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Relatedness and  
Alienation  
in Interpersonal  
Understanding:  
A Phenomenological Account

A thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Amanda Jayne Taylor Aiken

Department of Philosophy  
Durham University

2011

# **Relatedness and Alienation in Interpersonal Understanding: A Phenomenological Account**

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Amanda Taylor Aiken

Abstract

This thesis aims to provide a phenomenological exploration of relatedness and alienation in interpersonal understanding, which elucidates and supports recent interdisciplinary critiques of more traditional accounts of interpersonal understanding. Orthodox accounts of folk psychology, namely theory and simulation theories, have focused on the role of attributing mental states in understanding others. This focus has led to a neglect of how interaction and forms of relatedness contribute to the task of interpersonal understanding. Building on recent interdisciplinary research, my work aims to rectify this neglect through an exploration of how various forms of relations, particularly interactive relations between interlocutors, support interpersonal understanding. My account, therefore, emphasises understanding as a *shared* process, moving away from the spectatorial orientation of the orthodox accounts. My approach is distinctive in its use of Gadamerian hermeneutics to offer a novel and detailed account of the central role played by collaborative refinement of interpretative presuppositions. Examining face-to-face interaction, it becomes apparent that affective interactions often frame and underpin an ability to attribute mental states. I explore how, in conversational instances of interpersonal relatedness, understanding involves a continual collaborative refinement of interpretive presuppositions, resulting in a modification of understanding. From this my work broadens, taking into account how reciprocal embodied expression, space, and stance tacitly support an ability to relate to and understand others, in virtue of jointly inhabiting mutually meaningful social situations. To clarify the ways in which affective interaction and shared situation are partly constitutive of ability to understand others, I consider impaired forms of interpersonal understanding in the illnesses schizophrenia and depression. Examination of these instances highlights the central role held by an ability to dynamically engage and inhabit relations with others.

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Amanda Taylor Aiken

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## INTRODUCTION

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*“Understanding [...] inherent to the investigation of human beings is not, at least in the first place, a grasp of mind.” (Schatzki 2000: 165)*

*“The mechanism of the body cannot explain the spontaneity of the subject.” (Deleuze 1991: 89)*

*“What they leave out of the world is precisely what binds us to it.” (Ratcliffe 2009: 291)*

This is a thesis about intersubjectivity: a philosophical and phenomenological investigation of how we find ourselves alongside and able to understand others. Intersubjectivity is, at present, a topic that is thriving in interdisciplinary academic thought. Questions of how we understand others, mechanisms that may be involved in enabling this ability, the role of a shared social world, and whether we might identify neural correlates of understanding, have all thrived in recent years. Situated against this rich interdisciplinary backdrop, the motivation for this thesis arose from the way in which many researchers began to use the term ‘relatedness’ to counter what they saw as an overly mechanised account of interpersonal understanding.<sup>1</sup> Emerging predominantly from Hobson’s work, the importance of taking account of the role of ‘relatedness’ in understanding others became one of the trade-mark pleas of

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<sup>1</sup> Despite the term ‘relatedness’ entering the debate largely through Hobson’s work (1993, 2002, 2007b, Hobson, Lee & Hobson 2007), we can trace the life of the concept of relatedness as active in many spheres. It holds importance for psychoanalytic theory, which situates and seeks a basis for therapy in the bond between analyst and patient. In psychoanalytic practice and theory, the dynamism of the relation shared between practitioner and patient is of primary, and therapeutic, importance. We can also find it present, peppered in writing from philosophy and psychology through Buber (2004 [1937]) and other writers such as Cole (2001), MacMurray (1999 [1961]), Ratcliffe (2007a, 2009), Scheler (1998 [1954]), Schutz (1967), Stanghellini & Ballerini (2007), Starwarska (2009), Stern (1984, 1993), Trevarthen (Trevarthen and Hubley 1978) and Urfer (2001). In calling attention to how this term, and related ones (such as ‘relations’), are used, I seek to make the role of relatedness more explicit by emphasising the term and subsequently exploring what supports a sense of relatedness to dynamically evolve through interaction.

those critical of what has become the orthodox account of interpersonal understanding: folk psychology.

Throughout this thesis I use the term ‘folk psychology’ to refer to a philosophical position which seeks to describe our ‘commonsense’, everyday understanding of others. In what follows, I shall develop a critical attitude in relation to this position, and maintain that it does not offer us the account of everyday intersubjective understanding that it seeks to provide.

Broadly speaking, proponents of folk psychology argue that understanding others is primarily a matter of being able to attribute appropriate propositional attitudes, principally beliefs and desires, to them based on observation of their behaviour. Digging a little deeper, we find two main competing theories as to what enables us to understand others: theory theorists hold that ability to do so is enabled by possession of a theory of mind (Carruthers and Smith (eds.) 1996; Stich and Nichols 2003); whilst their rivals, the simulation theorists, deny the need for a theory, instead arguing that attribution of appropriate propositional attitudes is achieved through engaging in simulation routines (Gordon 1986; Goldman 2002, 2005, 2006; Heal 1986). Acknowledging that both accounts have some merit, hybrid theory states that successful understanding of others is born out of a fusion of both the possession of a theory of mind and an engagement in simulation routines: sometimes recourse to theory is needed whilst at other times simulation must be called upon. On other occasions both are used (Goldman 2006; Stich and Nichols 2003).

Recently, these views have been criticised as relying on a conception of people that is overly individualistic and detached; as a consequence, they neglect the important role of certain ‘social’ aspects.<sup>2</sup> More specifically, the ability to understand others, calling on the words of Clark and Chalmers, “ain’t [all] in the head” (1998: 8). Closely related to this criticism are the charges that folk psychology neglects to take account of the *affective tonality* of our exchanges with others, often referred to as ‘relatedness’, and to acknowledge the constructive role which relatedness plays. It is argued that this neglect leads advocates of folk psychology to mischaracterise the stance ordinarily occupied when understanding others, which in turn results in a failure to take into account

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<sup>2</sup> See Hutto and Ratcliffe (Eds.) 2007 for a selection of papers offering a critical reappraisal of folk psychology.

the interactive nature of understanding (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007, Gallagher 2001, Ratcliffe 2007a). These criticisms combine to present an alternative way in which intersubjective understanding may be understood; one that respects the ‘everyday phenomena’ of intersubjectivity more closely than folk psychology is able to.

Despite the largely persuasive nature of these arguments, I noticed whilst trekking through these debates that a full and systematic exploration of what we have called ‘relatedness’ has largely been missing. This is not to say that there is no discussion at all. However, a lengthy treatment of the phenomenon of relatedness, and its role in shaping and sustaining engaged interaction is conspicuous primarily by its absence.

Furthermore, such a project would be of use both to academic debates and those fields that practically apply the fruits of academic understanding to ‘real-life’ contexts. First, an exploration of the phenomenon referred to as ‘relatedness’<sup>3</sup> will go some way towards honing and refining our understanding of ‘everyday’ intersubjectivity, and those elements which feed in to it. Secondly, it might also prove of use in the practical application of philosophy of intersubjectivity to therapeutic contexts. Detailed exploration of elements that underlie and support the development of ‘healthy’ intersubjectivity might add to an understanding of ways in which these are often absent or frustrated in varying forms of illness that involve a change in intersubjectivity.

Given this, this thesis aims to provide an exploration of elements that support and shape a sense of relatedness between interlocutors. Furthermore, its findings elucidate existing theories of interpersonal understanding that deviate from folk psychology, such as interaction theory (Gallagher 2001, 2004a, 2008, 2009) and participatory sense-making (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007; Di Paolo, Rohde and De Jaegher 2010). In doing so, it explores the manner in which reciprocal bodily engagement and shared spatiality are active within a sphere of dynamic, affective, and mutually engaged interaction.

This thesis primarily uses the methods of phenomenological analysis and reflection in order to identify and examine certain elements that play a central role in structuring a sense of relatedness between people. Further, it seeks to

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<sup>3</sup> See footnote 1 for a list of sources that refer to ‘relatedness’.

describe the dynamic manner in which interlocutors' relationships with these elements is modified through interpersonal interaction.

A central part of this methodology is to clarify the ways in which affective interaction and shared situation are partly constitutive of the ability to understand others, by examining instances in which they break down. I consider impaired forms of interpersonal understanding, in particular cases in which intersubjective abilities are impaired in the psychiatric illnesses of schizophrenia and depression. Examination of these instances highlights the central role that a felt and dynamic sense of relatedness holds in supporting an ability to engage and interact with others.

This thesis is comprised of three parts. The first, 'Interpersonal Understanding: The Story so Far' (Chapters 1 and 2), is largely expository, establishing the background to and current state of the debate. It provides a critical exploration of debates surrounding folk psychology: its mechanisms and role in understanding. It takes note of recent literature that combines cognitive science with phenomenology to stress the importance of accounting for relations in understanding.

Chapter 1 provides a survey of 'folk psychology', detailing the emergence of folk psychology as a paradigm (1.1) before turning to examine arguments as to what constitutes an ability to successfully utilise folk psychology: theory theory, simulation theory, and hybrid theories (1.2). In this chapter, assumptions commonly held by proponents of theory theory, simulation theory and hybrid theory are brought to the attention of the reader.

Taking up the elements which are common to theories underlying folk psychology, Chapter 2 provides an overview of recent critiques of folk psychology. This chapter is largely expository, examining critiques that argue for the importance of situation, recognition of personhood and relatedness, and interaction, for interpersonal understanding.

The ground covered here is wide-ranging and interdisciplinary in nature. Whilst, in this chapter, I agree with the main thrust of already existing critiques, I argue that there is still much work to be done to provide an account of interpersonal understanding which moves beyond the purely cognitive mechanisms in recognising the social, personal, and dynamic aspects of our understanding of others. First, an account of how personhood and situation are

co-present and mutually informative in interaction is needed. Secondly, we must provide a detailed account of elements that contribute toward and shape interpersonal relatedness.

Taking seriously the arguments which state that relatedness plays a central and important role in understanding others leaves us with the challenge of demonstrating how a sense of relatedness emerges and supports dynamic interaction. Part 2 (Chapters 3, 4, and 5) seeks to answer this challenge, providing a detailed phenomenological exploration of relatedness and ways in which it supports and affects interaction.

Part 2 has two aims. First, it aims to explicate an understanding of the manner in which interaction develops and progresses which takes seriously the need to account for relatedness. Secondly, it identifies and provides a detailed account of: (i) factors which support, shape, and establish the mutual tonality of relatedness; and (ii) how these factors actively dynamically shape the sense of relatedness between interlocutors. On this account, relatedness is characterised as dynamic and active, rather than a static and unchanging sense of another as 'you'.

Chapter 3 works toward answering the first of these challenges. Here, I draw on Gadamerian hermeneutics to offer a novel description of the dynamics of interaction. Under this description, I offer and argue for an account of the central role played by collaborative refinement of interpretative presuppositions. I also seek to show the manner in which situational and personal factors, identified as important in Chapter 2, work together and have bearing on each other in interpersonal understanding. To do this I demonstrate how understanding on the social (global) and personal (parochial) level mutually affect and revise each other through the interactive process. This provides a framework according to which we can posit how situational and personal elements combine to mobilise interpersonal understanding.

Chapters 4 and 5 seek to address the second challenge laid out by Part 1 by identifying two phenomena which are of key importance in supporting and shaping a sense of relatedness: intersubjective space (Chapter 4) and reciprocal embodiment (Chapter 5).

The issue of 'lived' spatiality, and how this supports a sense of relatedness is the topic of Chapter 4. This chapter develops an account of, first,

how an ‘everyday’ apprehension of space as *lived* shapes the way in which we engage with others; and secondly how *others*, through embodied interaction, shape our perception of space. In this way, my analysis seeks to establish an appreciation of intersubjective spaces. Further, it argues that these intersubjective spaces are dynamic, and that a shared sense of space, which moulds and forms a mutual sense of relatedness, evolves as interaction progresses whilst shaping the ways in which interaction will unfold.

To explore this, I begin with Sartre’s well-known example of the park bench: the other’s presence is enough to change the manner in which space, for me, presents itself. Following from this, I explore several different examples of the dynamic relationship between space and interaction. Through these examples, I emphasise how a phenomenological, intersubjective sense of space acts as a foundation for interaction. Investigating this further, I argue that it contains certain normative, functional, and affective directives which guide interaction and form a platform which in turn shapes the way in which we relate to, and interact, with others. I argue that whilst phenomenological space encompasses elements of the normative, functional, and affective, it is not reducible to any of these. Rather, these elements jointly constitute a sense of space, and are an intrinsic part of what it is to inhabit a space in a non-pathological way.

Complimenting the exploration of intersubjective spatiality and the manner in which this can be said to help establish a sense of relatedness, Chapter 5 moves on to examine the role that reciprocal embodied interactions also play. This chapter establishes the central role which bodily responsiveness plays in constituting a sense of relatedness between interlocutors. First, I explore how affective bodily responsiveness contributes to interpersonal understanding; before characterising how this bodily responsiveness inputs into defining – and over-riding – particular types of intersubjective space in which interpersonal encounters take place. In outlining this, I show how consideration of embodiment is important for accounting for how we relate to and understand others. Chapter 5 also emphasises how considerations of the role which embodiment plays are intimately connected and related to those of spatiality. Both intersubjective space and reciprocal bodily dialogue come to bear upon each other to give rise to and shape the affective sense of relatedness shared between interlocutors. Emerging

from Chapters 4 and 5 is an account of relatedness that identifies aspects that may be distinguished, yet are inextricable.

Part 3 (Chapters 6 and 7) acts as a methodological counterpoint to the phenomenological explorations of Part 2. It examines instances in which a taken-for-granted ability to be alongside and to understand others break down in certain forms of psychiatric illness. Just as Chapters 4 and 5 worked together to provide the roots of an integrative exploration of relatedness, Chapters 6 and 7 do the same to provide case studies of instances of pathological forms of alienation. Such explorations are based on the premise that characterisations of interpersonal understanding, in order to be effective and complete, ought to take into account instances in which interpersonal understanding breaks down, or is frustrated and fragmented. Doing so not only reveals those important elements of interpersonal understanding that are taken for granted by folk psychology and thus offers a chance to strengthen accounts of interpersonal understanding; it also offers a useful accompaniment to the phenomenological exploration of relatedness. If we can trace what has fragmented or become strained in pathological understanding, the original account of relatedness gains strength.

In this final part, I provide two case studies through which I explore the fragmentation of intersubjectivity present in schizophrenia and depression. Focusing on extreme forms of alienation at the heart of schizophrenia and depression reveals what is normally taken for granted in our intersubjective exchanges with others: the ability to *feel* related to others, which lies at the heart of ‘unproblematic’ intersubjectivity. Part 3 responds to questions raised in Part 1 by demonstrating the inadequacy of folk psychology to deal with experience that deviates from the ‘healthy’ norm. It also reveals to us the extent to which relatedness, and its structure, needs to be present in a full and accurate account of interpersonal understanding, and investigations into intersubjectivity. Such explorations also reveal a place for the hermeneutic account of understanding, championed in Part 2. Part 3, then, has a dual aim: first, to elucidate and support the account of relatedness given in Part 2 through examination of instances of interpersonal alienation. Second, to give an account of deviations in intersubjectivity undergone in schizophrenia and depression, in order to shed more light on the nature of these disorders.

Chapter 6 takes intersubjectivity in schizophrenia as its focus. In particular, I examine the manner in which ‘lived’ spatiality undergoes a radical change in lived experience of schizophrenia. Drawing on autobiographical accounts, it is possible to argue that there is a geometricisation of space, often termed ‘geometric morbidity’.<sup>4</sup> This both exacerbates and occurs alongside a de-animation in things encountered in that space and also in other people. The ability to construe and encounter others as ‘people’ in the sense of the term highlighted in Chapter 2 often fragments.

This has obvious ramifications for interpersonal understanding. Most fundamentally, the structures of relatedness through which others are presented as imbued with an affective sense of personhood can be seen to erode, as the affective sense of self and space is lessened and in some cases lost. Finding Sass’s notion of ‘un-worlding’ (1992a) helpful, I track, and make explicit, changes in the sense of affectivity and spatiality. I also draw on notions of ‘distance’ to be found in both Minkowski (1970) and Blankenburg (2002), to give weight to my account of changes in lived spatiality in schizophrenia. I conclude this chapter by suggesting that changes in an affective apprehension of space as intersubjective and ‘lived’ affect a capacity for relatedness. This, in turn, shapes the way we understand others. What emerges from the discussion here is the similarity between strategies in which a person suffering schizophrenia might go about understanding others and those which are described in folk psychology as the ‘everyday’ way we go about understanding others.

The last chapter turns to take account of changes in intersubjectivity in depression. Chapter 7 argues that at the heart of the experience of depression are changes in relatedness, that is, in the ability to sustain interaffectivity. I begin by claiming that folk psychology does not have adequate resources with which to take into account the nature of intersubjectivity in depression. In examining accounts of depression, we find that changes in relatedness resound. In order to analyse these changes I draw on first-person accounts of depression which testify to changes in the lived body. Drawing on Fuchs’s notion of corporealisation (2005a), and Husserl and Merleau-Ponty’s (1962) accounts of ‘horizons’, I argue that changes to bodily phenomenology undergone in depression impact on

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<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Sass 1992a: 161.

perception of possibility: both in terms of possibilities for action and intersubjective interaction. I then move on to examine the way in which a lessening of dynamic bodily movement impacts on ability to initiate and sustain interaction. I turn to examine how this affects perception of – and participation within – intersubjective space, before turning once more to the hermeneutic account of interpersonal understanding. I argue that the hermeneutic account is better equipped to account for intersubjectivity, and the ways it breaks down, in depression.

# PART 1

## Interpersonal Understanding: The Story So Far

# CHAPTER 1

## FOLK PSYCHOLOGY

---

*“I guess all songs is folk songs. I never heard  
no horse sing 'em” (Big Bill Broonzy)*

### 1.1 What is Folk Psychology?

Folk psychology sets out to describe a commonsensical, non-technical, non-specialist, and essentially widespread ability that most people possess to understand others.<sup>5</sup> Possession of “folk psychological abilities” (Davies and Stone 1995a: 2) has been widely thought of as necessary for successful interpersonal understanding. It is important to delineate two ways in which the term ‘folk psychology’ is used: on the one hand, it is envisaged as an explanatory and predictive resource which furnishes us with an everyday ability to provide reasons for action and to predict the behaviour of others. Simultaneously, ‘folk psychology’ is used to name a philosophical position that seeks to describe our everyday understanding of others.<sup>6</sup> This position involves commitment to the idea that understanding others is centrally and pervasively achieved through attributing reasons for action, most commonly in terms of propositional attitudes. The two uses of the term are interlinked; the philosophical position called ‘folk psychology’ holds that an everyday, explanatory resource is present to mediate our understanding of others. Throughout this thesis, when I refer to folk psychology I refer to the philosophical theory. In this chapter I explain and explore folk psychology before reviewing criticisms of this position in Chapter 2.

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<sup>5</sup> Excepting certain individuals, such as those in the autistic spectrum. Proponents of folk psychology have attempted to explain the perceived ‘deficits’ in social knowledge and interaction in autism spectrum disorder as ‘mind blindness’ – as stemming from a lack of possession of a folk psychology (Baron Cohen 1995, Leslie 1991).

<sup>6</sup> This philosophical position is also often referred to as ‘common-sense psychology’, ‘belief-desire psychology’, and ‘mindreading’ at various points in the literature. All names refer to the central idea of understanding others being constituted by an ability to attribute mental states and propositional attitudes based on the behaviour of others.

Folk psychology states that understanding is enabled by so-called ‘mindreading’, or ‘mentalising’ (Stich and Nichols 2003). That is, an attribution of propositional attitudes to others on the basis of their actions and behaviour. In this way, understanding others is constituted by an ability to attribute underlying reasons for actions. Such mentalising is always inferential in nature and posits underlying, unobservable mental states as causally linked to observable behaviour.

In this way, we understand that Anne reaches for the pencil because she *desires* to write a shopping list and *believes* that doing so will help her remember everything she needs; Brenda slaps her forehead because she *remembers* the answer to the question at the pub quiz last night, and Carl kicks the car tyres because he *believes* that his car won’t start and he *desires* to get to work on time. These three simple sketches are examples of what folk psychology holds to be a widespread, largely accurate tendency to provide reasons for actions in terms of propositional attitudes (principally taking the form of X believes, desires for p).<sup>7</sup> It is argued that the ability to attribute mental states as reasons for action is central to our understanding of others.

Following these examples, we can see that folk psychology is committed to the assumption that interpersonal understanding takes the form of explanation or prediction of the actions of others.<sup>8</sup> It involves the claim that the way we achieve understanding of others is through attributing reasons for action, usually in the form of beliefs and desires. Understood this way, folk psychology furnishes us with a resource through which to provide reasons for action (Dennett 1991, Greenwood 1991a).

But what is it that grounds competency in using folk psychology? There have been three standard answers that seek to provide an account of what successfully enables a use of folk psychology:

- (1) Understanding others requires deployment of a theory of mind (theory theory) (Baron-Cohen 1995; Stich and Nichols 1992).

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<sup>7</sup> Folk psychology focuses primarily on the propositional attitudes ‘belief’ and ‘desire’, though we may of course attribute others. For example ‘X remembers, loves, hates, hopes for p’.

<sup>8</sup> Chapter 2 takes a critical look at this commitment and explores whether it is appropriate to state that this is the basis for *all* instances of understanding others.

- (2) Understanding others relies on generation of simulation routines (simulation theory) (Goldman 2006; Gordon 1986; Heal 1995a [1986]).
- (3) Understanding others is enabled by a combination both of theory and simulation routines (hybrid theory) (Goldman 2006; Stich and Nichols 2003).

Each of these established answers preserves a commitment to folk psychology being widespread and pervasive in understanding others. Each theory also seeks to describe a mechanism or underlying strategy, possessed by human beings, that enables successful utilisation of folk psychology.

In what follows, I provide a critical survey of the debate surrounding folk psychology. After covering early debates around how folk psychology is best understood,<sup>9</sup> I move on to examine the claims that successful utilisation of folk psychology is grounded in theory (theory theory) and through engagement in simulation routines (simulation theory). I then move on to consider developmental evidence that is often cited in support of folk psychology. I close the chapter by considering whether folk psychology has to be *mechanistic*. Here I discuss Hutto's 'narrative practice hypothesis' (2008a) before questioning whether folk psychology provides an accurate description of interpersonal understanding.

### ***(a) Early Debates***

Early debates surrounding the existence, use, and success of folk psychology tended to focus on the ontological status of folk psychology. The main question here was whether we have any reason to assert that there is anything in our neural architecture corresponding to the propositional attitudes posited as underlying behaviour. The ramifications of this question feed into how we conceive of folk psychology as a theory of interpersonal understanding.

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<sup>9</sup> The question which dominates these early debates is about folk psychology, its meaning and whether it will be supplanted and eliminated, as neuroscience progresses, by a better explanatory resource. These debates take folk psychology to be integral to folk practices of understanding others. In the following section I will also use the term 'folk psychology' in this way, but do not, myself, take it to be integral to the way in which we ordinarily understand others.

Wilfred Sellars (1997 [1956]) was among the first to state that our commonsense generalisations, often employed when understanding others, ought to be thought of in terms of a commonsense psychological, or *folk*, theory. Such a ‘theory’ was a body of law-like generalisations that link unobservable mental states to observable, intentional actions in order to make sense of them. For example, when people walk with a skip in their step (observable action) they are usually happy (unobservable mental state); if someone is shouting (observable action) it is usually because they are angry (unobservable mental state). Noticing, and then explicating, the interconnections between mental states and observable behaviour results in the founding of this commonsense, folk theory of understanding others.

This commitment to folk psychology being a *theory* was taken and developed by David Lewis (1980 [1972]), who fleshed out the conception of the form and content such a folk theory might have. He explored how we should philosophically characterise such a theory. He writes:

Think of commonsense psychology as a term-introducing scientific theory, though one invented long before there was any institution as professional science. Collect all the platitudes you can think of regarding the causal relations of mental states, sensory stimuli, and motor responses ... Include only platitudes which are common knowledge among us – everyone knows them, everyone knows that everyone else knows them, and so on. For the meanings of our words are common knowledge, and I am going to claim that the names of mental states derive their meaning from these platitudes. (1980 [1972]: 212)

Here Lewis emphasises that the terms of a commonsense theory are such that everyone assents to them (making it truly a theory of the ‘folk’). In conceiving of folk psychology as a theory comprised of “platitudes of common knowledge”, Lewis states that the constituting terms and ‘rules’ of the folk theory must be to some degree explicit.<sup>10</sup> However, if folk psychology is to be understood as an explicit body of platitudes which are derived from ‘common

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<sup>10</sup> The theory is explicit in that it is readily available to retrospective or overt reason-giving as seen in the quote above (1980 [1972]: 212).

knowledge', we run into a problem: why, on reflection, are we unable to articulate the terms and propositions which make up the theory? The answer given by Jerry Fodor is that folk psychology is a largely *implicit* theory: we utilise it without explicitly calling upon it. This theory, according to Fodor (1987), is active in all instances in which we understand others, running tacitly in the background to enable this understanding. The tacit and ongoing application of this theory gives rise to the platitudes which Sellars and Lewis take to make up the theory. However, Fodor's claim also entails ambiguity. If such a theory is largely implicit, then how are we able to describe it as a *folk* theory? Fodor's conception of folk psychology moves away from that of Sellars and Lewis to state that commonsense platitudes about behaviour are enabled by a complex, implicit theory of mind. Whilst Sellars and Lewis envisaged an explanatory resource which emerges from and is traceable to everyday practice, Fodor argues that this is enabled by psychological states which correspond to something localised in our neural architecture. Under Fodor's description, people do not articulate this theory of mindedness.

In elucidating how we ought to understand this folk theory, Fodor defends a realist claim about propositional attitudes; claiming that the beliefs and desires we attribute to others correspond to causally effective elements embedded within our neural architecture.<sup>11</sup> We have already noted that, for Fodor, folk psychology is a largely implicit theory. Understanding others consists in the ability to attribute propositional attitudes (of the form X believes that p; Y desires q; Z loves r; and so on) to others, thus providing reasons for the particular action. He states that in order for us to understand actions of others, we must be able to entertain thoughts of the following structure:

1. Jerry *desires* that we all be good representational theorists. In order to make this happen Jerry *believes* that he must write convincing papers arguing for such a position.

Or a simpler example:

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<sup>11</sup> We see later that it is precisely this point that critics of the realist characterisation of folk psychology, notably Dennett and Churchland, take their departure from.

2. Molly *desires* to fulfil her hunger. She *believes* that by eating the apple, her hunger will be satisfied; therefore Molly will eat the apple.

Or similarly:

3. Molly ate the apple. Eating apples is usually a sign that someone *believes* they are hungry and *desires* to quell the hunger, coupled with the *belief* that eating an apple will result in this.

In each of the three cases, there is something to be understood (Jerry's continual writing of papers, Molly's eating the apple) and that behaviour is understood by providing motivating reasons (the desire for us all to subscribe to mental representation theory, to satisfy hunger) for why the action (paper writing, apple eating) occurred. Fodor states that this ability to attribute or relate propositional attitudes to people also allows us to predict their behaviour. Arguing that – on the whole – most people do this accurately in everyday life, he concludes that our folk theory is, most likely, correct. If this is so, then the unobservable mental states that we attribute to each other as explanations for behaviour must somehow have causal efficacy. In this way, we can describe Fodor as a *realist* about propositional attitudes, in the sense that he argues for there being “contentful psychological states which ‘play a causal role in the generation of human behaviour’” (Greenwood 1991a: 7).

However, let us return to the three examples above. I will take example 3 for simplicity's sake. When we see Molly eating the apple, is the reasoning process as tight as has been supposed here? For one thing, folk psychology, if a theory, ought to fall foul of what Hutto has called “an embarrassment of riches” (2008a: 15). That is, far from highlighting *one* reason and taking that to be the case, surely folk psychology ought to provide us with a multitude of possible reasons for action. Consider, for example:

Molly ate the apple because her mother told her to.

Molly ate the apple because she was racked with guilt about children starving in Africa.

Molly ate the apple because she heard that doing so keeps the doctor away and she has an irrational fear of doctors.

Molly ate the apple as a sign of respect and gratitude to the person who gave it to her.

Molly ate the apple because it was about to go off, and she hates waste.

These are just a few possible reasons as to why Molly might have eaten her apple. The question then becomes: how do we decide which is the right one? I return to this question in Chapter 2. Here I consider criticisms that state that resources for understanding cannot stop short at the type of reasoning that adherents of folk psychology describe. It is the context provided by social situations, norms, and expectations that make certain explanations salient rather than others. However, for now, it suffices to draw the point that sketching folk psychology as a theory does not show how and why we often arrive at the right reasons.

Reacting against realist Fodorian conceptions of folk psychology and its commitment to a realist account of propositional attitudes, Paul Churchland (1988, 1991) argues that propositional attitudes do not correspond to anything in our neural architecture. This position leads him to be sceptical of the long-term success of talking in terms of propositional attitudes as explanatory-causal reasons for action. This position is eliminative materialism.

Eliminative materialism considers folk psychology to be false. Whilst Churchland's account of folk psychology begins from the same assumption as Fodor, that folk psychology is a theory, it suggests a very different use-value for folk psychology. As science matures, he argues, it will show folk psychology to be "false and radically misleading" (1988: 43). In offering a definition of folk psychology, he states:

It is a framework of concepts, roughly adequate to the demands of everyday life, with which the humble adept comprehends, explains, predicts, and manipulates a certain domain of phenomena. It is, in short, a folk theory. (1991: 51)

For Churchland, folk psychology is theoretical in the sense that it is a body of “rough and ready general statements and laws” (1988: 59) which support an ability to explain and predict other people’s actions. Such generalisations are learned at an early age and represent the culmination of commonsensical wisdom, passed on through generations (1988: 59). As such, folk psychology is, for Churchland, an empirical causal-explanatory, non-specialist theory for understanding and predicting the behaviour of others. However, it is one which is ultimately misleading. Why is this? The clearest explanation is as follows:

As the eliminative materialists sees it, the one-to-one match-ups [between mental states and brain states] will not be found, and our common-sense psychological framework will not enjoy an inter-theoretic reduction, because our common-sense psychological framework is a false and radically misleading conception of the causes of human behaviour and the nature of cognitive activity [...] On this view, folk psychology is not just an incomplete representation of our inner natures; it is an outright misrepresentation of our internal states and activities. Consequently, we cannot expect a truly adequate neuroscientific account of our inner lives to provide theoretical categories that match up nicely with the categories of our common-sense framework. Accordingly, we must expect that the older framework will simply be eliminated, rather than be reduced, by a matured neuroscience. (Churchland 1988: 43)

Contained within this, it is possible to distinguish two different but related notions: first, that folk psychology is empty as the beliefs, desires, and other mental states that we attribute to others as reasons for action do not correspond to any physical brain state or anything else in the world. In this way, the first eliminativist line is bound up with a commitment to physicalism: that is that the belief that what we posit as ‘real’ must necessitate, or supervene on, something physical.<sup>12</sup> Following this line, the eliminativist response states there are no things that correspond to beliefs, desires, and other mental states in the physical world. Therefore, folk psychology must be false (see Feyerabend 1963).

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<sup>12</sup> For an exploration and defence of physicalism see Papineau 1996.

The second eliminativist line develops along a different presupposition. It states that folk psychology will be redundant in light of a more mature scientific, specifically neuroscientific, framework.<sup>13</sup> Whilst we find folk psychology a useful explanatory device now, in the future, when neuroscience has progressed significantly, the concepts used in the theory constituting folk psychology will become outmoded and shown to be bankrupt. Instead, they will be replaced by a superior, neuroscientific framework that will eradicate the need for propositional attitude terms. Encompassed within this is the assumption that folk psychology as it stands now has explanatory value,<sup>14</sup> but will be shown to be redundant in light of scientific progression.

Whilst both eliminativist objections ultimately posit that folk psychology is false, Ramsey (2007) captures a subtle distinction between the two positions which we would do well to bear in mind. This difference consists in the following: whilst the first eliminativist position states folk psychology is false because there are no mental states, only brain states; the second states that folk psychology, as a supposedly utilisable theory, performs its tasks poorly. Even if it were to perform its task well, Churchland argues, a complete neuroscientific theory will perform it better (1988: 61). The first type of eliminativism states that sufficient progress in neuroscience will reveal that propositional attitude terms do not correspond to anything physical (and are therefore empty). This will (eventually) lead to an overturning of the language we use to express our understanding of others.

But why does Churchland state that ultimately as scientific knowledge progresses, folk psychology will turn out to be false? Churchland gives two reasons: first, what he labels the ‘explanatory poverty’ of folk psychology (1988: 45); secondly, on analogy with theories from the history of ideas, we see how theories change or are supplanted as knowledge grows and becomes more in-depth.

Whilst Fodor defends both the reality and indispensability of folk psychology, Churchland questions both. The charge of explanatory poverty of

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<sup>13</sup> In focusing on the primacy of neuroscientific explanation, Churchland neglects to consider how folk psychology, whilst failing to be a scientific theory of the brain, could hold a place in social scientific explanations (see Kusch 1999; 2007: 176-177).

<sup>14</sup> That is, at least *some* explanatory value. Churchland stresses that folk psychology’s explanatory capacity is limited (1988: 45-46), and notes that the theory has failed evolve over time and make progress (1988: 46; 1991:51).

folk psychology relates to what Churchland identifies as an inability or failure to explain the explanandum. Whilst we may use folk psychology on a daily basis, its explanatory powers remain poor, with Churchland pinpointing “the widespread explanatory, predictive, and manipulative failures of folk psychology” (1988: 45). Whilst it provides basic platitudes on which we can understand the behaviour of others, it cannot tell us anything interesting about basic everyday phenomena such as sleep and dreams (45-46), how memory functions (46), and how intelligence is grounded (46). Furthermore it fails to tell us anything useful when faced with cognitive and psychological impairment arising from brain damage and psychiatric disorder (46).

Churchland argues the theory which constitutes folk psychology itself has remained largely static and, consequently stagnant, since we began the project of understanding others. As other theories have been revised and have progressed, folk psychology remains the same. Developing this point, he states the subject matter which folk psychology seeks to explain is so complex that folk psychology has most likely ‘survived’ “because the phenomena addressed are so surpassingly difficult that any useful handle on them, no matter how feeble, is unlikely to be displaced in a hurry” (Churchland 1988: 46). However, the supposition that we ought to dispose of folk psychology’s terms and language on the grounds that we do not fully understand the terms we employ to make sense of certain issues is not necessarily sound. In fact, science and philosophy seem to be ripe with cases of this; and yet we have not abandoned the terms which we use.

Greenwood (1991b) makes this point forcefully, citing many cases in which we employ specialist terminology to explain certain phenomena, without having a full understanding of the terms involved. He cites biology, in particular, as a field rife with examples of this. In particular, he uses Golgi bodies and myelin sheaths as examples (1991b): we know they are present in cells but have no *full* explanation of their functional and causal roles; that is, we don’t know fully how they ‘work’. This, he argues, does not, and should not, stop us from using the terms in biological science. However, this first example is poor since biological sciences know of their existence, and their existence in relation to the cell to which they belong, through observation.

Perhaps a better example would have been served by particle physics which posits the existence of particles such as: Higgs' bosons, neutrinos, gravitons and quarks and so on, which are unobservable, yet are used to describe the fundamental make-up of the universe. The point is that there is nothing observable which corresponds to these posited particles, but they are integral to fundamental and phenomenological physics. Whilst Greenwood's example from biology is poor, he furnishes the reader with a better example of cases of Plato's bodily theory of emotion from his *Timaeus*, which Greenwood takes to be defunct. Such a theory involves emotions being rooted in the heart, liver, and other body organs. However, he states that though we now view the theory as defunct, we do not dispose of the terms 'heart' and 'liver', simply because they are misused and misattributed in a theory which turned out to be false. Greenwood's point is to stress how the ineffectiveness of folk psychology (which even Churchland admits has limited merit) does not provide us with a strong enough reason to throw out terms used to express folk psychology such as 'belief' and 'desire'. Greenwood writes:

It is ... wrong to suppose that the semantics of our folk-psychological theoretical descriptions [are] fixed by reference to the causal-explanatory propositions in which they regularly figure. (1991b: 77)

And surely Greenwood has a point. Churchland's position, as it stands, is extreme: in jettisoning propositional terms from our explanatory vocabulary, it would seem that Churchland would be throwing the baby out with the bath water. Furthermore, if this is the standard which he sets for terminological use then many other terms, inherent within many of our scientific and philosophical theories, must also be disposed of.

Developing this line of argument further, we must question the extent to which the explanatory and causal elements of folk psychology explanations must be treated as necessarily concomitant. In dealing with folk psychology theory, Churchland frequently describes such a theory of mind as 'explanatory-causal' in nature. In this way, the thing to be explained (explanandum) and explanation (explanans) are treated in a way that suggests they are inextricable. The explanans must causally give rise to the explanandum. The treatment of

explanatory and causal elements as inextricably bound leads specifically to an opening of the eliminative materialist criticism. Simply put, if we take a theory to be dually explanatory and causal, then if the causes the theory attributes are 'empty', then the explanation, it follows, must also be bankrupt. In this way, Churchland's notion of folk psychology as an explanatory-casual theory is problematic from the outset.

However, it is perfectly possible to deny the causal nature of folk psychology (in its realist, Fodorian sense) whilst still asserting its explanatory value. Whilst this initially may seem to weaken the credibility of folk psychology further, this does not necessarily have to be the case. Consider the following example by Greenwood:

In ascribing beliefs and motives to self and others we ascribe (intensional) contents directed upon (intentional) objects in natural and social psychological world. Thus, in attributing to myself the belief that the Empire State Building is the tallest building in the world, I mean that I represent the Empire State Building (intentional object) as the tallest building in the world (intensional content). In attributing shame to another, I mean that that person represents some action of his or hers (intentional object) as personally humiliating and degrading (intensional content). Such attributions are true if and only if agents represent particular aspects of reality in the particular ways attributed to them, irrespective of the adequacy of causal explanations referencing such psychological states. (1991b: 77)

Emerging out of this example are questions as to how we ought to treat such classifications, particularly the extent to which we can describe folk psychology's classifications as causal in nature. Greenwood's examples illustrate how folk psychology may be not causal in nature, but still provide reasons to explain actions, which do not need to be jettisoned in light of the emergence of a highly developed neuroscientific language. In this way, a path between Churchland and Fodor's positions is negotiated. Folk psychology is held to be explanatory but not causal; whilst the continued use of the language of folk psychology (even in the event of a neuroscientific vocabulary) is defended. Such

a path also remains true to the ‘folk’ nature of the theory. The point of folk psychology is that it is a non-specialist reason providing ability: shouting ‘Argh! My c-fibres are firing again!’ seems rather specialist, whilst ‘Argh! It really hurts’ remains true to the lay understanding of oneself and others which folk psychology attempts to describe.

These considerations lead us nicely to examine what Daniel Dennett brings to the fray surrounding how we should think about folk psychology. The point of departure for both Dennett and Churchland is the same. Agreeing with Churchland, Dennett begins by critiquing the realist presupposition that the concepts, rules, and propositional attitudes used to describe the underpinnings of folk psychology correspond to something in our neural make up. However, instead of developing and drawing eliminativist conclusions, as Churchland does, Dennett takes a different tack. Folk psychology, for Dennett, is not a theory, nor is it embedded in neural architecture; instead it is a *stance* which is adopted for the direct reason of making sense of the actions of others, or predicting what they will do next (1987: 14-15). The particular stance taken towards people is one he labels the intentional stance (1987: 15).<sup>15</sup> Dennett characterises the intentional stance as a *perspective* that one adopts in understanding others. As such, it does not claim to reveal internal states but instead focuses on particular patterns of behaviour: in such a stance, one assumes the other is a rational agent, and on that basis, ascribes beliefs, desires, and other propositional attitudes to others based on their behaviour or situation in order to predict or understand their actions. In Dennett’s own words:

[F]irst you decide to treat the object whose behaviour is to be predicted as a rational agent; then you figure out what beliefs that agent ought to have, given its place in the world and its purpose. Then you figure out what desires it ought to have, on the same considerations, and finally you predict that this rational agent will act to further its goals in the light of its beliefs. A little practical reasoning from the chosen set of beliefs and desires will in many – but not all – instances yield a decision about what

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<sup>15</sup> This is contrasted with the physical and design stances (See Dennett 1987: 16-17).

the agent ought to do that is what you predict the agent will do. (1987: 17)

Such a position seems to avoid the theoretical confusion of Churchland's eliminative position, as it does not view the roles of explanation and causation as interdependent. According to Dennett, folk psychology is simply a strategy which we adopt to make sense of others. In doing so, and in positing reasons for behaviour, we do not commit ourselves to the assumption that the reasons provided are essentially causal in nature. This is what makes it a 'strategy' rather than a theory. This leaves us with the question of how this can be the case: why posit reasons if the posited element ultimately does not correspond to something 'real'?

The answer to this lies in the very nature of what folk psychology *is* for Dennett. Whilst Churchland states unequivocally that folk psychology is a theory, even if a bad one, and so, has an empirical basis and forms a body of wisdom that we call on and apply, for Dennett, folk psychology is something we 'step in to'. It is not so much a theory, as a strategy. In this way Dennett walks a middle ground between the realist position of Fodor and the eliminativist one of Churchland. Like Churchland, he argues that propositional attitudes do not correspond to anything in neurobiological architecture; however, this does not form a problem for Dennett. In conceiving of folk psychology as a stance which is adopted he makes a more modest claim: it simply becomes a strategy to explain behaviour in general terms, rather than a theory which posits the physical reality of propositional attitudes. Folk psychology, on Dennett's view is still both useful and pervasive, but does not need to be revised.

We can see the opposition between Dennett and Churchland more sharply in the way they view the centrality of the 'folk' in the term 'folk psychology'. Whilst Churchland was regularly criticised for his conception of 'theory', which he viewed folk psychology to be; Dennett avoids these criticisms by bringing to the fore that folk psychology is a stance that the *folk* engage in, sometimes with success, other times not, emphasising that this stance is something which people can recognise and articulate as part of their practice. Dennett writes:

Do people actually use this strategy? Yes, all the time. There may someday be other strategies for attributing belief and desire and for predicting behaviour, but this is the only one we all know now, and when does it work? It works with people almost all the time. (1987: 21)

Whilst Churchland struggles to answer the question of why, if folk psychology is a theory which the *folk* acquire and use, we cannot readily articulate the principles it operates by (as we can with folk physics etc); Dennett's account holds onto and protects the use of folk psychology as an everyday resource for approaching and understanding others. But is it? We can identify several problems with Dennett's account of folk psychology.

First we must ask whether understanding others is a question of adopting a stance. Secondly, if we do adopt strategies and stances for understanding others, to what *extent* do we do this? Is it something we occasionally engage in, or does this form the entire bastion of our interpersonal understanding resources? Dennett, as is shown so clearly in the quote above, states that this is something we find ourselves doing in our day-to-day lives. It is, for him, something we do 'all the time'. However, it seems far from clear that this is the case.

Take an example from Hutto.<sup>16</sup> Asking us to imagine our partner, or family member walking into the kitchen with a new pint of milk, we do not need to step back, observe their behaviour and, adopting the intentional stance, attribute relevant motivational beliefs and desires. Doing so is not necessary, unless circumstances make it odd; that is, if the fridge is already packed with milk, or if all family members are allergic to milk. Only in the latter circumstances would the behaviour appear salient as needing explanation. In the former case, in which my partner brings in milk, other things carry the burden for explanation, and indeed, present us with the explanation. It might be countered that this does not create a problem for Dennett who at no stage claims that adopting the intentional stance requires effort. We could, it might be argued, adopt and inhabit the intentional stance without thinking about it. However, the question then remains that if we occupy this stance without thinking about it, in what sense are we *in* or *adopting* this stance? How much of our understanding of

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<sup>16</sup> Used in a paper entitled 'The Narrative Practice Hypothesis' delivered at *Social Cognition and Social Narrative Summer Collegium* (San Marino, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2008).

the situation is provided by folk psychology, and how much is down to socialisation, habit, and a navigation of the social world? As Ratcliffe puts it: “the world does the work” (2007a: Chapter 4) to an extent which may render adopting the intentional stance unnecessary. I examine such claims in Chapter 2, in which I re-examine the extent to which folk psychology ordinarily takes the flack in day-to-day life for providing us with understanding of others and their actions.

In an attempt to escape the early controversy of the term ‘folk psychology’ and to remain “theoretically neutral” (Stich and Nichols 2003: 2), various authors, have more recently, used terms including ‘mind-reading’, ‘mentalising’, ‘common-sense psychology’, and ‘belief-desire psychology’ to refer to the ability to attribute propositional attitudes to make sense of and predict other people’s behaviour. In what follows, I shall take and discuss these forms under the original name given to this collection of abilities: ‘folk psychology’, since this cluster of terms all refer to the “rich conceptual repertoire which [is] deploy[ed] to explain, predict and describe the actions of one another and, perhaps, members of closely related species also” (Davies and Stone 1995a: 2). However, this definition is wide to the point of not being very helpful. In what follows, when talking of folk psychology I appeal to a more specific definition, which also states that folk psychology is used to explain and predict the actions of others in propositional attitude terms.

Recent debates about folk psychology have moved away from concerns bound up with whether folk psychology exists and, if so, in what form. Instead, recent debates focus on what constitutes and enables us to be users of folk psychology. In doing so, it is largely accepted amongst advocates of folk psychology that: first, folk psychology is a largely accurate and widely used resource for understanding others, whether theory, stance, simulation, or a combination of the above; and secondly, that it is this which enables us to understand others by providing reasons and motivations for action through an ability to attribute propositional attitudes.

## ***(b) Recent Debates***

### *(i) Theory Theory*

Simply put, theory theorists argue that ability to successfully use folk psychology is enabled by possession of a theory of mind. Largely implicit, this theory is called upon whenever we provide reasons for actions and to enable prediction of behaviour. The ubiquity of the theory follows from this: in any instance involving attribution of mental states (taken to be the ‘unobservables’ within theory of mind), theory of mind is called upon. As Gallagher and Zahavi note, we ought to understand theory theory alongside its ubiquity claim, as not only mediating our understanding of others, but also being active in self-understanding (Gallagher and Zahavi 2008: 173).<sup>17</sup>

Debate as to how best to understand what is meant by ‘theory of mind’ is wide-ranging. Theory theory’s historical roots stretch back to the beginning of the folk psychology debate, where folk psychology was initially characterised as a theory (Sellars 1955; Lewis 1972), as we have already seen.<sup>18</sup> Amongst proponents of theory theory, accounts range from the permissive conception of theory of mind as an “internally stored body of information” (Stich and Nichols 1992: 46-47) to a stricter “systematic integration of knowledge” (Botterill 1996; Karmiloff-Smith 1992: 138).<sup>19</sup> However, the consensus is that theory of mind is a largely implicit, domain specific mechanism for understanding other minds (Baron-Cohen 1995; Leslie 1991).

Perhaps the clearest stated definition of theory of mind is that given by Botterill (1996), who states that our theory of mind is a systematic web of conceptual knowledge, employed to predict and explain behaviour according to a law like structure. Under his account, theory of mind is specific to the domain of interpersonal understanding and is systematically integrated.

In exploring what constitutes a theory of mind, he identifies four main criteria, which must apply in conjunction with each other:

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<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 2 for an exploration of this point.

<sup>18</sup> This was the case until 1986, when Heal and Gordon published their papers outlining simulation theory as an alternative underpinning for folk psychology.

<sup>19</sup> Theory of mind “involves inferences based on unobservables (mental states, such as belief), a coherent set of explanations and causal links between mental states and behaviour which are predictive of future actions” (Karmiloff-Smith 1992: 138).

- [1] It enables prediction and explanation of others' behaviour
- [2] It must support counterfactual claims
- [3] It must posit causally efficacious unobservable principles
- [4] It contains an implicit definition of concepts

First, it must enable us to predict and explain others' behaviour, specifically the "actions and reactions of others" (1996: 107). For Botterill, as for others in the folk psychology tradition, behaviour is the key to understanding others due to its public nature. Behaviour and actions are witnessed by others, and as such, it is supposed that this must be our starting point from which we may reliably come to attribute unobservable motivating reasons. The presupposition, that behaviour plus unobservable reasons (mental states) constitutes understanding has been heavily criticised, as we shall see in Chapter 2.

Secondly, for Botterill, theories must support counterfactual claims. These are claims of the sort of 'if x had not been the case, then y'. For example:

If Margot hadn't believed that the finish line was 10m earlier than it was, then she would have won the race.

Or

If John hadn't forgotten about the roast, then it wouldn't have burned.

Encapsulated in these seemingly simple examples is an expression of how things normally are, and how things might go wrong. Contained within the above counterfactual claim about Margot and the race is a realisation that:

- (a) Margot wanted to win the race
- (b) Margot had the ability to win the race
- (c) Circumstances thwarted Margot unexpectedly, but if all things had been equal, then she would have won.

Botterill's reasoning here is that if a theory supports counterfactual claims, then it must have principles that may be rendered in the form of law-like generalisations. Examining the case above shows how one may do this. However, the question remains as to whether these principles can, on their own, bear the sole burden for understanding. In stating that counterfactual claims form the spine of an ability to understand others, Botterill neglects wider phenomena which underpin an ability to make counterfactual claims.

Returning to the example of Margot and the race, we find that an ability to state that 'Margot would have won the race, had she not held a mistaken belief about where the finish line was' requires an ability to understand what it means not just to race, but to engage in competitive activities. We might characterise this in terms of yet more propositional attitudes:

Margot wanted to win because she desired the glory of winning the race.

Margot wanted to win because she believed the prize money was generous and desired to write off her debt.

Margot wanted to win because she desires to be liked and believes that everyone loves a winner.

Margot wanted to win because she desired to make her Dad proud and she believed that winning a race would lead to this.

Margot wanted to win because she desired to beat Laura, who she's always disliked.

However we must notice that contained within some of these propositional attitude statements are references to wider social platitudes ('everyone loves a winner') or to personal history (making her Dad proud, disliking Laura). Looked at in this way, it seems that we might view the counterfactual claim as an extrapolation of more general social and gaming norms, of personal history, and cultural expectation and valuation. It is within these larger meaning-bestowing structures which Margot's actions, aims, and life choices make sense. If we are to see this counterfactual as upholding a nomological principle in the first place, then it must be one that relies on countless other nomological principles which, as we pursue them, seem to rest on others and becomes seemingly endless. Faced with this, we must wonder where we draw the line.

We are also left with the question of how to characterise the relationship between our general social knowledge, and the nomological generalisations which constitute folk psychology, something which Botterill does not consider. This is especially pertinent when we realise that Botterill wishes to distance knowledge contained in the theory of mind from experiential knowledge gained over generations in a folklore fashion. The question of how social knowledge and valuation, which change over time, relate to the principles of the theory is a difficult one. Is it the case that this provides an interpretative background? Or perhaps certain forms of social etiquette and ‘know how’ may form part of the nomological principles which drive theory of mind, and which are somehow revised as standards of behaviour and social understanding change? As we see in the example above, whilst we can extrapolate propositional attitude statements from our general social and cultural knowledge and value systems, these relate in turn to other areas such as personal and family history. Botterill has to at least address the question of the role of such areas, something which he does not do.

Connected to this is Botterill’s third point that the theory must posit unobservables that play a causal role. In the case of folk psychology, these unobservables are “internal and causally active representational states” (1996: 108). Working in the importance of postulation of unobservables which are systematically structured is important for Botterill, as it guards the status of folk psychology as a theory against those who claim it is a mere loose collection of commonsensical generalisations. Whilst the latter characterisation might be thought of in terms of folk-lore or know-how passed on through generations, in stating that theory of mind is constituted by the systematically integrated relations between unobservable, yet causally powerful elements, Botterill protects the legitimacy of the theory in that it describes natural elements which are directly responsible for the understanding of others. In casting theories thus, Botterill protects the status of a folk theory of mind as a *theory*, which must have systematic integration rather than merely being practically useful.

Lastly, for Botterill, theory of mind involves an implicit definition of concepts (108). That is, we need not look outside the theory to define the elements and terms it deals with. Thus, for Botterill, propositional attitudes such as beliefs, desires, hopes, and so on, are best understood as theoretical concepts (108). However, these four elements alone are not enough to define theory of

mind: they must be *systematically integrated*. Only with systematic integration of principles, do they become a domain specific body of information (106).

Stressing systematic integration<sup>20</sup> emphasises the law-like structure of theory of mind and divorces its conception from commonsense generalisations, or lore-knowledge. Unlike lore-knowledge, elements of and principles within theories cannot be simple add-ons, in virtue of the fact that they have a functional role in relation to other principles. Each internal element or proposition is therefore situated in relation to others; taken together, they create an integrated whole which yields specific knowledge. This differs from folklore, which is a bundle of practical knowledge, amassed and added to as experience dictates. Whilst we might agree that a systematic integration of component principles is necessary for a body of information to specifically warrant the title 'theory', something more is needed here. That something is an account of the way in which the internal principles relate to each other. Unfortunately for Botterill and for us, this is not something he provides.

#### (ii) *Simulation Theory*

Prior to 1986 it was part and parcel of debates about folk psychology that attributing reasons for actions was enabled by possession of a theory of mind. However, in 1986 papers by Jane Heal and Robert Gordon challenged the view that understanding others was enabled by employing a theory of mind. Instead, they argued independently that mindreading is achieved through engaging in simulation routines (Gordon 1986; Heal 1986).

Simulation theory offers a rival account of mental state attribution, which diverges from theory theory in stating that understanding others relies primarily on a *practical* use of one's own cognitive and/or empathic resources to predict and explain behaviour of others. It states that understanding others is a matter of engaging in *simulation routines*. As Davies and Stone put it:

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<sup>20</sup> As opposed to contingent integration. For something to be a theory, the principles must sit in relation to each other in cohesive way that draws together its principles: in this way, each part of the theory is connected nomologically to other principles.

[T]he resources of our own minds ... simulate the psychological aetiology of the actions of others. (1995b: 3)

There are three alternatives within simulation theory as to how we ought to understand simulation: (i) explicit simulation, (ii) radical simulation (a variant type of explicit simulation), and (iii) implicit simulation. Each alternative provides a different answer as to how we ought to understand simulation routines. Uniting each differing approach to simulation is a wish to avoid recourse to a theory of mind in our accounts of how we understand others.

Explicit simulation theory argues that we attribute mental states to others by consciously “putting ourselves in the other’s shoes” (Davies and Stone 1995a: 21). Involved in this is feeding relevant information about the other’s situation into our own cognitive, empathic, and imaginative resources; we then make a judgement of their motivations, or a prediction of future behaviour, based on our own thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and desires which arise from this process. In short, explicit simulation theory states that I recognise the situation of the other person, and by empathetically imagining what I would do, think, or feel in their situation, I am able to infer mental states to them.

Key to explicit simulation is an insistence on the primary role of pretence and introspection; and using both in a consciously controlled manner. In this way, simulation, according to the explicit model, is an imaginative exercise of putting myself in the ‘situational shoes’ of others. Doing so activates my own emotion, memory, and perceptual processes and evokes how I should think, feel and act if placed in their situation. As Heal states:

[W]e take the contents of the beliefs and desires of the other as material for our own reasoning and reflective capacities. When this occurs the mind of the would-be predictor and the mind of the person to be predicted (if all goes well) proceed through parallel evolutions and arrive at similar end states; each of these persons develops thoughts from thoughts, using his or her capacities ... The prediction is derived by a simulation process, not by calling on some theory about how minds work. (1996: 46)

This form of simulation is one supported by the early writing of Goldman (2002, 2005). It has, however, attracted much criticism. Firstly, there are those who, noting the close relation of explicit simulation theory to the argument from analogy, resurrect criticisms originally levelled to the argument from analogy and direct them towards explicit simulation. Most prominently, there is the worry that in putting ourselves in another's situational shoes and using my own conceptual apparatus to generate thoughts, feelings, and mental states, we can at best arrive at an understanding of what we ourselves would do in similar circumstances. This does not guarantee that the same holds for the person we are trying to understand (Scheler 1954; Zahavi 2007: 29; also see Zahavi 2001, 2008). Zahavi argues that the same is the case for explicit simulation and we are left with the question of whether:

[S]imulation ever allows for a true understanding of the other or will it merely let me attain an understanding of myself in a different situation?  
(Zahavi 2007: 27)

A reliance on one's own imaginative and empathic pretence does not seem to give us grounds for an understanding of others. At best, it gives us the grounds to have a good guess, or to surmise, 'if it was me, then I would do x'.

A further worry with explicit simulation addresses methodological concerns. Explicit simulation states that we take salient aspects of the other's situation and by imaginatively putting ourselves in their situation and then introspectively examining our own beliefs, desires and other mental states; we arrive at the grounds for attributing these mental states to others. A central question is what enables us to decide what is salient within the other person's situation in the first place. Another way of phrasing this is the question of how we decide what to feed into our simulation, and what to leave out.

This concern is raised by Heal, who points out that when engaging in simulation we must make allowances both for our own and others' moods, which may not be immediately obvious to us, but which affect our judgement and the way we act (1996: 52). This is also the case for wider phenomena such as personal history, current personal elements which affect the individual's life, long term goals and hopes, pertinent memories, stress, and so on. For example on

witnessing a young man in silent tears in the waiting room of the dentist, how could I use explicit simulation to understand his actions? It will not be immediately obvious to me what it is in his situation that I might call upon to feed into a simulation. Perhaps he is terrified of the dentist, or maybe the music playing in the background holds particular sad memories for him. In this situation, I face the problem of how to decide what is salient and relevant about the young man's situation; and also how to choose the 'correct' explanation. Apart from in seemingly obvious cases it seems that explicit simulation is rendered unnecessary if one knows something about the person in front of us, and their life and personality. However, this might not be a problem if we make a more modest claim about the scope and usefulness of explicit simulation: that it is useful in simple cases in which environmental factors are limited and obvious. However, this leaves us a long way from the characterisation of simulation theory as ubiquitous. Given these criticisms, explicit simulation provides, at best, rather sketchy grounds for understanding others.

Following this line of thought, it seems that explicit simulation theory cannot shoulder the task of accounting for our understanding of others by itself.<sup>21</sup> There are those who argue that social competence, including an awareness of shared norms, cultural significance, and social roles, takes much of the burden for having to understand others. I explore this in Chapter 2.

Gallagher voices a separate criticism in which he claims that the picture of interpersonal understanding painted by explicit simulation does not tally with our everyday experience (2007b: 65). He calls this his 'simple phenomenological argument' (2007b: 65). Explicit simulation theory claims that simulation routines are consciously engaged in when we understand others. Furthermore, Goldman argues, this is something we do all the time (Goldman 2002: 7-8). Gallagher's rejoinder is that examination of our experience says otherwise. In day-to-day experience, whilst we may occasionally have recourse to something like explicit simulation, we do not normally have to *explicitly* make the effort to understand the actions of others. Understanding is instead given in part by context, or through an unfolding interaction, not in instances of explicit third person

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<sup>21</sup> Picking up on this, supporters of theory theory have stated that the 'gaps' could be filled in by a theory of mind; arguing that simulation must rest on a theory of mind. See Stich and Nichols 1992, Stich 2009, and Goldman 2006 for the debate.

mentalising. Gallagher is keen to point out that this is not equivalent to stating that we *never* call upon imaginative projection into another's situation. Instead, he makes the point that this is not pervasive.

A more specific, slightly different form of explicit simulation is radical simulation. Unlike explicit simulation it denies that an appeal to introspective examination of our own mental states leads to an understanding of others. Instead, radical simulation holds that engaging in simulation involves a transformative shift away from concern with what *I, myself*, would do in the other person's situation to what *they, themselves*, will do or believe in their own situation. Under this description simulation is still explicitly engaged in, and it is still an imaginative enterprise; only, instead of imagining what I would do, I imaginatively reconstruct the other person in their situation and, in doing so, make judgments about what they will think, do or believe (see Gordon 1995, 1996).

Whilst radical simulation appears to overcome explicit simulation theory's problem of never moving beyond what I would do,<sup>22</sup> the remaining criticisms levelled against explicit simulation still hold for radical simulation. The first of these was Gallagher's simple phenomenological argument that when we reflect on our general and everyday experience there is very little evidence to suggest that engaging in simulation routines happens very often. Whilst we imaginatively engage with the predicaments of other people occasionally, particularly when there is something odd or errant about their behaviour, the claim that this is pervasive or necessary remains one which is disqualified by appeal to our everyday experience.

However, this is not necessarily a problem for implicit simulation. Avoiding the criticisms levelled at explicit forms of simulation, implicit simulation states that simulation is an 'off-line', sub-personal process, which we are not consciously aware of performing or utilising as a methodology. Implicit simulation holds that understanding of others occurs through implicit simulation routines which enable an attribution of beliefs and desires as causes of observed behaviour. But if simulation routines are not imaginative engagements and a

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<sup>22</sup> However, it is arguable that radical simulation still fails on these grounds, as it does not provide an account of *how* one adopts another's perspective, or how transformation from my own mental states to those of others' is achieved.

literal ‘putting oneself in another’s shoes’, then in what sense is simulation occurring?

To answer this, implicit simulation appeals to evidence from neuroscience, in particular, to the working of mirror neurons and resonance systems more generally, to ground our ability to understand others (see Stamenov and Gallese (eds.) 2002; Gallese and Goldman 1998; Gallese, 2001, 2007). Mirror neurons, a specific subtype of F5 visuomotor neurons, are neurons found in the pre-motor cortex of both humans and non-human primates which are closely linked to intentional behaviour. Canonical neurons are the other subtype found in this region (Fogassi and Gallese 2002). Canonical neurons discharge in the presence of objects which provide scope for intentional action and when the agent, itself, performs a particular motor action (Borg 2007: 5-6; Fogassi and Gallese 2002: 15). Unlike canonical neurons, mirror neurons activate when the monkey witnesses its conspecific performing an intentional action (Fogassi and Gallese 2002: 15) and when it performs intentional actions of that kind itself. As Fogassi and Gallese write, mirror neurons:

[D]ischarge when the monkey [or human] observes an action made by another individual and when it executes the same or a similar action. (2002: 15)

Mirror neurons are active in intentional, goal directed actions, rather than movement in general. Interestingly, mirror neurons in this area of the monkey’s brain discharge most strongly when it observes the other monkey using its *hand* to grasp, manipulate, or hold something; or perform some other goal directed activity. Whilst mirror neurons still discharge if the monkey witnesses its conspecific using a tool, the response is weaker (2002: 16; Gallese et al. 1996).

The discovery and subsequent exploration of the role of mirror neurons has been of great importance for debates addressing how we understand others. The findings have led some to surmise that the presence of neural mirroring of intentional action grounds an ability to understand and attribute reasons for action to others (Gallese and Goldman 1998; Gallese 2001). Mirror neurons provide good evidence of a subpersonal process which enables us to perceive goal directed behaviour. The discharge of mirror neurons has been subsequently

taken as what grounds an ability to perceive actions as intentional, and thereby, to understand them:

To put the observed action into a motor semantic network is simply a necessity, if one has to understand what the observed action is really about. The activation of the parieto-premotor mirror circuit is fundamental to provide the observer with a real comprehension of the observed action. (Rizzolatti 2005: 419)

Supporters of implicit simulation theory draw on evidence and findings surrounding mirror neurons to suggest that the activation and workings of mirror neurons constitute an implicit simulation: when I observe the other performing an intentional action, the *same* neural pathways are activated as they would if I were to perform the same action. The resonance between observed intentional action and subpersonal activation of neurons is interpreted as *simulation*, albeit on the neural level. In this way, each time an intentional action is observed, the activation of mirror neurons simulates the neural working it would take to perform the action oneself. As Gallese writes:

To spell it out in different words, action observation implies action simulation. (Gallese 2001: 37)

The evidence of mirror neurons and their functioning is strong. Given this, perhaps we stop reading and think the debate ends here. Not quite.

Implicit simulation, in taking the discharge and function of mirror neurons to be *simulation*, raises some important issues which need to be addressed. Whilst implicit simulation answers the simple phenomenological worry which presents problems for explicit and radical simulation, we find a concern resurfacing that was a problem for explicit simulation. Whilst we might say mirror neurons enact simulation by their very function, there is still the question of how one can attribute explanations that are the *other's* and not simply one's own. In relying on one's own resonance system, once again we only have grounds for understand what I would do in that situation myself. More worrying is the question of to what extent can we call the subpersonal workings of mirror

neurons *simulation*, and still retain a sense of simulation as it was originally envisaged. Gallagher puts these problems forcefully when he writes:

The concept of implicit (subpersonal) simulation, identified with neural resonance systems (mirror systems or shared representations), fails to be the kind of simulation required by Simulation Theory, because it fails to explain how neuronal processes meet constraints that involve instrumentality and pretence. Implicit Simulation Theory also fails to explain how I can attribute a mental state or emotional state that is different from my own to another person. (2007a: 353)

In arguing that the action and functioning of mirror neurons and resonance systems constitute simulation, we must ask whether we have stretched the concept of simulation out of shape; instead of talking about perceptual processes, supporters of simulation theory adopt the language of simulation, which makes sense at a phenomenological level, and apply it to the subpersonal, where arguably such language is superfluous. Instead, it is arguable that mirror neurons provide grounding for *a direct perception* of others' actions, without the need to recourse to a simulation.

Working along this vein, it has been suggested that a better interpretation of the function of resonance systems and mirror neurons in particular is as playing a part in the perceptual processes.

Mirror activation, on this interpretation, is not the initiation of simulation, it is part of a direct intersubjective perception of what the other is doing. (Gallagher 2007a: 359)

When we interpret the functioning of mirror neurons as part of the perceptual processes, we do not *need* to appeal to simulation:

If ... we look at those processes from a phenomenological level that suggests a direct perception of the other's intentions, then we tend to read those processes as perceptual without simulation. Can the simulationist

offer any convincing evidence that the activation of resonance processes is in fact a simulation? (Gallagher 2007a: 359)

It is not clear that they can.

## **1.2 Acquisition of Folk Psychology: Developmental Evidence**

Given these problems, we are left facing the question of why we should posit that interpersonal understanding is enabled by theory, simulation or a hybrid of both. The answer to this lies with the identification of the emergence of an almost universal ability between 3-4 years of age, which can be distinguished from general intelligence (Baron-Cohen 1995: Chapter 4). This phenomenon is the ability to attribute false beliefs to others. Central to this is a capacity to recognise that others hold beliefs that differ from our own. Originally, developmental psychologists explained this ability in terms of a newly acquired theory of mind. The idea here is that possession of a theory of mind enables the infant to recognise that other people may hold different beliefs and information about the world than themselves. In other words, they explained this new ability in terms of the onset of mentalising, thanks to possession of a theory of mind.<sup>23</sup>

Evidence of the false belief test is used to bolster the claim that around the age of four, an ability to represent the beliefs of others develops. Various developmental psychologists have argued that ability to do so is enabled by the child having a *concept* of belief alongside the ability to attribute beliefs to others, based on their behaviour and an appreciation of the context of their actions. Wimmer and Perner (1983), and other supporters of the theory theory (Baron-Cohen 1995), put this ability down to a newly acquired theory of mind which enables this recognition that other people have access to knowledge beyond, or will have judgements differing from, my own. Possession of a theory of mind is thought to enable the child deploy their concept of belief in understanding others.

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<sup>23</sup> Simulation theorists also take the ability to attribute false beliefs to support simulation theory. There is a long and complicated literature which addresses this. For a good overview, see Goldman 2006: Chapter 8 (particularly 197ff).

Debates turned to consider how this related body of law-like generalisations is acquired. Two main accounts of theory acquisition are forwarded<sup>24</sup> (i) scientific theory theory, or ‘child scientist’ approach (Gopnik and Wellman 1992, 1994; Gopnik and Meltzoff 1997) in which the child learns and later internalises a body of rule based generalisations through experience of intersubjective encounters with others; and (ii) the modularity theory in which theory of mind is an innate and inherited module (mechanism) existing from birth in the mind which provides the potentiality of mindreading (Baron-Cohen 1995; Fodor 1983; Leslie 1987, 1988, 1991, 1994).

Scientific theory theory states that the child constructs her theory of mind much in the same way as a scientist constructs a theory. Central to this is entertaining hypotheses which are then tested. Scientific theory theory came to fall from favour for being unable to account for evidence suggesting that children acquire the ability to mind read at roughly the same age, between 3-4 years.<sup>25</sup> In addition to this is the more serious charge that scientific theory theory is self-undermining. The thrust of this charge is that children cannot entertain the sort of hypotheses which scientific theory theory requires (i.e. entertaining various beliefs) without first having the concept of belief (and false belief, in particular): one cannot build a theory about beliefs which other people hold, without first understanding what it is to hold a belief, correctly or incorrectly. In this way, it is argued that there is no appropriate grounding for scientific theory theory.

In explicating modular theory theory, Baron Cohen outlines four domain-specific mechanisms which he argues are evolutionarily advantageous, and which play a crucial role in the development of mindreading. These are: (i) an Intentionality Detector (ID) which enables the infant to recognise intentionality in object movement, specifically in terms of goals and desires (1995: 32); (ii) an Eye-Direction Detector (EDD), enabling a recognition of “eye-like stimuli” (1995: 35) and their direction; (iii) a Shared Attention Mechanism (SAM) which is instrumental in allowing infant and carer to attend to something jointly; and (iv) a Theory of Mind Module (ToMM) which develops later than (i-iii). The

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<sup>24</sup> There are also accounts which argue that both innate structures and learning are necessary in order to develop a theory of mind. See, for instance, Karmiloff-Smith (1992) who argues that children have innate capacities, rooted in modules, which grow and develop through exposure to particular environmental and cultural factors.

<sup>25</sup> This is one reason amongst other reasons. See Goldman 2006: Chapter 4 and Ratcliffe 2007a: 17 for an evaluation of this view.

ToMM works to synthesise the information gathered from ID, EDD, and SAM and attribute agency and reasons, in terms of mental states, to observed actions. For Baron-Cohen, as for Leslie, ToMM:

[H]as the dual function of representing the set of epistemic mental states and turning all this mentalistic knowledge into a useful theory. (Leslie 1994: 51)

Under this description, competence in folk psychology (mentalising) is grounded in sub-personal, domain specific mechanisms (modules), and theory-of-mind is innate and tacit.<sup>26</sup>

False belief tests usually take the form of a child being asked to witness a sequence of events. The one commonly used runs as follows: a mother and child (Maxi) enter a kitchen. Mother places some chocolate in the cupboard in the presence of Maxi, who witnesses the placing of the chocolate before going out to play. In Maxi's absence, mother moves the chocolate from the cupboard to the drawer. The question asked to the participating child, is 'Where will Maxi look for the chocolate?' (Wimmer and Perner 1983) It has been found that children prior to the age of 3-4 years will struggle and not be able to correctly answer that Maxi will look in the cupboard. They are unable to see that Maxi will hold a *false belief*. However, between the ages of 3-4 years children begin to correctly answer that Maxi will look in the cupboard for the chocolate. Involved in this answer is an ability to correctly adopt Maxi's perspective and realise that he holds mistaken beliefs, which will lead him to act in a specific way.

There have been many other deviations to the set up of such experiments, involving for example a Smarties tube full of pencils instead of sweets (Perner, Frith, Leslie, and Leekam 1989), and the Sally-Anne test, in which Sally places a marble in a basket, which Anne moves in her absence (see Baron-Cohen 1995: 70-72) but the core principles remain the same. Each variant of the false belief task reveals that around 3-4 years most children develop an ability to recognise that others may hold mistaken beliefs. Entailed in this might be an inability to

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<sup>26</sup> A challenge for such conceptions of theory of mind is to account for the translation of these sub-personal processes into a 'theory' that we explicitly call upon. However, I will not go into this further here.

realise that (a) other people hold beliefs differing from one's own and (b) that people may hold mistaken and false beliefs which they will then act on.

Wimmer and Perner originally explained this by reference to the child acquiring a theory of mind: the child understands that beliefs, when coupled with desires, are motivating forces. With the newly acquired theory of mind, the child may successfully predict that Maxi does not always have the same access to information than they do, and may therefore hold a mistaken belief. Psychologists including Chandler and Boyes (1982) Flavell (1988). Wellman (1990), and Wimmer and Perner (1983) all think this is explained by the "acquisition of new theoretical rules about the human mind" (Kern and Marbach 2001:70). Fodor expresses this clearly when he writes:

These data have been widely viewed as implying that the younger child's theory of mind differs in quite radical ways from the one that older children share with adults; for example, that the young child either lacks the notion of belief entirely, or fails to realise that beliefs can misrepresent the world, and thus lacks a notion of false belief. If any of this is correct, then we are badly in need of an account of how, somewhere between the ages of three and four, maturational processes, or learning processes, or a combination of the two, could eventuate in what amounts to a conceptual revolution in the child's theory of mind. (Fodor 1995: 109)

This 'conceptual revolution' is largely interpreted in terms of the child acquiring her theory of mind. Sloars and MacDonald characterise this precisely:

Taken together, the ideas that (1) discerning intentionality in the behaviour of others involves accessing their minds, (2) that this requires folk psychology understood as a theory and (3) that passing the false belief task is a hallmark of having acquired basic mastery of folk psychology, are the main features of the first player in the theories of mind debate, the classical Theory Theory (TT) of social cognition. (2008: 154)

This evidence is further supported by examples from childhood pathology. Baron-Cohen, Leslie, and Frith (1985) adapted Wimmer and Perner's original false belief test (1983) in order to test normal children alongside children with autism and Down's syndrome. The results indicated that whilst the large majority of normal children and those with Down's syndrome could successfully complete the task, those with autism struggled. Of interest to Baron-Cohen et al. was that children on the autism spectrum performed poorly compared to those with Down's syndrome despite the latter having lower general intelligence (Baron-Cohen 1995: Chapter 5). Given these results, they concluded that ability to understand others does not correlate with general intelligence; instead impairment in autism is specific to interpersonal understanding. Baron-Cohen uses this evidence to support modular theory theory and argues that children with autism lack a specific theory of mind module (see 1.1b) which precludes normal development of theory of mind (1995).

Claims of those who champion the false belief test as the marker of the sudden emergence of new conceptual abilities have more recently been taken to task, both on their accuracy, and on their conclusions. Whilst critics do not deny that this ability emerges at this age, they do question the extent to which we see this as central to the infant's ability to understand others. Given this, there is a question as to what the false belief test can be said to show, and in relation to this, what other, arguably more sophisticated abilities passing a false belief test requires in advance. Whilst the false belief test is taken as experimental evidence that around the age of 3-4 years a theory of mind matures and develops, if we recall our earlier exploration of theory theory, we saw there that most theory theorists characterise folk psychology as a *tacit* theory. However, Gallagher (2001) (also see Gallagher and Hutto 2008) has pointed out that evidence of the false belief test outstretches the conclusions drawn from it: the false belief test can at best be used as a measure of explicit theory of mind, not the implicit form which is favoured.

Following on from this, Ratcliffe (2007a) has questioned assumptions that are taken for granted by this test. Far from being a simple test which examines *only* whether the child is able to recognise that others have different beliefs from themselves, successful completion of the test actually requires subtler skills than has been recognised. Criticisms of this test show that not only

does the test presuppose folk psychology<sup>27</sup> (Ratcliffe 2007b: 229) but also that a successful engagement in the test requires a subtler understanding of situation and context than has been recognised. Even understanding what the test asks the child to do in the first place relies on subtle and complex skills which have been overlooked, including an ability to recognise that the puppets and props stand for people and furniture; an ability to engage with and follow the “lengthy narrative” (Ratcliffe 2007a: 53) of the test, as well as other feats of understanding, which are all presupposed by the terms of the test.<sup>28</sup> As Ratcliffe points out:

Given the considerable social abilities that children must already have in order to comprehend the task, it is questionable how central a role the further ability to attribute false beliefs has in social life. (2007a: 53)

He turns his attention to examine how sophisticated our understanding of social and personal know-how must be to even comprehend what the tasks requires us to do. For example, the infant must understand that the puppets represent people, that the set is their ‘world’ and so on. The infant’s ability to make sense of what the experimenter asks, then, is complex, subtle and taken for granted by the false belief task experiments.<sup>29</sup>

Inherent within these criticisms is the problem, stressed throughout this chapter, that theory theory and simulation theory take the remit of their explanation too narrowly. In focusing on the role of attributing mental states in understanding, theory theory misses out the more pervasive abilities which contribute to the activity of making sense of others in a specific context, whilst performing specific actions, without the initial need to make sense of these through inference.

Having examined folk psychology, and drawn out its commitment to characterising understanding primarily as a process of attributing propositional attitudes and intentional states to others in order to explain behaviour, I now move on to examine whether folk psychology, and the accounts of what enables

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<sup>27</sup> In asking the question of *when* folk psychology appears, the experimenters assume a folk psychology interpretation of the results from the outset. See Ratcliffe 2007a: 53ff.

<sup>28</sup> See Ratcliffe 2007a (53) for a discussion of these presumptions.

<sup>29</sup> I cover the complexities of infant intersubjectivity in Chapter 2 in which I examine work that criticises folk psychology for neglecting intersubjective capacities which infants possess prior to the age of 3-years.

possession of folk psychology (theory theory, simulation theory), can ever fully provide a working account of interpersonal understanding. In what follows, I suggest not. Whilst folk psychology may legitimately describe a facet of interpersonal understanding, namely the attempt to understand others when a more fundamental type of understanding falters and breaks down, I suggest that more pervasive skills underlie the ability to attribute beliefs and desires to others, and further that reliance on these skills renders attribution of intentional states largely unnecessary, apart from in the few cases already mentioned. Thus in the next chapter I turn to look at the roles personhood, context and interaction all play in interpersonal understanding, and assess how they ought to form a part of any description of understanding.

### **1.3 Must Folk Psychology be Mechanistic?**

Before moving on to consider criticisms of folk psychology more fully in the next chapter, I will first pause to consider a relatively recent and alternative account of folk psychological competence: the ‘narrative practice hypothesis’ (Hutto 2008a, 2008b, 2009). This account seeks to minimise the ubiquity claims of traditional advocates of folk psychology, emphasising that reliance on folk psychology is rare – only when actions appear as abnormal, errant or erratic do we seek to provide reasons which make sense of these action. Though the narrative practice hypothesis states that understanding others rarely references an ability to attribute reasons for actions, it protects the notion that competence to do so is a special skill, which we do occasionally make use of. It is, Hutto argues, worthy of philosophical attention in debates questioning how we understand others.

One major criticism is that orthodox accounts of folk psychology (theory and simulation theories) have assumed the wrong ‘start point’ for our understanding of others. Stating that a predominantly third-person stance is primary in our understanding of others, they do not take into account the ways in which *others* shape our competency at generating reasons, or more widely understanding what they say or do. We must, therefore, look at the work which being with others performs in learning and becoming adept at understanding

others (whether this is through reasons, direct perception or shared social context). Gillet expresses this concern precisely when he states:

[A] grasp of the rules that govern the use of a concept (its application and its internal role in thought sequences) is shaped by modelling the actions of fellow human beings and responding to their corrective responses ... The structure and coherence of one's mental world therefore reflects, in part, the cumulative result of using skills developed in human forms of life, rather than the functioning of a set of mechanistic cognitive operations working (solipsistically) on the stimulations falling on receptor surfaces. (2004: 25)

This is what the narrative practice hypothesis seeks to redress.

Working against the presupposition that the ability to attribute reasons for intentional actions relies on a sub-personal, innate, and tacit mechanism,<sup>30</sup> Hutto seeks to locate the ability to utilise folk psychology in a “decidedly socio-cultural basis” (Hutto 2008a: *x*). He also states that the principles of folk psychology are not the first port of call in understanding others; most of the time, understanding others is not a problem. According to Hutto, our understanding is scaffolded and supported by participation in a shared and public world; by the roles which we ourselves and others occupy; and across interaction with others.

However, Hutto argues, there are cases in which an action sits on the boundaries of sense: it sticks out like a sore thumb and needs to be explicitly understood. It is in these cases, and only in these cases, which the narrative practice hypothesis comes into action. In such cases the narrative practice hypothesis claims that providing reasons for actions<sup>31</sup> in terms of special reason-giving narratives grounds our understanding of the situation. Hutto refers to these as “folk psychological narratives” (Hutto 2008b: 178; 2009: 11). But what is it that enables a development of the capacity for successful attribution of reasons though action? Hutto's reply is as follows:

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<sup>30</sup> Whether theory of mind, simulation routines, or a hybrid of both.

<sup>31</sup> The narrative practice hypothesis states that these ‘reasons for actions’, whilst often relying on predicting or inferring a state of mind (mental states) which gives rise to the errant behaviour, do not have to be exclusively in terms of mental states and propositional attitudes.

[D]irect encounters with stories about persons who act for reasons – those supplied in interactive contexts by responsive caregivers – is the normal route through which children become familiar with both (1) the basic structure of folk psychology and (2) the norm-governed possibilities for wielding it in practice, thus learning both how and when to use it. (Hutto 2008a: x)

And this is where the ‘practice’ of the narrative practice hypothesis comes into play. According to the narrative practice hypothesis, competency in utilising folk psychology is not located in subpersonal, inaccessible, or individualistic frameworks. Instead it is developmental, and is learned through social interaction, most specifically through story-telling.<sup>32</sup> The context of telling and sharing stories is one ideally suited to interactional learning and it is largely here that, Hutto argues, children learn the norms, expectations, and interpretative social anchors of society which commonly structure everyday understanding.

Though Hutto takes care to emphasise that recourse to folk psychology is something seldom used, some questions emerge. In particular is the question of the extent to which a reliance on concepts of ‘belief’, ‘desire’, and other intentional attitudes are actually helpful in understanding others (see Ratcliffe 2008a). Ratcliffe argues that at best propositional attitude terms, such as ‘belief’ and ‘desire’, become generalised placeholders for a rich cluster of associated phenomena. When considering the concept of ‘belief’, Ratcliffe’s argument leads us to see that the ways in which we might ‘believe’ something are many and varied. Consider the following ways we can think of or hold belief:

Conviction

Religious belief

Irrational belief

Belief, which is more akin to hope, in which you want something to be the case, so believe it

Assertive belief (‘I believe you’)

Belief against the odds

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<sup>32</sup> Hutto quotes both fairy tales such as ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ and Shakespeare for adult competence in folk psychology.

The term ‘belief’, then, works as a placeholder for a diverse constellation of phenomena which when we pare down to the proposition ‘Paul did x because he believes y, and x-ing brings y about’ is not very informative. Consider how we might go about explaining Paul’s sudden falling to his knees:

- (1) Paul fell to his knees because he felt dizzy and believed that kneeling down would alleviate the dizziness.
- (2) Paul fell to his knees because he believed the kingdom of God was at hand and felt a sudden need to repent.
- (3) Paul fell to his knees because he believed he saw a rare 5 spotted ladybird and he gets excited about that sort of thing.

In each of the three cases a belief ‘motivates’ Paul’s behaviour, and yet in each case the term ‘belief’ is very different; so different in fact that we arguably do not need to refer to ‘belief at all’. Consider: Paul dropped to his knees because he felt dizzy; Paul knelt to repent as he felt the Kingdom of God was near; Paul fell to his knees because he was excited by the ladybird and wanted a closer look. In each of these cases there is an affective dimension which appeal to the language of ‘belief’ and ‘desire’ cannot capture (Ratcliffe 2008a: 446-447). We have to question and wonder what work an appeal to the core lexis of folk psychology is doing. The danger would lie in thinking that this, alone, constitutes interpersonal understanding, or an appreciation of why someone may have acted in the way they have. Morton makes a different but related point that is of relevance here:

When we ascribe beliefs and desires and use them to explain and predict what people are doing the ascriptions are incomplete: we rely on conversational context and our knowledge of the particular person involved, and no doubt other factors, to fill in the full content of the ascription. (Morton 2007: 216)

So, whilst ascription of propositional attitudes may give us a generalised idea of why something might be happening, much of the explanatory work, even in odd behaviour, is done by “conversational context” and knowledge of the person’s history and character (Morton 2007: 216). This serves to pin down what is meant

by 'belief' or 'desire' in a particular context. Though Hutto remains sensitive to this, the debate on the usefulness of describing interpersonal understanding in terms of folk psychology remains.

#### **1.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a survey of debates surrounding interpersonal understanding, which state that an understanding of others is enabled by utilisation of folk psychology. After some initial exploration of what folk psychology is, I turned to explicate two dominant claims as to what constitutes an ability to successfully utilise folk psychology. First, I examined the claims of theory theory that folk psychology, and therefore understanding others (as understood by this view), is enabled by utilisation of a theory of mind. After some discussion of this view, I turned to examine its main rival, simulation theory. As there is some argument as to how best to understand simulation theory, I outlined three main positions that state that simulation is to be understood as (i) explicit, (ii) radical, and (iii) implicit.

Discussion which followed highlighted that each way of understanding simulation theory falls foul of criticisms which challenge the effectiveness of simulation theory as a pervasive and widespread methodology for understanding others and, in the instance of implicit simulation, the appropriateness of using the term 'simulation' to refer to neural processes involved in perception. Moving on from here, I turned to explore why skilful utilisation of folk psychology is taken to be important in debates surrounding how we understand others. Here I outlined the 'false belief test' and the reasons given by supporters of folk psychology, that it marks an important cognitive turning point which goes hand in hand with an ability to understand others.

After this, I turned to examine the narrative practice hypothesis (Hutto 2008a) which offers a more modest account of folk psychology. Moving away from the ubiquity claims of theory theory and simulation theory, the narrative practice hypothesis states folk psychology is only used when we are faced with puzzling or bizarre behaviour. Further, it claims that competence in using folk psychology is grounded in social narratives. The next chapter takes off from Hutto's claims that folk psychology is not ubiquitous in instances of

interpersonal understanding and examines recent critiques of folk psychology. These criticisms accuse folk psychology of providing, at best, a narrow and overly mentalistic account of interpersonal understanding which neglects the role which shared social attunement and interaction play. After examining these criticisms, the next chapter turns to look at alternative accounts of interpersonal understanding, which seek to foster and take notice of subtle and socially shaped aspects of our ability to understand others.

## CHAPTER 2

### SITUATION, PERSONHOOD AND THE WIDENING OF ‘UNDERSTANDING’

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*“In these relations of mutual understanding, there is produced a conscious mutual relation of persons and at the same time a unitary relation of them to a common surrounding world.” (Husserl 1989: 203)*

*“There’s no art to find the mind’s construction in the face.” (Macbeth I.V l. 13-14)*

In the last chapter, we saw that folk psychology is a philosophical position that offers an account of how we ordinarily go about understanding others. Proponents of folk psychology argue that this is a matter of ‘mentalising’ or ‘mindreading’: explaining and predicting the actions of others by inferring and attributing mental states to them, usually in the form of propositional attitudes (Goldman 2006; Stich and Nichols 2003). Additionally, folk psychology claims that mindreading is primary and pervasive to successful interpersonal understanding (Currie and Sterelny 2000: 145; Goldman 2006: 3; Frith and Happé 1999: 2; Stich and Nichols 2003:1).

Recently, many have taken a critical attitude toward the claims of folk psychology.<sup>33</sup> They argue that in focusing almost exclusively on the role of mindreading, folk psychology neglects to account for richer phenomena that underlie and inform our understanding of others (Gallagher 2001; Starwarska 2007, 2009; Zahavi 2001, 2007a). In particular it does not account for the ‘inter-’

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<sup>33</sup> See Hutto and Ratcliffe (Eds.) 2007 for a collection of articles which critically explore folk psychology; and also the special issue of *Philosophical Explorations* 11.3 (2008) which examines theory of mind and narrative approaches to intersubjective understanding.

of intersubjectivity: the varying forms this takes, and the ways relations with other people shape our understanding of them (Hobson 2002, 2007a; Ratcliffe 2007a: Chapter 6, Starwarska 2007, 2009). Additionally, folk psychology overlooks and fails to recognise the role that shared situation plays in rooting our encounters with others and informing the direction that understanding takes (Ratcliffe 2007a: Chapters 3 and 4; Zahavi 2007a, 2008).

In what follows I turn to look at demands for this richer account of interpersonal understanding (Gallagher 2001, 2004a,b, 2005, 2008a,b, 2009; Gallagher and Hutto 2008; Gallagher and Zahavi 2008; Hobson 2002, 2007a,b, 2008; Hutto 2004, 2008, 2009; Ratcliffe 2006, 2007a,b, 2008b; Reddy 2008; Sloars and MacDonald 2008; Starwarska 2007, 2009; Zahavi 2001, 2007a,b, 2008). I identify and survey underlying assumptions of folk psychology before moving on to call into question the assumed pervasiveness of folk psychology. Following the arguments of recent critics of folk psychology, I argue that folk psychology must be placed in context of the work done by social elements, such as norms, expectations, roles, and rules. Consideration of these other factors which support and frame our understanding reveals that the universality claim of proponents of folk psychology is questionable. This chapter has a primarily expository function. Examination of the material I cover here will serve as a springboard for my own views, which I develop in Parts 2 and 3 of this thesis.

## **2.1 Folk Psychology: Underlying Assumptions**

Emerging from recent debates on what constitutes our ability to utilise folk psychology (theory of mind, simulation or both) is a presupposition and acceptance that *all* interpersonal understanding can be characterised in terms of folk psychology.<sup>34</sup> A survey of the literature enables us to appreciate this perspective. Folk psychology for Stich and Nichols is:

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<sup>34</sup> Gallagher refers to this presupposition as the ‘universality principle’ and argues that it is false (‘Interaction Theory and the Science of Social Cognition’ delivered at *Social Cognition and Social Narrative Summer Collegium* (San Marino, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2008).)

[E]xtraordinary because it is so pervasive, powerful and important in real life that it is taken for granted. (2003: 1)

The strong claim made by Stich and Nichols is that all instances of understanding others involve this ‘pervasive’ and ‘powerful’ ability. It is not only Stich and Nichols who are impressed by the centrality of folk psychology in understanding others. Currie and Sterelny agree with claims for the fundamentality of mind reading when they write:

[O]ur basic grip on the social world depends on our being able to see our fellows as motivated by beliefs and desires we sometimes share and sometimes do not. (2000: 145)

For Frith and Happé, mindreading “appears to be a prerequisite for normal social interaction: in everyday life we make sense of each other’s behaviour by appeal to a belief-desire psychology” (1999: 2); and for Goldman, “mentalising anchors the fabric of social life” (2006: 3). Baron-Cohen asserts the centrality of positing unobservables (mental states) when understanding and predicting the actions of others, writing:

[M]indreading is a wonderful thing for us to have: Attributing mental states to a complex system (such as a human being) is by far the easiest way of understanding it. (1995: 21)

Fodor goes one step further, remarking that, if we are mistaken about the prevalence and existence of folk psychology, it would be “the greatest intellectual catastrophe in the history of our species” (Fodor 1987, xii). These few examples are indicative of the common consensus amongst supporters of folk psychology that an ability to use folk psychology is indispensable to making sense of our encounters with others.

But is this the primary, or indeed, only way in which we understand others? Looking more closely at instances from our own social lives, it seems that our understanding and engagement with others might not be as clear-cut as

proponents of folk psychology make out. Consider the following ways in which understanding comes into play:

Understanding the off-side rule

Understanding how to pay for food at the till

Understanding that Molly is upset

Understanding what hand-holding means

Understanding what my work demands from me

Understanding that whilst it is socially acceptable to hug friends, it is not alright to do the same to your boss

Consideration of these examples (and there are many more) leads us to realise that the category of ‘understanding’ is by no means narrow or simply definable, and is not constituted by an individual ability to attribute reasons for action alone. Thus understanding *that* Molly is upset is different, and often prior to understanding *why* Molly is upset. Whilst we might explain and attribute reasons for Molly’s being upset in order to understand it, we first apprehend that Molly is upset through how she comports and expresses herself. If we know her well, our ability to recognise that she is upset might also take place within the context of her personality and history, and the way in which I perceive her interactions with others. Recognition of the role which social and personal elements play has led to criticism of the view that inference is the primary way we understand others. The ubiquity of mental states attribution to others in interpersonal understanding has been challenged further by arguments stating that direct perception, rather than inference, is the primary way in which we understand others (see 2.2d).

When we turn to examine folk psychology’s commitment to mindreading being ubiquitous in understanding others, we find it rests on and entails a further group of presuppositions about the nature and character of interpersonal understanding. Recently, it has been argued that these presuppositions are not representative of non-problematic, everyday interpersonal understanding as folk psychology has claimed (Gallagher 2001, 2004a,b, 2005, 2008a, 2009; Gallagher and Hutto 2008; Gallagher and Zahavi 2008; Hobson 2007a, 2008; Hutto 2004; Ratcliffe 2007a, b; Starwarska 2007, 2009; Zahavi 2001, 2007, 2008a,b). We can

list these presuppositions as follows:

1. Observing the behaviour of others is the key to having knowledge of their mind, which is otherwise inaccessible (Gallagher 2009: 291; Herschbach 2008: 223; Sloars and MacDonald 2008: 154).
2. The standpoint ordinarily occupied when we relate to each other is that of the third-person: we observe behaviour from which we may mindread to predict and explain the behaviour of others (Gallagher 2009: 291; Hobson 2007a; Hutto 2004, 2007, 2008; Starwarska 2007, Zahavi 2007a).
3. Inference, rather than direct perception is the mechanism through which we understand others (Gallagher 2005).
4. Understanding is primarily a matter of mindreading, that is, of attributing propositional attitudes, usually beliefs and desires, to others (Gallagher 2005: 209, 2009: 291; Ratcliffe 2007a, 2007b, 2008).

Taken together, these four interrelated claims offer a picture of everyday interpersonal understanding that is mentalistic, predominantly individualistic, and largely spectatorial in nature (Gallagher 2001: 90-1, 2005: 209ff; Gallagher and Hutto 2008: 27; Zahavi 2008b: 526). The overarching assumption that binds the four points above together is that the other's mind is private and inaccessible; that it is unknowable. Given this, in ordinary day-to-day life people present themselves as needing to be understood. We perceive them behaving in a certain way, but something extra is required in order to make sense of our perception. I now move on to examine each of the presuppositions listed above, offering an overview of ways in which people have criticised them. This overview leads us to question the extent to which folk psychology is used in our day to day encounters with others.

## **2.2 Challenges to the Ubiquity of Folk Psychology**

### ***(a) Infant Intersubjectivity***

In Chapter 1, we saw that the false belief task (Wimmer and Perner 1983)

has widely been taken to show that at around the age of 3-4 years a landmark cognitive ability develops. Around this age children become able to entertain beliefs about other people's beliefs. In particular they can correctly attribute and recognise that others may hold mistaken or 'false beliefs'. Entailed in this is the ability for children to be able to distinguish their beliefs from those which others have, which in turn enables them to successfully predict the actions of others. We saw in Chapter 1.2 that supporters of the theory theory take this development to be evidence that the child gains a theory of mind which they are able to deploy to understand other people. This development is taken to herald a crowning social achievement: the child is able to understand others, through correctly attributing mental states, in the form of beliefs, to other people.

However, we have already seen that in focusing specifically on a child's capacity to attribute beliefs to others (Leslie 1991, 1995),<sup>35</sup> theory theorists and folk psychology more widely neglect a host of social abilities that infants develop much earlier than the age of 4 years. These abilities arguably support and shape the child's ability to attribute beliefs to others that differ from their own (Hobson 2002, 2007a; Ratcliffe 2007a,b; Reddy and Morris 2004).

For example, understanding, let alone passing, the false belief task relies on a basic ability to navigate shared social situations. It also demands that the participants are able to understand the context that the task sets up,<sup>36</sup> and to be able to make judgments about a situation in which they are not directly involved (Reddy and Morris 2004). Children must also be able to understand the terms of the narrative in which the task is couched. In false belief task scenarios children have their capacity to attribute false beliefs tested, and it is on this conceptual basis that they are judged to have the tools (or not) for interpersonal understanding. The task fails to recognise and appreciate the skill with which infants below the age of 4 years enter into embodied and expressive relational exchanges with others. This constitutes a form of communication that precedes an ability to attribute beliefs to others. The attention focused to the skills of mindreading comes at the expense of neglecting and failing to recognise the

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<sup>35</sup> That is, beliefs about other people's beliefs. This requires one to realise that other people think differently from myself and may have a more restricted access to information that I possess, but that they do not (and vice versa).

<sup>36</sup> These are often, though not always, imaginary contexts which require the child to follow a particular narrative.

sophisticated grasp of embodied communicative relations young infants have, and develop from an early age, and the central role which this plays in interactional understanding (Trevarthen 1979, 1993; Trevarthen and Hubley 1978). In this way, using the false belief task as evidence for ability to understand others gives us a *narrow* understanding of what it is to understand others. Once we move away from thinking of understanding exclusively in terms of mentalising, we are able to discern a variety of early emerging abilities that hold significance for communication with, and understanding of, others. Acknowledgement of these leads to a reassessment of the way we think of our capacity for intersubjective relations in early infancy and childhood.

In what follows, I look briefly at imitation in neonates and in early infancy which we might see as a precursor to and enabler of social interaction (Gallagher 2005: 74); and also a basic form of communication between infant and their parents (Kugiumutzakis et al. 2004). According to this interpretation, imitation is an early way of “making contact” with others (Reddy 2008: 45). Following this I turn to examine primary and secondary intersubjectivity (Trevarthen 1979; Trevarthen and Hubley 1978); before posing the question of what this developmental evidence reveals about a capacity for intersubjectivity in early infancy.

Meltzoff and Moore’s now famous experiments tested the ability of a large number of neonates to imitate simple actions such as mouth opening, tongue protrusion, and lip protrusion (Meltzoff and Moore 1977, 1983, 1994). These experiments found that a significant number of infants were indeed able to imitate the particular gesture shown to them. The studies claim that neonates are attuned to the actions of others from birth.<sup>37</sup> This might not seem so impressive, until we take into consideration that within minutes of birth neonates are responsive to people, to the point of being able to imitate them, in a way they do not attempt with objects. There is something specific about the human person that solicits this response in these neonates, in a way which inanimate objects do not. This lead Gallagher, along with Meltzoff to conclude that:

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<sup>37</sup> Whilst Meltzoff and Moore have argued that their experiments show this ability is widespread, it is still contentious: other studies show that whilst some children initially show this ability, they cease to continue imitation, whilst others show no response to the demands of the experiment at all (see Reddy 2008: Chapter 4 for an overview of the debate).

Infants are able to distinguish between human faces and human bodies, that is, in a way that they do not respond to other objects. (Gallagher 2005: 225)

What is it that distinguishes the human face so that the neonate and infant imitate its gestures and movements? The answer to this is far from clear.<sup>38</sup> However, consideration of the controversial evidence for neonatal and early infant imitation suggests that, from very early on, infants are able to recognise and respond to something about the *personhood* of another. This is hugely significant for debates surrounding interpersonal understanding and folk psychology, since the presence of imitative ability in neonates trumps the idea that in order to connect to others, there must be some “intellectual bridge” (Reddy 2008: 48) existing between self and others. Imitation constitutes and indicates a type of connectedness that exists between infant and another at a very early age. In Reddy’s words:

The first of the key beliefs challenged by a neonatal imitation in recent psychology is the belief in the need for some sort of intellectual bridge (a third-person stance) to connect people. (Reddy 2008: 48) [...] If there was indeed such a gap between self and others as philosophers and psychologists have postulated and struggled with, a gap which required extensive experience and observation of similarities to bridge, we would either not have neonatal imitation at all, or if we did, this imitation would first involve those ‘visible’ features of the body (such as hands or legs) in which the self-other visual comparisons are more apparent. (Reddy 2008: 55)

The danger in calling this phenomena ‘imitation’ is the implication that it is one sided. However more recently developmental psychologists have been keen to recognise these early imitative abilities as a type of affective *exchange*

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<sup>38</sup> I will not rehearse the various arguments and debates here. Instead, see Reddy 2008: Chapter 4 for a discussion and evaluation of the differing theories as how to understand neonate imitation and theories as to what underlies and enables their ability to replicate simple facial expressions.

between infant and care giver:

When interacting with people newborn infants don't just imitate, they respond. They respond with interest or disinterest, with attention or avoidance, and at least within weeks, with reciprocal rather than imitative emotional actions. It has been argued that even imitative interactions are not merely imitative and that the actions themselves are never identical to those observed. They often involve (even in neonates ...) varying degrees of approximation and varying degrees of hesitation and change: responses to, rather than mimicking of, another person. (Reddy 2008: 59)

Trevarthen (1998), Kugiumutzakis (1993, et al. 2004), and Gallagher (2005) take the neonate evidence to show that there is an innate capacity for intersubjectivity. However, the results of the infant imitation studies remain controversial. Not only is it difficult to achieve the state of 'alert calmness' needed to carry out the task (as opposed to the infants showing disinterest or thrashing); but once these infants react in a manner to give us results, there is great debate as to how they ought to be interpreted.

Despite the evidence remaining controversial and having raised much debate, it appears that this is a remarkable achievement, and one that deserves special attention. Too often, focus has been lavished on the part of the imitator; but this opens the question of what is the effect on the party *being imitated*? We must ask what it is that we are doing, or what it is that is happening when we imitate and are imitated. Reddy makes the point that imitation is often the most basic form of an attempt to communicate, often coming at the point when we have no shared frame of reference or common language (2008: 60-65). She uses the example of explorers on the voyage of the Beagle, who in meeting a tribe described the way tribe members would *imitate* the sailors. Interestingly, she notes that this is an occurrence which resulted in great excitement and gladness. Why should this be?

In electing to imitate their actions<sup>39</sup> there is an invitation to share and attend to each other.<sup>40</sup> An action will be performed (yawning, tongue and lip protrusions, vocalisations) and the child imitates. But what effect does this have on the person who is imitated? The imitated person might be proud, delighted, or excited. At the very least, they might be encouraged to continue, trying out a different action to see how it will be received. Essentially, there is a rudimentary form of engagement between the imitator and the imitated; the imitator *responds* to the gesture of the imitated. In the case of infant imitation, the occurrence of imitation is one which is affectively laden (Kugiumutzakis et al. 2004). As Reddy notes:

Smiles are often seen in both infant and adult just before, during, and after the imitative acts [...] Not only does imitation appear to produce pleasure, but pleasure seems to facilitate the occurrence of imitation [...] Imitation as an emotional activity seems to be essentially mutual. (2004: 63)

When we focus on the exchange within which acts of imitation occur, rather than simply upon the acts of imitation, then we can see that from a very early age, a form of affective dialoguing is occurring between infant and parents, which seems to be a mutual source of delight (though not always, if the child is in the ‘thrashing’ mood, or just does not want to be bothered). When both infant and parent are mutually engaged in the activity of modelling and imitating, there is an affective bond; at least it is easy to say that the occurrence and context of the imitation will not be strictly neutral.

Building on early imitative abilities, young infants are, from the age of 2 months able to engage in “patterns of relatedness” (Hobson 2002: 35) in which they initiate, respond to, and solicit responses from the people they are engaged with. In other words, they show a steadily developing ability to interact, and to show sensitivity in this interaction, with others. This is described as a two-stage process involving primary intersubjectivity at 2-9 months and secondary

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<sup>39</sup> Though there is the question of whether young infants *elect* to imitate, or whether the imitation is merely a reflex response to certain stimuli.

<sup>40</sup> There are, of course, other reasons we might elect to imitate others. We might do so to tease or to make fun of others. However, this the case for adult, rather than early infant imitation.

intersubjectivity from 9-14 months (Trevarthen 1979; Reddy 2008).

Primary intersubjectivity is a “dynamic interpersonal awareness that allows mutual regulation of feelings and motives”. This stage of the child’s social development is marked by the emerging ability to engage in ‘proto-conversations’ (Bateson 1979). Within proto-conversations, infant and parent engage with each other through “delicate expressions and sensitive responses” which form “rhythmic patterns of engagement that could be represented as ‘musical’ or ‘dance-like’” (Malloch and Trevarthen 2008: 1). Proto-conversations include a dynamic exchange of affective and expressive interaction. In them, parent and child mirror and respond to the affective gesturing of each other in a structured way, taking turns to respond to and encourage each other throughout the interaction. Typical markers of the style of engagement include the parent adopting ‘motherese’ or ‘baby talk’: a highly expressive and intoned voice, imitating the sounds their child makes, or talking very musically and in a softened manner. This vocal tone is often accompanied by highly expressive facial movements, widened eyes and raised eyebrows to mirror the intonations and musicality of the vocalisation (Stern 1984: 140-142).

What makes these proto-conversations ‘conversations’ is the way in which the directions the exchanges take are mutually determined. The infant is able to initiate, respond to, and sustain these pre-reflective affective and embodied relations with their parents. In these proto-conversations, at a pause in the parent’s stream of vocalisation and bodily movement the child reacts, often by giggling, smiling, waving the hands about in an excited manner, or moving their face toward their parent. As the child grows older, they may vocalise back to the parent, cooing, or burbling to match the sounds of their parent. At this particular stage in the child’s social development, these proto-conversations appear to be enjoyed by parent and child alike and already they are structured and marked by turn-taking between infant and parent. The child gestures and responds to the affective communication of their parent once the parent’s expression has reached its cadence, whilst sensitive parents will resume their ‘chat’ once the child’s response has subsided. It is important to note the fundamentally affective and expressive nature which marks the interaction between parents and child.

Primary intersubjectivity is concerned with the way in which infant and parent relate to each other, without reference to anything else (objects, environment). Within primary intersubjectivity, the infant specifically responds to and recognises the human person. In particular infants respond to the face and body of another as that with which they may react and relate to, in a way which they do not attempt with inanimate objects (Johnson 2000, Johnson et al. 1998, Legerstee 1991, Meltzoff 1995). Interaction, at this stage, is focused primarily on imitative and playful enterprises within the parent-infant relation. Infant and parent maintain eye contact and, taking turns, will imitate each other's facial expressions or vocalisations. At this stage, there is also some cross-modal matching;<sup>41</sup> the parent may vocalise the unfolding expression on the child's face (Stern 1984: 141-143). The interactions, therefore, are face to face and will be formed by mirroring, or imitating each other's facial expressions and vocalisations. It is important to recognise that this is an affective relation between infant and parent, which is expressed through bodily orientation, posture and gesture, as well as specific vocalising. The bodily relatedness as parent imitates the child, leading the child to respond (or vice versa), is central to this stage. Hobson states that this early stage is marked by "patterns of relatedness" (2002: 35):

At least from 2 months of age, then, infants seek and register mutually co-ordinated relations with others. This is a motivational business, both in the ways infants seek and sustain such contact, and in their reactions to perturbations in the mutual exchanges. It is also affectively patterned, as the observable feelings of the infant and the manifest feelings of the adults attest. In some sense, it is also cognitive, at least insofar as the infants draw a distinction between humans or human-like forms on the one hand, and non-human creatures or things on the other, in what infants anticipate each class of 'object' to afford. (Hobson 2007b: 270)

There are those who are skeptical of attributing an ability to engage in

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<sup>41</sup> Cross-modal matching describes instances of expression incorporating different sense modalities. For example, in excitement the infant may widen her eyes (visual, kinesthetic) and vocalise in a sharp, high-pitched tone (hearing).

affective interactions ('protoconversations') to infants who are 2 months old. Instead of characterising them as mutual and coherent 'patterns of relatedness' between parent and child, as Hobson does (2002: 35), this might be better described as 'pseudo-dialogue'. Here, the parent interprets the phenomena as an exchange whereas, the infant reacts as they normally would regardless of what their parent does.<sup>42</sup> However, in response to this, Tronick devised a test to discern the extent to which the driving force of the proto-conversation between infant and parent is mutual and coherent.<sup>43</sup> Called the 'still face experiment', Tronick invited participants to strike up a normal engagement with their child, gaining the child's interest and allowing them to react.<sup>44</sup> 2-3 minutes into the interaction, the experimenter would give a signal, at which time the mother was to assume an impassive, 'still' or poker face, ideally for another 2 minutes. The driving idea behind this test was to see what the child's reaction would be. If there were in fact no affective interaction between child and parent<sup>46</sup> then the child would be unlikely to have any response. After a period of keeping a still face, the parent is given another signal at which time they were to resume 'normal' expressive engagement with their child.

The results were impressive. Far from the infants remaining impassive and unaffected, the result was dramatic, with the infants (2-9 months) showing signs of confusion and perturbation, with some efforts to reengage the parent in 'normal' interaction. When their attempts to reengage their parent fail, the child becomes visibly confused and distressed. Reddy describes this quite graphically when she tries the still face experiment with her young child and records her experience as follows:

During a period of good 'chatty' interaction, with Shamini [her child] lying on the bed and me leaning over her, I held my face still, continuing to look at her with a pleasant expression, but totally unmoving. Her reaction was textbook typical, but quite shattering to experience. She

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<sup>42</sup> See Reddy 2008: 73 for a critical exploration of this.

<sup>43</sup> Rather than a series of reactions on the part of the infant to their parent (See Hobson 2002: 34ff for further discussion of this.)

<sup>44</sup> This experiment is conducted using infants who are 2-9 months old.

<sup>45</sup> See Hobson 2002 (36ff) and Reddy 2008 (73ff) for explorations of the 'still face' experiments.

<sup>46</sup> This would be the case if the parent is merely interpreting their face-to-face exchange as conversation, in which the child is not really affectively engaged.

continued to look at me, smiled and vocalized a bit, then sobered at not getting any response, looked away briefly, then back to me again, smiled and vocalised again, sobered, looked away and back a few times. It must have lasted all of 30 seconds but felt much longer. I couldn't stand not responding anymore and broke into a smile, spoke to her and leaned forward to hug her in apology. At this her face crumpled and she began to cry. I was shocked, dismayed, and immensely touched ... This incident jolted me out of my self-consciousness and made me take her dialogues with me seriously. (2008: 74)

Here we see that the sudden ceasing and absence of expressive engagement with the child is not just upsetting for the infant, but is terribly difficult for the parent to carry out and keep on with. The retreat of the parent from the affective expressive engagement deeply affects the child. In this way, we see that at the very young age of 2 months old, the infant is already involved and engaged with others and somewhat adept at being directing and responding to patterns of relatedness with other people.

The findings of the still face experiments were corroborated by those of a second study, in which Tronick used the method of perturbation once again to examine its impact on infant-parent interaction.<sup>47</sup> This time, he sought to examine the effects of inappropriate, specifically mistimed, interaction on the infant. In the still face experiments, all interaction and responsiveness is removed from the infant-parent encounter. In the second experiment, Tronick set up television monitors through which parent and infant interacted in real time through the monitors. Once infant and parent had settled into normal interactive patterns, the experimenter introduces a time delay in the interactions. Rewinding the recorded interaction, the experimenter replays the video to the infant. Instead of the 'live' interaction, the infant is presented with the parent's interaction from 30 or more seconds earlier, whilst the parent continues to view the infant's 'live' reaction. Again the results are impressive. Despite the parent's reactions not being stressful, hostile, or unpleasant (as they were in the still face experiment) they become detuned to those of the infant. This causes visible confusion and

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<sup>47</sup> This experiment was also conducted separately by Murray in 1975 (See Murray and Trevarthen 1985). They used infants who were 2-3 months old in this experiment.

distress. Infants regularly turn away from the screen on which their parent is shown, with a few quick backward glances, as though to check (Hobson 2002: 39, Reddy 2008: 75). Smiling decreases, closed mouthed expressions increase, and from time to time the infant attempts to restart interaction (Reddy 2008: 75). The infant reacts clearly to the disturbance in the interaction and displays disconcertment at the out-of-kilter responses of their parent. As Hobson concludes:

[I]t was not simply that the infant felt unattended to or even unresponded to – it was that the interactions were not in tune, and disturbingly so. (2002: 39)

Through these experiments, we see that far from being merely imitative, the exchange between infant and parent is a dynamic, mutual, and affective relation. The developing patterns of relatedness between parent and child are fundamental; the child displays distress when he or she discerns a change in the feeling and presence of relatedness between her and her parent. We see in Tronick's experiments that this is conveyed through the parent's bodily expression and orientation to the infant. When this is inappropriate or removed entirely, the infant becomes distressed. What these experiments show is that already, at 2 months, there is a sense of relatedness between infant and parents in which infant and parents orient themselves to each other through dynamic, affective engagement. Their interaction is initiated, shaped, and sustained through this. This is significant for studies of interpersonal understanding, and particularly for the question of the ubiquity of folk psychology, because the gap between self and other, assumed by folk psychology, does not arise as a problem for the 2 month old (until interactions are perturbed).

Though the social abilities of a 2 month old are very limited, these experiments show that infants can, in a rudimentary way, engage with others in a dynamic and affective way. There is not a need for them to overcome the supposed gap between self and other. This leads us to question whether folk psychology provides an accurate description of interpersonal understanding. Though we cannot appeal to infant intersubjectivity to gain a full picture of everyday intersubjectivity, it does remind us of abilities which prefigure and

predate the ability to attribute reasons for actions and which continue to be important once this ability is gained. This leads us to question the centrality of attributing beliefs and desires to others in interpersonal understanding. Considering infant intersubjectivity provides a window into abilities and intersubjective competency which develops long before the ability to attribute mental states. Furthermore, this early competency does not disappear or become supplanted by the ability to attribute mental states to others. It plays an important part in adult intersubjectivity (Gallagher 2001, Gallagher and Hutto 2008). From this, we can argue that far from attributing mental states to others being the central ability that it is claimed to be, a pre-reflective sense of relatedness and attunement to others underpins our interactions with others (as it does in the case of primary intersubjectivity). It also can be seen to underlie a later developing ability to attribute propositional attitudes to them.

At around 9 months old, there is a marked shift in the way in which infants interact with their parents. Instead of the direct, exclusive relation between child and parent (present in primary intersubjectivity) the child begins to refer to and share objects of attention which feature in the shared environment in which exchanges with their parent take place (Trevarthen 1979). Primary intersubjectivity widens into secondary intersubjectivity (9-14 months old) as the child and parent *jointly attend* to things outside their direct relation (Seeman 2010: 162; Tomasello 1993: 174).

This marks a very important development in how the child relates to their parent: their relation becomes in reference to the world and things that are around them. In this way, the child, interacting and sharing eye contact with their parent, might break off their shared eye contact, shifting their gaze toward something nearby. By doing so, the infant 'points' something out to their parent by directing their attention to it. The child may then turn back to the parent, before issuing an invitation to turn their gaze to the object they themselves have just looked at. This is a kind of visual pointing and referencing, which may also be accompanied by vocalisation and facial animation which convey something to the parent about the child's affective response to the thing singled out. In this way, the quality of the relatedness between child and parent gains an additional dimension: the relation exists between child and parent, but this is now *situated* within a common space or frame. The attention may be triangulated, between

parent and infant and the world (Hobson 2002). In this way, the manner in which infants relate to things and their sense of relatedness to other human beings is no longer as separate as it has been until around the age of 9 months old; the child can sustain the sense of interpersonal relatedness, and bring inanimate objects within the scope of this relation (Hobson 2004: 40).

What marks this as important for studies on intersubjectivity and interpersonal understanding? For the most part, the developmental evidence states that from an early age we are endowed with the ability to recognise and respond to the expressive behaviour of others, without the need to represent it in terms of beliefs and desires to understand it before we may react. Instead, we see that in the very early infancy, patterns of relatedness, sustained through an embodied and affective responsiveness to others marks and shapes a form of intersubjectivity with them. This capacity to engage in and sustain relatedness through interaction is not only important for the social development for young children; it is something which marks our mature relations with others too (Gallagher 2001). Given this, there is a question of whether folk psychology has over-emphasised the importance of attributing mental states for adult life.

### ***(b) Relatedness and Stance***

Examination of early social phenomena in neonates and infants reveals that there is much going on to orient and anchor infants in social participation, long before they acquire and master the concept of belief around 3-4 years.<sup>48</sup> This section builds on the previous section by examining the second presupposition of folk psychology: that the third-person observational stance is the one we ordinarily occupy in understanding others.

We saw in the last section that from birth, human neonates and infants respond to (and arguably participate with) other human beings (imitation). In the first few years, the infant develops and comes to interact with others, particularly their parents, in a direct relation of intersubjectivity (primary intersubjectivity). Later the scope of interactions widens and the infant is able to interact with

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<sup>48</sup> There is some debate about the age at which children gain this ability. Original studies suggested the ability emerges at about 4 years (Wimmer and Perner 1983), though more recently, it is thought this ability might develop earlier (see Reddy and Morris 2004).

parents whilst referring to and sharing objects from their shared environment (secondary intersubjectivity). Primary and secondary intersubjectivity are ways in which the infant affectively relates and responds to their parent. This has led developmental psychologists to state that relatedness is of huge importance in developing intersubjectivity (Hobson 2007a,b, 2008; Stern 1984). In this section I examine the importance of relatedness and second-personal relations for intersubjective understanding.

This examination involves two closely related issues which need to be distinguished and separated. First, there is a difference between understanding someone as a 'you' (second-person understanding) and understanding them as a 'he' or 'she' (third-person understanding). Second, and closely related to this, is the standpoint we take in relation to others in understanding them, whether this is detached and observational or dynamic and interactive.<sup>49</sup> Folk psychology has tended to characterise everyday instances of understanding others as third-personal and observational. In doing so, proponents of folk psychology have neglected cases in which we relate to others as 'you' and/or interact with them.

This is significant for debates seeking to account for the way in which we ordinarily understand others. As we have seen, folk psychology describes everyday interpersonal understanding as predominantly a third-personal and observational enterprise: I observe the other's behaviour and, using theory, simulation, or a hybrid of both, I attribute mental states to them and thus understand their actions. The act and process of understanding described here is largely individualistic, and 'action-based'. Observing the behaviour of others is central to understanding them.

However, when we engage in simple phenomenological reflection of our daily encounters with others, we must ask to what extent this picture of understanding matches and reflects our ordinary experience. Gallagher (2001, 2004a,b, 2007b), Ratcliffe (2007a), Starwarska (2007), and Zahavi (2001, 2008a, b) argue that it does not. They argue that ordinarily the relation we take to others is that of the second-person; and that interaction, rather than observation, is the primary way in which we understand them. Furthermore, they emphasise that understanding, being rooted in interaction, is usually a process of mutual

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<sup>49</sup> Thanks go to Matthew Ratcliffe for pointing out the importance of this distinction. Also see Ratcliffe 2007a: 152.

engagement. Whilst approaches rooted in folk psychology do not deny this, at no point do they acknowledge it. In this way, rather than this argument being a ‘knock down’ stating that we never use folk psychology, it is one which raises two main concerns. First, it questions folk psychology’s accuracy as a description of *everyday* interpersonal understanding.<sup>50</sup> And secondly, it highlights folk psychology’s neglect of phenomena central to everyday understanding of others.

In doing so, this offers a marked difference from the third-person mentalising approach offered by folk psychology. The other person does not usually appear as someone we have to make sense of.<sup>51</sup> Instead we usually find ourselves in contexts of interaction and meaning, understanding and sense emerge through the process of interaction (Fuchs and De Jaegher 2009; Gallagher 2001; Gallagher and Hutto 2008; De Jaegher 2009; De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007; Ratcliffe 2007a).

To understand why many argue that the second-, rather than the third-person relation is primary in our relations with others it is helpful to turn to Martin Buber’s exploration of the “primary words” (2004 [1937]: 11), of which he identifies two: the ‘I-Thou’ and the ‘I-It’ (2004 [1937]: 11). These relational words are coined to describe firstly my relation with and orientation toward other human beings (‘I-Thou’); and secondly, my relation with the physical world (‘I-It’). The achievement of Buber, in coining and labelling these ‘primary words’, is

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<sup>50</sup> That is, the way in which we pre-reflectively ordinarily go about understanding others in day-to-day life when the other person’s behaviour or situation does not strike us as problematic, in that it is not odd or puzzling.

<sup>51</sup> Folk psychology does not clearly distinguish the third-person (approaching others as ‘he’ or ‘she’) from impersonal understanding (approaching others as ‘it’) (See Ratcliffe 2007a: 78-84 for an exploration of this point). Both second- and third-person understanding of others are *personal* approaches in which recognise, and do not question, the personhood of others. This must be distinguished from understanding someone from an impersonal stance; here, one retains a distance from the sense of the other as a person, and instead views them as a complex object (it). In failing to distinguish the third-personal from the impersonal stance, folk psychology often assumes that understanding others is a matter of interpreting them as a complicated ‘it’ that we need to make sense of by attributing mental states which motivate behaviour (for example see Dennett’s conception of the intentional stance (1987; also see Ratcliffe 2007a: 82 for a criticism of this)). In what follows I continue to refer to the stance which folk psychology describes as primary and ‘third-person’ in order to mirror the language which folk psychology uses to describe interpersonal understanding. However, I do so with the proviso that firstly, folk psychology often runs third-person and impersonal stances together in its description; and secondly, that if we tease these apart properly, then we find that in everyday life the third-person stance is sometimes used when the person is not present, or when we do not engage in direct interaction with others. However, the question as to whether the third-person stance is *primary* in everyday interpersonal understanding still remains.

to prioritise the relational experience over the individual experience. In this way, it is a mistake to read the primary word 'I-Thou' as merely a composite of you and me; rather the relation as a whole is more than the sum of its parts. Buber places the relation first.

This moves us away from the individualism that usually characterises our descriptions of interpersonal understanding ('I' understand 'You' from an observational distance) by stating that primarily we are inextricably in relation to others. Understanding is much more an emergent phenomena taking place between us. What is more, in this relation we are directly faced with a sense of the personhood of the other:

If I face a human being as my Thou, and say the primary word I-Thou to him, he is not a thing among things, and does not consist of things. Thus human being is not He or She, bounded from every other He and She, a specific point in space and time within the net of the world; nor is he a nature able to be experienced and described, a loose bundle of names [...] I do not meet with him at some time and place or other. I can set him in a particular time and place; I must continually do it: but I set only a He or She ... no longer my Thou. (Buber 2004 [1937]: 15)

Buber states that the I-Thou relation is the primary way in which we encounter others, and ourselves; thinking and naming a person as 'He' or 'She' (third-person relation) is an extrication from the more primary experience of them as 'Thou'. In this way, for Buber, we are primarily always in relation to others. Ordinarily, we do not have to reach out and construct a bridge between self and other; instead I am oriented within a relation with others that is different from the way I relate and am oriented to nature and things.

Buber's descriptions have been influential amongst those seeking to characterise our everyday understanding and affective experience of others (Hobson 2007a, 2008; Ratcliffe 2007a; Reddy 2004; Starwarska 2006, 2007, 2009). We have already seen that in characterising interpersonal understanding as an exercise of mindreading, folk psychology assumes that ordinarily we observe people and bridge a gap of understanding by inferring their mental states: 'I' observe, reflect and attribute mental states to 'him' or 'her' (third-

person relation). What is missed is an appreciation of the way in which we are oriented in a special way towards other human beings. This is what Buber's exploration of our encounters with others seeks to emphasise and prioritise; it seeks to reinstate a sense of relatedness that marks our encounters with other human beings. This is the sense that they are *someone* (rather than a *something*) capable of receiving and reciprocating interaction. We already saw in the previous section that this affective relation marks the earliest of our intersubjective encounters with others, that patterns of relations can serve to strengthen this bond and that parents and infants find pleasure in relating and interacting with each other from an early age. This sense of 'relatedness', then, marks out other human beings as 'special'; it is a recognition that our relations and interactions with them hold different possibilities than our interactions with objects, or the natural world. In *I and Thou*, Buber states that appreciation, or recognition, of another's personhood, through the capacity for relatedness, is manifest in the way we primarily relate to them as I-Thou.

This leaves us with the question of whether this is an accurate description of the way we usually relate to, and find ourselves amongst, others. In considering this, Schutz draws a helpful distinction between "social observation" and "social relationship" (1967: 151-159). Social observation is a mode of social engagement which shares some elements in common with the third-person observational stance as discussed above: it describes a way of understanding others through the mode of non-engagement, that is through observing their actions and reaching a judgment as to what they are doing; social observation is "the objective comprehension of [other people] and their experiences that takes place in the social sciences" (Schutz 1967: 151).

Social relationship, on the other hand, he describes as "the subjective comprehension of other people that takes place in everyday life" (1967: 151). Schutz argues that whilst the former is integral to the type of understanding described by and aimed for within the social sciences (1967: 140-141); this type of understanding is not an appropriate description of the kind of understanding that we have of others in our everyday lives; it misses out the way we are oriented directly to people, and the way in which others affect us (1967: 151). Schutz expresses this as an "Other-orientation" and "affecting-the-Other" (1967: 151). He is clear to state that when with others, our 'Other-orientation' is not

always reciprocated, and that it is possible to have a situation in which others do not allow themselves to be affected by their interlocutor; in this way, there are many ways of finding ourselves within an ‘Other-orientation’ in which our interlocutor may exist on a sliding scale of entirely responsive and open, to closed and unwilling to respond. Schutz is right to emphasise this and assert that though we primarily relate to others as *people*, this does not mean our interactions with them are always easy and non-problematic. We may easily imagine cases in which our interactions with people may start favourably, but deteriorate on listening to and engaging with their views; or as they refuse to listen and engage with our actions, viewpoints, or gestures. However, engaging with others in this way as people who may reciprocate our interaction and affect us (social relationship), is rooted in what Schutz terms the “Thou-orientation” (Schutz 1967: 153).

In speaking of the “Thou-orientation”, Schutz elaborates and argues for the phenomenon that Buber simply describes. The Thou-orientation is a pre-reflective relatedness through which I ordinarily approach, understand and make sense of others in a non-inferential way. It is constituted by an openness to, and reciprocity of, bodily mutual relations which reveal others as “fields of expression” (1967: 100) which we directly respond to, without recourse to a theoretically removed stance (observation), or by seeing the other ‘at a distance’ in order to make sense of their actions (third-person relation). Instead, I am “influencing them and [am] influenced by them in turn – in doing ... these things we understand the behaviour of others and assume that they understand ours.” (1967: 9).

Schutz argues that the kind of understanding which social science prizes is rooted within the more direct understanding of others and self in pre-theoretical daily life (140-141). This is based on the relatedness which constitutes the ‘Thou-orientation’ (163):

For in a certain sense I am a social scientist in everyday life whenever I reflect upon my fellow men and their behaviour instead of merely experiencing them. I live with them as a man among men, I encounter them continually in direct experience. My awareness of their presence and of their personal characteristics is immediate ... I not only

consciously experience you, but I live with you and grow old with you ... In the living intentionality of this experience, I 'understand' you without necessarily paying any attention to the acts of understanding themselves. This is because I live in the same world as you, I live in the acts of understanding you ... while I am directly experiencing you and talking with you, the whole complicated substructure of my own interpretation of you escapes my attention. (1967: 140)

In this way, Schutz draws a distinction between reflective and pre-reflective 'understanding', which folk psychology seems to merge. We might elaborate this point with an analogy to the difference between playing sport (pre-reflective understanding) and commentating on sport (reflective-understanding). In the case of playing sport, we unthinkingly engage in the game. When we are adept at a particular team sport we do not explicitly call upon and think of the rules which govern what we can and cannot do. Instead we are caught up in the flow of events, responding to the moves of our team mates with unthinkingly, without hesitancy. We seamlessly work with our teammates to the same shared end: to get the ball in the back of the net or fend off the opposition. We are caught up in the immediacy of the game with our team mates: there is a sense in which we know the position of those around us and can anticipate their movements without having to explicitly think about it. Often it is the case that when we think about our next move too hard and explicitly, we disrupt our natural reactions and rhythms, and 'fluff' the shot or pass. Our relation to each other is given through – and develops through the flow of – the game.<sup>52</sup>

This is very different from offering a sports commentary (reflective understanding). In this case, the sports commentator watches from outside of the game, seeking to describe and understand it from without the confines of play. The sports commentator is the observer par excellence; they use their knowledge and experience to analyse, explain, and offer insight into the play which they are

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<sup>52</sup> In this way, we might relate to each other in terms of our positions. Taking football as our example, we will not expect to find our goalkeeper playing up front, and we rely on her to patrol and direct the defence. This is akin to understanding someone, in part, through social role. However, sticking with the football example, players may come to play 'out of position' as the game dictates. A team who are losing might pull players back to strengthen and help the defence. In this way, the progression of the game tacitly directs the way in which we play and the way we relate to each other.

watching (or have watched). They observe others in the flow of play and use their knowledge or their own experience to interpret, understand, and critique (or praise) the skills and abilities of the players in front of them. This is akin to reflective understanding, through which we observe an action and then make sense of it (whether by theorising or drawing on one's own experience and resources).

It is worth emphasising the difference in the way in which one relates to others in playing sport, or interacting with them (pre-reflective understanding) and in commentating on sport, or observing them (reflective understanding). In the former, other people are one's team mates (or the opposition). They are those to whom one responds directly and pre-reflectively. One is caught up with them in the activity at hand, in which we are engaged together. In the latter case, others are players of a game that one is not part of, but that one, instead, observes. In this instance, one is removed from the immediacy of the 'play', and one is able to observe and understand the players apart from oneself.

In failing to distinguish observational and interactional understanding, folk psychology's characterisation of interpersonal understanding fails to fully take into consideration the 'inter-' of interpersonal understanding, and the richness and complexity of the forms this takes within both second and third-personal stances. Whilst we might indeed provide reasons for actions, especially when faced with inexplicable or odd behaviour, this is the exception to the rule. In neglecting to consider this, folk psychology misses out on the richness of interpersonal experience and understanding.

Emerging from this is an appreciation of the ways in which we interact with people, and the richness of the variety of relations we share with them, each of which affects our understanding of them in subtle ways. For example, I can interact with someone as:

A sibling,  
parent,  
boss,  
teacher,  
spouse,  
best friend,

acquaintance,  
colleague,  
assistant,  
confidante,  
leader  
and so on.

Each of these forms of interrelatedness carries a precedent for understanding, which the other person is ordinarily at liberty to transcend through our interaction. In assuming that interpersonal understanding is predominantly observational in structure and third-personal in nature, folk psychology fails to account for the second-person stance. Furthermore, it neglects the predominant role of direct and/or indirect interaction.

### ***(c) Shared Situation and Context***

We saw in 2.2a that, in prioritising and describing interpersonal understanding as an observational, predominantly third-personal venture, folk psychology runs the risk of neglecting to account for the richness of our social relations and interactions with others. Section 2.2b then explored the varying stances through which we relate to others during interpersonal engagement. This section picks up on and explores the role that shared situation plays in interpersonal understanding. By ‘shared situation’ I refer to the contexts and spaces that we interact with others in. Be it a beach, a school, the pub, or at home; when we are with others, we are with them in a certain place. Our situation often frames and shapes our understanding in virtue of the social signs, symbols, and social roles which it encompasses. Situation does not refer solely to spaces and places, but also includes transactions or activities, such as paying for my shopping, or teaching a class. In these examples, the context of action will often determine my understanding of the other people involved (as a till assistant, or my student perhaps).

The importance of shared situation has already been raised during discussion of secondary intersubjectivity, in which interactants triangulate their attention in an interactive dialogue that encompasses each participant and the

environment they find themselves within. Our discussion of Schutz also touched on the central role which finding ourselves with others in a social and public environment, which we are both adept at navigating, plays in ultimately understanding them.

In this section, I explore phenomenological argumentation that recognises the importance of being situated in a public and meaningful world for interpersonal understanding. I draw on Ratcliffe (2007a) who argues that understanding other people usually requires us to be able to take our situation for granted; before moving onto consider how embedded expectation of social roles scaffolds understanding of others (Gurwitsch 1979). Both state that we usually encounter others doing things within a context of action which provides a frame of reference within which the actions fit. In such instances, there is no need to make sense of other people's behaviour as the context performs the work.

To begin, let us consider an example. For instance, on undergraduate results day within the college in which I work and live, I will encounter a variety of emotions, unusual behaviour, high-pitched squeaking, and excitement. I might smile as I see a huddle of students jumping up and down with each other as they congratulate each other on their marks; I might notice the subdued student who is oddly detached from the rest of the vibrant scene; I will be surrounded by laughter, a general air of excitement and a party atmosphere. The proponent of folk psychology could argue, at this point, that this context helps us to infer mental states, allowing us to be more successful in our attribution of mental states. However, this misses the point of what it means to be in a shared situation with others: I have no need to attribute mental states to the people around me. My interactions with the others are rooted within our shared context which informs my understanding of them. When I see the group of students, hugging and jumping up and down, it does not occur to me to provide reasons for their actions. Their actions flow from and into the situation which they are in: results day. The context of the scene before me legitimates and provides me with understanding which I do not have to reach out and infer. Their actions *form part of that context*, as does my response as I wave, congratulate, or console. In these circumstances, it would never occur to me for it to be necessary to *infer* the context as the reason for action. As Zahavi writes:

Ordinarily, we do not encounter others primarily as thematic objects of cognition. Rather we encounter them in the world in which our daily life occurs, or to be more precise, we encounter others in a worldly situation and our way of being together and understanding each other is co-determined in its meaning by the situation at hand. (Zahavi 2007a: 37; 2008: 165)

As Ratcliffe writes, “[i]nterpersonal understanding does not take place in a social vacuum” (2007a). The situation in which actions occur provides a context which suggests meaning for, and make appropriate, the actions of others. For example, picture a person kneeling down with a straight, upright back; their hands are brought up to their breastbone, palms pressed together and elbows tucked into their sides. Their eyes are closed and their lips seem to be moving slightly, though without making any sound. The expression on their face is earnest, perhaps peaceful. Decontextualised, their action and position seem intriguing or strange. What is it that they are doing? As soon as we mention the context of church, temple, or mosque, thoughts of ‘prayer’ arrive. Usually, if we encounter someone in this position we will never have to ask the question of just what it is they are doing (unless we are a young child who has never encountered such behaviour, or the situation is alien). Once we place this public action in the context it usually or may appropriately take place in, the individual ‘evidences’ of the person’s stance, bearing and activity are read and understood directly through the background without the need for inference.

In this way, we see that the situations we share with others provide sense and a background to certain actions. Going back to the person kneeling in prayer; we might be more unsure, or curious as to what the person was doing if we were to walk past them in the middle of a pavement in a busy street, or if we are unfamiliar with religious contexts. However, when we encounter the person in a church, mosque, temple, or at religious gathering, there is no need to notice the ‘behaviour’ as something in need of explanation; it forms part of the activity and the background in which it takes place. In the same way, when we are in a lecture or talk, the person pacing, gesturing and talking, usually at the front of the room, does not present themselves as someone performing certain gestures or behaviour which demand to be understood. The situation and context carries the

behaviour, and endows it with meaning: it forms part of our shared situation.

This is what Zahavi is getting at in the quote above. Ordinarily, we encounter, rather than observe, other people through a shared, public, and normative medium that, as Zahavi puts it, “co-determines” the meaning we will find in the situation at hand. The terminology here conveys a legitimate difference which needs to be drawn out: we encounter people when we share a situation or are directly addressed by them; observation implies that one is removed from the other person through a spatial or conceptual distance; as a consequence, we do not share a direct relation with the other. The question we are now left with is how do we understand the way situation scaffolds and constrains our understanding of others? To answer that I turn to two phenomenological accounts of shared situation: (i) Heidegger’s explication of how we ordinarily find ourselves within the world (*Welt*); and (ii) Gurwitsch’s emphasis on social roles. First let us consider Heidegger.

Heidegger begins his investigation of our everyday relationship with the world by reversing the start-point of the inquiry, which he sees as traditional in mainstream philosophy (1962: 21ff). Traditionally, philosophy has, he states, relied too heavily on the distinction between subject and object. Doing so masks the way we pre-reflectively find ourselves in the world. That is, whilst the subject-object distinction seems reasonable in a detached, philosophical inquiry, it does not adequately characterise the way we relate to the world in a pre-reflective, everyday manner. Closely related to this, Heidegger diagnoses an overemphasis on beings, rather than Being, in mainstream philosophy. In other words, philosophers have tended to focus on making sense of the objects and things we find in the world (beings) rather than the structures which allow these things to be apprehended coherently and in ways that make sense to us (Being). This predilection in focusing on beings, in a detached and reflective way, feeds into and reinforces the subject-object standpoint of mainstream philosophy. For Heidegger, Being is a condition for the possibility of experience and is that through which the world makes sense. What is more, if we wish to understand our relationship to the world, as human beings, we must explore the structures which root us into the world in a pre-reflective and everyday manner. Heidegger calls this ‘Being-in-the-world’.

In order to characterise Being-in-the-world, Heidegger outlines ways in which ‘world’ may be characterised as:

- (i) All the things which are in the world.
- (ii) The way in which all these things relate to each other to form a coherent whole.
- (iii) As that in which we, as human beings, live within in a pre-theoretical manner (“Welt” (Heidegger 1962: 93)).<sup>53</sup>

The investigation of characterisation (iii) is what Heidegger labels as our ‘Being-in-the-world’. (i) and (ii) are characteristic of a traditional ontological framework through which we focus on the things in the world, and the way they interrelate. What is missing here is an investigation of how these things appear to us as pre-reflectively, outside the activity of ontological investigation. This is precisely what (iii) seeks to investigate.

Heidegger is careful to emphasise that Being-in-the-world is a “unitary phenomenon” (1962: 78) in which a person and world are primordially related. In emphasising Being-in-the-world as unitary, Heidegger distances his conception from those rooted in the subject-object distinction discussed above. To shed some light on this relation, Heidegger clarifies the way in which we should understand the ‘in’ of ‘Being-in-the-world’.<sup>54</sup> We might think of this as signifying a person’s particular position in space: they are ‘in’ the world much in the same way as my pen is in my pencil case, or the cat is in the kitchen. However, this is not what Heidegger means. Such interpretations follow from understanding of ‘world’ encapsulated by (i) and (ii) above. Instead, Heidegger uses the term to signify an existential “state of Dasein’s Being” (1962: 79)<sup>55</sup> as “resid[ing]” or “dwell[ing]” in the world (1962: 80). It is that within which we

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<sup>53</sup> See Heidegger 1962: 93

<sup>54</sup> “Being-in is not a ‘property’ which Dasein sometimes has and sometimes does not have, and *without* which it could *be* just as well as it could with it. It is not the case that man ‘is’ and then has, by way of an extra, a relationship-of-Being towards the ‘world’ – a world with which he provides himself occasionally.” (Heidegger 1962: 84)

<sup>55</sup> “Dasein” is Heidegger’s special terminology which he uses to refer to a person. He uses it to escape the connotations which “individual” and “subject” hold with the ‘subject-object’ viewpoint, of which he is so critical. Using ‘Dasein’ allows Heidegger to emphasise the way in which we are immersed in the world in a practical and pre-reflective world (Being-in-the-world) which we share with others (*Mitwelt*).

feel at home and in which we are immersed in a pre-reflective and taken for granted manner.

What is more, this manner of Being-in-the-world structures the way in which we apprehend things and the way we carry out our activities. An integral part of Being-in-the-world is that people are usually “absorbed” (1962: 80) in the world in virtue of their practical activities. When we pre-reflectively go about our business objects appear not as entities, but as ‘equipment’. That is, things appear not as isolated objects, but as useful tools to be picked up, grasped, used, or discarded, as our activities require. In this way, when I sit at my desk, my computer, coffee mug, felt tip pen, pile of books, and diary are grouped around me and are apprehended through the context of work. I do not first perceive each object individually, but rather they appear to me pre-reflectively according to my activity (Heidegger 1962: 96). ‘Equipment’ sums up the way in which things are pre-reflectively apprehended, flowing from our activities, as “in order to” (1962: 97). Heidegger demonstrates this through the oft-quoted hammer example, through which he describes relation between person and equipment through its usability.

When I grab my hammer to construct the extra bookshelf I have been promising myself, at first its weight in my hand may seem conspicuous. But as I become progressively more absorbed and engrossed in the activity of hammering each tack into the wood, and as my activities gain a rhythm, my awareness and apprehension of the hammer changes. It becomes transparent as I become geared into the activity at hand. Heidegger describes how the boundaries between the hammer and myself blur in the context of my action: engrossed in constructing my bookshelf, the hammer becomes an integral part of the context of my activity. I do not notice it as a ‘thing’ itself; instead it is a tool which allows me to get something done. It becomes, according to Heidegger’s description, an extension of myself as I become absorbed and caught up in the flow of my activity (Heidegger 1962: 98). However, this is not to say we always encounter things in the world in this way. I may become too enthusiastic in my activity and hammer my thumb instead of the nail.

The shock and pain of the occurrence jolt me out of the flowing activity and the hammer, far from retreating out of explicit awareness, becomes conspicuous as something which has caused me pain. The way I relate to the

hammer changes. It is no longer perceived in the context of my activity (as “ready-to-hand” in Heidegger’s terminology) but I might stare at it, comprehending and rationalising what has happened. In this instance, and in instances in which equipment ‘breaks down’, Heidegger says I perceive the hammer first as “un-ready-to-hand” – as something that once served my purpose and yet, now, has disrupted my project – and then, perhaps, as fully “present-at-hand”; that is, in a reflective, theoretical manner as divorced from myself and my projects. This is contrasted with “ready-to-hand” in which entities appear as equipment and in terms of their practical value for my current activity. Apprehending equipment as “un-ready-to-hand” forms a half way house between the “ready-to-hand” and “present-at-hand”.

Another integral dimension to Being-in-the-world is that it is a world which is fundamentally shaped by others. It is a “with-world” (Mitwelt). Heidegger, once again, begins by stating that accounts of others rooted in the subject-object stance mischaracterise our everyday experience of others. Beginning with the subject leads to a “misunderstanding”:

[I]n this characterisation does one not start by marking out and isolating the ‘I’ so that one must then seek some way of getting over to the Others from this isolated subject? (Heidegger 1962: 154)

Heidegger states that this is a mischaracterisation of how we usually find ourselves in the world. Far from experiencing ourselves as isolated subjects, others are encountered and implicated in our activities, projects, and “dealings” within the world (Heidegger 1962: 155-156). On one level, equipment rarely appears to us exclusively as ‘mine’; instead it appears as that which others can use, or which others have made.

The point to be extracted here is that, far from the traditional picture of beginning with oneself and then bridging meaning and sense from that, the way we find ourselves in the world is at once and primarily in a public way. The way in which we understand not only ourselves, but the projects we undertake, the equipment we use, the world we move about in is one which, from the beginning, references others. The hammer that lies on the table, the pavement on which I walk, the table from which I eat, even the cardigan that I wear is not solely for or

about me. Others are implicated in their design, manufacture, and possibility of use. Others, for Heidegger, are referenced by Equipment. They are those whom we share the world with.

Ratcliffe (2007a) makes the point that we can widen this insight to broader things in our world, which carry direct and social meanings and which help us to navigate a world which is shared: the traffic lights regulate our journeying, embodying social norms and laws which ensure a minimum of havoc and accidents on the road. We tuck in to the right when using escalators on the London underground so as to let those who are in a rush pass straight by. The ring I wear on the third finger of my left hand expresses a personal commitment, signifying something of my marital status. All of these different examples are public signs embedded within, and expressive of, a public meaning. Of course, this depends on belonging to the main culture of the situations we find ourselves within; but even when we find ourselves in an alien situation, we are often aware that there is a code of practice governing and structuring the activities of the people we find around us, who are seamlessly navigating their way through the situation. In these unfamiliar circumstances, in which a taken for granted sharing of public and social codes and symbols breaks down, we can find ourselves hopelessly lost.

However, it is worth noticing that even in these situations, the actions of those around us do not appear as completely bizarre or as defying explanation: we recognise that it is us who are missing the trick – there is a code, we just do not understand it yet. For example, when in Japan we might be offended for a long time until we realise that the gesture for ‘that smells’, in western contexts (waving a hand in front of our nose) means ‘no thanks’; or that swiveling an index finger into the cheek is a gesture of praise (meaning ‘that tastes good’) in Italian culture. Usually, in observing these gestures we might be baffled by them, but perceive them as holding a social meaning, only it is one we do not yet know. My point here is that even in cases in which we find ourselves outside of our cultural, situational and social cues we do not, in many cases, perceive that action to be completely baffling or defiant of any sense or meaning – instead, we realise it is a gesture which seeks to convey something, and one which has a publicly established meaning; it appears to us, then, to ask what it means.

Whilst this is going on, we still operate within a broadly second-personal

stance: we do not need to retreat from the situation to theorise or simulate what I might do or be thinking on performing such a gesture or action – I interact with my interlocutor and usually ask what is going on. In this way, the shared situations we find ourselves within perform much of the work in understanding others. Their meaning is embedded within and made appropriate by the situation that we share with others.

It is also the case that the way in which we will relate to and understand others within certain contexts will be understood in virtue of the social role which they occupy. In observing rows and rows of small children curtseying, bowing and handing over posies of flowers to an elderly woman with a hat on; we might wonder ‘why such deference and fuss’ if we did not know that the old woman is the Queen, and handing over flowers and curtseying is what one does when in the presence of the Queen.

In this way, we do not encounter others in daily life as agents we need to ‘figure out’; we often encounter them (for better or worse) in terms of their social role: the library assistant, the till girl, the policeman, my teacher, my students. Each role carries a normative dimension about how one ought to behave or treat the other (again for better or worse), or what we might come to expect of them. In this way, I might expect a hug and a sympathetic ear from my husband at the end of a day spent writing my thesis; it is not right that I expect the same from my students or from the assistant at the till.

Clearly there is a potentially negative and damaging aspect which comes with viewing others only in terms of their social role. This involves a denial or overlooking of the personhood of the other with which we meet them through the ‘Thou-orientation’. However, social roles do play a large part in shaping the way we might initially understand another (on first entering into interaction – this may change through the interaction process) or understanding the actions and behaviour which they are engaged in and perform. Gurwitsch relates this through the following excerpt:

How we comport ourselves, in which concrete sense we are partners, is, to be sure, determined by the situation of our being together. (1979: 107)

And following on from this:

[T]he partners encounter each other in their partnership-situations in these roles constituted by the relationship to one another; they encounter each as the ones who are what they are in the particular common situations e.g., as fellow workers, as buyers and sellers, as employees and employers, as masters and servants, and, more particularly, in just the roles which they have in the concrete case – as the coachman who carries the passengers on a journey, etc. [...] Hence I do not encounter an individual in this dimension with his individual properties accruing specifically to him that constitute him as this determinate individual. (108)

Gurwitsch points out the way in which social roles perform a central task in shaping how we encounter and approach people in shared social situations: in witnessing the actions of a police officer patrolling the skirt of a crowd of demonstrators, their behaviour, or manner of dress does not stand out as something odd which needs to be explained. The burden of understanding is met and fulfilled in virtue of the role and social job they perform; only if they become violent or abusive might I start to wonder just what they are thinking or doing since the action is out of line with what we expect of an officer of the law.

We encounter the person, then, within the context of the demonstration, and in virtue of their social markers which signal to us the job they are performing and the capacity in which they are present in the circumstances. Of course, there are many instances in which we do not understand people in virtue of their social roles, in the case of close family and friends. However, consider the manner and attitude we might adopt with our mother (the things we will or will not say; the topic of conversation) and compare it to your interactions with your best friend or spouse. Even in the case of individuals close to us, and with whom we share a long and rich personal history and bond, our relation and the understanding of them and what we expect of them, is in part demarcated by the relationship we share with them (mother, father, daughter, son, spouse, best friend, acquaintance).

In this way, actions that appear within a meaningful shared situation or context do not usually appear as in need of explanation. What is more, we are

often with others in social situations within which we are immersed. It is, then, not the case that we usually (certainly not as default) need to extract ourselves from this immersion to make sense of a particular action. Instead that action or behaviour flows from and is situated in a certain shared context of meaning. In cases in which understanding is not directly given by this situation, observation is not usually necessary. Instead, if we are inculcated and active within a situation, we react with others within the situation and understanding emerges from the dialectic between self, other and our shared situation.

#### *(d) Direct Perception*

Following from our exploration of the importance of relatedness and context, I now come to explore ‘direct perception’. Both Gallagher (2008a,b) and De Jaegher (2009; De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007) argue that in ordinary and non-problematic interactions with others, attributing mental states is not necessary for understanding. Instead, they argue, we directly perceive the affects, dispositions and intentions of others through their situationally embedded, embodied interactions: there is no need to infer intentions, feelings, beliefs, and dispositions of others as an ‘add on’ to perception (Gallagher 2008b, de Jaegher 2009, Ratcliffe 2007a). In stating that ordinarily we perceive something first and then infer what that thing is, Gallagher (2008b) argues that folk psychology underestimates the complexity and richness of ordinary perception. To make the point a distinction is drawn between “dumb” and “smart” perception (Gallagher 2008b: 536).

‘Dumb’ perception is that which folk psychology presumes to be typical:<sup>56</sup> folk psychology holds the view that, whatever we do perceive does not include mental states. In this way, we perceive behaviour, and in order to understand this we run a simulation or utilise a theory from which we are able to infer and ascribe mental states. Dumb perception, then, works from the following model: perception + inference = understanding. Dumb perception assumes, as De Jaegher puts it, “that perception and cognition are separate things that need gluing together” (2009: 537). It is this which Gallagher questions, asking the

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<sup>56</sup> It is worth noting here that folk psychology does not spend time developing a theory of perception.

extent to which this is indeed the case, arguing that ordinarily we do not need the ‘add on’. Instead, we directly perceive the action, or object.<sup>57</sup>

Gallagher, in making his case for direct perception, is careful to note that direct perception in intersubjective understanding is cradled by and emerges from second-person interaction (Gallagher 2009).<sup>58</sup> In this way, we should not think of interpersonal understanding as beginning with a perception, but instead see our perception of others as directly embedded within and constantly revised by interactive relations with them, within a process of understanding (2009). Considering an example, at this point, may clarify things. Imagine seeing a woman reaching out for and then squeezing a man’s hand.

When we notice the woman reaching out to give the man a squeeze of the hand, we do not discretely observe this action as something that needs to be made sense of. It occurs within a certain situation. As the last section stated, this situation performs a certain amount of work in framing and shaping our understanding of the action: it immediately conveys sense and meaning which makes inference unnecessary. Already, as we notice this intimate and friendly gesture being given and received, we understand the people as a couple. We do not need to infer this, based on evidence we see before us; rather we perceive it through their embodied exchange, and the way they comport themselves with each other. This perception is informed and suggested by knowledge of the social roles and understanding of what it is to be a friend, partner or spouse. Only in the context of the people being viewed as a couple would the gesture make sense: one does not go around squeezing the hands of passing strangers. However, if the man were to react in a shocked manner, or look alarmed or bemused, it would occur to us to wonder about the couple’s relation to each other, his reaction

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<sup>57</sup> Gallagher’s example here is that of perceiving his car (2008b: 536); there is no need to grasp for the concept of ‘car’ in order to synthesise visual data. Instead of being presented with a certain extension of a certain colour that to which we have to attribute the concept ‘car’; the car is *given* to us within perception. De Jaegher (2009) criticises Gallagher for use of an example including an inanimate object, claiming that direct perception is constituted and shaped by and through *interactive* and *intersubjective* contexts and processes (537ff). Whilst De Jaegher is right to highlight that direct perception in interpersonal understanding is not static, and develops and is revised through interaction, Gallagher’s point predominantly remains that whether in static instances of observation, or within social interaction, we do not need to yoke behaviour under a concept in order to make sense of it. Instead the concept is integral to the perception.

<sup>58</sup> Also see de Jaegher 2009, who stresses the potential problems in talking about perception as *before* understanding, instead emphasising the way in which perception and interactive understanding are bound up within each other. She issues this as a warning in response to Gallagher’s 2008b paper in which she considers Gallagher guilty of conceiving of perception as prior to, rather than embedded within, interactive understanding.

signalling her initial hand squeeze as inappropriate and shocking. If this were the case, his reaction would mark out her actions as a candidate for making a special effort to understand. In this way, the manner in which the gesture is received by the co-dialoguer presents it either as natural or unproblematic (it makes sense), or as bizarre and unwelcomed, as something puzzling which needs explanation. Only if something out of the ordinary occurs does the gesture appear as the latter. In this way, direct perception must be, and is, sensitive to the work which context, social knowledge and social roles play.

In order to appreciate the manner in which situation frames direct perception, we might generate reasons as to the woman's gesture, without being told the context, and cook up a host of explanations. However, conceiving of them in the terms of folk psychology seems contrived and odd. Consider:

(1) The woman reached out to squeeze the man's hand because she believed that doing so is a nice thing to do and she desired to be nice to him.

And now consider:

(a) They were sat on an uncomfortable looking bench outside the oak office door. The man squirmed a little. She absent-mindedly reached out to squeeze her husband's hand. It had been a hard day for them both and the gesture escaped her without her noticing.

(b) The woman bounced, turning to grasp his hand in an excited squeeze. He returned the gesture, grinning and gathered her in close.

(c) He looked ahead dejected and blank. What else could she do but gently take his hand and with a slight pressure reassure him that she was there?

Looking at these examples we can see that there is a sense in which (1) is trivially true and could apply as a description of (a), (b), or (c). However, it seems to betray a certain lack of what we might think of as a rich and nuanced understanding, which is given directly in (a), (b), and (c) in the context, and embodied interaction between the couple. In paring the situation down to be

expressible in terms of beliefs and desires, and in isolating the behaviour of the woman alone as the key to understanding, (1) misses the rich understanding in failing to appreciate the contextual nuances of the situation, within which an appropriate ‘understanding’ is made salient and enriched, as is the case in (a). At the same time, (1) fails to capture the complexity of the affective tonality, directly constituted and given through the embodied interplay between the couple, in (b) and (c). Both (b) and (c) involve an unfolding interactive awareness between two individuals which an observer would be directly presented with, and perhaps affected by.<sup>59</sup>

Not only does the above example put across the point of direct perception being the more common way in which we understand others, it also echoes the criticisms of both Ratcliffe (2008a) and Morton (2007), already noted in Chapter 1.3 (p.55-56). Here we saw that they questioned the extent to which folk psychology, with its emphasis on mindreading and understanding as primarily expressible in terms of propositional attitudes, can be useful for understanding others; and further whether we use it in this sense at all. Picking up the point that when we ascribe beliefs, desires, and other propositional attitudes to others, the context frames how we understand the unfolding behaviour, Morton writes:

[A]rticulate folk psychological description operates courtesy of a background of possibility-eliminating factors of potentially unlimited variety. (2007: 215)

The above examples also throw into light the simple point that understanding others is not usually an individualistic enterprise. I have already noted the role context plays here, but let us now turn to think about the other person in the example. The actions of the woman are directed toward the man, and to understand the significance of her actions properly will require a nuanced social orientation, which encompasses an understanding of social roles and appropriate behaviour, but will also take into account his own embodied orientation and the

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<sup>59</sup> One might feel a little sad for the tired looking couple of (c), or find oneself smiling involuntarily at (b).

way in which he receives or calls for her gesture.<sup>60</sup>

Whilst the above example is framed from a third-person perspective, we must also consider the difference it makes to understand others from inside the relation, that is to say, to understand the woman as the man or the man as the woman. Within the example, there are subtle tokens of the recognition of understanding that take place within a second-person relation to each other. The members of the couple do not take a third-personal stance toward each other. They are engaged with each other, and this engagement is shaped by the situation they are embedded in. They do not observe each other and then infer what the other is thinking or feeling, rather they interact. As Gallagher puts it:

[I]n ordinary instances of interaction with others, I am not in the observer position; I am not off to the side thinking or trying to figure out what they are doing. Rather, I am responding to them in an embodied way. What we call social cognition is often nothing more than that social interaction. (2008b: 540)

Given this, let us return to the question of the extent to which we use folk psychology in everyday contexts. When we take seriously positions from developmental psychology and phenomenology which draw on direct perception, it is argued that recourse to inference is not necessary:

It is a corollary of this that the other person has - like ourselves - a sphere of absolute personal privacy, which can never be given to us. But that 'experiences' occur there is given for us in expressive phenomena - again, not by inference, but directly, as a sort of primary 'perception'. It is in the blush that we perceive shame, in the laughter joy. To say that 'our only initial datum is the body' is completely erroneous. This is only true for the doctor or scientist. (Scheler 2008 [1958]: 10)

Instead:

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<sup>60</sup> By this, I mean the way how, in interaction, the bodily orientation or comportment of another can solicit an embodied response from us. I investigate this in Chapter 5.

[T]he understanding of others is not an inference of mental states, but a pre-cognitive, intuitive experience, a direct perception of the others' emotional life. (Stanghellini 2004: 14)<sup>61</sup>

Gallagher's arguments undermine the idea that understanding others is about overcoming the problem of 'hidden minds' which folk psychology tells us, need to be deciphered to overcome the explanatory gap between observable actions and unobservable states of mind. Instead, direct perception argues that there is rarely a gap that needs to be overcome in the first place. In stating that people's intentions, affects, dispositions, and so on are perceived through their embodied comportment, which is situated in a particular shared context, Gallagher removes the need to have recourse here to alternative ways of 'bridging the gap', as he reveals, ordinarily, there is no gap.

### **2.3 Alternative approaches to Interpersonal Understanding: Interaction Theory and Participatory Sense-Making**

If everyday interpersonal understanding is not about 'getting into another person's mind' and inferring mental states from behaviour, then how do we understand others? The main alternatives to folk psychology, including interaction theory (Gallagher 2001, 2004a,b, 2005, 2007a, 2008, 2009; Gallagher and Hutto 2008) and participatory sense-making (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007, 2010) offer alternative accounts of interpersonal understanding based on a challenge to the following principles they see as key commitments of folk psychology:

- (1) 'Other minds' are hidden.
- (2) Third-person observation and inference of mental states forms the basis for understanding others.
- (3) Mindreading is both the pervasive and dominant way in which we

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<sup>61</sup> Stanghellini argues that those suffering from schizophrenia often lack the ability to directly perceive emotions of others, writing: "What is missing is a pre-conceptual link between this person and the other persons, a pre-cognitive, intuitive experience and direct perception of others' emotional life" (2007: 133).

understand others.

Instead, Interaction Theory seeks to argue that:

(1.a) We directly perceive the intentions, emotions and dispositions of others through bodily comportment (Gallagher 2008b, 2009: 292).

(2.a) Second-person interaction is more primary in our understanding of others than third-person observation is (Gallagher 2009: 292).

(3.a) Far from being pervasive in understanding, mindreading is a “rare and specialised ability” (Gallagher 2009: 292) which is seldom utilised. Furthermore, development of mindreading abilities is dependent on more primary social embodiment (Gallagher 2009: 292).

To support these claims, Gallagher turns toward developmental psychology, in particular to the social abilities of infants from birth to around 3 years. As we saw in 2.2a, findings here suggest that before children are able to master and utilise a concept of belief, they are adept in a host of other, more primary intersubjective and communicative abilities.

Combining the evidence of an infant’s early intersubjective life with criticisms that state that folk psychology has missed the importance of situation and the second-personal stance, Gallagher forwards interaction theory, as a model for ‘everyday’ interpersonal understanding (2001, 2004a,b, 2008a, 2009; Gallagher and Hutto 2008). He states that understanding other people is “primarily neither theoretical nor based on an internal simulation. It is a form of embodied practice” (2005: 208). Whilst Gallagher accepts that there is a leap in conceptual abilities in understanding others around the age of four (see Chapter 1.2) he states that this advancement is couched in “a wider framework of interpersonal pragmatics” (2005: 224).

Such interpersonal pragmatics have been neglected by the narrow focus of folk psychology and are, Gallagher suggests, embodied (‘sensory-motor’ 2005: 224), affective, perceptual, pre-reflective (‘non-conceptual’ 2005: 204), and fundamentally: “second-personal embodied interactions with other persons perceived as others” (2005: 224). Citing the developmental evidence from 2.2a, and developing an emphasis on the roles which relatedness and situation play,

leads Gallagher to argue that folk psychology is not our primary way of understanding others:

Theory theory and simulation theory at best explain a very narrow and specialised set of cognitive processes that we sometimes use to relate to others [...] But neither theoretical nor simulation strategies constitute the primary way in which we relate to and interact with or understand others. Furthermore, in these cases where we do use theoretical and simulation strategies, these strategies are already shaped by a more primary embodied practice. (Gallagher 2005: 208)

The widening is achieved by taking interpersonal understanding out of the exclusive scope of the ability to attribute intentional and propositional states to others, and emphasising the pre-reflective skills and abilities which support interpersonal understanding. In order to flesh out his claim, Gallagher draws on evidence from developmental psychology and psychopathology, focusing in particular on the emergence and progression of types of shared intersubjectivity.

Gallagher argues that both primary intersubjectivity (shared person-to-person attention), and secondary intersubjectivity (in which child and caregiver begin to share situations and contexts) prefigure and underlie the conceptual abilities which accounts rooted in folk psychology emphasise as central to interpersonal understanding. The inescapable element in both of these forms of intersubjectivity is the way infants respond directly to others as people, in an embodied manner. Early intersubjective abilities are up, running, and enabling interactions with others to take place before the advent of conceptual knowledge. This leads us to question whether folk psychology can provide us with the whole story. Whilst these forms of sharing intersubjectivity develop in very early infancy, they feature and scaffold adult intersubjectivity.<sup>62</sup>

[P]rimary intersubjectivity is not something that we leave behind as we mature. We continue to rely on our perceptual access to the other's affective expressions, the intonation of her voice, the posture and style of

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<sup>62</sup> For example, see Currie 2007 for an explanation of the importance of shared attention for adult interpersonal understanding.

movement involved in her action, her gestures and so on, to pick up information about what the other is feeling and what she intends. (Gallagher 2009: 293)

Right from the beginning second-person interaction with others marks and enables both a fundamental ability to share and be with others, and supports an emerging and developing sense of self.<sup>63</sup> Secondary intersubjectivity develops from around the age of nine-months and underpins more general intersubjective capacities.

Gallagher emphasises the pre-theoretical capacities for intersubjectivity which are present in children before the age of 3 years, and which are embedded in a second-person relation, which is vital for sustaining these types of sharing oneself with another, and my world with another. However the fundamentality of primary and secondary intersubjectivity does not wane after the ‘cognitive revolution’ at 4 years. Far from it. Instead, Gallagher argues that primary and secondary forms of intersubjective sharing go on to enable adult as well as developing intersubjectivity. At the heart of both forms of subjectivity is a recognition and a direct perception of another as a person with whom I may interact (Gustafson 1993: 280), and with whom one does interact, in a primarily second-personal way.

Participatory sense-making is strongly influenced by Gallagher’s interaction theory. Recognising that “explanation and prediction may not be at the centre of our everyday social practice”, De Jaegher and Di Paolo also seek to offer an alternative account of social understanding which is more respectful to “everyday social practice” (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007: 486). In this way, De Jaegher and Di Paolo consciously follow the move away from viewing an inference of mental states to be at the heart of our understanding of others, to prioritise interactive understanding (Gallagher 2001, Hutto 2004, Ratcliffe 2007a).

Motivating participatory sense making is the challenge to “work out what the interaction process does for social cognition” (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007: 486). Whilst De Jaegher and Di Paolo agree with Gallagher’s general interactive

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<sup>63</sup> See the edited volume by Neisser (1993) for a variety of papers to argue for such a view.

approach, they state that those concerned with interaction have as yet failed to give a clear “articulation of a theoretical and methodological framework” (2007: 494) by which we may understand the process of interaction. Participatory sense-making aims to provide this by drawing on the enactive concept of sense-making, and dynamical systems theory (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007; Fuchs and De Jaegher 2009). It states that – and seeks to explain how – meaning arises between interacting individuals.

With this in mind, De Jaegher and Di Paolo seek to put forward an enactive account of the mechanics of interaction, which characterises it as an autonomous process, involving each interactant co-ordinating (or not) with the other (2007: 491-496). In doing so, like Gallagher, they emphasise interaction as an embodied and socially embedded process, but seek to add flesh to the bones of how we understand the way in which we come to consensual understanding with each other; how, in social interaction (by which they take to mean direct face-to-face interaction or conversation) we make meaning together:

[M]eaning is created and transformed through patterns of coordination and break-downs. The phases of action and perception typically used to describe individual sense-making now acquire collective aspects and sense is created through the stabilisation of patterns of joint activity ... In this kind of activity the interactors engage in the highest degree of participation. (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007: 500)

De Jaegher and Di Paolo are right to emphasise the “dynamics of co-ordination” (2007: 499). They form a complex phenomenon, but one which adds much to our understanding of the way in which we mutually affect each other to arrive at some mutual understanding. I agree with De Jaegher and Di Paolo when they seek to emphasise the dynamics which give rise to a mutual and consensual form of interpersonal understanding, and investigate how meaning arises from interaction. This is certainly something which needs to be addressed and is of potential value for accounts of interpersonal understanding. However, the concept of ‘co-ordination’ between participants still asks for more detail.

In appealing to the resource of sense-making, Gallagher questions whether participatory sense-making addresses the same problematic as

interaction theory. Responding to the criticisms laid at his door by participatory sense-making, Gallagher seeks to distinguish the problem of *intersubjective understanding* from the broader question of *social cognition*. In doing so, he locates interaction theory as addressing the former: the question being, how do we understand others? Answer: through interactive processes; whilst participatory sense-making contributes to the latter question: how are we able to navigate and share a social world? Answer: through participatory sense-making:

[T]hey [De Jaegher and Di Paolo] understand it to address the issue of how intersubjectivity enters into meaning constitution and most generally the co-constitution of the world. The question that PSM addresses is: How do we, together, in a social process, constitute the meaning of the world? In contrast, the problem of social cognition is centered on the following question: How do we understand another person? Now I believe these two problems are closely related. For example, one might think that the problem of PSM is the more general problem which includes social cognition since if we are trying to make sense out of the world, certainly we find other persons in the world. (Gallagher 2009: 297)

Gallagher does have a point here, which he uses to diffuse some of the criticisms laid at his door by De Jaegher and Di Paolo. However, I agree with the latter when they state that debates surrounding interpersonal understanding would indeed benefit from a more in-depth engagement with the question of how understanding is arrived at *between* people. Often this is through a process in which interlocutors affect each other and in doing so arrive at mutual enlightenment and understanding. Whilst ‘understanding’ and ‘making meaning’ are different phenomena, they are at the same time, highly related<sup>64</sup> and intertwined, especially if we take interaction to be the primary way in which we ordinarily understand others. Understanding reached through interaction relies on a mutual engagement in which we perpetually react to and clarify the

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<sup>64</sup> As Gallagher acknowledges (see Gallagher 2009: 298).

presuppositions we have of each other.<sup>65</sup> In a sense, this is related to a coming together of people who create meaning with, and understanding of, each other. Whilst the two problems are separate, debates surrounding how we understand others benefit from bringing them to bear on each other.

Whilst I do not disagree with the aims or content of their discussion of participatory sense-making, I believe (as they themselves do (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007: 503)) there is much more work to be done on how we envisage the way in which ‘co-ordination’ gives rise to shared meaning. It is not simply the case that I, on the one hand, begin to sync with you in an embodied, gestural manner. Whilst this is an important, indeed central part of the process of interaction, we must still question what enables and shapes this shared relation to continue unfolding.

## 2.4 Conclusion

Underlying the call to account for ‘relatedness’ and context is a commitment to anti-individualism in understanding others, that is, the kind of individualism in which we ourselves are the sole arbiter of understanding, whether in virtue of theory or simulation routines. Both theory and simulation theories neglect the more primitive, pre-reflective ways in which we ordinarily find ourselves operating alongside others. Having examined the themes of situation and relatedness, we are now in a position to ask how they come together to mutually aid understanding. This will be the topic of the next chapter. However, before ending this chapter, I wish to turn briefly back to ‘relatedness’ in order to pause and ask what precisely is meant by the term.

As we have seen, the value of relatedness for interpersonal understanding has been widely discussed and argued for, by philosophers, cognitive scientists, and developmental psychologists alike. By it, they mean the sense we have of being connected to others in a primitive and pre-reflective way. It is that which calls us to interact differently with people than we do with objects. But whilst the term has been used quite heavily, there has been little discussion of what constitutes, enables, and shapes this sense of relatedness. In the remainder of this

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<sup>65</sup> See Chapter 3.

thesis, I will attempt to unpack this notion of relatedness a little more carefully. To do so, I identify two main elements (space and reciprocal bodily expressivity) and explore the roles they play in supporting and transforming this sense of relatedness. After having laid out the hermeneutic account of interaction (Chapter 3), we will be able to see how the identified elements of space and embodiment work together to enable an understanding of other people. This way, we can fully see why we ought not to mistake interpersonal understanding with, as Hutto writes of the folk psychology approach, a “spectator sport” (2008: 12); and have an appreciation of some of the elements that combine to make normal interpersonal understanding achievable.

The next chapter builds on the critiques of folk psychology explored in this chapter, and also on the grounds of interaction theory and participatory sense-making. It aims to draw the strands of situatedness, relatedness, and interaction together to suggest how these elements, which support intersubjectivity, combine, and mutually affect each other during processes of interpersonal understanding. To do this I draw on the hermeneutics of Gadamer (2004) to offer a model of how interpersonal understanding rests on, is facilitated by, and progresses according to the mutual regulation of these elements.

Gadamerian hermeneutics offers a wealthy resource through which we can account for the way in which individual situations, personal history, cultural contexts, and intersubjective spaces feed into the interaction process. From examination and an application of this resource, we appreciate how we need to account not only for interaction between interactional participants, but how the interactional relation between participants leads to a dynamic re-orientation of the interactants to their wider social background and space. To do this, I draw on Gadamer’s notion of the fusion of horizons in order to show how interactive processes do not just occur between interlocutors, but encompass the broader dimension of changes in attitude and understanding to the situation we share. In this way, interaction inseparably occurs not just between myself and another, but between ourselves and our social context. Understanding others and making meaning with them, often involves a re-understanding of our wider situatedness which engagement with others subtly refines.

# PART 2

## Relatedness: A Phenomenological and Hermeneutic Exploration

Part 1 provided an overview of the main contenders for accounts of interpersonal understanding (Chapter 1) and several of the responses to these positions (Chapter 2). Emerging from the discussion was a need to provide an account of interpersonal understanding that moves beyond the preoccupation with attributing propositional attitudes, and recognises the social, personal, and dynamic aspects of our apprehension of others. Providing a comprehensive account of relatedness will be integral to this: an exploration of how it is enabled, facilitated, and sustained both prior to and through our interactions with others. As we have seen, an emphasis on relatedness and the ways in which it impacts on our interactions with others holds a key place in many descriptions of the developmental trajectory of our ability to understand others. Though it has been argued that a sense of relatedness underlies our ability to engage with others, there has not been much explicit attention given to what relatedness is, nor to what contributes to and shapes the development of successful interpersonal relating.

Thus we are left with a double gauntlet, thrown down from Part 1. First, there is a need to supplement interaction theory by providing an account of *how* interpersonal understanding emerges from and is shaped by interaction with others.<sup>66</sup> Secondly, we must offer an exploration of the elements that support, shape, and facilitate a basic sense of relatedness with others.

Part 2 attempts to take up these challenges. In response to the first challenge, I draw on Gadamerian hermeneutics to offer a description of the dynamics of interaction (Chapter 3). In addition to this, the account brings together understanding on both a social (global) and personal (parochial) level, demonstrating how understanding on each level mutually affects and revises the other through the interactive process. Interpersonal understanding successfully occurs from a negotiation between both levels. It is this insight that is missed by the accounts of theory and simulation theories, and to a lesser extent, in interaction theory, by not providing a framework outlining how situational and

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<sup>66</sup> As we saw in Chapter 2, Gallagher argues that interaction needs to be central to an account of interpersonal understanding, but has not yet illustrated *how* understanding emerges from interaction. Participatory sense-making is also sensitive to this, yet acknowledges there is still work to be done in providing an account of how co-ordination between interactants gives rise to shared meaning. This thesis is a continuation from, and a widening of, the implications of interaction theory.

personal elements combine to support understanding through an interactional process.

From here, Part 2 widens to consider possible solutions to the second problem. As mentioned previously, despite a prominent focus on the role that relations with others play in supporting and enabling interpersonal understanding, there has not been much consideration of what constitutes or enables these mutual relations to occur. Chapters 4 and 5 provide a phenomenological investigation of two elements that I identify as integral to an ability to enter into, whilst supporting and shaping, a sense of relatedness: phenomenological, intersubjective space (Chapter 4) and reciprocal bodily relations (Chapter 5). Accounting both for the ways that understanding emerges from interaction and the elements underpinning and shaping an ability to relate to others will give us a firmer basis on which to lay a more accurate account of interpersonal understanding.

## CHAPTER 3:

### A HERMENEUTIC ACCOUNT OF INTERPERSONAL UNDERSTANDING

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*“To understand is to participate immediately  
in life” (Gadamer 2004: 208)*

Chapter 2 argued that third-person observational accounts of interpersonal understanding (folk psychology) cannot characterise interpersonal understanding in its full bodied and everyday way. Attributing mental states based on observation of others’ behaviour constitutes a skill that we call upon when faced with behaviour that is bizarre, out of character, or in some sense puzzling. However, it is not the primary and pervasive way in which we understand others: at best it forms “a narrow and specialised set of cognitive processes” which is sometimes active in intersubjective understanding (Gallagher 2001: 84; 2005: 208).

In focusing almost exclusively on attributing mental states to others, theory and simulation theories have neglected the work which shared situation and interaction perform. Both underpin and shape the progression of our understanding of others. Appreciation of the role of shared situation and interaction requires a shift away from conceptualising understanding primarily as an individual (and observational) enterprise. Instead, it requires an account of how others actively shape the understanding we have of them through interaction. Providing an account of this will supplement and build on the groundwork of interaction theory.

This chapter introduces and outlines a hermeneutic account of interpersonal understanding. Gadamerian hermeneutics provides a wealthy resource, not only to account for situational and personal elements, but also to show how they dynamically come together in interaction to enable and facilitate an ongoing understanding of others. As such it supplements and builds on the groundwork which interaction theory has laid out, to account for how understanding emerges through interaction.

In what follows, I neither deny that there is an internal element to interpersonal understanding, nor claim that understanding must always be a completely shared activity. Some authority and autonomy does remain with the individual (in terms of level of engagement, and the decision to begin or end interaction). However, I offer an account which demonstrates that situation and personal engagement are more integrated and mutually informing than many have supposed: both are inextricably related in interpersonal understanding.<sup>67</sup> In arguing this, I examine three interrelated key areas, which I claim have a bearing on understanding others. They are: situation, pre-judgements, and a dynamic relation between self and other. To begin, I shall outline the structure of this hermeneutic account of interpersonal understanding, showing how the elements involved in understanding the other, as Clark and Chalmers insist, ‘ain’t (all) in the head’ (1998: 8).

### 3.1 Hermeneutic Structure

As we have seen, we understand others according to their situation, actions, goals, roles, according to social norms, ideals, and so on. I can understand Mick as an excellent carpenter, a good person, a good husband and father, a safe driver and so on. But what is it that allows us to make non-inferential acts of understanding about others? Doing so relies on an ability to understand the other against a ‘global’ backdrop which encompasses the present situation, past situations, knowledge of personal history, and so on. This knowledge is brought to bear on new situations in which we relate to the other through a personal stance.

Given that interaction theory and participatory sense-making already emphasise the importance of being affected by others and our shared environment during interpersonal understanding, why do we need to draw on hermeneutics? Hermeneutics provides us with a resource through which to understand the active role which context plays in shaping interpersonal understanding, while giving us a framework that can account for how

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<sup>67</sup> For example, Gurwitsch frequently states that situational understanding is prior to ‘personal’ (1979: 113), whilst Gallagher (2001) and Hobson (2002), among others, stress the primary role of ‘personal’ understanding.

understanding emerges through and from interaction.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, a hermeneutic account of interpersonal understanding not only explores the way in which interaction supports understanding between individuals; it also accounts for how interpersonal understanding is constituted through interaction *between* individuals. At the same time it explicates how interaction with others affects the understanding we have of the contexts in which our interactions are conducted.

In proposing to think of interpersonal understanding in terms of Gadamerian hermeneutics it is important to note that I do not use the term ‘hermeneutic’ in its traditional literary and theological sense. As discussed above, I use it to evoke a concept of understanding as a shared venture. This means the control of an understanding process that does not ultimately reside with, and only with, the individual. Instead it usually resides between interlocutors. In this way, use of ‘hermeneutic’ emphasises the Gadamerian hermeneutic ideal of understanding as a dynamic, mutual, and co-constituted process.

In this way, hermeneutics can shed more light on interaction theory to provide an account of how we can view intersubjective understanding (and misunderstanding) as emerging from interaction taking place within a shared context. Simultaneously, it enables us to account for how our interactions cause revisions to how we understand our context. Furthermore, drawing on Gadamer’s insights on the value of play and risk in understanding emphasises the retreat from the presupposition held by both theory and simulation theory that understanding others is a predominantly third-person and spectatorial enterprise. As Gadamer writes:

The task of hermeneutics is to clarify this miracle of understanding, which is not a mysterious communion of souls, but sharing in a common meaning. (2004: 292)

Gadamer likens the phenomenon of understanding to finding oneself within progressive dialogue with others. In doing so he appeals to the hallmarks of genuine conversation, in which participants are fully open to what their

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<sup>68</sup>In what follows I focus on themes specifically from Gadamerian hermeneutics.

interlocutor has to say, and through which interlocutors go beyond the presuppositions and positions which they begin the conversation with. This forms a contrast to conversation in which one partner dominates or browbeats the other into accepting their point of view. Instead, the subject matter leads the way, and through dialogue with one's interlocutor, we come to revise, abandon, and transcend our original position in coming to a consensus with the other. Once again, this is not a case of abandoning one's own point of view in favour of that of the other. Instead, through the momentum of dialogue we each bring our presuppositions to the dialogue, and in engaging with the other, they are laid bare. It might be that my interlocutor challenges a particular point that I had taken to be the case or that in seeing the other's tacitly held convictions I become aware of my own.

In genuine conversation, these presuppositions are 'put at risk': that is, in laying them bare we are prepared that they might be insufficient, misguided, or just plain wrong. Gadamer refers to coming to a consensus as "the fusion of horizons" (2004: 300-304) through which we "integrate differing perspectives in a deeper understanding of the matters in question" (Warnke 1988: 169). The quality of 'openness' to perspectives, objections, and experiences which differ from one's own preconceptions is integral to hermeneutic understanding as Gadamer characterises it. As long as one remains open and willing to risk one's presuppositions, the conversation, and understanding, remains ongoing.

In characterising understanding as dialogical, Gadamer challenges the way in which we think of the structure of understanding. This is particularly relevant to characterisations of interpersonal understanding. As we have seen, theory theory and simulation theory have tended to describe our understanding of others as being a matter of attributing propositional attitudes to others on the basis of observed behaviour. Chapter 2 explored how this is usually framed as an observational and predominantly third-person enterprise.<sup>69</sup> In this case, I observe some action by X, and apply a theory of mind or run a simulation, which allows me to attribute mental states to them. This model of understanding is linear in nature: there is something to be understood (someone's behaviour), I apply my

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<sup>69</sup> I noted in Chapter 2 that proponents of theory theory and simulation theory would probably not wish to deny that understanding can be second-personal, however, they make the claim that folk psychology is pervasive and predominant in understanding others, and they neglect to explore the interactional and second-person nature of everyday understanding.

internal resources (theory, simulation, or both), and this yields understanding of their action. Here the responsibility (control, decision to understand) and resources (theory, simulation) for understanding rest with the individual. The other person is apprehended as a model to simulate or apply a theory to. In characterising understanding thus, theory and simulation theories neglect to account for the way in which understanding others is often a mutual and co-constituted venture.

As we see above, Gadamer characterises understanding, when it is genuine, as a shared and co-constituted activity. It is achieved through the fusion of horizons. This leads Gadamer to characterise the structure of understanding, not as linear, but as a circular:<sup>70</sup> the person, who is always situated within their tradition,<sup>71</sup> brings certain presuppositions (tacit or otherwise) to their encounter with another person. On engagement with their interlocutor, these come to be revised or abandoned, causing a shift in the presuppositions that are held. Gadamer likens the back and forth of understanding to ‘play’ (Gadamer 2004: 104, 105, 483-484). Taking the form of ‘to-ing and fro-ing’ between interlocutors, play describes the dialogical and ongoing, engaged interaction which drives the fusion of horizons and the circular structure of understanding. Gadamer uses the term to emphasise the ordinary way in which we usually find ourselves “caught up” in the flow and process of understanding others (Coltman 1998: 52), which gathers its own momentum. In doing so, neither of the interlocutors control the direction the conversation takes, but yield to the

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<sup>70</sup> Gadamer was by no means the first to do this; the concept of the hermeneutic circle has long been established. Schleiermacher, Dilthey and Heidegger all referred to the hermeneutic circle in characterising understanding. See Warnke 1983: 82ff for an overview of its history. The hermeneutic circle was predominantly used to refer to understanding a part of the text in reference to the whole. Heidegger widened this to encompass the relationship between self understanding and one’s understanding of the world. This includes, for Gadamer, historical situation, culture, and tradition at large. It is the latter, wider conception which is useful when applying insights from hermeneutics to interpersonal understanding.

<sup>71</sup> Tradition for Gadamer includes the cultural and historical background within which we are rooted. For Gadamer, tradition shapes and forms the pre-judgements which we bring to understanding. See Gadamer 2004: 268ff. In what follows, I will not refer to ‘tradition’ or take it to be as central as Gadamer does. Instead, I view ‘tradition’ as part of a rich conception of ‘situation’. In what follows, I will refer to ‘situation’ in a rich sense which includes not only historical situatedness, but also the list of phenomena above (see p. 115-116). I also note here that Gadamer was criticised for his emphasis on the necessity of understanding others from inside one’s tradition, most famously, by Habermas. Habermas raised the concern that Gadamer does not allow the possibility for individuals to ever transcend their ‘tradition’. There is a long debate on whether Gadamer does indeed fall foul of this charge. However, this is beyond the scope of the present thesis. Instead see, for instance, Gadamer 1979: 108.

movement of the conversation. The subject matter, rather than the individual, steers the course of the conversation. In this way, understanding is dynamic and co-constituted; it emerges and is shaped between interlocutors.

The structure of play shapes progressive understanding between people, enabling and structuring a revision of our understanding of the contexts and presuppositions which we bring to our engagement with others. These then will feed back into the way we understand our interlocutor. Understanding is a transformative process which entails a relinquishing of power and control of the direction it takes:

[I]n order for the play of conversation to take over, the speakers must be willing to yield to its movement. In Gadamerian terms, they must be genuinely interested in coming to agreement ... and this means that for either of them to learn anything or for any degree of truth to emerge from the dialogue both partners must be able to put their own preconceptions at risk; they must remain open to the possibility of being wrong. (Coltman 1998: 53)

As with the hermeneutic circle, understanding interlocutors in the 'rich' sense outlined in Chapter 2 requires one to enter into a relation with them. One engages with the other in a way which is ultimately informed by background and cultural expectations. As Gadamer (2004) writes:

The circle, then, is not formal in nature. It is neither subjective nor objective, but describes understanding as the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter. The anticipation of meaning that governs our understanding of a text is not an act of subjectivity, but proceeds from the commonality that binds us to the tradition. (293)

Although Gadamer is talking of understanding between a reader and text, this process is applicable to understanding between interlocutors. Understanding is not an enterprise which endeavours to "read the author's mind" (Orange 1993: 252); it is instead a relational and culturally instantiated project, which is neither

entirely subjective, nor removed from the perspectives of the interlocutors.<sup>72</sup> Instead, as we have seen, it is a fusion of horizons; interlocutors come to understand each other through a revision of what they have understood in the past in the light of what they are presently confronted with.

We have already gone some way toward accounting for the dynamics of understanding as it takes place between interlocutors. However, in order to provide a rich account of interpersonal understanding, we need to account for how understanding between interlocutors is shaped by their situation; and, in turn, how interaction between interlocutors transforms the understanding which they have of their situation. These are inextricable aspects of the overall dynamic of the interaction process. As such, rather than examining the role which interaction plays, and then doing the same for situation, we need to account for how they work together dynamically throughout the interaction process. In order to emphasise this inextricability of interactional and situational understanding, and provide an account of the overall dynamic process of interpersonal understanding, I use the language of ‘spheres’. Doing so emphasises that interaction between interlocutors and situation are two sides of the same coin of the interaction process. In what follows, I identify two spheres at play in understanding others, which I refer to as the ‘global’ and ‘parochial’ spheres.

### ***(a) Global and Parochial Spheres of Understanding***

As we see from Gadamer’s description of the structure of understanding, we can delineate two forms of understanding which are at play. Both are brought to bear on each other to enable the process of understanding. The first is broadly situational. One of the prominent points of hermeneutics is that we always understand others from our situation.<sup>73</sup> Our situation forms a grounding from which understanding begins. It encompasses not only awareness and knowledge of the things in our environment, but also wider social phenomena including norms, social roles, social signs and symbols, cultural practices or rites, and so

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<sup>72</sup> See Athos and Gabarro: “The ability to prevent and anticipate misunderstandings, or problems of communication is directly related to the capacity to understand another person and what is important in that person’s world” (1978: 133).

<sup>73</sup> For ‘others’ we can read ‘text’ or ‘artwork’ as well as ‘person’. However, given the topic of this thesis, I focus on the case of applying hermeneutics to understanding other people.

on. In what follows, in order to emphasise the richness of this concept, I move away from the label ‘situational’ and refer to this as a ‘global sphere of understanding’. Doing so reminds us that included in this are not only the features of our environment, but elements of social context, and also previous knowledge of the other person or the situation which we share.<sup>74</sup> The global sphere of understanding amounts to a ‘world view’ which enables us to successfully get on with things.

The second form of understanding is constituted through the personal engagement with other people. I will refer to this as a ‘parochial sphere’ of understanding. By this I indicate the ‘to-ing’ and ‘fro-ing’ between interlocutors who share a direct relation, as described in the previous section. This form of understanding is co-constituted through sustained and ongoing interaction between interlocutors.

When we think of interpersonal understanding, the emphasis has tended to fall on interactional understanding in the parochial sphere (Gallagher 2001; De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007). We saw in Chapter 2 that many emphasise the role which shared situation performs both in attuning us to others. However, in order to account for the manner in which interaction facilitates a progression of interpersonal understanding, we need to characterise how these two spheres of understanding dynamically influence each other in interpersonal understanding. In order to understand how this is possible it is helpful to bear in mind that the contents of understanding in both global and parochial spheres are always open to modification.

It is the modification of presuppositions in both which enables the progression in understanding to occur. When we seek to understand someone, the enterprise will always be shaped by the situation we find ourselves within. For example, the way in which I engage and understand someone after hearing them give a conference paper will be very different to having a chat with them after dinner in the pub. In this way, our global understanding (including awareness of social norms) governs the way we enter into interaction with our interlocutor, forming a context which shapes our understanding of them in the parochial sphere. However, the influence is not just one way. The interaction with someone

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<sup>74</sup> In the case of interpersonal understanding, we might include knowledge of personality, and shared personal history with my interlocutor, if this exists between us.

in the parochial sphere (ideally) causes me to revise the presuppositions which in part feature in the global sphere.<sup>75</sup> This feeds back into the way in which I understand the other through the parochial sphere.

In this way, each sphere informs the other, allowing a revision of presuppositions which affects the way in which I interact with and understand my interlocutor; at the same time this causes a shift in my global sphere of understanding. The revision of presuppositions in both sphere mirrors the dynamic of the fusion of horizons, causing a transformation in understanding of both the other, and our situation; understanding is honed and revised through engagement with one's interlocutor, as this engagement is cross-referenced with one's own 'global' structures of understanding.

### **3.2 Elements of a Hermeneutic Understanding**

In providing a hermeneutic account of interpersonal understanding I seek to account for the importance of how the following elements dynamically influence each other in interpersonal understanding:

- (i) the importance of being situated in a culture that informs our understanding of others;
- (ii) the role of pre-judgements (tacit or otherwise);
- (iii) the dynamic joining of horizons to create understanding; it is the revision and addition of these pre-judgements through a dynamic and mutual relation that constitutes 'normal' understanding.

In the rest of this section I explore how understanding others involves the three areas above, to effect the 'fusion of horizons', mentioned above.

As we have seen, Gadamerian hermeneutics emphasises how ultimate authority for understanding no longer lies *solely* with the individual. Instead, understanding becomes a shared process which is influenced and modified directly by my interlocutor, and the contexts we find ourselves within. Applying the insights of hermeneutics help to rectify an over-emphasis on both: (1) the role

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<sup>75</sup> Given that we are 'open' to our interlocutor and interested in forming consensus.

of the individual in understanding the other (interpersonal understanding is characterised as arising through the dynamic, interactive relation between interlocutors); and (2) the separability of interaction and context in the process of interactional understanding. In doing so, a hermeneutic account of interpersonal understanding emphasises both the role of dynamic interaction between interlocutors, and further the dynamic relationship of situational and personal elements of interpersonal understanding. Drawing on hermeneutics not only underlines the importance of these phenomena, but shows how they come together in the dynamic process of understanding.

### ***(a) Situation***

Chapter 2 explored the work which situation performs in interpersonal understanding (p. 83-92). In considering the role of situation within interpersonal understanding it becomes noticeable how this account veers away from emphasis on the primacy of actions *alone* being the key to understanding the other. A space in which to consider additional contributing aspects to understanding others provides a more subtle and effectual analysis of factors that influence and are a part of understanding others. It becomes apparent that the ability to interpret the other in terms of their actions and behaviour is largely presupposed by an ability to interpret the situation in which the other's actions take place. As Gallagher states:

One way to summarise these pre-theoretical conditions is to say [...] that understanding of others in terms of their mental states requires a 'massively hermeneutic' background. This suggests that there is much going on in our understanding of others, in excess of and prior to the acquisition of theoretical and/or simulation capabilities. (2001: 86)

An example from Johnson (1987) makes this clear.

Johnson asks us to consider the following statement 'Mark chases Paul around the house' (1987: *xxxiii*). Although Johnson's primary concern is *meaning*, I believe this example is relevant for present purposes. Taken on its

own, this description of behaviour does not amount to much. It tells us what is happening in a skeletal way. We can imagine countless scenarios to which this description might apply. It may be a game of chase, Mark may be extremely angry with Paul, Mark may be a serial killer who likes to chase his victims before dispatching of them, Paul may even be a cat which needs to be put out, and so on. What this example goes to show is that in understanding others we draw on a wealth of additional factors that tacitly enrich our understanding. Understanding resting on behaviour and mental state attribution alone hardly leads to the ‘full bodied’ understanding of the other which ought to be the object of our philosophical investigations.<sup>76</sup> Instead, it leaves us only with the possibility of a meagre, ultimately insufficient account. As stated above, to understand someone’s behaviour, we must, to some extent, understand their situation; that is, the context in which the behaviour or actions take place.

This is not to suggest that behaviour and actions do not provide a way of understanding others, merely that this route of understanding is built on an ability to recognise and interpret situation. If this is not true we must ask how it is that actions may be meaningful; often actions and behaviour are meaningful in relation to a situation. Indeed, if what I have explicated so far is correct, there is not even a question of ‘whether we allow it or not’; situational understanding is a tacit occurrence which is present as much in ‘mundane’ situations as it is in extraordinary ones.<sup>77</sup>

### ***(b) Pre-judgements***

Emerging directly from this emphasis on the importance of situation for interpersonal understanding is a discussion of the importance of what, following Gadamer, I term ‘pre-judgements’ (2004: 293).<sup>78</sup> As already seen, understanding

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<sup>76</sup> Also see Goldie (2007a) for a similar critique.

<sup>77</sup> The importance of ‘situation’ and environment has recently come into focus in various debates in cognitive science. ‘Embedded’ or ‘extended cognition’ seeks to point out the ways in which instruments and environmental features aid cognition. The discussions of extended cognition fundamentally seek to show that the external plays a role in cognition; they broaden the scope of cognitive processes outside the internal. See Clark (1997, 2001).

<sup>78</sup> In his account, Gadamer also refers to ‘pre-judgments’ as “prejudices”. Through his hermeneutic account, Gadamer seeks to rehabilitate the notion of ‘prejudice’ from the negative connotations it holds, particularly in Enlightenment thought (2004: 268-285). In what follows, I

of others is facilitated by a mutual engagement in shared social practices, and in an ability to tacitly trust these social practices. If our values, social practices, bodily gestures, and so on are common in their meanings, then they form a background that informs our understanding of others. Indeed, an ability to trust in shared social conventions allows us to form preconceptions that again facilitate understanding. These can be of the most basic assumptions: for instance that the other is ‘like me’, that they are able to engage in conversation, that they have ‘personhood’, that they participate in similar social values as I do and so on.

Pre-judgements such as these, manifest in situational understanding, are necessarily in place prior to the process of understanding others. They form preliminary grounds on which understanding begins. Shaped by our understanding of the shared situation,<sup>79</sup> pre-judgements about the situation at hand in relation to the other form the base from which the process of understanding begins. These pre-judgements may range from those of convention (such as it is polite to begin a conversation) or those of more overt social norms (I cannot talk in a library) to those of unheeded elements which inform our understanding of the other such as body language (‘he’s frowning, he can’t be happy’) to recognising inflections of the voice or semiotics (her rapid speech conveys her excitement).<sup>80</sup> We can even bring personal history into this sphere of pre-judgements. These pre-judgements emerge from the general situation; they are salient facts that we pick up on and bring to understanding. In observing that my friend is not talking to me, I might first consider that he is rude until I realise we are in the aforementioned library, in which no one *should* talk.

In ordinary understanding these factors would usually already be presumed; they *enable* my judgement. It is not left for me to wonder why my friend is not talking to me and then inferentially fill in the gaps. Instead the social norm governing the situation dictates my understanding directly, without need for inference. A tacit presupposition that he *cannot* talk to me because of library user norms is entailed in a correct recognition of our shared situation. In this case pre-judgements act as salience providers, shaping a way into understanding the

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use the term ‘pre-judgement’, which Gadamer also uses in order to emphasise the positive value which ‘prejudice’ holds in structuring understanding.

<sup>79</sup> This may be in the sense of both cultural or ‘global’ situatedness and also the situation we find ourselves in ‘at hand’ or on the ‘parochial’ level.

<sup>80</sup> Chapter 5 deals at length with the roles which expressive embodiment plays in understanding others.

other which is more often than not reliant to some degree on situational factors. Pre-judgements dictate the terms on which my engagement with others should begin and progress. They specify certain types of behaviour as appropriate or inappropriate. These points are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, where I examine how the spaces within which we interact with others offer precedents for the interaction to begin and progress.

This is not to say that such pre-judgements are always correct. Pre-judgements are often revised or abandoned on engagement with the other. In fact, it is important to recognise that understanding is a gradual process in which pre-judgements are continually refined, and are always open to revision (Gadamer 2004: 304-306). It is the revision of pre-judgements in light of engagement with our interlocutors that constitutes the process of understanding. In relation to this we find that according to hermeneutics we need to adopt a position of *openness* to the other in order to properly understand and enter into understanding with others (Warnke 1897: 101-104). Openness is an essential precondition to understanding. It is only when one is open to the position of one's interlocutor that the possibility of transformation from occupying one's own perspective to a joint perspective is enabled.<sup>81</sup> This is expressed through Gadamer's notion and exploration of 'risk' (Gadamer 1977: 38; 2004: 305;<sup>82</sup> Coltman 1998: 53). In order to achieve understanding, we have to be able to risk our original interpretation and to relinquish control over the direction the interaction takes;<sup>83</sup> only then can our pre-understanding transform and deepen:

[T]he pre-judgements that lead my pre-understanding are also consequently at stake right up to the moment of their surrender – which surrender could also be called a transformation. (Gadamer 1977: 38)

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<sup>81</sup> Schutz identifies openness to others as an essential part of the 'Thou-orientation' discussed in Chapter 2 (pp. 80-81). Also See Schutz 1967 (162).

<sup>82</sup> "[T]he horizon of the present is continually in the process of being formed because we are continually having to test all our prejudices" (Gadamer 2004: 305)

<sup>83</sup> See the following quote from Coltman: "In order for the play of conversation to take over, the speakers must be willing to yield to its movement" (1998: 53). A common theme in hermeneutics is for authority of interpretation not to exclusively ride with an the individual interpreting the text, rather the process of interpretation and understanding is shaped by the challenge the text, or other person, presents.

Pre-judgements mark the terms on which my understanding of others begins, the terms on which I approach them. They mark, amongst other things, that understanding must start somewhere, for instance with the presupposition that the other is like me and will respond positively in engagement. If this presupposition were not in place, then we would most likely not engage with them in the first place.<sup>84</sup>

If what I have stated so far is to be taken as a description of how we understand others in an everyday way, then tacit pre-judgements, which are non-inferential, must form a part of our understanding. In this case pre-judgements, to a certain extent, enable a successful inhabiting and understanding of our situation.

As already stated, we may distinguish between many types of pre-judgement; these might be practical in the sense that the presence of an object indicates a purpose; they might be social, costume might enforce a type of social role, from which we can expect something in particular. These types of pre-judgements form one level. However, there is a lower level of pre-judgement that we might identify: ones which are not so much to do with a shared social world, but instead form a basis from which understanding may begin. Unlike the social pre-judgements, the lower level pre-judgements need to be in place before understanding may begin or be consciously embarked on.

As already discussed, the stance we usually occupy toward the others when we are in direct engagement with them is a personal one. Engagement in this stance also relies on certain pre-judgements, the most obvious one being that the person is 'like me' (personhood of the other) and that they are able to respond in an appropriate way. 'Low-level' pre-judgements of interest that Maruyama (1961) identifies are closely aligned to those supposed in second-person interaction. Involved in this pre-judgement are a number of presuppositions: that my interlocutor will be able to engage in a situation in a 'full-bodied' way; that they are able to understand the terms of engagement; that they share the same social and gestural (facial and bodily) signs as I do; that they, as Maruyama points out, have a similar or equal intellectual capacity to mine (1961: 123); that

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<sup>84</sup> This is reminiscent of Gadamer's principle of completion (2004: 294) in engaging with others or texts we make certain assumptions in order to begin and progress in our understanding of them.

inflections and intonations in speech mean or indicate the same non-verbal content (such as intonation or body language). If these ‘lower level’ pre-suppositions are not in place then engagement with the other becomes difficult, and the efficacy of understanding is curtailed.

In laying out the importance of such pre-judgements I do not state that these remain in place from the beginning to end of understanding; they are fluid and open to revision. I merely state that they must be in position, tacitly or explicitly, before one engages in understanding in the first place. Pre-judgements are open to modification as understanding progresses. They are brought to engagement through the global sphere, setting the terms for the way that we approach the other according to both social norms and lower level pre-judgments. This enables engagement with the other in the parochial sphere. Having examined the connected roles of situation and pre-judgements in interpersonal understanding, I now look at how these are drawn upon in an examination of the dynamics involved in the hermeneutic account.

### *(c) Dynamics*

Interpersonal understanding is a continuous, possibly endless enterprise that is facilitated through an engagement with the other, leading to a spiral structure. The spiral progressive structure is constituted through a dynamic engagement between interlocutors in which our presuppositions come to be revised (the hermeneutic circle).<sup>85</sup> In what follows I show how we may fruitfully conceive of the relationship between situational and personal understanding.

We have seen that prior to engaging with others we hold rudimentary assumptions (pre-judgements) and a global understanding of situation, context and so forth. We primarily engage with the other in light of these pre-judgements and form a basic understanding according to them. As we engage with the other through the parochial sphere and modify certain pre-judgements that are false or

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<sup>85</sup> Given that Gadamer emphasises that understanding is an on-going and potentially endless enterprise, which requires openness to the other and a willingness to put one’s presuppositions at risk on engaging with the other, it is perhaps more accurate to describe the structure of understanding as a spiral, rather than a circle. Rather than ‘going round in circles’, the revision of presuppositions in global and parochial spheres allow a continual transformation of our understanding, both of the other and our situation, which remains open to revision.

misguided, the global background conception is changed accordingly to take account of the modification of pre-judgements. This subtle shift in the global sphere of understanding leads to a change in understanding at the parochial level. The understanding process follows this on-going pattern, facilitated by a second-person relation and furthered by the influence of background understanding. This becomes evident when we consider an example: consider an ordinary conversation.

We enter the conversation with certain pre-judgements, which form a background; these may range from social norms that limit what we will think of doing and not doing; prescriptions, which shape our behaviour and our expectations from the other (for example, when meeting a friend for coffee in a café we expect to chat about harmless things because that is what one does over coffee. Holding a blazing row is usually deemed inappropriate by the situation we find ourselves within); or even pre-judgements of what the interlocutor might say or do.

Even on this brief sketch we see the different strata of background and pre-judgments at play. This strata of pre-judgements is added to and revised on engagement with the other. As conversation progresses, I may realise that expectations I held of my partner are unwarranted. This is reincorporated into my background 'global' conceptions, and changes the way I approach or view my partner. If my partner confides some secret to me, this may affect the constitution of my global situation, music or people may fade into the background as I lend heightened attention to my partner, while my evident eagerness to listen may encourage him to confide further. Here we see that features of the space we share (the music or bustling of people around us fading into the background) as well as the way we expressively comport ourselves (the embodied signs of an eagerness to listen) have a strong input on the construction of the situation in which we interact. Features within the parochial sphere (expressive embodiment,<sup>86</sup> what is said in dialogue) affect the way I relate to my global sphere (pre-judgements revised, my understanding of the situation changes).<sup>87</sup> It is reciprocal movement

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<sup>86</sup> Chapter 5 explores the role of mutually embodied expressivity for a changing sense of relatedness.

<sup>87</sup> I revisit this specific example in greater depth in Chapter 5. Chapter 4 and 5 explore the effect each of these background features (space, embodiment) and how they shape the way we

between parochial and global spheres that constitutes the spiral structure of the hermeneutic account.

This continual revision of global and parochial expression usually occurs through a personal stance in which the interlocutors are engaged with and open to each other. Making this observation limits the circumstances in which understanding of this kind may take place. For example, this pattern of understanding would be hampered in situations in which social signs and symbols are different or have no shared meaning, in which the same language is not shared, or in which interlocutors are unable to engage over a second person sphere. However, these situations tend to be in the minority; when understanding or engagement with another does occur it is usually the case that we both operate in this shared sphere of meaning.

I previously emphasised the ways in which embeddedness within a situation, both cultural and practical, and the ability to rely tacitly on certain presumptions, play a part in allowing understanding between myself and the other to ‘get off the ground’ (sections 3.2a and 3.2b) and emphasised how a fusion of horizons in the parochial sphere causes a revision in our understanding of the global sphere. In this way pre-judgements and other background features are brought to bear on the other, and further, are modified, held or rejected. In light of this, the understanding one has of one’s interlocutor modifies. This process of revision and negotiation between my interlocutor and myself in the parochial sphere affects my global sphere which in turn affects the way I relate to them on the parochial once more. This is at the heart of dynamic interactions between people.

This process allows us to come to an understanding of others, both in virtue of our interactions with them and the way we mutually interact in relation to our situation. However, it does not always follow that we must come to share a heightened sense of relatedness with our interlocutor. Our evolving interactions across the global and parochial spheres may result in a sense of alienation with the other if our interactions reveal them as frightening, bigoted, or rude. My point is that not all interactions taking place within this intimate interactive personal stance facilitate a greater sense of relatedness.

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approach, relate to and orient ourselves towards our interlocutor and thus affect our understanding of them.

To illustrate this, let us consider the following example: imagine that you are trekking over a coastal cliff-side walk with another person. It is a very windy day, and the ground beneath your feet, whilst undoubtedly beautiful, is craggy and uncertain. The terrain slows your movements down, and the signs of difficulty and tiredness that you display solicits a reaction in your partner, who helps you along, and encourages you not to be afraid. “Come closer to the cliff,” they say, “so you can see the view better”. The comforting manner with which they speak to you, along with the encouraging words they offer about it not really being dangerous, the way they point out the safety rails all combine and begin to change the way in which you view the situation: the rocks you previously thought of as treacherous don’t seem that unfriendly or dangerous any more, the wind you thought was so powerful and hostile no longer appears as something that could blow you over the edge of the cliff.

With these presuppositions revised through interaction with the other in the parochial sphere, you tentatively edge closer to the drop, when all of a sudden and out of the blue, you feel your partner’s hand on your back, giving you a gentle, but no less alarming shove. With that action, your judgements suddenly change once more. The place, once again, feels alarming and frightening and you are struck and shocked by the cruelty and tactlessness of your walking partner: how could they perform such an inappropriate action when they could see you were previously afraid? The quality of relations you share with your partner shift, and a sense of alienation, and perhaps anger, creeps into the relation you share, so recently trusting, now it is tinged by a sense of their tactlessness and absolute horror that you could have gone over the edge. In the same way, the context of our interactions, the space that we share – originally perceived with caution, then with growing adventurousness – feels hostile and dangerous once more.

Each of these three elements – situation, pre-judgements, and dynamic interaction – intertwine and affect each other in understanding. As seen in the example above, the context we occupy (global sphere) affects the manner in which we can relate (parochial sphere): we have to trek slowly to keep together, any conversation will probably be accompanied by a hint of breathlessness, my walking partner adopts a sympathetic tone and orientation as they recognise I am wary of the long drop into the sea. This is intimately tied with the pre-

judgements I hold (global sphere). I am aware that sheer cliff drops are deadly, that my walking partner, in being ahead of me, might be fitter or more knowledgeable about the outdoors than I am. When combined these create a global orientation that affects the way in which I will interact, both with the space around me, and with my walking partner.

The dynamic interaction I share with my walking partner in the parochial sphere – the reassuring conversation, their helping me clamber over more tricky areas of the terrain, their soothing talk of the fact that we are safe, and then later the misjudged and alarming joke-push – affect the way in which I view the situation (global sphere), and my pre-judgements (the walk seems manageable, less dangerous, whilst my fear or awareness of the drop lessen in their salience). But what is really emphasised in this example is how fluid my understanding of the other person and my situation are, and thus how fluid the quality of my relatedness with them is.

Chapter 2 emphasised the commonality and importance of situation. This returns to prominence here. Notice how this type of understanding and interaction would be difficult in an observational stance. Unlike detached and observational understanding, others have input and responsibility over the way we understand, an ability to affect us, the cognitive remove of theory and simulation theory is not usually an issue. My interlocutor and I dynamically shape the course of our understanding. In other words, understanding is no longer an individualised pursuit; it occurs alongside others and is affected by, in Gadamer's terms, a fusion of horizons. As understanding progresses, my world-horizon is influenced by that of my partner, which may subtly change my understanding of them in context. Thus it might be said that understanding is comprised by a mutual and dynamic process which is rooted ordinarily in a 'non-objectivist' stance (Rosch et al. 1993: 149).

This is clearly seen, when Gadamer writes:

We begin with this proposition: 'to understand means to come to an understanding with each other' ... Understanding is, primarily, agreement ... Thus people usually understand ... each other immediately, or they make themselves understood ... with a view toward reaching agreement ... Coming to an understanding, then, is always coming to an

understanding about something. Understanding each other ... is always understanding each other with respect to something. (2004: 180)

Throughout this short quote the mutual aspect of understanding is emphasised. The model offered here is not simply one of X understanding Y, but X and Y being in a *mutual process* of understanding each other. Treating interpersonal understanding in this way and not as a highly individualised pursuit changes the timbre of accounts of interpersonal understanding. Whilst theory theory and simulation theories would not deny that others have an effect on the way in which we understand them, their accounts frame and root interpersonal understanding primarily as an individualised pursuit: I, observing her behaviour, understand her by attributing motivating belief-desire states, which are furnished by particular cognitive processes. Thus, the final arbitration of understanding rests with the individual. Distilled, the individual *observes* a person and then *attributes* mental states to them: in this way understanding is a linear pursuit:

Observation → Cognitive processes → Attribution of mental states

If we apply the insights of Gadamerian hermeneutics, we begin to get an account which encapsulates an ongoing ‘to-ing and fro-ing’ interaction, which, as we saw in Chapter 2, Gallagher and others deem of primary importance in our everyday understanding and dealings with others. Instead of the linear and individualistic process of understanding described by theory and simulation theories, we arrive at the spiral structure of hermeneutics: spiral, since there is a, possibly endless, chance that we will go on refining the pre-judgements which anchor us into the dialogue in the first place.

If we recall the coastal walking scenario: my pre-judgements and understanding of my walking partner are fluid and changeable, according to the context we mutually occupy, our shared activity and interactions which take place within the context: in this case, the quality of our relatedness changes and becomes strained when my walking partner gives me a gentle shove. In this way, we see the spiralling of interaction spiral ‘downward’, as our relations become frosty, so to speak: but recall a conversation in which interlocutors discover and come to the same conclusion; a common occurrence in academia when

colleagues discuss and explore issues together. The coming together and the articulation of new modes of thought progress along this spiral structure.

### **3.3 Conclusion**

In Part 1 (Chapters 1 and 2), I explored the extent to which we can state that interpersonal understanding is not an exclusively internalistic and individualistic enterprise. Having built on the conclusions of Chapter 2, I have shown how understanding ordinarily draws on factors neglected by the third-person accounts of theory and simulation theories. I have suggested how understanding takes place according to two different spheres: on an interactional ‘parochial’ sphere, and also according to a ‘global’ sphere. The latter encompasses certain pre-judgements, and an ability to interpret one’s situation and draw upon past knowledge. The identification of both spheres is important if we are to characterise how everyday understanding occurs.

A negotiation between self and other in the parochial sphere and, further, a revision of the global and parochial spheres in reference to each other facilitates and encourages everyday understanding. In highlighting what form pre-judgements might take and how these fit into and follow from background situatedness and an ability to interpret this, I incorporate neglected elements which play an important part in normal social cognition and apprehension of the other. Understanding, therefore, according to this account, diverges from the supposed linear form delineated in 3.2, and instead becomes spiral by nature as the other influences and affects our understanding across the parochial and global spheres.

While we are now in a position to understand both the value and workings of interaction, we still need to account for the quality of relatedness in interpersonal understanding. As we saw in Chapter 2, accounting for relatedness forms a central role in accounting for how we are able to understand others in the first place. However, we are left with the question of what it is that feeds into, shapes and supports the shifting sense of relatedness which interlocutors hold.

In the chapters that follow I go on to identify and examine two preconditions that feed into and shape the sense of relatedness between people:

phenomenological, intersubjective space and reciprocal embodiment. Following on from this chapter it will emerge that it is not simply a case that individuals possess these two elements which enable interaction to progress: rather, the sense of these elements will both affect and be affected by the interactions we share with others. By exploring these constituents of relatedness, we will be in a position to have a more accurate, more encompassing account of interpersonal understanding.

## CHAPTER 4:

### RELATEDNESS AND SPACE

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*“He shares a community of space with me when he is present in person and I am aware of him as such, and, moreover, when I am aware of him as this person himself, this particular individual, and of his body as the field upon which play the symptoms of his inner consciousness.” (Schutz 1967: 163)*

Whilst Chapter 3 offered a framework according to which we may understand the dynamics of interpersonal understanding, we are still left with the task of accounting for relatedness: to describe more clearly what it is, identify the factors that underlie it, and to show how they come together to create a sense of relatedness. Recent work on intersubjective understanding focuses on the prominent role inhabiting *relations* with others plays in both supporting and enabling interpersonal understanding (Cole 2001; Hobson 2002, 2007a,b; Gallagher 2005; Ratcliffe 2007a,b; Starwarska 2007, 2009; Zahavi 2007a). Chapter 2 stated the importance of ‘relatedness’ for interpersonal understanding. However, there has not been much investigation into what the term denotes and, more importantly, how relatedness is facilitated and sustained.

Going some way toward answering this challenge, this chapter provides a phenomenological exploration of one element that underlies and shapes the quality and progression of relatedness with others. This is intersubjective space, which contributes to creating a context to interaction. In what follows, I explore how this sense of space helps constitute and sustain interpersonal relatedness. In particular, I focus on the ways space shapes our initial engagement and interactions with others. Taking account of space should be an integral part of discussions of interaction and those elements underpinning and shaping it, both in terms of the spaces within which we find ourselves with others, and the ways

in which space provides a framework from which interaction begins and progresses. As yet, such discussions have been largely conspicuous by their absence. In this chapter, I seek to redress this absence through examining how space shapes interaction. I also explore the extent to which our interactions reflect back to shape the way we perceive and act within the spaces we find ourselves. Doing so will flesh out the two-sphere account given in Chapter 3.

In what follows, I move away from more traditional notions of space as static and as a ‘container’ for human interactions. Instead I highlight, explore and emphasise the ways in which spaces are dynamic, and the effects that dynamic interaction have on the spaces we find ourselves in.<sup>88</sup>

Traditionally, philosophical treatments of space focused on space as ‘pure’ or ‘geometrical’ space (Casey 1997). Informed by Euclidean geometrical understandings of space, it characterised space as primarily measurable, in the form that it exists over and apart from any human contribution. Built into this understanding is that space is a dimension which is first and foremost objectively “representable” and “mappable” (Hubbard et.al. 2004: 4). Furthermore, space was understood as the dimension that *contains* all the things, people and events occurring in the world.<sup>89</sup> This understanding of ‘space’ is usually understood in relation to ‘place’. Here space is defined as a pervasive and all encompassing set of dimensions. ‘Place’, on the other hand, signifies a particular locality or region within all pervasive space. Such conceptions tended to characterise space as static (Casey 1997: 141; Massey 2005: 13), and in doing so the ways in which space is ‘lived’ were overlooked (cf. Casey 1997: 222; Malpas 1999: Chapter 1; Massey 2005: Chapter 4, pp. 61ff in particular). Construing space exclusively in this way neglects alternative ways in which we may conceive of space as structuring and structured by human activity and life.

Phenomenological approaches have sought to highlight and rectify this neglect, emphasising how geometrical characterisations of space form an

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<sup>88</sup> To a large extent, the theme of intersubjective spatiality is intimately linked to the theme of Chapter 5: reciprocal embodied expression. Each work together and mutually affect each other in creating a sense of relatedness, so it is in some ways misleading to treat each feature separately. However, a detailed examination is necessary in order to explore the role and workings of relatedness more clearly. I will remark on how these elements come together to shape relatedness over the next two chapters, and more concretely at the end of Chapter 5. In this way, the two chapters that follow offer the beginnings of a study of relatedness and elements that shape, develop and facilitate the sense of relatedness to evolve between interactants.

<sup>89</sup> This understanding of space is referred to as the ‘container model’.

abstraction from a more primordial engagement with space as ‘lived’ or ‘phenomenological’ (see Heidegger 1962: 134-148; Husserl 1970: 29;<sup>90</sup> Merleau-Ponty 1962; Sartre 1958: 322); and ‘social’ (Foucault 1973, 1976;<sup>91</sup> Lefebvre 1991). Such approaches seek to redress the neglect of the ways in which subjects – who are primarily embodied, active agents – ordinarily experience space.<sup>92</sup> Further, how our primary perception of space is shaped by our projects, embodiment and other such elements. Following the lead from these authors, this chapter shall not address so-called ‘Euclidian’ notions of space in terms of pure dimensionality and extension. Rather, I shall focus on the way in which space has meaning for people in an ‘everyday’, pre-theoretical way.

This focus entails adopting a phenomenological standpoint, rather than one of objective reflection. Both methods reveal different, important insights for different ways in which we may view space: one with space as the object of inquiry; one with space as a dimension through which we experience the world. Debates on interpersonal understanding acknowledge the role of being embedded or situated (Clark 1997, 2001; De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007; Gallagher 2001; Hutto 2004; Ratcliffe 2007a; Rosch, Thompson and Varela 1991). However, they do not sufficiently develop an account of the significance which *intersubjective spaces* have for our understanding of – and how we make meaning with – others. The further question of how the spaces we share with other people contribute to the form and quality of relatedness we hold with them must also be addressed.

In talking of ‘intersubjective space’ we can distinguish two aspects:

- (1) The *physical* space in which interactions occur;<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> “All this *pure* mathematics has to do with bodies and the bodily world only through an abstraction, i.e., it has to do only with *abstract shapes* within space-time, and with these, furthermore, as purely ‘ideal’ limit-shapes” (Husserl 1970: 29).

<sup>91</sup> Foucault’s histories explore the relation between particular socially created spaces (prisons, asylums, hospitals), and how power is manifest through spatial construction. Examples he uses include the panopticon (1976) and the changing nature and notions of asylums (1973). In these studies Foucault identifies the scope which spaces have for suggesting and controlling behaviour, whilst showing how this reflects social attitudes toward madness, sexuality, and criminality.

<sup>92</sup> There is also a thriving field which considers how political and economic forces are manifest through spatiality whilst simultaneously influencing how spaces are formed and impact life. (See footnote 98.)

<sup>93</sup> In talking of ‘physical’ space, I mean to acknowledge the *actual* space in which we find ourselves within, and in which the interaction takes place. This first aspect of intersubjective space can, of course, be a social space (home, classroom, restaurant, on the street) or a non-social, natural one (park, mountainside, river bank). Using the categorisations of ‘social’ and ‘natural’ spaces as distinctive raises legitimate questions, as the mountainside may become a ‘social’ space, when we walk through it with others, or remember others who we have been there

(2) The *sense of space* that it suggests constituted between us through interaction.<sup>94</sup>

These different aspects of ‘intersubjective space’ are inextricable. Together, both play active roles in shaping the way in which we interact with and relate to each other. (1) Provides the physical setting in which we approach, meet and interact with others, while (2) describes our awareness of and relationship to things, events and persons located within and affected by (1). Furthermore, (2) is the affective, social, and phenomenal character which the space holds for us. This colours and shapes the way in which we approach and relate to people and things we meet in the space; and our interactions with others will transform the sense of space, which is dynamic.

In this chapter, I want to explore aspects of this awareness that have been hitherto overlooked. In particular, I outline how it impacts upon understanding others. My exploration will focus on the affective, directive, and normative aspects of a sense of intersubjective space. First, I argue that intersubjective space shapes the initial way in which we engage with others (4.3). Second, that dynamic interactions with others shape the *sense* of space in which our interactions occur (4.4). In this way, intersubjective awareness of space is dynamic and fluid: the shared sense of space evolves as interaction progresses, whilst shaping the ways in which interaction will unfold. Our relation to it, and to others, evolves and changes through interaction. Doing so impacts on relatedness which I share with, and feel toward others.

To explore this, after a brief outline of the conceptions of ‘lived space’ forwarded by Heidegger (1962) and Merleau-Ponty (1962), I turn to Sartre’s well-known examples of the park bench and Pierre’s absence from the café (1958). Both examples serve to illustrate how another’s presence or lack thereof, is enough to change the manner in which space, for me, and subsequently for *us*, presents itself. From this, we see how the senses of spaces we occupy are bound up with the degree of relatedness we share with others around us.

From here, I explore several different examples of the dynamic relationship between space and interaction. In each case, I emphasise how an

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with previously. I acknowledge this, and simply use it here as a useful heuristic to make my point.

<sup>94</sup> In what follows all references to space, even ‘physical’ spaces, are phenomenological.

intersubjective sense of space acts as a foundation for interaction. Intersubjective space contains certain normative, functional, and affective directives that guide interactions and form a platform that shapes the way we relate and interact with others. I argue that while phenomenological space encompasses elements of the normative, functional, and affective, it is not reducible to any of these. Rather, these elements literally are a sense of space, and are an intrinsic part of what it is to inhabit a space in a non-pathological way.

At heart, this chapter explores two things: first, the intersubjective space in which interactions occur; and second, the ways interactions with others transform a *sense* of this space. Emerging from the discussion is the way that intersubjective space is vital for, and dynamic throughout, our evolving relations with others.

Before unpacking more fully what is entailed by intersubjective space, I will first explore what is meant by ‘space’, ‘place’, and ‘context’.<sup>95</sup> I indicate what debates on interpersonal understanding stand to gain by talking of space as well as context.

#### **4.1 Space, Place, and Context**

The term ‘space’ takes its place in a wider family of related terms of which ‘context’ forms just one, alongside ‘atmosphere’, ‘field of reference’, ‘place’, and so on.<sup>96</sup> Many recent accounts of interpersonal understanding heavily emphasise the importance of context as a backdrop for interaction (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007; Gallagher 2001, 2004b; Hutto 2004; Ratcliffe 2007a, b; Zahavi 2007a, 2008a). However, there has not been much attention focused on the *spaces* in which interactions occur.

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<sup>95</sup> Chapter 3’s exposition of the hermeneutic account of interpersonal understanding heavily emphasised the importance of context, as a backdrop which holds in place pre-suppositions, or pre-judgements, which form part of the start point for interaction. In this is contained all those social signs and symbols that enable us to make initial sense of the situation and others in that situation. The discussion which follows makes clear why consideration of space adds something important to the account.

<sup>96</sup> For an overview of the ongoing discussions of the importance and definitions of ‘space’ and ‘place’ see: Casey (1997), Massey (2005), Malpas (1999, 2008), Sheldrake (2001).

‘Space’, as a term, has been used in many different ways and has a rich, changing philosophical history.<sup>97</sup> As we saw on p. 132, ‘space’ has primarily been understood according to the ‘container model’. Here space is understood as a neutral dimension that *contains* everything that can be said to occur in the world. We saw that such conceptions of space do not take into account the way in which space shapes and impacts human life, and vice versa. In response to this criticism, other conceptions of space have recently risen to prominence. Moving away from understanding space as a neutral container dimension, theorists have sought to account for the ways in which spaces impact on social, political and human life and activity, and vice versa.<sup>98</sup> Here, abstracted notions of ‘absolute space’ have been called into question and criticised.<sup>99</sup> Terms such as ‘social space’ have muddied the waters of neat distinctions between abstract, pervasive ‘space’ and localised ‘place’. Instead, in using the term ‘social space’ there is the recognition that spaces both shape and are shaped by our human relation to, and life within them.

‘Context’ is a term often used in debates surrounding interpersonal understanding. As it stands, ‘context’ does not necessarily refer to spatiality. Instead, it is most often used to signify a backdrop to events. It is a rich term and may be used to denote different phenomena. For example, talk of ‘context’ could include: an understanding of surroundings and circumstances within which events take place; norms of how to conduct oneself in particular spaces (Morton 2003);<sup>100</sup> assumptions we might make of someone based on their social role or function; social signs and symbols including rules written into our daily lives (for example when driving stopping at a red light, or walking on the pavement rather than the road).<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> See Casey 1997 for a thorough overview.

<sup>98</sup> For example: Foucault 1965, 1973, 1976; Harvey 1973; Lefebvre 1991; Massey 2005.

<sup>99</sup> Lefebvre, in particular, argues that we can never experience such a thing as ‘absolute space’. Instead, he argues, human life entails *positionality*. We are always positioned within spaces: we exist and act within them. These spaces are not primarily abstract spaces, but instead are experienced in terms of activities and the social nuances of our everyday life. Further, he argues that our actions *create* certain spaces, whether these be sacred, profane, or politicised. He refers to this as the social production of space (Lefebvre 1991).

<sup>100</sup> See Morton 2003 for an account of social virtues and how they shape background understanding of others.

<sup>101</sup> See Ratcliffe (2007a, b) for an exploration of the ways these social features form a context that shapes our understanding of others.

‘Context’ is a backdrop to the activity of interaction: it encompasses bodily comportment and gesture, cultural history, cultural practices, political backdrop, social roles, signs and symbols, and norms on how to conduct oneself in particular spaces. As we see from this list, the term ‘context’ fits a wide array of sister concepts, rules, directives and so on. Spatial pre-judgements and directives are just one aspect we might distinguish from ‘context’ in this rich sense. In referring to ‘context’, emphasis rests on structures, both social and non-social, that make a situation meaningful. Context, then, is always a context ‘of’ or ‘for’ a particular activity, occurrence, task or meeting. In this sense, it is a backdrop or setting to a specific occurrence. ‘Context’ is always *relational* to that which it forms a backdrop to. In this sense, the context is anchored in but not reducible to the social space in which our interaction takes place.

The spaces within which we interact shape the context to that interaction. Whilst the context forms the backdrop to the interaction, this takes place and is rooted within a particular space. This space partly constitutes the context of the event. Certain social spaces have normative dimensions that dictate the way we behave and relate to each other. The quaintly cluttered old English teashop in which one might meet a maiden aunt for tea constrains one and amplifies a tendency to engage in polite behaviour, small movements, and general chit-chat. On the other hand, the vista opening out from the saddle of a newly climbed mountain imbues the walkers with the sense of freedom and achievement. The expansiveness of the scene encourages expansiveness in the way the walkers move: large strides, long, slow gazing over the panorama of land around and about. There is an absence of a need to make the chit-chat that seems natural within the teashop; co-walkers are satisfied with sharing a knowing glance. The examples here encompass both social and natural settings, but common to them both is that the spaces – both the space itself and the sense we have of that space – suggest certain ways to interact, both with the spaces and with others.

In this sense ‘context’ and ‘space’ are highly related terms. Space is an inextricable aspect of context without context being reducible to it. Backdrops to an occurrence must always be placed, that is, must have a particular spatial location. Space holds and localises context, and this is often a location in social spaces. Social spaces shape the formation of context. For instance the ways in which social space are physically constructed and normatively imbued shape the

actions that are and are not allowed or sanctioned to occur within that space. The space in which we find ourselves holds certain significances that shape, suggest, and go toward forming the context for our encounter.

In this way, in invoking the term 'space' we signal something more than just a backdrop for interaction and something more specific than 'context'. Not only do we look at the normative, social structures our lives are shaped by and embedded in, but we turn to acknowledge that the spaces themselves both shape and constrain actions and interactions. Context is shaped by social space. To see this, we only have to turn to the philosophy of architecture and spatial planning, which takes as its subject the way the spaces within which people live out their lives impact on and hold affective significance for the way we view, act, and move around in the world. It is this emphasis on the relation between how spaces are constructed and how action, identity, and relationships to and within the space are formed that is of interest to the question of relatedness. The spaces we find ourselves in cannot simply be reduced to the notion of context alone; instead the physical construction of certain spaces, coupled with the way they embody certain norms and suggest guidelines for behaviour scaffolds a sense of space. This affects the sense of space around us, which in turn helps determine the contexts we find ourselves within.

For example, in the Staatoperhaus of Vienna the opulence of the building, constituted and conveyed by the way in which the space is arranged, creates a certain sense of grandiosity and pomp. The arrangement of the rooms, the finesse in which they are decorated, and our awareness of these things combine to form a certain context to any interactions which might ensue. Certain actions, such as loud behaviour, will be 'out of bounds' whilst others will be suggested by the space. The spatial setting inputs and adds to the context to any interactions that follow. In this way, context cannot be seen as free-floating. Our context is rooted within, suggested, and shaped through the manner in which social spaces are achieved, designed and perceived.

In this chapter, I move away from talking about 'context' as separable from space, to 'context' as being hosted within and given identity by social

spaces.<sup>102</sup> I do so in order to call to mind how spatial features and arrangements feed into the context through which we play out our lives and interactions. To think more clearly about the relation between spaces and context, we might conceive of space construction and production as performative of context. What might this mean?

Performative schools of thought (Butler 1993)<sup>103</sup> seek to emphasise how a sense of our own and others' identities are essentially enacted. They claim this is reinforced by the way in which we approach, act within and relate to the spaces we find ourselves in. Moving away from conceiving of space in terms of pure dimensionality, or in Euclidian terms, performative thinkers seek to understand the relation between the social and normative as they are embedded within space. Spaces, according to this school of thought, are made meaningful by social and individual actions, which pool into constructing a specific meaningful space. In this way a church remains a church-space in virtue of the codes of practice that we adopt and perform in that specific space. A strength of such accounts lies in the manner in which they are able to retain the notion of the fluidity of our experience of space. A school sports hall can at different times become a concert hall, a place of assembly, an exam venue, or a place of exercise. Each manifestation of this space has a different 'feel'. This is in part suggested and given by the activities we find ourselves engrossed in, the relation and attitude we take to it, and also the way in which we act. Such accounts are able to embrace and explain the ways in which individuals, groups, and on a larger scale, society, impact on the spaces they act within to make them meaningful.

Such accounts positively emphasise a way in which social action impacts on the way we perceive and give spaces meaning. However, the question as to what underpins the way we shape our actions and interactions in different spaces is left untouched. It is here that an exploration of the synthesis between 'tradition', 'social norms', and 'space' will step in, to build on and advance this notion of performative space. The sense of space is not built anew each time we

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<sup>102</sup> We have already seen that there is a distinction that can be made between Euclidean or physicalist notions of space, which treat space as an object for study, and phenomenological space, which examines our pre-reflective relation to space and the way this shapes our day-to-day experience of the world. In what follows when I use the term 'space' it will be to refer to 'social space' in the phenomenological sense.

<sup>103</sup> Also see Austin (1962) who first uses the term 'performance' in this way.

enter it. A repetition of certain styles of behaviour will serve to reinforce notions of a space as sacred, as profane, as homely, as pressured. However, what is interesting is the manner in which our interactions might change the way we relate to and act within a space temporarily, whilst the sense of space as sacred, profane, pressured, and so on, remains intact. That a child runs around and misbehaves in a public lecture or concert does not cause the meaning of the space to shift. The actions of the child arise out of the collective, intersubjective space, and the activities taking place within it. For the child, the space is one in which the child's parents are concentrating on something other than her, which she cannot understand and therefore finds boring or stressful. In running around, being silly, making inappropriate noises, the child attempts to throw off the oppression that the space suggests for her. Yet, the space still remains one with affective overtones of oppression or boredom.

Later, I will consider the directive nature of spaces and the way in which social norms, the functionality of space, and affective orientation all combine to create a sense of space which directs the way in which we will comport ourselves within that space (4.4). But what are the ramifications for studies of interpersonal relatedness? A sense of space constrains and shapes the way we will begin and enter into interaction with others; it provides and suggests an effective start point from which interaction begins. We shall see by the end of Chapter 5 how it is that our interpersonal interactions may cause an evolution in the sense of space we occupy with others. This in turn affects the quality and type of relatedness we share with others. In this way intersubjective space is not pre-given and static. Instead, the sense of it that we hold, which encapsulates and influences our interactions with others, is dynamic and changeable.

This notion of intersubjective space enables me to explore in depth how the space we find ourselves in forms a basis for the interactions that will occur; they will often instantiate the elements of context, outlined as important for successful interpersonal understanding in Chapter 3. As I am talking about phenomenological, intersubjective, and *lived* space my treatment of space will be concomitant with many of the features which come under the broader heading of 'context'. However, speaking of 'intersubjective space' will perform important philosophical and phenomenological work, since space as an element that affects our interpersonal relations has not been studied in detail. In order to see this, I

first spend time exploring what various phenomenological conceptions of space reveal for our understanding both of spatiality and of relatedness, starting with Heidegger. After this, I move on to deal specifically with intersubjective spaces and the ways they impact on our interactions with others,

## 4.2 Phenomenology and Space

Heidegger reverses the traditional starting point of inquiries into spatiality, moving away from the purely objective, scientific view-point toward our status as ‘Being-in-the-world’ (Heidegger 1962). Heidegger highlights how philosophical treatments of space have been primarily concerned with *geometrical* construals, which he identifies as stemming from an overly Cartesian mode of thought. Working against this, Heidegger challenges exclusive conceptions of space as “neutralised ... pure dimensions” (Heidegger 1962: 147) to emphasise how space is also apprehended as circumspective<sup>104</sup> and essentially lived.

Whilst we *may* conceive of space according to the geometric model, Heidegger states that ability to do so is underpinned and enabled by a prior ‘working’ familiarity with space understood relative to Dasein’s projects, activities, and involvements within a world. Doing so emphasises our status as Beings who are ‘already alongside’ and immersed *within* a world. This world is shaped both by intersubjectivity and practical engagement.<sup>105</sup> Heidegger stresses the way space suggests possibilities for actions, projects, and goals. We experience things (equipment),<sup>106</sup> Heidegger states, in terms relative to us:

A three dimensional multiplicity of possible positions which gets filled up with Things present-at-hand is never proximally given. This

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<sup>104</sup> Heidegger uses the term ‘circumspection’ (Umsicht) to mean something quite specific. Literally translated, it means ‘looking around’. Heidegger uses this term to refer to the way in which we apprehend things and our environment holistically, in terms of our projects and concerns. See the entry on ‘Sight and Circumspection’ in Inwood (1999) for an in-depth exploration of this term.

<sup>105</sup> See Malpas (2008: 105ff) for an in-depth exploration.

<sup>106</sup> ‘Equipment’ is a term Heidegger uses to emphasise our practical engagement with ‘things’ or ‘objects’. Reversing the subject-object standpoint which he attributes to classical philosophy, Heidegger uses ‘equipment’ to re-characterise this relation and describe the pre-reflective manner in which Dasein encounters entities. He stresses that we do not usually encounter entities as ‘objects’, but instead as ‘equipment’ which is infused with social and practical meaning, and which presents practical possibilities and significance for Dasein. See Chapter 2.2c.

dimensionality of space is still veiled in the spatiality of the ready-to-hand. The 'above' is what is 'on the ceiling'; the 'below' is what is 'on the floor'; the 'behind' is what is 'at the door'; all 'wheres' are discovered and circumspectively interpreted as we go our ways in everyday dealings; they are not ascertained and catalogued by the observational measurement of space. (1962: 136-137)

As was saw in Chapter 2, Heidegger outlines three ways we can conceive of world:

(1) That which is made up by the totality of things (beings) in the world (tables, chairs, bodies, doorstops, rivers etc.);

(2) The ways these things relate to create a totality; and

(3) As '*Welt*': a term to signify the world that holds pre-reflective meaning for us, which is simply the everyday world we live in. It is this third conception of 'world' he states reflects our everyday relationship with world (1962: 93).<sup>107</sup>

But what implications does this have for understandings of space?

Heidegger's description of our everyday, pre-reflective experience of the world as *Welt* also cradles his approach to space. "Because Dasein is spatial", Heidegger writes, "space shows itself as a priori." (Heidegger 1962: 146) Heidegger goes on to explain that spaces are revealed to us in relation to activities we are engaged and involved in: what Heidegger calls 'regions of activity'.<sup>108</sup> Groupings of equipment become salient in the field of action, to create regions of activity. Instead of seeing space as all-pervasive and neutral, we encounter workshops, offices, or markets. Our apprehension of space depends on how we act, relate to others and how equipment appears as useful. In this way, emphasis is placed on the manner in which spaces are shared and public, and in which Dasein is ordinarily immersed.<sup>109</sup> In this way, space is coloured and made

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<sup>107</sup> See Chapter 2 (pp.86-89) for a full exploration.

<sup>108</sup> See Husserl (1989) and also Heidegger's treatment and exploration of 'regions' of space (1962: 135ff and Section 70, page 418ff).

<sup>109</sup> See Healey et. al. (2008: 1723).

significant by Dasein's projects and, more generally, in virtue of their Being-in-the-world.<sup>110</sup>

Dasein is essentially not a Being-present-at-hand; and its 'spatiality' cannot signify anything like occurrence at a position in 'world space', nor can it signify Being-ready-to-hand at some place. Both of these are kinds of Being which belong to entities encountered within-the-world. Dasein, however, is 'in' the world in the sense that it deals with entities encountered within-the-world, and does so concernfully and with familiarity. So if spatiality belongs to it in any way, that is possible only because of this Being-in. (Heidegger 1962: 138)

Heidegger expresses Dasein's spatiality in terms of what he terms "de-severance" (1962: 139-141). In opposition to geometrical understandings of space as primarily objectively measurable and divorced from our activities, Dasein's "essential de-severance" (1962: 139) signifies the manner in which entities in space appear *close*, or in Heidegger's terminology 'ready-to-hand'.<sup>111</sup> In using the term 'close' here Heidegger is once more underlining the nature of Dasein as involved and immersed in its surroundings. Spatiality is not ordinarily experienced as divorced, objective, and ungraspable. Instead entities are experienced in space in terms of regions of 'concernfulness' and practicality (Heidegger 1962: 140).

In this way, Heidegger seeks to challenge what he identifies as the privilege that he believes philosophy has previously placed on the detached, objective standpoint from which we have tended to describe space. Instead, being in space is a matter of belonging to a meaningful environment that we are 'always already' acting in. For Heidegger "[b]elonging-somewhere has an essential relationship to involvement" (1962: 420).<sup>112</sup> Consequently, a Heideggerian approach prioritises an exploration of the ways in which space is 'lived', rather than as abstracted from our activities and dealings in the world.

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<sup>110</sup> See this thesis Chapter 2.2c; and Ratcliffe 2007a, Chapter 4 for an in-depth discussion of this of Heidegger's conception of 'Being-in-the-world'.

<sup>111</sup> That is as relevant, usable, graspable, meaningful, and practically navigable to Dasein.

<sup>112</sup> See Malpas (2008: 105-106) for an in-depth discussion of this.

From Husserl and Merleau-Ponty we gain an analysis of how our bodily phenomenology impacts on the way we perceive and conceive of space. Husserl makes clear that though we can conceive of space in terms divorced from our subjectivity and capacity for action, this conception of space is not reflective of how we ordinarily find ourselves engaged in a bodily way in the world. He writes:

External space (*der Aussenraum*) is homogeneous, even though it presents itself as oriented in various ways ... *But the lived body and its bodily space breaks the homogeneity asunder.* (Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität: Book 1: 239).<sup>113</sup>

This emphasis on space, as ordinarily experienced, being a primarily *embodied* space is also taken up and developed by Merleau-Ponty, who, writing against what he terms the ‘intellectualist’ (rationalist) approach of “spatialising space” and ‘empiricist’ conceptions of space as “spatialised” seeks to explore the way space is constructed in virtue of a subject’s embodiment and activities.<sup>114</sup>

In doing so, Merleau-Ponty echoes and reinforces the contention of Husserl and Heidegger, that geometrical space is not reflective of how we ordinarily perceive, act within, and interact with space in a pre-reflective manner.<sup>115</sup> Merleau-Ponty identifies and rejects the dichotomy drawn between these two modes of space as ‘spatialising’ and ‘spatialised’, stating that we cannot constrain our descriptions of space to a choice between one and the other. Instead, Merleau-Ponty argues that space is ordinarily presented to us as “lived space”. The ability to conceive of space as either spatialised or spatialising presupposes our experience of lived space.<sup>116</sup> Sharing the approach of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty argues that the way space is experienced is inextricably tied with our bodily phenomenology. Lived space is “a sensible, a meaningful relation

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<sup>113</sup> Translation by Casey (1997: 220). Also see Husserl (1989: 195-199) for his exploration of the lived body and the practical relation we have with the world in everyday activity.

<sup>114</sup> The former being a reduction of space to the relations between things, the latter evoking geometrical conceptions of space as Newtonian absolute space (see Merleau-Ponty 1962: 115-116; Toadvine 2009: 97).

<sup>115</sup> “Geometrical space is space as thought rather than space as directly experienced. Geometry is the abstract mathematics of space. Merleau-Ponty is suggesting that it is in reflection rather than perception that I am presented with space as a single, indivisible whole” (Priest 1998: 103).

<sup>116</sup> See Toadvine (2009: 97) for an exploration of Merleau-Ponty’s argument.

formed between the body and its environment” (Toadvine 2009: 97-98). Our spaces are defined and experienced in terms of our embodiment and activities: things may appear near or far, as above or below, left or right according to the ways in which our body inhabits and “gears into” the world, creating this lived space (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 293-294).

Phenomenological conceptions and understandings of space approach the ways in which we, as active agents in a meaningful world, are shaped by, and in turn shape, the way in which we engage with the world. A common thread throughout the writings discussed above is the way in which involvement in activity, or the ability to be involved in activity, reveals and carves up space for us. However, a question emerges about the extent to which we ought to view activity as centrally revelatory and constructive of space. Below, I turn to examine the way intersubjective interactions impact upon how we perceive space. When we take this seriously, we see that the spaces we occupy are fluid, and can be shaped by the interactions that take place within them.

Also, in considering Heidegger’s phenomenological analysis of space we must be aware of different modes of activity and their roles in revealing space to us. Contemplating a sunset, making a table, walking at night, and writing an essay are very different activities that reveal spaces to us in differing ways. In these examples, space may be experienced as breathtakingly beautiful, as lonely, threatening, or work-like. Space can be expansive or claustrophobic, depending on our activities, our engagement with others, and our bodily phenomenology. When we begin to think more closely about the relation between spaces, activity and others, we begin to see that there are multiple ways of apprehending space, according to different layers of engagement and different levels of involvement.

This is made more apparent when turning to examine the ways people may feel alienated from a sense of space as meaningful. Studies of schizophrenia (Blankenburg 2002; Minkowski 1970; Sass 2001; Sechehaye 1970) and depression (Ratcliffe 2009) illustrate the complicated nature of the ways in which space is experienced as meaningful for individuals.<sup>117</sup> Whilst Heidegger situates his phenomenological analysis of space within the wider context of world as one

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<sup>117</sup> Examination of cases in which the meaningfulness of space fragments or distorts highlights the way in which lived space ordinarily provides a configuring and meaningful backdrop to interaction. See Chapters 6 and 7 for an exploration of distortions in the experience of space in schizophrenia and depression.

in which we are always ‘with’ others, there is not sufficient consideration of the ways in which others (either through joint activity, or simply just by the presence of others) shape the ways in which space is revealed. We must also account for the way in which others *revise* a sense of the spaces we occupy. I now turn to examine examples from Sartre that acknowledge the manner in which other people can morph the sense of the space we occupy. Space, under these examples, is *dynamic*.

Sartre gives us a way into considering the dynamics of interpersonal space. In the sections that follow, using phenomenological examples, I draw out the ways in which space directs our interactions and reciprocally, the way our interactions cause an evolution in the way we perceive space. Space is revealed, not only as ‘lived’ and ‘intersubjective’, but dynamic and fluid in virtue of the intersubjective interactions it hosts.

### 4.3 Phenomenological Space and Intersubjectivity

The previous section explored how several writers in the phenomenological tradition seek to understand space and the relation the lived body has toward it. A common theme emphasised is practicality, and the ways that space is revealed to us in terms of our activities, projects and dealings with the world we find ourselves in. For Merleau-Ponty and Husserl, this must always be an embodied involvement, which structures and scaffolds how space appears to us.<sup>118</sup> However, whilst attention is devoted to the ways the body scaffolds perception of space for individuals, there is not much exploration of how intersubjectivity affects the ways we inhabit, perceive, and make sense of the spaces we find ourselves interacting in. There is also the question of how intersubjective interactions impact on space we share with others. Heidegger does place the notion of shared world<sup>119</sup> at the centre of his phenomenology. However, his account does not take into account how engagement with others can change the sense we have of ‘world’. For this reason, further development of the ways we find ourselves dynamically engaging with others in space, and how

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<sup>118</sup> I return to this theme in depth in Chapter 5, in which I synthesise discussion of the importance of space for relatedness, with that of embodiment, to offer a richer working picture of how relatedness between interlocutors is shaped and morphs through interaction with others.

<sup>119</sup> In his characterisations of Equipment and *Mitsein* (Being-with-others).

this impacts and shapes us, is needed. This is particularly important in accounting for relatedness and the dynamics of interaction.

This is also the case within literature addressing interaction theory and participatory sense-making. Whilst both acknowledge that our interactions and exchanges with others are rooted within and informed by social situatedness, we need to go further and spell out how this situatedness impacts on our interactions.<sup>120</sup> However, we saw in the introduction to this chapter that there has been a move away from conceiving of space as static, instead emphasising the fluidity and dynamic nature of inhabiting spaces. To arrive at a fuller understanding of how situatedness influences and contributes toward understanding others, we need to explore the way the spaces in which interactions take place shape interaction, and also how our interactions shape and override the spaces we interact within. To do so is to explore the non-static nature of being situated in social space, and can help to understand how spaces can be intersubjective.

Examples of how spaces may be revealed and modified through others are to be found in Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1958). The sketches of Pierre's absence in the café (10-11), and of the encounter with the stranger on the park bench (254) both illustrate the manner in which expectations one has regarding others tacitly work to configure the way in which we perceive space. In the first example, which Sartre primarily uses to explore the 'origin of negation', a man waits for his friend, Pierre, to show up in a café.

The expectation of the presence of Pierre is frustrated, revealing his absence as a tangible reality. The crowds of people huddled around tables, the noise they make, the activity bustling around the individual fade into the background, as Pierre's absence looms to the fore. The space the individual occupies is given and constituted in terms of their expectation, namely the expectation of Pierre to either be there, or to arrive imminently. Extending the example, we might consider the way in which our awareness of the space around us is partly constituted by this expectation. The space becomes one of expectation in the light of the absent-other. Pierre's absence and expected arrival serve to reveal the café in a whole new, non-neutral light. Each swing of the door

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<sup>120</sup> That is apart from acknowledging that they will help form the entry point into our interactions with others.

becomes salient: is it Pierre? Perhaps the activities you attempt to engage yourself in are shallow and do not ultimately win your attention. The newspaper becomes something to hide behind, perhaps to disguise the fact that you have been stood up. As Sartre writes, the café “slips into the background” (1958: 10), and elements of this background appear salient or otherwise in relation to the possibility of their revealing something of Pierre. In short, the affective feel of the space takes the quality of expectation or perhaps disappointment in virtue of the quality of relatedness, or lack thereof displayed in this example, one shares with another. The space is an intersubjective one despite the other person not being present, as their absence creates and shapes the affective backdrop to my waiting.

In the case of the park bench, the realisation of the proximity of another agent brings on a radical shift in the felt-space as the walker realises that the spaces he has been moving through are for others, not just for himself; and so hold certain possibilities which might frustrate his own. Sartre describes this as a radical shift, or lurch in the way the world is constructed for the walker. This is a change in felt-possibility; for Sartre, the space comes to be experienced as belonging to the Other, with oneself as one of their objects.<sup>121</sup>

Whilst this is a seemingly pessimistic view of how others frame our experience of space,<sup>122</sup> there are certain points to be gained from such examples. First, phenomenological, intersubjective space is primarily an affective space, which serves to make elements within it salient. Secondly, the presence of others reveals spaces as normatively laden: there is an imposition on the actions we will deem acceptable or unacceptable; and these norms will frame our actions and the ways we will think about ourselves and others within that space. Thirdly, in these examples, spaces are dynamic in virtue of the varying degrees of relations we share with others in them: the café space is revealed as empty, or as containing

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<sup>121</sup> For Sartre, this experience is one which is necessarily bodily. It reveals a sense of myself as I appear, as a body, before the other. In the next chapter, I explore Sartre’s characterisation of intersubjectivity as both bodily and spatial. Whilst Sartre makes the important point of the inextricability of spatiality and bodily awareness in intersubjectivity, I claim he does not fully appreciate the ways in which spaces can be ‘ours’; and in which normativity regulates and shapes the way we inhabit spaces both alone and together.

<sup>122</sup> In focusing on how the other robs a sense of one’s possibility Sartre does not, for example, consider the ways in which others may open up a sense of possibilities in our space, or the ways in which we might see the space as *ours*, as for instance when we work together to achieve a joint-project.

an air of acceptance, the park appears as no longer ‘solely for myself’ in virtue of my relation to the others either within or absent from the scene. Again, this is at odds with the purely geometrical conceptions of space seen earlier. But we must ask how else space constrains and scaffolds a sense of relatedness.

#### 4.4 Space and Relatedness

The examination of Sartre’s examples in the previous section is useful; through them we begin to see the ways in which others shape our perception of space. However, the examples explored are somewhat individualistic: they centre on the experience of individuals and do not take account of the way in which *mutual* interactions might effect revision of a sense of space. It now falls to us to draw the strands of the discussion together to shed light on the nature of interpersonal interactions, relatedness, and experience of space.

In order to do this, an exploration of the ways in which we impact and are impacted by the spaces we pre-reflectively find ourselves in is needed. We saw that for Heidegger, space is an orienter: it forms a meaningful backdrop to activities, within which our actions make sense. However, going beyond this, I claim that space not only orients, but *directs*.

The directive nature of space is particularly important when we come to account for elements that underpin and enable an evolving sense of relatedness to occur between interactants. The manner in which interactants are able to relate to others is dependent on the spaces in which they find themselves and the relation they take and develop towards this space.<sup>123</sup> In this way, phenomenological space not only orients, but frames the scope and starting point of interaction: the spaces we interact within provide an appropriate ground basis, from which interaction will begin; and will also shape and modify the way in which the interaction, and sense of relatedness morphs and progresses.

The previous paragraph identified two central roles space plays in interpersonal interaction: (1) it specifies appropriate grounds on which interaction may begin, and (2) it shapes ways that interaction may develop. Both

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<sup>123</sup> Another interesting line of inquiry, which I do not pursue here, is interaction that takes place in non-face-to-face contexts, through digital media or technology, and the extent to which we might still recognise space as a framing factor to our interactions.

of these points follow from the directionality of space, which impacts on intersubjective encounters. The sense one has of space involves at least the following inextricable elements: normativity, functionality, and affectivity. Each combine to make salient certain modes of – and possibilities for – behaviour, action, and interaction.

We can see this more clearly with an example: imagine yourself in a church. In being sensitive to the space we occupy, being in the church immediately shapes our behaviour, and the possibilities of behaviour we deem appropriate are intimately related to the space we find ourselves within (normative directive): we would not run around and speak loudly, but adopt a respectful quietness which might show itself not only in the volume with which we speak or move, but may manifest itself in a slowing down of movement, or an increased feeling of stillness. The church-space, which is for worship, communal or private, personal reflection, or to aid a sense of peace, reinforces certain norms and standards of behaviour which together also signal and suggest an affective atmosphere, whether it be of spirituality, boredom, or stuffiness (functional and affective directives).

This is not to say that we never refuse the claims that certain spaces place upon us. Staying with the church example, we might run around, be silly or conduct loud conversations. The interesting thing to note is the response this solicits in the people also sharing the space. If it is a child creating the disturbance, there is no doubt that they will pretty quickly and sharply be told off and to ‘behave properly’; if it is an adult, the individual will be showered with disapproving looks, or cause hostile shuffling and body language from the inhabitants of the church who are trying to concentrate on their own activities. The disturbance calls forth and tacitly solicits a shift in the body language and activity of the church occupants, reflecting disapproval. When the individual causing the disturbance feels this, it contributes tacitly to a reinstatement of the behavioural norms governing the space.

Through this example it becomes easier to see the extent to which the space encapsulates normativity (an expectation of how one behaves in a church), functionality (what the church-space is appropriately used for) and affectivity (the mood governing the church is displaced and then restored after tacit body

signalling from disgruntled occupants of the church). We also see how these three elements are interrelated, and how they in turn reinforce one another.

This example shows us the intersubjective nature of many spaces. Their continued identity relies on a continuation in invested meaning, by which, in acting a certain way in a specific space, we continue to construct and give life to the certain space's identity (recall the notion of 'performativity' from Section 4.1). Its identity and meaning are partially created through the exchanges we hold within them, which go on to reveal the space in a new light, and through the meaning we invest in them. However, as already mentioned, this is not a one-way event. The invested meaning in that space becomes live, shaping and directing the way in which we conduct ourselves. In this way, space and interaction are entangled in a complex, symbiotic relationship.

Space configures and makes salient certain courses or possibilities of action, whilst also affecting the way individuals express themselves bodily in relation to the space they occupy. The adoption of certain bodily demeanours impacts the way we will interact with others. If a friend approaches me in the church-space, we may be conscious that any conversation we have will disturb the sense, or atmosphere, of the space. In light of this, we may huddle close to talk, keeping our voices to a whisper, restrain any vigorous movements, and keep the conversation short.

Lefebvre captures this sense of space as directive when he writes: "social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others" (1991: 73). Phenomenological, intersubjective spaces reveal certain possibilities for behaviour, action, and intersubjectivity as salient, or appropriate, whilst actively cutting off and curtailing others. Another example helps clarify this further. Let us return to the library example of Chapter 3 and say more about how pre-suppositions that feed into understanding are often suggested by and encapsulated within the interactional spaces. In Chapter 3 I drew on the example of being in a library and running into a friend (p. 120); we saw that 'in observing that my friend is not talking to me I might first consider that he is rude until I realise we are in a library, in which no one should talk.' Instead the social norm pertaining to the space directs my understanding of the other, to the extent to which I think nothing of my friend's silence. Entailed in recognition of our situation is a tacit presupposition that he cannot talk to me

because of library user norms: thus the pre-judgment is supplied both in relation to the functionality of the space and according to the social conventions governing the way we occupy the space.

The functional and normative directives of the space reinforce and reference each other. They combine to create and add to the sense of the space: the functionality of a space (library used for work and research) is intimately related to and reinforced by the norms governing the space (quiet is maintained to facilitate this). In this case pre-judgements, related to the spaces we find ourselves in, are salience providers; they shape our understanding of others. Moreover, they dictate the terms on which my engagement with them should begin and progress, and specify certain types of appropriate behaviour. Chapter 3 outlined how interaction begins with certain pre-judgements, which form a background against and through which our rudimentary understanding of others is constituted, which we see here are often suggested by the spaces we find ourselves interacting within. It is through the course of our interaction that these pre-judgements are revised, affirmed or abandoned through dynamic engagement with others.

I have already suggested how a revision of pre-suppositions in the parochial, interactional sphere (between people) causes a revision in that of the global (the way in which I relate to the wider context-space I am situated within) (Chapter 3). So we see that though spaces offer normative and functional directives about how we ought to behave to others and the style in which we might interact with them, these are revised and abandoned, or reinforced, as the interaction gets going. In meeting a new colleague at a work party, we might at first be overly polite, attentive, routine in the questions we ask them, until the flow of our conversation and interaction takes over, allowing me to forget my stiff posture, or the fact that I want to make a good impression on them as we find genuine mutual enjoyment in the unfolding of our conversation. I might loosen my tie, and perch on a desk, forgetting the 'formal' work environment in which we interact. The sense of relatedness becomes closer, and is infused by my interest in the new person. In this way, our ongoing interaction in the parochial sphere overrides the formality that is initially suggested by the relation I have to my global sphere (the space I find myself in, imbued with significances of work etc).

Let us consider another example from Chapter 3. This time, imagine yourself in a café, meeting an old acquaintance over coffee. In settling down to meet them, we expect to make general chit-chat, or to catch up because that is what one does over coffee. Shouting insults at your coffee partner, on the other hand, is usually ruled out by what the social space demands or deems appropriate.<sup>124</sup> However, we can identify a variety of ways in which we meet different types of people (old or long-lost friends, current friends, business meeting, date, social meeting between colleagues, and so on) in which different forms of behaviour are appropriate or inappropriate, and in which we may expect different things from our partner, depending on the existing level, quality, and type of relationship we share with the person we are meeting.

Here we begin to see the different strata of background and pre-judgments at play, which are fluid and change through my engagement with the other. As conversation progresses, I may realise that expectations I held of my partner are unwarranted. This revision of pre-suppositions is reincorporated into my general background conception of the other and our situation, and causes a modification in the way in which I approach or view my partner. This may in turn cause a modification in the way in which I perceive the space in which our interaction takes place.

The point to be drawn from this is that the influence of space on interpersonal relations is not static, but dynamic, and in constant revision: whilst the spaces we occupy and find ourselves in suggest certain codes and standards of behaviour, the sense of our evolving relations can ultimately over-ride or morph the ways in which we perceive and relate to the spaces within which we find ourselves. In this way the directive elements of spaces that shape, suggest and curtail the possibilities of relating to others in various ways, are not insurmountable.

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<sup>124</sup> In this way, if our friend annoys or angers us, we might bite a lip turning our anger inward in order to avoid 'making a scene'. The norms of behaviour of the social space preclude airing out grievances and holding a public argument.

## 4.5 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have sought to demonstrate that our experience of space, and the way in which interactions with others modify a sense of space, constitutes a distinctive and interesting, yet underexplored, experiential category. After looking at accounts of lived space from Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, I suggested that examining the ways in which space and experience of space are *dynamic* and *intersubjective* adds to our understanding of the way in which we perceive and inhabit 'lived' space. Furthermore, I suggested that examining intersubjective 'phenomenological space' has special relevance for, and may enhance, accounts of interaction and participatory sense-making, which, whilst acknowledging the importance of context, have not fully considered the ways in which *spaces* constrain and structure interaction.

## CHAPTER 5:

### RELATEDNESS AND RECIPROCAL BODILY EXPRESSIVITY

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*“In the relation between the body and the world, neither of the two is second ... Thus, the pre-reflective body and pre-reflective world are united as in a dialogue.” (Van den Berg 1972: 58)*

Chapter 4 showed how relatedness is formed in part by the spaces we find ourselves in with others. Intersubjective, lived space shapes the way we apprehend ourselves and others and the way in which we will interact with them. The previous chapter also showed that lived space is dynamic: our apprehension of it, and others within it, changes all the time. The task remaining for this chapter is to understand how this occurs and in what ways it supports and shapes a sense of relatedness.

In what follows, I argue that whilst intersubjective space provides an appropriate backdrop which shapes the way in which we engage with others, mutual bodily expressivity and resonance causes a transformation in the way in which space is perceived. Affective responsiveness to others displayed through bodily interaction is central to developing a dynamic and changing sense of relatedness between interlocutors. Chapter 4 has already outlined the ways in which Husserl and Merleau-Ponty argue bodily phenomenology impacts on the way we perceive and conceive of space (see Chapter 4.2 (p.144ff)). However, in what follows, I want to emphasise the way in which space and bodily phenomenology impact each other to shape and modify a sense of relatedness; we see that intersubjective lived space and bodily responsiveness to others are inextricably bound in creating and transforming a sense of relatedness.

Bodily movement and expression must always be placed. Intersubjective space provides the appropriate grounds for bodily interaction. Yet the way in which we move, express, and comport ourselves toward others and the way in

which others resonate with our movements can cause a transformation in the way in which we perceive space.<sup>125</sup> The initial sense interlocutors have of the space may change, or be reinforced, as bodily interaction between interlocutors gets going.

In order to examine the inextricability of phenomenological space and bodily expressivity for relatedness, let us begin with two examples which have featured at varying points in this thesis. Example 1 is that of when working is disturbed in a public library, whilst example 2 is of two friends meeting to catch up in a coffee shop:

*Example 1: Library*

Imagine a library during exam and revision season. The various rooms in the library take on a particular intersubjective spatial feel. The space is related to the task at hand for many of its occupants: to be the site of last minute cramming and serious learning. In virtue of this, the library becomes an intense working environment. The orientation of each occupant of each filled chair is intensely focused in a way which is often missing in ordinary term-time. The silence is heightened to a background hum, which comes to the fore in absence of any other distracting noise. Although each student in this environment works individually, the space is, nevertheless, an intersubjective one. The closed off body language, the heightened and focused intent on the page in front of each person, allows them to form an individual world, which is, nevertheless, a shared one. All the individual workers form a collective according to their mutual goals: to do enough work to pass and do well in their exams.

This implicit intersubjective and mutual characterisation of the newly defined library-space becomes clear as soon as an individual breaks the rule of the collective, by holding a conversation without whispering or trying to keep quiet. In breaking the unspoken rules of the intersubjective space, the social dynamic is changed. The library-workers emerge from their intensely focused work to exchange irritable glances with their fellow injured co-workers. When

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<sup>125</sup> As we saw in the church example of Chapter 4 (p.150).

the unspoken balance of the environment is disturbed, the people within the environment emerge as co-workers, as – taking a Heideggerian line of thought – the ready-to-hand feel to the space occupied is damaged. It is often swiftly restored however, when the bodily interaction between the injured parties suggests that the disruptive individual is unwelcome. Their body language becomes hostile and tense, and when it is noticed, the person who caused the disturbance ceases to be disruptive, and the working environment is restored. It is in this way that the actions and subsequently the interactions of individuals in the library combine to retain the sense of space as a working environment.

In this example, we see how the intersubjective space demands certain things of the people within it. In the last chapter I referred to these as the normative constraints of the space. In this scenario, this is typified most clearly by the expectation to remain respectful of the quiet working environment. The normative constraints of the space demarcate an appropriate way which those within the space may, and may not, conduct themselves, and how they should interact with others: the prerogative is not to disturb the people around. This example explores what happens when someone gets this wrong or seeks to ignore the normative constraints of the space. The person who behaves disruptively causes a response which is manifest in the bodily comportment and expressivity of the co-workers. In this way, this example is one of bodily interactions which *maintain* and seek to restore the particular spatial feel once this has been disturbed. We see that the spaces we find ourselves within direct us to behave in certain ways, and the bodily interactions of people in that space may change or retain the sense we have of it.

### *Example 2: Coffee Shop*

To make this even clearer, imagine the following situation first referred to in Chapter 3: you and a friend are in a coffee shop, meeting to catch up. At first, as the conversation gets going, our interactions are open, plodding and lazy, until the friend reveals that she has some news to share. The way the friend looks round the coffee shop to gauge where people are, the way she lowers her voice which gains a darker, more secretive edge, the way she leans into the table

towards me, the way she bites her lip and shields her mouth with her hand as she proceeds to whisper her secret to me all combine, both spontaneously and emblematically, to create a *conspiratorial space* between us, in which and to which I respond, in a similar manner.

This, then sets the tone for a particular type of interpersonal interaction, and colours my understanding of what she communicates. Already, before the friend has started to verbalise her secret, I know it is serious. In recognising this affective content, I respond to it by reciprocating her bodily comportment, illustrating to her that I understand the seriousness of the communication. This encourages a shift in the particular interactive relation we share, which becomes one of confidant and confider.

In this example, what is of interest is the relation between the changing phenomenological space inhabited by us both and the course of the type of relation we share. The spatial setting becomes the background for the verbal, overt communication and my understanding of what my friend will communicate. The space which we share, so recently tacitly defined as conspiratorial by our reciprocal bodily interactions, opens up a meaning. This colours not only what she will proceed to communicate with an air of urgency, but also the newly evolved relation we actually share.

From these examples we see that bodily responsiveness to one's interlocutor's bodily expressivity is important for establishing, maintaining, and modifying a sense of relatedness between us. Particularly in the second example, we see how sensitively responding to the bodily expressivity of one's interlocutor serves to propel the development of both our interaction and our sense of relatedness. Taking the second example: we meet as friends yet, through the bodily interaction which follows, the sense of our relatedness changes as my interlocutor confides something to me. This changes the way in which I perceive the space about us. Whilst my friend and our conversation occupy my full attention, my awareness of elements of the space and things within it retreat to the background. I cease to notice the music or the awkward position of my chair as I become engrossed in our unfolding conversation.

In this way, in the language of the hermeneutic account, events in the interactional, parochial sphere override and cause a change to the way in which I apprehend and understand the global sphere. A tacit recognition of emotional

responsivity as displayed through the body helps reconstitute a *background dimension* to our interactions, which I have referred to as intersubjective space. This sets the scene or adds a particular flavour to the direct, overt communication and interactions, which are then shaped by and contained within this space. In creating this space in which overt interaction begins and proceeds, gesturing tacitly sets up and guides the course that our interaction takes.

## **5.1 The Inextricability of the Body and Interpersonal Understanding**

### ***(a) Sartre and Young***

But how can we go about understanding this? Both Sartre (1958) and Young (2005) offer accounts of intersubjectivity which essentially involve embodiment and spatiality. What is more, their accounts reveal the different and diverse ways according to which this happens. Emphasis on the diversity of the transformation of space and bodily phenomenology is a positive element of these accounts. Ordinarily, others transform our sense of space in a myriad of ways. However, what they both recognise, but do not develop, is that our interactions and exchanges with others impact on the way in which space is apprehended.

In this section, I first examine Sartre's account of bodily intersubjectivity and then turn to Young. After this, we will be in a position to take their insights and offer an interpretation which I argue complements my account of how intersubjective space and bodily responsiveness to others informs and transforms a sense of relatedness between interlocutors.

Sartre advances three main ways of Being:

- (1) In-itself
- (2) For-itself
- (3) For-Others (1958: 306ff)

The third mode of self-consciousness, as for-others, describes the interpersonal instances in which I am aware of myself as apprehended by others. This, for Sartre, always involves a bodily dimension. Perceiving and being perceived by another person is not, Sartre says, like apprehending the grass over there, or this table (1958: 257). When we perceive another person, we first and foremost encounter their *transcendence*. Sartre distinguishes between two types of being which he labels the in-itself (immanence) and for-itself (transcendence), and states these are at conflict in this particular interpersonal instance. In perceiving ourselves before the other, we feel an overwhelming sense of appearing to the other *as* a body, *something* that may be apprehended, and judged by them:

[T]he Other accomplishes for us a function of which we are incapable and which nevertheless is incumbent on us: *to see ourselves as we are*. (Sartre 1958: 353-354)

‘Looking at’ someone thus denies what Sartre would call their transcendence, reducing them, in the other’s eyes to the level of the in-itself or ‘object’ (1958: 262-265). Sartre describes this phenomenon most vividly and famously in his example of the peeping Tom caught in the act. Prior to the arrival of the other, the voyeur, engrossed utterly in her activities does not retain a reflective awareness of herself. She exists and is bound up with her activities. It is only when she hears a creak on the stair and realises that someone else is present and witnessing her that the situation changes. Self-awareness floods the individual. In the presence of the other’s gaze, she sees herself as she is seen. The ‘flow’ of her activity is lost, and she becomes fixed in the light of the activity.<sup>126</sup> Sartre writes:

Shame reveals to me that I am this being, not in the mode of ‘was’ or of ‘having to be’ but *in-itself* [...] Once more the nihilating escape of the for-itself is fixed, once more the in-itself closes in upon the for-itself ...

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<sup>126</sup> Sartre states that involved in this moment is “recognition ... that I am as the other sees me.” (1958: 222)

Thus for the Other, I have stripped myself of my transcendence. (1958: 262)

Encapsulated within this is the idea that my body is available to be looked at by the other, as a material object. For Sartre, this gives the other a power over me. Through their gaze I am reminded of the materiality of my body. Their gaze, in revealing this aspect of myself, objectifies me and ‘fixes’ my sense of my own possibilities. Sartre describes this process as involving feeling oneself as spatialised: “The Other’s look” he writes “confers spatiality on me. To apprehend oneself as looked-at is to apprehend oneself as a spatialising-spatialised” (1958: 266). That is, the structure of ‘being-seen-by-the-other’ is one of alienation: the individual is alienated from a sense of their transcendence, as one for whom things within space afford certain possibilities (spatialising). Instead, in being-looked-at, one experiences oneself as one is, there, in that moment as one appears to the other. The effect of this is objectification (the person is ‘spatialised’). In this way, bodily phenomenology, especially as revealed through being-for-others, is inextricably linked to changes in how spatiality is experienced and structured. Sartre describes this in the already discussed example of apprehending the man on the park bench (Sartre 1958: 254-255; Chapter 4.3).

Sartre is careful to note that looking-at and being-looked-at always happens in situation (1958: 344).<sup>127</sup> What is more, the relationship between the body and situation is interestingly developed, and complements the account of direct perception supported by Gallagher and De Jaegher (see Chapter 2).<sup>128</sup> Chapter 4 already explored examples from *Being and Nothingness* in which the presence and absence of people configure and change a sense of the space we occupy (see Chapter 4, p.147-148). Through the illustrations of Pierre waiting for his friend in the café and the example of the man in the park, Sartre raised the

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<sup>127</sup> “The other is originally given to me as a body *in situation*” (Sartre 1958: 344)

<sup>128</sup> I will not go into this issue here, since it falls outside of the remit of this chapter. See Sartre 1958: 346-347 (“In itself a clenched fist is nothing and means nothing. But we also never perceive a *clenched fist*. We perceive a man in a certain situation who clenches his fist. This meaningful act considered in connection with the past and with possibilities and understood in terms of the synthetic totality ‘body in situation’ is the anger. It refers to nothing other than to actions in the world (to strike, to insult, etc); that is, to new meaningful *attitudes* of the body” (Sartre 1958: 347).

issue of how the presence, absence, or expectation of others is transformative of space. Analysing the example of the man on the bench,<sup>129</sup> Sartre writes:

We are dealing with a relation which is without *parts*, given at one stroke, inside of which there unfolds a spatiality which is not *my* spatiality; for instead of a grouping towards me of the objects, there is now an orientation which *flees* from me. (1958: 254)

Involved in apprehending others, for Sartre, is a felt change of possibility. Those things which appeared as objects in relation to me now appear in relation to another. What is more, the other's presence (transcendence) raises the possibility of myself being apprehended as an object for him. In this way, the subjective constitution of my immediate environment "regroups" (1958: 255), and is experienced as for the other:

[T]here is a total space which is grouped around the Other, and this space is made *with my* space; there is a regrouping in which I take part but which escapes me, a regrouping of all the objects which people my universe. (Sartre 1958: 255)

In the passage which follows this, Sartre describes how apprehending this man on the park bench entails a disintegration of the space around him and the objects which appear in that space. This disintegration is the result of a realisation that objects within the space serve both his possibilities and my own. Whilst Sartre here describes a kind of intersubjective space, it is one in which the presence of the other impinges upon me. For Sartre, there is a sense in which, rather than the space being shared, the other robs it of possibilities for me. One experiences space as belonging to the other person, rather than in a shared manner, as *ours*.

Sartre's description of intercorporeality and the sense of spatiality which this involves certainly constitutes a particular type of intersubjective, bodily interaction, one which provides the ground for the mutual objectification of the gaze (Sartre 1958: 285ff). Feeling an awareness of our bodily nature is, for

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<sup>129</sup> See Chapter 4 (p.148), for a description of this.

Sartre, an obstacle to feeling the full power of one's subjectivity in intersubjective situations. It makes one vulnerable, and capable of being objectified. As Sartre puts it, in these instances: "I exist for myself as a body known by the Other" (Sartre 1958: 351). It is from this that a *negative claim* may be extracted. Namely, that in interaction with others, I am first perceived as a *body-object*. Or rather, on feeling somebody observing me, I become aware of myself primarily as a body-object before them (1958: 351ff).

The central tenet of Sartre's point is taken up by Iris Marion Young in her characterisation of female bodily existence and comportment in her essay *Throwing Like a Girl* (2005). Although Young by no means generalises her account over the whole of female experience, she identifies similar negative consequences of embodied intersubjective interactions. Drawing heavily on De Beauvoir's distinction between *transcendence* and *immanence* (1972: 608ff) she goes a step further than Sartre. She not only shows how the body may be a source of objectification. Young, following De Beauvoir, details how women come to hold a particular feminine bodily carriage and comportment (2005: 31-34). She locates this in a tension between viewing oneself through another's eyes (as something or someone to be looked at) whilst feeling one's transcendence as a subject.

At the heart of her claim is the Beauvoirian tenet that female body experience is dualistic in nature: there is an experience of oneself as subject, transcending, but also as body-object, transcended (Young 2005: 32). As with Sartre, there is the idea of the body being the object of the other's gaze. In being looked at, one's transcendence is reduced. Young argues that girls are encouraged to view their body as something to be adorned, admired, and ultimately looked at. Their bodily comportment comes to reflect this expectation, and the dualism between transcendence and immanence is propagated. In this way, Young identifies female existence as "ambiguous transcendence" (2005: 36). This describes the way in which women are more clearly aware of both their *immanence*, in virtue of being embodied, as well as *transcendence*, as a subject (2005: 30-32).

This tension in felt bodily experience affects bodily comportment and expression. Young argues that this in turn reinforces the transcendence/immanence dualism that she identifies as inherent in female

bodily experience. Importantly, this categorises a particular aspect of embodied intersubjective exchanges, one which is particularly objectifying. Young does not take *all* our exchanges with others to reflect this form. Instead, she identifies how internalising an awareness of one's body as it is visible to others affects the way we move, act, and interact. In this way, exchanges with others reveal our bodily nature more clearly to ourselves. They encourage us to take and engage with the other's perspective on ourselves.<sup>130</sup> Whilst Young moves on to examine how this perception, both of women of their bodies in this way and by others who view women in this way, leads to discrimination and oppression, I do not consider such claims here, as they fall beyond the scope of this thesis.

### ***(b) Criticisms of Sartre and Young***

Both Young and Sartre identify a particular phenomenological, predominantly visual occurrence in their writing. But does this reflexive and largely pessimistic conception of the role of embodiment encompass everyday understanding? I think not. Instead, we may view their characterisations of intersubjective bodily phenomenology as indicative of a particular type of interpersonal embodiment, which is by no means the primary way in which we interact with and meet others.

Whilst Sartre and Young provide accounts of one mode in which we are aware of our body in relation to others, this is arguably the exception rather than the rule. How, for example, do their accounts fit in with the idea that there is a kind of reciprocal attunement between people which often is expressed, or even constituted, by tacit bodily orientation? The discrepancy between everyday experience and their accounts of interpersonal bodily interactions may reside in the importance given to largely visual modes of engagement with others. Both Sartre's and Young's accounts turn on apprehending myself *looked at* by another.<sup>131</sup> Feelings of my own subjectivity are frozen through the gaze, actual or internalised, of others. However, the acts of looking described in Sartre's and

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<sup>130</sup> This need not always be a negative occurrence as Sartre describes. It may, instead, underlie our ability to adopt a perspective and engage with perspectives which are not our own.

<sup>131</sup> Much of what Sartre says holds also for other sense-modalities (e.g. hearing, smelling). However, the point still remains that his discussion of bodily intersubjectivity is rather static and does not adequately account for interaction.

Young's examples are static. There is the person doing the looking (the other) and the person being looked at (myself). This, however, is not often the case: Sartre goes on to describe how rather than be objectified by the gaze of the other, we may 'out-look' them, so to speak, and thus engage in a battle to objectify the other and retain a sense of one's own subjectivity (1958: 255ff). Whilst Sartre has begun to account for interaction, his account remains one that is predominantly pessimistic. In Sartre's account the other, and their awareness of oneself, is characterised as encroaching upon one's freedom. As such, Sartre's account struggles to cope with cases in which such interaction is necessary to achieve a shared goal. It lacks the interactive mutuality referred to in Chapter 3.

As already stated, despite the fact that Sartre and Young legitimately describe one *type* of intersubjective experience, it is highly debatable whether this description fits intersubjective interactions as a whole. In light of this, we need to distinguish strong and weak claims. The strong claim states that *all* intersubjective embodied interactions take the form Sartre and Young describe. The weak claim states that this accounts for only a particular kind of interaction with others. Whilst the weak claim is supportable, the strong claim is not.<sup>132</sup> It simply does not resonate with most of our experience of interaction with others. The strong claim misses out the heart of intersubjective experiences: that they are *mutual interactions*.

I have already argued that at the heart of this mutuality is a two-way exchange (Chapter 3). It is the element of *exchange* which Sartre's account, in particular, misses. It is possible, then, to identify two mischaracterisations inherent in Sartre's descriptions of intersubjective embodied experience which undermine the validity of the strong claim. First, Sartre's description is decidedly *one-way*. It fundamentally describes a static intersubjective experience. A consequence of this is that interaction is neglected in Sartre's accounts.

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<sup>132</sup> It is important to emphasise that neither Sartre nor Young take their descriptions to be typical of *all* our interactions with others. Young's account restricts itself to discriminative and objectifying instances of apprehending others. Sartre's account takes the 'battle' of exerting one's subjectivity over that of the other's (through the gaze) to be in the background of our encounters with others. However, day-to-day interactions with others stabilise this in different ways. One way in which Sartre describes this stabilisation is in instances of bad faith, in which the person accepts their objectification. For an example of this, see Sartre's example of the waiter (1958: 59).

By claiming that we feel our body primarily as an object available to view, Sartre fundamentally miscategorises what it is to be present with and amongst others.<sup>133</sup> Instead, Sartre's view takes the exception rather than the rule and extends this as 'ordinary' experience.<sup>134</sup> I do not experience myself ordinarily through the eyes of the other in normal, unproblematic situations as both *subjective transcendence* and at the same time as a *body object*. In delineating these two ways of experiencing ourselves, we commit a descriptive error.

Secondly, Sartre neglects to account for the positive ways in which others transform a sense of my spatiality through interactive engagement; the impact this has on his conception of intersubjectivity leads him to neglect a genuinely *shared* sense of space as intersubjective; and the way in which sharing experiences or attending to something together can impact on the way in which space is apprehended. This flows from and feeds into his account of bodily intersubjectivity as a phenomenon in which we experience ourselves primarily as looked-at and objectified.

This becomes clearer after a brief examination of what Starwarska (2006) has to offer on the subject of embodied intersubjectivity. Whilst Sartre neglects to look at the shared quality of relations, Starwarska argues these are central to interaction and are constituted largely by patterns of bodily expressivity and shared attention (2006: 24-25). Sartre, with his emphasis on the body as uncomfortably salient in our interactions with others, neglects to describe or account for how features of embodiment add to *interaction*. This focus neglects an examination of how social attunement is shaped. The salient point for the present is that the absence of these elements is detrimental to Sartre's account.

Whilst Young's claims are restricted to cases of discriminative judgements that have been generalised and absorbed into bodily comportment, Sartre's description claims to be of our general intersubjective experience. However, Sartre's account of our apprehension of others fails to capture mutual-interaction. As a result of this, Sartre's account appears *stilted*. It does not capture the

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<sup>133</sup> Or as a member of a community. There is not much consideration of situations in which my interlocutor and I are working toward a common goal in *Being and Nothingness*.

<sup>134</sup> This is Merleau-Ponty's criticism of Sartre. See Merleau-Ponty 1962: 412.

dynamic ‘to-ing’ and ‘fro-ing’ movement of *mutual* interaction.<sup>135</sup> Instead, his account is more concerned with what it is to observe and be observed by others.

We saw in Chapter 2 that there is a large difference between observing another and interacting with them. As Reddy states, this is the difference between *witnessing* and *receiving* a gesture. Receiving and reacting to the gestures and embodied comportment of others involves openness to them.

Chapter 3 showed that understanding others through interaction requires the interlocutors to be open to revising their presuppositions, both of the situation and of their interlocutor. In some situations (such as discriminative situations etc.) there is a denial or unwillingness to revise these presuppositions. This denial leads to stultification in the process of mutual understanding. Instead, one’s own position and understanding is championed; understanding becomes more one sided. Something similar appears to be the case in Sartre’s account of the mutual objectification of interlocutors. Here, interactants engage in a dynamic in which each attempts to assert their transcendence over the other. In doing so, each person feels herself to be a body-object under the other’s gaze (objectification). The other reveals to me my own bodily nature. In this case, I am not open to the positive possibilities that the other brings to me. Their presence is felt as a limitation to my own transcendence.

For this reason, as we have seen, whilst Sartre sketches an interesting account of intersubjective dynamics it is by no means typical of our everyday interactions. In most ordinary interactive situations a degree of openness and mutuality is usually to be found.<sup>136</sup> Further, in such interactions, the body is not experienced as objectified or as a potential source of objectification. Instead, bodily awareness often retreats to the background of the situation, and we fail to notice it at all.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> We saw examples of interaction which involves dynamic to-ing and fro-ing in the coastal walking scenario of Chapter 3 (see pp. 125-126).

<sup>136</sup> Chapter 3 emphasised the importance of openness, as a readiness to communicate and interact with one’s interlocutor and to accommodate the views and opinions of others which might differ from one’s own.

<sup>137</sup> Unless our exchange is about our body or implicates it in some way: for example, someone asking their friend if their clothes fit them properly, or explaining an illness or injury. Another example might be if there is something unusual about my body which draws my interlocutor’s attention, such as a plaster cast on my leg, a mark on my nose, or a scar. In these cases, it might be difficult for ‘normal’ patterns of interaction to progress as I feel self-conscious since the other keeps staring at my nose or scar. The interactional dynamic might only become comfortable again once I’ve acknowledged the reason for my scar, or asked the person why they keep staring

Embodied expressivity also *encourages* this mutual, two-way interaction in multiple ways. Starwarska makes the central point that in intersubjective instances, we often share *mutual gaze* (2006). This, she remarks, can never be successfully described as two people each individually looking at the other. The fact that the gaze is shared implies the centrality of the other. It recognises this centrality of the other in virtue of it being mutual. The gaze incorporates a tacit *looping* which she calls “double sight” (2006: 23ff). That is, in the gaze we are confronted not just by someone looking at us, but the mutuality of our relation: in gazing at each other, interlocutors are aware of sharing each others’ attention, as we grasp that we see each other. It is not that X looks at Y and then Y looks back at X in a uni-directional manner. Instead, when the gaze is mutual, it leads to an interactional pattern in which I look at you, aware that you are looking at me, and we attend to each other through this relation. This mutuality of the shared gaze becomes an axis on which the engagement takes place. Through this, relationships are maintained and accounted for. As Starwarska states:

[W]e need to distinguish between social *observation* where two partners observe each other, from social *relationship*, where two partners mutually engage each other ... it is the latter type only that exhibits reciprocity and realises the dual relation of seeing and being seen that Merleau-Ponty attributed to reversibility. (2006: 25)

It is this which Sartre fails capture.

## **5.2 The Inextricability of Body and Space for Relatedness:**

### **Body Dialogue**

Sartre and Young have provided some ways in which we might account for the relation between intercorporeality and interspatiality. However, they cannot offer us a ‘full story’. Spaces may be disclosed to us in many ways, be it

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at my nose. However, these instances are more unusual, and though mutual interaction is somewhat stilted, there is still an openness to my interlocutor which shapes the nature of our interaction.

as aesthetically stunning, spiritually moving, invasive, enclosed, boundless, and so on. What is more, others transform the sense we have of space in multiple different ways. Apprehensions of spaces change their ‘feel’ depending on when I am in them, or how I am feeling at the time. Or, depending on who I am with, the way in which I relate to and am aware of intersubjective spaces is modified and shaped by my particular interactive patterns with my interlocutors.

Experiencing a sunset from a mountain top on my own is different from experiencing it with someone else. The mere presence of another is enough to change the phenomenal quality of the space. It might be the detection of the other’s awe, or their appreciation of the beauty that enhances my particular experience, or we may exchange a few words that add or detract from the scene. Conversely, they may display impatience on a silent level which affects my own relation both to the sunset event and to my partner within the scene. As their impatience is manifest, I may react subtly to them with annoyance, or suddenly become aware that I’ve been lingering too long. In each case, the presence of the other, and the manifestation of bodily expressivity, changes the way in which I view the space, and the other person.

This is supported by accounts in neuroscientific studies which examine behavioural synchronisation in conversational interaction (see Rotondo and Boker 2002). Such studies observe the prevalence of mirroring the posture of one’s conversational partner and seek to explore how and why. Hypothesised reasons for this mirroring include: (1) that it enhances an ability to simulate or evoke the mental state of the other; (2) that it forms an attempt “to express agreement or empathy” (Boker and Rotondo 2002: 164). In a separate article, Rotondo and Boker state that such mirroring may “benefit ... the continuity of the conversation”, apart from in instances where it is seen as malicious mimicking (Rotondo and Boker 2002: 151).

In what follows, I will not pursue the question concerning how we do this, but I will ask what effect this mirroring and matching has on a sense of (1) the spaces within which we find ourselves, and (2) intersubjective relatedness, with others. I shall defend the positive thesis that bodily responsiveness to the bodily postures and expressivity of others (which is a different phenomenon to mirroring as we shall soon see) causes transformations in the sense of relatedness we have toward our interlocutors. This might serve to ‘bring us closer’ or it

might shut down or frustrate a taken for granted sense of relatedness, depending on how one reacts to the expressivity of others.

We saw this in the two examples in the opening of this chapter. In the first example of the exchange in the library, the conduct of a disruptive person causes a collective, bodily response of frustration from other workers in the library. Their bodily response to the behaviour of the disruptive person leads the disruptive person to change their behaviour. The second example of the coffee shop displayed the way in which a sense of relatedness between interlocutors develops, becoming more intense as their interaction progresses. Here we saw that the bodily expressivity of one evokes bodily expressivity in the other which allows the interaction to progress and which newly defines the quality of the relatedness between the interlocutors (who take on and play out roles of confidant and confider). There is an appropriate resonance in the way the two relate to each other through patterns of bodily expressivity.

In order to conceptualise this and understand what is happening here, it helps to develop a notion of ‘body dialogue’. The concept of body dialogue attempts to capture the pre-reflective occurrence of bodies ‘speaking’, resonating, and relating to each other in interaction. Chapter 2 explored Gallagher’s view that ordinarily in interpersonal understanding we directly perceive the other person’s emotions, states, or intentions in their bodily expression (p.93ff). When I encounter someone, I encounter them as a being whose anger, joy, boredom, tiredness, excitement, and so on is expressed tacitly through their body position, gesture, and orientation. Such bodily expression may or may not accompany verbalisation. By and large, it directly conveys affective understanding to the person’s interlocutors. However, the important point to note in this section is that in doing so, their bodily expressivity *pre-reflectively solicits a reaction from their interlocutor*.

Consider a simple example from day-to-day life: that of how we often know how our friends are feeling by glancing at them. For example, it is easy for my friends to see when I have a headache. Without explicitly telling them, I appear sluggish, taciturn. I pinch my temples, close my eyes and talk at a lower volume and pitch. All these jointly convey silently to them that I am ‘not myself’. My bodily orientation, which suggests I am suffering, solicits a bodily response in my friend. Maybe they, in turn, frown with worry and turn toward

me before asking whether everything is ok. This low-key bodily responsiveness sets a tone of concern through which the consequent communication is tempered. This is why I label this phenomenon *body dialogue*. An individual bodily display that affectively communicates something about how I am solicits, and is met by, a bodily response from my partner. The evolving reciprocity between us constitutes a dialogue of embodied responses. ‘Body dialogue’ signifies the pre-reflective interactions of affective bodily expression that interlocutors invariably show when communicating. This reciprocal bodily expressivity helps to establish instances of affective resonance and attunement between people. The effect of this is to draw interlocutors into inhabiting a personal relation.

Body dialogue may be formalised, such as in the case of sign languages, or stock emblematic gestures and responses.<sup>138</sup> Or it may be the small scale, for example resting one’s forehead sorrowfully in one’s hand may be countered by a friend’s squeezing the other hand. Such gestures are without verbalisations yet convey an affective meaning to those involved. As Fuchs observes:

[W]e understand the gestures and facial expression of others immediately but cannot tell from which details; through the sounds of their voices, turning into carriers of meaning, we understand what they want to say, Moreover, there is an implicit resonance between their expressions and our own bodily reactions. (2005: 98)

This is another point to notice. Body dialogue is not constructed out of individual instances of bodily expressivity. Rather in non-problematic interaction it is perceived holistically. The elements of my bodily animation and orientation combine to create this dialogue with another. It is not the case that a smile plus an excited hand movement plus a light tone to the voice equal happiness. I do not usually need to infer that my interaction partner is happy by noticing all the individual features. Rather the features combine to present the other with happiness. Also, the affective responses between my partner and myself shape

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<sup>138</sup> See Goldin-Meadows who draws a distinction between ‘spontaneous’ and ‘emblematic’ gestures (2000). Spontaneous gestures are those we tacitly engage in to add to or emphasise certain features of overt communication. Emblematic gestures, on the other hand, carry meaning alone and are often culturally recognisable symbols which convey something in particular. For example, blowing a kiss or saluting would be examples of emblematic gestures.

the course and development of subsequent interaction, which leads to a development and sustaining of a particular relation. The dialogue between bodies may, then, either reinforce the happiness, or quash it. If I find myself automatically smiling back, it reinforces the happiness of the happy person, and creates a background and interactive space of mutual contentment, or happiness. It is this *affective resonance* of interlocutors that is the key occurrence in bodily dialogue. The gestures of both parties pre-reflectively speak to each other, and in doing so, encourage development of a personal relation to be adopted towards the other. It is the affective dimension, manifest through gesture and bodily expressivity, which I am affected by and which solicits an emotional response. It modifies the relation we share with the other.<sup>139</sup>

Affective responsiveness to others is often central to defining the *type* of relation engaged in, as we saw in the examples which opened the chapter. This is illustrated when we consult accounts from psychopathology, in which a normal intercorporeality cannot be established in cases such as schizophrenia (see Fuchs 2005a) and in forms of facial paralysis such as the Möbius syndrome and Parkinson's disease (see Cole 1999). In these cases, a normal tacit bodily responsiveness is compromised in varying degrees, leading to alienation. This is alienation both from the lived body (as bodily transparency is lost), and due to the inability to affectively respond to any interlocutors, from others. In these cases, this inability to affectively express oneself through the body makes it difficult to inhabit and develop a personal relation with others. Through examination of such cases the centrality of being able to engage in an affective body dialogue is highlighted.<sup>140</sup>

The effect of body dialogue is not only to transform the sense of relatedness between individuals, but also to revise a sense of the space that we find ourselves within. A sense of space is inextricable from one's bodily experience. Changes to bodily experience alter one's experience of space. We have already seen how, for Sartre, shame involves changes both to lived space

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<sup>139</sup> This might be for the better or worse. As our interaction progresses and my interlocutor's stance conveys that they are engrossed and engaged in the conversation we are sharing, it might lead to a deepening and intensification of the sense of relatedness I feel with them. I might feel closer, more willing to confide. On the other hand, my interlocutor might appear disinterested, leading to a dislocation and distance between us.

<sup>140</sup> Chapter 7 examines the effect which changes to cenesthesia and bodily phenomenology in depression have on body dialogue and intersubjective understanding.

and a sense of one's own bodily feeling.<sup>141</sup> We might also take the further example of two bored primary school children sitting at the back of a school assembly.

Looking around the hall, in their boredom, they might notice each other sighing, slouching in their chairs, or looking around the hall for something interesting to fix their attention on. They might, recognising each other's boredom, catch each other's eye and begin to pull silly faces, or perform silent impressions mimicking and mocking the gestures of the speaker. In giving each other silent attention, and continuing the game of mimicking, each eggs the other on, transforming the sense of boredom in to amusement, and causing silent giggles through their body dialogue. The way in which the assembly hall is now experienced changes. Instead of looking around for something to interest and dispel the boredom, the hall, and those within it, are objects of amusement. Teachers dotted about the place are now those to evade. The structure of the space is apprehended through the structure of the game: to amuse each other without being caught and told off. In this way, the bodily expressivity of one is reciprocated by the other, and the body dialogue which continues causes a transformation of the way the space and activity before them is perceived.

Accounting for the relationship between reciprocal bodily expressivity and phenomenological, intersubjective space helps to flesh out the two spheres account. We see that whilst the global sphere informs the way we begin interacting with another, our bodily interactions (body dialogue) in the parochial, interactive sphere cause a revision of the way in which we originally understand or apprehend our situatedness (global sphere). The mutual revision of both spheres fuels understanding of, and transforms a sense of relatedness to, my interlocutor. I further address the interconnectedness of bodily and spatial experience further in Chapter 7, when I turn to Merleau-Ponty and consider how depression changes an apprehension of both bodily possibilities and space.

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<sup>141</sup> Sartre describes this as “an immediate shudder which runs through me from head to foot” (1958: 222).

### 5.3 Conclusion

Building on Chapter 4, this chapter has demonstrated the ways in which space and bodily expressivity are inextricable in a sense of relatedness. Relatedness is a dynamic and affective quality which is, in Starwarska's words, an "unmediated awareness of being in the presence of another person" (2006: 20).

The preceding chapters have shown how relatedness is not a static feeling. Instead, there are degrees of relatedness and alienation which we may experience with regard to other people. The degree and quality of this relatedness changes throughout our interaction with others; this may be for the better or worse. The sense of relatedness one feels toward a partner, close friend or parent is radically different to that we feel towards a stranger on the street, or images of people we see in famine appeals. Common to all of these is the sense we have of the others involved as people (and therefore as people who hold possibilities for me, who I may understand, and who may be interacted with).

However, the degree of this relatedness and the sense of them as a person vary widely. When I look at my mother, I know the woman in a rich sense: her likes, dislikes, talents and weaknesses, and when I engage with her I bring our shared history and knowledge of each other's personality to our engagement. Something very different happens when I am paying for my shopping in a rush after having a bad day. The person behind the till performs a functional role for me, and our encounter at the end of the long day might not involve the pleasantries one would ordinarily wish to bestow on another human being. In both instances I apprehend both my mother and the shop assistant as people who I share a relation with; though the type and nature of this relation are very different in both cases. The relatedness which marks my interaction with them shapes the way I will interact with and initially understand them (and also what I might expect from them).

In this way, a sense of relatedness marks our sense of others as people that may be interacted with. At the same time, interacting with others transforms this sense of relatedness. For example, when walking down the street in a crowd, when all is well I do not doubt that those around me have personhood. However,

the experience of a sense of their personhood is not in the foreground of my attention; it retreats into the background as I navigate my way through the forest of bodies trying to get to wherever I am going on time.

But what happens when something disrupts this? Imagine being in this crowd, when, out of the corner of your eye, you see someone trip, fall, and hurt themselves in the process. In the event of this happening, you might suspend your worry about getting to wherever it is you are going, and rush over toward the other, who was so recently an anonymous face in the crowd. Instead, your awareness of them and their predicament comes to the fore, and your sense of them as someone who is in pain and needing assistance overrides current concerns. Their dazed look, as they grit their teeth in pain, leads you to kneel down to ask in a gentle voice whether they are okay and what is wrong. Your response to them, if accepted, sets a scene of concern through which they respond. The interaction might only last two minutes, as you assure yourself that they are okay, that they can stand, and that they are not concussed; after which you might go your separate ways, and the event retreats to the background and falls out of mind as you once again navigate your way through the streets.

We have seen how intersubjective apprehension of spaces shapes the way in which we enter into interaction with others in an ‘appropriate’ manner. As interaction progresses, so does our sense of relatedness to our interlocutor. Whilst apprehension of our space forms the way we enter into interaction with others, a bodily responsiveness to the bodily expressivity of others in interaction may often override or transform this sense of space. In doing so, reciprocal bodily expressivity, which I called body dialogue, often fuels our interaction in the parochial sphere with others, and causes change in the way space is apprehended. This in turn often reshapes the way we continue to interact with others. In this way, spatiality and bodily interaction are core in driving and forming a sense of relatedness and in subsequently developing, impoverishing, or changing it, depending on the nature of the patterns of interaction I engage in with my interlocutor.

So far we have explored the dynamic manner in which situation in the global sphere and interaction in the parochial sphere cause a revision in presuppositions which further interpersonal interaction (Chapter 3). Once we had examined this in Chapter 3, we moved on to explore more fully what constitutes

and changes a sense of relatedness. In doing so, we considered the roles which lived, intersubjective space plays in scaffolding our relations (Chapter 4); and subsequently the role which embodied expressivity – which is sensitive and resonates with that of my interaction partner – plays in transforming the feeling or quality of that relatedness (Chapter 5).

In the two chapters which follow, I take a different tack and explore the nature of interpersonal understanding and intersubjectivity when a sense of interpersonal relatedness fragments, breaks down, or disappears altogether. In order to do so, I explore the nature of intersubjectivity in schizophrenia (Chapter 6) and depression (Chapter 7). Both chapters reveal that central to the ability to understand the other is first the ability to perceive her as a person, and one whom I can affect and be affected by. These are abilities which are taken for granted in normal and unproblematic understanding. However, when a sense of relatedness with others fragments, we see this has serious ramifications for interpersonal understanding.

# PART 3

## Alienation: Understanding the Varieties of Alienation in Psychopathology

Part 2 focused on the elements contributing to a healthy sense of relatedness between interlocutors. Part 3 turns to examine instances of alienation. Doing so offers a useful illustrative counterpoint to material covered in Part 2. Through an examination of instances of breakdowns in intersubjectivity, the ‘normal’ conditions of intersubjectivity are highlighted and made salient. Examination of atypical experiences serves to reveal what we ordinarily take for granted in ‘everyday’ intersubjectivity, both in philosophical exploration and in everyday life. As David Karp remarks:

Severe illness, because it so disrupts relationships, illustrates the tenuous nature of everyday life, and highlights the taken-for-granted, normally invisible boundaries of social relationships. (1996: 162)

In what follows I seek to explore the ways in which a sense of relatedness and interpersonal understanding are disturbed in schizophrenia (Chapter 6) and depression (Chapter 7). Doing so reveals the centrality of a sense of relatedness for normal social cognition. Across both chapters, I focus on changes to how one experiences one’s body and lived spatiality during schizophrenia and depression. I also explore the manner in which these changes impact on our sense of others as people who offer possibilities for meaningful interaction. The study of schizophrenia and depression present different instances in which a basic sense of relatedness to others is disturbed. This reveals the centrality of a sense of relatedness – and the way in which this is constructed – for healthy intersubjectivity and interpersonal understanding; and for an unproblematic apprehension of others as *people* with whom one may interact and understand.

## CHAPTER 6

### SCHIZOPHRENIA AND SPATIALITY

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*“The person who regards the world as an ‘It’ lives in ‘severance and alienation’, and is without a ‘home, dwelling in the universe’.” (Buber 2004 [1937]: 34)*

In this chapter, I continue my project of scrutinising the role which relatedness plays in understanding others. The task here is to examine the anomalous experience of intersubjectivity in schizophrenia, paying particular attention to the way in which lived spatiality is experienced in this illness. This thesis has aimed to show that folk psychology has neglected the importance of relatedness for interpersonal understanding. The previous chapters argued that relatedness is sustained and shaped by a normative, functional, and affective awareness of the spaces within which we find ourselves. This in turn is revised and transformed by our bodily interactions with others. Examining the case of schizophrenia, we find that intersubjectivity is structured very differently.

This chapter is largely exploratory. By exploring deviations from lived experience in schizophrenia, we can see more clearly what we ordinarily take for granted in ‘healthy’ experience. Doing so illuminates aspects integral to healthy interpersonal understanding which have been overlooked by folk psychology. In what follows, I describe how intersubjectivity fragments in schizophrenia. I then explore the ways in which changes to intersubjectivity occur alongside, and may be influenced by, changes to the experience of space as lived. Through this exploration, two things confront us: (1) the centrality of a sense of interaffective relatedness in intersubjectivity and interpersonal understanding; (2) the close relation between an affective apprehension of space as *lived* and relatedness. I suggest that exploration of intersubjectivity in schizophrenia highlights the importance of accounting for relatedness in our descriptions of healthy intersubjectivity, thus supporting my overall thesis.

## 6.1 What is Schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia is a psychiatric illness which involves disintegration of coherent thought and affectivity. Symptoms are divided into two main groups: positive and negative symptoms (American Psychiatric Association 1994 (henceforth DSM-IV): 299). Placed under positive symptoms are the psychotic and disorganised symptoms of schizophrenia: hallucinations, delusions, loss of contact with reality, and grossly disordered thought and behaviour.<sup>142</sup> Negative symptoms involve a loss or lack of something normally present in healthy individuals. Examples of negative symptoms include flattened or diminished affect, lack of motivation, poverty of speech (alogia),<sup>143</sup> anhedonia, neglect of routine self-care,<sup>144</sup> poor memory and concentration, difficulty in completing tasks, and social isolation.<sup>145</sup> Negative symptoms are usually those which mark the prodromal phase and onset of schizophrenia (World Health Organisation 1992 (henceforth ICD-10): 9; DSM-IV: 301, 309); and it is often the negative symptoms which lead to a marked diminishment in quality of life (Snyder, Gur, and Wasmer 2007: 111).<sup>146</sup> Such symptoms are often overlooked when they occur alone;<sup>147</sup> this is particularly the case when the prodromal phase of schizophrenia coincides with adolescence or times of stressful change (World

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<sup>142</sup> Examples of grossly disorganised behaviour might include silliness, disproportionate agitation or excessive anger, bizarre or inappropriate dressing or dishevelment, and inappropriate sexual conduct (DSM-IV: 300).

<sup>143</sup> 'Poverty of speech' or 'disorganised speech' is a phenomenon in which the content of speech becomes fragmented and incoherent. This might include jumping frequently between topics, often mid sentence, giving vague, irrelevant, or tenuously linked answers to questions, and uttering words which sound like nonsense (often referred to as 'word salad') (DSM-IV: 300. Also see Sass 1992a: chapter 6). Sass helpfully defines it as "speech that is adequate in amount but conveys little information because of vagueness, empty repetitions, or use of stereotypes or obscure phrases" (1992b: 121).

<sup>144</sup> This symptom may be classed as both 'positive' – coming under the banner of "grossly disorganised behaviour" (DSM-IV: 300) – and 'negative', as there is a lack of normal attentiveness and care for the self.

<sup>145</sup> This includes diminishment of an ability to make and maintain social relationships.

<sup>146</sup> See Snyder, Gur, and Wasmer: "whilst delusions and hallucinations may be more dramatic, people with schizophrenia often say it's the negative symptoms that cause the most problems, because such symptoms make it nearly impossible to have the full life they want" (2007: 111).

<sup>147</sup> DSM-IV remarks: "Although common in schizophrenia, negative symptoms are difficult to evaluate because they occur on a continuum with normality, are relatively unspecific and may be due to a variety of other factors" (301).

Health Organisation 1992 (henceforth ICD-10): 9).<sup>148</sup> However, the negative symptoms of schizophrenia impact seriously on the quality – and the structuring – of everyday life.<sup>149</sup> In what follows, I focus on how interpersonal relations and understanding are affected in schizophrenia.

There is a marked impact on intersubjectivity within schizophrenia, leading to social isolation and feelings of alienation (Fuchs 2005b: 116; Gillet 2004: 27;<sup>150</sup> Hoerl 2001; Sass 1999: 317, 322-323, 2001: 251, 2004: 134-35; Stanghellini 2004: 177; Stanghellini and Ballerini 2007: 135-136). Impact on intersubjectivity includes both a capacity to make and sustain social relationships and friendships (DSM-IV: 302; Lysaker et al. 2005: 335), and the capacity to feel a sense of interpersonal relatedness (Hoerl 2001: 86).<sup>151</sup> Frequently, persons with schizophrenia experience a decline in the apprehension of the personhood of others, as a sense of feeling related to others erodes and in some cases is lost. Others are often perceived and described mechanistically as complex automata or ‘robots’ (Fuchs 2005a: 102). This occurs alongside a diminishment in apprehending the social nature of the world,<sup>152</sup> and has severe consequences for social exchange and interaction.

Changes to intersubjectivity occur alongside and are exacerbated by changes in affectivity. Schizophrenia involves key changes in affect (DSM-IV: 301; Parnas and Sass 2001; Sass 1992a, 2004; Stanghellini 2008)<sup>153</sup>. One prominent negative symptom of schizophrenia is a flattening both of felt affect

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<sup>148</sup> This is particularly the case for social withdrawal, lessening of emotional expressivity, and change to routines of self-care, which can be interpreted and contextualised as a ‘normal’ part of adolescence.

<sup>149</sup> DSM-IV states that: “The negative symptoms of schizophrenia ... account for a substantial degree of morbidity associated with the disorder” (301).

<sup>150</sup> “We might therefore expect the schizophrenic patient to be alienated from a world in which others feel secure and assured in their mental life and are cognitively supported by concurrence in judgement with others. This loneliness is a source not only of confusion and the thought disorders characteristic of schizophrenia but also of the suffering that results from the feeling of isolation and the loss of one’s place in the world” (Gillet 2004: 27).

<sup>151</sup> Hoerl refers to this as “an inability to conceive of others ‘in the second person’, to recognise them as potential partners in joint and cooperative enterprises” (2004: 86).

<sup>152</sup> This includes changes in the way objects in the social environment are perceived. Objects appear devoid of shared social meanings and references (Sass 1992a: 32).

<sup>153</sup> Schizophrenia has also been understood to centrally involve ‘poor reality testing’ in which the individual has a marked decrease in ability to distinguish between reality and their own delusions and hallucinations. Later in this chapter, I outline the link between affectivity and the way the world appears. If we take this seriously, this may provide a resource for bringing together diminishing affect with poor reality testing. Sass also argues for this (see Sass 2004).

and affective expression (DSM-IV: 30).<sup>154</sup> This affects self-affectivity,<sup>155</sup> and a capacity to recognise the affectivity of others. Sass observes that the severe flattening of affect in schizophrenia occurring in conjunction with felt alienation from others is a paradox of schizophrenia (1992a: 23). How can “persons [who] often seem devoid of emotion and desire” feel a profound sense of alienation from others (Sass 1992a: 23)? The lessening and erosion of felt affect, and the feelings of alienation, are closely related to two other key symptoms of schizophrenia: depersonalisation and derealisation.

Depersonalisation involves a change in the experience of oneself.<sup>156</sup> In depersonalisation, the person feels detached from him- or herself and self-experience is marked by feelings of unreality (Hunter, Sierra, & David 2004: 9; Stanghellini 2004: 151, 158). In particular, depersonalisation affects a basic sense of self-awareness, more specifically the sense one has of oneself as the ‘owner’ of one’s actions, emotions, and thoughts (DSM-IV: 530; Stanghellini 2004: 60; 2009: 59). The person with depersonalisation often feels as though she is an observer, rather than the owner, of her thoughts, feelings, and mental and bodily processes (DSM-IV: 530; ICD-10: 172). A commonly reported result is that the person feels like a robot or as though she is living in a dream or taking part in a film (DSM-IV: 530).

Experience of depersonalisation often occurs in conjunction with derealisation (DSM-IV: 530,<sup>157</sup> Hunter, Sierra, & David 2004: 9) and involves a change in experience of external reality (DSM-IV: 822; Stanghellini 2007: 130-131). The world appears distant, strange, and feels unreal (DSM-IV: 530); and

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<sup>154</sup> It is worth noting here that at the same time as affective flattening occurs, some affective responses are heightened. For instance, persons with schizophrenia often report feeling vulnerable and alone (Stanghellini 2004: 61) and ‘inappropriate affect’ displayed by persons with schizophrenia often involves “laughter, grinning, giggling, an ironic or perhaps self-absorbed and self-satisfied smiling, a lofty manner, and the like” (Sass 1992a: 112). I will not go into this paradox of schizophrenia here. Instead see Sass (1992a: 112-113) for an exploration.

<sup>155</sup> By ‘self-affectivity’ I refer to the capacity to feel affect and emotion. This is linked to, though differentiated from, the capacity to recognise affectivity in others.

<sup>156</sup> DSM-IV stresses that many people experience feelings of depersonalisation and/or derealisation at some point in their life. These experiences, when fleeting and not causing distress or a loss of healthy functioning do not indicate pathology. It is only when symptoms of depersonalisation and derealisation cause a marked negative impact on the individual’s life, leading to a loss of healthy functioning, that they are diagnosed and treated. See DSM-IV (530-533).

<sup>157</sup> ICD-10 classifies depersonalisation and derealisation together as depersonalisation-derealisation syndrome (see ICD-10: 171-172), whilst DSM-IV describes ‘Depersonalisation Disorder’ as one amongst many dissociative disorders (see DSM-IV: 530).

other people appear “unfamiliar” and “mechanical” (DSM-IV: 822; Hunter, Sierra, & David 2004: 9).<sup>158</sup> This leads to feelings of detachment and distance from everyday life; and also to external reality feeling uncanny (Stanghellini 2004: 60). The result of this is a fragmentation in the ‘flow’ and ‘dynamism’ of life, as intuitively performed actions, activities, and tasks become candidates for explicit reflection. Routinely performed actions become “mechanised” (Stanghellini 2004: 158; 2007: 133) and external reality becomes “spatialised” (Stanghellini 2007: 131).

The effects of this flattening of affect and disruption to the ‘flow’ of life have profound consequences for socialisation and for self. Sass remarks:

For normal individuals, affectivity often provides a medium of connectedness, a realm of emotional resonance that both presupposes and supports the sense of sympathy or fellow feeling. (2004: 128)

If felt connectedness to the world, and an emotional resonance to others is lost, then the way in which everyday life is structured and lived is radically different. For precisely this reason, individuals with schizophrenia report that a radical alienation marks the mode of schizophrenic existence.

Given this, it is perhaps not surprising that people with schizophrenia often report a severing in feeling connected to others. Through schizophrenia, an intuitive and taken-for-granted capacity to understand, resonate, and engage with others is lessened and in some cases lost (Sass 1992a: 23, Stanghellini 2004). Instead, the experience of others is marked by feelings of alienation, emerging from difficulties in affectively “mak[ing] contact” with others, as one schizophrenic person puts it (Sechehaye 1970: 46, 54, 55). This may, as Laing observes, result in the person with schizophrenia coming to “experience himself in despairing aloneness and isolation; instead of feeling like a complete and integral whole, he feels ‘split’ in various ways” (1960: 17).

It is important to note that with a loss of connectedness, we not only lose the capacity to feel related to others, but also to feel connected to a shared, social

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<sup>158</sup> ICD-10 reports that “surroundings seem to lack colour and life, and appear as artificial, or as a stage on which people are acting contrived roles.” (172)

world through which shared meaning is given and made (Guignon 1983: 243).<sup>159</sup> Feelings of isolation are compounded by a growing inability to feel and apprehend the personhood of others. Stanghellini and Ballerini describe this as a “loss of primordial intersubjectivity” (2007: 140). By this, they mean the intuitive grasp of others as *people* who engage in meaningful activities which have the capacity to affect or offer possibility for us. For Stanghellini and Ballerini, this is an affective and pre-reflective grasp of the activities, intentions, and personhood of others, through which we are attuned to them.<sup>160</sup>

The loss of “primordial intersubjectivity” (Stanghellini and Ballerini 2007) *is* a loss of a sense of relatedness toward others. We have seen throughout this thesis that relatedness is a pre-reflective attunement to other people. Through it, others are apprehend as *people* with whom one may interact, and who hold possibilities (positive and negative) for oneself. But how does this loss of pre-reflective connectedness to others change the way in which persons with schizophrenia understand others?

Considering the consequences of the flattening of affect in schizophrenia, Sass states that “[schizophrenic] persons often display a more deliberative and ideational rather than intuitive or emotional style of acting and problem solving” (1992a: 23). This deliberative style of understanding things also marks interpersonal understanding within schizophrenia, in which there is also a diminishment in affective perception of others. Schizophrenic persons report the increased necessity of attempting to employ “algorithms” or “tactics” through which to understand others (Stanghellini 2004: 22). Stanghellini labels this “the attunement crisis” (2004: 22):

What’s missing is the ability to attune with the current situation, to intuitively get a grasp on the thinking of the person you are talking to, and above all their emotional plane, and to match it. Obviously, we only realise the existence of this emotional medium when it’s no longer there. (Stanghellini 2004: 6)

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<sup>159</sup> For example see interaction theory (Gallagher 2001), participatory sense-making (De Jaeger and Di Paolo 2007) and also this thesis (Chapters 2-5).

<sup>160</sup> See Stanghellini: “[T]he schizophrenic dis-sociality is considered the effect of a disorder of social attunement, i.e., of a kind of non-propositional knowledge consisting in the emotional-conative-cognitive ability to perceive the existence of others as similar to one’s own, make emotional contact with them and intuitively access their mental life” (2004: 10).

Instead of approaching others and one's lived environment in a pre-reflective second-person and interactional manner, persons with schizophrenia "contemplate [their] own existence from outside – a third person perspective view, or a view from nowhere" (2004: 22). However, Stanghellini does not properly distinguish between a third-person stance (viewing somebody as a 'he' or 'she') and an impersonal stance (viewing somebody in a detached manner as 'it'). The third-person stance is frequently used in non-problematic cases of interpersonal understanding<sup>161</sup> and does not necessarily involve viewing somebody in a dispassionate, removed, and impersonal manner.

Understanding a person as 'you', 'he', or 'she' – though different modes of understanding others – can all be distinguished from approaching them as an 'it' (Ratcliffe 2007a: 79).<sup>162</sup> Second- and third- person stances are both *personal* stances. In them the other is apprehended as someone who offers possibilities for interaction and understanding.<sup>163</sup> Approaching an other as 'it', on the other hand, involves an *impersonal* stance. This does not recognise a sense of their personhood, or a sense of relatedness between oneself and the other. Accordingly, the other is not apprehended as someone who may affect, and be affected by, oneself in turn, or as a partner "of reciprocal attention" (Schutz 1967: 162). Instead they appear object-like.

Ratcliffe argues that various proponents of folk psychology fail to properly distinguish between the 'third-person' and 'it' in their accounts (2007a: 82). In particular, he singles out Dennett (1987) as falling foul of this by "assum[ing] that an intentional stance is just a matter of interpreting a very complicated 'it'" (Ratcliffe 2007a: 82). Examining the case of intersubjective understanding in schizophrenia highlights the importance of this distinction. It shows that taking an impersonal, detached stance toward others is atypical in everyday intersubjective understanding. Realising this reveals the importance of:

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<sup>161</sup> For example, when thinking about and understanding others who might not be present, or whom we are observing, rather than interacting with.

<sup>162</sup> See Ratcliffe 2007a: 78-84 for an exploration of this.

<sup>163</sup> We saw in Chapter 2 that folk psychology fails to distinguish these two different stances and neglects to acknowledge the importance of interaction. In doing so, folk psychology assumes that everyday interpersonal understanding is third-person and predominantly observational, which leads to a narrow and incomplete description of interpersonal understanding. See Chapter 2 (p.74ff).

- (1) distinguishing second-, third-, and impersonal stances from each other, and
- (2) relatedness to others in everyday, normal interpersonal understanding.

In what follows, I take Stanghellini's point that the way in which persons with schizophrenia relate to others changes, becoming *impersonal*. But what does this tell us about everyday, non-problematic intersubjective understanding? First, it emphasises how we are pre-reflectively attuned to others, and recognise and respond to their personhood in a way that does not require us to 'make contact' with them. Secondly, we do not ordinarily have to observe behaviour and attribute underlying 'motivations' to others in order to understand them. Looking at the fragmentation of healthy intersubjectivity in schizophrenia reveals everyday intersubjective understanding to be a dynamic process which is structured and permeated by affective relatedness with others.

Examination of intersubjectivity in schizophrenia starkly reveals that folk psychology neglects to account for something utterly integral: relatedness. Folk psychology argues for the centrality of the role of attributing mental states to others for interpersonal understanding. However, this is something which the person with schizophrenia primarily comes to rely on only *once* their sense of relatedness fragments or is lost.

The proponent of folk psychology might respond that this is all very well for accounts of explicit attribution of mental states (explicit theory theory or simulation theory), but it does not give us grounds for dismissing the centrality of folk psychology all together. There is still the prospect that, ordinarily, interpersonal understanding is enabled through implicit theory and simulation. Indeed, the analysis of schizophrenia given above cannot disprove or deny this. However, this response misses the point. Schizophrenia is a condition which involves profound changes to intersubjectivity. If we accept the analysis of schizophrenia given above, these are rooted in changes to – or a loss of – a capacity for interpersonal relatedness.

But what changes take place in relatedness within schizophrenia? And how is its structure changed? We find that within schizophrenia there is fragmentation in the perception of space as 'lived'. This lessens and may preclude experiencing oneself, others, and objects as *contextualised*. In particular, a sense of space as shared or even as 'relevant to me' is undone. Instead, space appears as geometricised. After exploring the experience of space

in schizophrenia, I move on to suggest that the inability to feel part of, and participate within a shared context is frustrating for self-directing interaction.

## **6.2 Schizophrenia and Distortions to Lived Spatiality**

Exploring first-person accounts of those who have experienced schizophrenia, it is possible to uncover a number of references to distortions undergone to both perception and experience of spatiality. Whilst there has been much already written on changes to a general sense of ‘Being-in-the-world’ and bodily phenomenology in schizophrenia (Fuchs 2005a; Parnas and Sass 2001; Ratcliffe 2008a; Sass 1992a, 1992b, 1994b, 2001, 2004; Stanghellini 2004), the topic of spatiality remains relatively untouched.

Jaspers makes a few brief remarks on changes undergone to perception of spatiality in schizophrenia (1997 [1959]: 80-81), outlining three categories: (1) “Exhaustion Neuroses”: in which space seems to become more expansive to the patient (80-81); (2) “Experience of Infinite Space”: in which space enlarges to the extent that it is perceived as boundless and infinite (81); and (3) “Emotionally Coloured Space” according to which the space takes on an affective tonality, or character (81). However, after acknowledging these categories, Jaspers does not continue to develop them.

Likewise, Minkowski devotes the last chapter of *Lived Time* to propose that “there is a lived space as there is a lived time” (1970: 400) and the ramifications of this for understanding psychopathology (see later in this section for an exposition of some of his remarks). Stanghellini also refers a number of times to the process of “spatialisation” in schizophrenia (2004: 21, 95, 177). He links this to hyper-rationality and uses it as a term to express the lessening in affective perception and the manner in which other people and things are experienced as detached and affectively unconnected to the person with schizophrenia. Sass also makes reference to ‘morbid geometricism’ in some brief remarks he offers on spatial form in modernist art and the way in which space is perceived and represented in schizophrenia (1992: 161). He sees this as a move toward flatness and immobility. Work already amassed on deviations to a healthy

‘Being-in-the-world’ would be complemented by a study on the distortions to lived spatiality.

**(a) General Remarks**

In order to see what changes to spatiality are involved, let us consider the following quotations taken from *Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Girl*, a memoir of schizophrenia:<sup>164</sup>

(1) “Suddenly the room became enormous, illuminated by a dreadful electric light that cast false shadows. Everything was exact, smooth, artificial, extremely tense; the chairs and tables seemed models placed here and there. Pupils and teachers were puppets revolving without cause, without objective. I recognised nothing, nobody. It was as though reality, attenuated, had slipped away from all these things and these people. Profound dread overwhelmed me, and as though lost, I looked around desperately for help. I heard people talking but did not grasp the meaning of the words. The voices were metallic, without warmth or colour. From time to time a word detached itself from the rest. It repeated itself over and over in my head, as though cut off by a knife. And when one of my schoolmates came toward me, I saw her grow larger and larger like the haystack.” (Sechehaye 1970: 25-26)

(2) “Then my room became enormous, disproportionate, the walls smooth and shining, the glaring electric light bathing everything in its blinding brightness [...] Again the terror mounted to a paroxysm. Desperately I wanted to break the circle of unreality which froze me in the midst of this electric immobility.” (Sechehaye 1970: 31)

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<sup>164</sup> I use this source as it provides a clear and lucid account of one person’s experience of schizophrenia which contains features corroborated by further accounts and psychiatric reports. As such, it provides an excellent point from which to explore changes occurring to experience in schizophrenia.

- (3) “I saw a boundless plain, unlimited, the horizon infinite. The trees and hedges were of cardboard, placed here and there, like stage accessories, and the road, oh, the endless road, white, glittering under the sun’s rays, glistening like a needle, above us the remorseless sun weighing down trees and houses under its electric rays. Over and above the vastness reigned a terrifying quiet, broken by noises making the silence still more quiet and terrifying. And I – I was lost with my friend in the limitless space.” (Sechehaye 1970: 37)
- (4) “For me, madness was definitely not a condition of illness; I did not believe that I was ill. It was rather a country, opposed to Reality [sic.], where reigned an implacable light, blinding, leaving no place for shadow; an immense space without boundary, limitless, flat; a mineral, lunar country, cold as the wastes of the North Pole. In this stretching emptiness, all is unchangeable, immobile, congealed, crystallised. Objects are stage trappings, placed here and there, geometric cubes without meaning. People turn weirdly about, they make gestures, movements without sense; they are phantoms whirling on an infinite plain, crushed by the pitiless electric light. And I – I am lost in it, isolated, cold, stripped, purposeless under the light. A wall of brass separates me from everybody and everything. In the midst of desolation, in indescribable distress, in absolute solitude, I am terrifyingly alone; no one comes to help me. That was it; this was madness, the Enlightenment was the perception of Unreality. Madness was finding oneself permanently in an all-embracing Unreality. I called it the ‘Land of Light’ because of the brilliant illumination, dazzling, astral, cold and the state of extreme tension in which everything was, including myself. It was as if an electric current of extraordinary power ran through every object, building until the whole blew up in a frightful explosion.” (44-45)

Within this collection of quotations we see that several themes emerge. Each express changes in the way space is perceived as ‘lived’.<sup>165</sup> There is a stripping away of the affectivity and vitality of space to reveal a somewhat brutal, precise, and distorted experience of space and the things the author finds around her.

We find here that there is a distortion in – and re-sizing of – lived space. This appears to be a common occurrence within schizophrenia. Jaspers notes that in schizophrenia, objects in space often change their scale, becoming “smaller (*micropsia*) or larger (*macropsia*) or aslant, larger on one side than the other (*dysmegalopsia*)” (1997 [1959]: 80). In the case above, things and people become ‘enormous’ and disproportionate, looming large. At the same time as things appearing larger and closer, there is a stripping of practical and affective significance, which encompasses environment, things and people. The disproportionality occurs alongside a perceived immobility. There is a seeming lack of change and vitality to the landscape, both social and natural, within which the individual finds themselves. There is a distinct lack of dynamism to Renee’s descriptions of the spaces she finds herself within.

‘Immobility’ and lack of possibility and change are features which are mirrored within interpersonal interaction in schizophrenia. In interactive situations, there is a lessening of the dynamism and fluidity of interaction. This is, in part, an effect of a growing immobility in bodily expressivity. We see in quotation (4) that the gestures which flow from people are perceived oddly by Renee, as having no intuitive sense. Chapter 5 stressed the transformative role which a reciprocal bodily relatedness plays in providing dynamism to interaction. Gesture may attune, put us off, enthuse, or dampen our sense of relatedness with others. In quote (4) the author loses a pre-reflective awareness of gestures as accompanying and substantively adding to communication.

This coincides with feelings of distance, alienation, and in the cases above, a sense of desolation. Space becomes stretching, flat, limitless, and infinite in nature and there is a sense of precision in the way the space appears as painfully light, smooth, and empty (quote (3)). Again, this experience appears to be common in schizophrenia; another schizophrenic patient remarks: “I still saw

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<sup>165</sup> That is, as space holding certain meanings – both social and individual – values, resonances, and implications for the person involved.

the room. Space seemed to stretch and go on into infinity, completely empty. I felt lost, abandoned to the infinities of space, which in spite of my insignificance somehow threatened me” (Jaspers 1997 [1959]: 81). This forms a marked contrast from the pre-reflective and taken-for-granted manner in which we usually find ourselves inhabiting the spaces around us, as we saw in Chapter 4.

In each of the quotations above, changes in perception of space are reported *alongside* changes to other phenomena. Quotes (1) and (4) are concerned with spatiality and intersubjectivity; quote (2) with disproportionality and lack of change; quote (3) testifies to the change in object perception situated within ‘infinite space’. This serves to remind us that the way in which we pre-reflectively perceive space is deeply entangled with the way in which others, objects, events, and possibilities all appear to us. I now go on to explore several of these themes in more depth, beginning with (a) un-worlding and decontextualisation, (b) loss of affective salience, and (c) distance and closeness. Doing so shows us several ways in which a sense of lived spatiality distorts in schizophrenia and provides a firm foundation on which to investigate changes to intersubjective understanding.

### ***(b) Un-worlding and the Splitting of Space and Context***

The fourth quote above is particularly indicative of how spatiality is inextricably bound up with our apprehension of others and of things. This quote expresses and describes each of the major themes of this thesis: space, others, and a sense of embodiment. And through it all, Renee declares, is a sense of ‘aleness’, of helplessness; and with this overwhelming feelings of desolation and distress.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> An interesting point which I shall not go into in this chapter is how, in the onset of her illness, Renee overcomes feelings of unreality through close proximity and later physical contact with her therapist. In this case it seems that interpersonal contact and proximity is of therapeutic value. As Renee’s illness progresses she comes to rely on her contact with ‘Mama’ (her therapist) more and more. Whilst one of the symptoms of schizophrenia is growing social isolation and alienation, it seems that ‘making contact’ with others to *feel* their presence is also of therapeutic value. For an example of this see: “Only near her I felt secure, especially from the time when she began to sit next to me on the couch and put her arm around my shoulders. Oh, what joy, what relief to feel the life, the warmth, the reality!” (Sechehaye: 46)

Renee describes the objects surrounding her and the way in which they appear, as “geometric cubes without meaning”. Sass has already comprehensively described the phenomena of “un-worlding” which he argues lies at the heart of apprehension of objects and tools within schizophrenia (1992a: 32-33). ‘Un-worlding’ draws directly from the Heideggerian account of Being-in-the-world (1962: 78-122), and is a term coined by Sass to characterise the waning and eventual loss of affordances which objects hold for people. In the process of un-worlding:

[O]bjective “things” ... seem unable to evoke or convey ... significance or value – one perceives meaningless bits of matter. (Sass 1992a: 33)

With this stripping away of practical orientation comes a decline in ability to pursue projects successfully. Ordinary objects appear as entities, divorced from any practical value for oneself. People with schizophrenia become unable to view the world as ‘for them’, becoming abstracted from the fundamental embeddedness which Sass, following Heidegger, takes as the way which we ordinarily operate in the world. Individuals with schizophrenia are alienated from a world in which they are ‘at home’ and in which they are able to carry out activities and projects in a taken-for-granted way. People with schizophrenia become unable to construe things as ready-to-hand,<sup>167</sup> as proffering distinct possibilities for the subject. Instead, Sass argues that persons with schizophrenia inhabit a perpetual present-at-handness which reduces capacity for action (Sass 2004: 136). If Sass is correct, in the early stages of schizophrenia, the schizophrenic person experiences a stripping away of the meaningful context in which we are all primarily embedded (Stanghellini 2004: 114) causing a “loss of significant external reality” (Heller 1975: 172). Part of this sense of reality is that it is one which others also occupy. With the inability to apprehend affordances of things in the world, and the possibilities which these and others present to us, there is a decline in the perception of the world as *social*. As Stanghellini writes, during schizophrenia:

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<sup>167</sup> See Chapter 2 (p.88-89) for an exploration of the way in which things may be apprehended as ready-to hand and present-at-hand.

The sense of belonging to a community of people, of being attuned to others and involved in my own actions and future; the taken-for-grantedness of all these doubtless features of everyday life, may be put in jeopardy. (2004: 111)

Evidence of un-worlding is contained within quotations (3) and (4). However, in these passages, we find that the experience of un-worlding is not limited to the objects which Renee encounters. It also occurs to the *spaces* within which she finds herself. Instead of perceiving herself to be within certain contexts, Renee's experience is one of context and space decoupling. Renee is de-contextualised and left in space which is perceived as "limitless" and "infinite". As such, the world is no longer homely for her, and comes to resemble 'geometrical' space in her description. The de-contextualising of space as 'for me' and 'lived' naturally impacts on the way in which one conducts oneself in the world. Instead of being 'at home', Renee is 'lost' and "separated [from others] by a brass wall" (Sechehaye 1970: 44-45). This separation is dual in nature. Whilst she is cut off from recognising the vitality of others, she is also cut off from recognising the vitality of the spaces in which she finds herself. Home, for her, becomes "a pasteboard house" filled with "sisters and brothers, robots" (Sechehaye 1970: 38). Walking with her friend she "perceive[s] a statue by my side, a puppet, part of the pasteboard scenery" (Ibid: 37).

Space and others appear devitalised, precise, and mechanical; they are 'cut off' from her. In this way, Renee feels she has to reach out to 'make contact' with others as she no longer intuitively feels their presence *as other people*. 'Making contact' is Renee's term for feeling the 'aliveness' and vitality, the dynamism of world and people. With this gone from her day-to-day life, Renee finds herself forced to *reach out*. What does this tell us about the way in which we ordinarily experience space and others?

First, it tells us that our activities and understanding of others take place within the affective context of 'life'. This is a context which is affective, dynamic, and to which we are connected, close, and related. Secondly, it shows us that we usually find ourselves related and attuned to others in a basic and pre-reflective way. We perceive them directly as *people* whose gestures make sense to us and whose actions are connected to and cohere with their situation. Lived

space is inherently tied to perceiving others as people, with whom we share a world and context which is often *ours*. This is the platform which, in healthy interpersonal understanding, we take for granted and from which we enter into interaction. However, it is through a capacity to be affected and shaped by the spaces we *share* with others, and their movements, gesturing, and words, that the quality of our felt relatedness to them undergoes change and holds possibilities.

Without a context, we lose the ability to make sense of ourselves in relation to others and the social world at large. The impact of this on social relationships is important. Jaspers observed that the schizophrenic person appears to inhabit *another world* (1997 [1959]: 81-85); this is one in which there is no taken-for-granted *shared* referentiality. It is only once this fragments and distorts in the case of illness that we can truly appreciate the manner in which participation in lived and intersubjective spaces scaffold the way in which we approach, interact with and accordingly understand others.

Furthermore, Renee also sustains a loss of meaningfulness in the positionality of the things which occupy the space with her: there seems to be no coherence which unites the objects around her in a practical way.<sup>168</sup> There is a loss of cohesion and meaning imbued in the space in which Renee finds herself. Consider the following:

When I arrived, I was as if frozen. I saw the room, the furniture, ‘Mama’<sup>169</sup> herself, each thing separate, detached from the others, cold, implacable, inhuman, by dint of being without life. Then I began to relate what had happened since the last visit and relived it in the telling. But the sound of my voice and the meaning of my words seemed strange. Every now and then, an inner voice interrupted sneeringly, ‘Ah, Ah!’ and mockingly repeated what I had said. (50)

Here, Renee is describing the process of spatialisation in which her apprehension of space as lived, affective, social, and as ‘for her’ fragments. There is a loss of an overall cohesion to the scene. The effect of this is for things

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<sup>168</sup> See the discussion of Heidegger’s notion of the ‘regionality’ of spaces in Chapter 4 (p.143; also see Heidegger 1962: 135ff).

<sup>169</sup> ‘Mama’ is the name which Renee uses to refer to her therapist, Marguerite Sechehaye.

to appear ‘detached’ not only from herself but from the other things around them. We saw in Chapter 4 that Heidegger describes the manner in which we ordinarily perceive space in terms of ‘regions of activity’ (1962: 135ff and Section 70, 418ff). In this way items in space, and space itself, group themselves according to our life habits and activities. The office in my house is a region of space that, though contained within my home, does not spill out into the ‘living space’. Each region of space is configured and marked by an affective apprehension of it, which is in turn shaped by my primary activity. In this way, a lump of marble when placed in the office might be apprehended and used primarily as a paper weight. The same lump of marble in our living room might be apprehended and valued as a decorative item. Perhaps it has a history relating to former travels. The same items hold different meanings, affordances, and values depending on the space and activity within which they are located.

In the quote above something very different is going on. Instead of a space appearing as a ‘region’ which is a host to a particular activity or mode of life, it becomes all-pervasive.<sup>170</sup> The space becomes ‘distant’ and detached from me and my activity. In the absence of a felt connection to the space around me, the objects within that space also become ‘distant’ and detached from me. The effect of all of this together is to lose an overall context to life and action. Space becomes the ultimate container, as there is a loss of cohesion and purpose to the things which populate this space (see quotes (3) and (4) above).

There is a fragmentation of being embedded within what I described in Chapter 4 as phenomenological, lived space. This distortion of space is one which individualises and makes salient present-at-hand *things*, rather than encountering a familiar backdrop within which *equipment* hold a meaningful place.

### ***(c) Distance v Closeness: The Loss of Affective Salience***

Closely linked to the phenomenon of un-worlding is the appearance of space – and objects within space – as distant, and yet simultaneously too close.

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<sup>170</sup> Also recall the recurring language of ‘limitlessness’ and ‘infinity’ which feature in the quotation at the beginning of this section. There is an emphasis in all of this of the pervasiveness of space.

At first glance this sounds contradictory. However, cases in which the schizophrenia patient cannot perceive the practical and value-based affordances of objects will have a prominent effect on the way they appear within space. In short objects are experienced both as distant and alienated from me and can at the same time loom large, and become overly close. Consider the following:

When, for example, I looked at a chair or a jug, I thought not of their use or function – a jug not as something to hold water and milk, a chair not as something to sit in – but as having lost their names, their functions and meanings; they became ‘things’ and began to take on life, to exist. This existence accounted for my great fear. In the unreal scene, in the murky quiet of my perception, suddenly ‘the thing’ sprang up. The stone jar, decorated with blue flowers, was there facing me, defying me with its presence, with its existence. To conquer that fear I looked away. My eyes met a chair, then a table; they were alive too, asserting their presence ... When I protested, ‘things are tricking me; I am afraid’ and people asked specifically ‘Do you see the jug and the chair as alive?’ I answered ‘Yes, they are alive.’ And they, the doctors, too thought I saw these things as humans who I heard speak. But it was not that. Their life consisted uniquely in the fact that they were there, in their existence itself. (55-56)

Here we have the dual occurrence of things becoming detached from Renee whilst at the same time they are experienced as too close. Whilst there is a loss of the practical meanings of things, and therefore things as appearing for me, within my frame of reference (culminating in distance), at the same time this ‘loss’ entails a lack of affectivity through which things are perceived as salient or unimportant. Things lose salience as for this or that, and instead everything is perceived as equally important or demanding: things lose their distance from me. For Renee, they are “alive”; they exist without reference to her, and as such, she cannot bring them under control or see them as serving a purpose for her or for other people.

We find a similar expression of this phenomenon in another memoir, *The Centre Cannot Hold*. In it Saks describes how:

Consciousness gradually loses its coherence. One's centre gives way. The centre cannot hold. The 'me' becomes a haze and the centre from which one experiences reality breaks up like a bad radio signal. (2007: 12)

And:

Consider this: The regulator that funnels certain information to you and filters out other information to you suddenly shuts off. Immediately every sight, every sound, every smell coming at you carries equal weight; every thought, feeling, memory, and idea presents itself to you with an equally strong and demanding intensity. You're receiving a dozen different messages in a dozen different media – phone, email, TV, CD player, friend knocking at the door, ideas assemble in your head – and you're unable to choose which ones come to the front and which are relegated to 'later'. It's the crowd at the Super Bowl, and they're all yelling directly at you. (2007: 212)

Minkowski, in *Lived Time* (1970), offers a few brief remarks on changes to spatiality in illness, particularly the manner in which perception of space distorts in schizophrenia. Much of what he offers during his exploration can be called on to shed light on the passage by Renee, and to qualify the interpretation of space put forward in Chapter 4. Declaring that “there is a lived space as there is a lived time” (1970: 400), he takes his departure from the so-called geometrical approaches that characterise space as a static container for objects and action. Minkowski states:

[S]pace cannot be reduced to geometric relations, relations which we establish as if, reduced to the simple role of curious spectators or scientists, we were ourselves outside space. We live and act in space and our personal lives, as well as the social life of humanity, unfolds in space. Life spreads out in space without having a geometric extension in the proper sense of

the word. We have need of expansion, of perspective, in order to live. Space is as indispensable as time to the development of life. (1970: 400)<sup>171</sup>

For Minkowski, space and a ‘normal’ inhabitation of it are essential for a healthy life. An ‘everyday’ relation to lived space is integral to a typically healthy structuring of experience. From the outset Minkowski contrasts the type of space with which he is concerned with the contrasting notion of geometrical space. He argues that ‘geometrical’ apprehensions are not the primary way in which we experience space (1970: 403). Instead it is abstracted from our rootedness in a *lived space*, which is constitutive of the way in which we find ourselves living and acting within the world in a normal manner.<sup>172</sup>

But what elements does Minkowski identify as distorted and modified during schizophrenia? Firstly, *lived distance* (1970: 402), and secondly what he characterises as a difference between ‘dark’ and ‘light’ spaces (1970: 427-428).

In speaking of ‘distance’ as being present in a healthy sense of reality and life, Minkowski is keen to stress that this is a *lived*, as opposed to ‘quantitative’ distance (1970: 402). The latter is a literal and measurable, ‘objective’ distance which exists between two objects or bodies X and Y. This measurable understanding of distance fits in precisely with the geometrical understanding of space from which he has already removed himself. Instead, by distance, Minkowski means something very different, which stems from his ‘lived’ approach to space.

‘Distance’ for Minkowski is an existential quality which structures the way life is experienced. It is integral to the conception of a social world as something which I am a part of, yet which is bigger than or separate from myself. A healthy apprehension of distance marks out that others are distinctive and individualised from myself.<sup>173</sup> This healthy sense of distance is sometimes paradoxically erased

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<sup>171</sup> See Chapter 4 for an outworking of interpretations of space as conceived of as geometrical and lived.

<sup>172</sup> See Minkowski: “space, seen only from its mathematical and intelligible aspect, served as its [time’s] foil, as it were. This aspect of space, stripped of life, could be of little interest to the psychologist or psychopathologist ... the ‘dead’ aspect of space seems to exclude, a priori, the possibility of more profound modifications of the human personality of a truly spatial nature” (1970: 339-400).

<sup>173</sup> This is echoed by Merleau-Ponty when he writes: “What protects the sane man against delirium or hallucination, is not his critical powers, but the structure of his space: objects remain before him, keeping their distance and ... touching him only with respect” (1962: 339).

and yet intensified in schizophrenia. We see this in some delusions of grandeur, by which the person with schizophrenia sees herself as omnipotent or necessary for the world's continued existence. At the same time, the individual can feel curiously vulnerable, feeling the world as persecutory.<sup>174</sup> It is my contention here that it may be understood in part as a distortion in a healthy sense of 'felt' distance: one feels utterly necessary, responsible, and part of the world; and yet at the same time there is a profound sense of alienation from it.

Clearly, the manner in which one feels attached to, or detached from, the world is variable. This forms a sliding scale: from a sense of mystical union with the world – in which the mystic experiences herself as continuous with and indistinguishable from everything else – to a state of brutal alienation and detachment. However, Minkowski claims that distance is a mark of being able to live in a coherent, cohesive and unproblematic manner:

I look in front of me; I see objects or people more or less distant from me. But I also see life unfolding around me; I see this life bursting out all around me; I participate in it myself, but it does not really 'touch' me in an immediate way; I feel that I am independent to a certain extent, and there seems to be spatiality in this independence; there is a distance which separates me from life or, rather, which unites me with life. There is always free space in front of me in which my activity can develop. I feel at ease, I feel free, in this space which I have before me; there is no immediate contact, in the physical sense of the word, between the ego and the ambient becoming. My contact with ambient becoming is achieved across, or rather with the help of, a distance which unites us to it. (1970: 402-403)

In this way there is an 'at ease' feeling when we occupy and inhabit the life world of our daily existence. In healthy experience of space, distance is necessary in order to feel an individual. The boundaries of self and world are transgressed within the experience of schizophrenia, with the patient sometimes relating that the world depends on her for its continued existence (Sass 1994b: 76).

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<sup>174</sup> See Sass 1994b: 77-85 for an exploration of this particular paradoxical delusion.

The interplay between excessive closeness and healthy distance is an interesting one. To understand this phenomenon, it is illuminating to turn to phenomenological approaches toward affectivity. Heidegger noted that our Being-in-the-World is always affectively coloured and structured. It is our *mood* which ‘ties us into the World’ and presents things as meaningful, relevant or irrelevant to Dasein’s projects (1962: 172ff). Accordingly, affectivity attunes and anchors us into a world which appears homely and as ‘for us’. The effect of this may vary from producing “a way in which the world appears” (Ratcliffe 2009: 1), to a general context within which activity, perception, and reasoning are tinted; or it may reveal certain features of the environment within which we find ourselves as salient, or conversely as something to be passed over due to its being unremarkable or indifferent to our projects.

We have already seen that schizophrenia involves a loss or flattening of affect. Numerous cases discussed by phenomenological psychiatry suggest that a loss of affective filters correlates with a loss of practical reasoning (Blankenburg 2002; Sass 1992a, 1999, 2004; Stanghellini 2005: 95-109). The loss of affect in schizophrenia entails a lessening of things appearing as salient to a person. Loss of affective salience has a radical effect on the way in which world, people and events are structured. De Sousa has argued that affects are “salience producers” and as such, give both coherence and a frame of reference to experience (1980: 137; 2004: 64). Affects configure the way we broadly view the world.

De Sousa states that “[e]motions are determinate patterns of salience among objects of attention, lines of inquiry, and inferential strategies.” (1980: 141) He argues that affects highlight certain features of experience (1980: 136). This might be because they are useful to our projects, or pertinent to our comfort or safety, for example if thing is an object of fear. The point here for De Sousa is that affects define a field of reference within which we operate. Affects limit what we have to take into consideration in our activities, by making salient certain features or by more generally evoking a field or what we may comfortably take for granted (1980: 136). Affects as salience prescribers therefore have a direct impact on the ways in which we experience, comprehend things, and live life. If our affective life fragments or erodes, then the structure which affective states provide to experience also fragments and erodes. In highlighting certain elements of our environment as interesting, relevant, or to be

responded to, we are able to constrain what we need to take into account and prescribe bounds within which we perform our tasks.<sup>175</sup>

Whereas certain elements normally appear salient in healthy perception, in schizophrenia, loss of affect entails a loss of salience and the work which affects do to structure and demarcate certain things as significant are lost. With this loss, those with schizophrenia cannot constrain a field within which they operate, act, and think. This affects the reasoning processes: a field of reference becomes *limitless* and *unconstrained*. Notice here that we are back to one of the key terms which Renee uses to describe her apprehension of spatiality and the world.

Blankenburg also gives us the example of one of his own patients who had great difficulty in performing routine tasks such as getting dressed (2002). Blankenburg explains this as the effect of a diminishment in affectivity. With the diminishment of affect comes a reduction in perceiving patterns of salience, which constrain and structure both tasks and perception. When faced with the task of deciding what one will wear, when affective constraints are lost or are inoperative the ‘field’ of those things to be taken into consideration suddenly becomes wide open, limitless.<sup>176</sup> However, when we look at memoirs, autobiographies, and psychiatric reports, it seems appropriate to suggest that it is not only the ‘things’ that appear in space which lose salience. It is the space itself. This is at once a simple, but far reaching point; and one which is important if we wish to avoid the ‘container’ model of space and take account how *lived* space structures - and is structured through – interaction.<sup>177</sup>

Taking into consideration the flattening of affect holds important consequences for the way in which spatiality is perceived. With the flattening of affective significances, everything in space appears disconnected, without vitality and without relevance to oneself or to others. Instead of perceiving a world within which one is at home, which presents opportunities and possibilities, a world which is a *field of reference and activity*, we are confronted instead with a *spatialised* world, one which is a-social and limitless.

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<sup>175</sup> De Sousa focuses primarily on how affects structure a capacity for reason (see De Sousa 1980, 2004). However, I will not discuss this here, as the point of relevance is that affects structure a healthy perception of the world.

<sup>176</sup> This then impacts on routine ability to follow instructions and complete tasks. The lessening of an ability to do these things is counted amongst the symptoms of cognitive impairment (see introduction for the discussion of symptomatology of schizophrenia).

<sup>177</sup> See Chapter 4 for discussion of varying conceptions of space.

Turning back to Renee's account, there is a parallel between the words which Renee uses to describe her surroundings and space, and those of geometrical descriptions of space. Both place emphasis on space which is characterised as a continuous underlying container for things, rather than a *context*. The emphasis in both cases is on emptiness and stasis: both in the sense of things being stultifying ('immobile') and of things being unchangeable. This forms a sharp contrast to the manner in which *lived, interpersonal* space was characterised in healthy inhabitation of a world in Chapter 4. Here emphasis was on the fluidity and dynamism of spaces that are partly constitutive of specific contexts within which activities and exchanges gain meaning. In contrast, the life-world which Renee describes is closer to the description of 'geometrical spaces' discussed in Chapter 4, p.132).

### **6.3 Schizophrenia, Space, and Interaction**

But how do deviations in spatial experience affect the manner in which understanding and relatedness between individuals is constituted? In Chapter 4, I argued that inherent to, and structuring, a sense of relatedness is spatiality. Here I argued that an apprehension of lived space as shared and intersubjective is partly constitutive of context. This forms a platform from which understanding begins, which is in turn transformed through our bodily interactions with others. In this way, our shared sense of space is open to revision on engagement with others: space both suggests and shapes the manner within which we first approach and make sense of others whilst others feed back into this sense of space, changing the qualitative feel of it and the manner which we inhabit it through interaction.

#### ***(a) Perceiving Others***

We saw in section 6.1 that schizophrenia involves loss of feelings of interpersonal relatedness; whilst section 6.2 explored how a loss of affective resonance is also something which occurs between individuals and the spaces which they occupy. Lived space loses its characteristic 'homeliness' and regionality, and becomes infinite and detached from human activity and life. The

dissociation of space from lived space causes a retreat from the world or environment being a meaningful context for action and interaction. Without being able to recognise and respond to the social, normative, and affective aspects which are inextricably bound with a sense of space as social, schizophrenic persons lose a frame of social reference which ordinarily feeds into our interactions with others, forming some of the presuppositions which we bring to our interpersonal exchanges.

The effect of depersonalisation and the de-contextualisation of space is that people and things come to be perceived in similar ways. This is evident in Renee's account in which description of people comes to match that of her perception of 'things': they are mechanised and evade intuitive, pre-reflective understanding. Curiously, the sense of loss of affective attunement is recognised clearly by Renee who writes about the demise of being able to 'make contact' with others. In the early stages of her illness this is experienced as frightening and disturbing:

During the visit I tried to establish contact with her, to feel that she was actually there, alive and sensitive. But it was futile. Though I certainly recognised her, she became part of the unreal world. I knew her name and everything about her, yet she appeared strange, unreal, like a statue. I saw her eyes, her nose, her lips moving, heard her voice and understood what she said perfectly, yet I was in the presence of a stranger. To restore contact between us I made desperate efforts to break through the invisible dividing wall but the harder I tried, the less successful I was and the uneasiness grew apace. (Sechehaye 1970: 36)

As her illness progresses, she frequently remarks that the meanings and purpose of gestures escape her (1970: 44). They appear to be complex movements which have no meaning. People are described as "puppets" and mannequins moving here and there without apparent sense (Sechehaye 1970: 25-26, 29-30, 37). Perception of gesture in schizophrenia loses its fluidity and inherent meaning. There is a spatialisation of movement instead of a smooth, coherent whole; the schizophrenic person perceives gesturing not as part of a communicative whole, but as individualised movements. Again, this has the

effect of diminishing intuitive interpersonal understanding, and also slows interaction. We already explored how schizophrenia often disturbs and affects bodily phenomenology, in particular feelings of body ownership (6.1).<sup>178</sup> The result of this is that schizophrenic persons experience difficulty in pre-reflective action and movement as their gaze is turned inward upon themselves (Stanghellini 2007: 130).<sup>179</sup> Fuchs refers to this as a “disembodiment of the self” (2005a: 101) in which one occupies a perspective on one’s self whereby one is always aware of the movements, even those which are usually spontaneous:

[T]he schizophrenic person suffers from what may be called a *disembodiment* of the self. She does not ‘inhabit’ her body any more, in the sense of using as taken for granted its implicit structure, its habits or automatic performances, as a medium for relating to the world. (Fuchs 2005a: 101)

The effect of this is to slowdown and hamper gesturing or, in severe cases, for gesture and bodily movement to cease altogether.<sup>180</sup> The body, and perception of others’ bodily expressivity, are experienced as mechanised (Fuchs 2005a; Sass 2004; Stanghellini 2007, 2008: 312, 2009). This has a profound effect on interaction and feelings of relatedness which are propelled by bodily dialogue (Chapter 5), and contextualised and structured through a sense of shared space (Chapter 4).

Considering Renee’s account shows how fragmentation of affective attunement to others is expressed as seemingly irrevocable social detachment. She talks about an ‘invisible dividing wall’ and being in the presence of strangers. As perception of a face becomes fragmented and dissociative there is a feeling of an unfriendly and hostile sense of space between Renee and her friend.

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<sup>178</sup> Feelings of loss of body ownership, or that one is being controlled by something alien often occur alongside a loss of bodily transparency. (Hoerl 2001: 85; Stanghellini 2009: 57)

<sup>179</sup> See Stanghellini 2007: “A person with schizophrenia is also displaced from his perceptual process, and therefore can become aware ... of them. His gaze is turned inside – he watches, so to say, his eyes watching.” (130) and: “Schizophrenic persons undergo a special kind of depersonalisation: the living body becomes a functioning body, a thing-like mechanism in which feelings, perceptions, and actions take place as if they happened in outer space. They also endure a special kind of de-socialisation: the interpersonal scene becomes an empty stage in which the main actor is unaware of the plot, out of touch from the role he is acting and unable to make sense of what the others are doing” (2007: 133).

<sup>180</sup> As in catatonic forms of schizophrenia.

The metaphor she employs to convey the experience of the onset of schizophrenia is also a fundamentally spatial one. The sense of ‘aliveness’ which Renee tries so hard to recapture and maintain is described again in a spatial term: she tries to ‘make contact’, that is, to reach out and reconnect herself.<sup>181</sup> This is brought to attention very clearly in the, previously quoted,<sup>182</sup> manner in which Renee describes the scene around her as she takes a walk with a friend:

Around us the field spread away, cut up by hedges or clumps of trees, the white road ran ahead of us, the sun shone in the blue sky and warmed our backs. But I saw a boundless plain, unlimited, the horizon infinite. The trees and hedges were of cardboard, placed here and there, like stage accessories, and the road, oh, the endless road, white, glittering under the sun’s rays, glittering like a needle, above us the remorseless sun weighing down trees and houses under its electric rays. Over and above the vastness reigned a terrifying quiet, broken by noises making the silence still more quiet and terrifying. And I – I was lost with my friend in the limitless space. (1970: 37)

Again, note the language: ‘endless’, ‘limitless’, ‘unlimited’, ‘infinite’. There is a recurring emphasis on stasis, limitlessness, purposelessness. There is also a loss of vitality, a loss of aliveness, in her perception of the world and of people (“I perceive a statue by my side, a puppet, part of the pasteboard scenery”). As Stern argues in *Forms of Vitality* (2010) feelings of vitality and expression of it are of central importance in unproblematic and developing interactions. Being confronted by this in others, and recognising it forms an impetus to approach and engage with others; and more, it shapes the course which that engagement will take (Stern 1985, 2010). And, once more, this is inherently linked to the spaces these interactions take place in: “movements happen in space, so a sense of space

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<sup>181</sup> This notion of ‘making contact’, that is feeling the affective pull of people as *people* in a full and rich sense is repeated throughout the book. During the early stages of her illness Renee prizes the contact she is able to make with ‘Mama’ alone (her therapist) and described the benefit she feels in therapy in terms of this ‘being able to make contact’. Eventually even this is lost and Renee enters into a period of illness in which she becomes detached and alienated from others and her environment, and in which perception of personhood is not possible.

<sup>182</sup> I replicate the quote here for ease of reference.

is defined by the movement.” (2010: 4) It seems that this is lost to Renee in schizophrenia.

This is also hinted at by Minkowski (1970) in his exploration of ‘light’ and ‘dark’ spaces. Light space, he writes is, ‘precise, natural and non-problematic’ (428). Furthermore:

I also situate myself in this space, and in doing so I make myself similar to ambient things, at least in one aspect of my being; I occupy a place in this space in relation to other objects which are there, exactly as they do. I ‘fall into line’ in this way ... and the space that englobes all of us brings about a levelling effect. Space thus becomes a ‘public domain’ I share it with everything that is there; it no more belongs to me than to anything else that it contains beside me; I occupy only a very small place in it. It is in this space that I see my fellow men - seeing, moving, acting, living as I do. Light space is an immediately socialised space in the broadest sense of the term. (428)

Minkowski’s description of ‘light’ space or a non-pathological apprehension of space emphasises just what is lost in an unproblematic inhabitation of lived, social and intersubjective space: precisely the ability which is compromised for Renee.

Given this, we might identify ‘un-worlding’ to be at the heart of spatial apprehension in schizophrenia. A loss of the ability to hold things and people close to oneself: to feel connected. We see this when we appeal to Renee’s account. At the heart of Renee’s experience is a felt alienation of herself from: (1) others, (2) from the spaces she finds herself within, and (3) the objects and tools in those spaces. The waning of ability to perceive tools as having a use for a particular subject in a particular situation also occurs alongside a muting of ability to have a sense of the bodies of others as *lived bodies*. The gestures which animate and imbue our interactions with tacit meaning and depth now stultify and float free from meaning. In the above quote, Renee’s friend becomes a ‘statue’: devoid of a sense of vitality and aliveness. There is nothing for Renee to be affected by or to relate to. And we have already seen how for her:

People turn weirdly about, they make gestures, movements without sense; they are phantoms whirling on an infinite plain, crushed by the pitiless electric light. (Sechehaye 1970:44)

There is not only a draining of lived meaning, then, from objects and space, but also from others. Sense decouples from movement and characteristic gestures lose their stock meanings.<sup>183</sup> When this happens, a basic sense of others as *people*; as holding potentiality for both self and other wanes and is lost. The reciprocal to and fro sustained in interaction is compromised and the individual suffering from schizophrenia loses the foothold from which to launch into interaction: instead ascribing motives, reasons, and the ‘rules’ for interaction become salient and necessary.

### ***(b) Praecox Feeling***

Often, work on intersubjectivity in schizophrenia has tended to focus on the effects of changes to intersubjectivity stemming from and impacting on the schizophrenic individual. However, it is interesting to widen the scope of this and consider the effect which it has on their interaction partner. To do so, we may examine certain characteristic features of *interaction* in the early and prodromal stages of schizophrenia. In particular, therapists have remarked on the difficulty which often accompanies understanding those with schizophrenia. Jaspers remarked that the schizophrenic person appears to inhabit another world or existence, which proves difficult to enter into and share (Jaspers 1997 [1959]: 281<sup>184</sup>; Hoerl 2001: 63<sup>185</sup>). Stanghellini reflects on his experience as follows:

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<sup>183</sup> See Chapter 5 for an exploration of the role of differing forms of gesture in interaction and the role this plays in constructing a sense of relatedness.

<sup>184</sup> See the following: “The normal world is characterised by objective human ties, a mutuality in which all men meet; it is a satisfying world, a world that brings increase and makes life unfold.” (1997: 281). Jaspers goes on to make brief remarks about the ‘worlds of schizophrenic persons’ (282). He surmises that far from there being a single frame of reference through which to understand ‘the world of the schizophrenic’ that there is no mutual world: “Schizophrenics, however, are not surrounded by a single schizophrenic world, but by a number of such worlds. If there were a single, uniform world formation schizophrenics would understand each other and form their own community. But we find just the opposite. They hardly ever understand each other; if anything, a healthy person understands them better” (282-3). The lack of a shared mutual context or frame of reference isolates the patient and excludes them from the “mutuality in which all men meet”.

Although my efforts to understand, by suspending all clinical judgement, allows me to see this person's self-reports as a possible configuration of human consciousness. I must admit that there is something incomprehensible ... in these experiences. (2007: 129) [...] He seems to look and to listen from another place. (2007: 130)

And for Sass:

Schizophrenics are ... perhaps the clearest illustration of that incomprehensibility which ... can occur between persons who may share a language but not a single 'form of life'. (1992a: 110)

Whilst there is a sense of alienation lying at the heart of individual experience within schizophrenia, it is also important to acknowledge that there is frequently a sense of alienation accompanying the *intersubjective interactions* engaged in with those suffering from schizophrenia. Many writers and psychiatrists have often commented on the uncanny feelings that arise when sustaining dialogue, eye contact, or interaction with someone diagnosed with schizophrenia. The 'praecox feeling' captures this. Involved in the praecox feeling is that one is facing someone entirely alien, distanced, and detached both from the situation at hand and from oneself.<sup>186</sup> Often described as strange, odd and disconcerting,<sup>187</sup> it is this sense of radical alterity that some psychiatrists have considered the best diagnostic indicator of schizophrenia" (Sass 1992a: 45).<sup>188</sup> The mark of the praecox feeling is one of "strangeness or remoteness, of

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<sup>185</sup> Hoerl, reflecting on Jaspers, states the following: "Schizophrenic patients, Jaspers suggests, live in 'specific, private worlds', which are not mediated by communication with others and whose origins are to be sought in a psychopathological process that actually severs ties" (2001: 63).

<sup>186</sup> Sass helpfully provides the etymology of this term as deriving from the term 'dementia praecox', an older name for schizophrenia. See Sass 2004: 130.

<sup>187</sup> See Sass, who defines the praecox feelings as: "the feeling of strangeness or remoteness, of encountering something beyond normal emotional contact or rapport, that normal persons may have in the presence of a person with schizophrenia" (2004: 130).

<sup>188</sup> Also see Stanghellini 2007: "This feeling of displacement has been, right or wrong, also considered the kernel of the 'encounter' with the schizophrenic: a precocious feeling of alterity ... that I feel in front of him. Indeed this displacement hides a much more complex structure. It is not just an intuitive and pre-categorical diagnostic existence, which the phenomenological gaze helps to reveal. In the first place, I have the sensation that he is not there where I see him. The

encountering something beyond normal emotional contact or rapport” (Sass 2004: 130) and is constituted through interaction. It often places a strain on ordinary patterns of interaction. The feeling which is created between patient and therapist is one which makes fluid and dynamic interaction difficult.

But what is it that makes interpersonal interaction, exchange and understanding difficult? One answer to this seems to be the way in which reciprocal embodied expressivity and ways of sharing our context change. Returning to Jaspers’s point of schizophrenia patients seemingly occupying another world, there is the feeling that whilst we inhabit the same physical space, the same language resources, we do not share a *context*. Patient and therapist lack a shared sense of commonality which encompasses the way the world about them is *felt*. This creates difficulty in making sense of both the symptoms and situation which the patient experiences (Hoerl 2001: 83). Hoerl remarks that “this situation is radically different from our own” (2001: 83).

Given the flattening of affect and depersonalisation which also often occur, we are also faced with another who is not able to affectively resonate with oneself, or feel affect in a healthy manner. I have already remarked on the way which this impacts to slow or preclude ‘normal’ bodily interaction. In short, the sense of relatedness between therapist and patient is disturbed and fragmented, and this phenomenon is rooted in a loss of conspicuousness of normal bodily affective relations.<sup>189</sup>

## 6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored and explained the deviations to intersubjectivity which occur in schizophrenia. We saw that central to schizophrenia was a loss of interpersonal relatedness to others, which lessens the experience of the personhood of others. I began the chapter by making the point

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here-and-now experience is at stake. He seems to look and to listen from another place.” (130). And also Sass 1994 “Most other primary features of schizophrenia can be understood as aspects of, or else as contributing to, this autism and the alienating, difficult-to-understand quality (the quality of strangeness and detachment known as the praecox feeling) that accompanies it.” (95)

<sup>189</sup> This forms an interesting parallel to work by Jonathan Cole (1999), which described a fragmentation of ordinary interactions when ability to tacitly express oneself both facially and through the body is lost in physiological illnesses such as Möbius Syndrome, Parkinson’s disease and Bell’s palsy. He interestingly notes how a lessening of expressive ability on one side calls for a change in patterns of interaction, and the understanding ensues.

that in preoccupying itself with the role of attributing propositional attitudes to people, based on observation of behaviour, folk psychology has neglected a more primordial feature of interpersonal understanding: relatedness. Examining intersubjectivity in schizophrenia reveals just how central relatedness is to healthy intersubjectivity and interpersonal understanding.

To explore this further, I examined the deviations to experience of space as ‘lived’ undergone in schizophrenia. We saw that the condition often entails a geometricisation of space, which stems from depersonalisation and results in a ‘de-contextualisation’ of the schizophrenic person. Also lost is a sense of sharing a social world. To explore the phenomenological underpinnings of this, I drew on Sass’s notion of un-worlding, Minkowski on distance, and De Sousa on affective salience. I suggested that exploring the deviations which occur to lived distance and closeness, provides a more helpful route into understanding the existential changes this illness provokes.

The loss of a pre-reflective and affective attunement to others emerges as characteristic within some forms of schizophrenia, which severely hampers a normal ability to be with and around others. First, I emphasised how changes to (i) the perception of space as lived, and (ii) bodily expressivity are central in schizophrenia. I then outlined how this affects the individual’s ability to *feel* related to others. This exploration highlighted what is normally taken for granted in our everyday interactions with others.

Such a study, then, is invaluable in considering what it is which enables a trouble free and everyday ability to engage and understand others. In the next chapter, I look at deviations that occur in intersubjectivity in depression. I focus on changes to cenesthesia, and the way this ordinarily structures experience of others and world. We find that ability to successfully tacitly inhabit and relate to our bodies as ‘lived’ is central to intersubjectivity and interpersonal understanding. The next chapter moves on to use depressive experience as a case study to examine how changes in one’s relationship to the ‘lived’ body affect ability to engage in and sustain a sense of relatedness with others.

## CHAPTER 7

### DEPRESSION AND THE BODY

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*“The most important part of the environment is my fellow-man.” (James 1884: 195)*

*“It was never this estrangement that grieved him nor anything tangible, but a constant and indigenous sorrow.” (Peake 1946: 205)*

In this chapter I scrutinise changes to intersubjectivity in depression and develop a phenomenological account of changes to interaffective relatedness. Doing so contributes to this thesis by underlining how felt relatedness to others is integral to a capacity to interact with and understand them. People with depression often report a sense of being irrevocably ‘cut off’ from others (Karp 1997: 7; Styron 1990). This is closely associated with the feeling that one cannot ‘reach out’ or ‘be reached’ by others (Brampton 2008: 10). For example, one person describing their experience of depression states:

I wanted a connection I couldn’t have; I did not understand or value the ones I did have. It was a story I saw again and again in the ward. ‘Only connect!’ E.M. Forster had written, but we hadn’t, or couldn’t, or never had. There was the doctor, lost in his personal torment, or Heather, grasping for superficial symbols of connectedness, or Luisa, looking for it through sex. It seemed to me the basic definition of any mental illness, this persistent, painful inability to simply be with someone else. On our side of that severed connection, it was hell, a life lived behind glass. (Thompson 1996: 199-200)

Here Thompson expresses something central to depression: the loss of interaffective relatedness. Accounts, testimonies, and memoirs of those who

have, or have suffered from, depression place this loss as central to their narratives. Solomon describes it as “the aloneness within us made manifest” which “destroys ... connection to others” (Solomon 2002: 15); whilst for Brampton “[l]ife is about connection. There is nothing else. Depression is the opposite; it is an illness defined by alienation” (2008: 1). And, when asked to talk about his experience of depression, another person states:

I believe depression is – a disease of isolation that tells you to withdraw, stay away, don’t be a social person. *Stay away from the people who are going to make you better.* (Karp 1996: 35 [author’s italics]).

Though I have referred to just four testimonies here, these are indicative and reflective of a wide and pervasive experience of intersubjective alienation in depression.<sup>190</sup> Classified as a mood disorder (DSM-IV: 328; ICD-10:112, 119ff), common symptoms of depression include: feelings of sadness, inappropriate guilt, changes in weight and appetite, loss of energy and vitality, feelings of worthlessness, difficulty in thought and speech, and retreat from – and diminishment in ability to cope with – social situations (DSM-IV: 328).<sup>191</sup>

In this chapter, I go one step further and characterise depression as a disorder of interaffective relatedness which fundamentally involves changes to affects that attune us to others. We see from the quotes above that in depression there is a felt loss of interpersonal connectedness. The lack of connection is not simply experienced as absent. Its absence is palpable to the person with depression. What is more, it is felt as *painful*.<sup>192</sup> This is a loss, not just of affectivity but specifically of affects which connected one to others and which promote a felt sense of belonging.<sup>193</sup> Changes to relatedness in depression are

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<sup>190</sup> Also, see the interviews of persons with depression in Karp 1996 (26-27, 34-38). These lead Karp to state: “An insistent theme raised in every interview centres on human connection. Each person’s tale of depression inevitably speaks to questions of isolation, withdrawal, and lack of connection. The pain of depression arises in part because of separation from others; from an inability to connect, even as one desperately yearns for such connection” (1996: 26-27).

<sup>191</sup> In what follows, when I refer to ‘depression’ I indicate what DSM-IV labels ‘Major Depressive Disorder’ (369ff), diagnosis is based on the presence of symptoms listed above.

<sup>192</sup> We see this in the quote from Thompson above, which describes this graphically as a “*severed* connection”.

<sup>193</sup> We see this in some first-person narratives of depression manifest in the way in which spatiality is experienced: instead of a place feeling ‘homely’, it takes of a darker atmosphere. For example: “I did notice that my surroundings took on a different tone at certain times. The shadow

different from those undergone in schizophrenia (Chapter 6). In schizophrenia a sense of apprehending others as affective-beings fragments and people appear devitalised and mechanistic. Although this sometimes occurs in depression in which depersonalisation is co-present, persons with depression usually retain a sense of affective personhood of others. Importantly, this is recognised but not *felt*. Persons with depression often report feeling outside of and apart from the social world, and excluded and distanced from others (see Karp 1996). This obviously has ramifications for one's sense of self and world; in depression others are felt as physically present and sharing the same physical space as the person with depression, and yet they are apprehended as affectively far away.

In this chapter I seek to achieve two things: (1) An exploration of changes to interaffective relatedness and the ways this impacts on intersubjectivity and a capacity for understanding others; and (2) Suggest the ramifications of this for accounts of everyday intersubjectivity. I argue that consideration of depression reveals that our 'start point' in understanding others is one in which we are situated with them in a shared context within which we feel affectively close. In emphasising the role of attributing propositional attitudes, folk psychology forgets what is in place to enable such an ability in the first place.

In seeking to characterise and explore changes to interaffective relatedness in depression, I examine how changes to bodily phenomenology impact on a sense of others as holding possibilities for oneself. To do this, I explore several examples from first-person accounts of depression which emphasise changes in bodily phenomenology. Exploring these, we see that depression is a disorder which involves significant changes to bodily phenomenology. Depression upsets taken-for-granted bodily awareness (cenesthesia): the body becomes conspicuous and is often felt as painful. In the analysis which follows, I suggest that these changes to background cenesthesia impact on a felt connectedness to others (relatedness), so that it is extremely hampered, and in severe cases, lost. I then suggest how this affects intersubjectivity.

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of nightfall seemed more sombre, my mornings were less buoyant. Walks in the woods became less zestful, and there was a moment during my working hours in the late afternoon when a kind of panic and anxiety overtook me, just for a few minutes, accompanied by a visceral queasiness – such a seizure was at least slightly alarming, after all” (Styron 1990: 41).

## 7.1 Depression and Distortions to Bodily Phenomenology

### *(a) General Remarks*

As we have seen, many testimonials of depression feature two strongly recurring motifs: (1) a loss of interpersonal connectedness, which is often experienced as somatically painful; and (2) felt changes to the lived body. Though classified as a psychological disorder, depression involves a high prevalence of somatic symptoms (pains in localised parts of the body, agitation, tiredness, feelings of constriction in the chest (DSM-IV: 350; Fuchs 2005a: 99)) as well as psychological ones (Solomon 2002: 20). Depression also involves symptoms which cannot be categorised as solely psychological or somatic, but involve both (for example, anxiety, insomnia or hypersomnia, diminished concentration (DSM-IV: 356)). In this way, depression is a disorder which has a profound effect on experience of the body as lived and dynamic (Fuchs 2001, 2005a).

In what follows, I look in detail at the effect these changes to bodily experience have on intersubjectivity in depression. In order to do so, I engage with first-person accounts of depression. The exploration which follows presents us with ways of thinking, considering, and understanding the changes to cenesthesia in depression. This achieves two things. First, it enables new ways of understanding changes to a capacity for intersubjectivity in depression. And secondly, it also provides a counter case from which we may re-evaluate ways interpersonal understanding has traditionally been conceived. Consider the following:

- (1) “As I saw it, my mind made a choice each day about how to torment my body. One day it might be a terrible ‘grief knot’ in my throat. On another it might be chest pains that could easily be mistaken for a heart attack. Other days it might be an awful heaviness in my eyes, pressure in my head, feelings of sadness in my cheeks, shaky hands and legs, or even some combination of all these. On my most difficult days I was constantly aware of my body, monitoring from minute to

minute whether things had become better or worse. During all of this I felt deeply alone. Everyone else seemed to be moving through their days peacefully, laughing and having fun. I resented them because they were experiencing such an easy time of it. I felt utterly cut off from them emotionally. I was angry because there was no way they could understand what I was going through. Their presence seemed to magnify my sense of isolation.” (Karp 1996: 7)

(2) “The madness of depression is, generally speaking, the antithesis of violence. It is a storm indeed, but a storm of murk. Soon evident are the slowed-down responses, near paralysis, psychic energy throttled back close to zero. Ultimately, the body is affected and feels sapped, drained.” (Styron 1990: 46-47)

(3) “What began to enrage him the most was my remoteness, my zombie face – this blank look I had. It closed him out, which was the one thing he could not bear; to him, overt hostility would have been better. We could be watching television, having a meal, driving down the road, when he would say, ‘You’re doing it again’. The zombie look was, in fact, the mask of depression, a clinical symptom known well to psychiatrists. But the creeping emotional numbness I was falling into made it impossible for me to know when my face assumed that expression.” (Thompson 1996: 123)

(4) “My body feels spongy and heavy, weirdly unfamiliar. It is as if my flesh has been pumped full of a thick viscous liquid.” (Brampton 2008: 28)

Uniting each of the above quotes is a common concern with the way in which the body becomes salient and conspicuous, though this is realised in different ways. Quote (1) shows how the body becomes conspicuous through near constant feelings of pain or discomfort. The physical discomfort which Karp experiences brings awareness of his body to the forefront of his attention and

becomes the default way in which it is apprehended. His body as a taken-for-granted background to all encounters, interactions, and activities is lost and fragments as he turns attention to the various feelings he experiences. Parts of the body appear as uncomfortably salient through feelings of constriction (throat, chest) or pressure (eyes, head). Attention is diverted to these experiences, and the heightened awareness of the body as uncomfortable prevents a normal ‘getting on with things’: instead the body becomes an obstacle and absorbs the attention of the sufferer (Fuchs 2005a: 99).

Quote (2) speaks of the extreme fatigue and weariness which is a hallmark of depression. Emphasising the slowing of the body’s responsiveness and a lack of energy, Styron writes of what DSM-IV describes as an increase in fatigue which is disproportional to activity (DSM-IV: 350). Depression often entails a pervasive tiredness which is felt prior to any activity or physical exertion, and which makes movement, activity, and exercise difficult. Persons with depression report that it takes increased time, effort, and energy to complete routine tasks of self-care, or the demands placed on one through work or day-to-day responsibilities (Solomon 2001: 53-54).<sup>194</sup>

The experience of the body as slowed and drained is closely related to feelings of unfamiliarity of one’s body which often accompany depressive episodes and experiences. This is the subject of quote (4). The type of bodily conspicuousness here is revealed through change to the background feeling of the body (cenesthesia). Instead of one’s body being (by and large) inconspicuous when performing activities, Brampton retains a constant awareness of her body as weighty, heavy, and alien. This awareness of the body as such becomes the default manner in which the body is experienced and, we shall see later, structures the way one acts and perceives the world and spatiality.

Awareness of one’s body as heavy and cumbersome causes changes in the way one perceives what one is able (and unable) to do. Tasks which once

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<sup>194</sup> “I kept running through the individual steps in my mind: you turn and put your feet on the floor; you stand; you walk from here to the bathroom; you open the bathroom door; you walk to the edge of the tub; you turn on the water; you step under the water; you rub yourself with soap; you rinse; you step out; you dry yourself; you walk back to the bed. Twelve steps, which sounded to me as onerous as a tour through the Stations of the Cross [...] I would sometimes start to cry again, weeping not only because of what I could not do, but because the fact that I could not do it seemed so idiotic to me” (Solomon 2001: 53-54).

appeared easy now take planning and perseverance.<sup>195</sup> One person reports how this impacts on their interactions with other people:

[T]he sufferer from depression ... finds himself, like a walking casualty of war, thrust into the most intolerable social and family situations. There he must, despite the anguish devouring his brain, present a face approximating the one that is associated with ordinary events and companionship. He must try to utter small talk, and be responsive to questions, and knowingly nod and frown and ... even smile. But it is a fierce trial attempting to speak a few simple words. (Styron 1990: 62-63)

This makes plain the extent to which tasks which are normally taken for granted require energy and become tiring. Karp also identifies this with regard to intersubjectivity and interaction when he writes: “Depressive feelings make interaction arduous and sometimes the need to withdraw from others overrides the realisation that self-isolation will only deepen one’s anguish” (Karp 1996: 35). Feelings of the body as cumbersome and heavy, then, impact not only on performing tasks and activities but also upon being around, and responsive to, others.

The effect of the arduousness of maintaining a ‘normal’ bodily and facial expression and carriage are also made plain in quote (3). In quote (3) Thompson details the changes undergone in a normal bodily expressivity and the way in which this can impact others. Here Thompson describes the effect which a facial freezing had on her (then) partner, which she attributes to a growing numbness and diminishing affectivity. This, again, is common to experience of depression (Styron 1990: 16) and stems from a growing weightiness and heaviness experienced in the body as it is felt, as well as diminishing in felt affect. Quote (3) reports not only on the experience of a lessening in bodily animation and affectivity, but also on the impact this might have on others.

In each of these cases there are changes to the body as it is ordinarily experienced (or not experienced) in healthy interactions with others and the

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<sup>195</sup> For example: “I found everything excruciatingly difficult, and so, for example, the prospect of lifting the telephone receiver seemed to me like bench pressing four hundred pounds” (Solomon 2001: 85).

world. Instead of the body forming the background of our awareness of self, others, and world, it becomes conspicuous in several ways: through physical discomfort (quotes (1) and (4)), as a slowing down, or lack of energy (quote (2)), and through our intersubjective exchanges with others (quote (3)). We find that in depression there is a re-attunement in the way in which the body is primarily experienced. Fuchs (2005a) notes that in severe depression the body loses the quality of *transparency* (95) and comes to be experienced as object-like and in all its materiality. He refers to this as “corporealisation of the lived body.” (2005a: 96)

### ***(b) Corporealisation and the Loss of Bodily Possibilities***

We can identify the process of corporealisation present in quotes (1) and (4). In both quotes there is a loss of the normal way in which the body structures – and is felt in – healthy, everyday life. Instead, parts of the body (as in quotation (1)), or the body as a whole (as in quotation (4)), come to be experienced as objects of awareness rather than as a medium of activity. Quotation (4), in particular, conveys the feeling of strangeness which accompanies this process. The corporealised body becomes “weirdly unfamiliar” in Brampton’s words; this is markedly different from the way in which the body is often taken for granted in our actions and activities.<sup>196</sup> Before exploring corporealisation – and its

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<sup>196</sup> Though this is not always the case. For example, when learning to balance whilst riding a bike, we feel a heightened awareness of our body as something which has the potential to be hurt, or as cumbersome as we wobble and attempt to keep balance. We are also often aware of our bodies when learning new skills, practising and repeating techniques and postures until they become habitual. For example, when first playing the violin one learns to hold the violin and the bow. In doing so one’s body feels awkward and rebellious: the exertion of holding the neck of the violin with the left hand, the elbow held aloft at chest height and the wrist forced to keep a flat line makes the arms feel heavy and awkward. The student then adjusts their cheek on the chin rest, trying to find a comfortable position. In the process, one’s body aches and feels rebellious as we force ourselves to keep the required position. However, the strangeness of the position of the arms, hands, and cheek dissolves on sustained engagement with, and practice of, the instrument. What used to be cumbersome and cause aches, becomes natural and second nature. Young (2005) also details the way in which the body may be experienced as conspicuous and as a focus of one’s awareness in pregnancy (‘Pregnant Embodiment: Subjectivity and Alienation’) or under the objectifying gaze of others (‘Women Recovering Our Clothes’, see also the discussion of Sartre and bodily phenomenology in Chapter 5 of this thesis (pp.159-162)). However, in many of our routine activities the body, rather than being an object of attention or awareness, becomes that which enables actions to take place and structures the manner in which they do. This will be discussed shortly.

presence and effect on the body – in depression, we first need to say something of how the body ordinarily structures experience.

(i) *The Body as it is Ordinarily Structures Experience: Husserl and Merleau-Ponty*

Various positions in phenomenology state the inextricability of body and experience of the world (Husserl 1989, Sartre 1958, Merleau-Ponty 1962). In opposition to the way the body has often been conceived of as a ‘thing’ or ‘object’ in the world, these positions state that the body is not merely the vehicle through which consciousness interacts with the world; this way of characterising the body forgets the more primary way in which it structures experience in day-to-day life (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 235ff). Arguing against this, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, in their analysis of how the body structures experience, make the strong claim: ‘I am my body’ (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 231; Sartre 1985: 326).<sup>197</sup> In doing so, they seek to exorcise the notion of “the ghost in the machine” (Ryle 1976 [1949]) implied by the conception of subjectivity and body as separable.<sup>198</sup> Instead, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty emphasise how the body is *constitutive* of subjectivity. It is argued that the body *opens up* possibilities within, and shapes experience of, the world (see Merleau-Ponty 1962). In the discussion which follows, I explore the arguments of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. Both illustrate how the body shapes experience.

In order to do this both Husserl (1989) and Merleau-Ponty (1962), draw on the long-standing distinction between two ways we may conceive, relate to, and understand the body as: (1) *Körper*, that is the objective, physical body, which encompasses the body as it appears as an object of reflection; and as (2) *Leib* which characterises the body as it is lived and pre-reflectively experienced. Involved in the latter characterisation is the body as it functions when things go well and one is pre-reflectively caught up in activity. Husserl (1989) and

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<sup>197</sup> In asserting this, Sartre was influenced by Marcel who asserts “I am my body”. See Marcel 1951: 119; 1963: 47.

<sup>198</sup> As typified by Descartes mind-body dualism. See, for instance, Descartes (2000: 57-70). There is a long and rich philosophical history underlying this point, which is beyond the scope of this chapter. For a history of changing philosophical treatments and conceptions of the body see: Crane and Patterson (2000).

Merleau-Ponty (1962) argue that in this situation, one's body acts as a field of intentional possibility through which things are experienced and apprehended.

Exploring how the body does this, Husserl outlines two indispensable areas in which embodiment shapes and constrains experience: first, the body *orients* experience, and secondly, things appear as possibilities in terms of bodily ability. To begin, Husserl makes the point that the body is that which provides perception with positionality:

The Body is, in the first place, the *medium of all perception*; it is the *organ of perception* and is *necessarily* involved in all perception. (1989: §18)

Here, Husserl states that things are given to us in particular ways in virtue of our body. Being embodied orients experience of the world. The body becomes the locus point from which things are experienced from a certain perspective or distance in relation to us.<sup>199</sup> It is, Husserl writes, the “zero point of orientation, the bearer of the here and now, out of which the pure Ego intuits space and the whole world of the senses” (1989: §18). The body performs this role for Husserl simply because there is no way of experiencing and perceiving things from outside it: I cannot be near or far from my body, instead things appear near or far, left or right in virtue of my bodily position. Importantly, for Husserl, the body orients not only in terms of physical distance and measurable relationality but also in terms of possibilities. Husserl and Merleau-Ponty refer to this as experiential ‘horizons’ of possibility (see Husserl 2001, Merleau-Ponty 1962). Through the horizontal structure of experience I apprehend both present and future possibilities. In this way, as I look at the cup on the table, it appears to me in virtue of my current bodily position. Involved in my perception of the cup is the possibility that if I squint or turn my head to the side, I see it from another angle, which reveals something more about the cup (Husserl 2001: 50-52).

My perception of the cup is also structured in terms of possible actions: it might appear as graspable or as delicate (if it's a fine china cup). In this way,

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<sup>199</sup> Merleau-Ponty makes the same point when he states: “The relationship between my body and things is that of the absolute here to there, of the source of distances to distance. My body is the field within which my perceptive powers are localised” (1964b: 166).

horizons of possibility involve multiple sensory modalities (Husserl 1989: 42). Let us take another example: looking at a rotten apple on the table (vision) involves apprehension that if I get closer it may smell bad (smell), or that it may feel soft and oozing beneath my fingers if I pick it up and put it in the bin (touch). Horizons of possibility are structured and shaped by the body: both in terms of positionality (I see this side of the cup, if I move away from the rotten apple, I will not smell it) and action (the cup appears as something I can reach out and grasp, the door is something I can walk through).<sup>200</sup> In everyday experience Husserl states that objects suggest ‘hidden dimensions’ for bodily activity: doors are to be walked through, seats are to be sat on and so on (2001: 50ff).

What is more, Husserl states that horizons are not always perceived neutrally, but can be appealing or otherwise: they have an “affective claim” on us (2001: 98). In this way, on a hot day after a jog, a glass of water appears as tantalisingly graspable. Horizons of possibility, then, are necessarily constrained and presented in virtue of what we are able to do, within the limits of our bodily capabilities and phenomenology.

Building on the work of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty also argues that ordinarily when things ‘go well’ I do not notice my body (Leib); I do not need to hold it in conscious thought or wilfully direct its actions in a conscious manner.<sup>201</sup> Instead, the body is what pre-reflectively opens up the world to me. “Movement”, Merleau-Ponty writes:

[I]s not thought about movement, and bodily space is not space thought of or represented. ‘Each voluntary movement takes place in a setting, against a background which is determined by the movement itself ... We perform our movements in a space which is not ‘empty’ or unrelated to them, but which on the contrary, bears a highly determinate relation to

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<sup>200</sup> Husserl refers to this as “kinestheses” (2001: 50-52). This term indicates how the body necessarily structures horizons of possibility: “The lived-body is constantly there, functioning as an organ of perception; and here it is also, in itself, an entire system of compatibly harmonising organs of perception” (Husserl 2001: 50).

<sup>201</sup> See footnote 197 for exceptions to the way in which we can experience our body as conspicuous in unproblematic, everyday life.

them: movement and background are: in fact, only artificially separated stages of a unique totality.’ (1962: 159)<sup>202</sup>

We do not ordinarily, in everyday situations, perceive any gap between ‘myself’, ‘my body’, and ‘my situation’. Instead, for Merleau-Ponty, there is a horizon which binds our actions and future actions together in experience. He refers to this as the “intentional arc” which:

[P]rojects round about us our past, our future, our human setting, our physical, ideological, and moral situation, or rather which results in our being situated in all these respects. It is this intentional arc which brings about the unity of the senses, of intelligence, of sensibility and motility. (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 157)

Resisting the idea that in order to act within the world, we must first be able to represent it, Merleau-Ponty argues that in non-problematic experience, we do not begin from the stand point of ‘I think’ (1962: 156*ff*). Instead, the way in which we find ourselves in the world is primarily structured by motility, action, and potential for action, in terms of the ‘I can’ (1962: page). This is what Merleau-Ponty refers to as ‘motor intentionality’.

Motor intentionality describes the manner in which we are able to engage habitually in an action. For example, when I sit at my piano, I do not have to explicitly think of the level at which I raise my hands, the position I place them over the keys. I do not have to consciously place my feet at the pedals, poised over them, but not yet pressing down on them. I do not consciously signal to myself to start playing, or gauge the force with which I begin to strike the keys. Merleau-Ponty’s point is that in healthy experience one does not first represent and think through the situation, and then perform the actions. Rather, the actions flow from the situation and take place within a context which gives them meaning. Furthermore, my actions flow from my bodily capabilities.

Likewise, when I am going about my day-to-day business, things in the world seem possible or impossible; offer the prospect of amusement or despair,

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<sup>202</sup> Merleau-Ponty quotes Goldstein here. For further details see footnote 93 in Merleau-Ponty 1962: 159.

in terms of my bodily skills, capabilities, and limitations. When passing a shop which sells musical instruments, the piano in the window might call out to me, presenting itself as something to be played. I might feel the itch in my fingers and a deep urge to play it. In this bodily way, the instrument does not primarily appear as detached from me, but instead my experience of it is shaped and configured by my skills and capabilities. These bodily skills and capabilities project possibilities onto myself which are *bodily* possibilities.

Merleau-Ponty goes on to argue that this has an impact on the way in which space, and things within space, are experienced and configured (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 159, quoted above on pp. 221-222,). Merleau-Ponty argues that there is an intentional directedness between person and the world: our bodily capabilities project and create a spatiality within which things are experienced according to potential for action. This is given and shaped in terms of the ‘I can’. The jar on the top shelf is not just presented to me as occupying a certain position in relation to my own positionality. Instead, it appears as within reach or grasp, or hopelessly out of reach. The hill which I stand in front of may reach high into the sky, but appears as a challenge (or trial – depending on health and capability) to be surmounted. In this way, the body shapes potentiality of action through the ‘I can’. In turn this structures perception of the world and opens up possibilities. So what happens when this fragments? Fuchs argues that depression involves a fragmentation of the lived body as it structures experience, as a result of a corporealisation of the lived body.

(i) *Corporealisation and the Loss of Bodily Possibilities*

Now we have accounted for ways in which the body ordinarily structures experience, let us return to examine how this changes in depression. We have already seen in section 7.1a that depression involves an upheaval in the way in which the body is experienced. Fuchs refers to this as a corporealisation of the lived body. In describing the body as it is ordinarily experienced as ‘lived’ Fuchs, drawing on Merleau-Ponty (1962), maintains that the body is ‘transparent’ (Fuchs 2005a: 95). That is, it is not usually experienced as something requiring attention. Instead, it sets the scene and shapes the manner in

which things are experienced. As Fuchs puts it: “the world is disclosed by the interactions of the body with its environment” (2005a: 96).

Corporealisation involves a loss of this bodily transparency. Instead of the body being a “mediator of experience” (Fuchs 2005a: 96), it becomes an object of awareness. In speaking of the body as ‘mediator’ between subject and world, Fuchs opens a possibility of interpreting what follows as a weak form of subject-body dualism (Leder 2005). Here, the body might be interpreted as a container for subjectivity, rather than constitutive of it (as Husserl, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty argue). This is a claim which Fuchs wishes to avoid, as he himself states (2005b). Instead, his characterisation of corporealisation assumes that the lived-body structures experience in the way discussed in the previous sub-section.

The effect of corporealisation is that attention which would ordinarily be directed out toward world and activities, is directed inwardly to the body. In Fuchs’s words, “the relation of the subject to the world is deprived of its immediacy, leading to a fundamental alienation of the self” (Fuchs 2005a: 96). Instead of the body projecting a mode of spatiality in which things are experienced in terms of the ‘I can’, the body is instead spatialised: it is experienced as bounded, heavy, and cumbersome. Instead of things appearing in terms of the ‘I can’, the ‘I cannot’ becomes prevalent.

In characterising the relationship between person and world as one which is necessarily shaped by, and through, bodily phenomenology, we saw that Merleau-Ponty presents the world in terms of the ‘I can’. Our bodies, in constraining the things that we experience as possible, impossible, challenging, comforting, and so on, opens up and presents possibilities for action and activity (1962: 408). For Merleau-Ponty this also affects our intersubjective relationships with others. Intersubjectivity is shaped through intercorporeality (see Merleau-Ponty 1962: 403-425, 1964b: 159-181).

This is important for understanding changes to bodily experience undergone in depression. Through depression we have seen that there is a change in which people become aware of their body as an object of attention: it appears as heavy, weighty, and cumbersome (Fuchs 2005a: 99). The bodily transparency, which Merleau-Ponty argues is the norm of the ‘I can’, gives way to opacity and reconfigures experience in terms of ‘I cannot’. The body, instead of opening up

the world, becomes an obstacle: things must be done in spite of it (Fuchs 2005a: 99). We might reflect, as we already have done (see footnote 198), that there are instances in ordinary and healthy experience in which the body is the focus of our attention, or becomes opaque. However, the experience of the body as opaque in depression is a radical version of this. As attention is turned inward, cenesthesia becomes alien and constantly uncomfortable.

This is often manifest in the onset of depressive episodes as bodily discomfort; a list of niggling somatic complaints which usually have no discernable diagnosis (DSM-IV: 350). This is frequently reported in autobiographical accounts of the experience of depression. Styron, for instance states:

And soon I was in the throes of a pervasive hypochondria. Nothing felt quite right with my corporeal self; there were twitches and pains, sometimes intermittent, often seemingly constant, that seemed to presage all sorts of dire infirmities ... Normally I would have been satisfied, indeed elated, when, after three weeks of high-tech and extremely expensive evaluation, the doctor pronounced me totally fit; I *was* happy, for a day or two, until there once again began the rhythmic daily erosion of my mood – anxiety, agitation, unfocused dread. (1990: 44)

And Thompson also records similar concerns:

[S]igns of chronic depression were emerging. Even before the accident, I had begun to make frequent trips to the doctor, always complaining of a variety of ailments. Some were real; others had no clear physical cause. I seemed to suffer constantly from stomach-aches, headaches, a mysterious cough, strange lumps in my lymph glands – a litany of ailments baffling my doctors and worrisome to my mother. (Thompson 1996: 34)

As we see in the quotes above, the onset of depression frequently involves a list of somatic complaints often passed off as hypochondria. Such somatic complaints commonly include: achiness, heaviness or a weighty feeling to one's body, pains in the chest (common in cases which are compounded by, and rooted

in, anxiety), feelings of suffocation and lethargy, the feeling that more energy must be exerted in order to complete routine tasks (Karp 1996: 29, 30).

If, as Merleau-Ponty and Husserl argue, the body shapes the horizons of daily life, changes in background bodily feeling<sup>203</sup> will lead to changes in what appears possible and impossible, and also the affective tonality through which the world appears. Losing bodily transparency and instead experiencing oneself as lacking in energy, motivation, and as ‘heavy’, limits a carefree sense of activity. Instead of opening out possibilities for action and interaction with the world, the body is felt as “an obstacle” (Fuchs 2010: 1). Tasks require extra energy and people appear distant; others are now those to whom the person with depression needs to reach out.

Of interest is the effect this may have on the configuration of bodily spatiality and possibility. For Merleau-Ponty we saw that spatiality is given in terms of motor intentionality. The space around us appears as limitless or claustrophobic, navigable and surmountable, or impossibly perilous, in relation to bodily capabilities and skills.

Drawing on this insight is important for understanding changes to intersubjectivity and spatiality in depression. Recurrent in first-person accounts of depression is imagery of enclosure which is evoked to convey the sense of isolation central to experiences of depression (Brampton 2008: 171; Karp 1996: 29; Plath 1966: 178, Styron 1990: 44; Wurtzel 1995: 101). This is pertinent to the way in which the body is experienced. Instead of the body opening up possibilities, in depression, the body now works to shut off, close down, or reveal things in the world as difficult or impossible. The effect of this is to restrict the apprehension of space as ‘embodied’ (in Merleau-Ponty’s words) and limit it to the boundaries of the body (Fuchs 2005a). Experience of others and the world becomes *distanced* as the person with depression feels encapsulated and enclosed.<sup>204</sup> Fuchs expresses this when he writes:

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<sup>203</sup> Particularly, as we have seen, in the case of the body occupying the foreground of one’s attention.

<sup>204</sup> For examples, see the following: “I felt as if my head had been encaged in Lucite, like one of those butterflies trapped forever in the thick transparency of a paperweight” (Solomon 2001: 66); an interviewee when asked to describe the feeling of depression responds: “I feel like I’m in a cage and I’m trapped, and I can’t get out and it’s night time and the daylight’s never going to come” (Karp 1996: 29); “[People with depression] may continue to associate with friends and family while nevertheless feeling disengaged, uncomfortable, marginal, and profoundly alone. Indeed ... sometimes being in the presence of others and ritualistically moving through the

*Corporealisation* ... means that the body does not give access to the world, but stands in the way as an obstacle, separated from its surroundings: The phenomenal space is not embodied any more. (2005: 99)

In depression, the close relationship between the body and space collapses and the person with depression feels a sense of slowing down which quote (3) in 7.1a expresses. Instead of the pre-reflective relationship between self and world which Merleau-Ponty, drawing on Goldstein, describes (see 1962: 157, quoted on pp.221-222), the depressed person now has to reach out to the world; bodily heaviness and conspicuousness adds to and feeds a sense of isolation, encasement, and alienation (see first-person accounts in footnote 205).

This is also the case for feelings of intersubjective relatedness to other people in depression (Brampton 2008: 10;<sup>205</sup> Karp 1996: 27). Horizons shape our perception of things as presenting certain possibilities for perception and action. It is possible to argue that this is also the case for other people.<sup>206</sup>

We have already seen in Chapter 2 that the social roles which people hold structure our expectations of, and interactions with, them. Throughout this thesis more widely, we have seen that relatedness is what enables us, in part, to view others as providing possibility for interaction: when we feel related to others, we often feel affectively close to them. They are presented to us as holding possibility for interaction, whether this is paying for shopping or holding a ‘deep and meaningful’ conversation. In both cases our interactions are structured by the other person or people appearing as ‘close’. By this, I mean we do not have to “bridge a gap” (Reddy 2004: 54-55); people appear as those with whom we can get on and interact.

In depression, this is not the case. Although they share the same physical space, other people appear distant, cut off, far away; they do not appear as

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motions can dramatically magnify a sense of loneliness and isolation” (Karp 1996: 34); “Depression feels like the most isolated place on earth. No wonder they call it a disease of loneliness” (Brampton 2008: 1).

<sup>205</sup> “My inability to reach out and communicate with them drove me almost mad with grief” (Brampton 2008: 10)

<sup>206</sup> See Smith 2010 for an account of perception of others’ intentions, feelings, and mental states which draws on Husserl’s conception of horizons.

‘graspable’. Instead the person with depression must reach out, and expend energy in order to initiate and sustain the usually taken-for-granted feeling of interpersonal connection.<sup>207</sup> For instance, consider the following:

- (a) “[W]herever I sat – on the deck of a ship or at a street café in Paris or Bangkok – I would be sitting under the same glass bell jar, stewing in my own sour air.” (Plath 1966: 178)
  
- (b) “I need people I date to be a little able to take care of themselves, because taking care of me takes a lot of energy, and I can’t be responsible for every little hurt feeling someone has. Isn’t that a terrible way to feel about love? [...] I am not yet in a full-blown depression, but am slowing down a little – I mean that I have to focus on each thing I do on more and more levels.” (Solomon 2001, quoting correspondence with ‘Laura’: 94-95)
  
- (c) “After the lecture, I went with a group of friends and the people who’d organised the event to dinner in a nearby restaurant. The evening included enough varied people so that some effort was required to muster the appearance of perfect politesse, but under ordinary circumstances it would have been a pleasure. As it was, it seemed as though the air around me was setting, the way glue sets, into a weird rigidity, so that people’s voices all seemed to be breaking and cracking through the solid air, and that cracking noise made it hard to hear what they were saying. I had to break through just to lift my fork ... I was slightly mortified but did not know what to do about it ... And then I found that the air was getting so hard and brittle that the words were coming through in staccato noises that I couldn’t quite string together ... I felt the logic disappearing right out from under me.” (Solomon 2001: 88)

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<sup>207</sup> Also see Styron 1990 (62-63), previously quoted on p. 217.

- (d) “During the spring of 1994, I went to parties and tried and failed to have fun; I saw friends and tried and failed to connect.” (Solomon 2001: 45)

In each of these quotations we see that the structure of interpersonal experience has changed: instead of being ‘alongside’ others in an unproblematic and taken-for-granted manner, isolation is the default position from which interaction with others begins (as displayed in quote (a)). This is a subtle but forceful point. Instead of our apprehension of others holding possibilities for interaction and joint ventures, the person with depression now needs to exert energy in order to ‘connect’ (as in quotes (c) and (d)) or simply to follow and keep up with interactions (quote (c)). Quotes (b) and (c) both link this to a decrease in bodily energy stemming from a need to surmount changes to cenesthesia. Quote (b) clearly shows how disintegration in background bodily feeling impacts on the way in which spatiality, and others, are perceived. As the body begins to feel thick, heavy, and strange, so does the air become thick and interaction becomes difficult to sustain, as people feel more distant. Here the changes in cenesthesia and bodily possibility (lifting cutlery demands energy, hearing is affected) impact directly upon interpersonal possibility (interaction becomes fragmented and challenging, speech slows down, and sustaining a conversation and line of thought become difficult) and spatial atmosphere (the air becomes brittle and tense). Bodily feelings involved in depression, here, entail a change to interpersonal horizons of possibility.

### ***(c) A Slowing of Reciprocal Bodily Expressivity***

The question to be addressed is how does this affect interpersonal dynamics? Chapters 4 and 5 argued that central to the dynamic transformation of a feeling of relatedness are an ability to participate within intersubjective, lived space which structures the way in which we begin interaction with others (Chapter 4); and an ability to respond appropriately to the bodily carriage and gesture of others with one’s own (Chapter 5). I argued that bodily responsiveness to others in the parochial, interactive sphere can fuel interaction, and cause

transformation in the manner in which we relate to the spaces around us and to our interlocutor. In the previous section, we saw that loss of bodily transparency causes a realignment to and shift within horizons of possibility. When one's body feels cumbersome, heavy, and alien (as in quote (4) in 7.1a) this impacts on the way in which we view activities and tasks. What once seemed possible, now feels difficult and effortful. The loss of bodily transparency, Fuchs argued, disrupts an unmediated relation to the world and spaces in which we find ourselves.

Quote (3) in 7.1a showed another manner in which intersubjectivity is affected through depression. Here, Thompson described the manner in which her facial expressivity changed, becoming immobilised and mask-like. Through depression her tacit bodily expressivity changed. This not only impacted on her own experience, but also that of people around her. The effect was to create a 'distance' between herself and others. We have already seen that depression involves changes in the way the sufferer feels tied into the world: we have seen that there is a slowing, and a feeling of weightiness (Fuchs 2010). There is a tendency for the body to become conspicuous and for movement, activity, and speech to slow down completely (DSM-IV: 350). It follows, similarly, that this causes a slowing and weightiness to the dynamism of interaction. As bodily transparency is lost, there is a slowing of embodied expressivity which in turn causes a hesitancy or conspicuousness in the sense of relatedness between sufferer and interlocutor (Fuchs 2005a). That is to say, a slowing in embodied expressiveness affects the rhythm, flow and what we might call using Stern's (2010) vocabulary, *vitality* of intersubjective exchange. As Karp states:

Depressive feelings make interaction arduous and sometimes the need to withdraw from others overrides the realisation that self-isolation will only deepen one's anguish. (1996: 35)

Reciprocal bodily expressivity establishes, directs, and maintains a sense of relatedness between interlocutors, with bodily bearing and tone of voice playing companion roles.<sup>208</sup> In depression, the loss of bodily transparency leads

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<sup>208</sup> As argued in Chapter 5.

to a decline in spontaneous bodily expressivity; this is often accompanied by a flattening in tonal variation of the voice (Styron 1990: 17)<sup>209</sup> and a stultifying of overall bodily comportment (Fuchs 2005a). All these factors come to bear upon dynamic intersubjective exchange in depression, to slow down the pace of intersubjective exchange. This potentially has an effect on feelings of interpersonal resonance which reciprocal gesturing helps to establish.

We saw in the coffee shop example of Chapter 5 (pp. 157-158) that body dialogue between interlocutors reinforced a sense of the relatedness which they shared, and encouraged the participant who was relating a secret to carry on. The pre-reflective reciprocation of the bodily posture of their partner reinforced that they were listening, attentive, and interested. In this instance of unproblematic interaction, the body dialogue was fluid and dynamic, and encouraged resonance between the two interlocutors.

In depression, the body loses some of its expressive vitality (Fuchs 2005a, 2010). In interactive situations, the lessening of embodied expressiveness solicits an affective response on the part of one's interlocutor: the slowing and flattening of embodied responsiveness places a strain on the formation of a self-directing bodily dialogue. The heaviness of body, and the shift in bodily possibility which persons with depression experience, lessens an ability to participate in this shared bodily dialogue. Interestingly, the effect that changes in embodiment have on a taken-for-granted, self-directing, and dynamic interaction, is to slow and to reduce capacity for the self-directedness of the interaction. Cole's work on the Möbius syndrome<sup>210</sup> (1999, 2001, 2009) shows how reduced capacity for tacit embodied expression not only inhibits a flourishing sense of relatedness between interlocutors, but how this feeds back into feelings of alienation and distance within the individual. With a reduced capacity for tacit bodily responsiveness comes a reduced capacity to establish an unproblematic sense of relatedness between individuals. In turn, this causes a heightened

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<sup>209</sup> It is worth quoting Styron here, who connects the loss of a capacity to interact with bodily pain: "At this point the ferocious inwardness of the pain produced an immense distraction that prevented me from articulating words beyond a hoarse murmur; I sensed myself turning wall-eyed, monosyllabic, and I also sensed my French friends becoming uneasily aware of my predicament" (Styron 1990: 17).

<sup>210</sup> Möbius syndrome is a rare congenital facial paralysis in which Möbius patients cannot facially express themselves.

vulnerability and sense of alienation which feeds the depression. As one interviewee of Karp states:

A paradox of depression is that sufferers yearn for connection, seem bereft because of their isolation, and yet are rendered incapable of being with others in a comfortable way. (1996: 14)

Central then to this slowing of embodied expressiveness is a change in the sense of relatedness between interlocutors. The slowing in embodiment solicits a slowing or heaviness to the feeling of relatedness shared between interlocutors. As the rhythm of interaction slows, entering into and reinforcing the sense of mutual relatedness can become difficult. As interaction requires more energy and becomes more difficult there is a reinforcement of the feelings of isolation and alienation. As one sufferer remarked: “The pain of depression arises in part because of separation from others; from an inability to connect, even as one desperately yearns for just such connections” (Karp 1996: 27).

#### *(d) Changes to Lived Space*

We have seen in the previous section the consequence that shifts in bodily feeling have on relatedness, which in turn affect ability to interact with others. A loss of bodily transparency changes the way in which we are able to apprehend possibilities. Horizons of possibility change and things that once appeared easy or taken-for-granted require new energy, consideration, and time. But what happens when we are no longer able to feel as though we belong to and share the same space with others? What happens when the tacit feeling of inhabiting a social, lived, and shared space wanes and one feels detached as if by a gulf from others?

Spatial imagery, metaphors, and language are recurrent in autobiographies, accounts, and interviews by those suffering from depression. These describe a sense of isolation, detachment, and marginalisation that characterise experience of depression. Several accounts of depression express feelings of being ‘cut off from the world’ (Karp 1990: 7; Thompson 1996: 13; Wurtzel 1995: 96-97); and trapped behind or encased within thick glass walls in

which the depressed person exists alone, able to see out to the world and people around, and yet unable to reach the social world (Brampton 2008; Plath 1996; Thompson 1996: 223). Reports of the experience of depression repeatedly refer to feelings of “suffocation”, “drowning” and being “enclosed” (Karp 1996: 29; Thompson 1996: 128). Whilst such language use may seem merely to point toward a feeling not expressible in ordinary language, it is significant that many of these metaphors are spatial metaphors which express both extreme isolation (glass wall, being cut off) and the overwhelming power with which depression assails those who suffer from it (suffocation, drowning).

At first glance it might appear as though there is a dichotomy here: the sufferer is isolated, alienated, cut off from a social world; and yet they are overwhelmed in a way in which things feel painfully close. On the one hand there is an irrevocable distance, and yet on the other things seem intensely close. Without the intervention of others, a social sense of perspective is removed and the experience and feelings of the depressed person become more intense (see Karp 1996: 37). Others are identified here as having the power to heal, or ease the burden of depression; yet since they are experienced as affectively distant, this reinforces the vulnerability and the sense of alienation. The person suffering from depression feels themselves as individualised, cut off from a reciprocal sense of being amongst and tied to others, due to a loss of relatedness. Loss of relatedness leads to the necessity of ‘bridging the gap’ when initiating or participating in interaction, a task which is often described as arduous.<sup>211</sup>

Before going into this in more depth in the next section, let us pause to consider two examples. The first deals with *withdrawal* from the lived space as described in Chapter 4; the second with a more pervasive shift in the affective character of the space which one inhabits in depression. In this way we can distinguish two themes in accounts of depression: the first is the feeling of a retreating and increasing alienation from belonging within a socially meaningful space; the second addresses the manner in which space is apprehended after the withdrawal and through the sense of alienation.

The following statement from Brampton is illustrative of the first:

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<sup>211</sup> “Depressive feelings make interaction arduous and sometimes the need to withdraw from others overrides the realisation that self-isolation will only deepen one’s anguish” (Karp 1996: 35).

Even as I shrank from my surroundings and the middle aged woman in front of me, I cried. I had no idea why. (Brampton 2008: 59)

Whilst the following captures the second distinction:

It was not really alarming at first, since the change was subtle, but I did notice that my surroundings took on a different tone at certain times. The shadow of nightfall seemed more sombre, my mornings were less buoyant. Walks in the woods became less zestful, and there was a moment during my working hours in the late afternoon when a kind of panic and anxiety overtook me, just for a few minutes, accompanied by a visceral queasiness – such a seizure was at least slightly alarming, after all. (Styron 1990: 41)

Both of the quotes above express elements integral to the turn of lived spatiality in depression. We might take the first to encapsulate something of unfolding the experience of spatial change, whilst the second quote captures something of the sense of what the world appears like once the severing, cutting off or distancing from a ‘normal’ apprehension of intersubjective, lived space has occurred. The first contains the essence of ‘shrinking’, of the transition; the second is the spatial and affective backdrop of depression.

Whilst there has been much written on the major changes in experience of temporality in depression (Fuchs 2001, forthcoming; Tellenbach 1980) there has not been as much attention given to changes to lived spatiality. A subtle and often overlooked feature of the consequences of experience of depression is a reorientation and a devitalisation of lived spatiality; an element which has a direct bearing on interpersonal dynamics.

During the onset of depression, sufferers might experience feelings of sliding or “shrinking” (Brampton 2008: 59) away from a daily existence which is rooted in shared, social and public spaces. It is not the case that in feeling the retreat of the self from these public spaces, the sufferer ceases to belong to, be referenced by or shaped through public spaces, far from it. Instead, sufferers experience themselves in this retreat becoming radically individualised.

Though the person with depression may share the same physical, proximal space which is also populated by others, there is an affective change within the way this is inhabited; there is affective distance. The sufferer may physically be in close proximity to others – or in a social situation with others – whilst, affectively speaking, feeling a million miles away. Reported feelings of encasement are common in which there is the sense that the sufferer exists within their own parameters marked out by their depression. Also common are reports of feeling separated from others as if by a gulf (Fuchs 2002, Karp 1996).

In such situations, there is a lessening in the potentiality to feel part of a mutually shared, intersubjective space. Things that might be meaningful to one person may be experienced as overwhelming or impossibly distant to depressed persons. When cut off from a world seemingly inhabited by others but not oneself, the normative, functional, and affective directives of certain spaces become elusive to pick up on. Features of the space which might be salient to others, as guidelines for behaviour, as cause to share comment on and so on, might not hold the same significance to the person suffering from depression: the turning of attention inward<sup>212</sup> contributes to a severing of felt connection to – and feeling affectively tied and tuned into – a shared, intersubjective and social arena.

The second quote regarding spatiality eloquently describes a manner in which lived space appears once the retreat from social surroundings has begun. In this case, there is a strong sense of a loss of vitality, buoyancy, and lightness to Styron's relationship to the world around him. This is intimately connected to the loss of pleasure typical of depression (anhedonia). However, it is striking in its description of these spaces lacking something in particular. They lack a sense of enjoyment and as Styron puts it 'zest'. What is the effect of such a change in perception of space on relatedness and intersubjective relations?

Chapter 4 argued that relatedness evolves and is shaped by a mutual apprehension of our surroundings as notable: others, through interaction, modify and develop the way in which we understand the spaces we find ourselves within. However, related to the loss of pleasure in depression and the feeling of being encased, space becomes *static*. It becomes a backdrop of indifference;

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<sup>212</sup> Changes to bodily phenomenology turn the attention toward the body, which is felt as painful or alien.

there is a shift in the affective tonality of the apprehended surroundings. This shift is both a consequence of and exacerbates the feeling of encasement described previously. As such, it reveals space in an idiosyncratic and indifferent manner, which frustrates entering into mutual relatedness. Space, in depression, is static and timeless:<sup>213</sup> an unchanging backdrop to an individualised sense of self.

## 7.2 Lessons for Folk Psychology

Given the analysis of depression put forward so far, we find that at the heart of depression are changes to interaffective relatedness. Within depression there is a profound change both in feelings of belonging to, and participating in, a social world (Karp 1996: 34-35). These changes have significant ramifications for an effortless participation in interaction with others. Consideration of depression should be of interest to accounts and studies of intersubjectivity and interpersonal understanding. When we are presented with a case in which membership in the social world is felt as tantalisingly close, and yet impossibly distant, examination of the changes which are undergone stands to tell us much about what we ordinarily take for granted in interpersonal understanding.

We have seen that at the heart of depression is the loss of interaffective relatedness. People are no longer felt as ‘close’. This has effects on apprehension of felt possibility, both of things in the world and which others present to us. Instead people with depression feel isolated and separated from others. When we consider accounts which testify to depression involving a severing between self and others, it reveals that the way we ordinarily find ourselves with others is as connected to them; as having a sense of interaffective relatedness. The loss of interaffective relatedness in depression points toward it being primary, pervasive, and primordial within our ordinary interactions and understandings with others. What this reveals is that the start point of intersubjectivity and intersubjective

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<sup>213</sup> Solomon remarks that one difference between feelings of sadness and depression is experience of temporality: “Being upset, even profoundly upset, is a temporal experience, while depression is a-temporal. Breakdowns leave you with no point of view” (Solomon 2001: 55). I do not go into the complex issue of experience of temporality in depression here. Instead, see Fuchs 2001, Ratcliffe 2012, and Tellenbach 1980.

understanding is not one individual making sense of another. But, instead we primordially share a sense of relatedness to others and this shapes the way we are able to make sense and meaning with them, to jointly attend to tasks together and to do something as routine as having a conversation. This stands in contrast to the individualistic and impersonal start point of ‘I’ making sense of another through attributing propositional attitudes of folk psychology.

Throughout this thesis I have been careful to emphasise what folk psychology misses from its account. It seems appropriate to use the words of Ratcliffe to sum this up: “What they leave out of the world is precisely what binds us to it” (Ratcliffe 2009: 291). Whilst Ratcliffe here is not talking about folk psychology and intersubjectivity, the phrase seems an apt one. What we are presented with through case studies of depression is the very thing that is integral to binding us into a social world in such a way that we are able to navigate, talk to, interact with, or even assign propositional attitudes to others. And this is a sense of relatedness. Ordinarily, a sense of relatedness involves a felt sense that we are alongside and affectively ‘close’ to others. An account of interpersonal understanding that leaves this out must be to some degree impoverished.

Considering depression also reveals to us that, ordinarily, we feel connected to others. Depression involves a central loss of interpersonal connection. We saw in the previous chapter the nature of experience in people who no longer have a taken-for-granted sense of others as people who offer possibilities for affective interaction. Instead, people are perceived and understood in a mechanised manner. We saw that this was a consequence of affective depersonalisation.

The case of depression illuminates a similar point, though from a different angle. We find that an affective apprehension of others as close – that is related – to us is integral to our social relations, interactions, and understandings of others. Whilst people with depression still retain an affective sense of people as people,<sup>214</sup> when relatedness is severed, depressed persons lose the felt possibility of others as close, as able to be interacted with; as holding possibilities for us, and as us holding possibilities for them. What depression shows is that our ‘start point’ in understanding others is one in which we are

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<sup>214</sup> That is rather than seeing them impersonally as a complicated ‘it’. See Chapters 2 (p. 77 (fn. 51)) and 6 (p.185-186) for an exploration of this point.

situated with others in a shared context within which we feel affectively close. In emphasising the role of attributing propositional attitudes, folk psychology forgets the glue which holds us in place to allow such ability in the first place.

This presents a particular challenge for orthodox accounts of folk psychology: theory theory and simulation. Depression presents a counter case in which an ability to understand others through an ‘impersonal’ attributing of propositional attitudes to others, based on their behaviour, remains largely intact; and yet the way in which the depressed person is ‘in the world’ is profoundly changed and becomes difficult.

Given this, traditional accounts of interpersonal understanding rooted primarily in folk psychology (theory theory and simulation theory) cannot provide us with a fully nuanced resource with which we might understand changes in intersubjectivity undergone in depression. This is precisely because folk psychology fails to appreciate the fundamentality of relatedness and the second-person relation in understanding others. In accounting for changes in intersubjective understanding in depression, what is needed is an emphasis on changes to feelings of relatedness: the affective bonds between self, others, and world which furnish experience with a sense of meaningfulness. Mutual participation in interaffective relatedness marks and facilitates a relation to others in a non-problematic way. We have seen throughout this thesis that this is usually taken for granted in everyday experience. In this way, reflecting on the lived experience of depression potentially serves us with a different starting point for the ability to be intersubjective, something that is prior to an ability to understand others through attribution of propositional attitudes to behaviour. This start point is a sense of felt relatedness.

This deviates markedly from what theories of folk psychology suggest, as we saw from Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis: both theory theory and simulation theory maintain that of primary importance is the ability to attribute propositional attitudes to others, based on observation of their behaviour. What an examination of the experience of depression reveals, is that a primary sense of attunement to others and to the spaces in which we find ourselves is important. This is not reliant on ability to infer reasons for actions. Instead, this is much more akin to the pre-verbal, pre-theoretical descriptions of primary and secondary intersubjectivity lauded by Trevarthen (1979, 1993; Trevarthen and Hubley

1978) and which Gallagher (2008) and others (Hobson 2000, 2007a, 2007b) emphasise the importance of. In focusing primarily on the importance of attributing propositional attitudes to others, accounts allied to folk psychology seem to miss the point in the case of depression.

Consulting the lived experience of depression reveals that at its core is a perceived and tangible alienation between sufferer and others. This is revelatory of what we ordinarily take for granted about 'normal' intersubjectivity: that ordinarily we are primarily attuned to others in a manner which makes them feel 'close', and which shapes and moulds the beginnings of interaction with them.

### **7.3 Revisiting the Hermeneutic Account of Interpersonal Understanding**

*There is no debate, though, that depression simultaneously erodes hope and makes ongoing involvement with others difficult and uncomfortable, if not impossible. (Karp 1996: 32)*

The previous section illustrated how folk psychology cannot satisfactorily account for the experience of intersubjectivity in depression, since it presumes the individualistic standpoint as the default normal stand point of everyday understanding. As we have seen, consideration of intersubjectivity in depression suggests that we experience ourselves primarily in relation to others; it is this ability and sense of connection that is lost, slowed or ruptured in depression. I now show how the hermeneutic account of interpersonal understanding can offer a better characterisation of intersubjective understanding that can accommodate non-normal instances of understanding.

We saw in section 7.2 the way in which a decrease in bodily transparency leads to a shift in horizons of possibility, which are given in relation to the body. Amongst other things the change in bodily horizons of possibility impacts on the manner in which other people are apprehended and interacted with. In particular, it leads to a lessening in spontaneous bodily gesturing, and a weightiness and effortful comportment of the body.

The manner in which this affects interaction can be explained in terms of relatedness being more difficult to sustain through interaction. It helps if we appeal once more to the hermeneutic model of understanding, in which dynamic

interaction between individuals in the parochial sphere is supported, facilitated and evolves according to tacit and often spontaneous entering into bodily dialogue. When a mutual and reciprocal bodily dialogue is difficult to sustain, this leads to tension between interlocutors, and seamless and flowing interaction becomes more difficult to enter into and follow through. As we saw in Chapters 4 and 5, relatedness is sustained not just through this tacit bodily reciprocity, but this bodily reciprocity is also impacted by and impacts upon a sense of shared space. In depression, there is the characteristic slide away from apprehension of space as socially shared and meaningful. Pervasive feelings of alienation, marginalisation, and distance reveal the world in a certain way, which forms a backdrop to interaction and action.

Because of its impact on perception of space, depression also makes it difficult for an evolution and joining of horizons in the global sphere: interlocutors find it difficult to come to occupy the same affective space through interaction. As mentioned in Chapter 3 and reiterated in Chapter 5, this sense of space as plateauing and stultifying is partly due to the difficulties which interlocutors face in sustaining a taken-for-granted dynamic evolution of relatedness in the parochial sphere. Felt relatedness becomes thinner, as the depressed person feels progressively more detached; instead of horizons joining to create a shared field of reference, meaning and understanding, the sufferer of depression finds it difficult to transcend the bounds of alienation they so readily experience. In this way, a sense of common relatedness is more difficult and more conspicuous to create: the depressed person experiences themselves primarily and radically as an individual. Interlocutors begin at an affective distance from each other which is difficult to transcend. This is not to say it is impossible. However changes to the affective tonality of the space, and the way the body is experienced, make it difficult for the depressed person to be able to be comfortable in transcending the severed connection.

At the same time, the participant who does not suffer from depression also struggles to establish 'normal' patterns of interaction and a deepening course of relatedness. The less the person suffering from depression is able to respond tacitly or otherwise to their bodily gesturing, the more aware of their own body they become. Interchange, then, becomes stultified. However, we have found that only by taking seriously the central nature of relatedness and the necessity of its

presence for ‘normal’ understanding can we begin to understand depression and intersubjectivity in depression. If we cling to notions of an individualistic start point, then we are unable to explain how, and why, depressed intersubjectivity differs from that of ‘healthy’ or ‘normal’ understanding.

## **7.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has explored changes in interaffective relatedness through an examination of the deviations to bodily experience occurring in depression. It focused on two things. First, it presented depression as a disorder which involves radical changes to a taken-for-granted sense of intersubjectivity, which constitutes a loss (partial or complete) of a sense of relatedness to others. Secondly, it brought this analysis to bear on debates in interpersonal understanding.

I began by exploring the fragmentation of relatedness through an examination of changes to the lived body undergone in depression. Drawing on Fuchs’s characterisation of depression involving corporealisation, I showed how changes to background bodily feeling impact on bodily horizons of possibility. I suggested that this impacts on intersubjectivity in two main ways: apprehending the body as an obstacle causes a change in bodily possibility from ‘I can’ to the ‘I cannot’; furthermore, loss of interaffective relatedness causes other people to feel ‘distant’. This impacts on the way in which we view others as holding possibilities for interaction. Secondly, the lessening of dynamic movement and expressivity in depression leads to a difficulty in establishing bodily resonance during interpersonal reaction. This makes pre-reflective participation in body dialogue difficult. I then moved on to examine how a loss of relatedness impacts on apprehension of, and participation within, social space. I rounded off the chapter by suggesting certain lessons that this analysis might hold both for folk psychology and those seeking to characterise and describe everyday intersubjectivity.

## CONCLUSION

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Throughout this thesis, I have brought ‘relatedness’ under examination. My aim in doing so has been twofold: first, I wished to explicate and explore how relatedness between people is central to interpersonal understanding. Second, in doing so I wished to shed some light on what it is we are talking about when we appeal to ‘relatedness’. I began this thesis by stating in the Introduction that various theories and people who explore interpersonal understanding appeal to ‘relatedness’. They claim that relatedness is central to interpersonal understanding, and yet is neglected by dominant accounts seeking to explain it (theory theory, simulation theory). In this thesis, I have supported the view that relatedness plays an integral role in understanding others; and have contributed an exploration of certain factors which support, shape, and transform a dynamic sense of interaffective relatedness.

Chapter 1 started things off with an overview of the dominant accounts of interpersonal understanding. The orthodox accounts of interpersonal understanding (theory theory and simulation theory) focus on understanding the actions and behaviour of others. They describe interpersonal understanding as a matter of attributing appropriate propositional attitudes to others. Understanding others under this description is characterised as a matter of understanding and predicting their behaviour and is a spectatorial enterprise. Throughout this thesis I have shown that though attributing propositional attitudes on the basis of behaviour sometimes forms part of an ability to understand others; this is not the primary or default manner of interpersonal understanding. Theory theory and simulation theory are too narrow in their account of understanding others.

Presuppositions underlying accounts of folk psychology were explored in Chapter 2. This chapter was also largely expository and covered key criticisms of folk psychology. These state that folk psychology does not and cannot provide ‘the full picture’ of our everyday, unproblematic understanding of others. Instead, we saw here that interaction theory and participatory sense-making emphasise and argue that understanding others is a matter of dynamically engaging with them; an occurrence which often entails a direct and second-person relation. This, they argue, rarely requires an explicit attribution of

propositional attitudes to the behaviour of others. In this chapter I agreed with the main thrust of these arguments and supported arguments which state that interpersonal understanding is, in the everyday sense, largely interactive and, when it is unproblematic, does not require attribution of mental states. Interaction theory and participatory sense-making have both emphasised the dynamic and mutually co-operative nature of interpersonal understanding. Both theories acknowledge and argue for the importance of interlocutors participating in a shared context. However, it remained for us to understand what enables us to enter into interaction in the first place. We were also left with the task of how to account for the dynamics of interaction.

The remainder of this thesis went some way to answering these challenges. Part 2 sought to address these lacunae by offering a hermeneutic account of interpersonal understanding (Chapter 3), before turning to offer a phenomenological exploration of elements contributing toward a sense of relatedness (Chapters 4 and 5). Unlike folk psychology, the hermeneutic account seeks to recognise the manner in which situatedness in a shared context and a dynamic relation between interactants actively shapes and enables interpersonal understanding to occur. In this sense, the hermeneutic account recognises and develops an explanation of certain elements which are necessary for interpersonal understanding and yet are neglected by traditional accounts. It also adds to the work of interaction theory and participatory sense-making by investigating the nature of the dynamics of interaction; and exploring how interaction between interlocutors occurs in tandem with interaction between interlocutors and their shared context.

Chapter 3 began by emphasising that understanding others through interaction relies not only on transformations in the way I understand and relate to my interlocutor; but also how we both relate to the context in which our interaction takes place and which we share. I identified and conceptualised this as a twofold revision of previously held presuppositions: first, in the parochial sphere – the interactive relation between my interlocutor and myself; and secondly in the global sphere – the interactive relation between myself and our shared context. I characterised interaction and the process of interpersonal understanding as a constant transformative and dynamic revisionary process negotiated between these spheres.

From here we needed to think more about the term ‘relatedness’ itself, and to explore and characterise elements which shape and affect the sense of relatedness between people. To do so, I explored intersubjective lived space (Chapter 4) and reciprocal bodily expressivity (Chapter 5).

Chapters 4 and 5 worked together to offer a phenomenological exploration of elements which are integral to relatedness and which are inextricably bound. Chapter 4 developed a distinctive approach to intersubjective, lived space. It outlined how I conceive of intersubjective space as constituting a context for interaction, which is in turn transformed through interaction. This chapter works in tandem with my Chapter 5, in which I explore how mutual bodily expressivity transforms our sense of intersubjective space. I argue that this impacts on and changes the quality of relatedness between interlocutors, whilst also fuelling the dynamic nature of interaction.

To consolidate the account of relatedness and interaction given in Part 2, I turned to instances in which a normalised sense of relatedness breaks down in instances of schizophrenia and depression. Examining the nature of interpersonal experience in these limit cases was revelatory of elements which are ordinarily taken for granted in everyday, healthy experience, and have indeed also been taken for granted by theory and simulation theories. Chapter 6 focused on the manner in which apprehension of a lived spatiality (phenomenological, intersubjective space) often breaks down in cases of schizophrenia, and in doing so, places strain on unproblematic intersubjective experience: particularly, persons with schizophrenia may find it hard to participate within and navigate shared and social spaces. Instead, space is experienced as geometricised. In conjunction with this, I argued that this is related to a sense of depersonalisation of others often experienced in schizophrenia in which others appear *outside* the bonds and bounds of relatedness. This, I argued, has obvious and drastic effects on a sense of interpersonal relatedness, which is fragmented and may become increasingly absent – or in severe cases, lost altogether – from experience.

Chapter 7 similarly looked at the altered sense of intersubjectivity commonly experienced by those suffering from depression. I argued that at the heart of this illness is a loss of relatedness: sufferers are able to perceive that others are *people*, and yet feel affectively severed from them. This results in irregularities in interpersonal experience. Sufferers withdraw, and find

interpersonal exchanges hard and laborious. Taking into consideration the nature of this affective distance again serves to underscore the arguments driving Part 2 of this thesis: that affective, spatial, and embodied reciprocity are of central importance in interpersonal experience and understanding.

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