

Introduction

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Few ideas have been so widely accepted as the idea that art transports us to other places and times and offers new perspectives as we float between real and fictional worlds. In reading *Pride and Prejudice*, we feel absorbed in life in nineteenth-century Regency England; in seeing Gericault's *Raft of the Medusa*, we immerse ourselves in the horrors of the shipwreck that shook France's political and social life by 1816. Sometimes, this deep and vivid immersion in an artwork affords, in the words of Rae Langton (2019: 78), a 'shift in self-location', a sense of first-personal presence in alien experiences: we not only see the world through an other's lenses, but we affectively and/or cognitively relate to experiences that primarily belong to someone else. This remarkable phenomenon is invariably called *empathy*, whether manifested in everyday experience or the experience of art. The aim of this volume is to probe the character and role of empathy in our engagement with different forms of art, but also its significance beyond the artistic encounter: its value for cognition, our emotive life and our moral stance.

For contemporary aesthetics, this is a pertinent endeavour: in both philosophy and psychology of art, empathy is now widely acknowledged as a central, if not necessary, mechanism for understanding works of art and even as the mode of engagement that mediates art's edifying effects. Of course, the ties between empathy and aesthetics exceed contemporary scholarship: as the history of the term attests, empathy is tied to aesthetics from its lineage to the German aesthetic tradition of *Einfühlung* – a tie explored by Thomas Petraschka in Chapter 1 of this volume. Still, for most of the twentieth century, discourse on empathy waned – possibly due to the obscurity of the concept or the dominance of an anti-sentimentalist drive in the second half of the century (Brinck 2018: 202) – to resurge in the past few decades with an unprecedented force and in a range of disciplines: beyond aesthetics, empathy studies now expand to philosophy of mind, neuroscience, evolutionary and social psychology, ethics, politics, education sciences, linguistics, media theory, gender studies, medicine and caregiving, law studies and the list continues to grow.

The vigorous interest in empathy in such a wide range of disciplines has widened the range of empathy-related issues that aesthetics can explore, as well as the perspectives from which they can be explored. However, it has also brought variance in the understanding of empathy itself: as De Vignemont and Singer (2006: 435) note, 'There are probably nearly as many definitions of empathy as people working on the topic.' Although there is some exaggeration in this remark, it is indicative of the diversity in the ways that empathy is understood in contemporary scholarship, including aesthetics: some understand empathy as the ability to put oneself in an other's shoes

or to actively engage in perspective shifting (*cognitive empathy*); for others, empathy is resonance with an other's emotional state, which entails affective sharing or an understanding of what it is like to be in that state (*affective empathy*); for yet others, empathy signifies a physiological or bodily reaction to perceived movement, gesture, expression and so on (*kinesthetic empathy*). There are also different stances on the above. For instance, it is a debated issue whether what counts as empathy in the sense of perspective shifting is, in Coplan's (2011) terms, an 'other-oriented perspective-taking', where the empathizer imagines the actions, thoughts and feelings of the target as that target experiences them, or whether it can also be a 'self-oriented perspective-taking', where the empathizer simply imagines what it would be like for himself or herself to be in the target's situation. It is also a debated issue whether empathy in the sense of affective sharing requires 'affective matching' (see, e.g., Coplan 2011), that is, that the empathizer undergoes an affective experience qualitatively identical to that of the target, or that the empathizer's affective state is simply congruent with that of the target (see, e.g., Hoffman 2000). And all the while, there is disagreement over whether empathy, whatever way it is understood, entails sympathy or concern for the target or rather lacks in itself a prosocial dimension (see, e.g., Batson 2011; Prinz 2011).

Apart from varying definitions, there are competing explanatory accounts of empathy in current research, and it can be a challenge to understand how these accounts work to explain – or even which account should be enlisted to explain – art-related empathic responses. Once the dominant account of understanding other minds, 'theory-theory' contends that we acquire a theory of the mental realm (a folk psychological theory) which we deploy to inferentially understand or predict others' mental states based on their behaviour (see, e.g., Gopnik and Wellman 1994; Davies and Stone 1995). Simulation accounts, on the other hand, argue for a mechanism that allows individuals to use themselves as a model for understanding the mental states of others, an idea that has garnered support from neuroscientific studies on empathy and research on mirror neurons (see, e.g., Stueber 2006). Among simulationists, some discuss empathy as involving various subconscious forms of direct responsiveness to others' mental states ('low-level' or 'basic' empathy), while others focus on simulative imagination, that is, an imaginative reconstruction or re-enactment of an other's experience by means of perspective shifting ('high-level' or 're-enactive' empathy) (see, e.g., Goldman 2006). Scholars in contemporary phenomenology provide a third account of empathy. Drawing on the work of Husserl, Stein and Scheler, they argue that empathy, at least when conceived as low-level response, is neither inferential nor simulative; it is rather a direct perceptual access to the mindedness of other beings, as this is manifested in their observed bodily expressions (see, e.g., Zahavi 2008, 2011).

Faced with the diverse conceptions and explanations of empathy in contemporary discourse, as editors, we had to make a choice: to aim for an exploration of the volume's themes from the perspective of a specific phenomenon or process subsumed under the term 'empathy' or rather to give a leeway of perspective to the authors. Aiming for a breadth of scope, we opted for the latter. As is evident from the descriptions of empathy that authors provide in the volume's chapters, the positions they defend and the arguments used to defend them are thus tied, to a greater or lesser extent, to the respective descriptions.

Besides the diversity in the ways that empathy is currently conceived, the volume's chapters also make manifest the richness of contemporary discourse on empathy and the arts, owing to a considerable extent to art's own variability. Broadly speaking, the relevant scholarship tends to focus either on imaginative engagement with works of fiction or on the aesthetic experience of non-representational works, thematizing in each case the specificities of an individual art form and its unique expressive tools that matter for the recipients' empathic response.

In the case of fiction, there is consensus that empathic responses are typically directed towards fictional characters and are guided by the information that the narrative provides, as we lack direct perceptual access to the characters' situations. However, the nature of such empathic connections seems to vary significantly depending on the medium. For instance, the ways we empathize with characters and the strategies employed by authors to elicit such empathy in the case of literature (see, e.g., Keen 2007; Gibson 2015) differ from how we engage with characters portrayed in film (see, e.g., Plantinga 2009; Smith 2017), in theatre (see, e.g., Gallagher and Gallagher 2020), in dance (see, e.g., Carroll and Seeley 2013) or in pictorial art (see, e.g., Carroll 2017; Lopes 2011) and sculpture (see, e.g., Gilmore 2020). Noël Carroll aptly notes that 'there is no single affective relationship that describes the one and only connection between readers, listeners, and/or viewers on the one hand, and fictional characters on the other hand' (Carroll 2011: 180), and this seems to apply also to empathic engagement with fictional characters across media.

In the case of non-representational works, where no characters are present, emotional responses typically relate to their expressive qualities, as has been noted, for instance, with regard to instrumental music (see, e.g., Davies 1994; Vuoskoski and Eerola 2012), contemporary dance (see, e.g., Carroll and Seeley 2013), architecture (see, e.g., Robinson 2019) or abstract visual art (see, e.g., Freedberg and Gallese 2007; Currie 2011). Many scholars further assume that empathic responses in such cases target the creator's emotional state (or the performer's feelings and movements) or the experiences of a non-represented, hypothetical persona (Levinson 1996), in a manner similar to empathy for fictional characters. However, others reject the idea of an 'imagined persona', suggesting instead that artworks present features that are expressive in their own right (Davies 1997; Lopes 2005).

Yet, amid this variety of issues and perspectives, a number of theories converge on the idea that projection is the primary mechanism behind empathy in the experience of art, whether this is empathy for characters (fictional or real) or for inanimate objects, as indeed the volume's chapters attest. In the case of fictional characters, the idea is that we imaginatively project ourselves into their situations, recreating a similar one within ourselves (Stueber 2006; Goldman 2006); while in the case of inanimate objects or environments, we project our own emotions onto them, attributing affective states to the aesthetic objects we perceive.

The theoretical issues discussed here mark, more or less, the terrain of the volume. They are raised, however, in the context of the overarching themes of the volume's four parts, selected to track those of current relevant research in aesthetics: obviously the nature and conditions or limitations of empathy in the case of different forms of art, but also its cognitive and moral import specifically in the case of fiction. As will

be noted later, despite such diversity in focus among the volume's chapters, common preoccupations emerge, which are significant in their own right with regard to the current state of research in the field.

The volume's point of departure, as already noted, is the German aesthetic tradition of *Einfühlung*, which is the main focus of Thomas Petraschka's opening chapter titled 'What Is Aesthetic Empathy and How Does It Work? A Historic-Systematic Approach'. Petraschka examines the main theories of this tradition from the end of the nineteenth to the dawn of the twentieth century not only from a historical point of view but also in an attempt to systematically bridge the first conceptualizations of *Einfühlung* with contemporary debates in analytic aesthetics. The first issue he addresses concerns the emotions that can be projected onto artworks and how these emotions relate to the latter's beauty and ugliness. Of special interest here is Lipps's approach, according to which aesthetic empathy, in its fundamental affective dimension, has a broad sense as it is related to a general expression of life and activity that humans tend to see in both animate and inanimate beings. The second main issue Petraschka deals with concerns the psychological mechanisms behind the manifestation of aesthetic empathy towards, more specifically, inanimate objects. He presents six different historical theories that attempt to explain how our emotions are projected onto or are thought of as inherent in, for example, landscapes, paintings or poems. These theories include: the panpsychism-related view that everything is animated; the hypothesis that aesthetic objects remind us of human qualities and thus lead us to react as if we were encountering a living entity; the claim that we unconsciously mix the effect an object has on us with its properties; the view that the simultaneous occurrence of empathic emotions and perceptions makes us believe that both originate outside of ourselves; the thesis that artworks induce bodily reactions, causing emotional experiences that appear to us as coming from the objects themselves; and finally, the view that perceived *Gestalt* similarities between aesthetic objects and our activities or mental states lead us to attribute our emotions to those objects. Petraschka's overall analysis makes clear that the richness of historical debates on aesthetic empathy can be valuable for its understanding today.

Following Chapter 1, the volume develops into four parts. Part I, titled 'Empathy with Fictional Others: Challenges and Complexities', explores our imaginative and affective engagement with the characters of fictional works. It is widely acknowledged that, despite being fictional, such others open up an internal world to which we can empathically connect; and, for the most part, theorists assume that we empathically engage with fictional characters in much the same way we engage with real people, that is, through the same mechanisms and processes (Robinson 2010; Currie 1997; Coplan 2004; Gilmore 2020). However, it is arguable whether empathy for fictional others is otherwise continuous with empathy for real others, or even whether its own dynamics are stable across different kinds of media or fiction. Contributions to Part I address such issues in relation to literature (Chapters 2 and 3), but also in relation to video games (Chapter 4) and theatre (Chapter 5) that seem to impose their own, medium-specific conditions on empathic engagement.

In Chapter 2, 'Imagining Empathy for Fictional Characters', Jonathan Gilmore advances an ontological thesis regarding empathy with fictions, one that contests both

its continuity with and its benefits for real-life empathy. Identifying empathy as a form of simulation, Gilmore argues that empathy in response to real people and empathy in response to fictional characters differ in kind, as there are important asymmetries, metaphysical and epistemological, between the two modes of mental state attribution. According to this analysis, empathy with fictional characters is only an imagined empathy, that is, it is part of the imaginative project of engaging with a fiction, to the extent that it is normatively constrained by the ways in which such characters are represented in a story and by the fiction's formal demands (relevant, e.g., to its style, genre, mood, etc.). Owing especially to the latter sort of constraints, such 'quasi-empathy' is not a reliable model for empathy with real others and so cannot promote its cultivation, Gilmore further argues, casting doubt on a popular thesis regarding the benefits of engaging empathically with stories (cf. Chapter 6, this volume).

In Chapter 3, 'Imaginative Freedom and Epistemic Constraints in the Context of Literary Text', Julia Langkau reflects on the character of phenomenal and experiential imagining elicited by literary texts, aiming to highlight the normative differences that pertain to such imaginings in the case of literary fiction and literary non-fiction. There are two guiding insights in her analysis: to understand a literary text, according to Langkau, a reader needs to imagine not just propositionally but also phenomenally and experientially; further, in contrast to propositional imaginings that are prescribed by the text, phenomenal and experiential imaginings generally enjoy normative liberty: such imaginings, Langkau argues, are bound to be affected 'by our previous experiences, our personality, and the particular context we are in while we are reading'. It is on the grounds of such liberty that Langkau then traces the asymmetry between literary fiction and literary non-fiction. In the case of literary fiction, she argues, phenomenal and experiential imaginings can well be creative: that is, the reader can imagine in ways not intended by the author, thus making the text 'their own'. But in the case of literary non-fiction (meaning works that are autobiographical or historical or just realistic in terms of the characters and experiences they present) the reader is required to *empathize*: that is, to imaginatively reconstruct as truthfully as possible the character of the experiences presented, unalloyed by subjective inputs. Truth and lived experience, Langkau contends, put constraints even on rich forms of imagining, and such constraints entail a responsibility for both authors and readers: authors need to use literary means that facilitate empathic imagination, and readers need to make a conscious effort to imagine empathically rather than creatively.

In Chapter 4, 'Videogames as Vehicles for Empathetic Perspective Shifting: Imagining Psychosis in *Hellblade*', Christopher Bartel draws our attention to videogames, aiming to track the medium-specific potential of this growing form of fiction to elicit empathy. Bartel's concern is focused especially on the limitations that the medium imposes on empathic engagement, introducing 'the problem of empathetic games'. A game like *Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice*, for instance, has a serious purpose: players are invited to empathize with Senua, the central character, and thus understand something of what it is like to suffer from schizophrenia; at the same time, however, players need to experiment with the character's affordances and limitations to learn the game, and this requires an attitude of detachment. Bartel argues that the problem of empathetic games is practical rather than philosophical: as is the case in *Hellblade*, it can be resolved

through thoughtful game design that allows the players to internalize the character's perspective and thus to strategize and respond to the narrative from that perspective.

The need for a medium-specific approach to empathy with fictional characters is also evidenced in María José Alcaraz León's consideration of theatrical experience in Chapter 5, 'Authentic Performance and Empathy'. Her analysis departs from a key aspect of theatrical experience, described as 'twofoldness' after Richard Wollheim's relevant characterization of pictorial experience: twofoldness in the case of theatre means that the experience is marked by a simultaneous awareness of the theatrical characters and of the actors performing those characters. Such double awareness entails, of course, that spectators do not engage with the characters of a play directly, as if they were present. A further condition of theatre that Alcaraz León thematizes concerns the actors themselves, that is, their own awareness of the audience's presence. Granted these conditions of theatre, the aim of Alcaraz León's analysis is to provide a characterization of authentic theatrical performance that is alert to the dynamics of mutual awareness between actor and audience; and then, a phenomenologically informed conceptualization of empathy in theatrical experience that is tied to this form of performance authenticity and is likewise consistent with the relevant dynamics.

Part II of the volume, titled 'Empathy and Aesthetic Cognitivism', addresses the extant philosophical debate on whether engaging with art can promote knowledge and understanding. In relation to empathy, specifically, the contested issue is whether empathic engagement with fictional works can inform or deepen understanding of alien experiences and perspectives, and/or cultivate and enhance our empathic capacities in real-life situations (see, e.g., Nussbaum 1995; Currie 2016). Contributions to Part II illuminate key aspects of such engagement, especially in the experience of literature, and provide structured arguments in support of the epistemic value of empathizing with fiction.

In Chapter 6, 'Empathy, Imagination and the Epistemic Value of Fiction', Amy Kind defends the cognitivist thesis that Jonathan Gilmore undermined from an ontological perspective in Chapter 2, that is, that empathy with fiction can cultivate the reader's empathy with real others. Kind critically examines Gregory Currie's strand of scepticism for this thesis, grounded on the ineffectiveness of fictional empathy for the demands of real-life empathy as well as its undesirable outcomes: fictional empathy, according to Currie, can weaken the psychological link between empathy and corresponding action or trigger moral self-licensing. Drawing on her previous work on imagination, Kind rejects Currie's scepticism, showing how a skills-based approach to empathy can promote an optimistic stance. Fiction, she argues, provides a low-risk environment for the exercise of our empathic skills, as well as an opportunity to train at least some of their dimensions; further, it can help us to broaden our empathic horizons and thus to overcome empathy's similarity bias in future conduct. As to Currie's expressed worry that fiction leads to decreased empathic behaviour, Kind gestures towards a correct attitude of engaging with fiction, 'conducive to the cultivation of a modulated empathy that will give rise to real-world change'.

In Chapter 7, 'Affective Empathy and Imagined Emotion in Literary Fiction', Cain Todd provides further support to the cognitive value of fiction, focusing on the capacity of literature to elicit affective empathy. The imagined emotions that constitute affective

empathy, according to Todd, involve the experience of bodily feelings: basically, proprioceptive, interoceptive and feelings of action tendencies. The phenomenology of those feelings is that of the 'as if', namely they are experienced as attenuated versions of their 'real' counterparts. This 'affective bodily imagery' can be summoned in response to any potential object or state of affairs, something that enables us to empathize with other people even if their states are unfamiliar or new to us. Literary fiction, according to Todd, can facilitate and enhance this process. Narratives provide abundant details regarding the characters' minds, experiences and perspectives, helping us overcome the difficulty we face in real-life situations of not having direct access to the other's psychological state. They also allow us to exercise our empathic abilities without the difficulty of having to decipher the determinants of the circumstances or the action to be taken. Optimistic regarding fiction's cognitive value, Todd further claims that fictional narratives can help us detect or reconceptualize feelings in us that stayed unnoticed or ambiguously neglected, as well as reconsider familiar emotions in light of experiencing them in new contexts and in the face of new types of objects.

In Chapter 8, 'Empathic Imaginings and "Knowledge of What It Is Like" in Aesthetic Cognitivism', Ingrid Vendrell Ferran elaborates on the experiential view in aesthetic cognitivism, that is, the thesis that fiction can afford us non-propositional 'knowledge of what it is like' to undergo an experience. Ferran marks off two versions of this cognitivist thesis: the phenomenal knowledge version, according to which fiction provides knowledge of what it feels like to have a certain experience; and the existential knowledge version, according to which fiction provides knowledge, or better understanding, of what an experience means for the one who undergoes it. In both cases, she argues, the cognitive gain is mediated by empathy, that is, the reader needs to imagine 'from the inside' the experience of a fictional other to be acquainted with its phenomenal character or existential significance. However, according to Ferran, to fully track the cognitive benefits of empathy with fiction, we need to acknowledge that a reader's empathic engagement with a character also has a rich diachronic dynamic or afterlife, that is, it usually extends 'beyond the moment of reading and might even accompany her across the course of her life'.

Apart from its cognitive benefits, it is a common intuition that the empathic engagement that art provokes is invaluable for moral agency, allowing us to transcend our limited perspectives and connect to those of other beings, thus provoking ethical reflection and awareness. Contributions to Part III of the volume, titled 'Empathy and the Moral Stance', indicate that an unqualified endorsement of this thesis is not merited: on the one hand, empathy can be used strategically for the manipulation of our moral perspectives and can even mediate the endorsement of immoral outlooks; on the other hand, empathy itself has its 'dark sides' that artists may need to work against to allow thoughtful connection to the narrated others.

In Chapter 9, 'The Rhetoric of Empathy in Narrative Film', Carl Plantinga unfolds the means that filmmakers employ to elicit empathy in narrative film with a strategic aim: to direct the audience's stance on the characters of the film and on their socio-moral perspectives. As Plantinga argues, such 'strategic empathy' is rhetorical to the extent that it aims at persuasion, and the effects of the rhetoric (affective and/or cognitive) can transfer from the world of fiction to the actual world. Still, it is not

ethically problematic in itself: an assessment of its ethical character would require us to consider the moral character of the thematic project to which empathy is enlisted, as well as empathy's 'simple' or 'complex' character, that is, the extent to which it merits or elicits reflective thought, supported by other dimensions of the viewing experience. A central thread in this analysis, we should note, is a specific conception of empathy, according to which it involves a combination of feeling with and feeling for, with self-other differentiation: 'Strategic empathy', Plantinga argues, 'works with and through other-oriented thoughts and emotions', an insight he develops with reference to the emotions of elevation and admiration in the experience of narrative film.

In Chapter 10, 'Stepping into Ill-Fitting Shoes: The Rewards and Perils of Empathy for Rough Heroes', Panos Paris examines the value of artworks that prescribe empathy with morally flawed yet attractive fictional characters – that is, with 'rough heroes' – addressing, as it were, an issue foreshadowed by Plantinga's analysis. Whereas contemporary philosophical appraisals of such works tend to argue for the ethical and cognitive benefits of an empathic engagement with rough heroes, Paris casts doubt on indiscriminate optimism. As his analysis illustrates, the way in which prescriptions of empathy are handled within a rough-hero work to serve a specific end (be it entertainment, self-indulgence, glorification of immoral outlooks or moral enlightenment) determines the work's morally educative or corruptive potential. Given the diversity of rough-hero works on this score, the only sensible evaluative stance on the issue of empathy with rough heroes, according to Paris, is pluralism: a stance that binds the potential ethical perils or rewards of such empathy to the artistic identity of a given work and, perhaps no less, to the identity of the audience. As Paris argues, in engaging with rough heroes, we are taking on a responsibility to be finely discriminating and morally alert; this entails that the extent to which we can exit such engagement rewarded or ethically unharmed will crucially depend not just on the artistic identity of the work (the creator's province of responsibility) but also on our own aesthetic and ethical sensibilities.

An aspect of empathy that has attracted much discussion in moral philosophy and psychology is its selectivity or proneness to bias, subject to social and other categorizations (see, e.g., Prinz 2011; Bloom 2016). In Chapter 11, 'Cheap Empathy: Sam Lipsyte's *The Ask*', Tzachi Zamir draws our attention to a manifestation of this 'dark side' of empathy in the socio-economic reality of neoliberalism and the unconventional literary means employed in Sam Lipsyte's *The Ask* to circumvent it. Milo, the novel's protagonist, is a failed, trained artist with a background of relative privilege, now facing the woes of precarious existence. His plight, however, is in the dark spot of empathy and compassion: in a society that depreciates cultural labour and reserves pity only for those with nothing at all ('the stereotypes of misery'), Milo belongs with those who have lost their right to protest that they have suffered injustice: he hardly qualifies as a real victim of the system, unlike the 'cheap empathy' targets of exploitative mass media, and his suffering bypasses identification. And yet, as Zamir illustrates, Lipsyte allows us to connect to Milo in a deep and expansive manner (the manner also of 'thick empathy') through the use of bitter humour: becoming an alternative channel into Milo's mind and predicament, humour can be seen to establish 'connection-in-

distance – an understanding and a sharing – when more direct forms of fellow-feeling have been ruined.

Part IV, 'Beyond Fiction: Empathy in the Experience of Music and Architecture', departs from fiction and deals with one of the thorniest issues around empathy, namely our capacity and tendency to empathically engage with inanimate objects and, more specifically, with the inanimate in art. In contrast to the historically first thematizations of empathy, which, as highlighted by Petraschka in Chapter 1, were centrally unfolded as accounts of precisely our appreciation of aesthetic properties of artworks, contemporary discussions largely overlook this significant focal point. The four chapters of Part IV come to fill this gap, taking as their theme the paradigmatic cases of our relatedness with music and architectural structures.

In Chapter 12, 'The Role of Empathy in Musical Experience and Understanding', Joel Smith engages with the two main approaches on the emotional character of music, that is, the arousal view and the resemblance view, aiming to provide support to the latter via an appeal to empathy. According to the arousal view, a piece of music causes emotions to the listener who then projects them on music itself. This hot account of musical experience, it has been argued, cannot explain cases where emotions are absent, or why we often yearn to listen to sad music and experience negative emotions. The resemblance view, on the other hand, holds that music simply resembles the expression of emotions but has been criticized in its turn as being too cold since it downgrades the listener's own emotional experience. Drawing on his previous work on empathy, Smith shows here how the resemblance approach can be productively fertilized by conceptualizing the role empathy plays in musical experience and understanding. Empathy, he argues, allows knowledge of how the other feels. It also allows the transparently shared and reciprocal awareness of feeling the same with the other, something that, importantly, makes us feel understood. In the case of music, one can imagine the emotional states expressed as being those of a persona with whom one can empathize: this 'would be a way of coming to be consciously aware of how they (in the imaginary world) feel, and thereby of transparently fellow-feeling with them'. To the extent that transparent fellow-feeling can make us feel seen, Smith notes, it could motivate us to seek out even sad music.

In Chapter 13, 'The Social Dimension of Music Listening: Empathy and the Experience of Feeling Moved', Jonna Vuoskoski further explores the way in which empathy is involved in our engagement with music, drawing on relevant empirical studies. Vuoskoski puts emphasis on the fact that the experience of empathy, especially in terms of its intensity, is significantly influenced by several individual traits and other relational and situational factors. Music, she argues, can induce empathic responses as it is filled with signs of emotional expression and agency. This is more obvious in the case of vocal music, where the recognition of mental and affective states becomes manifest through the semantic content of the lyrics and the acoustic features of affective vocal expression. But also instrumental music, Vuoskoski concurs with Todd, can be grasped as expressing a persona whose emotional character is unfolded in a narrative way. In her analysis, Vuoskoski provides ample empirical evidence for the important role empathy plays in music listening: according to relevant studies, empathy is pivotal for the experience of feeling moved by music, which in turn can facilitate social

connectedness and social bonding. As for our tendency to seek pleasure in sad music - a paradox also discussed by Todd - Vuoskoski contends that it is the feelings of compassion and concern for others, often involved in our empathic experience, that make listening to sad music rewarding and therefore desirable.

In Chapter 14, 'Varieties of Empathy in Architecture', Anne Tüscher provides a cartography of possible expressions of empathy in the field of architecture. This is a challenging task if we consider all the parameters that should be taken into account: architect(s), client(s), user(s), as either empathizers or empathizees; buildings and architectural representations (free-hand drawings, digital plans, etc.) as targets of empathy. Tüscher aligns herself with the simulation theory of empathy, judging that its encompassing character can better explain empathizing with persons but also with inanimate objects. She discusses several types of perceptual relatedness with inanimate objects and artefacts. In perceiving things, we pre-reflectively understand their affordances and imaginatively explore interacting with them. These dimensions of experience, Tüscher argues, can play a significant role in empathizing with potential users of a building. Furthermore, we can follow specific traces in perceptual things and imaginatively understand the actions and emotional states of their makers; in such cases, things can be springboards for empathizing with the makers. According to Tüscher, the type that counts as genuine objectual empathy, though, is the one where the object, for example, a building, is imaginatively transformed into a persona. This kind of pure empathy in the face of real architectural structures cannot be elicited, she contends, by architectural representations. Design methods, on the other hand, can be empathically informed and thus promote architectural work.

Sarah Robinson's analysis in Chapter 15, titled 'From Feeling into to Feeling *with*: Rhythm, Resonance and Response', has a wider focus albeit with clear implications for architecture and design. Robinson thematizes empathy not as an outward projection of our affective or cognitive states to other animate or inanimate beings, nor as a simulation of the other's mental states, but as some kind of direct mutual resonance between interacting and communicating bodies. To support this view, Robinson emphasizes the significance of rhythm in creating order and connectivity in both organic and inorganic realms, and claims that it is this very rhythm, manifest already in our early developmental stages, that drives our meaningful relatedness with our surroundings. The rhythmic interplay between the infant and the carer in their bodily, kinesthetic, affective and situated attunement exemplifies a general pattern of mutual engagement and incorporation between subjects. In their dynamic empathic interactions, subjects comprise innate moments of synergetic resonant wholes and not independent parts externally related to each other. Robinson argues that this synergetic coupling also emerges in our engagement with objects of use, works of art and also works of architecture. But the formation of resonant synergetic wholes always presupposes that the objects are responsive to our openness towards them. Importantly for architecture, this means that architectural design should take into consideration and incorporate the ways architectural structures and their elements would respond to the determinants of our existence.

The chapters collected here span a wide range of issues in relation to empathy and art (historical, metaphysical, epistemological, psychological, phenomenological,

evaluative), as well as a range of conceptions and perspectives on empathy. As hinted earlier, beyond the central themes explored in the volume's parts, additional common strands of inquiry emerge even across parts, bringing forth deeper complexities related to empathy's role in the experience of art. Several contributions examine how specific aesthetic features and authorial strategies beyond character engagement provoke or enhance empathic responses (Chapter 4, Chapter 5, Chapter 7, Chapter 9). Other contributions highlight the differences between real-life empathy and empathic responses towards fictional narratives, or even delve into the varying degrees of empathy that different types of fiction can evoke (Chapter 2, Chapter 3, Chapter 6, Chapter 11). Finally, several contributions thematize perspective-taking in relation to different lines of inquiry: its importance for the cognitive value of art (Chapter 8), its role in our emotional engagement with morally complex characters (Chapter 10) or the ways in which different media – including video games (Chapter 4), theatre (Chapter 5) and film (Chapter 9) – facilitate this process.

Owing to the collective scope and individual achievement of its contributions, the volume claims importance for those invested in the field: it signals how much we yet need to explore or debate to track reliably the intricate web of phenomena that make up empathy with works of art, as well as the wider significance that this manifestation of empathy holds for the self. While the success of this project is bound to the study of empathy in other fields of research, there is no doubt that art imports levels of complexity that merit focused attention and an acute sense of art's own subtleties and demands.

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