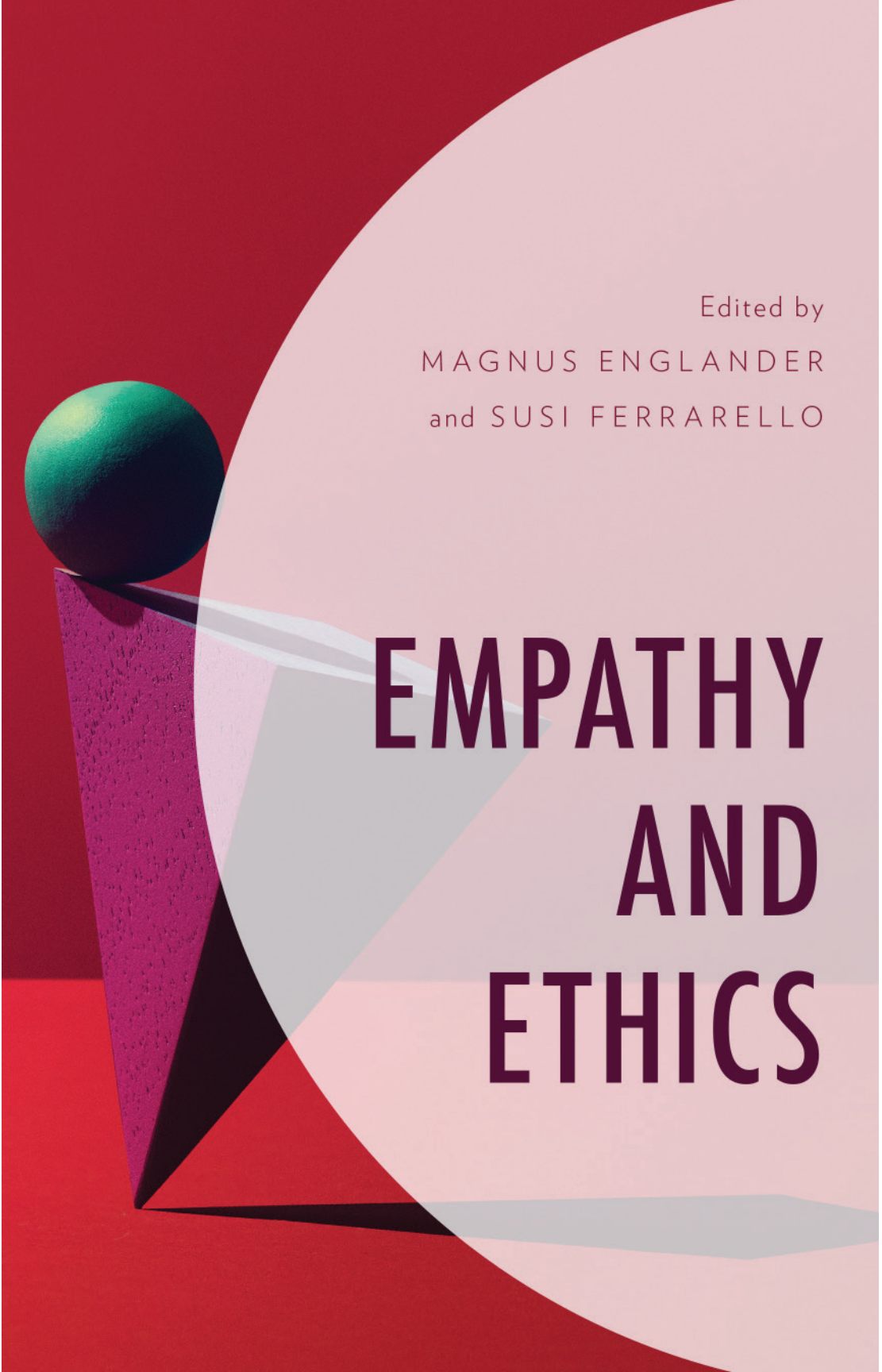
Edited by
MAGNUS ENGLANDER
and SUSI FERRARELLO
EMPATHY
AND
ETHICS

Empathy and Ethics

Empathy and Ethics

Edited by

Magnus Englander and Susi Ferrarello

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

Published by Rowman & Littlefield
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

86-90 Paul Street, London EC2A 4NE, United Kingdom

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Englander, Magnus, editor. | Ferrarello, Susi, editor.
Title: Empathy and ethics / edited by Magnus Englander and Susi Ferrarello.
Description: Lanham : Rowman & Littlefield, 2023. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2022035771 (print) | LCCN 2022035772 (ebook) | ISBN 9781538154106 (cloth ; alk. paper) | ISBN 9781538154113 (electronic) | ISBN 9781538154120 (paper : alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: Empathy. | Caring. | Ethics.
Classification: LCC BJ1475 .E455 2023 (print) | LCC BJ1475 (ebook) | DDC 177/.7--dc23/eng/20220906
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2022035771
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2022035772

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Contents

Chapter 13

Sharing and Other Illusions

Asymmetry in "Moments of Meeting"

Joona Taipale

ABSTRACT

This chapter tackles the question of interpersonal understanding from the point of view of so-called "moments of meeting." Coined by Daniel Stern and his colleagues, this term refers to specific and particularly intense experiential situations, where two (or more) persons attune to each other's affective experiences, thus "cocreating" an experiential area that exists to these two individuals exclusively—a "shared private world," as Stern puts it (Stern, 2004). While moments of meeting have attracted a lot of interest in research on psychotherapeutic change, clinical effectivity, and outcome, the usefulness of the concept in nonclinical discussions has been overlooked. The chapter fills in this lacuna by underlining the applicability of the concept of descriptions of everyday experiences of emotional sharing. The core argument is that moments of meeting have an *asymmetric* structure that complicates the structure of self-other relationships. By opening new perspectives to interpersonal understanding—its successes and shortcomings—this chapter contributes both to nonclinical and clinical discussions.

Keywords: interpersonal understanding, affect attunement, emotional sharing, reparation, mutuality, illusion, Daniel Stern, illusion, truth of solipsism

INTRODUCTION: THE SUBJECTIVE BIAS

One of the necessary (though not sufficient) conditions of an ethical relationship lies in the effort of recognizing others *in their own right*, in contrast to viewing them emphatically *in the light of our subjective experiential situation*. Considering the full scope of our daily interactions, however, unbiased experiences of others count as *exceptions* rather than comprising the *rule*. Our social experiences are usually more or less colored by our dynamically vacillating and largely unconscious needs, desires, interests, associations, inhibitions, and other psychic factors. In the light of this idiosyncratic "psychic reality," other people are, by rule, introduced to us in a *subjectively biased* manner.

The subjective bias significantly complicates our experience of others. On the one hand, it affects our grasp of others in their *outer* appearance. To illustrate, whether we consider someone's behavior as bold or arrogant, active or pompous, hilarious or politically incorrect, and also whether and how such features stand out in our experience—in all this, a constitutive role is played by our factical bodily condition, state of alertness, idiosyncratic preferences, habitual prejudices, and indeed our whole developmental history. On the other hand, and more to the point, the subjective bias plays a part in our interpretations, expectations, presuppositions and suspicions concerning *others' self-experience, their experience of the world, and their experience of us* (including our external appearance and our respective experiential relations). To be sure, in many kinds of social encounter, our grasp of others' experiential life may remain rather vague and general: in an urban setting, we may fleetingly perceive tens or even hundreds of people every day, and in these perceptions we mostly build on social typifications—considering others as passers-by, cashiers, businessmen, drunkards, and so on—without pondering on how these particular individuals feel about themselves, the world, and us (see Taipale 2016). By contrast, in personally significant forms of interaction, we also reach into the other's experience and busy ourselves with how our companion thinks and feels about herself and her body, how she thinks, how she perceives and values her surroundings, and how she represents us and our intentions directed at her.

In these latter forms of interaction, to which I will be focusing in the following, the subjective bias plays a particularly central role. Namely, given that we cannot simply step into the other's mind to see how she experiences everything, in our respective sense-making efforts we can only rely on our subjective grasp that is already colored by the aforementioned idiosyncrasies. To be sure, we can consciously *aim* at recognizing the share of our idiosyncratic associations, reach beyond the subjective bias, and, thus, strive for

a more neutral and "objective" assessment of others. While in the present context, we need not take a stand on whether we ever *completely* succeed in such abstraction, two observations regarding this issue can nonetheless be made. First, given that affects and emotions play a central role in the subjective "coloring" of experience, and given that the share of affects and emotions is greater in cases with personal involvement, it seems safe to note that *the subjective bias tends to be underlined in our significant social experiences.* Differently put, maintaining an unbiased attitude is particularly challenging in relation to our significant others. Second, even if we can *momentarily* recognize, more or less exhaustively, our subjective biases, and hence consider others more objectively, this abstraction is not constantly at our disposal. Indeed, considering the nuanced and vivid flow of social experiences, unbiased attitudes toward others count as exceptions: Notwithstanding the importance of the *capacity* for neutral observation, this potentiality is *not predominantly actualized* in our social life.

The subjective bias complicates the structure of interpersonal understanding and mutuality. For one, it modifies each individual's grasp of their *own* feelings and thoughts. And so, whereas *our grasp of the other's experience* is colored by our idiosyncratic psychic reality, *the other's grasp of her own experiences* is determined in the light of the other's idiosyncratic psychic reality.[1] A comprehensive and exhaustive "match" between the two seems highly unlikely. As much as we know of the other and of her history, as much as we are familiar with the other's habitualities, inclinations, and styles of reacting, and as much as we can empathically feel our way into their experiential situation, we are forever "outsiders" when it comes to *the other's idiosyncratic experience as lived through by the other.* The same naturally holds for ourselves: Others are equally "outsiders" when it comes to the inviolable core of our self (cf. Winnicott 1965, 187). Differently put, given the subjective bias, each individual lives in his or her idiosyncratic version of reality—an issue that Merleau-Ponty touches upon when speaking of "the truth of solipsism" (2012, 374). We meet, we perceive each other, and we communicate—and yet we can only relate to the other, and to what we take to be shared with them, *from our biased subjective viewpoint*.

Reciprocity complicates matters even further, given that the mentioned bias simultaneously figures *on both sides.* The other's grasp of how I think and feel likewise unfolds from the other's idiosyncratic viewpoint, and my subjective feelings and thoughts are most likely not identical with the other's representation of them. And so, while an exhaustive grasp of someone else's thoughts and feelings in all their nuances and associations, and conversely someone else's accurate grasp of my idiosyncratic feelings and thoughts as they unfold in my life, seems highly unlikely, a *reciprocal match* seems even less probable. On both sides, experiences of being with the other are at once

subjective and, hence, idiosyncratically outlined experiences, and each individual has their own peculiar representation of what is shared with the other. Formally put, what Individual A considers as shared with Individual B is not identical with what Individual B considers to be shared with Individual A. In this sense, intersubjectivity has an *asymmetric structure.*[2]

While this asymmetry renders the *shortcomings* of interpersonal experience rather understandable, even expected, it appears perplexing in the light of *successful* ones. After all, in personally significant social encounters, we occasionally feel we have a good sense of *what the other is going through*, we may find ourselves *joining in the other's feeling*, and we may conversely *find our own affects met, recognized, and understood*, thus *feeling intimately connected with the other.* What should we make of such experiences in the light of subjective bias? More precisely: *What happens to the structural asymmetry in such experiences?*

The theoretical consequences of the *subjective bias* and of the ensuing *asymmetry* have not been sufficiently recognized in the philosophical and multidisciplinary literature on intersubjectivity.[3] To analyze how asymmetry underlines and complicates emotional understanding, I will focus on those intimate cases of nonverbal and emotional sharing that Daniel Stern has called "moments of meeting" (e.g., Stern 2004, 166ff.). The concept emerges from Stern's work in developmental psychology and psychoanalysis, and it has attracted a considerable amount of interest in research on psychotherapeutic change and outcome. However, the usefulness of the concept in non-clinical discussions on interpersonal understanding has been overlooked. In Stern, moments of meeting refer to particularly intense experiential situations, where two[4] persons reciprocally attune to each other's affective experiences, thus "co-creating" a shared experiential space that exists to these two individuals exclusively—a "shared private world," as Stern also puts it (Stern 2004, 173). Focusing on these particularly intensive cases enables highlighting a general structure in interpersonal experience: If moments of meeting involve an asymmetric structure, this can be expected to hold also for the less intensive, fleeting, and casual social encounters, where self/other demarcation tends to be more pronounced—this, however, will be left for further studies.

The chapter is structured as follows. In the following section, I will explain what Stern means by moments of meeting, extending his analysis beyond the psychotherapy setting. In the third section, I will engage in a critical analysis of the notion from the viewpoint of the aforementioned subjective bias. In the fourth section, I will illustrate the volatile nature of moments of meeting, and argue that they repeatedly require "acts of repair." Arguably, what continually threatens to interrupt the sense of connection is precisely the underlying asymmetry, which can make itself felt to a greater or lesser

degree. Being constantly on the verge of shattering, moments of meeting presuppose a *reciprocal ignorance* concerning the asymmetric setting. I expect this account to prove useful in analyzing the successes and shortcomings of interpersonal understanding.

INTO THE UNKNOWN: STERN ON MOMENTS OF MEETING

Stern introduces the moments of meeting as occasionally arising out of *specific responses* to what he calls "now moments": spontaneously and hence unexpectedly emerging moments where the routined course of interaction is suddenly put into question (e.g., Stern 2004, 245). Such moments restore the sense of presence of the engaged individuals, by challenging the implicit "rules" or the "grammar" of being together. Stern illustrates this with an anecdote of an analysand who in one morning suddenly says that she wants to sit up and see her analyst's face:

> And with no further ado she sits up and turns around. The therapist and patient find themselves staring at each other in startled silence. That is a *now moment.* The patient didn't know she was going to do it right before . . . that moment. It was a spontaneous eruption. Nor did the therapist anticipate it, just then, in that way. Yet they now find themselves in a novel intersubjective situation. *Kairos* hangs heavy (Stern 2004, 166).

The unexpected gesture "disequilibrates" the familiar intersubjective context and calls for *action*: "something must be done" (Stern, Bruschweiler-Stern, et al., 1998, 305). It is as if an ethical claim was imposed: 'I am here—your move.' On the face of the pressing "now moment," doing nothing would equally be an act (Stern 2004, 166).

Whether a moment of meeting grows out of such now moments is contingent on the nature of the reaction of the *recipient* of the disequilibrating gesture (Stern 2004, 169). In this sense, the spontaneous eruption can be compared to an *invitation.* The unexpected gesture shakes the routined course of interaction, "pushes the intersubjective state into a zone of transition that is unstable" (Stern, Bruschweiler-Stern, et al., 1998, 305), and challenges the manner of being-with. Hence, the other member of the interactive situation is put into a position where she has to either *accept* or *turn down* the invitation, as it were. Stern's anecdote continues:

> The therapist, without knowing exactly what she was going to do, softened her face slowly and let the suggestion of a smile form around her mouth. She then

> leaned her head towards slightly and said "hello." The patient continued to look at her. They remained locked in a mutual gaze for several seconds. After a moment, the patient laid down again and continued her work on the couch, but more profoundly and in a new key, which opened up new material. The change was dramatic in their therapeutic work together (Stern 2004, 169).

The patient's spontaneous gesture combined with the therapist's personal adjustment to the unexpectedly emerging situation together established a moment of meeting. With her "authentic response finely matched to the momentary local situation" (Stern 2004, 168), the therapist *entered* the new intersubjective situation opened by the patient's spontaneity, and encountered the patient *where she currently is* (170). In other words, if the patient's initial communication to the therapist was, "I am here," the therapist's responsive communication to the patient was, "I am here with you." With her adjustive gesture, the therapist thus turned what initially emerged as a *disruptive gesture* into a *relational move* to be built upon. In short, the patient issued an invitation, and the therapist accepted it and played along.

To continue with this metaphor, we could think of various ways in which the recipient might *turn down* the invitation. As Stern exemplifies, the outcome of the now moment would have been different if the therapist had rigidly maintained or underlined her professional role, retained an observational distance and reacted to the patient with a "neutral, technical response" (Stern 2004, 168)—for example, "what are you thinking now?" In this case, the therapist would have indirectly, yet very clearly, expressed both *her reluctance to enter the new situation* created by the patient's spontaneous eruption and *her wish that the patient would return* to the routined course of interaction—or, the space that the therapist never left, as it were. By thus turning down the invitation, the therapist would have rendered the patient's spontaneous eruption as a *disruption to be overcome*, as something that does not fit the grammar of the situation at hand. In this case, the spontaneously emerging opportunity for an intersubjective meeting would have been lost. Instead, the therapist accepted the uncontrollability of the event, momentarily stepped out of her role as a therapist, and encountered the patient not so much *as a patient* but *as another human being* (see Stern, Sander, et al., 1998, 912). As Stern put it, with her spontaneous and authentic response, she resolved the sudden crisis created by the now moment (Stern 2004, 169).

Stern underlines that the intersubjective space opened by such moments is co-created (Stern 2004, 158). With this, he aims to highlight two things. For one, "each move and moment creates the context for the one that follows," and this "mutual context-creating goes on and on, one relational move after one another, such that the *direction* of where the moves go together is very largely dyadically determined" (Stern 2004, 158). That is to say, both

parties *constantly* find themselves building on *something unexpected* while heading toward an *uncharted territory*. Neither of the interacting partners is *pre-acquainted* with the area they are traversing; neither of them knows what kind of intersubjective space will be co-created—if any. Each *move,* hence, presumably requires a great deal of courage and trust: After all, the other's adjusting response is needed for the spontaneous eruption to be established as a "relational move" in the first place, and the fate of one's spontaneity cannot be known in advance. Second, "each relational move and present moment is designed to express an intention relative to the inferred intentions of the other. The two end up seeking, chasing, missing, finding, and shaping each other's intentionality" (Stern 2004, 158). That is to say, while Individual A does not have direct access to the mind of Individual B, nor the other way around, what they adjust themselves to is the other's thoughts and feelings *as they subjectively conceive of them* (see Stern 2004, xvi). In the previous example, the therapist does not *know for sure* what the patient is heading with the gesture of suddenly sitting up and turning around; in her responding, she can only rely on her *own* sense of the situation and her vague grasp of the other's intention—and "misreadings" are therefore constantly possible.

Co-creation is accordingly a *recursive* process, where the engaged individuals—in a "hit-miss-repair-elaborate fashion" (Stern 2004, 156)—strive to achieve intersubjective "fittedness" (168):

> Because the process of chaining together (sometimes very loosely) relational moves in present moments is largely spontaneous and unpredictable from move to move, there are many mismatches, derailments, misunderstandings, and indeterminacy. These 'mistakes' require a process of repair (Stern 2004, 157).

In a related context, Stern talks about "missteps in the dance" (1977, 109ff). The metaphor is illustrative: when stepping on your partner's toe while dancing, for instance, there is an interruption, a kind of now moment ensuing from your clumsiness. To continue dancing, mutual adaptation is needed: your partner has to adjust her movements to your misstep, while this in turn forces you to refit your movements to her unexpectedly altered movements. Along with such *reciprocal acts of repair*, the flow of dyadic movement is retained, whereby you mutually continue each other's movements, or complement each other's motor intentionalities (see Sander 2014, 199). Likewise with interpersonal communication. To react to a patient's spontaneous gesture of sitting up by leaning forward and saying "hello" is not something one can read from a psychologist's manual; insisting upon a "specific fit to a specific situation" (Stern 2004, 168–69), moments of meeting can only be "created on the spot to fit the singularity of the unexpected situation" (Stern, Bruschweiler-Stern, et al., 1998, 305). Such "intentional fuzziness" and the

ensuing need for recurring reparation render human interaction a "sloppy" process (Stern 2004, 156–57).[5]

In his account, Stern mainly maneuvers in the psychotherapeutic context, but the same applies to everyday interaction. Insofar as there are unexpected spontaneous eruptions on behalf of Individual A, there must also be room for spontaneous deviations from the preestablished setting on behalf of Individual B. Nonclinical interaction is equally a sloppy process. And while certain inviolable parameters—in psychotherapy as well as in everyday life—are necessarily needed for communication (Stern 2004, 164), the spontaneous and personal nature of the required reaction renders moments of meeting impossible to plan. The conversing individuals can only balance "at the boundary between sloppiness and coherence" (182) and, hence, repeatedly repair their missteps and adjust to those of others. As said, if the therapist was not open to the sloppy nature of the process but kept strictly with her occupational role, the patient would have felt neglected or dismissed, finding herself met *as a patient*, yet less *as a human being*. Likewise in nonclinical interaction, moments of meeting require that the other is met "where she is." While the significance of moments of meeting is particularly underlined in the psychotherapeutic setting, and while it has been mainly examined in this context, moments of meeting can be equally found outside the consultation room. We could perhaps even say that, notwithstanding their immense clinical significance, in their capacity to temporarily do away with hierarchical settings, *moments of meeting essentially are nonclinical encounters.*

In contrast to casual cases of joint action that do not deeply alter our relationship with the other, Stern underlines moments of meeting as transitional moments or experiences of a sudden shift *in implicit relational knowing* (Stern, Sander, et al., 1998, 905; Stern 2004, 242), that significantly alter or "rearrange" our way of being with the other (Stern, Sander, et al., 1998, 905, 917; Stern 2004, 176). If the now moment is like an invitation to reorganize the ground rules of being together, acceptance of the invitation amounts to an expansion of the *scope or range* of being with the other: it transforms both members' implicit sense of togetherness (Stern, Bruschweiler-Stern, et al., 1998, 305) and moves the relationship "to a deeper level of intersubjectivity" (Stern 2010, 140).

Though mainly giving clinical examples, Stern illustrates this "transitional" nature of the moments of meeting with a beautiful narrative of two persons, not knowing each other, going out for their first date. It is winter and, on the spur of the moment, the two persons decide to go ice skating; stumbling onto the ice, they engage in a sort of a clumsy dance:

> She almost falls backwards. He reaches out and steadies her. He loses his balance and tilts to the right. She throws out a hand and grabs it. . . . And each of

> them knows, at the moment, that the other knows what it feels like to be him or her. . . . There is much laughing and gasping and falling. There is no space in which to really talk. . . . At the end of a half hour, tired, they stop and have a hot drink at the side of the rink. But now their relationship is in a different place. They have each directly experienced something of the other's experience. They have vicariously been inside the other's body and mind through a series of shared feeling voyages. They have created an implicit intersubjective field that endures as part of their short history together. . . . They will talk across the table and share meanings. And while they talk, the explicit domain of their relationship will start to expand. Whatever is said will be against the background of the implicit relationship that was expanded before, through the shared feeling voyages they had on the ice (Stern 2004, 174–75).

Like in the clinical examples, here too the intimate sense of doing something together "expands" the intersubjective field (Stern 2004, 189). The expanding proceeds both horizontally and vertically, as it were: On the one hand, new dimensions of interaction open up, thus widening the horizon of possible interaction, whereas, on the other hand, the already established dimensions of interaction increase in depth. And so, once an implicit relational space has been pioneered through the joint experience, explicit interaction is altered as well (Stern, Bruschweiler-Stern, et al., 1998, 305).

Stern's emphasis concerning the *implicit* nature of moments of meeting also has a normative dimension: Moments of meeting not only *often are* implicit, but they also *need to remain* such. For one, Stern underlines that what is at stake is not a reflective experience, explicit recognition, or conscious awareness of fittedness (Stern 2004, 172; see also Lyons-Ruth 2000, 92). It is only in retrospect that moments of meeting can be grasped as such (see Sander 2014, 231). Moreover, Stern underlines that conscious attention also tends to *compromise* the experience in question: "an attempt to make this moment of meeting explicit, especially immediately after it occurred, could undo some of its effect" (Stern 2004, 191). Just consider the ice-skating couple enjoying the intimate moment, laughing and gasping carelessly, feeling enchanted by the intimate emotional connection with the other—and then consider one of them exclaiming cheerfully: "It seems that we are falling in love with one another, isn't that marvelous?" The experience is at once "disenchanted," and this is because, by *reflectively explicating* the experience, one at once introduces an observational distance to it.

To sum up, moments of meeting are implicit, nonverbal, transitional episodes in the ongoing process of implicit relational knowing, "shared feeling voyages" that significantly expand the intersubjective space among the ones involved. Metaphorically speaking, moments of meeting are not about *moving forward as one unit* but about *heading to the same direction together with someone*—even if in a sloppy manner, by way of a clumsy dance, and without

knowing where one will end up. What is at stake is a rather volatile or fragile phenomenon. Like immersive experiences of playing, moments of meeting insist on remaining unreflective and unknown as such. Just as playing is interrupted as soon as one becomes explicitly aware that one is playing, moments of meeting similarly build on an *illusion*.

THE INFINITELY COMPLICATED MATCH

The topic of illusion brings us back to the question we set out with: What happens to asymmetry in moments of meeting? Some of Stern's characterizations seem to imply that in successful moments of meeting the structural asymmetry is displaced by a symmetrical sense of mutuality. Stern not only argues that moments of meeting involve an intense sense of sharing (Stern 2004, 168) and a sense of specific "fittedness" (151, 171) that build on "reciprocal mindreading" (xvi) and the sense of sufficiently "similar mental landscapes" (151). He also claims that moments of meeting build on "other-centered-participation" (Stern 2000, xxii; cf. Bråten 1998; Trevarthen 1979), whereby the interacting partners entertain a "dyadic form of consciousness" (Stern, Bruschweiler-Stern, et al., 1998, 305) and are momentarily "aware of what each other is experiencing" (Stern 2004, 151). Accordingly, moments of meeting are "cocreated by both partners and lived through originally by both" (173); they are "shared feeling voyages" (172–74), in the course of which the participants "vicariously inhabit" each other's mind and body (174) and directly "experience what the other is experiencing" (174, 241). These "cocreated islands of intentional fittedness" (164) or "shared private worlds" (173) allegedly emerge out of dyadic interaction with a "roughly equal contribution of two minds" (159). In this manner, moments of meeting allegedly relocate the interacting partners "in a no-man's land" (174), in *a neutral area equally given to both*.

Such characterizations make it seem as if Stern was thinking of a *symmetrical* setting. The preceding discussion on the subjective bias puts some pressure on many of these claims. If the experiences of the individual are inseparably veiled in idiosyncrasies—that is, if each of the engaged individuals experiences themselves, the other, and the shared area differently—it seems unavoidable that *what one individual considers to be shared with another does not perfectly coincide or match with what this other individual considers to be shared with the first one*.

The subjective bias significantly complicates interpersonal experiences by modifying the individuals' grasp of self and others. For one, instead of a homogeneous "other," the interactive situation involves both *the other in the light of my idiosyncratic psychic reality*, and *the other in the light of her*

idiosyncratic psychic reality—two idiosyncratic representations that might not coincide with each other. Likewise, instead of a homogenous self, there is *idiosyncratic self-awareness and self-representation*, on the one hand, and *my self as I am portrayed in the other's idiosyncratic representation of me*, on the other. These two representations might not harmoniously coincide with each other either. Thus, instead of *two* poles, we already have *four*. Moreover, the issue is exponentially reiterated given that "my experiential relation to the other" is conceptually divided into *this relation as lived-through by me* and *this relation* as *represented by the other.* And, in turn, "the other's experiential relation to me" divides into *this relation as grasped by the other* and *this relation as I experience it.*

In this fashion, the subjective bias complicates the self-other relation. The latter unfolds as a complex structure involving internal relations, dynamics, and tensions between *numerous* poles of reference (see figure 13.1).

To verbalize this table, the overall experience of Individual A covers her *subjective self-experience* (A1), her *subjective experience of the environment* (A2), and her *subjective experience of the other* (A3). Each of these is permeated and burdened by an idiosyncratic coloring. Moreover, Individual A's experience of Individual B (A3) can be conceptually divided into A's grasp *of B's subjective self-experience* (A3-1), A's grasp *of B's subjective experience of her surroundings* (A3-2), and A's grasp *of B's subjective experience of A* (A3-3). Given that all these elements respectively figure in Individual B's overall experience (B1, B2, B3-1, B3-2, and B3-3), which is equally subjectively biased, the picture gets highly intricate.

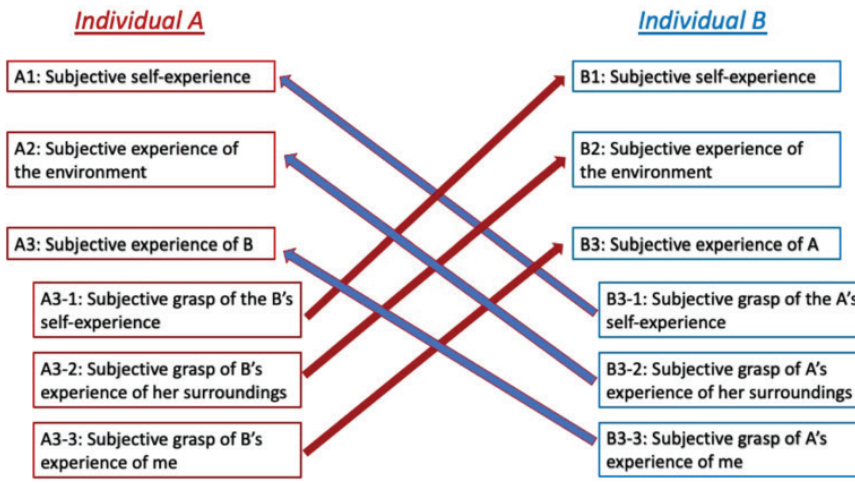

Figure 13.1.

Moreover, personally significant social experiences harbor *implicit and unconscious assumptions* concerning a match between various poles (these assumptions are indicated by arrows in figure 13.1). For instance, whenever one feels that she is "experiencing what the other is experiencing"—a trait that allegedly characterizes moments of meeting—a match is implied between *how I take the other to be feeling* (A3-1) and *how the other is feeling* (B1). In other words, while intensely feeling that we experience what the other is experiencing, we tend to assume that we are grasping the experiences of the other *as they appear in the life of the other*. The reciprocal setting complicates the issue further, increasing the number of the assumed matches. Namely, in my subjective experience of the other, I am intentionally reaching not only into the other's *subjective experience of me* (A3-3 → B3), but also the other's *subjective experience of my experience of her* (A3-3 → B3 → [B3-3 →] A3), and so on. The infinite recursive loop (see Stern 2004, 243) opening here would allow for drawing a much more complicated picture, but this level of detail is sufficient for our purposes.

Instead of busying ourselves with the further complexities of this field, we only need to note that, in the light of the subjective bias, the term *dyad* seems like a gross simplification. To be sure, from a third-person standpoint, there are *two* poles of interaction (Individual A and Individual B), whereas from first- and second-person standpoints, the number of poles is much higher. And, accordingly, *numerous* assumptions of a match may be involved, including ones between A3-1 and B1, between B3-1 and A1, between A3-3 and B3, and between B3-3 and A3. These insights motivate a critical analysis of the moments of meeting.

By suggesting that moments of meeting are built on a direct glimpse into the other's mind, or on directly grasping the other's experience (e.g., Stern 2004, 174), Stern comes to raise the bar for successful intersubjective experiences rather high. To be sure, he accordingly notes that moments of meeting are "fairly rare occurrences" (178), and he underlines that reparation is constantly needed—within the process of going along, moments of meeting are literally *moments,* even if personally significant and often unforgettable (see Sander 2014, 230). However, conceptualized in this manner, the subjective bias and the complexity ensuing from it seem to render moments of meeting not only rare but practically impossible. Namely, if already the possibility deems highly unlikely that my idiosyncratic grasp of how the other feels (A3-1) could ever *exhaustively match* with the other's subjective self-experience (B1), in reciprocal cases the complexity of the situation is exponentially increased. In the form of an argument: if an exhaustive match between the poles was required for moments of meeting, there would *not be* moments of

meeting; and while moments of meeting do exist, the requirement for a comprehensive and mutual grasp of each other's intentionalities therefore must be dispensed with.

ON THE VERGE OF CONNECTION: HIT, MISS, REPAIR

In the light of what has been argued thus far, the term *dyad* strikes as a simplification. Rather than as a setting with *two* poles, interpersonal experience has been introduced here as a dynamic web of references between *numerous* poles. This complexity is owing to what I have termed *the subjective bias*. Each person experiences themselves, the world, and others in the light of their idiosyncratic experiential circumstances, and a comprehensive match across all of the respective poles seems highly likely.

While this complexity renders *mis*understandings rather understandable, what to make of *successful* interpersonal experiences? Given the subjective bias, how should we interpret *experiences of grasping what the other is going through*, *feelings of taking part in the other's feeling*, or *the sense of being understood by others*? To narrow down the scope: *what happens to the unavoidable structural asymmetry in moments of meeting?*

To examine this question, note that depending on the circumstances, the aforementioned tacit assumptions may *remain unnoticed* or *stand out*. In the latter case, suspicion tends to arise whether one's grasp of the other, or the other's grasp of oneself, is misguided one way or the other. In moments of meeting such suspicions are altogether absent. Importantly, as long as no mismatch *stands out*, the interacting partners can act *as if* there was none. To be sure, for an assumption to remain unchallenged is by no means a guarantee of its veracity. It is one thing to say that a match between subjective experiences *is ensured* and another thing to say that a match between subjective experiences *is not compromised*. My suggestion is that moments of meeting—and interpersonal understanding in general—presupposes the latter but not the former. That is to say: As long as the respective tacit assumptions are not compromised, the engaged individuals can *build on* them—regardless of their veracity. As I will suggest, this introduces an ingredient of *illusion* into the heart of intersubjective relations.

To clarify this issue, for starters, consider *verbal interaction*, which is sometimes taken to have the power to *rid* the mismatch between idiosyncratic representations of two individuals, providing interaction with a firm, symmetrical setting. For instance, in telling Individual B about a dog that I (Individual A) saw earlier, it might turn up at some point that B has a different kind of dog in mind. This prominent misunderstanding (i.e., an overt mismatch between B3-2 and A2) disturbs and interrupts the sense of sharing,

and calls for "acts of repair." The prominent sense of mismatch can be rid by verbally specifying further that it was a poodle that I saw. The increased sense of precision ensuing from this act of repair might well satisfy the purposes of the interactive situation: further details, and hence, any additional mismatch between our idiosyncratic representations, *might not matter*. This often is the case in casual everyday encounters: Mutual understanding on a rather general level suffices, while idiosyncratic differences remain unimportant. However, should the nature of the conversation so demand, any recurring sense of mismatch could again be "repaired" by way of additional verbal specifications. Nonetheless, the generality of words can never exhaust the full richness of the idiosyncratic experience. No matter how detailed our specifications (i.e., verbal acts of "repair"), there will always be more to be specified.

While the mismatch between A2 (i.e., my perception of the dog) and B3-2 (i.e. the other's representation of the dog I perceived) thus *no longer makes itself felt*, the joint contentment hardly guarantees an exhaustive coincidence between the two—after all, A and B might well (and most likely do) have a *different kind* of poodle in mind. Instead of undoing the mismatch, therefore, verbal communication only pushes the mismatch one step farther: It rids the *sense of mismatch* but not the mismatch itself. The disproportion of the idiosyncratic experiences may in fact be constantly flickering beneath the surface, as it were, but without standing out to interrupt the interaction. The *level of required specificity* is what matters; interaction is disturbed only when the mismatch breaches these situational parameters and thus breaks the surface. As long as it does not stand out, the interacting partners enjoy and build upon a *sense of sharing*, without being prompted to decide on its objective veracity. In the sense that the factual mismatch is *overlooked*, the sense of sharing rests on an *illusion*.

This idea can be applied to cases of nonverbal experiential sharing, such as occurring in moments of meeting. Nonverbal interaction, too, strives for a sense of mutuality and togetherness; here, too, acts of reparation are needed; and here too the required level of specificity is determined by the nature of the interactive situation. However, without verbal communication, *how can we tell* whether our subjective intentions align with one another to a sufficient degree? Stern's response is "affect attunement" (Stern, 1985). Whereas in verbal interaction *explicit specifications, clarifications, and corrections* function as kinds of beacons that enable fitting together the idiosyncratic experiences of the conversing individuals, in nonverbal interaction the needed beacon resides in the *feeling of attunement.*

Originating in Stern's work in developmental psychology, affect attunement is a phenomenon familiar to most parents (and infants). As Stern exemplifies:

> a nine-month-old boy is sitting facing his mother. He has a rattle in his hand and is shaking up and down with a display of interest and mild amusement. As mother watches, she begins to nod her head up and down, keeping a tight beat with her son's arm motions (Stern 1985, 141).
>
> A ten-month-old girl is seated on the floor facing her mother. She is trying to get a piece of puzzle into its right place. After many failures she finally gets it in. She then looks up into her mother's face with delight and an explosion of enthusiasm. She "opens up her face" [her mouth opens, her eyes widen, her eyebrows rise] and then closes back down. The time contour of these changes can be described as a smooth arch [a crescendo, high point, decrescendo]. At the same time her arms rise and fall at her sides. Mother responds by intoning, "Yeah" with a pitch line that rises and falls as the volume crescendos and decrescendos: "yeeAAaahh." The mother's prosodic contour matches the child's facial-kinetic contour (Stern 2010, 41; cf. Stern 1985, 140).

Though not identical, the two gestures "fit together" like pieces of a diachronic puzzle: one gesture *continues* the other and, thus,establishes it as a relational move. The situation is basically similar in the case of the therapist/patient example: the therapist's gesture of leaning forward and saying "hello" is a "specific fitted match" (Stern 2004, 169) that *complements and continues* the patient's gesture of sitting up and turning around. This phenomenon also underlies the nonverbal coordination of the movements of the dancing partners, as well as the intense nonverbal exchange of the ice-skating couple. The common denominator is that the other *plays along* and establishes the gesture as a *relational move* to be built upon, so that the engaged individuals find themselves in a shared area cocreated in the course of this ongoing interaction.

Stern characterizes affect attunement as a cross-modal match between *vitality forms* (Stern 1985; 2004, 84). In both examples, instead of simply *imitating* the child's gesture, the mother gives an alternative expression to it. And, by so doing, she communicates to the child that she grasps not only how the child's behavior *externally looks like*, but also *how the child is feeling* (Stern 2010, 43). Such communication can be conveyed in various ways, making use of different sensory modalities: "extremely diverse events may thus be yoked, so long as they share the quality of feeling" (1985, 58). That is to say, it does not matter whether the mother rhythmically nods her head, produces a sound pattern, or does something else—as long as the mother's response *matches the vital quality of her son's feeling*, and thus gives an alternative expression to it (see Stern 1985, 56; 2010, 42; cf. 43, 113; Stern 2004, 84):

> What is being matched is not the other person's behaviour per se, but rather some aspect of behaviour that reflects the person's feelings state. The ultimate

> reference for the match appears to be the feeling state (inferred or directly apprehended), not the external behavioural event. Thus the match appears to occur between the expressions of inner state. These expressions can differ in mode or form, but they are to some extent interchangeable as manifestations of a single recognizable internal state (Stern 1985, 142; cf. Stern 2004, 241).

Feeling of attunement is achieved when the responding individual—be it the caregiver, the therapist, one's dancing partner, or one's friend—selectively reproduces "the dynamics of the form but not the modality" (Stern 2010, 41):

> In affect attunement, the mother matches the dynamic features of how the baby acted. This ensures the baby that she grasps what he did. However, she does not match the content and modality of the infant's action. Instead, she makes her own choice of modality and content. This assures the baby that she understood, within herself, what it felt like to do what he did. It is not an imitation, because she put it 'into her own words'—it carries her signature. It is something she felt, too. She wants a matching of inner states (Stern 2010, 114).

As long as the vital form remains the same, the alternative ways of attuning with the child will *feel the same* in the child.

Whereas these examples are somewhat one sided, in the sense that there is the child whose feelings are being mirrored by the caregiver, in moments of meeting, such *attunement occurs reciprocally*. Experiential sharing, accordingly, is not primarily a matter of knowledge but a matter of feeling. It is from the other's attuned expressions that we can tell when the other has grasped how we feel and when our subjective intentions align with one another to a sufficient degree. In short, we *feel different* when we are attuned and when we are not attuned with the other (Stern 2004, 180; cf. Sander 2014, 198–99). As Stern puts it, in the spontaneously cocreated, uncharted interpersonal space, the sought-for attunement "acts as a sort of non-conscious compass to guide" the course of interaction (Stern 2010, 138). Just consider the still-face experiment (Tronick et al., 1978) and the immense trouble that the baby experiences when the mother is still physically present but no longer attunes with her; and consider, in turn, how the baby's feeling alters when the mother re-attunes with her and thus repairs the interrupted sense of connection. No words are needed for this, and if words are involved, *how* something is said tends to matter more than *what* is said (see Stern 2004, 191).[6]

Attunement is a subtle issue, and it requires balancing between *intimacy* and *distance*. Stern illustrates this in terms of *over-attunement* and *under-attunement* (1985, 148–49). For instance, if you are telling someone about a personal loss, you would feel awkward if the other would respond with an overblown gesture as if the loss was her own; conversely, you would feel dismissed if the other would maintain an unchanged face and respond

with an official tone of voice, "I see that you are sad" (see Stern 1985, 136). In both cases, you would experience *mis*attunement, but in two different senses—in the case of under-attunement, you would not feel supported by the other, whereas in the case of over-attunement you might end up supporting the other. While such obvious missteps are easy to pinpoint, mis-attunements are not always that extensive and emphatic. *Attunement is a matter of more/less, not a matter of either/or* (see Stern 2004, 189). Sometimes the sense of interpersonal connection may be only slightly disturbed by a minor detail that marginally makes itself felt without altogether interrupting the interaction. As Stern puts it: "There are many 'missteps' every minute in the best of interactions, and the majority of them are quickly repaired by one or both partners" (157).

Also, the engaged individuals might have partly different parameters for a "sufficient attunement." To illustrate, if one of the dancers is much more skilled than the other, she might be much more sensitive to missteps that her partner does not even notice: whereas the less skilled dancer may be elevated by a sense of attunement, the more skilled dancer may be vexed by what she grasps as missteps. Likewise, in verbal interaction a disproportion of representations might be disturbingly felt by one individual, while remaining altogether unnoticed by the other: whereas the current level of specificity might well be sufficient for one, the other might be troubled by the lack of further details (e.g., "what kind of poodle was it?"). In moments of meeting, there is mutual sense of fittedness and, hence, a series of relational moves that *consecutively and reciprocally build on each other.*

Whether in a literal or in a metaphorical sense, the experience of "moving along" is a *shared experience*—yet one *appearing differently* to both parties. Even if sufficient attunement was felt on both sides, and no mismatch would *stand out*, the interactive situation will nonetheless appear differently to both. As Merleau-Ponty puts it, solitude and communication are two sides of the same phenomenon (2012, 376). Given the unique experiential background of each individual, feelings of togetherness, too, awaken differing associations, memory traces, and idiosyncratic ideas. In this sense, interpersonal relationships are always *uneven* or *asymmetrical*: Each individual creates the common space in his or her own way, and hence experiences it differently. That is to say, insofar as the two do not have an exactly identical experiential set up and same idiosyncratic associations, the mismatch is constantly there, flickering beneath the surface. Even in moments of meeting, each individual first and foremost relates to his or her own idiosyncratic version of the cocreated area or shared private world. On the one hand, moments of meeting build on a sense of a match; on the other hand, this sense is partly owing to ignorance concerning the mismatch. In this sense, moments of meeting build on an *illusion* (see also Taipale 2021).

CONCLUSION

To wrap up, consider two musicians engaging in spontaneous improvisation. On the one hand, the two are *sharing an experience*: Both give and both gain. There is a felt coordination between what they hear and what they play. They are repeatedly confirming each other's "relational moves" by building on each other's spontaneous output, and hence both participate in the cocreation of *one and the same* "dynamic flow" (see Stern 2010, 140). On the other hand, each individual views the cocreated piece of music from their own idiosyncratic standpoint: Each has their own idiosyncratic representation or version of what is being co-created with the other. As long as the spontaneous musical "eruptions" of the two are sufficiently attuned with one another, the noncoincidence between the idiosyncratic "versions" may flicker beneath the surface without standing out. To be sure, generally speaking, we can say that each musician "contributes equally" to the co-creation of the piece of music: After all, both are successively issuing invitations and adjusting to those of the other. Yet, *in each moment*, the setting is asymmetrical and both relate to the co-created space differently. No matter how intense and comprehensive the feeling of attunement, the two musicians have partly differing musical background and personal taste, the music awakens partly different associations in them, and hence the two will experience the one and the same cocreated piece of music differently. Moreover, even if in the long run both individuals would take turns in inviting and adjusting, nonetheless *in each moment* one individual either *presents an invitation* or *adjusts to that of the other*—and (like in dancing) the feeling is different depending on whether one is presently leading or following. From this perspective, the claim of "equal contribution" strikes as an idealization.

Even when the established sense of attunement is felt by both, leaving lesser mistakes and rhythmic flounderings within agreeable parameters, *the sense of mismatch is only pushed aside*. Like in verbal interaction after a certain point there is no longer *need* to increase the level of specificity, in nonverbal interaction, too, the sense of attunement can reach a point where the *need for acts of repair* no longer makes itself felt. The mismatch and asymmetry is still there, but it only dimly flickers below the surface, and interaction is not disturbed by it. Like with verbal interaction, what is rid is not the mismatch but the *sense of mismatch*. Like the two musicians sufficiently attuned for an experience of co-creation to unfold, in moments of meeting, more generally, the interacting individuals are close enough to ignore the mismatch, as it were. Within the situationally outlined implicit parameters, the "emotional landscapes" of the interacting partners are similar enough for a *sense of match* to occur. Whether we are thinking of dancing, musical improvisation, infant/

caregiver dialogue, therapist/patient communication, or some other type of intense interpersonal interaction, given the subjective bias a factual match between "inner states" is highly unlikely, as was argued previously.

In this light, it seems that even in moments of meeting, the individuals may dwell *on the verge of mutually matching connection.* In short, the asymmetry is there, but it does not stand out, and hence the interacting partners may act *as if* there was none. This tension introduces an ingredient of *illusion* into moments of meeting. After all, while we *know* that a match between inner states is practically impossible, yet we occasionally *feel* a match. Notwithstanding their partly *illusory* quality, such feelings of connectedness entail an affective sense of "completion" (Stern 2004, 178) or "vitalization" (Sander 2014, 198–199), and hence comprise "the high spots of life" (Winnicott 1987, 43):

The ideas presented here have consequences for our interpretation of *ethical encounters*. If what has been said here is on the right track, it follows that we can never *exhaustively grasp* how others experience themselves, how they relate to the world and to us, and how they grasp our experience of them. In our efforts to understand others, we can only rely on our subjective experiences that are colored by idiosyncratic associations and representations, even if these might not do justice to the other "in her own right." The truth of solipsism, that Merleau-Ponty is speaking about, refers to this essential inability to transcend the boundaries of our own experience. What we can do, however, is to increasingly challenge our own presuppositions concerning others. To be sure, it might be that we never manage to *free* ourselves of our idiosyncrasies, and grasp the other without subjective biases; it may be that the other in her own right is like a *limes* in the mathematical sense, something that orients our experience without being able to be reached. Be that as it may, it seems that our occasional *feelings* of understanding others and of being understood by them—as illustrated in moments of meeting in particular—can teach us something important about *our need* for interpersonal connection. I will end with quotes from Winnicott and Merleau-Ponty, that capture some of what I have tried to analyze here:

> Although healthy persons communicate and enjoy communicating, the other fact is equally true, that *each individual is an isolated, permanently non-communicating, permanently unknown*, *in fact unfound*. . . . The question is: *how to be isolated without having to be insulated?* (Winnicott 1965, 187).

> Like polytheistic gods, I must reckon with other gods . . . . Consciousnesses present the absurdity of a solipsism-shared-by-many, and such is the situation that must be understood" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 376).

NOTES

1. This idea relates to the clinical concepts of transference and countertransference (see, e.g., Ogden 1982; see also Taipale 2015a and Taipale 2019).

2. I have elsewhere discussed the asymmetry of interpersonal experience from two related angles (see Taipale 2015b and Taipale 2021).

3. When it comes to this widespread and multifaceted discussion, giving a comprehensive list of references is not possible. For just a few examples, consider, for example, Tuomela 2007; Zlatev 2008; Schmid, Shulte-Ostermann & Psarros 2008; and Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia 2018.

4. I will limit my analysis on cases with *two* individuals, thus leaving the question open whether Stern's notion can be applied to larger groups.

5. Stern makes this point vis-a-vis psychotherapeutic interaction, but hurries to note that he is not conveying a theory-hostile opinion: "sloppiness is potentially creative only when it occurs within a well-established framework. . . . I am not advocating 'wild analysis' at all. Rather, I am pointing out that even within the normal boundaries of any approach there is plenty of room for sloppiness" (Stern 2004, 164). Stern thinks that whereas "theory alone only provides the bones, sloppiness [in two-person psychology] and irruptions of unconscious material [in one-person psychology] are two different ways of providing the flesh" (Stern 2004, 159).

6. I have elsewhere analyzed this issue with respect to music listening (see Taipale forthcoming).

REFERENCES

Bråten, S. (1998). "Infant learning by altercentric participation: The reverse of egocentric observation in autism." In S. Bråten (ed.), *Intersubjective Communication and Emotion in Early Ontogeny* (pp. 105–24). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lyons-Ruth, K. (2000). "'I Sense that You Sense that I Sense . . . ': Sander's Recognition Process and the Speficity of Relational Moves in the Psychotherapeutic Setting." *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 21(1–2), 85–98.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2012). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Donald Landes. London: Routledge Academic Publishers.

Ogden, T. (1982). "The Concept of Projective identification." In T. Ogden, *Projective Identification and Psychotherapeutic Technique* (pp. 11–37). London: Karnac.

Rizzolatti, G., & Sinigaglia, C. (2018). *Mirrors in the Brain*. Translated by Frances Anderson. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sander, L. (2014). *Living Systems, Evolving Consciousness, and the Emerging Person. A Selection of Papers from the Life Work of Louis Sander.* Edited by G. Amadei and I. Bianchi. London: Routledge Academic Publishers.

Schmid, H. B., Shulte-Ostermann, K., & Psarros, N. (2008). *Concepts of Sharedness: Essays on Collective Intentionality.* Frankfurt: De Gruyter.

Stern, D. (1977). *The First Relationship. Infant and Mother*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

———. (2000). "Introduction to the paperback edition." In D. Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant* (pp. xi–xxxix). New York: Basic Books.

Stern, D. N. (1985). *The Interpersonal World of the Infant: A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology*. New York: Basic Books.

———. (2004). *The Present Moment. In Psychotherapy and Everyday Life*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

———. (2010). *Forms of Vitality*. *Exploring Dynamic Experience in Psychology, the Arts, Psychotherapy, and Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stern, D. N., Bruschweiler-Stern, N., Harrison, A. M., Lyons-Ruth, K., Morgan, A. C., Nahum, J. P., Sander, L. W., and Tronick, E. Z (1998). "The Process of Therapeutic Change Involving Implicit Knowledge. Some Implications of Developmental Observations for Adult Psychotherapy." *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 19(3), 300–308.

Stern, D. N., Sander, L. W., Nahum, J. P., Harrison, A. M., Lyons-Ruth, K., Morgan, A. C., Bruschweiler-Stern, N., and Tronick, E. Z. (1998). "Non-Interpretive Mechanisms in Psychoanalytic Therapy: The 'Something More' Than Interpretation." *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 79, 903–21.

Taipale, J. (2015a). "The anachronous other: Empathy and transference in early phenomenology and psychoanalysis." *Studia Phaenomenologica*, vol. XV, 331–48.

———. (2015b). "Similarity and asymmetry. Husserl and the transcendental foundations of empathy." *Phänomenologische Forschungen 2014*, 141–54.

———. (2016). "From types to tokens: Empathy and typification." In: T. Szanto and D. Moran (eds.), *Phenomenology of Sociality. Discovering the 'We'* (pp. 143–58). London: Routledge.

———. (2019). "Anonymity of the 'Anyone.' The Associative Depths of Open Intersubjectivity." In Frode Kjosavik and Christian Beyer (eds.), *Husserl's Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity: Historical Interpretations and Contemporary Applications* (pp. 193–209). London: Routledge.

———. (2021). "The illusion of contact. Insights from Winnicott's 1952 letter to Klein." *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 102(1), 31–50.

———. (forthcoming). "The modifying mirror: Binding one's experiences through music." In Wiskus and De Souza (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of Phenomenology of Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tuomela, R. (2007). *The Philosophy of Sociality. The Shared Point of View*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Trevarthen, C. (1979). "Communication and cooperation in early infancy: A description of primary intersubjectivity." *Before Speech: The Beginning of Interpersonal Communication*, 1, 530–71.

Tronick, E. Z., Als, H., Adamson, L., Wise, S., & Brazelton, T.B. (1978). "The infant's response to entrapment between contradictory messages in face-to-face interaction." *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry*, 17, 1–13.

Winnicott, D. (1987). *The Spontaneous Gesture*. *Selected Letters by D. W. Winnicott*. Edited by Robert Rodman. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Winnicott D. W. (1965). "Communicating and not communicating leading to a study of certain opposites," In: *The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment* (pp. 179–92). New York: International Universities Press.

Zlatev, J. (2008). *The shared mind: Perspectives on intersubjectivity*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.