



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

*An exploration of a hermeneutic of empathy for
epistemological approaches to design thinking*

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree
Magister Artium Information Design

By

Wynand André Kok

25110472

University of Pretoria
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Visual Arts

IOW 800

Supervisor: Dr. Duncan Reyburn

September 2022

“And only when man speaks, does he think—not the other way around, as metaphysics still believes.”

– Martin Heidegger (2004:16)

“The little girl had the making of a poet in her who, being told to be sure of her meaning before she spoke, said: ‘How can I know what I think till I see what I say?’”

– Graham Wallas (1926:106)

SUMMARY AND KEY TERMS

This study turns to Heideggerian phenomenology as a counter to reductive and cognitivist conceptions of empathy and as a response to a provocation towards adding rigour to the concept of empathy within design discourse. Accordingly, it takes the form of an exploration of a Heideggerian hermeneutic of empathy so as to situate empathy in the context of design as a way of making sense of things that is dependent on the being-with of human relatedness. To achieve this aim, the study articulates a provisional framework for empathy through a Heideggerian reconstruction of empathy which it consequently synthesises in relation to theoretical perspectives on design thinking. Objectives for this study are formulated and addressed accordingly.

The study outlines epistemological orientations connected to five design thinking sub-discourses derived from academic design discourse, which serve as targets for synthesis in relation to a provisional framework for empathy, which in turn is given direction by Martin Heidegger's call for a special hermeneutic of empathy. To articulate this provisional framework, the study turns to the account by Lou Agosta of an ostensive reconstruction of empathy on the basis of Heideggerian distinctions for human being of affectedness, understanding, interpretation, and speech. The framework is further nuanced through the synthesis of the Heidegger-inspired concept of sensemaking as conceived by Christian Madsbjerg, and in particular a model for empathy comprising three layers.

Each epistemological perspective in design thinking is interrogated in relation to the tenets of the provisional framework, revealing both contributions to the development of a concept of empathy in design and implications for discerning the perspectives themselves.

In the course of the study listening, as a component of speech, emerges as a fundamental means of establishing connection with and gathering information from the other.

Key terms: Martin Heidegger; hermeneutic of empathy; design epistemology; sensemaking; design thinking.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the University of Pretoria, the Faculty of Humanities and the Department of Visual Art for allowing me to see this study through.

Apart from these institutional acknowledgements, there are several individuals to whom I am indebted for the empathy and support they have granted, and without which this study would not have been possible.

To my supervisor, Prof. Duncan Reyburn, my sincere gratitude for your guidance, and for all the trust you placed in me.

To my parents, André and Elaine, thank you for everything.

To the Horn household, thank you for your open doors, encouragement, and boundless kindness.

To Hendrien, thank you for your unconditional support and for reminding me that I *'got this'* when I needed the assurance the most.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY AND KEY TERMS	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS	V
LIST OF FIGURES.....	IX
LIST OF TABLES.....	X
DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	XI
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background and need for the study	1
1.2 Aim and Objectives	13
1.3 Theoretical framework and research methodology	14
1.4 Preliminary literature review	15
1.4.1 Design thinking in academia: epistemological approaches	15
1.4.2 Designers and empathy.....	16
1.4.3 Sensemaking.....	17
1.4.4 Towards a Heideggerian reconstruction of empathy	18
1.4.5 Design is Hermeneutical.....	19
1.5 Overview of chapters	19
CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN DESIGN THINKING AND EMPATHY IN DESIGN DISCOURSE	21
2.1 Introduction to Chapter Two	21
2.2 Design thinking: a concept used in theory and practice	24
2.3 The academic discourse of design thinking	25

2.3.1 Design and designerly thinking as the creation of artefacts.....	26
2.3.2 Design and designerly thinking as a reflexive practice	29
2.3.3 Design and designerly thinking as a problem-solving activity	33
2.3.4 Design and designerly thinking as a practice-based activity and way of making sense of things.	41
2.3.5 Design and designerly thinking as creation of meaning	43
2.3.6 A brief comparison of the five discourses of designerly thinking	45
2.4 Empathy in design discourse	46
2.4.1 Empathy as a “quality” of designing	48
2.4.2 Empathy as a “quality” of designers	49
2.4.3 Empathic Techniques	50
2.4.4 The construct ‘empathy’ in psychology	51
2.4.5 Affective and cognitive empathy	54
2.4.6 Perspective-taking: becoming the empathee, or staying beside the empathee	56
2.4.7 Empathising as a process	57
2.4.8 A process framework for empathy in design practice	58
2.4.9 A phenomenological turn.....	61
2.4.10 Empathy as direct social perception	61
2.4.11 Empathy in a service relationship	63
2.5 Conclusion to Chapter Two	65
CHAPTER THREE: TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR EMPATHY	66
3.1 Introduction to Chapter Three.....	66
3.2 Sensemaking.....	67
3.2.1 Culture – not individuals	68
3.2.2 Thick data – not just thin data.....	70
3.2.3 The Savannah – not the zoo	71
3.2.4 Creativity – not manufacturing	72
3.2.5 The North Star – not the GPS	73
3.2.6 (Analytical) empathy is sensemaking	73
3.3 A phenomenological (re)turn	76
3.3.1 Intersubjectivity.....	78
3.3.2 Inauthentic being with one another	88
3.3.3 Authentic but alone.....	89
3.3.4 Inauthentic relation to death	90

3.3.5 Authentic being together with others.....	91
3.3.6 Affectedness.....	94
3.3.7 Empathic understanding (as possibility).....	98
3.3.8 Empathic interpretation (as perspective taking).....	101
3.3.9 Empathic speech (as listening).....	106
3.4 Coming full circle.....	110
3.4.1 Empathy and design ethnography.....	112
3.4.2 Towards a hermeneutic framework for empathy.....	113
3.4.3 Affectedness and intuitive empathy.....	113
3.4.4 Understanding and aware empathy.....	115
3.4.5 Interpretation and analytical empathy.....	116
3.4.6 Parallel continua.....	118
3.5 Conclusion to Chapter Three.....	119
CHAPTER FOUR: DESIGNERLY PERSPECTIVES ON EMPATHY.....	120
4.1 Introduction to Chapter Four.....	120
4.2 Empathy and the creation of artefacts.....	121
4.3 Empathy and Reflexive practice.....	125
4.3.1 Schön and hermeneutic reflection-in-action.....	126
4.3.2 Schön and Pragmatism.....	130
4.3.3 Schön and Constructivism.....	132
4.4 Empathy and problem-solving.....	134
4.5 Empathy and making sense of things.....	140
4.6 Empathy and the creation of meaning.....	143
4.7 Conclusion to Chapter Four.....	147
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....	149
5.1 Introduction.....	149
5.2 Summary of chapters.....	149
5.3 Contribution of the study.....	152

5.4 Limitations of study and suggestions for further research	152
5.5 Concluding remarks	156
SOURCES CONSULTED.....	157

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The Hermeneutic Circle of Empathy111

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Comparison of Five Discourses of Design Thinking.....	45
Table 2:	Possibility of Heidegger's special hermeneutic of empathy.....	93

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I (full names)	Wynand André Kok
Student number	25110472
Title of the work	An exploration of a hermeneutic of empathy for epistemological approaches to design thinking

Declaration:

1. I understand what plagiarism entails and am aware of the University's policy in this regard.
2. I declare that this MA dissertation is my own original work. Where someone else's work was used (whether in print, digital or any other format), referenced and/or appropriated, this has been properly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with departmental requirements.
3. I did not make use of another student's previous work and submitted it as my own.
4. I did not allow and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of presenting it as his or her own work.

Signature:



September 2022

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and need for the study

Lou Agosta (2019:34) offers a basic definition of empathy as being “a method of data gathering about the experience of another person’s experience,” data which is then processed to understand the other person and respond in such a way that the other person can assess whether he or she has been understood. From the heading in the text under which this definition is given – *Empathy as the Foundation of Authentic Human Relations* – one might, however, get a sense of a more profound place Agosta has in mind for empathy in interrelational human experience, one in which empathy is not reduced to a psychological mechanism as is the case in the “average everyday way of thinking about empathy” (Agosta 2019:36). Indeed, Agosta (2010; 2011; 2014) attempts to rethink the thesis on empathy as a condition for the interpretation of interrelational events. Towards this end, Agosta recruits the German philosopher Martin Heidegger.

In a 2014 article titled *A rumor of empathy: reconstructing Heidegger’s contribution to empathy and empathic clinical practice*, Agosta challenges the conventional opinion that, by the mid-1930s, Heidegger had made a complete shift from the analysis of human beings in the world – Heidegger’s *Daseinanalysis* outlined in *Being and Time* – to the ontologically more fundamental originary event of Being – a shift conventionally referred to as Heidegger’s *Kehre*.¹ As evidence of Heidegger’s sustained engagement with practical, even clinical, considerations of his earlier, systematic work and the ensuing philosophical interpretations of Aristotle, Kant, and Nietzsche, Agosta cites Heidegger’s decade-long engagement with a group of Swiss psychiatrists, many of whom had an appreciation for psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. Heidegger’s commitment at the Zollikon Seminars² to engage

¹ The move away from human being to being as such (as that which is ultimately worth thinking, as Heidegger phrases it) is not, Agosta (2010:18) argues, an exclusive choice. Agosta’s development of a fundamental analysis of human being with one another as empathy suggests the “[restoration of] the balance between ‘human being’ and ‘being’” (Agosta 2010:17).

² The Zollikon Seminars were a series of philosophical seminars delivered between 1959 and 1969 by Heidegger. Heidegger hereby presented his ontology and phenomenology as it pertained to the

explicitly with issues in psychodynamic therapy with psychiatrists entailed the delivery of a “kind of ‘*Daseinanalysis* for beginners” to the colleagues of the Swiss psychiatrist Medard Boss (Agosta 2014:282). This commitment to instructing psychodynamic therapists in the fundamentals of his most systematic work, Agosta (2014:282) argues, must invite a closer look by those maintaining that Heidegger had abandoned his analyses of the world of practical engagement by the time of his *Kehre*.

In particular, Agosta (2014:282) finds that with this engagement, the meaning of *Daseinanalysis* alters from an inquiry into the distinctions fundamental to the way of being that human beings exist in the world (as is explicated by *Being and Time*) to the “practical encounter between psychotherapist and patient.” As Heidegger (2001:124) states:

...[[I]t is therefore possible that the relationship between the one who does the *Daseinanalysis* and the one who is [analysed] can be experienced as a relationship between one Dasein and another. This relationship can be questioned regarding how this specific being-with-one-another is characterized in a way appropriate to Dasein...The decisive point is that the particular phenomena, arising in the relationship between the analysand and the analyst, and belonging to the respective, concrete patient, must be broached in their own phenomenological content and not simply be classified globally under existentialia.

Agosta (2014:282) explains this to mean that the encounter of one Dasein with another – in the example above, the encounter of patient and therapist – cannot adequately be captured individually by an existing categorical classification or “existential structure” (Agosta 2011:43), even one that is specific to Dasein, that is to say, any one of Dasein’s “characters of Being” as defined in terms of existentiality, or *existentialia* (Heidegger 1962:70).³ Agosta therefore calls for further inquiry into the

theory and praxis of medicine, psychology, psychiatry and psychotherapy. Refer to *Zollikon Seminars: protocols–conversations–letters* (Heidegger 2001).

³ As Agosta (2010:24) explains, Heidegger understands the way human beings exist and “operate” in the world as being obviously different from both the scientific accounts of humans as parts of physical and biological nature, on the one hand, and the pragmatic account of tools and instrumentality on the other. It is inappropriate to apply distinctions such as categories of physical objects to human beings, nor does it make sense to regard the human way of being as like that of tools and technology, although a pragmatic approach to worldly involvement does reveal constructive avenues for engagement. To cite Agosta (2010:24), “human beings just have a different way of being – a different way of existing.”

relationship between one Dasein and another in a practical clinical context, and to do so he proceeds to give an account of Heidegger's special hermeneutics of empathy by applying a "Heideggerian method of inquiry" as a way towards understanding and implementing empathic human relations (Agosta 2014:282).

This study takes inspiration from Agosta's project, however in doing so I will be turning my attention towards an understanding of empathy and its application in the context of design, and in particular in epistemological approaches to design thinking. One basis for doing so is an understanding of design as being a service relationship (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:41). While one's relationships in design extend well beyond the clinical context and concern designers not with patient-therapist encounters but the "idealized protocol" roles of *thou, you, us, them, other, it, all, we, and self* (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:51),⁴ Agosta's inquiry presents an avenue for exploration towards how a "relationship of true empathy" between server and served might develop and be understood in design (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:47).

Agosta's account of Heidegger's special hermeneutic of empathy, as will be explored in this study, is a reconstruction in the sense that it "goes beyond" what Heidegger explicitly says about empathy, taking basic distinctions from Heidegger's fundamental analysis of the *being-in-the-world* of Dasein to discern a Heideggerian method of inquiry which can contribute to "understanding and implementing empathic human relations" (Agosta 2010:4-5, 2014:281). In particular, the method undertaken by Agosta includes distinguishing and applying four interrelated

⁴ Diethelm (2015:1) similarly proposes a thesis that the encounter of patient and therapist in resolving personal situations is not just confined to the model of clinical work, but that the agent-client model also holds for larger social situations of significance that expert design-stakeholder groups attempt to resolve through professional design initiatives. For Diethelm, designing is a general social process for transforming perceived situational deficiencies and qualitative differences into preferred situational outcomes. Insofar as situations are significant and meaningful (in a design context) when they are centred in the beliefs, perceptions, perspectives, needs and outcomes that satisfy the people involved, an improved understanding of design, designing and design thinking can be gained by looking closely at what each of the parties "brings to the table" (Diethelm 2015:1). Furthermore, the commonality Diethelm proposes in the clinical and design context is the partnership of two "differently constructed domains of knowledge," one intimate and normative, and the other empirical. On this basis, Diethelm proposes an understanding of "late modern design thinking" as recognising that both domains of knowledge are legitimate thinking paradigms that must be accounted for in each of the parties: "Both [domains] and their complex interactions are required to fully understand and satisfactorily resolve significant situations," that is to say situations that are centred in the beliefs, perspectives, needs, and outcomes that satisfy the people involved (Diethelm 2015:1).

distinctions – affectedness, understanding, interpretation, and speech (which includes listening) – all of which Heidegger describes “as being equally original in the sense of forming a coherent whole that does not privilege any one of them but allows them to be traversed sequentially” (Agosta 2010:7, 2014:281). These related distinctions, as “the four key existential structures of human being (Dasein)” (Agosta 2011:44) is argued by Agosta to be the heart of Heidegger’s *Daseinanalysis*. In applying these distinctions to human interrelations, Agosta derives an account of empathy that he claims can illuminate the possibilities of authentic interrelations as including affectedness, vicarious introspection, understanding, interpretation and speech.

Why be concerned with empathy in the first place? In the 1982 article *Designerly ways of knowing*, Cross (1982:222) lists empathy as one of the “values” that distinguish the “third culture” of the field of design from the comparatively more established cultures of the sciences and the humanities. Alongside practicality, ingenuity, and a concern for “appropriateness”, Cross singles empathy out from the values of objectivity, rationality, neutrality, and a concern for “truth” in the sciences, and subjectivity, imagination, commitment, and a concern for “justice” in the humanities, respectively (Cross 1982:222; 2006:2). Heylighen and Dong (2019:107-109) argue that empathy has since become a central theme in design practice, research, and education: following Cross, the value of empathy is one to aspire to, cultivate and reinforce, with several types of techniques taken to enhance empathy in the design process developing as a result. Indeed, design theorists and practitioners commonly describe empathy as a “crucial impact factor” (Köppen & Meinel 2015:16) of design thinking (Brown 2008:3; Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser 2009:438; Kolko 2011:159-160). In spite of this focal role ascribed to empathy in design, however, Heylighen and Dong discern – aside from the effort by Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009) to introduce distinctions relevant to design taken from the concept of empathy as it had developed in psychology, and their own attempt to inform the discussion about empathy in the design community through insights from philosophy and cognitive science – a lack in fundamental understanding in design scholarship of what empathy “actually is and how it can be achieved” (Heylighen & Dong 2019:107-109).

Koycheva (2020:244) further associates the “meteoric rise to prominence in and dominance of” empathy in the vocabulary and mindset of design and innovation as being attributable to the impact wrought by design thinking in the innovation process, in particular from the last decade of the 20th Century. As she elaborates:

As one of the first and most distinct steps in design thinking – back then a novel approach on how to identify and solve problems – the rise of empathy as a concept and as a fundamental step in the innovation process in the last 20 years can easily be pointed to as one of the true success stories of a long-standing and continuously ongoing push for peopling engineering practice and management thinking.

Koycheva (2020:244) questions, however, whether the term empathy is becoming an empty signifier in the world of design and innovation, and what this might entail for design thinking as a framework for innovation:

In taking stock of the merits of empathy as part of design and innovation, as well as the challenges and dangers posed by its increasingly near-automatic and formulaic application lately, we must tack back and forth between not only what the term means and what it does, but also place it within a larger understanding and increasing critique of design thinking as the leading framework for innovation.

Koycheva (2020:245) points out that the term empathy is, in practice, interpreted in a multitude of often contradictory ways, prompting her to warn of the risk of limitations in adopting empathy as an approach. As such, she proposes that those working in design and the innovation space must either collectively eschew the notion of empathy in favour of more ethnographic thinking, or work towards eliminating such limitations and adding rigour to the concept of empathy. Although Koycheva comes from an anthropology background⁵ and is speaking from an understanding of design thinking as a rule-based, algorithmic approach produced out of heuristics that apply within limitations in the real world for delivering “expected outcomes” in an innovation context (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:29), this study is an attempt to respond to

⁵ As Koycheva (2020:246) points out, “the question of accessing, understanding, and representing, in a formulaic shorthand, ‘how they feel in their shoes,’ has never been a simple affair.”

Koycheva's provocation by aspiring to add rigour to the concept of empathy in the discipline of design.⁶

Why, on the other hand, be concerned with Martin Heidegger? After all, Heidegger dismissed empathy as *derivative* for human interrelations, not foundational; “empathy is empirical not ontological, a superficial and inauthentic way of being” (Agosta 2010:16; Heidegger 1962:162-163). Yet, to Agosta, Heidegger nonetheless has much to contribute to an understanding of empathy. As Agosta points out, Heidegger calls for a special hermeneutic of empathy in *Being and Time* to “explicate the contribution of the other person to authentic human interrelations” (Heidegger 1962:163) but does not develop on this further himself. As suggested above, the ambition for Agosta is the recovery of empathy and an authentic definition and enactment of empathy in the spirit of Heidegger's approach, albeit one explicated from what Heidegger says explicitly (Agosta 2010:16-17).

Agosta finds justification for his approach in Heidegger's own method and the powerful originality found in the re-thinking and “violent interpretations” to which Heidegger subjects the writings of Kant, the pre-Socratics and other thinkers and poets. As Agosta (2010:27-28) explains, to interpret being-with (*Mitsein*), being-with-human-being (*Mitdasein*) and being-with-one-another (*Miteinandersein*) as variations of a form of empathic relatedness is, given Heidegger's dismissal of empathy, a violent reinterpretation which requires reading against the obvious and initial meanings of Heidegger's discussion of empathy in *Being and Time* (Heidegger 1962:162-163). This need for violent interpretation, Agosta further explains, is owing to human beings' inclination to cover things up and to be distracted by “everyday” concerns, which in the case of Agosta's interpretation extends to empathy:

Dasein's *kind of Being* thus *demand*s that any ontological Interpretation which sets itself the goal of exhibiting the phenomena in their primordially, *should capture the Being of this entity, in spite of this entity's own tendency to cover things up*. Existential analysis, therefore, constantly has the character of *doing violence* [*Gewaltsamkeit*], whether to the claims of the everyday interpretation, or to its complacency and its tranquilized [*sic*] obviousness...And if, for the

⁶ Indeed, an understanding of innovation as a sequential and episodic process of implementation in the design communication process, as put forward by Nelson and Stolterman (2012:18, 134), provides one basis for a direct response to Koycheva's provocation in this thesis.

most part, Dasein interprets itself in terms of its lostness in concerning itself with the 'world', does not the appropriate way of disclosure for such an entity lie in determining the ontico-existential possibilities (and doing so in the manner which we have achieved by following the opposite course) and then providing an existential analysis grounded upon these possibilities? *In that case, will not the violence of this projection amount to freeing Dasein's undisguised phenomenal content?* (Heidegger 1962:359-360, emphasis in original).

What Agosta suggests by his inquiry is that the phenomenon of empathy is both so pervasive and so well-concealed and forgotten by "everyday automatic behaviour and its reactive responses" that it will only be disclosed by careful analysis of the details of the experience of the other as comprehended in the afore-mentioned distinctions of affectedness, understanding, interpretation and speech (Agosta 2010:29). Indeed, Gadamer (1994:12) finds the claim that "[we] are still far from pondering the essence of action decisively enough," with which Heidegger (1977:217) opens his essay *Letter on Humanism*, to apply equally to "the alleged inattention to the social problem of the 'we,' which is known in philosophy as the problem of intersubjectivity" as it does to his ontological critique of the prejudices contained in the concept of the subject. As Gadamer (1994:12) explains Heidegger's thinking:

The task of thinking cannot be run along behind self-dissolving ties and self-weakening solidarities and hold up the admonishing finger of the dogmatist. Rather, the task was much more to think about what lies at the bottom of this disintegration that has been brought about by the industrial revolution and to call thinking back to itself, thinking that had otherwise been reduced to calculating and producing.

While such "disintegration" is understood to apply also to intersubjectivity, *Dasein* and "*being-with*" [*Mitsein*] are equally primordial; *being-with* does not signify the being together of two subjects but is rather a primordial mode of *being-we*, a mode "in which the I is not supplemented by a you" but which encompasses a primary commonality (Gadamer 1994:12).

One can ask the question more broadly, however: why be concerned with Martin Heidegger? In design contexts – understood by Diethelm (2015:3) as "transformational situations" – the parties involved in the "social situations of significance" (Diethelm 2015:1) of design initiatives enter the process of designing

with a conviction in the possibility of improvement and change. Both on an individual and collective basis, these parties commit to and engage in the pursuit, evaluation, preference, and selection of what is understood or believed to be satisfactory outcomes. As Diethelm (2015:3) suggests, this kind of engagement is “a portrayal of full-blooded human beings immersed in their worlds of meaning.” People and the things in their worlds are put into direct contact through the phenomenon of attention, and it is through this “attentional connection” that humans “come into presence” not in the physical sense of the natural sciences, but rather in the sense of how human beings are engaged as living, experiencing human beings, that is to say, what Heidegger described as being-in-the-world (Diethelm 2015:3). To Teal (2011:40), “good” design emerges when one recognises that all aspects of the design project – the transformational situation – are indeed co-evolving and co-forming.⁷ Artifacts of the design process are appreciated for their co-forming and coincident nature, not only for their uniqueness.⁸ Such an appreciation Teal associates with an effective understanding of history. As Teal points out, Heidegger cautions against a passive approach to history as opposed to an understanding of history as being non-linear. This view Heidegger articulates by distinguishing *Historie* from *Geschichte*. Whereas *Historie* is characterised by scientific recording and analysis of and debate over past events, *Geschichte* presents a regard for history that is characterised by “the suddenness and the coming to presence of that past that, strictly speaking, has not passed away since it is still in sway and ‘on-coming’” (Heidegger 2006:xxix). Through *Geschichte*, in other words, Heidegger has in mind a conception of history that is “presently influential,” and forms the basis for possibilities being as such in a given moment. Whereas *Historie* is characterised by the “finality and irretrievability of the past events with which it is preoccupied,” *Geschichte* is “simultaneously deeply familiar and confoundingly esoteric”, suggesting that history’s significance is found in the complexity and involvedness of being-in-the-world (Teal 2011:38).

⁷ Snodgrass and Coyne (1997:89-90) argue that every situation has meaning, insofar as meaning plays a fundamental role in all human behaviour. Only in relation to other things and other meanings in the field of meanings that the situation encompasses do *things* have meanings. A critical insight that Snodgrass and Coyne draw from this is that meaning cannot be derived from a single, insular thing.

⁸ According to Teal’s proposed thesis (2011:40), when integrative thinking serves as the foundation for a designer’s unique skills, the design process shifts away from the production of specific objects and toward the development of methods where “all the relevant elements and information can react with one another.” When this happens, Teal claims, design becomes more effective.

Teal (2011:38) explains that history's role in this complex existence is structured by time:

Heidegger urges that we do not conceive of time as a series of "nows" that string together the past, present and future. Rather, he posits that one's involvements are always characterised by duration. We do not live in a series of present moments disappearing into the next, but rather live across a time span that is constituted by an overlapping of the past and the future in the present moment. In a sense, there is no present, only the interplay of past and future. Of this condition, Heidegger has said that existence "*is what it was*". That is, one's personal history attunes one to present situations and future possibilities in particular ways (emphasis in original).

For Heidegger, the past is "defined by a specific way of 'coming toward' the future" (Guignon 2005:396), or to cite Teal (2011:38), the past "orients our perceptions and is revealed in its significance as we take up opportunities toward specific ends." Furthermore, the complex interplay between world-historical and personal-historical scales of time coalesces in the everyday encounters of being-in-the-world: "[d]aily events and possibilities are not linearly determined but are rather the mixing of specific historical potentials" (Teal 2011:38). Insofar as history is a field of unrealised potentialities as opposed to "a collection of images, facts or events," Teal (2011:39) suggests that *Geschichte* cannot be approached through representation or representational thinking but should be engaged as "a sense of rhythm that is rather sensed and heard than seen" (Vallega-Neu 2008:97). Indeed, Teal finds that such a relation grounded on sense and rhythm occurs commonly in "the intuitive leaps a designer makes when immersed in the design process," and on this basis proposes that effective design thinking might also be effective historical thinking (Teal 2011:39). As Teal further explains, Heidegger describes such a move toward thinking in rhythms as "inceptual questioning," whereby thinking clears "its own way only by its own questioning advance. But this clearing of the way is curious. The way that is cleared does not remain behind, but is built into the next step, and is projected forward from it" (Heidegger 1968:170).⁹ In contrary to this thinking "that creates its

⁹ Such projection, Snodgrass and Coyne (1997:75) further explain, are not merely arbitrary productions of the subjective imagination, but rather derive from experience brought to bear on the "clues scattered in the situation we are in." Apprehensions of the "completed whole" of the situation

own ground as it moves,” Heidegger finds that an interpretation of the Greek notion of “on the way” as “method”¹⁰ loses its essential openness. With this translation, thinking shifts from being dynamic, responsive, and flexible to being ossified (Teal 2011:39). In opposition to this “adulteration,” thinking becomes effective when “we learn to think by giving our mind to what there is to think about” (Heidegger 2004:4).

An essential factor for engaging the “rhythms of *Geschichte*” is a fundamental change in disposition that the thinker “first learn to exist in the nameless” (Heidegger 1993:151), that the thinker must pursue attunement to the situation itself over maintaining a position of subjective agency. This way of thinking, Teal explains, is encouraged by being attentive to the matters close at hand, by “first learning to listen closely” (Teal 2011:40). As Teal points out, this may seem paradoxical when given a context whereby design initiatives must achieve specific ends. Heidegger’s intent is to remind us, however, that a focus that permits an ecstatic relation with the world – whereby the “subject” becomes subsumed in the situation, thereby becoming part of its complexity – is necessary to uncovering situational truth. This process of absorption grants an intensity of focus and a particular sensitivity that is inhibited in a “surveying” position of subjective agency (Heidegger 2004:9; Teal 2011:40). Rather, through such absorption, according to Heidegger (2004:9), one finds one’s “essential nature.” To Teal (2011:40), this suggests that we are “at our best” when responding in terms of the situation, by becoming enmeshed in the situation and thereby annulling the self as an egocentric subject.

Similarly, Snodgrass and Coyne (1997:75) argue that understanding things in the lived world is not a matter of knowing objects but of taking them for granted: “[t]hey are there, in our circumspective perception; they are already understood; our relationship to the world is already hermeneutical through and through; we understand things before they are there as objects for our direct inspection.” From Heidegger, Snodgrass and Coyne learn that one does not only ‘throw forward’ his or her pre-understandings in each act of interpretation. Rather, pre-understandings are

are not conjectures from subjectivity, but emergence from pre-understanding that inhere within the situation.

¹⁰ As Snodgrass and Coyne (1997:71) point out, the achievements of method in the natural sciences are incomparable when applied in the study of human behaviour (and specifically, design).

themselves “thrown”, from prior experience, into the present situation. Human beings are not simply “objects” in the world, without a history and as if isolated from the past. Rather, human beings are thrown “into the midst of a network of understandings of practices, institutions, conventions, aims, tools, expectations, and a multitude of other factors that make us what we are” (Snodgrass & Coyne 1997:75).

Meaning, in other words, is not fixed but is historical, changing with time and as the situation changes. Understanding, therefore, is in perpetual flux, albeit thus given the very “*facticity of [Dasein’s] being delivered over*” (Heidegger 1962:174, emphasis in original) which is Dasein’s thrownness.¹¹ From Heidegger, one discovers that meaning, rather than being an immutable object that stands over against one, is an ever-changing part of an ever-changing situation. As Snodgrass and Coyne (1997:76) elaborate:

[Meaning] is not an object, but neither is it subjective. It is not something we think first and then throw over onto an external object. It is known from within and can only be so known: we cannot get around in front of meaning, any more than we can get around in front of language. We are embedded in meaning structures, and so cannot view them as objects that can be tested by the criteria of logic. Meaning exists prior to any separation of subject and object. In the interpretive act the Cartesian subject-object dichotomy dissolves.

However, another interest in Heidegger’s *Daseinanalysis* motivates this study. As de Oliveira (2021:36) suggests, Heidegger’s radical, originary interpretation of ontology seeks to reveal and surmount an “ancient ontology” dealing in “reified concepts,” including that of “reifying consciousness.” The word “reification” [*Verdinglichung*] occurs only four times in *Being and Time* (Heidegger 1962:72, 150, 487), but according to de Oliveira (2021:38) plays an important semantic function that pervades the work. In Heidegger’s own words, as he concludes *Being and Time* (Heidegger 1962:487):

¹¹ For Weick (2004:74), thrownness has a clear implication for design. Since people, whether designers or their clients, are “always in the middle of something,” designing is as much about *re-design*, continuity, intervention and re-contextualising as it is about creation, invention, initiation and contextualising. “Good design” may be ascertained more by how people contend with “the experience of thrownness and interruption” than by the substance of the design itself.

The distinction between the Being of existing Dasein and the Being of entities, such as Reality [Vorhandenheit], which do not have the character of Dasein [nichtdaseinsmäßigen Seienden], may appear very illuminating; but it is only the point of departure for the ontological problematic; it is nothing with which philosophy may tranquilize [*sic*] itself. It has long been known that ancient ontology works with 'Thing-concepts' and that there is a danger of 'reifying consciousness.' But what does this 'reifying' signify?

By asking the question *what, after all, does 'reifying' mean?* Heidegger essentially modifies the problem of reification. Beyond Hegelian, Marxian accounts of alienation which objectify relations and otherness, according to Heidegger, it is only in considering the ontical-ontological difference brought about by Dasein as the formal-indicating unveiling of the meaning of Being that one can understand the problem of – and thereby avoid – the reification of beings and consciousness¹² (de Oliveira 2021:36). While the problem of reification – understood in Heideggerian terms in the problematic ways of relating the being of Dasein with itself and its other inauthentically, “in its dealings with innerworldly beings, present-at-hand and ready-to-hand, ‘out there,’ ‘handy’ and ‘available,’ as well as in their shared, common modes of being, lifeworlds and common forms of being with one another” (de Oliveira 2021:42) – will not be explored exhaustively in this study, a few provisional comments may suffice.

As Honneth (2008:88) points out in his critical appropriation of the concepts of reification in Marx, Lukács and Heidegger into a recognition-theoretical diagnoses of social pathologies, the Heideggerian distinction between readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand in the analysis of Dasein evades the concepts of “object” and “thing” on the ontological level, as it rather utilises the concept of “equipment” as a complementary category to “readiness-to-hand.” The resulting “proximity” between *poiesis* (thinking of human-made devices, artifacts and tools) and *praxis* is intended exactly to oppose the primary relationship to the world as being constituted by a

¹² Gadamer (1994:32) recounts a seminar delivered by Heidegger in 1923 on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, where one might get a clue as to how Heidegger might have understood a non-reified conception of consciousness. Here, Heidegger showed that all *technē* (technical skill) contains an internal limit insofar as its knowledge never entails a complete disclosure; the work that *technē* “knew how to produce” is released into the uncertainty of a use that was at one's disposal. In consideration of this topic, Heidegger presented consciousness as the very distinction that “separates all knowledge – especially that of mere doxa (opinion)” from phronesis. The insight Gadamer draws from this is that with phronesis there is a “type of knowing” which admits of no final objectivity in the sense of a science – a knowing in the “concrete situation of existence” (Gadamer 1994:32-33).

neutral confrontation with an “object” to be understood or objectively contemplated (i.e. *theoria*) (de Oliveira 2021:49). Honneth positions “reification” as signifying the corresponding habit of thought, or “habitually ossified perspective”, which, when assumed, leads not only to the loss of the subject’s capacity for empathetic engagement, but also to the world’s loss of its qualitatively disclosed character (Honneth 2008:35,88).¹³

Apart from being indicative of what might be at risk for empathy and the ‘capacity for empathetic engagement’ in design, this provisional understanding of reification will help draw parallels and digressions between an Agostian-Heideggerian special hermeneutic of empathy¹⁴ and *notitia*, described by Nelson and Stolterman (2012:47) as not a method, but rather “a way of being that is highly focused and attentive in the extreme...the opposite of detachment and separation encouraged by contemplative traditions” which allows a relationship of “true empathy” to form between the server and served.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

This study turns to Heideggerian phenomenology as one response to a reductive understanding of empathy and as a response especially to Koycheva’s provocation towards adding rigour to the concept of empathy mentioned above, in this case with respect to design discourse. Specifically, the study intends to enrich the discourse around epistemological approaches in design thinking, in particular by exploring a Heideggerian hermeneutic of empathy as a means of situating empathy in the context of design as a way of making sense of things that is dependent on the being-

¹³ Heidegger follows his remark on the danger of reifying consciousness and the question of what this reifying signifies with the question of why being is “conceived” ‘proximally’ in terms of the present-at-hand *and not* in terms of the ready-to-hand, which indeed lies *closer* to us?” (Heidegger 1962:487). Heidegger seems to suggest that both reification and the objectification of being as presence entail a conceptualisation which involves a distortion of conscious experience, and in the case of reification, a systematic one.

¹⁴ Agosta finds in Heidegger’s question of what reification means and what positive structure the Being of ‘consciousness’ has if reification is inappropriate to it (Heidegger 1962:487) a link which allows the transition from a Heideggerian approach to empathy to one that reveals empathy as a set of varied acts of intentionality of an individual that distinguishes *mineness* from otherness. The possibility of a positive account of consciousness Agosta understands as impetus for investigation into empathy as a manner of intentionality (Agosta 2010:9).

with of human relatedness. In this way, the study aims to make a contribution to the development of a rigorous concept of empathy within design discourse.

My aim, then, will be to explore empathy in the context of design thinking through a predominantly Heideggerian hermeneutic lens. To achieve this aim I have identified the following objectives:

- To explore and synthesise theoretical perspectives on design thinking connected to five sub-discourses derived from academic design discourse, with special attention to perspectives founded on scholarly design perspectives;
- To articulate a provisional framework for empathy through a Heideggerian reconstruction of empathy, on the basis of the distinctions of affectedness, understanding, interpretation, and speech as appropriated by Agosta;
- To synthesise this framework in discussion of the theoretical perspectives on design thinking explored in fulfilment of the first objective, with respect to the key distinctions discussed in fulfilment of the second.

1.3 Theoretical framework and research methodology

The study is entirely theoretical and involves no human participants. It builds an argument on literature and scholarship available in the public domain. The study adopts the position taken by Snodgrass and Coyne (1997:92-93) that the design process is hermeneutical, insofar as that it corresponds to the domain of social actions and interactions. Design is firmly embedded in a human situation, and it is a central nexus within a network of intersubjective relationships.

On the basis of this foundational theoretical tenet, this study intends to engage with established theoretical perspectives on 1.) epistemological orientations in design thinking within design discourse, and 2.) a Heideggerian hermeneutic and its advancement towards a hermeneutic of empathy. As such, the study will conform to a qualitative research methodology in the form of a thorough literature review.

1.4 Preliminary literature review

The following offers only a brief sense of the literature to be consulted for this study. A more thorough literature review will be provided in the study itself. As is suggested below, the literature to be consulted falls into five broad categories, namely:

Epistemological approaches to design thinking in academia, designers and empathy, sensemaking, a Heideggerian reconstruction of empathy, and, finally, design as a hermeneutical discipline.

1.4.1 Design thinking in academia: epistemological approaches

Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2013:122-3) explore the literature demographics of design thinking discourse – how it has developed over time and what types of literature has been published – up to 2013. From their extensive literature review, they classify and characterise two main discourses prevalent in their survey: one derived from design-oriented, scholarly literature, and the other derived from widely accessible business media, distinguished by its application in the realm of business management. From the contributions made to the former academic discourse five sub-discourses are derived, each corresponding to their own respective theoretical perspectives and each having apparent roots in foundational works (Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* 2013:124). These are delineated as follows, and further elaborated upon in their paper:

1. *Design and designerly thinking as the creation of artefacts.* Marking the start of the academic discourse of design thinking, this sub-discourse is initiated by Herbert Simon's advocacy for the establishment of "sciences of the artificial" in 1961.
2. *Design and designerly thinking as a reflexive practice.* Reacting to the shortcomings he perceived in the rational problem-solving approach to professional practice, Donald Schön (1983) proposes a pragmatist, constructionist theory, describing design as an activity involving "reflective practice."

3. *Design and designerly thinking as a problem-solving activity.* Buchanan (1992) advances an understanding of designers' professional way of thinking as a matter of dealing with "wicked problems", a class of social systems problems with a fundamental indeterminacy, without a single solution and where creativity is needed to find solutions.
4. *Design and designerly thinking as a way of reasoning/making sense of things.* Using abductive processes to find patterns that are grounded in practical experience and can be described through practical examples, Bryan Lawson and Nigel Cross each suggest a 'model' of the design process: Lawson (2005: 289–301) in a number of process-driven steps that attempt to describe the complex processes of designing, and Cross (2011: 78) in a recursive representation of the design strategy followed by creative designers.
5. *Design and designerly thinking as creation of meaning.* Shifting the focus from the design process and how designers think to a human-centered concern for "what people do with artifacts" (Krippendorff 2006:47), Klaus Krippendorff defines design and the work of designers as encompassing the creation of meaning.

1.4.2 Designers and empathy

New and Kimbell (2013:3) point out the neglect of the topic of empathy by Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* in their account of design as part of their review as discussed above. In response to this gap, Gasparini (2015:50) adopts the epistemological discourses identified by Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* as a foundation for clarifying how empathy might be situated in a design process. Gasparini (2015:50) makes a distinction between the emotional empathy and cognitive dimensions of empathy, in turn mapping these dimensions to the epistemological discourses to derive a tentative view of how empathy might be used in design processes (Gasparini 2015:50). Gasparini does not, however, provide a comprehensive account of the basis for his distinction between emotional and cognitive empathy and, indeed, Koycheva (2020:248) points out that the literature and discourse around empathy does not differentiate critically between cognitive and affective empathy on a systematic basis, nor can it explain when to use which variant

(although New and Kimbell do make a similar distinction to Gasparini). Additionally, and of particular interest to the proposed study, Gasparini (2015:53) warns of the risk in applying cognitive empathy in particular: since this is a “state” that is not actually experienced by a person, it may lead to “misunderstandings and subjectivity.”

1.4.3 Sensemaking

While sensemaking represents a “developing set of ideas with explanatory possibilities” (Weick 1995:xi) rather than a body of knowledge, Weick (1995:4) proposes a literal reading of the concept of sensemaking, that is to say, of sensemaking as meaning *the making of sense*. Weick further explains that, in sensemaking, active agents construct “sensible, sensible...events.” However, sensemaking practitioners differ in their understanding over *how* they construct what they construct, why, and with what effects, and therefore definitions of sensemaking likewise vary. Some practitioners view sensemaking as involving the placement of “stimuli into some kind of framework” which allows for comprehension and prediction with would not have been otherwise available, while others are more concerned with sensemaking as a thinking process that uses retrospective accounts to explain unanticipated events (Weick 1995:4). Klein *et al* (2006:71) define sensemaking as “a motivated, continuous effort to understand connections (which can be among people, places, and events) in order to anticipate their trajectories and act effectively.” This definition builds on a more abstract description by Brenda Dervin, according to which “Sense-Making reconceptualizes [*sic*] factizing (the making of facts which tap the assumed-to-be-real) as one of the useful verbings humans use to make sense of their worlds” (Dervin 1983 cited by Klein *et al* 2006:70). This situates sensemaking as an “action-oriented process” whereby people automatically integrate experiences into their understanding of the situation (Kolko 2010:18).

Christian Madsbjerg proposes a concept of sensemaking that is driven by principles from phenomenology and ethnography. Madsbjerg’s 2017 book *Sensemaking: The Power of the Humanities in the Age of the Algorithm* can be read as work which calls for a return to educating business leaders in the fields of humanities and social sciences in order to oppose the predominant mode of reductive cognitivism found in

business – most strongly expressed in the rise of algorithmic intelligence – which Madsbjerg argues lacks the ability to produce contextual analyses that can comprehensively account for and interpret perspective and meaning (Madsbjerg 2017a:[sp]). Madsbjerg offers a construct which he refers to as *sensemaking* as a principle-driven expression of phenomenology and situates a conception of empathy within this construct. He clarifies his notion of empathy to mean the emotional and intellectual skill of understanding another’s worldview or cultural perspective, and outlines three levels of empathy:

- The first level of empathy registers below the threshold of one’s awareness. This is the kind of empathy one “rarely ever talk about.” Madsbjerg refers to an empathetic alignment to suggest how this kind of empathy is responsible for how human beings adjust to each other (Madsbjerg 2017b:113).
- The second level of empathy is often triggered when one notices something is amiss. This level Madsbjerg elsewhere refers to as being “aware” (Madsbjerg 2017a:[sp]).
- The third level of empathy is a “systematic” empathy supported by theory and requiring an analytical framework that is informed by the realm of the humanities (Madsbjerg 2017b:114-115). Madsbjerg’s analytical empathy approximates an understanding put forward by Köppen and Meinel (2015:16) of empathy as perspective-taking, involving both the reflexive act of feeling with someone else and the cognitive act of placing oneself into someone else’s position and adopting their perspective: empathy in this way represents the attempt to *reconstruct* the specific perspective of the other and how he or she perceives the situation.

1.4.4 Towards a Heideggerian reconstruction of empathy

Zahavi (2011; 2019) provides an extensive review of Heidegger’s critique of empathy, situated within a rich and multifaceted discussion of empathy found in the writings of various phenomenologists around the time of World War I. Zahavi’s review provides an appraisal of concepts which are critical to the concepts that will be covered in this study.

In spite of Heidegger's appraisal of empathy as being derivative and not foundational for human interrelations, Agosta (2010; 2014) proposes an account of empathy which takes four basic, interrelated distinctions from Heidegger's Daseinanalysis - namely, affectedness, understanding (of possibility), interpretation, and speech - towards an analysis of a multidimensional process of empathy (Agosta 2014:281). Agosta's objective is to show how these distinctions provide a clearing for empathy as the foundation of human interrelations. The ambition, for Agosta, is the authentic definition and implementation of empathy in the spirit of Heidegger's approach, albeit extricated from what Heidegger explicitly says.

1.4.5 Design is Hermeneutical

Drawing on studies of language in philosophical hermeneutics, especially the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer, Snodgrass and Coyne (1997) argue that design activity proceeds by way of a hermeneutical circle, thereby comprising the projection of pre-understandings and a dialogical structure of question and answer. Snodgrass (1997) and Coyne and Jahnke (2012) collectively position hermeneutic understanding of design as comprising an act of interpretation which dissolves the subject-object dichotomy; this concept will be of importance to the study to be undertaken.

1.5 Overview of chapters

To address the aim of this study, the following chapters respond to the objectives set out in this chapter. Chapter Two provides further motivation for the need for the study by briefly discussing limitations to empathy as an epistemological instrument in design thinking, with reference to the vague and varied characterisations of empathy found in design literature. Additionally, this offers a point of departure for the remainder of the chapter. To establish a frame of reference for epistemological foundations for empathy within design thinking discourse, five sub-discourses derived from the academic design discourse of design thinking are discussed, each having clear origins in seminal design literature. This discussion will establish bases for synthesising a provisional framework for empathy. Chapter Two then provides an

overview of perspectives on empathy within design discourse, which, while providing background to the discussion, highlights the opening left in the survey of the epistemological perspectives for the exploration of the role of empathy.

Chapter Three starts with an overview of Madsbjerg's Heidegger-influenced construct of sensemaking. Following the delineation of the five principles making up the construct, Madsbjerg's proposal of a levels framework for empathy is discussed, thereby serving as a further reference point for the development of a provisional framework for empathy later in the chapter. A brief survey on writings by Heidegger on the concept of empathy is explored, with particular emphasis on Heidegger's negative evaluation of the concept in *Being and Time*. This survey provides a context for the ensuing exploration of Agosta's situation and development of a special hermeneutic of empathy. This provides a basis for a provisional framework for empathy through a Heideggerian reconstruction of empathy, which is then developed by connecting the components of the hermeneutic of empathy as developed to the relevant findings from Madsbjerg's levels framework.

The provisional framework for empathy in design is then further probed in Chapter Four by situating it in relation to theoretical perspectives on design thinking. This chapter serves as an attempt at *resolution* of the provisional framework for empathy in design. Chapter Four concludes with a discussion of a connection between the synthesis of an Agostian-Heideggerian inspired special hermeneutic of empathy with designerly perspectives on epistemology and the concept of *notitia*.

Chapter Five concludes the study with a summary of the content of each chapter. This is followed by a brief discussion of findings and the contribution made by this study. Limitations to the study are outlined, with suggestions made for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN DESIGN THINKING AND EMPATHY IN DESIGN DISCOURSE

2.1 Introduction to Chapter Two

Design theorists and practitioners often depict empathy as a “crucial impact factor” (Köppen & Meinel 2015:16) of design thinking (Brown 2008:3; Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser 2009:438; Kolko 2011:159-160). Brown (2009:49) suggests that empathy is what distinguishes design thinking from academic research:

It's possible to spend days, weeks, or months conducting research...but at the end of it all we will have little more than stacks of field notes, videotapes, and photographs unless we can connect with the people we are observing at a fundamental level. We call this 'empathy' and it is perhaps the most important distinction between academic thinking and design thinking.

To Seitz (2019:37), this quote portrays a meaning of empathy in design thinking as latent justification for forgoing the abstract description of research – which depends on knowledge that can be explicitly formulated and that refers to related academic disciplinary discussions – in favour of tacit knowledge resulting from habituated research practice. “Employing empathy” suggests working from intuition instead of in a controlled and traceable manner, effectively eliminating theory in the design thinking process. In practice, empathy functions as a “methodological placeholder”, releasing the process from the demands of reflection (Seitz 2019:37,39).¹⁵

Furthermore, characterisation of empathy remains vague in the design thinking practices described by Seitz, as the term is used in different ways (Seitz 2019:39). While it is described as an “effort to see the world through the eyes of others” (Brown 2009:50) and gets characterised as an endeavour to understand others, it is described elsewhere by Brown (2008:87) as an important personality trait and an integral component of the “design thinker’s personality profile”, otherwise consisting

¹⁵ In a way, this can be compared to the embrace of a “teleology of data” by businesses (Madsbjerg 2017b:32). More data and more empathy are perceived to yield progressively more: better results for consumers, a more accurate understanding of their needs and wants, even better outcomes for society at large.

of attributes like integrative thinking, optimism, experimentalism, and collaboration. Because the term remains imprecise, Seitz (2019:39) explains, it is liable to get utilised in such a way as to render cursory meaning to the design thinking process without making concrete how this process works:

Empathy is an immediately understandable concept and seems like a medium through which to actualize user-friendliness without having to explicate the steps one would need to take to get there. It also produces a narrative of becoming-emphatic, thereby saving itself from needing to make methodological decisions (Seitz 2019:39).

Coming from the perspective of user-centered design, Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:437) and Heylighen and Dong (2019:107) situate the problem of understanding the user and his or her experience as being of central importance, with 'empathic design' developing as a research program (Mattelmäki *et al* 2014:67-68) concerned with bringing designers nearer to the lives and experiences of users – be theses putative, potential or future – with the aim of improving the prospect that the product or service being designed meets their needs. However, what this entails is not entirely clear:

Empathy serves to inform and to inspire designers to create products that fit the user's needs. Many authors mention the 'empathic' factor in design and indicate avenues of inquiry; however, the definition of what 'the empathic' exactly is stays rather intuitive (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:440).

Although the requisite to inform designers about user experiences and the contexts in which they occur is acknowledged by practitioners in user-centred design, and tools and techniques have emerged that aim to aid designers to “step into the user's shoes' and 'walk the user's walk'” so as to design products that suit the user's life, Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:438) point out that a fundamental understanding of what empathy in design is, and how it is realised, is missing. Heylighen and Dong (2019:110) agree that what the “capacity to stand in another's shoes” entails is unclear, and with the assessment made by de Vignemont and Singer (2006:435) that “there are probably nearly as many definitions of empathy as people working on this topic.” Heylighen and Dong (2019:118) also point out that the predominantly positive accounts of empathy in design – with little attention paid to the potential issues – suggest the risk that empathy may have become a “design ideology rather than a

principle that is appropriate in some situations and inappropriate under other circumstances.” Heylighen and Dong (2019:119) propose two dimensions in the consideration of empathy which they propose correlate positively with empathy for end-users. Consideration of empathy is *active* in that designers are tasked with ‘living’ the experience of the mind and body of the end-users whose cognitive or affective state they are supposed to be informed by, and it is *evaluative* in that designers must determine and consider the *degree* to which their mind and body are thereby being affected by the cognitive and affective state of end-users.¹⁶ Heylighen and Dong propose the hypothesis that when either of these dimensions are weak, the quality of design could diminish, especially if designers depend exclusively on empathy as the means to reveal insights into users’ experiences.

Having raised some doubts over empathy as an epistemological instrument in design and design thinking at this early point, I will in this chapter attempt to establish a foundation for theoretical perspectives on design thinking. I begin by discussing five sub-discourses derived by Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2013) from the academic design discourse in their extensive literature review, each sub-discourse corresponding to its own theoretical perspectives and each having apparent roots in foundational works. This will provide a frame of reference for later articulating a provisional framework for empathy which I will turn to in Chapter Three. As I hope to demonstrate in Chapter Four, while none of the theoretical perspectives on design thinking explicitly negate the value of empathy, and each has a contribution to make to developing a rigorous concept of empathy in design, tensions nonetheless are to be found, with some of the theoretic perspectives being more amenable to synthesis with the proposed framework than others.

Following discussion of the theoretical perspectives, I then return to the topic of empathy by delivering a brief survey of how empathy is discussed in a sample of design literature. Although my interest is primarily in the bounds of design thinking –

¹⁶ Based on these considerations, Heylighen and Dong (2019:119) pose as the key question for design practice and scholarship on empathy in design whether regard for embodiment differentially influences the suitability of empathy as “an avenue for generating insights into users’ experiences, needs, and desires.” Heylighen and Dong present their contribution as an initiation to acknowledge and respect interpersonal difference between people through ongoing reflection on the limits of knowing the experiences of others.

as the mode of reasoning that is inherent to the primary approach of design as a discipline – I will refer to related interaction design and design research literature. This will provide precedents of interest for comparison with the framework to be articulated in Chapter Three, while also giving a sense of some of the issues which such a framework may need to overcome.

2.2 Design thinking: a concept used in theory and practice

Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2013:122-3) explore the literature demographics of the design thinking discourse – how it has developed over time and what types of literature has been published – up to 2013. From their extensive literature review, they classify and characterise two main discourses prevalent in their survey: one derived from design-oriented, scholarly literature – *academic design* discourse – and the other derived from widely accessible business media and distinguished by its application in the field of business management.

In relation to the academic design discourse, Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* use the term “designerly thinking” to connote the academic construction of the professional designer’s practice – the relevant practical skills and proficiencies of a working designer – and theoretical reflections on how to interpret and characterise this non-verbal competence of designers (Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* 2013:123). Otherwise stated as “the way designers think as they work”, this understanding of designerly thinking addresses how the practice of being a designer on the one hand, and the theories trying to account for the act of designing on the other, coexist in the same sphere, and how this is understood from an academic perspective (Gasparini 2015:50).

Whereas Johansson *et al* (2010:5) trace the history of design thinking back to Herbert Simon’s argument in favour of the creation of “sciences of the artificial” in 1961, the management discourse on design thinking is suggested to be a more recent development from around the turn of the millennium, focusing on the need to improve the design thinking skills of managers for business success. Wendt (2014:61) suggests that the transition of design thinking as a mostly academic focus

to a business-oriented mindset was conducted chiefly by the global design consultancy IDEO; by articulating how non-designers frequently think like designers, IDEO was able to position design thinking as a process framework, and thereby a means of facilitating communication with large corporate organisations. The field of management adopted design thinking as a set of “method[s] for innovation and creating value” (Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* 2013:123). As explained by Nussbaum (2011:[sp]), this was done on its own terms: “Companies absorbed the process of Design Thinking all too well, turning it into a linear, gated, by-the-book methodology that delivered, at best, incremental change and innovation.” Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2013:123) reserve the term “design thinking” for this discourse where design practice and competence are employed beyond the design context, by and with people without a scholarly background in design. This reservation will arguably be less useful for the purpose of this study; indeed, as Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* also argue, their use of the term “design thinking” signifies a simplified version of “designerly thinking” integrated into an academic or practical management discourse. Although in this study the topic of design thinking is understood to be more closely aligned with the academic design discourse, I use “design thinking” and “designerly thinking” interchangeably to refer to this discourse.

2.3 The academic discourse of design thinking

In design research theory, characteristics of the work and practice of designers have been considered with contributions from both designers and related disciplines such as architecture, planning and design history. To Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2013:123-124) the contributions to this discourse are exclusively academic, devoid of the ‘hype’ discourse they associate with management literature (Johansson & Woodilla 2010:2-3).¹⁷ From the theoretical perspectives held by these contributions,

¹⁷ In a 2010 article, Johansson and Woodilla adopt what they call an ironic perspective to “move away from binary views” held on design thinking as being either a fad or not a fad. Inspired by the philosopher Richard Rorty, they describe such an ironic perspective as the recognition that multiple dimensions exist in complex situations. Irony becomes a platform that allows these dimensions to be held together during critical examination. Johansson and Woodilla turn their ironic perspective to the “hype” over design thinking to show how, on the one hand, earlier research in the area is systematically ignored, while on the other hand, the claims of design thinking as a universal tool for problem solving and innovation make it a “new phenomena [sic].” The purpose of this approach (as an alternative to the hype around design thinking they find in management discourse) is to provide

five sub-discourses are derived, each having apparent roots in foundational works (Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* 2013:124). These are delineated as follows:

1. *Design and designerly thinking as the creation of artefacts.* Marking the start of the academic discourse of design thinking, this sub-discourse is initiated by Herbert Simon's advocacy for the establishment of "sciences of the artificial" in 1961.
2. *Design and designerly thinking as a reflexive practice.* Reacting to the shortcomings he perceived in the rational problem-solving approach to professional practice, Donald Schön proposes a pragmatist, constructionist theory, describing design as an activity involving "reflective practice."
3. *Design and designerly thinking as a problem-solving activity.* Buchanan advances an understanding of designers' professional way of thinking as a matter of dealing with "wicked problems", a class of social systems problems with a fundamental indeterminacy, without a single solution and where creativity is needed to find solutions.
4. *Design and designerly thinking as a way of reasoning or making sense of things.* Using abductive processes to find patterns that are grounded in practical experience and can be described through practical examples, Bryan Lawson and Nigel Cross each suggest a 'model' of the design process: Lawson (2005:289-301) in a number of process-driven steps that attempt to describe the complex processes of designing, and Cross (2011:78) in a recursive representation of the design strategy followed by creative designers.
5. *Design and designerly thinking as creation of meaning.* Shifting the focus from the design process and how designers think to a human-centred concern for "what people do with artifacts" (Krippendorff 2006:47), Klaus Krippendorff defines design and the work of designers as encompassing the creation of meaning.

2.3.1 Design and designerly thinking as the creation of artefacts

insights for the (presumably, both design and management) academic discourses by both embracing critical scrutiny and "acknowledging positive perspectives" (Johansson & Woodilla 2010:3).

As already mentioned, Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2010:5; 2013:124) situate the start of the academic discourse of design thinking with Herbert Simon's advocacy for the creation of "sciences of the artificial" in 1961. Coming from an engineering background, Simon made a seminal contribution to the development of a broadened understanding of design with the introduction of the concept of the science of the artificial, that is to say, design (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:18).

Simon understood 'design' to encompass all conscious activities involved in the creation of artefacts. This, to Simon, makes design distinct from the sciences, which deal with what already exists. Buchanan (1995:42) suggests that the problem Simon addresses is the relation between the *necessary* in natural phenomena and the *contingent* features of the man-made. Simon's discernment is not that of the reduction of design to any one of the established theoretical sciences, but a "recognition of the theoretical substance of design *distinct* from the substance of its supporting sciences" (Buchanan 1995:42, emphasis in original). From this point of departure Simon asserts that design is distinct not only from the natural sciences – the search for absolute and general laws – but also from the humanities and social sciences, the former making one cultivated and perceptive to the worlds human beings inhabit, and the latter casting a critical eye on what happens in society. This distinction does not, however, apply between design and engineering; rather, Simon (1996:4-5). understands design as a general way of expressing engineering, creating what has never been before. Simon's seminal work, *The Sciences of the Artificial*, is understood by Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2013:124) as providing the foundation for conducting research on the activities involved in creation, and as a legitimisation of an experimental approach to design research in academia.

Simon places the epistemological foundations for research in design on two dimensions: one normative, the other creative. From this, Simon argues for the need of a formal "science of design." Thinking about design – to Simon – falls within a paradigm of bounded rationality; in this paradigm, the design problem defines the "problem space" that has to be surveyed in search of a "satisficing" design solution.

By deeming design as a rational problem-solving process,¹⁸ Simon advocated for a positivist view of science which takes the natural sciences as the model for a science of design. The rational problem-solving approach to design combines practice-based phase models of the design process and a model taken from the field of cognitive psychology of the designer as an information processor (Dorst 2015:183).

With Simon, one sees how design seeks to improve the human experience by pushing it to a preferred state (Wendt 2015:70).¹⁹ Krippendorff (2005:26) reads Simon as thereby suggesting which direction such a 'push' must take as being the fundamental problem designers are to solve:

Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones. The intellectual activity that produces material artifacts is no different fundamentally from the one that prescribes remedies for a sick patient or the one that devises a new sales plan for a company or a social welfare policy for a state. Design, so construed, is the core of all professional training; it is the principal mark that distinguishes the professions from the sciences. Schools of engineering, as well as schools of architecture, business, education, law, and medicine, are all centrally concerned with the process of design (Simon 1996:111).

With this collective 'core' of knowledge, one which can supposedly be shared by members of all cultures, Simon suggests the importance of design in establishing one's orientation to the inner and outer environments that define one's living space:

...in large part, the proper study of mankind is the science of design, not only as the professional component of a technical education but as a core discipline for every liberally educated person (Simon 1996:138).

¹⁸ Nelson and Stolterman suggest that, while a desire for change is commonly assumed to necessitate comprehensive analysis and rational decision making to establish a defined choice for action, analysis typically leads to more choices which in turn demand more analysis. The consequence of this is that decisions cannot and are not made rationally in the sense championed by the rational tradition of scientific thoroughness: "The real world is much too complex to deal with comprehensively" (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:21).

¹⁹ Wendt (2015:18) links Simon to Heidegger by pointing out that, insofar as one is thrown into a world, one's contextual situation is almost never ideal, so one copes (both in terms of dealing with broken things, but also the simple ways of incorporating things into one's daily life, a type of incorporation which necessitates design). The act of coping, to Wendt, is "a movement, intentional or unintentional, toward a more preferred state."

The synthesis or creation of new artifacts should aid humanity in that these artifacts should be how things “ought to be” in order to realise goals and to operate better than before (Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* 2010:5; Simon 1996:4-5). With this understanding of design, Simon becomes a point of reference for subsequent academic writing about design and design thinking (Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* 2013:124). Despite the humanist orientation, by positioning design thought within the same positivist framework of the sciences, designers – as problem solvers – are reduced to “goal-seeking, information processing systems” (Simon 1996:22) operating in an objective and ‘knowable’ reality. Simon explicitly states that his theory does not account for the processes and results of human perception; it assumes that “human beings, viewed as behaving systems, are quite simple. The apparent complexity of our behavior [*sic*] over time is largely a reflection of the complexity of the environment in which we find ourselves” (Simon 1996:53). In studying an “adaptive system” – like that of human beings – one can frequently predict behaviour from knowledge of the system’s goals and its outer environment and with the least amount of assumptions about the “inner environment of the physiological machinery that enables a person to think” (Simon 1969:53).

2.3.2 Design and designerly thinking as a reflexive practice

Donald Schön develops the conversation on the evolution of design thinking with a study on practitioners and the phenomenon of reflective practice, showing how professionals enact thinking through making (Wendt 2015:70). Coming from a background in philosophy with pragmatism as his theoretical frame of reference, in the 1983 book *The Reflective Practitioner* Schön challenges both researchers and practitioners to reconsider the role of technical knowledge in opposition to ‘artistry’ in the advancement of professional excellence. The book can be read to apply to many different fields, with Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2013:124) citing organisational competence and practice as examples of such varying perspectives. From a design thinking perspective, Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* argue that it serves as a critique of Simon’s cognitive, positivist perspective. Schön considers the rationalistic model as deficient and instead tries to “stand the model on its head” and pursue “an epistemology of practice implicit in the artistic intuitive processes which some

practitioners bring to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict” (Schön 1983:49).

Schön sought to explain his idea of reflective practice through stories about how design practitioners and other professionals think while acting; there is an embodied sense of performance, similar to that of the craftsperson, found in many professional activities in which the practitioner exhibits a reflexive movement between thinking and acting. Wendt (2015:69) reads into this a particularly phenomenological move on Schön’s part, which allowed him to link theory and practice into a single praxical movement.

Krippendorff (2005:31) sees Schön as adopting a human-centered approach by analysing professionals as intelligent actors, rather than as objective decision-makers. Schön recognised that most professionals do not follow pre-formulated plans, enumerate alternatives, and precisely evaluate the advantages for each, but think in modest, incremental steps, acting and reflecting on their actions recursively. Professionals, according to Schön, apply general principles, or standardised knowledge, to concrete problems. ‘Application’ infers transition between professional knowledge and requirements and constraints of real-world practice; from this arise concepts such as *knowing-in-practice*, *knowing-in-action*, *reflecting-in-action*, and *reflecting-in-practice*. As a mental activity employed by professionals in their own practice, reflection-in-action is favoured by Schön. To articulate such reflections, one must use words to express a kind of knowing, and a *modification* of knowing that was not likely initially represented in words at all. Schön describes the design process as a conversation with the situation, in which designers are constantly taking cues from the environment and introducing new variables into the same environment (Wendt 2015:74). As designers articulate problem spaces, they realise that introducing solutions into those spaces does not necessarily solve the problems but changes the conditions in which the problems exist (Wendt 2015:74). Designing proceeds as “a reflective conversation with the situation”, an “interactive process based on posing a problem frame and exploring its implications in ‘moves’ that investigate the arising solution possibilities” (Schön 1983:79). A designer confronts a situation of complexity, and:

[b]ecause of this complexity, the designer's moves tend, happily or unhappily, to produce consequences other than those intended. When this happens, the designer may take account of the unintended changes he has made in the situation by forming new appreciations and understandings and by taking new moves. He shapes the situation, in accordance with his initial appreciation of it, the situation "talks back", and he responds to the situation's back-talk (Schön 1983:79).

In a practitioner's reflective conversation with a situation, treated as unique and uncertain, he or she serves as an agent or *experient*. By transacting with the situation, the practitioner shapes it and makes him- or herself a part of it. Hence, the sense made of the situation must include the practitioner's own contribution to it. Nevertheless, the practitioner recognises that the situation, having "a life of its own" distinct from intentions imposed by the practitioner, may frustrate such intentions and disclose new meanings (Schön 1983:163).

To Schön, a practitioner – when viewed in action – behaves like an artist, responding to the specific situation at hand in a holistic way; the practitioner takes the information, conceives of different ways of intervention, and considers it in different ways without "disrupting the flow of inquiry." Additionally, there is a fundamental structure to the pattern of inquiry followed by a practitioner. An understanding of the situation as first encountered must be constructed, and because it is found to be problematic, it must first be reframed. Unless one starts to reframe the situation and reframe it again when confronted with new obstacles, one is not reflecting in action. Framing and reframing a problem is therefore central to Schön's understanding of design practice (Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* 2010:7, Schön 1983:134-136).

Nelson and Stolterman (2012:165-6) set this problem (re-)framing in relation to the design project as a cyclic process of problem framing and problem solving. Central to this process is the notion of the *parti* – a "conceptual whole of an ideal design solution" – with the design "problem" being the apparent difference between the elusive ideal solution as represented by the *parti*, on the one hand, and the concrete schemes, that is to say design concepts, that are used to represent such a solution in real-world terms on the other. The continuous development of design concepts is one of problem framing and problem solving. Designers can therefore be understood to problem-solve using a form of dialogue (or graphologue) that involves the iterative

formulation of design schemas as distinct compositions which are compared on an equally iterative basis to the ideal parti, which provides the teleological basis for new compositions (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:165-6). In this way, Nelson and Stolterman (2012:166) explicate the critical role of “clients and other stakeholders”²⁰ in the design process. As these role players “become intimate” with the essence of the parti through the emerging concrete images of the schemas with which they are presented, they come to recognise whether or not their desires and needs have been met by the emerging designs revealed by these images.

Schön also suggests that practitioners reflect on their own inquiry, and that this is how competence is developed. Through reflection on their own prior practice, practitioners integrate their knowledge and thereby extend their competence in the framing and reframing of future problems. Practitioners thereby become researchers in their own practice, undertaking “reflective research” (Schön 1983:309), and design work – or design thinking – thus in itself becomes a research process (Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* 2010:7).

Schön (1983:309) distinguishes between four types of reflective research:

1. *Frame analysis* (Schön 1983:309-315): When a practitioner becomes attentive to his or her frames, an awareness also forms of the possibility of alternate ways of framing the reality of practice. This awareness aids the practitioner in understanding the competences that may be required, and the kind of person he or she would become, if the role assumed by the practitioner had been framed in a particular way.
2. *Repertoire-building research* (Schön 1983:315-317): Practitioners accumulate and illustrate examples in ways beneficial to reflection-in-action. While the exact character and composition of the examples vary from profession to profession, in general this includes the initial situation, the actions taken, the progression of inquiry, and the outcomes or results achieved.

²⁰ Nelson and Stolterman (2012:146) explain their use of the term “client” as referring broadly to the ones that are “being served by the design activity and the subsequent design itself,” and bemoan their finding that there is “no good substitute term” in the context of design and designing.

3. *Research on fundamental methods of inquiry and overarching theories* (Schön 1983:317-320): This research can be either ascertaining how processes of recognition and restructuring work by studying episodes of practice or may comprise the explication of fundamental theories as “action science” (Schön, 1983:319). Such research is conducted by researchers within the context of action and by practitioners who engage in systematic reflection, with its development requiring new ways of integrating reflective research with practice.
4. *Research on the process of reflection-in-action* (Schön 1983:320-323): Here researchers must acquire skill in an “art of experimentation” (Schön 1983:323) in which reflection-in-action assumes a principal role.

Although Simon and Schön present two distinct paradigms for design research, Dorst (1997, 2015) suggests that these paradigms have complementary strengths, and that both are needed to grant a complete overview of the breadth of foundational activities in design. To Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2010:8), Schön’s work establishes the conceptual foundation for subsequent research on the thinking or “taken-for-granted reflective processes” that designers employ as they engage in the process of designing.

Krippendorff points out that, much like Simon, Schön sees design as underlying all professions, with professionals modelling, composing, engineering, fabricating, programming, constructing, drafting, organising, directing, and instituting new practices. Additionally, professionals tend to have well-established vocabularies to describe the changes they bring about in their worlds (Krippendorff 2005:31).

2.3.3 Design and designerly thinking as a problem-solving activity

Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2013:125) suggest that Buchanan’s 1992 article *Wicked Problems in Design Thinking* has become a “foundational reference” for design thinking discourse and related design discourses. In the article, Buchanan presents the way of thinking of professional designers as being concerned with a class of

social systems problems with a fundamental indeterminacy and which require creativity to find solutions.

Buchanan (1992:15) explains that the *wicked problems* approach was drafted by Horst Rittel in the 1960s at a time when design methodology was a subject of acute concern. Rittel introduces wicked problems as ones which are ill-formulated, which include role players with conflicting values, and where the system in question and information about it are complex. Writing in the context of planning and policy sciences, Rittel and Webber (1973:160) find that the “classical paradigm of science and engineering” is not appropriate to the types of problems encountered by planners. These kinds of problems – societal problems – are inherently wicked compared to those faced by scientists and “some classes of engineers.” Buchanan builds on Rittel and Webber’s (1973) *wicked problems* approach as an alternative to the “step-by-step model of the design process” consisting of an analytic step of problem definition undertaken as distinct from a consequent synthetic sequence of problem solution which yields a final plan to be carried into production (Buchanan 1992:15; Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* 2013:125).

In contrast to a linear model of design thinking which is based on determinate problems which have defined conditions and can therefore be addressed by identifying those conditions precisely and then calculating a solution, the wicked problems approach suggests that there is a “fundamental indeterminacy in all but the most trivial design problems” (Buchanan 1992:15-16). Indeterminacy, Buchanan (1992:16) points out, implies that there are no definitive conditions or bounds to design problems. As Nelson and Stolterman (2012:16) further elaborate:

The characteristics of a wicked problem are not descriptive of the process for determining solutions to such problems, but are merely explanative of the nature of wicked problems. These characteristics are the result of the limits and paradoxes of reason when applied to real-world situations in human affairs that are unique, contingent, unpredictable, and complex.

Buchanan (1992:16) explains that design problems are indeterminate and wicked because design has no distinctive subject matter of its own “apart from what a designer conceives it to be.” Since design thinking may be applied to any area of human experience, the scope delimiting the subject matter of design is potentially

universal. This subject matter is not given but is rather established through the activities of invention and planning, and through the methodologies or procedures designers employ to characterise their work (Buchanan 1995:24). It is, therefore, in the process of application which the designer must discern a particular subject out of the problems and issues of specific circumstances. Buchanan contrasts this with the disciplines of science, which are concerned with understanding the principles, laws, rules, or structures that are necessarily delimited by existing subject matters. While such subject matters may be undetermined or under-determined and call for further investigation to make them more fully determinate, they are not *radically* indeterminate to the extent of design (Buchanan 1992:17). Buchanan points out that the authority of designers lies in their experience and “practical wisdom.” Yet on the level of professional practice, the discipline of design must integrate contending interests and values, alternative ideas, and different bodies of knowledge in order to identify and acquire concrete techniques for evaluating the diverse perspectives from which products are viewed by clients, manufacturers, business and other technical experts, and potential users (Buchanan 1995:25-26). At the same time, design *is* inquiry and experimentation in the activity of making, since “making is the way that human beings provide for themselves what nature provides only by accident” (Buchanan 1995:30). Designers are therefore concerned with invention as well as judgment, and their reasoning is practical insofar as it occurs in situations where the results are influenced by diverse opinions (Buchanan 1992:13n23). Buchanan (1995:30) discerns an inherent reflexive relation between human character and that of the human-made: “character influences the formation of products and products influence the formation of character in individuals, institutions, and society.”

Buchanan’s appropriation of the concept of wicked problems should be understood as an integral component to a historically inspired argument for the broadening of design beyond the orders of signs and products, and into process and culture.²¹

²¹ As Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2013:125) point out, Buchanan is concerned with reaching a more profound understanding of design thinking in an increasingly complex technological culture, so as to foster communication among all participants involved in the design process. Buchanan (1992:9-10, 2001c:12) proposes four distinctive areas of design thinking as sites of interventions where problems and solutions could be reconsidered: symbolic and visual communications (or *graphic design*), material objects (or *industrial design*), activities and organizational services (or *service design*), complex systems or environments for living, working, playing and learning (or *interaction design*).

Buchanan (1995:24) looks for places of intervention where one discerns the dimensions of design thinking by a reconsideration of problems and solutions:

What is needed to reduce the welter of products, methods, and purposes of design to an intelligible pattern is a new conception of the discipline as a humanistic enterprise, recognizing [*sic*] the inherently rhetorical dimension of all design thinking.

To Buchanan, the “essential nature” of design opens both the process and the results of designing to debate and disagreement. In dealing with possibilities and opinion over “what the parts and the whole of the human environment should be,” designers’ judgements and the result of their decisions are open to questioning (Buchanan 1995:25). This is consistent with Krippendorff’s (2005:27) identification of Rittel and Webber with a shift from top-down technical problem solving to a model of design that accommodates stakeholder participation. Since intelligent humans, “individuals, organizations, and communities – with interests in a design” are implicated in the social domain, problems in this context are never solved, but are more likely to involve conflicts that may be resolved by consensus. These conflicts may potentially re-emerge later in the form of new kinds of conflicts, calling for further resolutions. In this way, wicked problems are not objectively given but their articulation already is contingent on the viewpoint of those presenting them (Coyne 2005:6), or, as Krippendorff points out, reaching consensus on what the wicked problem is, *is* the problem. To Krippendorff, the wicked problem conception of design shifts argumentation to its centre, rendering language and discourse as “the ultimate arbiter of what is desirable, achievable, and will be done” (Krippendorff 2005:27).

One can already note Buchanan’s concern with communication as a central topic in design and design studies in an article written in 1985, where the suggestion is made that, “[d]irectly or indirectly, this idea and its related themes have animated more discussion of design theory and practice than any other” (Buchanan 1985:18). Buchanan narrows his focus on communication as rhetoric, “the inventive and persuasive relation of speakers and audiences as they are brought together in speeches or other objects of communication” (Buchanan 1985:4n1). Buchanan (1985:5n11) explains that rhetorical theories tend to consider communication as an invention of arguments that induce belief or identification in an audience. This is

contrasted with grammatical theories which tend to regard communication as the “transfer of a state” of mind from the speaker to the audience. Buchanan singles out semiotic theories of communication, which are deemed to be essentially grammatical theories concerned with a system of natural or conventional signs and the meanings “stored” in them (Buchanan 1985:4n1). Design is concerned with rhetoric when it serves as “a mediating agency of influence between designers and their intended audience” (Buchanan 1985:4): to the extent in which they deal with “the influence of designers and the effects of design on an audience of consumers or society at large,” Buchanan finds that the themes of communication and rhetoric exert an influence on one’s understanding of all objects produced for human use (Buchanan 1985:4). Instead of merely producing objects or things, designers create persuasive *arguments* that are engaged into whenever users consider or use a product as a mean to some end (Buchanan 1985:8). Buchanan identifies three interrelated elements that become applicable in this context that are claimed to specify the substance and form of design communication: *technological reasoning*, *character*, and *emotion* (Buchanan 1985:9).

Buchanan (1985:9) asserts that design becomes “a distinct possibility” because of technological reasoning, described as the “logos of design”. Buchanan (2001a:195) elaborates technological reasoning to be the “intelligent structure of the subject of [the designer’s] design.” This kind of reasoning is contended to be the core aspect of design that, while appearing as remote from human values and opinions, is, indeed, developed in terms of participation with an audience. While established partly on an understanding of natural and scientific principles that operate as premises for the construction of objects for use, it is also based on premises drawn from human circumstances, “from the attitudes and values of potential users and the physical conditions of actual use” (Buchanan 1985:9). Premises taken from human circumstances define technological reasoning as an element of rhetorical art for communication with specific audiences, as opposed to a deductive science concerned only with universal principles. Such premises distinguish not only diverse audiences and the kinds of design arguments most likely to be persuasive with different groups, but also characterise the diversity of approaches that may be taken by designers (Buchanan 1985:10). Technological reasoning is “not judged theoretically by appealing to the knowledge of a small group of experts, but

practically by appealing to the interests, attitudes, opinions, and values of users,” and technology is therefore understood to be fundamentally concerned with rhetoric. By linking technology and design in this way, Buchanan positions design as an “art of thought” engaging with practical action through the persuasiveness of objects, and therefore as involving a clear expression of plural ideas about social life (Buchanan 1985:7,19).²² The second element is character or *ethos*. Whereas technological reasoning is concerned with the manipulation of materials and processes to solve practical problems of human activity, the element of character is concerned with the control over how designers represent themselves in products to persuade potential users that a product has credibility in their lives (Buchanan 1985:14). The implied character or personality of the designer and manufacturer as it is represented in a product creates a relationship by which those who use the product may identify with the product, as a user of the product (Buchanan 2001a:196). The implication here is the identification of users with a community of other users. The third element of a design argument is emotion or *pathos*. Buchanan holds that emotion is not in itself an end but is rather a mode of persuasive communication that aids in the delivery of a broader argument. Design is concerned with placing an audience of users into a “frame of mind” so that when they make use of a product, they are persuaded that it is emotionally desirable to them and valuable in their lives (Buchanan 1985:16).²³ On this basis, Buchanan proposes that self-expression is a means toward serving other people, and designers do so by “strengthening their individual dignity and supporting collective social values, all within the pluralism of human experience” (Buchanan 2004:35).

²² Buchanan (1985:8) describes design is a “debate among opposing views about such matters as technology, practical life, the place of emotion and expression in the living environment, and a host of other concerns that make up the texture of postmodern, postindustrial living.” Rather than regarding the history and contemporary practice of design as the “inevitable result of dialectical necessity based on economic conditions or technological advance,” Buchanan (1985:22) proposes the examination of the variety of product culture as the “pluralistic expression of diverse and often conflicting ideas.”

²³ Buchanan (2001a:195) argues that the concept of “affordance” also captures the intent behind *pathos*. In so far as affordances are concerned as much with physical, cognitive or cultural features as with emotional ones, however, a meaningful distinction from technological reasoning might not be obvious. In an apparent attempt to clarify his position, Buchanan draws on an analogy with traditional rhetoric, in the sub-division or “transformation” of syllogisms by rhetorician seeking to make their reasoning accessible to their audience. Success in solving the problem of affordances, on the other hand, means making products usable (Buchanan 2001a:195-196).

Buchanan identifies the three elements as each being components designers draw on to some degree in every design argument, yet what links them is the idea of argument which becomes an “active engagement between designer and users” (Buchanan 1985:8-9). On this basis, Buchanan can contend that, while analyses of rhetoric have been concerned merely with words, the production of man-made objects represents another mode of communication: a “rhetoric of things” (Buchanan 1985:18).

Buchanan positions rhetoric as an architectonic art which guides the efforts and products of design – itself an architectonic art – that integrates objects into social activities (Buchanan 1985:21). While design is architectonic with respect to thoughtful decision-making in the making of things, rhetoric is architectonic with respect to thought as it is formulated and presented for an audience, whether in words, things, or actions (Buchanan 1985:21):

The skillful practice of design involves a skillful practice of rhetoric, not only in formulating the thought or plan of a product, through all of the activities of verbal invention and persuasion that go on between designers, managers, and so forth, but also in persuasively presenting and declaring that thought in products.

By emphasising rhetoric relationships among graphic designers, audiences, and the content of communication, Buchanan (1992:12) envisions a shift in attention toward design audiences as active participants in reaching conclusions rather than as passive recipients of preformed message, in the same way that designers would come to be seen as communicators who seek to discover convincing arguments by means of a new synthesis of images and words rather than as individuals who “decorate messages.”

Buchanan introduces the concept of placements to describe the process of contextualisation demanded by design problems. As discussed above, the subject matter of design is not given in advance, but is rather created through the activities of the design process. Design thinking cannot be described through fixed

categories²⁴ from which deductive chains of reasoning develop, but through boundaries which shape and constrain meaning while not being rigidly fixed and determinate themselves (Buchanan 1992:13). Beginning with a “quasi-subject matter” tenuously present within the problems and constraints of specific circumstances, a designer must determine a design direction. Buchanan (1992:17-18) describes such quasi-subject matter as indeterminate subjects to be made specific and concrete, though, not determinate. This, Buchanan further elaborates, is where placements take on profound significance as tools of design thinking. Placements permit the designer to position and reposition the problems and issues at hand:

Placements are the tools by which a designer intuitively or deliberately shapes a design situation, identifying the views of all participants, the issues which concern them, and the invention that will serve as a working hypothesis for exploration and development. In this sense, the placements selected by a designer are the same as what determinate subject matters are for the scientist. They are the quasi-subject matter of design thinking, from which the designer fashions a working hypothesis suited to special circumstances.

While the boundary of a placement gives a context or orientation to thinking, Buchanan (1992:13) explains that its application to a specific situation can produce a new perception of that situation and therefore new possibilities for exploration: placements serve as sources of novel ideas and possibilities when applied to problems in concrete circumstances. Wylandt (2008:13) draws the insight from the consideration of placements that design thinking becomes more a process of posing questions than one of finding right answers. Placements let the problem formulation and solution go hand in hand rather than as sequential steps (Buchanan 1992:17-18; Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* 2013:125),²⁵ and in this way Wylandt finds placements as “indicative of the playful quality inherent in the design pursuit,” from which a broad

²⁴ Buchanan (1992:12) understands categories as having static meanings that are established within the framework of a theory or a philosophy. Categories grant the basis for the analysis of what *already* exists.

²⁵ This recalls Nelson and Stolterman’s binary process model of *inquiry* and *action* in systemic design. As they explain, assessing a design situation involves producing descriptions and explanations of the situation using a variety of cognitive frames: “Assessment and design are interconnected processes unfolding in time with mutual influence that are not necessarily sequential” (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:77).

range of issues can be recognised and duly considered in the development and introduction of innovation (Wylandt 2008:14).

Based on the discussion above, a discomfort might arise in response to the classification of design through Buchanan as a problem-solving activity. As Krippendorff (2005:26) points out, demarcating design as problem solving, while common, commits designers to the same technical rationality associated with Simon, where problems are clearly defined and the solution space is determinate. Designers, however, are concerned not with factual truths but with what should be. To Krippendorff, replacing 'what *is*' with 'what *should be*' has a crucial implication: "Should' statements are imperatives, and the logic underlying the design discourse, Simon suggests, is normative or deontic, not propositional." The problematic reduction of Buchanan to a designerly thinking as a problem-solving activity will not be resolved here, but for the purpose of this study the emphasis will be placed on the activity as a pluralistic process.

2.3.4 Design and designerly thinking as a practice-based activity and way of making sense of things.

Bryan Lawson and Nigel Cross each describe and reflect on practical cases of designers thinking and working. Arguably, their research could be seen to belong to the reflexive tradition started by Schön (Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* 2013:125); however, through their presentation of practice-based examples their texts take a practical view of designers-at-work, rather than taking a philosophical perspective. Cross works from ethnographic research to reveal what designers do during the activity of designing, whereas Lawson draws on the psychology of creative design processes to translate his research knowledge into 'forms' designers can use; both Lawson and Cross apply abductive processes to make sense of and generalise from observations, and thereby identify patterns that are founded in practical experience and illustrated through practical examples (Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* 2013:125).

Lawson aspires to “demystify”²⁶ the design process, and to establish a model of designing. He accordingly discusses how designers alternate between problems and solutions during the design process, and the types and styles of thinking that can be collectively classified as “design thinking” (Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* 2010:8):

Designing is far too complex a phenomenon to be describable by a simple diagram...A model of design thinking must be able to allow for all this richness and variation...We have groups of activities and skills that are all needed and are commonly found in successful design. They are ‘formulating’, ‘moving’, ‘representing’, ‘evaluating’ and ‘reflecting’. Through all this somehow designers seem to be able to negotiate their way to a comfortable, or at least satisfactory, understanding of both the problem and the solution and to give their clients and users a least workable and occasionally beautiful and imaginative designs (Lawson 2005:289-291).

Furthermore, the ill-defined character of design problems entails that they cannot be solved simply by accumulating and synthesising information. Citing architect Richard MacCormac in Cross (2006:32): “I don’t think you can design anything just by absorbing information and then hoping to synthesise it into a solution. What you need to know about the problem only becomes apparent as you’re trying to solve it.” To Cross, this suggests a view that all the applicable information cannot be anticipated in advance of the design activity. Rather, “[t]he creative designer interprets the design brief not as a specification for a solution, but as a kind of partial map of unknown territory...and the designer sets off to explore, to discover something new, rather than to return with yet another example of the already familiar” (Cross 2006:32). Formulating a problem space is not a step in a process but is rather an emergent, constantly evolving, reflective activity. To Wendt (2015:76), this is the combination of thinking and making. To Schön’s conception of the design process as a conversation between designer and situation, then, Cross adds to this perspective by adding that the externalised design artifact supports that conversation, acting as a sort of materialised speech object, which serves at least two purposes: to assist the designer in the act of thinking, and to facilitate conversation between designers and situations, designers and users, and designers and other designers (Wendt 2015:78).

²⁶ The subtitle to Lawson’s (2005) book *How Designers Think* reads “*The Design Process Demystified*”.

For Cross, the explication of what “design ability” encompasses is necessary for a “proper study of mankind”, an agenda that additionally signals acceptance of that of Simon (Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* 2010:9). The requisite epistemology of design revolves around the difference between how designers think in contrast to science and the humanities (Wendt 2015:61). Cross suggests the following differences.

The phenomena of study in each culture is:

- In the sciences: the natural world
- In the humanities: human experience
- In design: the artificial world

The appropriate methods in each culture are:

- In the sciences: controlled experiment, classification, analysis
- In the humanities: analogy, metaphor, evaluation
- In design: modelling, pattern formation, synthesis

The values of each culture are:

- In the sciences: objectivity, rationality, neutrality, and a concern for ‘truth’
- In the humanities: subjectivity, imagination, commitment, and a concern for ‘justice’
- In design: practicality, ingenuity, empathy, and a concern for ‘appropriateness’

2.3.5 Design and designerly thinking as creation of meaning

Starting from a philosophical and semantic orientation, Klaus Krippendorff (1989a; 1989b; 2004; 2006) demonstrates how design thinking extends beyond designer and user to create a sense of meaning *through* designed objects (Wendt 2015:70). By defining design and the work of designers as a matter of creating meaning, Krippendorff inverts the relationship between the design object and its intention that one finds with Simon. Rather than thinking of the artifact which is the outcome of design activities as foundational with meaning assigned as a mere attribute thereof (as an interpretation of Simon might suggest), Krippendorff places meaning at the centre of the design process; the artefact becomes a medium for communicating meanings (Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* 2013:126).

Krippendorff is concerned with the textual and intertextual matter of discourse, “the artefacts it constructs and leaves behind...[and] the connections created between these artefacts” (Krippendorff 2006:23-24). The study of how designed objects incorporate themselves into everyday life and become meaningful Krippendorff calls “product semantics”. To Krippendorff, this practice

...should be concerned not with the forms, surfaces and visual or tactile boundaries of artifacts...but with the understanding that penetrates them. Product semantics should be concerned not with material objects as such, but with how they participate in human affairs, how they support understanding and practice. Product semantics should optimize [*sic*] not performance, as measured by outside criteria, but meaningfulness, motivation and the centeredness of humans in their world by their own criteria (Krippendorff 1989b:6).

For Krippendorff, “[u]nderstanding things involves relating them to their context of use, to their practice, including to other things we are aware of” (Krippendorff 1989b:12). Artifacts participate in and – when well designed – maintain circular patterns involving one’s actions on them, one’s perceptions of them and what one anticipates accomplishing with them. Different permutations of interacting with an artifact each create a different system of meaning. The goal of product semantics is to fully articulate these meaning systems, both from the user’s and the designer’s perspective.

Nelson and Stolterman (2012:43) adopt Krippendorff’s language by suggesting that a designer “makes meaning” for his or her client and placing this within their framework of design as being in service. This meaning is made by “empathically drawing out” the client’s desires through open communication.²⁷

²⁷ As Nelson and Stolterman suggest, designers are tasked with discerning the underlying intentions of their clients’ “vaguely-cloaked” *desiderata*, which the clients themselves might not recognise as such. To be in service, to Nelson and Stolterman, means to build on these incipient indications of direction and purpose and to “concretely conceptualize them in such a way that they surpass the [clients’] own understandings and imaginations, while fully representing [the designers’] authentic self-interests” (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:43-44).

2.3.6 A brief comparison of the five discourses of designerly thinking

Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2013:126) summarise the comparison between the five²⁸ discourses of designerly ways of thinking using the following table:

Founder	Background	Epistemology	Core Concept
Simon	Economic & political science	Rationalism	The science of the artificial
Schön	Philosophy & music	Pragmatism	Reflection in action
Buchanan	Art history	Postmodernism	Wicked problems
Lawson & Cross	Design & architecture	Practice perspective	Designerly ways of knowing
Krippendorff	Philosophy & semantics	Hermeneutics	Creating meaning

Table 1. Comparison of Five Discourses of Design Thinking. Reproduced from Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2013:126).

As is clear from the above discussion, for these five different discourses with different epistemological footings, one finds both forerunners and successors existing as parallel tracks. Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2013:132) point out the importance of keeping this pluralistic perspective in mind in the further development of academic contribution to this discourse. As do the discourses Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* collectively identify as a 'designerly way of thinking', academic

²⁸ Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2013:126-7) acknowledge that an argument could be made for collapsing the five discourse streams presented above into three, by incorporating the frameworks of Schön, Buchanan, and Lawson and Cross into a single practice-based approach, thereby distinguishing 'designerly thinking in practice' from the rationalised, systematic study of design by Simon on the one hand, and the meaning-creation of Krippendorff's hermeneutic approach on the other. However, their preference is to treat the practice-related approaches as three different discourse streams depending on the level of theoretical focus, namely: Schön's examination of the designer's reflection-in-actions of problems encountered; Buchanan's examination of the nature of the problems themselves and the designer's use of placements as 'tools' to intuitively or deliberately shape a design problem, and; Lawson and Cross's empirically-based studies concentrate on the designer's specific awareness and abilities.

knowledge needs to take prior knowledge into consideration, and to develop an epistemological foundation – even for a critique that dissociates from a specific discourse. With this perspective in mind, I return to the topic of meanings of empathy in design thinking.

2.4 Empathy in design discourse

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, acquiring empathy for end-users is generally considered a principal task in design (Heylighen & Dong 2019:107). Heylighen and Dong find Cross' listing of empathy as one of the 'values' that characterises the 'third culture' of design as distinct from those of the sciences and the humanities, as discussed above in section 2.3.4 *Design and designerly thinking as a practice-based activity and way of making sense of things*, to be of particular importance in the development of this orientation toward empathy in design. However, they "trace the seed of this attention toward empathy" to the 1970s, with the view that the industrial revolution had instituted a distance between designer, user, and maker. This distance resulted in the direct feedback loop between design and use being disrupted. In attempting to restore this feedback loop, a key role developed for empathy as a way for designers to have insight into the experiences, needs and desires of users (Jones 1970 cited in Heylighen & Dong 2019:108).

Design researchers and scholars consequently observed that tools and methods favoured by human factors to understand human behaviour and thought as the foundation for product development were mostly based on cognitive models with emotion considered a "nuisance variable" (Dandavate *et al* 1996:415 cited in Heylighen & Dong 2019:108). In response, these scholars urged for the inclusion of empathy in design, though not yet as an *approach to design*, and mostly only to the extent of satisfying emotional needs (Heylighen & Dong 2019:108). Eventually, Segal and Suri (1997) mobilised empathy as a form of data collection and analysis, advancing it "[from] only something to use during interactions with users, [to] a way of thinking that should permeate throughout the design process" (Segal & Suri 1997:454).

Empathy has since been established as a central theme in design and has found itself focal within broad frameworks such as universal design and human-centred design (Heylighen & Dong 2019:108). Human-centred design and more domain-specific variations such as user-centred design, goal-directed design, and experience-centred design consider empathy as “[o]ne of the most powerful tools designers offer” (Cooper *et al* 2014:22) and a defining feature in designer’s endeavours “to know the user” (Wright & McCarthy 2008:637 cited in Heylighen & Dong 2019:108). Empathy between designers and users is generally advanced by these frameworks as a *quality* of the design process (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:438), as is discussed in section 2.4.1 *Empathy as a “quality” of designing* below.

Heylighen and Dong (2019:108) find that empathy is further inclined to be regarded as a *value* to aspire to, to cultivate and reinforce. As is also discussed in the coming section 2.4.1 *Empathy as a “quality” of designers*, empathy is taken to be subject to influence by the designers’ abilities and willingness (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:439) which suggests an importance to training and fostering experiences to expand the “empathic horizon” of designers, that is to say, the bounds on their individual ability to empathise “beyond characteristics of their own group” (McDonagh-Philp & Denton 1999:21). Additionally, empathy is taken to be enhanced by several types of techniques (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:439).

In spite of such importance attributed to empathy in design, however, design scholarship seemed to be lacking a “fundamental understanding of what empathy actually is and how it can be achieved” (Heylighen & Dong 2019:109). Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:438-447) set out to address this deficiency and to advance the discussion in the design community by employing the concept of empathy as it had developed in psychology to design. Specifically, they highlight three interconnected distinctions as pertinent to designing: 1.) between the *affective* and the *cognitive* component of empathy (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:442); 2.) between *becoming* and *staying beside* the person with whom you empathise (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:442-443), and; 3.) between different phases of empathy, namely *stepping into*, *wandering around in*, and *stepping out of the other’s world* (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:442-443). In consideration of these

interrelated distinctions, Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser advance a four-phase framework for applying empathy in design, concluding that its application necessitates designers to be motivated and to structurally invest time (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:447). These distinctions as well as their development towards a phased framework for empathy is discussed in section 2.4.8 *A process framework for empathy in design practice* below.

2.4.1 Empathy as a “quality” of designing

Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:438-441) explore the concept of empathy by reviewing discussions attempting to deal with the topic in design and in psychology. They find that the design literature portrays empathy as a ‘*quality*’ of the design process: the introduction of the adjective ‘empathic’ in relation to design is traced back to the late-1990s, at which time companies started to realise that observation-oriented research methods – methods that allowed researchers to gain access to user needs that would otherwise not have been articulated – were needed in order to develop successful products (Leonard & Rayport 1997:103). This encouraged the stance that designers should be more sensitive to users, be able to understand them, their situation, and feelings: designers should be “more empathic” (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:438). Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser continue, suggesting that empathy supports the design process as design considerations move “from rational and practical issues to personal experiences and private contexts” (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:438; Mattelmäki & Battarbee 2002:266). However, in spite of understanding empathy as a *quality* of designing, Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser suggest that an understanding of what this empathic quality of designing entails is not precisely distinct from their literature review.

Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:438) observe that metaphors are the most pervasive way of describing how empathy can be attained. In one example of this, empathy, as “an emotional understanding, is achieved precisely by leaving the design office and becoming – if briefly – immersed in the lives, environments, attitudes, experiences and dreams of the future users” (Battarbee *et al* 2002:243). Such ‘immersing’ insinuates that designers *become* users by releasing their own

view, or in extreme terms, “they merge with the users” (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:438). The resulting understanding, Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser claim, is a relation that comprises an emotional connection (Battarbee & Koskinen 2005:6) to users, their situations and why particular experiences are meaningful to them which “goes beyond knowledge.” Elsewhere, empathy is described as “an imaginative projection into another person’s situation” (Koskinen & Battarbee 2003:45), or a “particular kind of imagination” (Fulton Suri 2003:57). As Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:438) suggest, the terms ‘projection’ and ‘imagination’ imply that empathy involves an assortment of activities where designers should imagine what it would be like for themselves to be, or at least be in the position of, the user.

2.4.2 Empathy as a “quality” of designers

Aside from being a *quality* of the design process, Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:439) find descriptions of empathy as an ‘*ability*’ people have, and one that might differ between individuals. Fulton Suri (2003:52), for instance, describes empathy as the “intuitive ability to identify with other people’s thoughts and feelings – their motivations, emotional and mental models, values, priorities, preferences, and inner conflicts.” McDonagh-Philp and Denton (1999:21) introduce the term “empathic horizon” to represent the limitations on a designer’s individual ability to empathise beyond certain characteristics of the community or group to which he or she belongs, such as nationality, background, age, gender, culture, education and unique experiences.

In addition to ability, however, Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:439) find that the willingness of the designer to explore and discover the user’s situation and experience is an important precursor to establishing an empathic connection. Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser further suggest that this willingness stems from the “designer’s personal connection with the user that motivates him (e.g. a special interest into the user group, because it is familiar to him), his emotional state that hinders him (e.g. tired, or a workshop at the end of the day) or his commitment to the project (e.g. how much the designer is responsible for the project)” (Kouprie &

Sleeswijk Visser 2009:439). This is taken to suggest that a determining factor to the level of empathy which can be achieved is the situation and context itself.

This understanding of empathy as an ability and willingness of the designer to explore the user's situation and context resembles Brown's description of empathy as an important personality trait and component of the "design thinker's personality profile," although as Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:439) point out, empathic understanding can be enhanced by training and practical experience. Nelson and Stolterman (2012:66), in turn, discuss the idea that systemic insights into complex realities are revealed partially or obscurely through images,²⁹ which are distorted by "intervening factors or elements that filter or dim direct cognitive access." Such filters include culture, habit, expertise, biases, bigotry and prejudices, which can all limit what can be accessed, "what can be seen, heard, and felt." On the other hand, filters help determine "what is foreground and what is background," and help distinguish what is important from the unimportant. Nelson and Stolterman (2012:66), then, propose dialogue and conversation (and graphologue) as empathic listening filters, which take place "with 'other' about 'other'." Apart from adding to an understanding of empathy as a "quality" of designers and their "empathic horizons", this also suggests that there are techniques that are conducive to attaining empathy (or 'accessing' others empathically).

2.4.3 Empathic Techniques

Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:439) indeed find that empathy, understood as a quality of the design process which is influenced by the ability and willingness of the designer, can be augmented through the use of techniques. Of the tools and techniques that are considered as especially beneficial for enhancing empathy, they define three key categories: *techniques for direct contact between designers and users*, *techniques for communicating findings of user studies to design teams* and *techniques for evoking the designer's own experiences in a domain relevant to the user*, respectively, techniques for *research*, *communication* and *ideation*.

²⁹ By 'images' Nelson and Stolterman (2012:61-62) mean schemas, abstract conceptual images that represent complex sets of interrelated elements in a system (or systemic composition).

While Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:440) acknowledge empathic techniques as encapsulating direct contact, communication, and the stimulation of ideation by enhancing imagination, they concede that these are described in the literature they review 'as is', with little argumentation or generalisation offered for those intending to employ or expand on the techniques. One reason given for this is that much of the work they reviewed was, at the time of their review, exploratory: "many presented cases are first attempts in a new field" (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:440). More critically, however, they concede that design discourse lacks a "shared language", or even agreement over what aspects ought to be described, examined or argued when advancing empathy in design (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:440).

2.4.4 The construct 'empathy' in psychology

Empathy, Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:440) conclude, correlates with a deep understanding of users' circumstances and experiences. More than just *knowing about* the user, this understanding involves *relating* to users. Similarly, New and Kimbell (2013:3) also disclose an understanding of empathy in design as a form of engagement. To do so, they first specify the central role of general expertise in processes as a critical differentiation of design from management consulting practice; whereas a core element of the latter is an expertise-gradient between consultant and client – the advisor understands the problem and the prescription better than the advised can – the design process of working to a solution is different to that of drawing on expertise in a particular problem domain. By referring to the empirical studies of designers by Dorst and Cross (2001) and their finding that design problems co-evolve with repeated attempts at solving them, New and Kimbell (2013:3) find a necessity for a "form of deep engagement with the client and users of the system in question." They identify this form of engagement as empathy, referring to the enumeration by De Lille *et al* (2012:3) of the role of empathy in the design process for product service systems (PSS's):

The design thinkers' ability to empathize with multiple kinds of people and the skill to co-create enables collaboration to develop PSS. Empathic understanding goes beyond knowledge: when empathizing [*sic*] you do not

judge, you 'relate to (the user) and understand the situations and why certain experiences are meaningful to these people, a relation that involves an emotional connection...Using empathy, the design thinker can identify needs of the different stakeholders and react upon them. Through a complex and iterative process of synthesis and transformation of research data, design thinkers empathize with the stakeholders through revealing future design opportunities (De Lille *et al* 2012:3).

Although Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser glean a generalised encapsulation of the broad range of psychological mechanisms, from creating awareness, emotional understanding, projecting, relating, connecting, to internalising the user's experiences under the notion of "deep understanding of the user and his or her experience including the situation and feelings," they find that a structural overview is missing. To deliver a framework to sustain further efforts in the development of an understanding of empathy in design, Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:441) turn to the development of the use of the term 'empathy' in the discipline of psychology.

Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:441) find that empathy has been a significant concept in psychology, merging from the philosophy of art in the late nineteenth century, developing in psychotherapy in the first half of the twentieth century, and receiving renewed attention within design. These three periods are "almost unconnected," however, with very few cross-references being found, either from the design literature to the psychological literature or from the psychological literature back to the arts.

Zahavi (2011:542) finds relatively modern roots for the notion of empathy.³⁰ As Zahavi explains, although the term *Einfühlung* had been used in the domain of aesthetics by the philosopher Robert Vischer³¹ in the late 19th Century – at this stage the concept is relatively imprecise and relates to the "resonance or mutual interaction between subject and object" (New & Kimbell 2013:4) – it was appropriated by Theodor Lipps who, introducing it into the field of social cognition, employed the

³⁰ New and Kimbell (2013:4) suggest that while the notion of 'empathy' has debatable origins, the word found its way into English from the Greek *εμπάθεια* (*empathēia*, roughly translated to physical affection) via the German *Einfühlung*, which translates as *feeling-into*.

³¹ Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser suggest that the construct originated specifically in art history, being used by Vischer to "describe a process in which a woman projects her entire personality upon an object, and in some sense merges with this object" (Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser 2009:441).

concept to understand aesthetic experiences, whereby “the contrast between myself and the object disappears” (Lipps 1903, translated in Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:441). Lipps used the term to designate peoples’ experience and knowledge of others’ mental states. For Lipps, *Einfühlung* was preceded and brought about by “projection and imitation, especially imitation of affect (for example, smiling when you see someone else smiling)” (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:441). In proposing that people “knew and responded to each other” through *Einfühlung*, Lipps addressed a fundamental problem philosophers and psychologists had been trying to understand, namely, how one comes to know other people’s minds (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:441) Thereby, empathy came to designate “our basic capacity to recognise others as minded creatures” (Zahavi 2011:542).

It was Lipps’ notion that the Cornell University psychologist Edward Bradford Titchener had in mind when translating “*Einfühlung*” as “empathy” (from Greek *em* – into – and *pathos* – passion or feeling) (Agosta 2010:6; Zahavi 2011:542). In 1915 Titchener wrote that empathy is essential to imagination: “We have a natural tendency to feel ourselves into what we Titchener perceive or imagine...[t]his tendency to feel oneself into a situation is called empathy, on the analogy of sympathy, which is feeling together with another” (quoted in Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:441). New and Kimbell (2013:4) explain that Titchener’s use of the term empathy ends up departing from that of Lipps’ use of the term *Einfühlung*: whilst the former is comes to be about putting oneself in the position of another – *imagining* what it is like for one to be another – Lippsian term is more akin to the psychological concept of ‘projection,’ where one’s feelings are ascribed to another. As Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:438) point out, the nuances found here are reflected in the subtle differences in wording in the descriptions of empathy they find in the design literature. Indeed, Gieser (2008:308) suggests that empathy has since come to be understood as a complex multidimensional phenomenon that takes account of both cognitive and affective components and control systems, varying in degree with personality factors, relational factors, and situational context.

Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:441-442) indicate that with the development of the concept of empathy in sociology, psychology and psychotherapy, a shared jargon evolved, designating the subject and object of empathy as the empathiser and

empathetic, respectively. Concurrently, an understanding developed that empathy is not an instantaneously granted quality but rather evolves in a process over time. Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:441-442) also point to three issues that practitioners in the above-mentioned fields have encountered in relation to the use of the term empathy, namely:

- The merging of 'affective' and 'cognitive' mechanisms.
- The question over whether the perspectives of the empathiser and empathetic (or, psychotherapist and patient, designer and user) should merge or remain distinct.
- The steps taken to empathise.

2.4.5 Affective and cognitive empathy

Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:442) and New and Kimbell (2013:6), respectively, find that most of the psychological literature they explore makes a distinction between two components of empathy: *affective* empathy on the one hand, and *cognitive* empathy on the other.

The affective component is seen as an immediate, vicariously (Stueber 2018:10) shared emotional response of the empathiser to the affective state of the empathetic. Such an emotional response can take several forms, of which congruence or "emotional contagion" – the automatic response to another's emotional state – is the most pervasive (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:442; New & Kimbell 2013:6).

Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:442) explain the cognitive component to empathy as "the understanding by the observer of the other person's feelings," and attribute the introduction of this concept to the philosopher and social theorist George Herbert Mead. Cognitive empathy correlates to an individual's ability to determine what is going on in the other's mind and involves intellectually assuming the role or perspective of another person; the empathiser sees or hears about the situation of the empathetic and imagines this situation from his own perspective (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:442; New & Kimbell 2013:6). Kouprie and

Sleeswijk Visser (2009:442) point to Mead's emphasis of the notions of role-taking and role playing, suggesting that the perspective-taking involved in these activities can facilitate one's ability to understand both another person's affective behaviour and how this person views the world.

Although the affective and cognitive components can be discussed distinctly in theory, the boundary between the two concepts is arguably permeable (New & Kimbell 2013:6), leading Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:442) to suggest that the two components function exactly because they are strongly interrelated. Indeed, the authors claim that awareness of both components is essential for designers; accounting for only one of the two components is insufficient for understanding the user's world. Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser therefore propose that having an emotional response to another's emotional state – associated with the affective component – and being able to reflect on that by perspective taking – the cognitive component – are the core mechanisms of empathy, and that establishing the suitable balance between affective resonance and cognitive reasoning is a one of its fundamental issues. This allows them to additionally propose that designers should gain an understanding of their user by “feeling the user's emotional state” (Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser 2009:442).

The distinction between affective and cognitive components of empathy also has merit for New and Kimbell (2013:6-7). While the authors acknowledge that cognitive empathy entails a deep sense of “what it is like to be someone else” that goes beyond superficial technical descriptions of a problem, and that elaborations of this approach are one of the key elements of design thinking as promoted by Brown (2009:49) and others, they find that affective empathy more closely fits with their understanding of an “Ideal Type” designer. Indeed, they find that the idea of affective empathy is “more than just using one's imagination to get a fuller picture of the other's experience,” but involves a kind of emotional labour that involves sharing the emotional response of the other. The understanding attained is not just descriptive, but embodied:

It is not that one can rationally appreciate the fact of another's emotions, but that one has the emotions oneself (New & Kimbell 2013:6-7).

Ruijsch van Dugteren (2014:18) points out that the role and presence of the body is insinuated as a “register” in the affective component, in turn suggesting that this is less so the case in the cognitive component.

Heylighen and Dong (2019:111) indicate, however, that even within affective empathy, how strictly one should interpret the “sharing” of affect remains unclear. According to some sources, empathising requires one to be in affective states of the same order and kind as the person with whom one empathises: one hereby ‘knows’ how the other feels about something by feeling the same about it. According to other sources, however, empathy requires only having feelings that are more congruent with the other’s situation than with your own.

2.4.6 Perspective-taking: becoming the empathee, or staying beside the empathee

The next issue Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:442) address is whether the empathiser shares the empathee’s feelings, or rather (merely) understands them.

While Lipps had surmised that *Einfühlung* occurs through the merging of boundaries between the empathiser and the empathee, the philosopher Edith Stein, on the other hand, argued that these intersubjective boundaries do not, in fact, disappear. Rather, the empathiser comes to an *understanding* of the feelings of the empathee. Citing Rogers (1975), Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:442) refer to the distance maintained in empathy as resulting in a “state of empathy”:

The state of empathy...is to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy and with the emotional components and meanings which pertain thereto as if one were the person, but without ever losing the ‘as if’ condition. Thus it means to sense the hurt or the pleasure of another as he senses it and to perceive the causes thereof as he perceives them, but without ever losing the recognition that is as if I were hurt or pleased or so forth. If [*sic*] this ‘as if’ quality is lost, then the state is one of identification (Rogers 1975:2-3).

To Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:443) the dichotomy between becoming and staying beside the empathee reflects the split they had already addressed between ‘resonating emotion’ and ‘reasoning perspective’ – affective and cognitive

components of empathy, respectively – and suggest that the sharing and understanding the empathee’s feelings are interwoven in a way similar to how affective and cognitive components are. Turning to the relevance of this relationship to the field of design, Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser point out that various techniques that designers draw on allow them to address both possibilities:

When observing the user in the user’s environment, the designer stays beside the user. One reason is that the designer is aware of his intervention in the user’s context and has a researcher’s role to play. By, e.g. role-playing, the designer can become the user for a moment. (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:443)

2.4.7 Empathising as a process

The third issue that Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:443) address in relation to the use of the term empathy concerns the steps that are taken to empathise.

Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:443) note that Stein described a process of realising empathy comprising three phases, namely: the *emergence* of the experience; the “*fulfilling explication*” of the experience; and 3) the “*comprehensive objectification*” of the experience.

Stein maintains that in the initial phase one perceives a prior experience of somebody else; in the second phase one is “pulled into” this experience – one ‘stands next to’ the person facing the object of his emotion; and in the third phase one withdraws from the other’s experience and returns to the first state, though with a more developed understanding of the experience of the other Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:443).

Following Stein, psychotherapists such as Rogers proposed variations on the process. Notably, Rogers (1975:2-3) designated the middle phase as “temporarily living in” the empathee’s experience. These variations, Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:444) find, all describe the movement of an empathiser “stepping into and stepping out of” the empathee’s life: stepping in for deep understanding, and stepping back for competent action.

Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:444) find that this process of “stepping into and stepping out of” the empathee’s life – established as a process to guide psychotherapists in helping their patients – arguably also applies to designers in serving their users. They claim, therefore, that these phases are important to discern and to achieve in the context of design. From the discussion of the issues discussed by Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser, they resume by proposing a framework for empathy in design.

2.4.8 A process framework for empathy in design practice

For Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:444), the issues raised from the psychological literature are important to address in the development of techniques and tools in design. They accordingly propose a framework that can be employed in design practice, grounded on the process of empathy outlined in the sections above and integrating aspects of ability, affective resonance and cognitive reasoning also discussed.

Their framework is founded on the principle that a designer steps into the life of the user, wanders around for a while and then steps out of the life of the user with a deeper understanding of this user, and in accordance to this principle outlines four phases which together plot a “stepwise process” (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser, 2009:446), which guides the designer through 1) their initial *discovery, approach* and *contact* with the user; 2) to the designer’s *immersion* and *non-judgmental “wandering around”* (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:445) in the user’s world; 3) to the designer’s *affective and cognitive connection* with the user framed by the designer’s window of experience or “empathic horizon” (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:439); 4) and then *detaching* back into the reflective, “helpful mode” of the role of designer (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:445; Ruijsch van Dugteren 2014:18).

As the first phase in the framework, *discovery* serves to inspire the designer’s curiosity and stir her motivation, and in this way is an answer to Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser’s (2009:439) finding that the willingness of the designer regulates to

a large degree the level of empathy he or she is able to achieve (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:446).

The second phase – *immersion* – involves the designer taking time to “wander around in and be surprised by various aspects of the user’s world” (Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser 2009:446). Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:446) suggest that this phase might be the most crucial in realising an empathic process: “[w]ithout this phase, the knowledge about the user’s world will not increase” (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:446). On the other hand, by having the explicit task to “wander around, to immerse, without making judgments and implementations,” the designer becomes receptive to the experiences of the user in their world (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:446).

Having been “deeply immersed,” Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:446) claim that the designer can make “emotional resonances” by incorporating his or her own experiences. While Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:446) suggest that the second and third phases are closely coupled, they maintain that, by separating them in to two, an overt phase of incorporating the designer’s own experiences in order to understand what the user feels and what it could mean to the user is accentuated.

In the last phase, the designer “becomes the designer again” (Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser 2009:446), by “detaching [emphasis my own] from his [or her] emotional connection in order to become ‘in the helpful mode’” (Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser 2009:445). Now, he or she can “use” an increased understanding for producing ideas that better suit the user’s world (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:446).

The framework accommodates the notion that empathy comprises both cognitive and affective efforts, and that empathy can be augmented by a stepwise process. Although Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:444-445) concede that the four phases in the framework might seem like obvious steps, by making each of these phases overt and considering them separately practitioners may be supported in understanding and employing empathic techniques:

The different perspectives of the designer in each phase become more explicit, and give him better insight into what roles can be taken. When designers have more knowledge about the fundamentals of empathy, they can choose specific techniques and tools and use them in the right order (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:444-445).

The framework can therefore be applied to structure and organise design activities and to guide the development of suitable tools and techniques (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:446). Ruijsch van Dugteren (2014:20) agrees that the framework provides a useful foundation for design activities, insofar as the four phases of empathy outlined seek to capture and clarify empathy into a defined, stepwise process. Subsequently, she suggests that the “broad single arc” of stepping into and then out of the user’s life established by this model can be compared to the double dynamic noted in the divergence and convergence of the *Double Diamond* design process model proposed by the UK Design Council in 2005 (Ruijsch van Dugteren 2014:20).

Additionally, as noted by Ruijsch van Dugteren (2014:20), the metaphor of stepping into and out of the users’ world in this model is notable in its implication of the direct, embodied engagement that informs the empathic connection and participation which is given a central focus in the *Participatory Design* process. What emerges, however, is the unilateral nature of the concept of empathy held by Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser, which is situated from the standpoint of the designer. It is the designer’s “deep understanding of the user’s circumstances and experiences” (Kouprie & Sleeswijk 2009:440) – an immersion and elicitation – which is paramount, rather than a reciprocal co-emergence between the designer and user, which Ruijsch van Dugteren understands the ideal of Participatory Design to strive towards. She accentuates this ideal by referring to Finlay’s assertion that empathy is not a one-way process, and the notion of “reciprocal transformation”, where the researcher (designer-facilitator) both affects and is affected by the research participants (Finlay 2005:288). The unilateral understanding of empathy posited by Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser, further chooses overlooks the agency and power dynamic that is placed with the designer and not with the participant user or community (Ruijsch van Dugteren 2014:20).

2.4.9 A phenomenological turn

Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser intended for their framework to give insight into the process of empathy for the position of designer in relation to the user, and for it to be applied to advance existing empathic research and design techniques, support the development of new empathic tools and techniques, and to encourage dialogue on the emerging role of empathy in the design process (Kouprie & Sleeswijk Visser 2009:447). Heylighen and Dong (2019:107) find that the attempt made by Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser to advance the discussion on empathy in the design community was, indeed, followed by more nuanced considerations on empathy. They draw on examples from the context of inclusive design, which suggest that there are notable limits to empathy. Given these nuanced accounts and observations, Heylighen and Dong set out to further advance the discussion on empathy in the design community by drawing on insights from philosophy and the cognitive sciences. The main understandings of empathy they describe from these fields are highlighted in their relevance to design.

2.4.10 Empathy as direct social perception

Heylighen and Dong (2019:112) point out that the idea has for the most part not been taken seriously in the analytic tradition of philosophy that empathy is a – or indeed, the fundamental – means for understanding other minds. Within the phenomenological tradition of philosophy,³² however, empathy is understood as a “unique and irreducible kind of intentional experience,” which allows one to know the experiential life of others (Zahavi 2014:129). Empathy is hereby recognised as “the mode of presentation of foreign consciousness” (Zahavi 2014:129) or, stated otherwise, “the experience of the embodied mind of the other, which takes the asymmetry between self-experience and other-experience to be a necessary and persisting existential fact” (Zahavi 2014:151).

³² Heidegger explicitly calls out the conversation on empathy and intersubjectivity between Edith Stein, Max Scheler and Edmund Husserl, introducing an internal division (Zahavi 2016:252) within the tradition of phenomenology. This is discussed in Chapter Three.

Edith Stein, introduced in an earlier section, pointed out that, “[a]lthough empathy differs from perception by not giving us the object directly, it does resemble perception in so far as its object, say the empathized [*sic*] pain or distress, is given directly, unmediated, and non-inferentially as present here and now” (Stein 1989, cited in Zahavi 2014:126). This supports the view held in design literature that empathy is intuitive: empathy “has a directness and immediacy to it that is not shared by whatever beliefs one might have about someone in their absence” (Heylighen & Dong 2019:107; Zahavi 2014:150).

The relationship between empathy and perception was further expressed by Stein’s teacher Edmund Husserl. Husserl explains that “[w]hen I perceive an object, say a sofa, the object is never given in its totality but always incompletely...[d]espite this, the object of my perception is exactly the sofa and not the visually appearing profile” (Husserl 1973 as cited in Zahavi 2014:128). However, “[w]hereas the absent...profiles of the object can in turn become originally present to me, namely, if the prerequisite movements are carried out, this can never happen with the other’s experiences” (Zahavi 2014:129). Heylighen and Dong (2019:112) take this to mean that empathy is therefore an entirely embodied relationship and that, in empathy, one “participate[s] in the other’s positing” (Finlay 2005:276).

Heylighen and Dong (2019:112) come to the conjecture that the prominence given to its intuitive and direct character restricts empathy to face-to-face forms of interpersonal encounters (Zahavi 2014:151), which may be especially restrictive in the context of design. Nonetheless, this understanding of empathy still warrants attention since it indicates the importance of situatedness. This prompts Heylighen and Dong (2019:112) to question the extent to which one must be the same as the other to empathise (Finlay 2005:280). They find an answer in Finlay (2005:280; citing Stein 1989): “When there is too big a difference, the possibility of empathy is compromised. However, to some extent, differences can be transcended through empathy as one imaginatively identifies with the Other’s position.”

Heylighen and Dong (2019:114) find that there are limits or an “incompleteness” of empathy that are important to acknowledge in design. While expanding designers’ empathic horizons may be viable to some extent, there is a limit to this expansion.

Heylighen and Dong (2019:114) do admit that the phenomenologists' views on empathy is not the dominant understanding in philosophical spheres; rather, they identify the prevailing position to be that empathy stems from some cognitive process that makes one attribute the mental state to the other instead of perceiving it for oneself. While they identify and briefly explore two strands within this position (namely, *Theory Theory* and *Simulation Theory*), these will not be of interest to this study.

2.4.11 Empathy in a service relationship

Nelson and Stolterman describe a concept of empathy as it is to be found in the context of the client-designer relationship. In section 2.3.2 *Design and designerly thinking as a reflexive practice*, I introduced Nelson and Stolterman's understanding of the design process as involving those "being served by the design activity and the subsequent design itself" (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:146). Nelson and Stolterman expand on this understanding by defining design as a service relationship (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:41). This encompasses a "full partnership" whereby those being served work in a *conspiracy* with the design team (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:54).³³ Nelson and Stolterman claim that such a symbiotic relationship is possible only if there is an exchange of empathy, which they describe in the case of a design situation, to be the ability to "be" as the other, while remaining a whole self: "It is the ability to stand in someone else's place while standing on your own." These "empathetic states of alignment" are then directed through the emerging understanding that occurs during the process of serving; an understanding designated as *desiderata* (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:54). To ensure that an appropriate design situation will emerge when entering the "tensional, but collaborative, social system" client-designer relationship, and that design goals are

³³ Nelson and Stolterman (2012:54) adopt a literal translation as the notion of conspiracy they refer to, that is to say 'breathing together.' They describe this notion as "transcend[ing] mere management of group processes," but rather as similar to concept of "flow" in the creative process as presented by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), where normal divisions and distinctions of everyday activity blend into a seamless experience of intentionality.

identified by focusing on desires and open communication, designers must be “willing to let empathy lead the way” (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:56)

In a similar albeit more imprecise vein, Kruger (2008:117) proposes a description of empathy in design as “design as service in the furtherance of quality of life.” Kruger suggests that, at first approximation, the interrelation of design and empathy is manifest: “[S]urely empathy leads to ‘good’ design,” no matter the specific discipline in which is it applied. Upon further consideration, however, Kruger finds cause for concern over an exclusory and exploitative instrumentalisation of empathy she ascribes to prevalent design practices (Kruger 2008:115,117). To challenge this instrumentalism – associated with the paradigm of positivist science – Kruger calls for an “inclusory” paradigm, and appeals to Martin Heidegger to justify her position on how such a paradigm (while being “more difficult to describe” than the positivist paradigm) might be understood. As Kruger explains, the hermeneutic position taken by Heidegger (as well as, in her view, fellow hermeneuts Martin Buber and Hans-Georg Gadamer) assumes a critical and sceptical stance toward the instrumentalist paradigm that Kruger argues underpins western culture. Rather, Kruger understands the awareness of the world in which one is situated in the mode of Dasein as Heidegger’s repudiation of positivism. Within the latter paradigm, Kruger argues, design praxis is unable to implement an empathetic approach (Kruger 2008:116-117).

Kruger (2008:116) is eager to propose Dasein as an “empathetic mode of consciousness”. As I discuss in the next chapter, for such a proposal to be tenable, such a conceptualisation of empathy requires an interpretation of being-with (*Mitsein*), being-with-human-being (*Mitdasein*) and being-with-one-another (*Miteinandersein*) as variants of a form of *empathic relatedness* that – in light of Heidegger’s dismissal of empathy in *Being and Time* and elsewhere – develops on the obvious and initial meanings of Heidegger’s discussion of empathy in *Being and Time*. It is to the explication of a special hermeneutic of empathy which I turn in the next chapter.

2.5 Conclusion to Chapter Two

This chapter started by casting doubt over empathy as an epistemological instrument in design thinking. To contextualise epistemological foundations for empathy within design thinking discourse, five sub-discourses derived from the academic design discourse of design thinking was discussed, the aim of which is to establish a foundation for later synthesising a provisional framework for empathy which I will articulate in Chapter Three. However, this chapter also included an overview of perspectives on empathy within design discourse, which, while providing background to the discussion, indicated further limitations which an attempt to add rigour to the concept of empathy in design and design thinking may need to consider.

CHAPTER THREE: TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR EMPATHY

3.1 Introduction to Chapter Three

Christian Madsbjerg's 2017 book *Sensemaking: The Power of the Humanities in the Age of the Algorithm* can be read as a work which calls for cultivating business leaders in the disciplines of humanities and social sciences so as to oppose the predominant mode of reductive cognitivism found within business – most strongly expressed in the rise of algorithmic intelligence – which Madsbjerg argues falls short of the capability to produce contextual analyses that can comprehensively account for and interpret perspective and meaning (Madsbjerg 2017b:5, 32). To this end, Madsbjerg offers phenomenology as the foremost methodological orientation to analyse the context of business situations as phenomena, which can then provide greater insights and in turn lead to more appropriate and viable and appropriate responses to client needs. Madsbjerg (2017b:5) offers a construct which he refers to as sensemaking as a principle-driven expression of phenomenology; he outlines five principles which can be operationalised by applying phenomenology as a context-sensitive analytical tool; by studying human experiences within a cultural context, one derives an “analytical empathy” that helps explain the complexities of the world.

In this chapter, Madsbjerg's sensemaking construct is explored, before focus is narrowed on his levels framework for empathy, which is informed by ideas from Martin Heidegger. What Heidegger explicitly says about empathy³⁴ is then examined before contextualising the ensuing exploration of Agosta's development of a special hermeneutic of empathy. This provides a basis for a provisional framework for empathy through a Heideggerian reconstruction of empathy, which in this chapter is used to connect to relevant insights from Madsbjerg's levels framework, and in the

³⁴ Ferencz-Flatz (2016) describes several examples in Heidegger's early Freiburg period where the concept of empathy was used in a positive sense. This study is concerned primarily with Heidegger's doubts concerning the concept of empathy, and therefore draws mainly from the criticism of the term in *Being and Time* where applicable.

next chapter will be situated in discussion of the theoretical perspectives on design thinking.

3.2 Sensemaking

For Madsbjerg (2017b:6), sensemaking is “a method of practical wisdom grounded in the humanities” and a corrective to reductionist thinking.³⁵ Although academics have used the term sensemaking to describe different concepts (within contexts such as psychology, human-centred computing and naturalistic decision making (Klein *et al* 2006:70-72)), Madsbjerg uses it to describe a practice of cultural inquiry. In sensemaking, human intelligence is utilised to develop a sensitivity toward meaningful differences – what matters to other people as well as to oneself. A rigorous cultural engagement therefore forms the foundation of sensemaking.

Madsbjerg (2017b:7-22) outlines five principles that make up sensemaking, each of which he frames in direct contradiction to reductionist assumptions which he claims to be prevalent in business practices and culture and which he associates with algorithmic thinking. These principles are: *culture – not individuals; thick data – not just thin data; the savannah – not the zoo; creativity – not manufacturing*, and; *the North Star – not the GPS*. These five principles are discussed below.

³⁵ Although Madsbjerg explicitly distances himself from design (Madsbjerg 2014:[sp]) and design thinking (2017b:133-134), there are notable similarities between Madsbjerg’s project and that laid out by Nelson and Stolterman (2012). Although these will not be discussed exhaustively in this thesis, a few remarks will serve our discussion. Nelson and Stolterman (2012:76) point out that complexity is the “rule of the real world.” Complexity is a distinctive attribute arising from the dynamic interactivity of connections. While Nelson and Stolterman concede that analytic, reductionist thinking – separating the whole into parts – can produce knowledge that is powerful and productive in a positive way, it can only do so when it is situated back into a context of inquiry that takes into account the existence of complex relationships of connections and the “phenomenon of emergence” (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:76). For the most part, however, the simplifications of reductionist thinking and its ignoring of interrelationships of “critical connections and concomitant emergent qualities” threaten to be a “dangerous distraction.” This echoes the risk Madsbjerg sees in the dismissal of cultural knowledge when facing the challenges of meeting society’s needs: when “we erode our sensitivity to all forms of knowledge that are not reductionist” we do so at the risk of “our businesses, our educations, our governments and our life savings” (Madsbjerg 2017b:176). While reductionist and algorithmic thinking “[exist] in a no-man’s land of information stripped of its specificity,” sensemaking is entirely situated in the concrete (Madsbjerg 2017b:5). Further similarities are discussed where relevant. Also worth noting is Wendt’s (2015:42) postulation of the shared concern between phenomenologists and designers with “how we make sense of the world, and [how] the objects we use are the means by which the world reveals itself.”

3.2.1 Culture – not individuals

The first principle of Madsbjerg's sensemaking contends that focusing on individual behaviour decontextualises human action since such action can only be adequately analysed through a larger cultural context, or as Madsbjerg states, "[n]othing exists in an individual vacuum" (Madsbjerg 2017b:11).³⁶

Citing anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973:5), Ladner (2014:12) describes culture as "webs of significance" 'spun' by those inhabiting culture. Ladner interprets Geertz as saying that culture is about the meaning humans collectively assign to objects, people, and events. Culture is therefore about *meaning*. Details are not themselves meaning; they are just "a list of things that happened" (Ladner 2014:12). If one wants to understand the most profound insights of a culture, understand of why people in that culture act the way they do must first be attained. That understanding is rarely, if ever, based on what individual people say or claim to do, but is rather developed around an understanding of worlds: humans are sensitive to how others in their world do things, change things, and think about things. Philosophy, and in particular Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, Madsbjerg claims, can help one appreciate this better (Madsbjerg 2017b:7-8).

Heidegger challenged the presuppositions of Western philosophy when he proposed in 1927 that the unspoken assumptions – the "oxygen of our everyday lives" (Madsbjerg 2017b:8) – should be called "*Being*." He defined it as "[t]hat on the basis

³⁶ Here one finds another link to Nelson and Stolerman. Madsbjerg argues that by decontextualising experiences – "by pulling world apart in an attempt to create an assembly of facts" (Madsbjerg 2017b:12) – one missed that which can explain human behaviour. As Nelson and Stolerman point out, such reductionist approaches in thinking and intervention separate and isolate function from teleological ends while ignoring intentional aim. They argue that the understanding and improvement of functional members and elements of a system in isolation from the intention, purpose, or ends of a system is not possible:

The relationship between functional activity and teleological considerations are as important as the connections between system elements. An approach that accounts for critical consideration of relationships of connections and emergence is necessary to overcome this and other limitations of reductionist thinking (Nelson & Stolerman 2012:77)

This speaks to the same holism that Madsbjerg asserts one must understand if one is to understand human behaviour, so for instance: "[a] car is just an object; we cannot interpret anything about its driver until we have access to the chains of meaning that connect the driver to a social world" (Madsbjerg 2017b:49).

of which beings are understood.” This way of conceiving of ‘us’ – those of *us* inhabiting *our* respective worlds – stood in opposition to the prevailing edict of René Descartes, namely, *cogito, ergo sum* – *I think, therefore I am*. Heidegger’s *Being*, rather, does not denote an individual thinking, analysing, or standing objectively distanced from a context. Madsbjerg reads Heidegger in a way which allows the claim that “that there are very few situations, if any, in which the pure, self-contained individual subject has a significant role to play” (Madsbjerg 2017b:8): to Madsbjerg, Heidegger argued for a view of experience as inextricable worlds in which one cannot separate mind from body, or person from environment (Madsbjerg 2017b:7-8). Social context, or “Being,” then, is understood to be not just what drives everyday behaviour; it is the “very filter through which” reality emerges as meaningful and intelligible (Madsbjerg 2017b:7-8).

Madsbjerg positions phenomenology as an organising framework for the tenets of sensemaking: phenomenology is the “first place to go when you are interested in engaging with a sensemaking practice” (Madsbjerg 2017b:100). He points out how Heidegger took the work of Edmund Husserl and turned it on its head by suggesting that even the most rigorous phenomenology – as instructed by his predecessor – was still in the tradition of Descartes, insofar as it was still about an individual sitting and thinking apart from a social context. Heidegger consequently set out to describe the phenomenon of being itself, or to Madsbjerg’s approximation, one’s shared existence in the world. According to Madsbjerg’s reading of Heidegger, the world is not characterised by the set of ideas individuals have in their heads. In fact, he draws the conclusion that there is nothing ‘inner’ about one’s experience.³⁷ This form of phenomenology, as opposed to that of Husserl, directed practitioners to focus on

³⁷ Agosta (2010:34) suggests that when one says that an experience is ‘inner,’ it is a distorted, deceptive way of saying it is ‘mine.’ Here, Agosta is referring to *mineness* as belonging that which belongs to any existent Dasein as the “condition which makes authenticity and inauthenticity possible” (Heidegger 1962:78). The statement that Dasein is always mine establishes a positive and productive method of undermining the division between inner and outer in preference of a dynamic differentiation across a “system boundary” (i.e., between Dasein and its context which includes the other in context) that may be either open or closed (Agosta 2010:86). Worth also noting is the link to Krippendorff’s (2005:50-52) notion of sense. Sense, which Krippendorff defines as “the feeling of being in contact with the world without reflection, interpretation, or explanation” is always *someone’s* sense, insofar as it is an embodied phenomenon: “No other person and no physical instrument can substitute for or replicate anyone’s sense, and the sense that something makes is not observable by anyone else.”

the social structure of worlds (Madsbjerg 2017b:138). The phenomenology of *Being-in-the-world* in Heidegger's philosophy turns out to be hermeneutic, since the achievement of self-understanding by everyday Dasein "demands uncovering, a dismantling, authentic interpretation" (Svenaesus 2003:413). Furthermore, in the first division of *Being and Time*, Heidegger makes it clear that Dasein – human being – is to be thought of primarily as being with others (*Mitdasein*) (Svenaesus 2003:413).

Social context and everything therewithin which is perceived as meaningful, is overwhelmingly contextual and historical, and one is mostly incapable of conceptualising beyond that context. To Heidegger, humans are characterised by the very society in which they live. Madsbjerg (2017b:9) consequently positions sensemaking – as a rigorous and demanding form of culture engagement – as the most effective means of achieving a type of understanding that accounts for perspective and meaning.

3.2.2 Thick data – not just thin data

The second principle of sensemaking relates to "thick data," by which Madsbjerg means looking beyond the *what* of a phenomenon – that is to say looking beyond the algorithmic empirical data, the "thin data stripped of all its organic life" (Madsbjerg 2017b:16) – and rather accounting for the *why* of what is happening through a holistic synthesis of the data:

If thin data seeks to understand us based on what we do, thick data seeks to understand us in terms of how we relate to the many different worlds we inhabit (Madsbjerg 2017b:15).

It was Geertz who in 1973 developed the term thick description to characterise his ethnographic field notes. Geertz was interested not just in human behaviour but in how that behaviour related to the greater cultural context. Geertz spent the majority of his academic career writing about the nuances of culturally complex gestures, the "thickness that adds depth to life" (Madsbjerg 2017b:13). Madsbjerg takes inspiration from Geertz's phrase by designating sensemaking data as "thick data", explaining

that both express what is meaningful about a culture: thick data captures “not just facts but the context of those facts” (Madsbjerg 2017b:13).

3.2.3 The Savannah – not the zoo

This principle is an appeal for the analysis of true social contexts that cannot be found in abstract numbers. Madsbjerg uses the metaphor of “watching a pack of lions hunt on the actual savannah” as opposed to “seeing them get fed from a bowl at the zoo.” Accordingly, Madsbjerg proposes that humanity must be studied in the full complexity of the lived world, and this is the basis of the philosophical method of phenomenology, which Madsbjerg classifies as “the study of human experiences”. By using phenomenology, human behaviour is observed as it exists in social contexts, and not through quantitative representations (Madsbjerg 2017b:16).

In Madsbjerg’s view, Heidegger argues for an interpretation of experience as comprising inextricable worlds, in which one cannot separate mind from body, or person from environment. In a sensemaking process, one is not trying to find out what people “think” about things – opinions and perceptions are largely irrelevant – rather, one is interested in uncovering the structures that govern different realities. For Madsbjerg, Heidegger argues that the main topic that should be studied is “that on the basis of which [woraufhin] entities are already understood, however we may discuss them in detail” (Heidegger 1962:25-26).

Madsbjerg (2017b:49) makes the seemingly radical claim that “[d]espite what we may think, we are not individuals...[w]e are, all of us, situated in a context. If we are to understand human behaviour, then we must understand context, an argument for the holistic versus the atomized.” The more one understands about worlds and the ways in which social contexts drive one’s actions, the better what it means to develop interpretive skills can be appreciated. Madsbjerg (2017b:96) stresses that phenomenology calls on one to return to the world, to go back “to the thing itself.” Phenomenology will not reveal the essence of something, but rather the essence of one’s *relationship* to that thing: “[n]ot everything is important to us all the time. We

stand in relation to the things in our lives, and phenomenology can show us which things matter most and when.”

Madsbjerg (2017b:97) suggests that when one thinks in terms of human phenomena, characteristics with real explanatory power start to emerge:

This is the kind of interpretation that makes people nod their heads in agreement and say, “That is so true.” Such a truth is not a universal law – it won’t apply to all quarks and all asteroids. But it will tell us something profound about a very specific time and place and population.

Madsbjerg’s sensemaking is always seeking an understanding of the same thing:
What is it like to be this person? How do they experience their world?

3.2.4 Creativity – not manufacturing

Madsbjerg elevates creative thinking or abductive reasoning, which he defines as “non-linear problem solving,” above traditional approaches of inductive or deductive reasoning.³⁸ In the section dealing with this principle, Madsbjerg associates design thinking with a misconception of how creativity is *actually* expressed and experienced. This misconception understands creative output to be the output of a “mental assembly line” (Madsbjerg 2017b:133), i.e. that by following a rigid process, one can manufacture creativity in a consistent way. As Madsbjerg points out, by treating ideas as discrete and atomised “widgets” that can be fabricated into an existence apart from any context, the creative process is detached from one’s worlds

³⁸ As Nelson and Stolterman explain, in science one strives to reason from ultimate particulars to universal principles and laws, and this is done by method of induction. Science can, in turn, aid in the account of something particular by drawing on universal principles, that is to say by method of deduction. The process for producing the ultimate particular, however, is established neither on scientific induction nor scientific deduction; science is a process of distinguishing abstractions that apply across categories or taxonomies of phenomena, while the “ultimate particular” is a singular and unique composition or assembly. Therefore, producing something which is unique and particular cannot be achieved through a scientific approach (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:30-31). For his part, Madsbjerg refers to American philosopher and logician Charles Sanders Pierce to position abductive reasoning, what Madsbjerg also labels as nonlinear problem solving, as the only kind of reasoning capable of generating new ideas (Madsbjerg 2017b:19). Whereas deduction is a top-down approach going from the general to the more specific, and induction is bottom-up going from specific observations to broader generalisations and theories, abductive reasoning, by starting from a position of openness, is the only method of reasoning that can incorporate new knowledge and insights (Madsbjerg 2017b:153-154).

– subjects apart from objects – in analytical thought. By making the claim that they’re “not actually experts in any given area,” Madsbjerg (2017b:134) argues that proponents of design thinking divorce the design process from the context-dependent and layered meanings of the objects within the worlds humans inhabit. According to Madsbjerg’s reasoning, unless one knows what truly matters to the cultures one wishes to serve, one cannot understand anything about the objects – the equipment – that they use, and one therefore cannot presume to know what might make this equipment serve them better.

It worth noting that Madsbjerg is evidently referring to the “rule-based algorithms fashioned out of heuristics that seem to have worked within limitations in the real world” and especially design and creative problem-processes as commoditised “branded approaches for delivering expected outcomes” (Nelson & Stolterman 2012:29), as opposed to the theoretic approaches to design thinking described in Chapter Two. At the same time, it may serve one well to be aware of the market demands for ready-made, transferable solutions to complex problems.

3.2.5 The North Star – not the GPS

The last sensemaking principle employs the analogy of following the north star over GPS to challenge dependence on the acquisition of information without being able to understand how it was collected and without developing the ability to interpret “new and unfamiliar contexts.” This principle sets sensemaking up to disclose where to place attention when trying to understand potentially new and unfamiliar context: “[w]e don’t try to know everything; we work to make sense of something. In the midst of complexity, a sensemaking practice allows us to determine what actually matters” (Madsbjerg 2017b:23).

3.2.6 (Analytical) empathy is sensemaking

Madsbjerg situates a conception of empathy within his construct of sensemaking. He clarifies his notion of empathy to mean one’s emotional and intellectual skill of

understanding another's worldview or cultural perspective. He outlines three levels of empathy (Madsbjerg 2017b:113-116).

The first level is below the threshold of one's awareness. Madsbjerg refers to an empathetic alignment to suggest how this kind of empathy is responsible for how people adjust to each other. Madsbjerg points out that this first level of empathy has been the topic of study for sociologists and anthropologists in the guise of shared worlds or "structures" – the norms and values through which reality is 'structured'. These researchers have debated whether these structures are fixed and eternal, or constantly changing. To Madsbjerg, what really matters for the purpose of his sensemaking framework is that this type of empathy is rarely ever noticed. It is the kind of empathy one "rarely ever talk[s] about" (Madsbjerg 2017b:113). In a 2017 talk titled *Observing & Listening* and delivered at the Princeton University Keller Center, Madsbjerg refers to this level as *Intuitive* empathy, equating this directly to Heidegger's notion of background practices, "what's proper and what's appropriate and what is it one does in a particular situation" (Madsbjerg 2017a:[sp]).

The second level of empathy is typically triggered when one notices something is amiss. Madsbjerg uses two examples of where this second level of empathy might arise: a friend exhibiting an "unusual affect" such as sullen speech might prompt questions as to what this friend might be thinking, what her emotional disposition might be, and; the intrigue over da Vinci's Mona Lisa, where one can never quite synthesise the facial cues (Madsbjerg 2017b:113-114). In the Princeton talk, Madsbjerg refers to this level as '*Aware*,' suggesting that this is what is usually meant by people making use of the term empathy (Madsbjerg 2017a:[sp]).

If one wants to engage in a process of understanding, however, one progresses to the third level of empathy, which is to say analytical empathy. This deep and more systematic empathy is supported by theory, frameworks and an engagement with the humanities. To Madsbjerg, "[t]his *is* sensemaking" (Madsbjerg 2017b:115 emphasis my own). The third level of empathy requires an analytical framework that is informed by the realm of the humanities. Theory ultimately reveals the insights:

There are frameworks for understanding everything from sexuality to family to power to social roles, to the role of art and music and stories in society. Once our thick data of ethnographic field notes, photographs, journals, and interviews is collected and sorted, our job is to identify the salient patterns occurring across all of the data. Good theory provides a structure for recognizing [*sic*] these patterns and, ultimately, one or two theories snap this raw data into focus. This is where we achieve insights with explanatory power: a more profound understanding of the phenomenon.

Madsbjerg's analytical empathy might approximate an understanding put forward by Köppen and Meinel (2015:16) of empathy as perspective-taking, including both the involuntary act of feeling with someone else as well as the cognitive act of placing oneself into someone else's position and adopting their perspective. While Köppen and Meinel do indicate that the aim of empathy is to construe mutual understanding, as a fundamental form of social cognition, they describe empathy as the capacity "to share, to experience the feelings of another person" (Greenson 1960 cited in Köppen & Meinel 2015:16). Köppen and Meinel characterise empathy as an "*ability*" that "allows us to comprehend the situations and the perspectives of others, both imaginatively and affectively" (Köppen and Meinel 2015:16; Rogers 1975). It is therefore not about how one would feel in the certain situation another person finds him or herself in. Rather, empathy is the endeavour to reconstruct the specific perspective of the other and how he or she perceives the situation.

Madsbjerg deems the arguments of proponents that "defend the ideology" of design thinking by saying that they spend time with people, observing and empathising with their circumstances, as insufficient. He likens this to "drive-by" anthropology, since the time spent on these observations are frequently limited, with the predetermined goal of how to improve the design of an individual object or service already established from the outset. In this way, Madsbjerg's view is similar to that of those drawing on the extensive theoretical and practical engagements between ethnography and design who might see designers' empathy as a dumbed-down ethnography (New & Kimbell 2013:3). With a narrow, pre-set goal already in mind, design thinkers never fully immerse themselves in the worlds of those they are designing for. As Madsbjerg argues, however, only when people give themselves over to their shared social context will different worlds and their practices reveal themselves.

Although this study is not concerned with a detailed comparison between Madsbjerg's construct of sensemaking and conceptions of sensemaking in organisational management literature, it is worth noting that social context is an important theme arising in the latter. As Weick (1995:39) notes, those who disregard the character of sensemaking as a social process neglect a "constant substrate that shapes interpretations and interpreting." To Weick, sensemaking is contingent on the "social substrate" of the process. Weick suggests that when people overlook social context, they are inclined to introduce and prioritise theories which are incapable of accounting for contingencies, thereby creating distracting theoretical obstacles.

Given that Madsbjerg draws on Heidegger for his understanding of sensemaking, how can one understand empathy? In the next section I will explore how one can understand what Heidegger himself had to say about empathy, before returning to evaluate Madsbjerg's levels of empathy.

3.3 A phenomenological (re)turn

As discussed in Chapter Two, empathy has come to be recognised as a complex multidimensional phenomenon that comprises both cognitive and affective components and control systems, varying in degree with personality factors, relational factors, and situational context (Gieser 2008:308). Rather than providing any further analysis of empathy in all its aspects in any detail, however, in the following section I return to a phenomenological interpretation of empathy, narrowing down in particular towards and in relation to the work of Martin Heidegger.

Phenomenologists such as Scheler, Stein, Walther and Husserl, reacting critically to Lipps' work,³⁹ regarded empathy as a fundamental, perceptually-based form of other-directed intentionality. Utilising the term empathy (*Einfühlung*) interchangeably with terms such as other-experience (*Fremderfahrung*) or other-perception (*Fremdwahrnehmung*) (Husserl 1960:92; Scheler 2008:220), these

³⁹ See section 2.4.4 *The construct 'empathy' in psychology*.

phenomenologists viewed empathy as a basic form of other-understanding, one that other more multifaceted and indirect forms of interpersonal understanding take for granted and depend on. In the “empathic face-to-face encounter” (Zahavi 2019:251) one can obtain a familiarity with the other’s experiential life that has a directness and immediacy to it that is not common to the opinions one holds about the other in his or her absence. Rather than blurring the distinction or leading to a fusion between self and other, empathy, on the account of these phenomenologists, required a preservation of the distinction between self and other (Zahavi 2019:251).

As Zahavi explains, the attention of the phenomenologists soon shifted from a concern with “individual intentionality and dyadic interpersonal relations” to an interest in social units. Many of them presumed that their analysis of empathy could influence and illuminate the nature and preconditions of group formations and “we-identities” (Zahavi 2019:251-252). A conviction shared by Husserl, Scheler, Stein, Walther and later Schutz was that an appropriate account of communal being-together and shared intentionality involves the study of how individuals are experientially interrelated (Zahavi 2019:251).

Zahavi points out, however, that not everyone was convinced by this approach. Most prominently, Heidegger rejected the view of dyadic interpersonal relations as the key to a suitable conception of sociality and community and instead argued that group belongingness, rather than being based upon an other-experience, precedes any such experience (Zahavi 2019:252). On this basis, Zahavi (2019:252) identifies an internal division within phenomenology, concentrated on the question of how best to conceive of the foundations of sociality:⁴⁰

Should one prioritize [*sic*] the concrete face-to-face encounter and highlight the importance of the difference between self and other...or should one rather focus on an everyday being-with-one-another characterized [*sic*] by anonymity and substitutability, where others are those from whom “one mostly does not distinguish oneself”...?

⁴⁰ Agosta (2011:44) reads Heidegger as responding explicitly and critically to the conversation on engaging in an empathic relationship with the other individual.

3.3.1 Intersubjectivity

Before continuing, it will be useful to situate the discussion on empathy more precisely in relation to the notion of intersubjectivity, that is to say the understanding of the relation between one subject and other subjects, which, as the section above suggests, became one of the main focal points of philosophical reflection of the “phenomenological movement” (Ferencz-Flatz 2015:479). Empathy, Zahavi (2001:153) explains, is typically taken by this movement to comprise a distinctive and irreducible form of intentionality. Understood as a mode of consciousness, empathy is considered to allow us, in a more-or-less direct manner, to experience and understand the feelings, desires, and beliefs of others. In this light, empathy becomes the basis for what Zahavi conceives as the “model of *empathy*”, which he describes as a specific type of approach to intersubjectivity. Indeed, as Zahavi suggests, the empathic approach has occasionally been taken to constitute the definitive phenomenological approach to intersubjectivity (Zahavi 2001:153). One of the traditional tasks of this descriptive enterprise has consequently been to explicate the distinction between empathy and other forms of intentionality, such as perception, imagination and recollection. Zahavi suggests, however, “that some of the most interesting and far-reaching phenomenological analyses of intersubjectivity” are characterised by “going *beyond empathy*.” On the one hand, such analyses take empathy as a “thematic encounter with a concrete other” to be derivative of intersubjectivity, rather than a fundamental form thereof. In this reading, empathy does not establish intersubjectivity, but rather discloses it. On the other hand, there are characteristic of the problem of intersubjectivity which “simply cannot be addressed” so long as focus narrowly remains on empathy (Zahavi 2001:153-154). The focus in the following will mainly remain with the former point, that is to say that empathy is not a fundamental form of intersubjectivity, and indeed, Zahavi discusses Heidegger’s position on intersubjectivity in this respect.

Zahavi (2001:154) situates Heidegger’s conception of intersubjectivity in the context of his analysis of *being-in-the-world*. It is in relation to an analysis of one’s practical engagement in the world, one’s surrounding context, that Heidegger addresses the issue of others. For Heidegger, one is not engaged with concerns in not in a private world, but a “public and communal” one (Heidegger 1979:255, Zahavi 2001:154).

Zahavi finds that, to Heidegger, the types of entities one encounters “first and foremost” in daily life are not natural objects, but rather artefacts or pieces of equipment – tools. It is an essential aspect of these types of entities that they all involve references to other people, be it in that they are the result of production by others or that the work that these entities allow one to perform is intended or ‘destined’ for others. In other words, in one’s daily life of care and concern one is constantly engaged with entities which refer to others: in utilising tools or equipment, Dasein is *being-with* (*Mitsein*) others, irrespective of whether or not the persons are actually present (Zahavi 2001:154). As Agosta (2010:18) indicates, “a human being’s participation in the public group is complemented by the public’s participation in the constitution of the individual – in the community of *Mitsein* (ontological) and *Mitdasein* (ontic).”

Dasein therefore does not initially exist alone, only to attain its *being-with* in the moment of engagement with another. Dasein is fundamentally social to begin with. The absence of concrete and determinate others, according to Heidegger, simply means that Dasein’s constitution as *being-with* does not reach its *factual* realisation. Indeed, as Zahavi points out, one can ultimately only characterise others as ‘lacking’ precisely *because* Dasein is fundamentally distinguished by its *being-with*. Heidegger ultimately asserts that Dasein’s fundamental social nature – its *being-with* – is the “formal condition of possibility” for any concrete encounter with and experience of others (Heidegger 1962:156-162; Zahavi 2001:154).

Ferencz-Flatz (2015:480) describes three perspectives from which Heidegger’s dealing with intersubjectivity seems eccentric in relation to any prior texts concerning the phenomenological tradition. First of all, as suggested above, Heidegger disagrees with the fundamental presupposition of the discussion on intersubjectivity as it had been occurring. Heidegger disavows the conception of knowledge as a relationship between the “subject” and the “object,” the self and the other. This conception, in Heidegger’s view, was a mere residue of substantialist thinking, albeit one that also underlies the understanding held by other phenomenologists of the relation between one subject and other subjects. Secondly, Heidegger rejects the philosophical problems arising from this traditional perspective, especially the question of how the isolated subject comes to discover and recognise the other as

another subject. For Heidegger intersubjectivity is not the “belated accomplishment of an egological subject” (Ferencz-Flatz 2015:480), but an ontological feature of the subject. The subject, in other words, is not primarily a distinct individual separate from others, but is an indistinct part of “them.” In taking this position – one he shared with Max Scheler⁴¹ – Heidegger radically subverts the very idea of the other’s “coexistence” by asserting that in fact it is the subject himself whom is the first to “coexist”. It is on the basis of Dasein himself being in the mode of *being-with* (*Mitsein*), that others can coexist alongside him as *being-with-one-another* (*Mitdasein*). Thirdly, Heidegger, due in part to his idiosyncratic terminology, distances himself from the entire realm of debates concerning intersubjectivity occurring in the phenomenological milieu. As Ferencz-Flatz (2015:480) points out, Heidegger does not speak of “intersubjectivity, nor of the ego and its alter ego, nor of the social dimension of consciousness, but instead solely of *Mitsein*, *Fürsorge*, *Rücksicht* and the like.” Of the terms he chooses not to adopt from the other phenomenologists into his vocabulary is also ‘empathy’.

In *Being and Time* as well as in lecture courses from around that period, including *History of the concept of time: prolegomena* [*Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*] (1925), *The basic problems of phenomenology* [*Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*] (1927) and *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (1928-1929), Heidegger does in fact speak out against empathy, denying it and the *I-Thou* relation any epistemological and ontological importance (Zahavi 2019:252). Heidegger deemed the very attempt to empathically comprehend the experiences of others to be an exception, and not the “default mode” of one’s *being-with-others*. Furthermore, he

⁴¹ Agosta (2010:18-19) suggests that, by taking the position that the other is a constituent of the individual, Heidegger was in fact involved in an interchange with the philosopher Max Scheler. Heidegger and Scheler both take an undifferentiated community of engaged practice as starting point, when the individual and other within this inter-human context are differentiated. From Heidegger (1962:154):

By ‘Others’ we do not mean everyone else but me – those over against whom the ‘I’ stands out. They are rather those from whom, for the most part, one does *not* distinguish oneself – those among whom one is too.

And from Scheler (1913/1922:247, quoted in Agosta 2010:19):

A man tends, in the first instance, to live more in others than in himself; more in the community than in his own individuality.

took the proposal that a “bridge” or connection has to be set in place between two “initially independent selves” – an *I* and a *Thou* – to constitute a fundamental mistake. To Heidegger, no “gap” to be “bridged” by empathy exists, given that a fundamental component of Dasein’s *being-in-the-world* is its *being-with*. From Heidegger’s *The basic problems of phenomenology* (Heidegger 1982:278):

Dasein is essentially being-with others as being-among intraworldly beings. As being-in-the-world it is never first merely being among things extant within the world, then subsequently to uncover other human beings as also being among them. Instead, as being-in-the-world it is being with others, apart from whether and how others are factually there with it themselves. On the other hand, however, the Dasein is also not first merely being-with others, only then later to run up against intraworldly things in its being-with-others; instead, being-with-others means being-with other being-in-the-world — being-with-in-the-world.... Put otherwise, being-in-the-world is with equal originality both being-with and being-among.

Zahavi (2019:252) finds Heidegger’s most complete critique of empathy in paragraph 26a of the *Prolegomena*. Developing on the analysis of the fundamental *being-in-the-world* of Dasein, Heidegger asserts that daily life of practical concerns constantly involves others. One lives in a public world, and the work one does, the tools one uses, the goals one pursues, all comprise references to others, irrespective of their factually presences, or, to cite an example from Heidegger (1985:240), “[t]he poorly cultivated field along which I am walking appresents its owner or tenant. The sailboat at anchor appresents someone in particular, the one who takes his trips in it.” Indeed, just as Dasein is not first a worldless subject to whom a world is then subsequently added, Dasein is not alone until another happens to concretely turn up. Rather, others are “there with me even when I am not attending to them, and even when they are not bodily present, and it is because I am characterised by a being-with-others in this fundamental way, that the disclosure of concrete others is at all possible” (Zahavi 2019:252), and “...it is because Dasein as being-in-the-world is of itself being-with that there is something like a being-with-one-another” (Heidegger 1985:239). As discussed above, the absence of another merely implies that Dasein’s *being-with* is not factually realised: “It is only insofar as Dasein as being-in-the-world has the basic constitution of being-with that there is a being-for and -against and -without-one-another right to the indifferent walking-alongside-one-another” (Heidegger 1985:241). When Dasein does in fact encounter the other in his or her

bodily presence, this does not transpire in terms of a subject “standing over against” the other as object. Rather, the encounter is always situationally, environmentally and contextually set and facilitated:

I do not encounter the other as a thematic object of cognition, rather I meet the other and understand the other in the context of specific shared concerns and worldly situations (Heidegger 1985:239).

To Heidegger’s insistence, earlier empathy theorists they fail to discern the extent to which their notion of empathy is bound to the problematic ontological assumption that the *I* is initially situated in its own ego-sphere whence it must *subsequently* exit to access the alien sphere of the other and establish a connection (Zahavi 2019:252). For Zahavi, this entails an artificial effort at solving a pseudo-problem. Dasein encounters the other in an “outside” in which it already exists:

It is assumed that a subject is encapsulated within itself and now has the task of empathizing [*sic*] with another subject. This way of formulating the question is absurd, since there never is such a subject in the sense it is assumed here. If the constitution of what is Dasein is instead regarded without presuppositions as in-being and being-with in the presuppositionless immediacy of everydayness, it then becomes clear that the problem of empathy is just as absurd as the question of the reality of the external world (Heidegger 1985: 243).

Furthermore, the empathy theorists therefore failed to appreciate the extent to which empathy is first possible on the basis of being-with, rather than it *constituting* one’s being-with (Heidegger 1996: 117), or as, Heidegger emphasises in *Einleitung in die Philosophie*:

The With-one-another [*Miteinander*] cannot be explained through the I-Thou relation, but rather conversely: this I-Thou relation presupposes for its inner possibility that Dasein functioning as I and also as Thou is determined as with-one-another; indeed even more: even the self-comprehension of an I and the concept of I-ness arise only on the basis of the with-one-another, not from the I-Thou relation (Heidegger 2001: 145–146).

Heidegger mentions the term empathy several times in *Being and Time*, yet always between quotation marks and in the context of a critical evaluation thereof.

Heidegger’s interest in such instances is to demonstrate, on the one hand, that empathy cannot be constitutive of intersubjectivity, and on the other hand, that

empathy is a derivative phenomenon and not a foundational characteristic of existence (Ferencz-Flatz 2015:480):

'Empathy' does not first constitute Being-with: only on the basis of Being-with does 'empathy' become possible: it gets its motivation from the unsociability of the dominant modes of Being-with (Heidegger 1962:162).

Ferencz-Flatz maps Heidegger's treatment of the problem of "empathy" to his stance towards the problem of the reality of the external world. In this respect, Heidegger writes in *Being and Time*: "[O]ur task is not to prove that an 'external world' is present-at-hand or to show how it is present-at-hand, but to point out why Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, has the tendency to bury the 'external world' in nullity 'epistemologically' before going on to prove it" (Heidegger 1962:207).

Ferencz-Flatz points to this as a reversal of the problem. It is on account of an equivalently inversion that Heidegger comes to partially modify his more categorical dismissal of empathy from the earlier 1925 lecture course *History of the Concept of Time*. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger no longer regards the question of "empathy" as merely a "pseudo-problem". Rather, he makes the concession that it does in fact pose a valid philosophical problem:

But the fact that 'empathy' is not a primordial existential phenomenon...does not mean that there is nothing problematical about it. The special hermeneutic of empathy will have to show how Being-with-one-another [*Miteinandersein*] and Dasein's knowing of himself are led astray and obstructed by the various possibilities of Being which Dasein itself possesses, so that genuine 'understanding' gets suppressed, and Dasein takes refuge in substitutes; the possibility of understanding the stranger correctly presupposes such a hermeneutic as its positive existential condition (Heidegger 1962:163).

Yet, despite this concession, Heidegger still refutes the grounding function granted to empathy throughout the phenomenological tradition by overtly characterising it as *merely* a derived phenomenon, itself ontologically founded upon the structure of *Mitsein*. In Heidegger's view, empathy, ostensibly a form of mental "transposition" into other subjects, pertains exclusively to a deficient mode of *being-with-one-another* and involves an elaborate operation in comprehension to connect with another subject. This operation is itself only required since Dasein, for the most part,

lives among one another in a mode of “reciprocal indifference and concealment” (Ferencz-Flatz 2015:481). Heidegger, therefore, regards empathy as being, on the one hand, mere proxy to a more whole form of mutual understanding – as exemplified in *Being and Time* by genuine friendship or national solidarity – and, on the other hand, symptomatic of the precarious condition of the social being in contemporary life. Heidegger is consequently able not only to demonstrate that the entire problem of empathy neglects the original phenomenon of the social, but also to account for this very failure as a consequence of the foundational ontological concept of intersubjectivity (i.e. *Miteinandersein*). Heidegger does, however, concede to this concept a “special hermeneutic,” the task of which would be to discern exactly what existential possibilities disrupt the original form of the social situation so as to render empathy not only a possibility but a requirement (Ferencz-Flatz 2015:481). Whereas Ferencz-Flatz grants this special hermeneutics a peripheral importance, Lou Agosta (2010:21) argues that the very establishment of the possibility of authentic human interrelations with the other depends on its success. In turn, this special hermeneutic of empathy must extricate everyday forms of *being-with-one-another* from the authentic *being-with-one-another* of human beings.

As discussed above, for Heidegger empathy was derivative and not foundational for human interrelations. As Agosta encapsulates Heidegger’s perspective, empathy “was empirical not ontological, a superficial and inauthentic way of being” (Agosta 2010:16). Indeed, the effort to thematically grasp the experiences of others is itself the exception rather than the rule. As Zahavi highlights (2001:155), for the most part “we understand each other well enough through our shared engagement in the common world, and it is only if this understanding for some reason breaks down, that something like empathy becomes relevant.” If this is so, Zahavi argues, then an inquiry into intersubjectivity that takes empathy as its point of departure and steady point of reference is destined to mislead the enquirer. Agosta, however, proposes an argument which takes distinctions in Heidegger’s “design of a human being (*Dasein*)” that express the structure of human being in the world with other human beings in order to clarify how these distinctions “provide a clearing for empathy as the foundation of human interrelations”. This, Agosta proposes, permits “a rehabilitation of empathy and an authentic definition and implementation of empathy in the spirit of

Heidegger's approach" (Agosta 2010:16-17). As Agosta makes clear, this definition must be explicated from what Heidegger explicitly says, and, critically, it must also augment an understanding of the common meaning of empathy as "coming to appreciate what another individual feels because one feels it too" (Agosta 2010:17).

Agosta therefore starts by revising Heidegger's dismissal of empathy, before attempting to develop a description of human being with another which he argues to be missing from *Being and Time*. To perform such a revision, Agosta first turns to the "historical matrix" (Agosta 2010:18) in which empathy was embedded and to which Heidegger himself was bound.

As discussed above, for Heidegger the philosophical question of other minds is extraneous in both epistemology nor ontology, since the 'other mind' is already promptly accessible as being-in-the-world: "A human being's participation in the public group is complemented by the public's participation in the constitution of the individual – in the community of *Mitsein* (ontological) and *Mitdasein* (ontic)" (Agosta 2010:18). In other words, Heidegger conveyed a world of human beings receptive to one another in their interrelations (Heidegger 1962:164-165).

The original access to the self of the individual human being itself is through others. As Agosta clarifies, the individual is "one among many of the anonymous 'others'," and for the most part one does not differentiate him- or herself from them (Agosta 2010:19). As mentioned above, for Heidegger empathy cannot grant the "first ontological bridge from one's own subject, which is given proximally as alone, to the other subject, which is proximally quite closed off" (Heidegger 1962:162), without these individuals being receptive towards one another (Agosta 2010:20). As Wendt elaborates, one distinct, closed-off subject establishing a connection with another, priorly inaccessible subject does not "fit with the praxical, situated nature of *Dasein*" (Wendt 2015:56).

As also discussed above, the hermeneutic of empathy ought to clarify the presupposition for comprehending the other, that is to say, the possibility of authentic human interrelations with the other. As, Agosta reminds us, however, Heidegger did not consider empathy as itself foundational or "primordial" (Agosta 2010:21). Agosta

finds that, prior to Heidegger's comments on the hermeneutic of empathy, 'empathy' is regarded "more [as] the title of a problem than the answer to one" (Agosta 2010:20):

But if one only grants that human beings live in an interrelational world of affective, conversational, practical understanding, then empathy can be a way of over-coming the contingent breakdowns in sociability ('lack of intimacy') even if social relations are distorted, inauthentic misunderstandings.

Up to this point, Agosta suggests, Heidegger is referring to empathy narrowly defined as a form of social cognition, treating human beings scientifically as things present-at-hand, to be examined and defined in abstraction from their 'habitus' in the inter-subjective world (Agosta 2010:20).⁴² When this happens, "[t]he theoretic problematic of understanding the 'psychical life of Others'" (Heidegger 1927:161) takes hold, with the result of alternately egocentric and behaviourist conceptions of "other minds" (Agosta 2010:20, Heidegger 1927:161-162). On the other hand, human beings mostly understand each other well enough through their shared engagement in the common world. Only in the event of this understanding being disrupted does the thematic understanding of the other becomes relevant (Agosta 2010:20; Zahavi 2001:155). In *being-with (Mitdasein)*, the designation for everyday being with one another, a human being is mostly immersed in everyday coping or 'getting by', with the involvement with others leading "in the direction of the seemingly inevitable routines of everyday life in which humans have a tendency to live out of the possibilities already predefined by conformity and staying out of trouble – gossip ('idle talk'), not asking too many questions ('superficial curiosity'), conforming to 'the letter of the law' and 'gaming the system' ('ambiguity')," and evading accountability for the contingent situation into which one is 'thrown' (Agosta 2010:26). Adopting these "predefined possibilities", in the indecisive, routine way of the mode of *being-with-one-another* especially, Agosta claims, frequently results in an inauthentic being with one another, a substitute for authentic human interrelations (Agosta 2010:21).

⁴² This suggestion is reinforced by Heidegger's placement of the term empathy in quotation marks.

Heidegger characterised the term 'authentic' to mean to 'be oneself,' or, as Agosta (2010:23) states, "[a]uthenticity' is a terminological disguise for the human being's (*Dasein*'s) self." Agosta (2010:25) interprets being 'authentic' to mean "making a commitment and decision that opens and implements possibilities for humans that enrich the quality of life, promote human flourishing and deepen one's shared humanness; and 'inauthentic' means succumbing to – falling into – the 'rat race' of looking good, controlling and manipulating others, pursuing selfish ends, gossiping, pseudo-intellectualism and busyness." If one is inauthentic towards others in their everyday engagement, one will be correspondingly inauthentic towards oneself (Heidegger 1962:68). Agosta makes the claim, to which I will return, that access to the authentic self will come forward during his analysis in the notion of *taking a stand*, in taking a stand in the face of death and taking a stand for the other in empathic human interrelations.

As Agosta (2010:24) points out, Heidegger disputes the propriety of applying distinctions such as categories of physical objects to human beings as much as he subverts the consideration of the human way of being comparable to that of tools and technology. Rather, human beings have a distinct way of being. Agosta's approach is to adopt Heidegger's distinct way of being by recounting his "existential structures" (*existentialia*) as "design distinctions for a human being" (Agosta 2011:43). These distinctions are ways of being *for* human being whereby one operates in the world, and are designated as 'existentialia' and summarized by Heidegger as the structures of human being of *affectedness* (including *thrownness*), *understanding*, *interpretation*, and *speech* (Heidegger 1962:70). *Existentialia* designate the way humans operate in their existence and the way in which human lives "work or do not work." Otherwise stated, *existentialia* characterise how *Dasein* succeeds in advancing what matters to it or fails in breakdowns (Agosta 2010:24). Agosta does point out that the term "design distinctions" is not one utilised by Heidegger; it is, rather, an interpretation that attempts to make clarify the distinctions by which human beings "operate" as distinct from those appropriate for physical objects or tools (Agosta 2010:25):

'Design distinctions' are a way of accessing and making sense of the phenomenon of human being in the world whose way of being Heidegger

elaborates as 'existentials'. It gives us a lever with which to open the intricate infrastructure of Heidegger's text in such a way that both preserves its integrity and empowers us to exploit the significance of its undeveloped possibilities.

As will be demonstrated, each of the design distinctions corresponds to an authentic or inauthentic way of being. Agosta's analysis proceeds by relating the distinctions for "designing" a human being to empathic interrelatedness, taken as authentic being with one another (Agosta 2010:25).

At this point, the possibility of a special hermeneutic of empathy as a manifestation of authentic being with the other must be secured. Agosta does so by cross-referencing the ways of being authentic or inauthentic central to Heidegger's analysis with the individual alone or in a relationship with another. This results in a two-by-two matrix which connects the respective distinctions, and from which four possibilities for being arise (Agosta 2010:28, 2014:284). These possibilities are discussed as follows:

3.3.2 Inauthentic being with one another

The first of the possibilities elaborated on by Agosta is the "inauthentic being with one another." This, according to Agosta, is the "generally unempathic" way in which humans are most commonly found to relate to one another (Agosta 2014:284). This relation is in terms of the inauthentic and distracted "They Self."

To explain this, Agosta refers to the understanding of human beings as being "creatures of habit" and behaving in accordance with habitual patterns of speaking and acting. This habituality is undoubtedly important, since, as Agosta points out, this supports one's survival in one's everyday encounters. However, Agosta argues that survival does not mean "flourishing or accomplishing anything extraordinary or amazing, even by one's own standards of personal best" (Agosta 2014:285); survival for its own sake is empty of meaning and satisfaction. Yet this habitual behaviour is, as Agosta elaborates by adapting a line from Thoreau (2004:8), the life of the lonely crowd, the "modern mass of persons living lives of quiet desperation" (Agosta 2014:285).

Agosta does not read Heidegger as delivering a social critique under this interpretation and does not take the philosopher to be proposing any societal reform based on a critique of conformity and that aims to allow members of society to spend more time “living authentically”. Rather, for the most part, the way one is with others is inauthentic – one goes “through the motions in diverse role-playing paradigms.” While the possibility of expanded authenticity is a certain possibility for humans, it is neither the anticipated nor proposed outcome of Heidegger’s *Daseinanalysis* and everyday being in the world (Agosta 2010:21, 2014:285). This allows Agosta (2014:285) to make the assertion that people are not *themselves* in their everyday concerns with survival and overcoming “petty challenges and vicissitudes.” Rather, human beings are “containers” for adhering to social norms and conventions that determine what “one does.” As Agosta then points out, however, this conformity and day-to-day commitment of the “they self” to “doing what one does,” does not account for attaining meaning and satisfaction. For this something more is needed, and this “more” Agosta finds in the next possibility for being, namely being authentic (in the face of death).

3.3.3 Authentic but alone

For Heidegger, human beings are roused from the form of conformity and passivity described above and led into authenticity by the confrontation with the certainty and necessity of death: “As potentiality-for-Being, Dasein cannot outstrip the possibility of death” (Heidegger 1962:294). The confrontation with Dasein’s finitude in the certainty of death and as a relationship to death restores the authentic awareness that “life is not a dress rehearsal [...but...] the event itself” (Agosta 2014:285). This inspires a certain freedom (Heidegger 1962:311) from the inauthenticity of living life in a passive, routine manner but at an expense that calls for further analysis (Agosta 2014:285-286). Such an authentic awareness isolates the individual in the face of death: “Yes, I am authentic. But I am alone...Death individualizes [*sic*] human existence. Dasein faces death alone” (Agosta 2014:286). “The non-relational character of death...individualizes [*sic*] Dasein down to itself” (Heidegger 1962:308).

This confrontation with the inevitability of death serves as an impetus to individual humans to occupy themselves with what authentically matters (Agosta 2010:26).

Agosta finds that the equation which therefore constitutes the centre of the analysis in Heidegger's *Being and Time* is, on the one hand, Dasein in its authentic, solitary confrontation with its death – since no one else can die one's own individual death – and on the other hand, Dasein, inauthentically for the most part, distractedly occupied with coping in the world of everyday concerns (Agosta 2010:27).⁴³

3.3.4 Inauthentic relation to death

In contrast to authentically being alone in relation to death, Agosta finds that a preoccupation with death comes to present a barrier to determining and committing to a course of action, rendering an “analysis paralysis” (Agosta 2010:27, 2014:284). Agosta rejects such a preoccupation as an inauthentic relation in the face of death and a “caricature of existentialism.” However, following Friedman (2002:62), one may in any case understand this relation to death as lapsing into the “They” of everyday public existence. Indeed, Heidegger describes a situation which appears to account for such a preoccupation with death as described by Agosta in the “falling everydayness of Dasein”:

They say, “Death is certain”; and in saying so, they implant in Dasein the illusion that it is *itself* certain of its death...In the ‘sometime, but not right away’, everydayness concedes something like a *certainty* of death. Nobody doubts that one dies (Heidegger 1962:301).

With this “every-day-state-of-mind which consists in an air of superiority with regard to the certain fact of death – a superiority which is ‘anxiously’ concerned while seemingly free from anxiety,” everydayness admits a greater certainty than one which remains only empirical: “[o]ne *knows* about the certainty of death, and yet ‘is’ not authentically certain of one’s own” (Heidegger 1962:302). The inauthentic

⁴³ Agosta (2010:27) suggests, however, that this equation – inauthentically with others or authentic alone in the face of death – does not represent a conclusive nor absolute decision and, in reading Heidegger, it would be a misleading choice.

relation to death stays with the “idle talk of the ‘they’ to the effect that ‘one dies too, sometime, but not right away’” (Heidegger 1962:299).

In any case, Agosta dismisses this alternative as serving only an expository purpose and “moving no other part of the debate” (Agosta 2014:285).

3.3.5 Authentic being together with others

Having discussed being authentically alone, Agosta asks what the corresponding authentic being with others would mean: “But what then is the role of the other Dasein? Where is the other individual in all this?” (Agosta 2014:284).

Agosta holds an understanding of individual whereby “every individual has within her- or himself the distinction ‘other person’” (Agosta 2019:37). For Agosta’s individual, membership in the public group is supplemented by the public’s participation in the individual’s constitution. One may read in this an equation by Agosta of Dasein the individual which respects Heidegger’s notion of being-with as “constituting an essential ontological determination of Dasein as such” (Olafson 1987:71).⁴⁴ While this equation by Agosta may not be without critique, it will be sufficient to show that Agosta understood the “first access to the self of the individual human being” as being through others (Agosta 2010:19), and that such access occurs *prior* to any theoretic problematic of understanding other minds.

Agosta can thereby turn back to the possibility of authentic being with one another. For individualisation, death has priority; for humanisation – once the other “shows up” – the other does. A first clue to how Heidegger permits such a possibility for an authentic way of being with others (despite leaving this possibility undeveloped) Agosta (2010:22) traces to Heidegger’s acknowledgement of the possibility of authentic human being-with-others in the analysis in *Being and Time* of *Fürsorge* (Heidegger 1962:157-159), translated as ‘solicitude’, ‘concern’, or, simply, ‘caring for’. In particular, Agosta refers to the undeveloped passage describing the capability

⁴⁴ See also footnote 37 above.

whereby one Dasein can “leap ahead” of the other so that the other is granted his or her authentic possibility of authentic commitment, rather than “leap in” and deprive him or her thereof (Heidegger 1962:158-159):

With regards to its positive modes, solicitude has two extreme possibilities. It can, as it were, take away ‘care’ from the Other and put itself in his position in concern: it can *leap in* for him... This kind of solicitude, which leaps in and takes away ‘care’, is to a large extent determinative for Being with one another, and pertains for the most part to our concern with the ready-to-hand... In contrast to this, there is also the possibility of a kind of solicitude which does not so much leap in for the Other as *leap ahead* of him [ihm *vorausspringt*] in his existentiell potentiality-for-Being, not in order to take away his ‘care’ but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time. This kind of solicitude pertains essentially to authentic care – that is, to the existence of the Other, not to a “what” with which he is concerned; it helps the Other to become transparent to himself *in* his care and to become *free for* it.

Heidegger does not develop this option beyond a mere logical possibility. Rather, Agosta suggests that the elaboration of this possibility is the task of the special hermeneutic of empathy (Heidegger 1962:163),⁴⁵ whereby empathy is not merely established as a cognitive function of knowing the mental state of the other (although it does not discount this either) but serves as a foundational way of being in the world with the other. On this basis, Agosta is satisfied to have established justification for the possibility of a special hermeneutic of empathy as a form of authentic being with the other and to have found space wherein it can be situated within the matrix of Heidegger’s inquiry (reproduced below in *Table 2*). The task consequently turns to delivering it. This is achieved by applying the Heideggerian distinctions *affectedness (Befindlichkeit)*, *understanding (Verstehen)*, *interpretation (Auslegung)*, and *speech (Rede)* in an investigation into empathy (Agosta 2010:29, 2014:286). Each of the “ontological principles” about the way in which Dasein exist contained in these distinctions, to Agosta, allow for a distinct conduit between a human being who is alone, yet authentic in the face of death, and one who is

⁴⁵ Agosta suggests that by proposing a conception of ‘caring for’ which authentically bounds together Dasein in their Being-with-one-another which in turn “makes possible the right kind of objectivity [die rechte Sachlichkeit], which frees the Other in his freedom for himself” (Heidegger 1962:159), Heidegger does in fact offer a *re-description* of empathy. Even though ‘caring for’ is less elaborated in Heidegger than the individuation of Dasein in the face of the inevitable death, Heidegger, to Agosta’s estimation, must have known that his description of *Fürsorge* comprises striking terms that – occurring prior to the analysis of care as the fundamental structure and process of Dasein – had not yet been subject to explicit analysis (Agosta 2010:22).

distracted and subsumed in the everyday concerns of inauthentic being with others. However, a third option emerges as one that underscores an authentic being with others. Agosta’s construal of the distinctions thereby allows an analysis of empathy as the foundation of human being with one another (Agosta 2010:29).

Although Agosta concedes that, to Heidegger, these distinctions are equally original⁴⁶, he engages the distinctions sequentially on the basis that “that is the way that human language processing works⁴⁷” (Agosta 2014:286). He therefore starts with *affectedness*.

	Individual human being	Being together with others.
Authentic	Authentic but alone Ownmost Possibility Commitment: Being toward Death	Special hermeneutic of Empathy
Inauthentic	Caricature of Existentialism	[Inauthentic being with one another] Das Man (the One) The “They Self”

Table 2 Possibility of Heidegger’s special hermeneutic of empathy. Reproduced from Agosta (2010:28).

⁴⁶ Agosta makes only one reference to a section in *Being and Time* as an exemplification of these distinctions being equally original, or “equiprimordial” [gleichursprünglich]. In this section, Heidegger (1962:182) proposes that *Befindlichkeit* (translated to “state-of-mind” in the Maquarrie and Robinson translation) is equiprimordial to *understanding* [*Verstehen*] in constituting two of the existential structures in which “the Being of the ‘there’ maintains itself.”

⁴⁷ To understand this, Snodgrass and Coyne’s (1997:72) examination of the hermeneutic circle might provide a useful analogy. To these authors, the hermeneutic circle implicates a logical contradiction, namely, that if one is to understand the whole prior to understanding the parts and yet the parts derive their meaning from the whole, then understanding remains unattainable. As Snodgrass and Coyne point out, however, this paradox does not determine the circle as being a vicious one, but rather that logic is insufficient to the task of understanding the workings of understanding: “...understanding occurs, so there must be some leap that enables us to understand the whole and the parts at the same time, however contrary to the rules of logic this may seem” (Snodgrass & Coyne 1997:72).

3.3.6 Affectedness

Commonly translated as “affectedness”, *Befindlichkeit* is described by Agosta as a way of being open to the situation or environment and the other human beings included thereby, for example, in the case of elation or ill humour or being affectively burdened by a mood (Heidegger 1962:172)⁴⁸; it is a form of receptivity (Agosta 2014:286). In literal terms, Heidegger’s distinction *Befindlichkeit* plainly means “how one finds oneself,” the implication to Agosta being that this distinction relates to how one is affected by the situation in which one finds oneself; in particular, this concerns an “openness to the situation that is characteristic of human beings in-community” (Agosta 2014:286, emphasis added). While this openness includes the “emotional life of the other and the other’s expression of affects, sensations and passions, pleasures and pains, and moods,” Agosta (2010:30-31) argues that affectedness is a significant distinction upon which empathic understanding, interpretation and speech will operate rather than being what empathy is entirely reducible to:

This openness is not empathy; it is the basis on which a particular empathic receptivity is developed in this or that particular situation. This capacity for being affected by our inter-human milieu – our being with one another – is a form of receptivity on which a wide variety of empathic phenomena build (Agosta 2010:35).

Thus, Agosta asserts that the communicability of affect is assumed in advance. Openness to the experiences human beings have together with others is required for feelings to be communicable (Agosta 2010:32, 2020:34). In turn, Agosta makes the claim that the fundamental access that one individual has to the experience of another is through vicarious experiences. Such an experience is not direct or a quantitative merger; rather, in being vicarious, it offers a representation of the other’s experience that is “numerically different but qualitatively of a kind that the other is experiencing”:

⁴⁸ Agosta (2010:31) points out that Heidegger assigns a priority to mood (*Stimmung*), which bears on a disposition to have a specific feeling (*Gefühlsanlage*) in agreement with other people.

...[v]icarious experience gives individuals the opportunity to sample experiences that would not otherwise be available and to experience a “trace affect” or “signal” without an overwhelming loss of individuality in submersion or merger (Agosta 2014:287)

Vicarious experience is therefore distinct from shared feeling. Agosta claims that in shared feeling one recognises that the situation requires more than “mere receptivity”: one participates, becomes involved (Agosta 2010:36). In vicarious feeling, one is open to the feeling, and replicates it in a fundamental sense of reclaiming it as a possibility. According to Agosta, there is a reproduction – or representation – of the feeling which precedes any cognitive meaning and does not induce action, involvement, or participation in response. Vicarious feeling does not, therefore, affect one’s actions directly. With this reference to reproduction and representation, however, Agosta risks aligning his concept of affectedness with an approach to hermeneutics which is determined to provide “objective,” “valid” interpretations (Stewart 1983:381). This approach to hermeneutics, connected to Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey, holds that irrespective of the role the subject assumes in the process of developing understanding, the object of understanding or interpretation “remains object and an objectively valid interpretation of it can reasonably be striven for and accomplished” (Palmer 1969 quoted in Stewart 1983:381). This approach is thus *reproductive* rather than productive, with the theorists aligned to the approach maintaining that one understands a text when one reproduces the meaning as it was initially produced by the author: “meaning is viewed as synonymous with the author’s intent” (Stewart 1983:381). On this basis, Stewart (1983:381) and Arnett and Nakagawa (1983:371-372) assert that empathic listening, understood as an attempt to attain understanding by “reproducing in one’s own awareness” the psychological intentions or internal states of another, is founded in a psychologism that “reifies the self and focuses attention away from the communicating to the individual communicators” (Stewart 1983:381). Instead, Stewart (1983:382) proposes an understanding of openness which one can apply to Agosta’s concept of affectedness, whereby the “fore-structure of understanding” (discussed below in the section *Empathic interpretation (as perspective taking)*) is recognised as “inherent in persons and constitutive of the ground of all human understanding.” Stewart (1983:382-383) likens Heidegger’s concept of the fore-structure with Gadamer’s understanding of prejudice, both of which are open to

continuing development and change. In turn, Stewart points out a passage whereby Gadamer (2004:355) illustrates a productive openness which differs from the “reproductive openness” Stewart claims is characteristic of the empathic paradigm:

In human relations the important thing is, as we have seen, to experience the Thou truly as a Thou—i.e., not to overlook his claim but to let him really say something to us. Here is where openness belongs. But ultimately this openness does not exist only for the person who speaks; rather, anyone who listens is fundamentally open. Without such openness to one another there is no genuine human bond. Belonging together always also means being able to listen to one another. When two people understand each other, this does not mean that one person “understands” the other... Openness to the other, then, involves recognizing [*sic*] that I myself must accept some things that are against me, even though no one else forces me to do so.

The hermeneutic experience, understood by Gadamer, is productive rather than reproductive, and the understandings that surface are “contingent and context-dependent, not positive or objective” (Stewart 1983:382):

The hermeneutical consciousness culminates not in methodological sureness of itself, but in the same readiness for experience that distinguishes the experienced man from the man captivated by dogma (Gadamer 2004:355)

The concept of listening is discussed further below (see section 3.3.9 *Empathic speech (as listening)*), although for now I will note the contribution Stewart makes to an understanding of openness as concerned with meanings that are continuously context-dependent (Stewart 1983:383), and which develop as a product of being with one another in affectedness.

The above ideas allow a link to be made from Agosta’s thinking to that of Madsbjerg at this provisional stage before discussing the further distinctions of Heidegger’s *Daseinanalysis*. Both authors seem to be interested in accounting for meaning found in experiences through a holistic synthesis of the data, and “uncovering the structures that govern different realities” (refer to sections on 3.2.2 *Thick data - not just thin data* and 3.2.3 *The Savannah - not the zoo*, respectively). Although speaking with clinical practice in mind, the scope of Agosta’s ideas on vicarious experiences can easily be imagined to extend more broadly:

Exposure to the diversity of human experience as depicted in the process of sustained empathic listening is arguably what is missing in professional training programs for medical doctors and mental health professionals that neglect the humanities and experience-rich, “thick” social sciences in favor [*sic*] of distinguishing categories of diagnostic data...Overlooking vicarious experience in the hermeneutic circle of empathy results in a misunderstanding that grasps only the cognitive dimension and reduces the process of empathy to an over-intellectualized [*sic*] “putting oneself in the other’s shoes” (Agosta 2014:287).

A critical dimension of affectedness is lost in such “over-over-intellectualized” appraisals of vicarious experience – and, by extension, empathy – as itself a form of cognition (Agosta 2010:37; Agosta 2014:287); rather, a Heideggerian approach to empathy must account for an “openness to experiences of the other person of diverse kinds such as sensations, pains, moods, affects, and emotions in the narrower sense of the term” (Agosta 2014:287). While Agosta does concede that cognition is a valid construct, it is not a fundamental one as it pertains to being-in-the-world (Agosta 2010:37).

As suggested above, and reaffirmed by Agosta in his discussion of affectedness, empathy is not reducible to affectedness; rather, affectedness is an “input to the same process that eventually develops, explicates, and elaborates affectedness and produces full-blown adult, mature empathy.” Agosta proposes that the facticity of affectedness as an approach to empathy involves “readiness for empathy,” or a “letting things be” (Agosta 2010:38).⁴⁹ This ‘letting it be’ means to the Heidegger of *Being and Time* to listen for the call of the other in respect and to listen so that one may “recognise and hear the other’s authentic self-expression of possibilities and commitments” (Agosta 2010:38). Affectedness thereby becomes a significant distinction upon which the other distinctions of empathic understanding, interpretation, and speech carry out “further explicative processing and work” (Agosta 2010:31, 2014:286-287).

⁴⁹ Here, Agosta connects the Heidegger of *Being and Time* with the later Heidegger. Referring to an essay entitled ‘*Gelassenheit*.’ Agosta points to the relevance of the term ‘*Gelassenheit*’ in relation to empathy: “much about the mobilization of empathic receptivity has the characteristic of a ‘passive overcoming’...listening as a ‘letting it be’” (Agosta 2010:38). Such ‘letting go’ of the everyday world and disinterest in it is not reducible to passivity, Agosta explains, since listening, or “the appropriation of inchoate possibility, empathic receptivity” is accomplished (Agosta 2010:38-39).

3.3.7 Empathic understanding (as possibility)

Understanding follows as the next design distinction that, as Agosta (2010:39, 2020:34) explains, provides structure to the way human beings operate. To Heidegger, understanding as human beings 'live' understanding, while including cognition, is not *primarily* cognition. Rather, understanding is characterised as advancing into possibilities maintained by a network of meaningful plans, patterns, and insights. Understanding is a form of projecting possibilities of significance upon one's involvements with the world in their totality (Agosta 2010:39; Heidegger 1962:185). The cognitive aspect is derivative, only coming consequently to this projection. Here again a hint is found to how empathy might be understood by Madsbjerg: Heideggerian understanding, according to Agosta's reading, is "practical understanding in the manner of Aristotle's *phronesis*" (Agosta 2014:288):

It is "know how" in the sense of making friends and influencing people, putting a new patient or client at ease with one's attuned listening, or turning a skeptical [*sic*] opponent into a friend or at least a neutral individual.

Such "know how" is distinctive from epistemology. Rather, understanding understood in this way is characterised as pressing forward into possibilities. With respect to being with one another, it pertains to individuals who are "highly competent in dealing with other people." Agosta suggests that understanding is, in instrumental terms, "rather more like a Swiss Army knife" for coping with how to accomplish things in the practical world of instrumental relationships. This instrumental dimension of social understanding extends from relationships such as psychotherapy and counselling, which are Agosta's main areas of concern, to "problem solving, executive coaching, platoon leadership in the armed forces, all the way to sales and marketing, public relations, community building and action" (Agosta 2010:39, 2014:288), and, one may conclude, Madsbjerg's *sensemaking*⁵⁰, and design thinking.

⁵⁰ In positioning sensemaking as "a method of practical wisdom grounded in the humanities," Madsbjerg (2014:6) attempts to trace the concept to *phronesis*, which he describes as "an artful synthesis of both knowledge *and* experience."

Svenaesus (2003:408-409, 2014:294) explains that the Greek concept of phronesis is thematised by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Commonly translated as “practical wisdom”, phronesis stands in distinction from technical skill in arts and crafts (*technē*), the knowledge of science (*episteme*), the theoretical wisdom of philosophy (*sophia*), and intuitive reason (*nous*).⁵¹

Practical wisdom is characterised by Aristotle as a sort of knowledge of how one acts in situations that can be evaluated only by carefully judging the concrete situation at hand and determining a unique and appropriate aim in relation to its particularities, and not through algorithmic calculation. As such, phronesis is distinct from scientific knowledge, where general truths are revealed which can be applied, and from technical expertise, which presupposes an outcome prior to its pursuit since “the technician aims to produce a certain *thing*” (Svenaesus 2014:294). Practical wisdom is likewise distinct from philosophical wisdom, which is not focused precisely on acting in human matters, as it is distinct from *nous*, or intellectual insight (Svenaesus 2014:294-295). Phronesis is, by Aristotle’s account, an intellectual ability one perfects with experience but, as Svenaesus points out, this does not entail that practical wisdom is concerned exclusively with thinking at the exclusion of feeling or acting. Aristotle grants that good actions (*eupraxia*) are reliant both on intellect and a determination to “do the right thing (*orexis*)” (Svenaesus 2014:295).

Svenaesus therefore situates phronesis within the realm of human interaction.⁵²

Practical thinking is founded in ‘feelings’ that guide that which is deliberated. On this

⁵¹ Svenaesus (2003:408-409) points out that Aristotle classifies these abilities or “excellences” as intellectual virtues pertaining to the seeking and acquisition of knowledge, and therefore standing in distinction to moral virtues. Svenaesus elaborates that the terms *arete* and *hexis*, utilised by Aristotle in the thematization, lack the Christian and Victorian connotations captured by the English word ‘virtue’. By Aristotle’s account, the virtues are “states or dispositions of the soul” that permit one “to think, feel and act in an appropriate way” (Svenaesus 2003:408-409). Svenaesus further explains that Aristotle utilises the expression “intellectual excellence” (*aretai dianoetikai*) to differentiate practical wisdom from the ostensible moral excellences, which include as temperance, courage, generosity, friendliness, and righteousness. They are all *arete*, but practical wisdom entails reflexive consideration absent from the moral excellences, which guide one’s action in an exact and un-reflected way. The morally virtuous person must foster the different moral excellences, but he also requires practical wisdom to understand and judge the situation in which he is to act. In the absence of practical wisdom he is incapable of acting in a good way even if he is courageous, friendly, generous, moderate, etc. (Svenaesus 2014:295).

⁵² Svenaesus (2003, 2014) proposes Heideggerian (and Gadamerian) phenomenological hermeneutics as being basic to medical, especially clinical, practice. To Svenaesus, medical practice is

basis, Svenaeus (2014:296) positions empathy as the ‘feeling’ component of phronesis, proposing a “minimal notion” of empathy as consisting of feeling and knowing the state of another person. Understood as such, empathy is a way of discerning what occurring in a world that is shared with other human beings and it is this that Svenaeus thinks Aristotle meant by phronesis (Svenaeus 2014:295):

Phronesis is not devoid of feelings, it is rather based in feelings that help the wise person to see and judge what is at stake in the situation. In Aristotle’s famous, but also notoriously vacuous, formulation it is about feeling the right things “at the right times, about the right things, towards the right people, for the right end, and in the right way.” Phronesis must therefore be rooted in empathy; it must take its starting point in being able to feel and know the state and predicament of the other person in the situation in which we strive to seek the best solution for the people involved (Svenaeus 2014:295).

In other words, while one cannot exercise phronesis in the absence of the moral virtues, neither can one exercise nor even initiate phronesis in the absence of empathy.⁵³ Phronesis in part comprises empathic capacities (Svenaeus 2014:297).

Drawing on both Heidegger and Aristotelian phronesis, Agosta positions understanding as the “source of possibility, the possibility of possibilities” (Agosta 2010:40, 2014:288):

As long as it is, Dasein always has understood itself and will understand itself in terms of possibilities...As projecting, understanding is the kind of Being of Dasein in which it *is* its possibilities as possibilities (Heidegger 1962:136).

The task for Agosta from here is to use understanding to “implement” empathy. In order to do so, Agosta proposes the ‘schematisation’ of empathy – that is to say the processing of the distinction “understanding” through “a particular domain of

to be viewed as a special form of understanding, different from both explanation in science and interpretation in the humanities.

⁵³ Svenaeus (2014:297) claims that empathy is “utterly morally significant” without itself being a moral excellence insofar as a deficit in empathy entails a deficit in phronesis, without which the moral virtues are deprived from “wise expression.” Because of this Svenaeus argues, empathy is critical to being a morally virtuous person despite not being a moral virtue. Although my concern in this thesis is not the application of an Aristotelian moral philosophy to design in the way which Svenaeus attempts this in the context of medical ethics, this does suggest ethical implications to the “deployment” of empathy in design contexts.

experience unfolding in time” – in relation to human interrelatedness as it unfolds in the to-and-fro of a conversation in context (Agosta 2010:40, 2014:288).

For Agosta, empathy grants the ontological possibility of access to what had otherwise been cognitively impenetrable:

Empathy provides a clearing for the possibility of breaking through – engaging and resolving – the obstacles confronted by the individual in thrown contingency, the past standing in the way of possibility as such (Agosta 2014:288).

In and through human understanding, empathy grants an opportunity for the possibilities of the other, and therefore the possibility of authentic being with the other. Empathy engenders “specific possibilities of commitment by the other, authentic decision making by the other, acknowledging the humanness of the other, as brought forth in the interrelatedness of self and other” (Agosta 2010:40-41). While ontically the other is the one who has is granted his or her possibility, ontologically, the empathiser acquires the possibility of “being human” by virtue of being there for the other in empathic openness and engaging in an investigation with the other into the possibility of being human (Agosta 2010:41). Empathy imparts a “clearing” for the possibility of confronting and resolving the obstacles encountered by the individual in “thrown contingency”, whereby the past impedes possibility as such. To cite Agosta (2010:42), “[t]he possibility of possibility becomes the clearing. The one who is empathising takes a stand for the other.”

3.3.8 Empathic interpretation (as perspective taking)

For Heidegger, interpretation is a form of understanding (Agosta 2014:288; Heidegger 1962:188). Whereas one lives in an implicit understanding of one’s possibilities, interpretation explicates the possibility in which one already lives so that “it can be talked about or acted on” (Agosta 2014:288). Interpretation is based in understanding, is a derivative form of understanding which “makes explicit what is understood as what it is and does not add anything to it” (Agosta 2010:43). While receptivity to another’s affectedness constitutes the disclosure of their presence (as discussed in the section titled 3.3.6 *Affectedness*), interpretation is what clarifies

receptivity into an articulate response. Through interpretation, the other's affectedness is acknowledged as constrained to a particular contingent form of animate expression in a context of engagements. Without interpretation, Agosta suggests, empathic receptivity remains "mute" and unarticulated, since it has not yet been made articulable. It is on this basis that a cause for processing receptivity through the "exercise" of interpretation becomes apparent: whereas an uninterpreted vicarious feeling remains inaccessible (or at least retains the characteristic of feeling undifferentiated and unindividuated, and therefore remaining inarticulate) without interpretation, interpretation is a "form of expression" through which one comes to realise what his or her feelings are and mean, and, by expressing them, "completes the feeling" (Agosta 2010:45).

Empathic understanding, for Agosta (2010:43) is implemented as the interpretation of *possibility*. Dasein is enmeshed in a totality of interpretations regarding what life means, what is taken for granted and the possibilities available: "[a]s understanding, Dasein projects its Being upon possibilities" (Heidegger 1962:188). A provisional definition of interpretation for Heidegger is the grounding of meaning based on foresight, fore-having and fore-grasping whereby that which is being interpreted is understood. This 'fore-' structure is that of prejudice in the sense of disclosing pre-judgements, assumptions and a perspective one holds on someone, something or a set of circumstances. While one cannot eliminate this fore-structure, it can be made explicit, conferred over and exchanged for assumptions that are more appropriate for a given situation (Agosta 2010:43).

To explain what Heidegger means by this fore-structure, Snodgrass and Coyne (1997:72) offer the example of reading a text or hearing a speech utterance, whereby one holds initial expectations and presumptions over what the meaning of the whole will be. On this basis, one interprets what is being read or heard at the given moment: "[w]e pick up clues and cues from the parts, and from these construct an antecedent formulation of the whole, which then functions in a dialectical fashion to refine and redefine the parts," moving "from partial and disjointed insights to an understanding of the whole and back to the yet-to-be-understood portions of the text." As soon as one initially discovers some aspects that can be understood, one

delineates the meaning of the whole text. One casts forward (or, rather, fore-casts) a preliminary project which, as understanding develops, is gradually amended. Interpretation, therefore, insinuates an anticipation, at first vague and informal, of the meaning of the whole, and “the light of this anticipation plays back to illuminate the parts.” This incipient understanding is validated or modified as the particulars react upon it (Snodgrass & Coyne 1997:72).

The meaning of the whole is consequently projected even as one starts to read the text or hear the speaker and grasp the parts accordingly, as Snodgrass and Coyne (1997:72) elaborate. As the significance of the constituent pieces is understood, this initial prediction is continually revised. The projection, which is initially vague and only “in outline,” “plays back” into the parts’ interpretations, necessitating a revision of those interpretations even as the projected meaning is continuously altered in light of the interpretation and growing understanding of the parts. Progressively, the comprehension of the entirety emerges through this back-and-forth reflective process. Snodgrass and Coyne (1997:72), drawing on Habermas, argue that the future exists as a “horizon of expectations,” which merge the fragments of previous experience into an intuitively grasped totality: “[w]e anticipate end states by reference to which events, both past and present, smoothly coalesce into ‘action-orienting stories’” (Snodgrass & Coyne 1997:72). One anticipates the results of one’s actions in this cycle of expectation and revision, and interpretation moves forward in the context of the anticipated result. The result pervades one’s current comprehension. Heidegger (1962:192-195) proposes that any interpretive event, such as comprehending spoken language, a text, or the meaning of an object, has already been placed in a certain context, viewed from a pre-given perspective, and conceptualized in a certain way, prior to conscious interpretation. He calls this the “fore-structure of understanding” (Snodgrass & Coyne 1997:73).

Interpretation, then, is “the working out of possibilities projected in understanding,” that is, it involves figuring out how something fits into the situation in which it is placed. (Snodgrass & Coyne 1997:74). Prior to the simultaneous acts of detecting and recognising an object, a concept of what the object *is* is necessary for the activity of sensing it as something. Because one already comprehends it, and one

brought that prior knowledge with one to the feeling and recognition, one understands the thing and what it is in this activity:

In interpreting we do not, so to speak, throw a 'signification' over some naked thing which is present-at-hand, we do not stick a value on it; but when something within-the-world is encountered as such, the thing in question already has an involvement which is disclosed to our understanding of the world, and this involvement is one which gets laid out by the interpretation (Heidegger 1962:190-191).

This means that when something is interpreted as something, one does not first experience it as an object before giving it meaning, according to Snodgrass and Coyne. Instead, the interpretation is based on something one already knows, specifically a prior understanding or fore-conception. "An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us" (Heidegger 1962:191-192). These pre-understandings provide the structure for meaning, which makes the things understandable. Therefore, all interpretation takes place in the fore-structures. The interpretation has already understood what is to be interpreted (Snodgrass & Coyne 1997:74).⁵⁴

Agosta (2010:43) uses the example of pre-existing assumptions to illustrate the relevance of the fore-structure of interpretation to empathy – especially if not made explicit at the level of everyday relatedness between individuals – "[get] in the way":

Nothing will derail empathic receptivity and empathic understanding more quickly than pre-existing assumptions. Making these pre-judgements explicit and rendering them inert is an important function of empathic interpretation (Agosta 2010:44).

In subjecting receptivity to the operation of interpretation, the task is not, according to Agosta, to avoid the reciprocity between the interpretation and the interpreted

⁵⁴ Anticipating the discussion of speech in the following section, it is worth noting that Snodgrass and Coyne (1997:74) suggest that a speech utterance is similarly understood instantly, at the moment of hearing it: "[w]e understand it as meaningful, not after hearing it, but as we hear it. This understanding is only possible because we have a prior understanding of what the statement is saying even as it is spoken. We have, as it were, projected an understanding onto the statement in the moment of its enunciation, and in this manner understand the statement as something" (Snodgrass & Coyne 1997:74).

affectedness, but rather to “enter into it in the right way”. The various phenomena of affectedness represent “a point of articulation” in being oneself with another and point in two directions: on the one hand, towards receptivity; on the other, towards interpretation. Both, however, are needed to make a whole. Without interpretation, one’s empathic receptivity is inarticulate, but without receptivity interpretation is empty (Agosta 2010:45). What this ‘right way’ of entering into the empathic reciprocity entails for Agosta is the realisation that one is in an on-going inquiry with the other about what it means to be a human being:

We can begin with empathic receptivity, in which case the need for interpretation will be evoked by the otherwise mute receptive manifold of affectedness. Or we can begin with interpretation, in which case the need for receptivity will be evoked by an otherwise unfulfilled interpretation. In either case, the process comes full circle. So we can summarize [sic] the interpretive- as by exposing this distinction as a version of the reciprocity in the ‘hermeneutic circle’ (Agosta 2010:46).

In Agosta’s approximation, empathy ‘implements’ interpretation as a set of perspectives – namely, that of first- second- and third- person – as well as the operation of alternating between them. With assertion, interpretation takes the form whereby a human being assumes the first-person pronoun, says ‘I’. The second-person is the one who talks back to the ‘I’ – calls the ‘I’ a ‘you’ – and to whom the ‘I’ says ‘you’ in return. Between these two perspectives, an attempt is made at constructing consensus, one that supports public inquiry and ‘objectivity’ when pursued in the third-person with the proper checks and balances. The disclosure of the other as being an instance of human being in no need of fixing and lacking nothing in order to be a partner in one’s shared humanness – what Agosta (2020:44) refers to as the ‘as structure’ of interpretation – is permitted by the exposition of affectedness in possibilities of understanding as one addresses another as ‘you’ and exchange perspectives. This, in Agosta’s view, is precisely the kind of design distinction required by empathy as a full, rich way of being with other humans (Agosta 2010:47-48).⁵⁵

⁵⁵ This requirement Agosta further explains by pointing to the “many paradoxes and philosophic puzzles” resulting from the inherent asymmetry between these perspectives, resulting in “collapsing points of view, dropping out the second- person point of view altogether, or demanding of one perspective what that perspective is not designed to deliver” (Agosta 2010:48). As Gallagher and

Agosta (2020:34) correlates empathic interpretation to a popular or “folk” understanding of empathy, and the understanding of empathy as taking a walk in another’s shoes and taking the perspective of the other “as *if*” in the other’s place. By asserting that empathic interpretation works to make explicit and articulate the other “as if” one had her perspective, one may connect it to the understanding of empathy described by design theorists.⁵⁶ This “as if” structure underscores the distance maintained in empathy between empathiser and empathee, and suggests the importance of making explicit an understanding of the other especially if “one finds oneself unable to relate due to differences of character or context” (Agosta 2020:34). However, it may be clear that an understanding of empathy constrained only to this “as if” structure of empathic interpretation cannot by itself account for how empathy may be entered into or form part of a whole, coherent process.

3.3.9 Empathic speech (as listening)

As suggested above in the sections above (namely, 3.3.6 *Affectedness*, 3.3.7 *Empathic understanding (as possibility)* and 3.3.8 *Empathic interpretation (as perspective taking)*), receptivity moves from the particular affectedness to the otherness of the other while understanding starts with the possibility of possibility for the other, is further interpreted in perspectives, and thereby moves in the opposite direction. As I discuss further in the next section, Agosta (2010:50-51) understands a “full deployment” of empathy as traversing the hermeneutic circle as the totality of ways of being in the world vis-à-vis the existential structures discussed above. Of these structures, it is speech (*Rede*) – and how human beings “operate” it in communication (*Mitteilung*) – that reveals empathy as a form of articulating being-with others (Agosta 2010:51). This, Agosta explains, can be understood in the context of the exchange between perspectives discussed in the previous paragraph: The second-person – ‘you’ or in some contexts ‘thou’ – is the human being who talks back, and to which the first-person is receptive.

Zahavi (2012:21) also warn, “there is no pure third-person perspective, just as there is no view from nowhere.”

⁵⁶ See section 2.4.6 Perspective-taking: becoming the empathee, or staying beside the empathee.

Agosta (2010:51) refers to a section in *Being and Time* where Heidegger is explicitly referring to the existentialia of speech and its operation in communication:

It [communication] brings about the “sharing” of being-attuned together and of the understanding of being-with. Communication is never anything like a conveying of experiences, for example, opinion and wishes, from the inside of one subject to the inside of another. Mitdasein is essentially already manifest in attunement-with and understanding-with. Being-with is “explicitly” shared in discourse. In talking, Dasein expresses itself not because it has been initially cut off as “something internal” from something outside, but because as being-in-the-world it is already being “outside” when it understands...Being-in and its attunement are made known in discourse and indicated in language by intonation, modulation, in the tempo of talk, “in the way of speaking” (Heidegger 1996:152).

As Wendt suggests, speech is more than vocal communication, but it extends one’s way of thinking: “[i]f objects are the means by which we relate to the world, speech is how we relate to each other” (Wendt 2015:55).⁵⁷ It is worth noting that Heidegger precedes this section by stipulating that the phenomenology of communication must be understood in a sense which is “ontologically broad,” whereby the “[a]rticulation of Being with one another understandingly is constituted” (Heidegger 1962:205). Also worth pointing out, is that Agosta opts for the 1996 Stambaugh translation of *Being and Time* in his reference to this section. This allows him to more easily modify the translation to substitute the term *co-affectedness* for the phrases *being-attuned together* and *attunement-with* as translations of *Mitbefindlichkeit*.⁵⁸ For Agosta, co-affectedness – *Mitbefindlichkeit* – is precisely the way in which two humans find one another attuned to each other in the course of a conversation (Agosta 2010:51).

Agosta (2010:51) proposes that the form of speech in which empathy is made explicit is keeping silent and listening. In a section 34 of *Being and Time* dealing with the “existential-ontological foundation of language [as] discourse or talk,” Heidegger makes the claim that “[k]eeping silent authentically is possible only in genuine

⁵⁷ For Wendt (2015:55), speech and making go together as two methods of thinking: “We don’t know what we think until we speak or make.” Speaking and making demonstrate how thinking exists outside the self, refuting the division between self and world.

⁵⁸ The 1962 Macquarrie and Robinson translation of *Being and Time* translates ‘*Mitbefindlichkeit*’ to ‘co-state-of-mind’ (Heidegger 1962:205).

discoursing" (Heidegger 1962:208). By modifying the translation of *Rede* to be translated as 'speaking,' rather than 'discoursing,' Agosta can argue that the "optimal form of speech" in which empathy is articulated, is an empathic listening (Agosta 2014:289). Listening is a form of receptivity and openness (Agosta 2010:51). For Agosta, Heidegger's contribution to a 'hermeneutic of empathic receptivity' is clear:

Listening to . . . is Dasein's existential way of Being-open as Being-with for Others. Indeed, hearing constitutes the primary and authentic way in which Dasein is open for its ownmost potentiality-for-being – as in hearing the voice of the friend whom every Dasein carries with it. Dasein hears, because it understands (Heidegger 1962:206).

Keeping silent is another essential possibility of discourse, and it has the same existential foundation. In talking with one another, the person who keeps silent can 'make one understand' (that is, he can develop an understanding), and he can do so more authentically than the person who is never short of words...As a mode of discoursing, reticence articulates the intelligibility of Dasein in so primordial a manner that it gives rise to a potentiality-for-hearing which is genuine, and to a Being-with-one-another which is transparent (Heidegger 1962:208).

Agosta (2010:51) suggests that the mention above of 'the voice of the friend whom every human being carries with him' implies that different aspects of the self are being 'mobilised' when listening, pertaining to two related ways of dealing with this 'voice'. For one, Heidegger develops his analysis of conscience as that which functions in transforming the inauthentic they-self ('the one') into an authentic individual who chooses commitments autonomously (this Heidegger distinguishes from an understanding of conscience as a 'voice over' facility, which is not what he has in mind). There is also a dialogical paradigm offered as an additional approach to handling internal discourse. The various elements of the Dasein's self serve to represent both the caller and the one to whom the call is made. For Agosta (2010:51), a description of being open to others is intertwined with an account of being responsive to oneself. Similarly, Snodgrass and Coyne (1997:79) postulate that while "[g]enuine conversationalists" must be open to the questioning of the other, this openness is not the "open-mindedness' of the tabula rasa." Since one's questioning involves a particular orientation already directed by preunderstandings, questioning is always directional and intentional.

Seemingly paradoxically, then, the optimal form of speech in which empathy is articulated is empathic listening: “[l]istening gives way to that for which one listens” (Agosta 2010:52). To listen, human beings must ‘fall silent’. Heidegger (1962:342) characterises silence as an essential property of speech:

Anyone who keeps silent when he wants to give us to understand something, must ‘have something to say’. In the appeal Dasein gives itself to understand its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. This calling is therefore a keeping silent. The discourse of the conscience never comes to utterance. Only in keeping silent does the conscience call... Only in reticence, therefore, is silent discourse understood appropriately in wanting to have a conscience. It takes the words away from the common-sense idle talk of the “they” (Heidegger 1962:342-343).

This “quiescing” (Agosta 2010:53) of the on-going “idle talk” (Heidegger 1962:342) – both between individuals and within the individual’s own thinking – is such as to occasion and reinforce empathy (Agosta 2010:53). Agosta suggests that the rich paradoxes found in Heidegger’s text – calling silently, authentic speech expressing itself as listening and conscience having something to say but expressing itself in stillness – underscores the innovation of Heidegger’s interpretation of conscience. The call of conscience that occurs is a call back from distractedness in the world of gossip and idle chatter by the uncanny, silent call of care, to be one’s authentic possibilities (Agosta 2010:53).⁵⁹ Moreover, this interpretation of conscience also applied to the way the other becomes the conscience of a human being in offering an authentic, committed listening in empathy. Making decisions, making resolutions, and making commitments are made possible by establishing a clearing for committed listening, which in turn opens up possibilities. As Agosta (2010:54) points out, while a person can potentially make a commitment in solitude, the implementation thereof inevitably involves being with others. Resolutions, decisions, and commitments are never made in a vacuum; they always require the other to witness the commitment and to whom it is made:

⁵⁹ Agosta contends that Heidegger’s account of introspection would also be “positively structured” by a listening for the silent call of conscience (1962:343), if he were to deliver it. This listening has to quiesce the idle chatter of the inauthentic relations with others as well as that which is “owned as ‘mine,’” loosely described in everyday speech as an internal monologue “streaming off in one’s head” (Agosta 2010:9).

Resoluteness⁶⁰, as *authentic Being-one's-Self*, does not detach Dasein from its world; nor does it isolate it so that it becomes a free-floating "I". And how should it, when resoluteness as authentic disclosedness, is *authentically*, nothing else than *Being-in-the-world*? Resoluteness brings the Self right into its current concerned Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand, and pushes it into solicitous Being with Others (Heidegger 1962:344).

3.4 Coming full circle

For Agosta, it is thus with listening – as both a form of speech and as a form of receptivity – that the “process” of empathy comes “full circle.” The dimensions of empathy – empathic receptivity, empathic understanding, empathetic interpretation, and now empathic speech – are interconnected so that one can engage with one of them while invoking others as a part of a coherent empathic process:

We can begin with empathic receptivity, in which case the need for understanding and interpretation will be evoked by the otherwise mute receptive manifold of affectedness in a vicarious experience. Or we can begin with understanding, in which case the need for receptivity will be evoked by an otherwise unfulfilled interpretation of possibility. Or we can begin by listening, which arouses receptivity, understanding and interpretation in turn (Agosta 2014:46).

Realising that one is engaged in an ongoing conversation with the other about what it is to be a human being constitutes entering into empathetic reciprocity “the right way” (Agosta 2010:46). The application and articulation of empathy as a multi-dimensional process is granted interpretive flexibility by the continuum between empathic receptivity and empathetic comprehension (Agosta 2014:284); Agosta summarises the interpretive-as by depicting the difference between receptivity and interpretation as a version of the reciprocity in the “hermeneutic circle of empathy” (see *Fig. 1* below).

⁶⁰ Translated from *Entschlossenheit*, which can also be translated to ‘commitment’ or ‘decision’ (Agosta 2010:5).

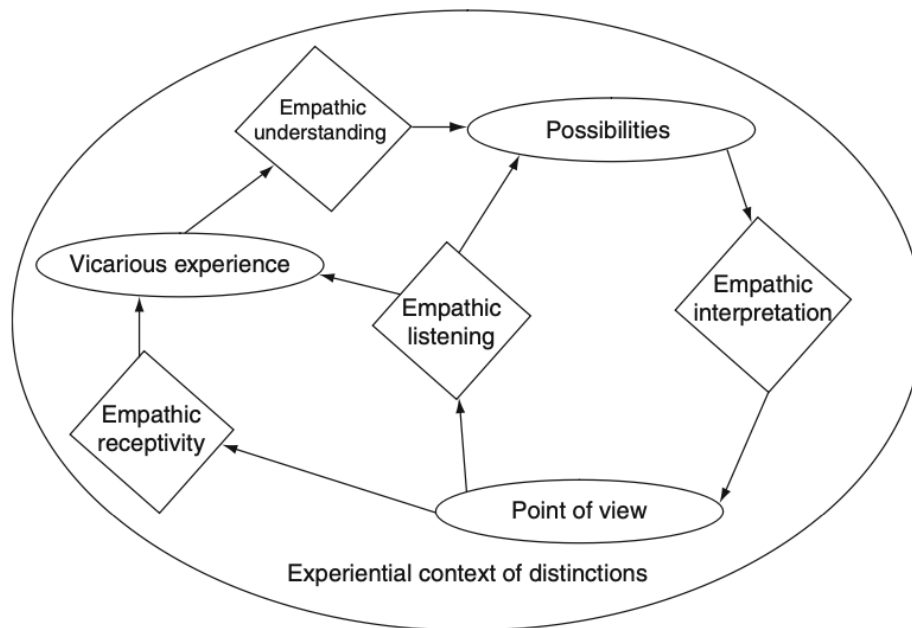


Fig. 1 *The Hermeneutic Circle of Empathy*. Reproduced from Agosta (2010:46)

Taken as such, the hermeneutic of empathy oscillates between regarding one-self (first person) as another (third-person) and vice versa: “[t]he third-person starts with the general concept of the other and works towards the particular affectedness; the first-person works from the particular affectedness towards the otherness of the other” (Agosta 2010:46). In either case, a “full deployment of empathy” must traverse the design distinctions of affectedness, understanding, interpretation and speech that constitutes ways of being in the world. This way of access to the other’s affectedness Agosta (2010:46-47) proposes as that which is entailed by the colloquial expression of ‘putting oneself in the other’s shoes’, generally interpreted as an operation of role-reversal.

An essential component of empathy as a whole is empathic responsiveness. The would-be empathiser must eventually make an effort to explain to the other person what the listener has understood in his respective experience. This expression of empathy could take the form of an appreciation of the other’s courage, persistence, or humanity in experiencing what the other has experienced. This offers the other person the chance to add further pertinent information that could support or refute the intended empathic response. A circle ensues from the processes of empathetic receptivity, empathy, comprehension, interpretation, and responsiveness. If the

proposed empathic response is inaccurate or incomplete, then, as Agosta suggests, “go back to the top and iterate” (Agosta 2019:35). This definition of empathy is summarised in *Figure 1*.

Agosta argues, however, that most analyses of intentionality and empathy overlook that empathy fundamentally brings to experience the other and the individual in community. As discussed above, since empathy is precisely what connects the individual and the other in community as a crucial component of its functioning, the person “implementing” empathy does not need to establish an epistemological relation from the one to the other. Empathy has a meaning that includes the intending of the other; otherwise, empathy would not make sense. The premise for extending the individual’s empathic intentionality to the other is their shared humanness (Agosta 2010:10).⁶¹ As Agosta indicates, rather than presenting an infinite regress, the hermeneutic of empathy, as he develops it, offer a positive indication that both receptivity and interpretation are needed to constitute the whole denoted by ‘empathy’ (Agosta 2010:47).

3.4.1 Empathy and design ethnography

Wendt (2015:55-56) argues that the “deepest” design research is that which is informed by the anthropological method of observing culture, research which he connotes as *design ethnography*. Ethnographic methods attempt to understand through experience, supporting the goal of fostering a deeply embodied relationship with those being researched. The (design) ethnographer embeds themselves into particular context and learns from observation and careful probing, thus adapting and coping with that context in a similar manner as those who already exist in that context. As Wendt reminds us, “these methods are often espoused for their ability to

⁶¹ To Agosta, this common humanness – accessed through the intending of the other as part of a community and on the basis of an experience of being human – is what is given in the empathic encounter: “[w]ithout the other, the individual loses his own humanness. The one can only intend the humanness of the other in empathy if he has his own humanness from the other” (Agosta 2010:10). This resonates with Kruger’s (2008:115) development of the characterisation of empathic capacity as the facility “to see the other not as someone distinct or different, but someone with whom humanity is shared” (Swanger’s 1993:44) into a description of empathy as “the connection between people that reminds them reciprocally of each other’s humanness.”

'generate empathy' while having relevance for designers as a way to understand others" (Wendt 2015:55-56).

Like others drawing on Heidegger's discussion of empathy (see the section titled *Intersubjectivity*) Wendt (2015:55-57) concludes that *Being-with* provides the conditions of possibility for empathy:

Empathy is not something we do but is rather a consequence of our being-with others. In this way, the conscious generation of empathy through design research methods and problem-framing is a conscious enactment of our being-with others. Empathy exists everywhere and at any time we demonstrate understanding for others. Empathy within design is simply a (supposedly) more systematic and reliable means of creating the conditions for empathy to be its most effective (Wendt 2015:56).

In this way, empathy becomes the option to establish a point of view based on one's authentic being-with (Wendt 2015:56). Based on an understanding of being-with as a central component of Dasein and empathy as a phenomenon that "emerges out of" being-with, Wendt poses the question of how designers might "provoke" the emergence of empathy. This same question applies to Madsbjerg's levels framework for empathy, to which I now return.

3.4.2 Towards a hermeneutic framework for empathy

Through Agosta, the attempt to investigate a hermeneutic classification to Madsbjerg's levels framework is permitted, whereby the "design distinctions" of *affectedness*, *understanding* and *interpretation* may be compared, respectively, to Madsbjerg's concepts of *intuitive* empathy, *aware* empathy and *analytical* empathy.

3.4.3 Affectedness and intuitive empathy

As demonstrated, affectedness is a form of receptivity, a "capacity for being affected by our inter-human milieu" upon which "a wide variety of empathic phenomena build" (Agosta 2010:35, 2014:286). Individuals must be receptive to the shared experiences of others for affect to be communicable (Agosta 2010:32). This resonates with Madsbjerg's proposal, in describing his notion of 'intuitive empathy,'

of an “empathic alignment” which influences how one adjusts to another. However, since, according to Agosta’s (2010:36) argument, the fundamental access that one individual has to the experience of another is through vicarious experiences, it may be wise to note that the ‘influence’ Madsbjerg indicates may be understood to be indirect, insofar as vicarious experience precedes any “cognitive significance” (refer to the section titled *Affectedness*).

On the other hand, what has also been established is that, to Agosta, empathy is not reducible to affectedness, but rather relies on affectedness as an “input” to the process that “eventually develops, explicates, and elaborates affectedness and produces full-blown adult, mature empathy” (Agosta 2014:286). As such, an Agostian interpretation suggests that Madsbjerg’s *intuitive* empathy may not, strictly speaking, itself qualify as empathy as such, but may be more appropriately be classified under the “fore-structure of understanding” which is to be made explicit (Agosta 2010:43) as part of the development of empathy. Insofar as the facticity of affectedness as an approach to empathy involves “readiness for empathy,” affectedness, as has been indicated, becomes a significant distinction upon which the other distinctions of empathic understanding, interpretation, and speech perform “further explicative processing and work” (Agosta 2010:31, 2014:286-287). Intuitive empathy may therefore be understood as the possibility of an openness towards the “emotional life of the other and the other’s expression of affects, sensations and passions, pleasures and pains, and moods” (Agosta 2010:30-31). In this way, intuitive empathy may yet be understood as being associated with empathic receptivity as one extreme of a continuum, rather than as a discrete “level” – as the (as yet uncleared) possibility of the traversal of the first-person working from the particular affectedness towards the otherness of the other.

At the same time, both Agosta’s notion of affectedness and Madsbjerg’s *intuitive* empathy may be compared with Svenaeus’ “minimal notion” of empathy as consisting of feeling: a pre-reflective ‘discernment’ of what is going on in a world one shares with other human beings (Svenaeus 2014:295), or; the degree to which one person is receptive to another’s emotional life and their expression of affects, sensations, and passions as well as pleasures and pains (Agosta 2010:30). Phronesis, and by extension Madsbjergs’s sensemaking project, “must be rooted in

empathy,” and take its starting point in being able to feel and know the state of predicament of the other person when seeking “the best solution” (Svenaesus 2014:295) for those designed for.

3.4.4 Understanding and aware empathy

As I discuss in the section titled *Empathic understanding (as possibility)*, (pre-thematic) understanding is characterised as a “pressing forward into” possibilities supported by a network of meaningful plans, patterns and insights. Understanding is a form of projecting possibilities of significance upon a totality of involvements with the world (Agosta 2010:39, Heidegger 1962:185), and human beings understand each other through their shared engagement in this world. It is when this understanding “breaks down” that the *thematic* understanding of the other becomes relevant (Agosta 2010:20; Zahavi 2001:155), and Agosta appoints empathy as providing the ontological possibility of access to what had otherwise been cognitively inaccessible, as “provid[ing] a clearing for a possibility of breaking through” to the possibilities of the other, and the possibility of authentic being with the other (Agosta 2010:41).

Thematic understanding is arguably what is lacking – and this lacking becomes apparent – when, as Madsbjerg (2017b:113) says, one notices something is “amiss.” What is then “triggered” (Madsbjerg 2017b:113) is an awareness of the possibility of being human in engaging in an inquiry with the other in the possibility of being human (Agosta 2010:41). Critically, this form of understanding as a grasping of possibility is, as I have discussed, not primarily cognitive, but is the condition for the possibility of cognition to be “derived ‘downstream’” (Agosta 2010:40).

We are confronted with a tension in Agosta’s hermeneutic of empathy, in this respect. As Agosta (2010:37) suggests, every vicarious experience has “at its kernel a nucleus of respect for the other,” an openness to what is occurring that does not impose on the other’s own experience or integrity: “[i]t is respect in which empathic receptivity is initially disclosed as affectedness.” However, with this suggestion one

encounters a degree of awareness already in place in vicarious experience, held at least by the other:

[In vicarious experience the] other is left with the awareness that he or she is not alone but free to create and express possibilities and make commitments no matter how limiting one's facticity (thrownness) may seem to be in the moment. The mood of respect is a paradigm here, which...means a clearing for care, in the strict Heideggerian sense, in which care includes the other in empathic being with (Agosta 2010:37).

Rather than seeing this tension as restrictive, however, one can understand it in light of the inherent tension involved in the on-going inquiry with the other about what it means to be a human being required for entering into the empathic reciprocity between empathic receptivity and empathic interpretation 'in the right way' (Agosta 2010:46) (see section titled *Coming full circle*).

3.4.5 Interpretation and analytical empathy

Interpretation (as a form of understanding – see the section titled 3.3.8 *Empathic interpretation (as perspective taking)*) is what discloses receptivity into an articulate response, and what makes explicit the possibility in which one already lives so that “it can be talked about or acted on” (Agosta 2014:288). As the operation of alternating between first-, second- and third-person perspectives, interpretation represents an attempt at constructing consensus. Agosta indicates that such consensus upholds objectivity⁶² when pursued “with the proper checks and balances” (Agosta 2010:44). Through Snodgrass and Coyne (1997:28-29), one can understand such “checks and balances” to liken (or at least constitute reference to) general principles which, in the act of interpretation, “are revealed as what they are, are revealed to be what they are, come to be understood in their being, in the

⁶² This is arguably distinct from the criteria of objectivity demanded by the natural sciences, which are, as Snodgrass and Coyne argue, self-defeating when utilised in the study of human behaviour: “In the name of objectivity, the practitioner of natural science must ignore the practices whereby facts are selected and theories and hypotheses are constructed and must regard these practices as external to the scientific endeavour. The practitioner of human science, on the contrary, must take them into account as forming part of the very behaviour that the human sciences seek to understand. No patterns of human behaviour can be understood unless these patterns of selection and exclusion are taken into account” (Snodgrass and Coyne 1997:9).

unfolding of their application in the [hermeneutic] event.” Snodgrass and Coyne explain that, in such an event, application is interlaced with and inseparable from interpretation and understanding – theory cannot be isolated from practice. Theory only comes into consciousness and is only clarified, disclosed, in the process of its application. Theory and practice therefore merge in the act of interpretation. This is contrasted with the epistemological event, wherein knowledge and its application are occur separately and sequentially: “knowledge is prior to its application. The answers to the questions arising in the situation are known in advance. They do not vary according to peculiar exigencies or contingencies” (Snodgrass & Coyne 1997:28-29). Theory transpires prior to practice in the epistemological schema.

Snodgrass and Coyne (1997:28-29) discern designing as primarily an interpretative activity, insofar as it concerns the understanding of a design situation rather than the knowledge of formulae, theorems and algorithms: “[designing] is a hermeneutical rather than an epistemological event.” Similarly, Madsbjerg’s sensemaking construct, in its adoption of phenomenology as foundational orientation, is an interpretive activity which delivers explanatory power: that account of truths not equal to universal laws, but that “tell us something profound about a very specific time and place and population” (Madsbjerg 2017b:97) (refer to the section titled *The Savannah – not the zoo*). Svenaeus (2003:409), too, finds that the goal of hermeneutics is good understanding, rather than true understanding, so long as truth is understood in terms of correspondence between statements of language and facts in the world: “It is the good reading, rather than the true reading, that constitutes the normative model and goal of hermeneutics as a methodological basis for the humanities” (Svenaeus 2003:409).⁶³

⁶³ Svenaeus makes this argument based on Gadamer’s designation of the Aristotelian concept of phronesis as a hermeneutic virtue. This does instil a moral connotation to Svenaeus’ use of the term ‘good.’ However, Svenaeus raises this argument to explain why the concept of phronesis is central to his thesis that medical practice is to be understood as a form of hermeneutics. Another point he raises to this end is to point out the fact that a Gadamerian hermeneutical approach (Svenaeus points out that an appropriation of Aristotle’s practical philosophy is at the heart of Gadamer’s main work, *Wahrheit und Methode*) is not restricted to the activities of arts and humanities, but basically concerns the dialogic meeting between persons who strive towards mutual understanding in language. It is the concept of dialogue, and not of text, that is central to Gadamerian hermeneutics (Svenaeus 2003:403). This, to Svenaeus, lends considerable credibility to the thesis that medical practice is hermeneutical in its essence. Although it is not the task of my thesis to comprehensively explore this point, I have explored evidence in this study (not limited to Snodgrass and Coyne) that the same conclusion may be drawn with respect to design.

The ‘fore-‘structure that serves as the grounding of meaning in interpretation⁶⁴ is made explicit through theoretic analysis and exchanged with assumptions that are more suitable to a given situation. The only difference, Madsbjerg claims in the 2017 Princeton talk, between *aware* and *analytical* empathy is that the latter is “infused with theory...You carefully capture, organise and rework your way through data by means of theory” (Madsbjerg 2017a).

3.4.6 Parallel continua

Despite the connections drawn between the Agostian design distinctions in relation to the hermeneutic of empathy, on the one hand, and Madsbjerg’s levels of empathy on the other, differences are apparent. As a model, Madsbjerg’s levels can rather be understood as a continuum which parallels the hermeneutic circle of empathy as developed by Agosta: with each traversal of the hermeneutic circle, one is able to progress from *intuitive*, then *aware*, then *analytical* empathy.

At this point, one may return to the question Wendt poses of how one might go ahead so as to “provoke” the emergence of empathy. As an attempt at an answer, Wendt makes the claim that speech is the medium of empathy insofar as it facilitates understanding. In the design research setting, he explains, participants are engaged through speech as a primary means of establishing connection and gathering information: “Through questions and probing, the researcher is able to extract information and hear stories about the topic at hand, hopefully generating a sense of empathic understanding of the participants” (Wendt 2015:56). The most rigorous research methods, Wendt finds, use a combination of interviews and behavioural observation to compare the difference between real behaviour and accounts of behaviour. Wendt further suggests that empathy does not always need to be a positive phenomenon: “we might discover that participants lie, and that act of lying may establish empathic understanding in the same way a positive account can.” The

⁶⁴ See section 3.3.8 *Empathic interpretation (as perspective taking)*.

process of empathic understanding in design is a conscious and purposeful way of everyday being-with (Wendt 2015:56-57).

Wendt (2015:57) further points out that, in the design process, speech and non-speech can operate in similar manner. While speaking to research participants can elicit information, aid sensemaking and facilitate empathy, the lack of speech in design research can also facilitate empathy. As examples of this phenomena, Wendt refers to “pure observational” studies in which vicarious understanding is achieved through observation and reflection, or through a researcher practicing active listening in an interview. Researchers who train themselves to listen more than they speak, in Wendt’s view, can discover deeper insights. This is consistent with Agosta’s comments discussed in the section titled *Empathic speech (as listening)*.

3.5 Conclusion to Chapter Three

Chapter Three started with an overview of Madsbjerg’s Heidegger-influenced construct of empathy. Following the delineation of the five principles making up the construct, Madsbjerg’s proposal of a levels framework for empathy was discussed as a further reference point for the exploration of a provisional framework later in the chapter. A brief survey on writings by Heidegger on the concept of empathy was then delivered, with particular emphasis on Heidegger’s negative evaluation of the concept in *Being and Time*. This survey provided a context for the ensuing exploration of Agosta’s situation and development of a special hermeneutic of empathy. This provided a basis for a provisional framework for empathy through a Heideggerian reconstruction of empathy, which was then developed by connecting the components of the hermeneutic of empathy as developed to the relevant findings from Madsbjerg’s levels framework. In Chapter Four, the provisional framework will be further situated in relation to design with a discussion of the theoretical perspectives on design thinking.

CHAPTER FOUR: DESIGNERLY PERSPECTIVES ON EMPATHY

4.1 Introduction to Chapter Four

As discussed in Chapter Three, Madsbjerg dismisses design thinking as anti-intellectual and “unhelpful to authentic creative endeavours” (Madsbjerg 2015:134). Indeed, by claiming that the methods used in design thinking for understanding and fostering empathy for subjects are largely invisible other than references to techniques such as ethnography, Madsbjerg recalls Seitz’s (2020:39) questioning of the validity of empathy as an epistemological instrument in design thinking.

The “‘tyranny’ of willed creativity” which Madsbjerg associates with design thinking he situates as a prevalent part of the business management culture conversation around innovation. Madsbjerg’s perspective allows for an appreciation of design thinking as an interpretation thereof within the management discourse. Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2013:127) elaborate:

With some experience from design practice, we find it hard to think about innovation without including design. And it is from an innovation perspective that the popularity of ‘design thinking’ [as part of the management discourse] has to be understood, as here the concept captures the design practice and the way designers make sense of their task, and ‘a way of thinking’ that non-designers can also use, or as a source of inspiration...rather than being limited to a professional group of designers as Schön might argue. And here might be one of the keys to the popularity of the concept just after the millennium.

Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2013:127) further explain that the management design thinking discourse is less reflective and less robust than contributions to the academic design thinking discourse that have been sustained by scholars over several decades: “‘Design thinking’ is much younger than ‘designerly thinking’, but it has grown rapidly” (2013:127). In the adoption of design thinking within the management discourse, Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* suggest what may have been left out:

Design thinking can be seen as a translation of designerly thinking into a popularized [sic], management version. As with any translation, nuances of meaning may be left out, and acknowledging these 'left out dimensions' is important academic work.

Although this paper will not go into depth in all the ways in which Madsbjerg's thinking can be compared to the academic discourse of design thinking, it is important to stress that Madsbjerg is reacting to an understanding of design thinking constrained by the management discourse. As such, his claim that design thinking does not allow the space for the hard work – “the truth of making sense of the world” – required for creative thinking and brilliant innovation is questionable when concerned with the academic design thinking discourse. As has been noted in previous chapters, however, there are comparisons that have started emerging between Madsbjerg's conception of sensemaking and ideas taken from the epistemological perspectives on design and designerly thinking introduced in Chapter Two. With a provisional framework for empathy which includes thinking from Madsbjerg and Agosta (interpreting Heidegger) having been articulated in Chapter Three, this chapter attempts to synthesise aspects of the framework in relation to epistemological perspectives on design and designerly thinking.

4.2 Empathy and the creation of artefacts

In *The Sciences of the Artificial*, Simon (1996:2) proposes that “[t]he world we live in today is much more a man-made, or artificial, world than it is a natural world.” Artificial things, to Simon, can in turn be characterised in terms of functions, goals and adaptation (Simon 1996:5). By adopting an apparent rationalist “priority of purposeful behaviour in human affairs” (Coyne 1995:19), Simon is aligned with a broader cognitivist construct of subjectivism⁶⁵. According to this conception, the

⁶⁵ While Coyne (1995:17-31) focuses his discussion of the theoretical orientation to computer systems design on the field of artificial intelligence research that “trades in the capture and preservation of human knowledge in machine form” (Coyne 1995:4), he points out that researchers outside of the area of automated intelligence are also interested in similar models to those developed in this field. As Coyne points out, to some researchers, general computer system design should consider cognitive models, insofar as, according to these researchers, a computer system may be understood to embody a representation of the goals and plans of its users, and the users in turn have a model of the computer and of the situation and domain he or she is working in. According to this position, “irrespective of whether the system is to be “intelligent,” good system design takes account of cognitive models” (Coyne 1995:20).

“subject (the thinking self) identifies problems and goals, much like Descartes’s method of reason, then sets about achieving those goals” (Coyne 1995:19). This characterisation of cognition therefore includes the Cartesian “self-evident” notion of the thinking subject (*res cogitans*) as distinct from an independent and measurable spatial object world (*res externa*). Consequently, the “essence of thought” can be described in terms of “formulas, production rules, and axioms in predicate calculus” (Coyne 1995:20), able to be processed through context-independent and unprejudiced reason. Human reason and activity are thereby motivated in accordance with the objectives or aims, and reason can be separated from the culturally situated human agency and acted on formulaically. People are always concerned with ends, continually creating and revising goals in response to challenging circumstances, and creating means, or plans, to carry them out (Coyne 1995:19-21).

By this characterisation, Coyne (1995:4) identifies Simon as being allegiant to conservatism. As I discussed in Chapter 2, Simon strove to position design thinking within the positivist framework of the sciences. As Coyne (1995:6) explains, logical positivism, as a philosophical movement, epitomised the search for the conservation of truth in predicate form. Simon’s concern with conservation becomes apparent in his notion of design as an intervention or manipulation: design is to convert an undesired situation into a desirable one (Coyne 1995:10). According to this conception, individuals are granted a sense of atomic priority: designers presuppose their ability to independently declare needs, wants, and intentions, and artifacts are understood as the product of creative individuals or teams of individuals (Coyne 1995:10-11). The conservative view presumes that, by designing through the application of decontextualised method and “a modest adaptation of ordinary declarative logic” (Simon 1996:115), designers impose precise control over what they produce: “A sequence of steps takes us from the undesired situation to the desired” (Coyne 1995:11). In this way, design artifacts are understood to conserve the intentions and meanings of their producers⁶⁶. As Krippendorff (2005:26) explains:

⁶⁶ Coyne (1995:3) compares this view with the conservative position on the interpretation of texts. According to this position, the task of interpretation is to extract “original meanings placed in the text” by the author: “Texts serve to conserve meaning.”

Not only does Simon's rationality assume consensus on what is to be accomplished, it also takes for granted that the outcome of the design process can be implemented by decree, similar to how the components of a mechanical system are installed.

The rationalistic premise that human cognitive experience has an interior and an exterior, an inside world of knowledge that entails a self-knowing about itself, and an outside world that that self can also know about, is highlighted by logical positivism. Coyne (1995:19) notes that this distinction between, respectively, "subjective knowledge" and "objective knowledge," is not contingent on any particular context of discussion:

In assuming the immutability of subject and object, communication is largely a matter of passing information from one subject to another through the medium of the "external world."

In the conservative view, information is the "raw material" of reason (Coyne 1995:18). Communication is understood in terms of passing information from one agent to another: "[c]ommunication gives us access to each other's subjectivities" (Coyne 1995:19).

As Coyne (1995:28) points out, the rationalist tenets underlying Simon's position on design promotes the designer to the role of expert who has privileged "access to the theories and [who is] best placed to deliver the appropriate designs." The implication of this is that the participation of the clientele or end users in the design process is minimised: "The tenets of rationalism militate against practice as participation" (Coyne 1995:28). However, Coyne (1995:30) stresses that, in spite of rationalism asserting the superior position of the expert, the design process demands engagement with the experiences of the clientele and an account of the designer's involvement in practice as a community⁶⁷.

⁶⁷ Mattelmäki and Battarbee (2002:119) specify empathy in particular as requisite to the design process as design considerations move "from rational and practical issues to personal experiences and private contexts."

Carrol finds that Simon does, in fact, express sympathy with the central concepts of participatory design⁶⁸. In his discussion of the design of complex systems, for example, Simon (1996:130) notes:

We have usually thought of city planning as a means whereby the planner's creative activity could build a system that would satisfy the needs of a populace. Perhaps we should think of city planning as a valuable creative activity in which many members of a community can have the opportunity of participating if we have wits to organize [*sic*] the process that way.

Carrol (2006:6) points out that Simon maintained an awareness of the challenge in design work of framing design problems with sufficient scope to account for likely side-effects, and held the view that designers must consider consequences beyond their clients' directly articulated concerns. Especially in his later revision of *The Sciences of the Artificial*, Simon demonstrated an awareness of the limits of professional expertise in understanding the "remote consequences of their prescriptions" (Simon 1996:150):

The traditional definition of the professional's role is highly compatible with bounded rationality, which is most comfortable with problems having clear-cut and limited goals. But as knowledge grows, the role of the professional comes under questioning.

Carrol finds that, in response to this challenge, Simon considered design as social activity. However, Carrol (2006:8) adds that Simon conceived of the relationship between "official"⁶⁹ designer and end-users game-theoretically. Simon (1996:153-154) offers a model of engagement whereby "planners make their move (i.e. implement their design), and those who are affected by it then alter their own behavior [*sic*] to achieve their goals in the changed environment." Simon's tendency to see relationships in terms of underlying logic rather than social dynamics limits his analysis to social interaction as asynchronous transactions (indeed, as Carrol points

⁶⁸ Carrol (2006:3) specifies the term participatory design as referring to a "large collection of attitudes and techniques predicated on the concept that the people who ultimately will use a designed artifact are entitled to have a voice in how the artifact is designed." It is not a single and integral design method, but a "high-level feature of design methods that can be implemented in a myriad of ways."

⁶⁹ Simon's view of participation that emerges in his revised work understands end-users as active participants "designing their own use" (Carrol 2006:8): "The members of an organization [*sic*] or a society for whom plans are made are not passive instruments, but are themselves designers who are seeking to use the system to further their own goals" (Simon 1996:153).

out, “rather stodgy” turn-taking). While Carrol (2006:8) concedes that such analysis is compatible with cooperative “games in which all stakeholders in a design work towards common objectives,” it is not compatible with collaboration in which participants work together to design *each* move. While advocating for an active role for users in design, this is on condition of designers making the first move:

[Simon’s] game-theoretic view suggests the metaphor of chess openings, namely, that the initial design move is drawn from a standard body of design knowledge, and after that interesting and creative things begin to occur. (Carrol 2006:8)

As discussed above, Simon’s subjectivism binds his thinking to a view by which communication is understood in terms of passing information (the “raw material’ of reason”) from one agent to another. In this way, I understand Simon’s game-theoretic view of collaboration as being constrained to a syllogistic understanding of reason. In this understanding, reason is seen as determinate: “It closes conversation and settles the matter” (Coyne 1995:54).⁷⁰ In Simon’s paradigm, designers impose metaphysical systems and appeal to principles that are asserted as transcending the given situation to decide matters (Coyne 1995:55). Such an understanding holds that knowledge can only be transmitted between object and subject, and does not accommodate for clarification or disclosure in the act of interpretation in which theory and practice coalesce. On this basis, any framework for empathy is reduced only to technique which cannot account for real understanding or insight.

4.3 Empathy and Reflexive practice

In *The Reflective Practitioner* Schön draws attention to a considerable disparity between what he finds to be an entrenched picture of the kind of instrumental knowledge which successful practitioners are supposed to possess and the knowing-in-action which their practices actually embody. Schön explicitly challenged the positivist doctrine underlying much of the “design science” movement by asking:

⁷⁰ Coyne (1995:54) equates the notion of “technological rationality” with the focus of syllogism on the “capturing [of] the essence of reason.” Krippendorff (2005:26), in turn, suggests that, while “at home” in coherent social hierarchies, technological rationality fails when applied to problems that involve people as informed agents in heterarchical forms of organisations. In such contexts “technical-rational problem solving breaks down, and design must proceed differently.”

How comes it that in the second half of the twentieth century we find in our universities, embedded not only in men's minds but in the institutions themselves, a dominant view of professional knowledge as the application of scientific theory and technique to the instrumental problems of practice? (Schön 1983:30).

Schön criticises Simon's "science of design" by pointing out that Simon's "science can be applied only to well-formed problems already extracted from situations of practice," while in professional design "well-formed instrumental problems are not given but must be constructed from messy problematic situations" (Schön 1983:47). Schön proposes instead to search for "an epistemology of practice implicit in the artistic, intuitive processes which some practitioners do bring to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict" (Schön 1983:49) and which he characterises as "reflective practice" (Schön 1983:ix). This shows that Schön is more willing than his positivist forebears to trust the skills demonstrated by skilled practitioners and to attempt to account for those skills rather than to discount them. (Cross 2006:99). The reflective practitioner becomes a post-rationalist model of the designer, whereby the rationalist concepts of "problem" and the instrumental view of design as a "problem-solving process" is superseded by the pragmatic and phenomenological concept of "situation" (Bousbaci 2008:40). By understanding design as "reflection in action," pragmatism sees design as an exploration, but, as Coyne (1995:11) suggests, one that is "already in progress prior to any particular design situation": designers are already caught up in a world of artifacts, practices and their shared history.

4.3.1 Schön and hermeneutic reflection-in-action

As (Snodgrass & Coyne 1997:81) point out, even a " cursory examination" of Schön's protocol studies indicates that the design process he describes works according to the dynamics of the hermeneutical circle. By "reflection-in-action," Schön refers to "a reflective conversation with the situation" (Schön 1983:67-103,148,163): the hermeneutic circle is entered into through a dialogic exchange with the design situation.

In one of the protocols Schön (1983:79-102) studies, he quotes a studio master in the context of an architectural design studio as proposing an understanding of reflection on the “action of designing as” as “[working] simultaneously from the unit and from the total and then [going] in in cycles—back and forth, back and forth...” (Schön 1983:81,92). First, however, one must “begin with a discipline, even if it is arbitrary” (Schön 1983:92). To Snodgrass and Coyne (1997:81), this disciplinary starting point represents the hermeneutic projection of a preunderstanding. Snodgrass and Coyne read Schön as positioning the projected discipline as the asking of the question “what if,” the “testing of local moves” in an “evolving system of implications within which the designer reflects-in-action” (Schön 1983:100). As Snodgrass and Coyne (1997:81) elaborate:

[t]he designer thus begins the design task by shaping the situation in accordance with an initial appreciation. The situation then “talks back” and the designer responds to the situation’s back talk by reflecting-in-action on the construction of the problem, the strategies of action, or the model of the phenomena. The process then develops in a circle—“back and forth, back and forth.”

For Snodgrass and Coyne, Schön is describing a “clear and straightforward account” of the operation of the hermeneutical circle. The designer proceeds by an inter-referencing between a “projected whole” and the specifics that make up the design situation: in the design process designers “project the meaning of the whole and work out the implications of this projection by referring it back to the parts...the design is continually re-determined by an anticipatory movement of the pre-understanding” (Snodgrass & Coyne 1997:81). In the design process, understanding therefore arises by a process of constant revisions.

Snodgrass and Coyne adopt Schön’s account of the design process as being “grounded in understanding and [as being] nothing other than the explication of what has already been understood” (Snodgrass & Coyne 1997:82). Borrowing heavily from Heidegger’s language, they maintain that the design situation is one of an understanding into which the designer is thrown by past design experience, yet from which the designer can project a provisional image of a future fulfilment of the design requirements:

There is a mutual influencing and interaction of past, present and future understandings. Our present understanding of the artefact projects forward to adumbrate the artefact in its future completion, and this provisional projection then throws back to refashion our present understanding, which in turn throws back to refashion our understanding of our past experience...and so the cycle continues (Snodgrass & Coyne 1997:82).

The design situation thereby comes to be a reflection on the prejudgements, preunderstandings, values and attitudes held and by the designer and introduced to the design situation. Reflection is “referred back to the designer’s own fore-structures” (Snodgrass & Coyne 1997:83): Design is “an interpretative activity, one of understanding a design situation rather than of solving a problem” (Snodgrass & Coyne 1997:82). As I discuss in Chapter 3, all interpretation, empathic interpretation included, operates in such fore-structures. In the analysis of understanding as a projecting within thrownness, Heidegger draws particular attention to the fact that “[a]n interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us” (Heidegger 1962:191-192), but always arises within the structures of ‘forehaving’, ‘foresight’, and ‘foreconception.’ As Dunne (2009:110) points out, this makes of understanding a circular process: “our foreknowledge must be open to modification by what we are trying to understand; but this ‘what’ is not available to us at all outside our foreknowledge.” For Heidegger, this circular movement of understanding is unavoidable and definitive; it is “the expression of the existential forestructure of Dasein itself,” in it “is hidden a positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing” (Heidegger 1962:153).

Schön’s account of the design process can therefore be considered to be amenable to the possibility of the “operation of interpretation” required by empathy. However, the “point of articulation” in being oneself with another is not accounted for explicitly by Schön. As determined in Chapter 3, in order to enter into empathic reciprocity between interpretation and the interpreted affectedness, second- and third- person perspectives are required. Schön does indeed acknowledge the capacity for empathy in his discussion of the relationship between therapist and client, which he describes as potential grounds for inquiry in which “thoughts and feelings can be seen as sources of discovery” (Schön 1983:161). Nevertheless, in elaborating the account of reflection-in-action into an epistemology of practice, Schön (1983:132-133) gives priority to reflection on the “actual practice of experienced, competent

practitioners who reflect-in-action.” Accounting for second- and third-person perspectives are not developed beyond an implicitly intimated possibility.

Coyne (1997:96), however, finds that user participation is inherently bound to the hermeneutical account of design. To substantiate this perspective, Coyne points to a “holistic connectivity” which is present both in Heidegger’s account of equipmentality and his later writing which presents the notion of *the thing* as a gathering. This connectivity Coyne links to the contemporary hermeneutical emphasis on community and praxis which understands technologies as always caught up in a field of community praxis. Insofar as this understanding applies to the invention, design, manufacture and use of design artifacts, these artifacts are caught up in praxis that involves communities of designers and stakeholders.

For Coyne, design comes to be about the concern over the projecting of expectations rather than addressing needs, the latter being representative of a positivist understanding of design. In the pragmatist view, expectations are situated within communities, as is the design activity itself and the evaluation thereof. Needs are, in turn, identified retrospectively or during the development of the design, rather than at the outset of the design process. Snodgrass and Coyne (1997:82) note that an openness that allows for the “intrusion of rival projections” is determinative in the efficacy of the design process:

Every projection contains the potentiality of itself projecting a new design. Alternate projections can develop side by side until they coalesce or one drops out of the contest.

For Coyne (1995:96), the design process assumes trust in the process of participation “with all its vagaries and frictions” resulting from the openness to “rival projections” held by participants. With this, one satisfies the qualification of the openness to the situation that is characteristic of human beings in-community which Agosta identifies with the distinction of affectedness discussed in Chapter 3, and account for the second- and third-person perspectives required to enter into empathic reciprocity between interpretation and interpreted affectedness “in the right way”.

4.3.2 Schön and Pragmatism

As indicated in Chapter 2 and the section above, Schön's theoretical frame of reference was pragmatism. An understanding of how this frame of reference informed his writing on reflective practice is supported by the link Coyne (1995:48) makes between a "pragmatic turn" in design research and a hermeneutical conception of the design approach as described above. Pragmatism contends that inquiry is inseparable from the practical, and advances the thesis that theory is a kind of practice (Coyne 1995:36-37):

It is not that the theoretical and the practical are simply two ways of looking at something, or two activities—intellectual inquiry, which is theoretical, and application, which is practical. There is only the practical. What we commonly refer to as theory is just a kind of practice (Coyne 1995:48).

Similarly, Coyne (1995:48) understands the hermeneutical thesis as contending that understanding and knowledge are not bound by theories but by practical judgment, that is to say phronesis. Coyne acknowledges that he adopts a "modern rehabilitation" of the concept of phronesis, especially that presented by Gadamer, whereby it is understood as a situated judgment taking place through dialogue in human communities: praxis concerns "action in situated human practices" (Coyne 1995:89). Through this understanding, Coyne asserts that both the hermeneutic and pragmatic orientations hold that phronesis is "the only way of knowing," with the "rules, formulas, frames, plans, scripts, and semantic networks" given precedence by positivism now understood not as forms of knowledge but as tools for research (Coyne 1995:48).

Dunne (2009:272) finds, however, that phronesis is not so much a form of knowledge as a purposive "resourcefulness of mind that is called into play in, and responds uniquely to, the situation." In their review of Dunne's examination, Chia and Holt (2009:107-108) find that both phronesis and praxis are non-instrumental forms of a type of action that "unwittingly produces a coherent strategy through merely striving to cultivate oneself without any regard for a tangible output." Praxis describes a form of personal engagement in which "the self is totally immersed in the activity, of which it forms a part" (Chia & Holt 2009:108). To the extent that praxis involves

“absorbed action...an ineluctable movement that a person can never step out of” (Dunne 2009:268), it draws the self into action. Praxis is thereby understood not as the deliberate seeking of any intended outcome, but as a striving for self-realisation. Chia and Holt (2009:108) suggest that it is precisely this non-deliberate form of acting that “indirectly and intentionally produces progressive and lasting outcomes”: from praxis, phronesis arises not as a consciously acquired ability but as an expression of the “internalized [*sic*] tendencies and dispositions of an individual as a thoroughly engaged being; a *modus operandi* acquired through the process of socialization [*sic*] and maturation” (Chia and Holt 2009:109). In contrast to “the purposeful and deliberate activity of producing outcomes that draws upon the form of instrumentally engaged knowledge that is called *technē*” (Chia and Holt 2009:108), phronesis is a “mediation of the universal and the particular in a way that puts a premium on experience and perceptiveness rather than on formulated knowledge” (Dunne 2009:273). By emphasising the socialised basis of phronesis, one can in this case identify perceptiveness with the openness to the emotional life of the other and the other’s expression of affects, sensations and passions, pleasures and pains, and moods Agosta (2010:30) describes in relation to *affectedness*.

A relevant implication of the account of praxis described above is that a critical aspect of exercising phronesis and praxis is that designers decide in each instance of practice which method or technique to apply, when to use it, and why and how to use it. By describing reflection as the process of “going outside the immediate situation” to, in part, “search for an appropriate tool”, tools remain part of the “active productive skill brought to bear on the situation” (Coyne 1995:39). It is through phronetic engagement that the applicability of tools that feature in the reflective experience – including theories, proposals, recommended methods, and courses of action – is worked out in the situation. This implication in turn supports the position encountered in Chapter 2 that the willingness of designer to enter into *affectedness* as a form of receptivity can be enhanced through the exploration and application of the techniques described by Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser (2009:440) as “encapsulating direct contact, communication and the stimulation of ideation by enhancing imagination.”

However, the above also suggests the persistence of a productivist thinking in Schön. This is explored in the next section.

4.3.3 Schön and Constructivism

According to Nielsen (2007:456), the idea of reflection in practice, which is essential to Schön's methodology, entails the practitioner responding to practical issues in a manner akin to how an intellectual would approach an academic issue. In his or her practice, the practitioner considers, experiments with, and creates fresh approaches to the topic at hand: Schön's practical thinking is focused on doing relevant experiments in the manner of a scientist until a suitable solution has been found. Whereas Schön has thus far in this study been regarded as aligning with the paradigm of pragmatism, I now turn to the implications of understanding Schön as offering a constructivist paradigm (Cross 2006:99, Nielsen 2007:456).

According to the constructivist paradigm, experience of the world is assumed to be objective and certain, understood spatially and temporally, with causal interactions between objects. Experience is constituted through the mind's application of these cognitive structures to basic sensory impressions. Constructivism therefore places significant emphasis on knowledge and knowing the world (Nielsen 2007:455-456).

As Nielsen (2007:459) points out, Schön's account of reflection-in-action entails the deliberate abstraction of certain aspects of a practical situation in order to render them as objects of the practitioner's thinking, without any loss of complexity of the situation as a whole. This abstraction is understood to be a prerequisite for the practitioner to establish a comprehension of the situation. Schön's viewpoint is focused on the portion of a scenario where the practitioner explores with "on-hand" resources to come up with a solution to an issue. By adopting Heidegger's perspective, it may be said that Schön's interpretation of reflection-in-action places a particular relationship, namely the present-at-hand, at the centre. Schön emphasises that practical knowledge must be constructed by the practitioner to a significant extent before he or she can utilise equipment. To Schön, equipment is any object that can be altered and presents an occasion for the practitioner to reflect if the

equipment does not act as expected. According to Heidegger, however, the purpose employing equipment is not first and foremost individually and mentally constructed, but is already embedded in the equipment and everyday practice (Nielsen 2007:462). To reflect-in-action would mean that the practitioner reduces the complexity of the situation. One's reflective capabilities are incapable of making the situation transparent. If one follows Heidegger here, one could say that reflection-in-action would only work in delimited situations with a low degree of complexity. Practical understanding can never be constructed from a selection of isolated problems that the practitioner tries to solve. The problems that stand out, those one has to "reflect" one's way out of, are of another type than the kinds of activities one is surrounded by in one's everyday life. Heidegger demands that one give closer focus on the processes which constitute one's familiarity and are the background of certain subject matters that show as issues (Nielsen 2007:467).

Nielsen (2007:459) finds that a "pivotal difference" between Schön and Heidegger lies in the concept of what Heidegger terms as "circumspection" [*Umsicht*]. As Nielsen elaborates, circumspection is characterised by an understanding of the world as ready-to-hand: human beings have a specific way of orientating themselves by which one's manipulation of equipment is guided and "from which [equipment] acquires its specific *Thingly* character" (Heidegger 1962:98). This orientation understands objects in their actual connection before one understand them in themselves:

The basic way for the practitioner to orientate herself is by looking around. By means of circumspection or "looking around", the practitioner learns how pieces of equipment are related to each other. Inspired by Heidegger we can claim that to understand practice, the learner needs to participate and see how things are done in their context as a presupposition for learning in practice (Nielsen 2007:463).

Nielsen (2007:460) finds Heidegger's concept of circumspection to be "more useful" than Schön's reflection-in-action, as it introduces a way of understanding context, which is "crucial for getting a grip on complex everyday situations." It is within these contexts that one encounter others:

When Others are encountered, it is not the case that one's own subject is *proximally* present-at-hand and that the rest of the subjects, which are likewise occurrents, get discriminated beforehand and then apprehended; nor are they encountered by a primary act of looking at oneself in such a way that the opposite pole of a distinction first gets ascertained. They are encountered from out of the *world*, in which concernfully circumspective Dasein essentially dwells. Theoretically concocted 'explanations' of the Being-present-at-hand of Others urge themselves upon us all too easily; but over against such explanations we must hold fast to the phenomenal facts of the case which we have pointed out, namely, that Others are encountered environmentally (Heidegger 1962:155).

Indeed, Heidegger draws an analogy between the circumspection of readiness-to-hand and solicitude (Hatab 2002:265n5):

Solicitude proves to be a state of Dasein's Being – one which, in accordance with its different possibilities, is bound up with its Being towards the world of concern, and likewise with its authentic Being towards itself. Being with one another is based proximally and often exclusively upon what is a matter of common concern in such Being (Heidegger 1962:159).

When those in Being-with-one-another “devote themselves to the same affair in common, their doing so is determined by the manner in which their Dasein, each in its own way, has been taken hold of. They thus become *authentically* bound together, and this makes possible the right kind of objectivity [die rechte Sachlichkeit], which frees the Other in his freedom for himself” (Heidegger 1962:159). Hatab interprets through Heidegger a risk in vacillating between the “positive extremes” of overtaking – standing in for another's care – and release – of the other *in* his care – as modes of solicitude. On this basis, Hatab finds an important role for phronesis to “negotiate a balance between self-regard and other-regarding empathic concern.”⁷¹ An account of phronetic solicitude and circumspection can be developed in an Agostian framework to account for the event of releasement.

4.4 Empathy and problem-solving

As discussed above in the section 2.3.3 *Design and designerly thinking as a problem-solving activity*, Buchanan argues for an understanding of rhetoric as a

⁷¹ Hatab notes that, in the introduction to a proposed but unpublished book on Aristotle, Heidegger translates phronesis as *fürsorgende Umsicht*, which is to say ‘solicitous circumspection’.

central component of design. Intimate links are also found between rhetoric – “the art of persuasive speech” (Sipiora 1991:239) – and Heidegger’s thinking (Sipiora 1991:239). In *Being and Time*, for instance, Heidegger (1962:178) provides a positive estimation of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*:

Contrary to the traditional orientation, according to which rhetoric is conceived as the kind of thing we ‘learn in school’, this work of Aristotle must be taken as the first systematic hermeneutic of the everydayness of Being with one another. Publicness, as the kind of Being which belongs to the “they”...not only has in general its own way of having a mood, but needs moods and ‘makes’ them for itself. It is into such a mood and out of such a mood that the orator speaks. He must understand the possibilities of moods in order to rouse them and guide them aright.

Moods, as discussed in the sections 3.3.6 *Affectedness* and 3.4.3 *Affectedness and intuitive empathy*, play a role in the disclosure of being-in-the-world as a whole. Moods are the pre-thematic attunement to the referential context in which one finds oneself with others and in terms of which any and all things take on meaning: “[t]he disclosive status of moods resides in their telling us the way in which the world matters to us” (Sipiora 1991:240). As Sipiora (1991:240) elaborates, the moods which characterise the publicness of the “they” are a common disclosure of one’s everyday familiarity with the world. This familiarity is the “lived ground” held in common by speaker and hearer (Sipiora 1991:240). On this basis, Sipiora maintains that Heidegger appears to acknowledge that rhetoric differs from the idle chatter of the “they”⁷². The art of rhetoric, “which Aristotle contends can discover the means of persuasion in reference to any given situation”, is grounded in an understanding of world disclosure and brings about a “re-formed attunement” to a common context of concerns: “[t]he art of rhetoric empowers the orator to transform the very familiarity of the world which she or he shares with the audience” (Sipiora 1991:240).

Having explored rhetoric as a central component of design, Buchanan (1985:20) more specifically likens design arguments and the rhetoric of things to an orientation of persuasion in language towards the present, which, while stemming from

⁷² See 3.3.9 *Empathic speech (as listening)*.

materials from the past and hinting at possibilities for the future, is most concerned with attitudes in the present:

[Design arguments and the rhetoric of things] are demonstrations or exhibitions, growing out of the past (as in traditional shapes and forms or in already known scientific principles that provide the premises for construction) and suggesting possibilities for the future (as in future activities that a given object may make possible), yet existing primarily in the present as declarations (Buchanan 1985:20).

Buchanan identifies the kind of rhetoric associated with this orientation as *demonstrative* or *epideictic* rhetoric, and further notes (Buchanan 2001a:200) that in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, the problems addressed by epideictic rhetoric are presented *in terms* of the judgments that audiences are called upon to make. Again linking Heidegger with Aristotle, Sipiora (1991:242) points out that recollection of the past in epideictic rhetoric is not merely a calling to mind of what has come before, but is a turning of the audience to "face the presence of their past in such a way that the happenings of the past re-call or re-claim it." The past thereby appears as a dynamic presence, the recollection of which brings to attention the claims in which the present originates. The anticipation by the epideictic orator of the future is, likewise, not the foretelling of what will someday be present so much as the engendering of a recognition of, and openness to, possibilities that are coming towards the audience "out of the horizon of the future." Anticipation of the future is an awareness thereof as appearing now in the ways in which the present is "drawn beyond itself" (Sipiora 1991:242).⁷³

Sipiora (1991:246) points out towards the status of epideictic rhetoric as a rhetorical performative act, whereby the performance does not just say something about a topic, nor do they only assert opinions or argue facts. Rhetorical performatives "actively participate in the reality to which they refer." Rhetorical performative acts direct their audience's attention to their significance as actions and thereby involve the audience in the "action." As Sipiora further points out, Heidegger makes a similar case with respect to meditative thinking, by proposing that thinking "is not inactivity

⁷³ In an address celebrating the seven hundredth anniversary of the founding of the town of Heidegger's birth, Heidegger (1973:47) tells his audience that "[t]omorrow is not only the tomorrow that follows immediately upon today; rather it already dominates within the affairs of today."

but in itself by its very nature an engagement that stands in dialogue with the epochal moment of the world” (Heidegger 1981:60). Meditative thinking, as proposed by Heidegger, is not an idle reflection about the world but a dialogical engagement of being-in-the-world with the “there” of its being, and, by extension, of its being-with. The rhetorical presentation of meditative thinking relies on the specific structure of being-with as discourse. As discussed in section 3.3.5 *Authentic being together with others*, a positive form of solicitude – Dasein’s involvement with others – is that of “leaping ahead,” whereby Dasein leaps ahead of the other in her or his involvements, not to disburden the other of her or his concerns, but to free the other to engage these concerns authentically. Epideictic performance of meditative thinking, Sipiora (1991:247) argues, leaps ahead of the audience by attuning them to the meanings latent in the “alienated everydayness of their being-in-the-world.” Undertaken in the form of rhetoric as a being-with in discourse, the *act* of concerned solicitude delivers the audience to the situations in which they may be able to realise their “ownmost potentiality-for-being.”⁷⁴ For Buchanan (2001a:194) an important perspective that all products are vivid arguments about how to lead one’s life emerges when approaching design from a rhetorical perspective. These arguments offer substitutes for the immediate tasks and activities of daily life, but they also have more subtle and difficult-to-understand long-term repercussions. According to Buchanan, one of the main “wicked challenges” of design thinking today is the formulation of criteria for successful products, since these have persistent implications in the behaviour of human beings.

Sipiora (1991:247) finds that a fundamental tenet upon which the whole project of meditative thinking’s epideictic performance turns is that of appropriateness or *propriety*. As Sipiora elaborates, genuine thought is always a response to that which calls to be thought about: thought flourishes only when it is an appropriate response to that call. Epideictic rhetoric, according to Sipiora, seeks to establish a feeling or disposition to act at the appropriate moment. The persuasive power of epideictic

⁷⁴ This paper falls short of engaging with Heidegger on many aspects of his thinking on technology and its enframing presencing of being, but it is worth noting that, as Sipiora (1991:247) points out, Heidegger’s notion of solicitude can be understood within the wider context of world destiny [Weltgeschick]. To Heidegger, it was only within situations of Dasein’s realisation of its ownmost potentiality-for-being that it can anticipate a “destining of Being which would grant human beings genuinely new possibilities of dwelling in an age of technology” (Sipiora 1991:247).

rhetoric is directed toward the clarification and cultivation of “already existing evaluative dispositions” (Sipiora 1991:248). A similar concern with propriety emerges in Buchanan’s (Buchanan 2001a:196-197) observation that, if a product is persuasive in the “debate about how we should lead our lives”, it is so because a designer has achieved a powerful and compelling balance of what is perceived to be useful, usable, and desirable, and, indeed, of the themes of *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos*.⁷⁵ What the appropriate balance should be in either a particular product or in products in general is, according to Buchanan, one of the most complex problems in design “precisely because of the pluralism of competing visions and philosophies of design that have existed since the earliest days of design practice.” According to Buchanan, the concept of the designer’s obligation to the people who use their products within their “community of use” has gradually converged in design thinking. Epideictic rhetoric suggests how designers might respond to design challenges as an “engagement that stands in dialogue with the epochal moment of the world,” corresponding to the “highly idiosyncratic” practice of design described by Buchanan (2001a:198) and which is typically influenced in subtle ways by the philosophic perspective of the designer. As Buchanan reminds us, designing is not simply the following of procedural steps in the design process: “[the arts of design] form a sequence of considerations, but the considerations are integral and sometimes simultaneous in practice” (Buchanan 2001a:199). The different procedures of designing seem, to Buchanan (2001a:198), to converge in a set of fundamental rhetorical considerations of design thinking. Insofar as design grants a “pathway for bringing theory – ideas about the nature of the world and how one should live our lives – into closer relationship with practical action and the creation of diverse kinds of products and experiences,” Buchanan’s prioritisation of rhetoric as a central component of design can help designers account for effective historical thinking in design and respond to the “rhythms of *Geschichte*” implicit in design challenges.⁷⁶

From the above, a link emerges between the applicability of epideictic rhetoric to design and sensemaking. Exploring how Heidegger’s concept of *thrownness* may be useful within the vocabulary of design in articulating the context within which designs

⁷⁵ See section 2.3.3 *Design and designerly thinking as a problem-solving activity*.

⁷⁶ See section 1.1 *Background and need for the study*.

may be applicable to varying degrees, Weick (2004:76-77) suggests that good design “supports the mood of thrownness.” In elaborating this, Weick explains such support as enriching the experience of thrownness when improvised actions are rendered stronger and more appropriate. While designing advances in a world that is already interpreted where people are already acting, where options are constrained, where control is minimal, and where things and options already matter for reasons that are taken-for-granted, “good” design “takes the edge off thrownness by providing affordances that make it easier to generate wise action, reflection-in-action” (Weick 2004:76), action that can be adapted so that prediction is unnecessary, increased situational awareness with decreased dependence on stable representation, richer interpretations, and more differentiated and nuanced language. One such affordance that is central to some conceptions of sensemaking is the placing of stimuli into frameworks that are already deployed in situations that involve human interaction, in order for those doing the placement to “to comprehend, understand, explain, attribute, extrapolate, and predict” (Weick 1995:4). Such a notion of placements corresponds with that proposed by Buchanan. Buchanan introduces the concept of placements to describe a process of contextualisation.⁷⁷ Placements are “tools” for shaping a design situation intuitively or deliberately, identifying all participants’ perspectives, the issues of concern, and the intervention that becomes a working hypothesis for exploration and development, allowing the formulation of the problem and the solution to occur concurrently rather than as a series of sequential steps.:

By using placements to discover or invent a working hypothesis, the designer establishes a principle of relevance for knowledge from the arts and sciences, determining how such knowledge may be useful to design thinking in a particular circumstance without immediately reducing design to one or another of these disciplines. In effect, the working hypothesis that will lead to a particular product is the principle of relevance, guiding the efforts of designers to gather all available knowledge bearing on how a product is finally planned (Buchanan 1992:18).

Placements may offer an understanding of how designers may be more aware of how they traverse the hermeneutic circle of empathy as proposed in Chapter Three.

⁷⁷ Jahnke (2013:37) classifies Buchanan’s doctrine of placements as aligned with an approach made both inevitable and necessary by a hermeneutic perspective.

According to Louis (1989:241), the activity of fitting stimuli into frameworks is most obvious when predictions fail, indicating that expectations have some influence over sensemaking. Every time an expectation is unmet, a current activity is interrupted. Understanding sensemaking therefore also involves understanding how people respond to interruptions. Louis and Sutton (1991:59) refer explicitly to Heidegger's notion of the unready-to-hand as that orientation which is entered when one encounters some problem or upset in one's practical activity, as part of an environmental condition that leads people to switch from what Louis and Sutton (1991:58) describe as an automatic cognitive mode to a conscious cognitive mode. While Louis (1989) and Louis and Sutton (1991:59) discuss a concept of sensemaking founded in the organizational management discourse, their insights are consistent with that of Madsbjerg. To Madsbjerg (2017b:11-12), sensemaking is concerned with the "unspoken rules" in Dasein's background practice which "come to the fore when we keenly observe them or when they break down." In particular, this is resonant with Madsbjerg's *Aware* empathy.⁷⁸ By situating placements as boundaries that shape and constrain meaning, designers can be understood as promoting conditions that can trigger the designer's orientation or mode from affectedness to empathic understanding. Placements might similarly be useful for developing guiding criteria for other frameworks for empathy for designers. For instance, placements may serve as boundaries for limiting the scope of *Discovery* and *Immersion* and for provoking triggers to *Detach* within the process framework of empathy proposed by Kouprie and Sleeswijk Visser.⁷⁹

4.5 Empathy and making sense of things

As discussed in the sections *1.1 Background and need for the study* and *2.3.4 Design and designerly thinking as a practice-based activity and way of making sense of things*, Cross distinguishes empathy as a value of the culture of design. Surma-Aho and Hölttä-Otto (2022:2) suggest that Cross thereby positions empathy as a factor differentiating the logic of design from that of other disciplines, following from which empathy comes to occupy a central role in design process. It is, however, only

⁷⁸ See section 3.2.6 (*Analytical*) empathy is sensemaking.

⁷⁹ See section 2.4.7 *Empathising as a process*.

in the comparison Cross makes between the culture of design and those of the sciences and humanities that reference to empathy is made *explicitly* (Cross 1982:221; 2006:2). In Cross's exploration of designerly ways of knowing, a pervasive bias is apparent towards what designers know over what those served by their designs may know. While Cross concedes that designing is "a natural human ability," and that design knowledge is therefore not held exclusively by designers, Cross narrows his attention to how the activity of design is performed *by designers*. This bias is maintained by a taxonomy for the field of design research which Cross (1999:6) proposes and elaborates as consisting of three main categories, namely: design epistemology, the *study of designerly ways of knowing*; design praxiology, the *study of the practices and processes of design*, and; design phenomenology, the *study of the form and configuration of artifacts*.⁸⁰ Furthermore, by specifying *modelling and synthesis* as the "ways of finding out" (Cross 1999:7) that which design is to know, Cross offers little insight into how empathy might be situated in relation to the facets of the proposed design taxonomy.

Jamal *et al* (2021:3) find that Cross (2001:53-54) nonetheless proposes an understanding of human-centred design as being "socially situated in values and sense making." Indeed, in an article investigating a post-industrial model for designers, Cross (1981:6) describes an emergent process of participatory design, to which he attributes the features of being *democratic, externalised, inclusive and extensive*. In this design process, designers need to be prepared to "collaborate anonymously" and to prioritise the application of participatory expertise above professional integrity.

Cross (2006:33) and Lawson both consider designing as a dialogue or conversation, "a negotiation between what is desired and what can be realised," rather than as "a directional activity that moves from problem through some theoretical procedure to solution" (Lawson 2005:272). Wendt (2015:77) points out that Cross, in particular,

⁸⁰ Wendt (2014:11) proposes that design phenomenology as defined by Cross is in fact too narrow in focus. Wendt's conception of design phenomenology encompasses the knowledge of artifacts insofar as this knowledge is dependent on how the artifacts are designed and used. In turn, design phenomenology always includes a facet of design epistemology, in as much as one understands one's world in relation to the artifacts in it and vice versa.

develops on Schön's perspective of the design process as a conversation between designer and situation by adding that externalised design artifacts support this conversation. As Wendt elaborates, act as a "materialised speech object" which, while assisting the designer in the act of thinking, also facilitates conversation between designers and situation, designers and users, and designers and other designers. While this suggests that Cross and Lawson both allow for an understanding of design as a hermeneutic exchange with the design situation⁸¹ and those affected thereby, Cross (2006:33) asserts that the design conversation takes place between "internal and external representations," and on this basis is part of the recognition that design is indeed a reflective practice. As discussed in section 3.3.6 *Affectedness*, Agosta proposes an understanding of vicarious experience as offering a representation of the other's experience that is numerically different but qualitatively of similar kind that the other is experiencing. On this basis, one may find scope to incorporate *affectedness*, through vicarious experience, into designerly "ways of finding out" as integral to the inclusion of interrelational concern over the other *in addition to* the artificial world as "things to know" for designers (Cross 1999:7). However, the risk (as also similarly noted in section 3.3.6 *Affectedness*) for Cross is to remain within a psychologism that remains *reproductive* rather than productive, that remains determined to provide "objective," "valid" interpretations, and that retains the focus on individual communicators over the communication.

Cross (2006:31) does, however, echo Buchanan by maintaining that design is rhetorical in nature. This concession suggests the possibility of shifting towards the "inceptual questioning" of effective historical thinking, as the prioritisation of rhetoric as a central component of design might suggest.⁸² By considering the rhetoric nature of design, there may also be an opportunity to resolve Lawson's (2004:22; 2005:84-85) consideration of users and clients as sources of constraints to design knowledge and as being "remote from designers" (Lawson 272:87), and the theme of *ethos* in persuasion outlined by Buchanan⁸³ may subvert the 'anonymity' of collaboration Cross expects from participatory design.

⁸¹ See section 4.3 *Empathy and reflexive practice*.

⁸² See section 4.4 *Empathy and problem-solving*.

⁸³ See section 2.3.3 *Design and designerly thinking as a problem-solving activity*.

4.6 Empathy and the creation of meaning

In a paper titled *Intrinsic motivation and human-centered design*, Krippendorff (2004) situates empathy in a discussion of intrinsically motivating interfaces.⁸⁴ Intrinsic motivations, Krippendorff (2004:53) points out, invoke emotions, and therefore when designing for intrinsically motivating interfaces, it is important to consider how access is attained to the emotions of others. While acknowledging that such access is conventionally understood to occur through empathy, Krippendorff further raises concerns over the limits of empathy discussed by other theorists (refer to the sections *Empathy in design discourse*, *Empathy as a "quality" of designers*, and *Empathy as direct social perception*) by asking how one could empathise with someone else's emotions when "we have no sense of the biological processes that underly our own?" (Krippendorff 2004:53). Krippendorff offers a provisional answer to this question by suggesting that 'empathy' is part of a "situation-specific vocabulary whose use draws attention to bodily happenings that one is expected to have in a particular situation." To develop on this position, Krippendorff points out that, while human bodies are always in continuous motion, most bodily activity remains unknown:

When we are awake, we have no clue to the vital blood circulation in our brain, no idea about the activities of the nervous system and no awareness of how our chemical composition changes – which muscles do what. Metabolism and

⁸⁴ Krippendorff (2004:42) describes the paper as an attempt at clarifying a purported paradigm shift from object-centered to human-centred research and design. Such a transition includes the rejection of the industrial era's concepts of human-machine connection, which are based on technological determinism, in favour of human-machine interactions that are derived from how people interact with one another through language, conversation, and play. As part of this effort, Krippendorff (2004:44) proposes that the emerging human involvement at the heart of this paradigm shift signals a correlated epistemological shift toward respect for the internal validity of various world constructions, recognition of the social or cultural role of language in accounting for human behaviour, and recognition of the reality of embodied human experiences. Insofar as motivations are the reasons given for actions taken or to be taken, they reside in language, "in communication, between people, not in any one individual's psychological reality" (Krippendorff 2004:51-52). Motivations therefore fall within the scope of an epistemological path that acknowledges the crucial use of language which Krippendorff outlines. In particular, intrinsic motivations, as justifications for actions made on their own terms and "without reference to an outcome, achievement or result" (Krippendorff 2004:52), must be of particular interest to human-centred design in the acceptance of the 'linguaging' of artifacts into being (Krippendorff 2004:50) and the acknowledgement that epistemological propositions apply to "users, designers, producers and scientific observers alike: none has privileged access to reality" (Krippendorff 2004:49).

physical activities like cardiovascular, endocrine and brain never stop, but are no doubt affected by what we knowingly do (Krippendorff 2004:54)

A person notices very little of his or her own bodily activity in everyday life. The default, everyday mode of attending to the external world, to its artifacts or natural objects, is referred to by Heidegger as “ready-to-hand” (Krippendorff 2004:88), and it is only the derivation from normalcy, “disequilibria, eases changing into diseases and back” (Krippendorff 2004:54), which are noticed of one’s always-ongoing bodily activity. Krippendorff claims to be adopting Humberto Maturana’s terminology by referring to these inaccessible bodily dynamics – the “‘ease’ and ‘dis-ease’ of otherwise unrecognized [sic] bodily processes” – as ‘e-motions’ (Krippendorff 2004:54,61). In turn, Krippendorff identifies three ways of languaging in which e-motions play central roles. Firstly, Krippendorff suggests that feelings draw distinctions in the domain of speakers’ emotions, typically by reference to the context of particular social situations or scenarios. Insofar as feelings involve an agent, “an ‘I’ who speaks, whose body is invoked through using feeling words” (Krippendorff 2004:54), e-motions are characterised by being designated a place within a scenario involving actions, actors, bystanders, artifacts and situations. Hearing an account of a scenario in which specific feelings are expected and justified, on the other hand, reveals how specific ‘feeling’ words are used rather than a speaker’s e-motions: “[a]ll we have is the use of certain words from which we surmise that they draw distinctions among e-motions that we cannot possibly see” (Krippendorff 2004:54). Uncertainty arises only when the scenario in which feelings are said to occur becomes unintelligible. Secondly, Krippendorff (2004:54-55) refers to *evaluative attributions* which distinguish among the supposed causes of one’s e-motions and classifies these causes by assigning “evocative qualities” to them. Krippendorff argues that evaluative attribution assign responsibility over distinct e-motional effects to objects that are exterior to speakers’ bodies. In such assertions – saying a painting *is* beautiful or a bride *is* lovely, for instance – one distinguishes among seemingly objective properties, obscuring the e-motion effect. While Krippendorff (2004:55) points out that evaluative attributions account for a “long and largely fruitless history” of research studying the formal attributes of the stimuli of emotions, and while this point is relevant to the history of the use of the term ‘empathy’, this

way of languaging is less important to this study.⁸⁵ The third way of languaging in which Krippendorff finds e-motions play a central role is through the expression of *emotional attachments*, which are conveyed in narratives of the relational consequences of e-motion, of a speaker's involvement with things, people or of social situations. Emotional attachment, Krippendorff suggests, resides in repeatedly told stories, and therefore persist longer than feelings and are not as "exteriorly focused" as evaluative attributes; they most typically are revealed by narratives that are about the acquisition of things the narrator is attached to, about outstanding situations, or about the history of being with someone. What makes emotional attachment enduring, in Krippendorff's view, is not the physiology of a particular e-motion, but the recounting of the narrative in which the attachment has its reason (Krippendorff 2004:55).⁸⁶

With these three ways of languaging, Krippendorff questions the limitations of theorising emotions without reference to the language "that reveals and encourages them" and without accounting for the situations in which they have their justifications nor for their embodiments. Without these facets, taxonomies of emotion tend to ignore the rich linguistic constructions and complex conversations that "reveal as well as encourage e-motions to arise" (Krippendorff 2004:55). Consequently, Krippendorff asserts that research in service of decisions concerning the human use of technology must result in second-order understanding, that is to say the understanding of how others understand their worlds, including the artifacts and human beings that occur in these worlds. Second-order understanding is an understanding of understanding, has a recursive structure, and is of a different logical type than first-order understanding of things assumed to be incapable of understanding on their own. In distinction to first-order understanding, which is the understanding of something incapable of understanding on its own or of someone whose understanding does not interfere with the phenomenon to be understood (Krippendorff 2004:56), second-order understanding cannot be achieved without

⁸⁵ Krippendorff does include an apparent warning that might be relevant to future developments of this study, namely that, while linguistic attribution has some basis in perception and e-motions, causality is not as simple as the linguistic construction suggests (Krippendorff 2004:54).

⁸⁶ Krippendorff (2004:55) points out that, since stories of attachment are commonly recounted to others and thereby become subject to approval or criticism, emotional attachment play social roles.

linguaging with those whose understanding is at issue. Second-order understanding is fundamentally social by virtue of the introduction of language (Krippendorff 2004:57).

Furthermore, second-order understanding is recursive, not hierarchical. One's ability to understand another individual's understanding and the granting of this capability to the other individual entails that the others could, at least in principle, understand one's own understanding. In turn, "my understanding of someone else's understanding entails the possibility of my understanding of that other's understanding of my understanding" (Krippendorff 2004:57). As I discuss in the (chapter 3) section *Empathic interpretation (as perspective taking)*, Agosta (2010:43) understands empathic understanding as being implemented as the interpretation of possibility through the operation of alternating between first-, second- and third-person perspectives. Second-order understanding suggests that through the hermeneutic of empathy, mutual understanding develops in empathic exchanges. The hermeneutic of empathy in turn offers an appreciation of how second-order understanding might also resist succumbing to an infinite regress, but can rather result in emergent social constructions. Indeed, Krippendorff maintains that "all social constructions, from family, to money, to government, but especially including the collective use of technology, are grounded in the recursivity of second-order understanding" (Krippendorff 2004:57). Artifacts, according to Krippendorff, exist not in individuals' heads but in the recursive practices of a community of their users, and any individual's understanding is merely a participant in these practices.

Krippendorff (2004:58) points out one critical consequence of introducing second-order understanding into the designers' world, that of the "upgrading" of *users* to *stakeholders*. While first-order understanding trivialises human beings, reducing them to unintelligent causal mechanisms, second-order understanding recognises the need to grant users the ability to create their own meanings, determine their own uses for artifacts and to express their intelligent support for or opposition to designs that are being developed. In *The Semantic Turn*, Krippendorff (2005:64-65) explains that product semantics replaced the concept of an average individual – "THE user" – with "*networks of stakeholders*," and introduced a shift in the understanding of design from a technical or rational problem-solving activity (à la Simon) to a social process

involving stakeholders with diverse and potentially conflicting interests. The “intelligence, interest and political astuteness” and the diversity of roles through which stakeholders can and do influence design is thereby acknowledged (Krippendorff 2004:58). Krippendorff (2005:65) continues: “Seeing users, bystanders, collaborators, and opponents as stakeholders grants them the respect they deserve.”

Indeed, as Krippendorff (2005:64) points out, the semantic turn fundamentally requires respect for the concepts, values, and goals of those affected by the technology being designed. Respect is granted by attentive listening and acknowledging others people say and not by complying with what they want necessarily, but by giving due considerations to their views and interests.

4.7 Conclusion to Chapter Four

From the synthesis of an Agostian-Heideggerian inspired special hermeneutic of empathy and designerly perspectives on epistemology explored in this chapter, it stands to reason that – while some perspectives are found to be more resonant with such a hermeneutic of empathy than others – each perspective nonetheless holds promise to advancing an understanding of how a “relationship of true empathy” between server and served, as endorsed by Nelson and Stolterman, might be developed in the design situation.⁸⁷

A theme that has emerged in this chapter (and indeed, in this study) is the limitation posed to the capacity of designers to enter and traverse the special hermeneutic of empathy by a ‘*methods approach*’ to design, with such an approach explicitly presenting a rationalistic orientation (Coyne 1995:18). As Coyne (1995:22) elaborates, the ‘*methods approach*’ to design is rationalistic insofar as it presupposes the objective status of problem statements and assumes a privileged relationship between thought and the “representations of knowledge” articulated by formulas, process diagrams, charts, tables, and lists. It is empathic speech, and listening in particular, that thereby finds a central place in a productive openness to

⁸⁷ See section 1.1 *Background and need for the study*.

the other in the design situation. Indeed, Nelson and Stolterman (2012:47) find that in terms of design, service demands a “heightened and refined ability to ‘listen’ – to hear what is pressing for expression as much as what is being outwardly expressed.” Essential to this ability, Nelson and Stolterman (2012:47) assert, is *notitia*, which they describe as:

...an act of attention that is complete and uncompromising, one that senses every nuance and can bring in to focus details and patterns of connection that elude more passive encounters with real-world situations.

As indicated in section *1.1 Background and need for the study*, *notitia* is held by Nelson and Stolterman as being fundamental to a relationship of “true empathy” between designer and those served by design. As Nelson and Stolterman (2012:47) elaborate, *notitia* is “the opposite of detachment and separation encouraged by contemplative traditions.” *Notitia*, therefore, can be compared with empathic receptivity.⁸⁸ Crucially, Nelson and Stolterman point out that *notitia* is *not* a method, but an attentive “way of being”. Nelson and Stolterman (2012:47) propose care and concern for both details and overall compositional order and organisation as central to “good designs” but also urge for a symmetry between the care required from designer and user. This balance of careful attention, including the examination of artifacts, are presented by Nelson and Stolterman as “a manifestation of *notitia*” that does not necessitate the reification of psychologism described by Stewart as the “[focusing of] attention away from the communicating to the individual communicators” (Stewart 1983:381).⁸⁹

⁸⁸ See sections 3.3.6 *Affectedness* and 3.3.9 *Empathic speech (as listening)*.

⁸⁹ See sections 3.3.6 *Affectedness*

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This study turned to Heideggerian phenomenology as one response to the perceived limitations of a reductive understanding of empathy and as a response especially to Koycheva's provocation towards adding rigour to the concept of empathy in design discourse. Specifically, a Heideggerian hermeneutic of empathy was investigated as a means of situating empathy in the context of design as a way of making sense of things that is dependent on the being-with of human relatedness. This chapter concludes the study by providing an outline of the manner in which the pursuit of its aim to explore empathy in the context of design thinking through a predominantly Heideggerian hermeneutic lens unfolded by means of a summary of its constituting chapters. While key insights are specified in this outline, due to the discursive nature of the study the discussion of these and further contributions are already constituted thereby. This chapter then indicates the contribution made by the study to design discourse, before turning to the limitations posed to the study and responses thereto in the form of recommendations for further research. A few concluding remarks closes the study.

5.2 Summary of chapters

Chapter One provided the background and aims of the study with reference to the broader context of the discourse on design thinking. It started with the introduction of Lou Agosta's assimilation of Martin Heidegger's thinking into an account of a special hermeneutic of empathy, which Heidegger himself left undeveloped, and which in turn served as inspiration for this study. The need for adding rigour to the concept of empathy in design was discussed, before deliberation on the contribution Heidegger might make to this project and, more broadly, design discourse in general. A particular risk posed to the designer's capacity for empathetic engagement was highlighted in the form of *reification*, which serves as an underlying motivation for this study.

The aim of this study was to explore empathy in the context of design thinking through a predominantly Heideggerian hermeneutic lens. The study intended to enrich the discourse around epistemological approaches in design thinking, in particular by exploring a Heideggerian hermeneutic of empathy as a means of situating empathy in the context of design as a way of making sense of things that is dependent on the being-with of human relatedness. In this way, the study aimed to contribute to the development of a rigorous concept of empathy within design discourse.

The research aim was substantiated by several key objectives. The first objective was to explore theoretical perspectives on design thinking connected to five sub-discourses derived from academic design discourse, with special attention to perspectives founded on scholarly design perspectives. The second objective was to articulate a provisional framework for empathy through a Heideggerian reconstruction of empathy, based on the distinctions of affectedness, understanding, interpretation, and speech as appropriated by Lou Agosta. The third objective was to synthesise articulated framework in discussion of the theoretical perspectives on design thinking explored in fulfilment of the first objective, with respect to the key distinctions discussed in fulfilment of the second. These objectives were addressed in Chapter Two, Chapter Three and Chapter Four, respectively.

Chapter One additionally introduced key resources of the study in the form of a literature review (section *1.4 Literature review*) that guides the direction of the remainder of the study. The chapter then described the research methodology this study follows and provide a brief overview of the chapters of the study.

Chapter Two called into question empathy as an epistemological instrument in design thinking, with reference to the vague and varied characterisations of empathy found in design literature. This served to provide further motivation for the need of the study and offered a point of departure for the remainder of Chapter Two. To establish a frame of reference for epistemological foundations for empathy within design thinking discourse, five sub-discourses derived from the academic design discourse of design thinking were discussed, each having clear origins in seminal design literature. The purpose of this discussion was to establish bases for

synthesising a provisional framework for empathy. Chapter Two also provided an overview of perspectives on empathy within design discourse, which, while providing background to the discussion, pointed out the gap left by the lack of exploration of the role of empathy in the survey of the epistemological perspectives. Central to the limitations to empathy designers face in their practice was the concept of the 'empathic horizon', characterising the bounds on individual ability which influence and in turn are influenced by designers' abilities, willingness and skills.

Chapter Three started with an overview of Madsbjerg's Heidegger-influenced construct of empathy. Following the delineation of the five principles making up the construct, Madsbjerg's proposal of a levels framework for empathy was discussed, so as to serve as a further reference point for the exploration of a provisional framework later in the chapter. A brief survey on writings by Heidegger on the concept of empathy was then delivered, with particular emphasis on Heidegger's negative evaluation of the concept in *Being and Time*. This survey provided a context for the ensuing exploration of Agosta's situation and development of a special hermeneutic of empathy. This provided a basis for a provisional framework for empathy through a Heideggerian reconstruction of empathy, which was then developed by connecting the components of the hermeneutic of empathy as developed to the relevant findings from Madsbjerg's levels framework. A key insight into how designers can enter into empathy in the 'right' way emerged in this chapter in the form of listening as a dimension of empathic speech.

The provisional framework for empathy in design was further probed in Chapter Four by situating it in relation to theoretical perspectives on design thinking. The attempt at synthesis of the provisional framework indicated that instrumental, positivist and constructivist conceptions of design in particular present limitations to empathic engagement in the design process, and in doing so the chapter contributed a new dimension against which to appreciate the theoretical perspectives and their interrelations. Listening again emerged in this chapter as a dimension of respect, whereby empathic receptivity is revealed as affectedness. Additionally, a connection emerged between phronesis and epideictic rhetoric as concepts that may help designers respond appropriately to the social, transformational situations of design. Chapter Four concludes with a discussion of a connection between the synthesis of

an Agostian-Heideggerian inspired special hermeneutic of empathy with designerly perspectives on epistemology and the concept of *notitia*.

5.3 Contribution of the study

This study represents, in part, a response to a provocation to add rigour to the concept of empathy in the discipline of design. Paradoxically, the study was given direction by the insight by New and Kimbell that, while empathy has come to be seen by many as a central concept in design, *not* all accounts of design give attention to the concept – the review of design discourse by Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* “essentially ignores this issue” (New & Kimbell 2013:3). By investigating a hermeneutic of empathy in the context of design, one contribution of this study is to add nuance to the theoretical perspectives on design thinking with which it was concerned. While, on the one hand, the study found that each of the perspectives had a contribution to make in the development of a rigorous concept of empathy in design, the study also contributes to the enrichment of the discussion of each of the perspectives.

More ambitiously, this study responds to the abovementioned provocation by contributing a provisional framework that offers some explanatory power for how empathy can be understood, approached and stimulated in the design situation. In this way, the study forms part of a broader project to account for and expand designers’ empathic horizons in an appreciation of the limits of empathy and of design as a compound of rational, ideal, pragmatic and phenomenological inquiry and as a hermeneutic project. As an exploratory study, the research presented therein provides a reference point for further development and application of an approach to and understanding of empathy in design.

5.4 Limitations of study and suggestions for further research

This study draws on literature from a spectrum of perspectives on epistemological approaches to design thinking. For setting course and to maintain a focus, however, the study relies on the survey conducted by Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* (2013) in

their literature demographics study of the design thinking discourse. While broad in its scope, the survey by Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* is not definitive, nor exhaustive in its inclusion of epistemological approaches to design thinking; this is necessarily so, since their survey was interested in uncovering *trends* and identifying authors of significance in relation to these trends (Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* 2013:122). While, in turn, serving as a self-imposed limitation to this study, this suggests direction for further research. On the one hand, a contemporary literature study including literature made available since that done by Johansson-Sköldberg *et al* may yield more recent research on epistemological approaches to design thinking that may be of interest to the examination of a hermeneutic of empathy as a foundation for clarifying how empathy might be situated in a design process.⁹⁰ On the other hand, particularly theorists representing perspectives on design epistemology that echo Snodgrass and Coyne's view of design as being hermeneutical, while not being discernible as part of a 'trend' in design literature as such, suggest a plausible avenue for situating and developing a framework for empathy as initiated in this study.⁹¹

At the same time, while this study identifies threads relating to design epistemology that simultaneously link and distinguish the five epistemological perspectives on which it focuses, each of the perspectives may be explored in much greater depth. This may be done, first, from a Heideggerian perspective in general, but also in relation to how empathy is situated by design scholars as, for instance, a key characteristic of the design thinking process or an ability of the designer. Arguably, each author discussed – in relation to their respective epistemological perspectives – contributed to design discourse to an extent which was not exhaustively addressed in this study.

Further, the accusation may be levelled against this study that it commits violence – similar to that which Agosta acknowledges he commits in his interpretation of Heidegger – in its interpretation of Agosta himself. On the one hand, this violence

⁹⁰ See, for instance, Kim and Tan (2022)

⁹¹ See, for instance, Willis (2006), Fry (2012) and Fry and Willis (2017) on *Ontological Design*, and Tonkinwise on *Material Thinking* (2008)

takes the form of discussion, in some cases, where Agosta's perspectives seem to deviate from other interpretations of Heidegger. On the other hand, this violence takes the form of a narrow focus on Agosta's reading of Heidegger, and the omission, for instance, of his analyses of Sigmund Freud, Edmund Husserl or John Searle in the development of the hermeneutic of empathy as he proposes it.⁹² Agosta (2017:[sp]) also problematises perspectives raised in this study by referring to empathy as a "capitalist tool"; this study does not attempt to clarify, much less resolve, the subsequent problematic. Nonetheless, further critical engagement with Agosta may offer more insights relevant to design practice.

Not only Agosta, but other phenomenologists are likely to contribute to further exploration of empathy in design. Stewart (1983) points to Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur as notable contributors to an approach to hermeneutics that Stewart describes as interpretive listening.⁹³ From Ricoeur, for instance, one learns that problem-solving is characterised by a "trade in narratives" (Coyne 2005:10); or, Gadamer's development of the concept of *phronesis* may (through the help of e.g. Svenaeus) help one understand how empathy is "crucially distinct from and irreducible to" *technē* (Dunne 2009:126). Stewart (1983:382) distinguishes four themes discussed by Gadamer and Ricoeur that are relevant to his development of the construct of interpretive listening, namely, *openness*, *linguisticity*, *play*, and the *fusion of horizons*. Each of these themes may, in turn, would likely contribute to linking themes discussed in the investigation of a hermeneutic of empathy to perspectives on empathy in design discourse.⁹⁴ Further, the development of the relationship between *phronesis* and *epideictic* rhetoric might give novel insight into how effective historical thinking might be accounted for in design.

At the same time, this study has shown a bias towards Heidegger's *Being and Time* as a primary source. As already noted in this study, Heidegger himself offered a

⁹² See Agosta (2010, 2015).

⁹³ See also section 3.3.6 *Affectedness*. Gadamer and Ricoeur are also discussed by Jahnke (2012) in his project to develop on Snodgrass and Coyne's advancement of a hermeneutical understanding of design practice.

⁹⁴ As an example, a notable connection may be inferred between Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons' and notion of the designer's 'empathic horizon' proposed by McDonough-Philip and Denton. See section 2.4 *Empathy in design discourse*.

different evaluation of the concept of empathy prior to writing *Being and Time*. As this study has also shown, however, Heidegger makes a contribution to both the development of a hermeneutic of empathy and to epistemological perspectives on design thinking through his later lectures and writings. This suggests that further exploration of sources by Heidegger has additional nuance and insight to add to the topics this study addresses.

Furthermore, this study was selective in the concept of *sensemaking* it applied in the development of a provisional framework for understanding empathy in design, to the exclusion of others from both organisational management discourse and, arguably more crucially, design discourse itself. In a sense, a similar tension emerges here as between designerly thinking as, on the one hand, the academic construction of the professional designer's practice and, on the other, 'design thinking' as a discourse where design practice and competence are used beyond the design context. Design discourse may be explored in terms of how notions of design as the making sense of things – not limited to Cross and Lawson, but also including Buchanan (2019) and Krippendorff (1989a; 2006) – may contribute to the discourse on sensemaking in organisational management, and vice versa.⁹⁵ In light of such exploration, both discourses may benefit from further research on situating a hermeneutic of empathy in the varying concepts of *sensemaking*.

Additionally, since this study was – in spite of concerns alluded to over the limitations of theory in the design situation – entirely theoretical and established its argument on literature and extant scholarship, further studies could be undertaken in the situation of the provisional framework for empathy derived in this study in applied design contexts, as part of phenomenological studies. Furthermore, while this study was not concerned with the moral and ethical dimensions of design and design thinking, ongoing research on the topic of this study could be approached from an ethical or moral standpoint, as suggested, for example by Svenaeus (2003; 2014).

⁹⁵ Contributions from Buchanan (2019:99-101) and Weick (2004:74-78) suggest that this is an engagement that is already underway.

5.5 Concluding remarks

This study traces its early inceptual motivation to a concern over the seeming trivialisation of empathy in design practice, this despite an apparent inability of designers to articulate an understanding of what empathy is that is consistent with what designers do in practice. Rather than discount empathy altogether, this study can, in a sense, be taken as a doubling down of sorts on attaining a rigorous and suitable conception of empathy in design. This study has shown that designing can be taken as a social process whereby situational shortcomings are altered into preferred situational outcomes. Situations are meaningful, and in a design context this involves concern over the perspectives, needs and outcomes that serve those involved.

One learns from Heidegger that, to reveal situational truths, a perspective that allows a relation whereby one is subsumed in the situation is required. This situation, as this study has shown, always already involves others, even in their factual absence. By proposing a provisional framework assembled around a hermeneutic of empathy as outlined, this study aspires to serve as a catalyst for further exploration of the possibilities for designers to maintain an ecstatic relationship with their worlds and those with whom this world is shared.

SOURCES CONSULTED

- Agosta, L. 2010. *Empathy in the Context of Philosophy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Agosta, L. 2011. A Heideggerian approach to empathy: authentic being with others. *Existenz*, 6(2).
- Agosta, L. 2014. A rumor of empathy: Reconstructing Heidegger's contribution to empathy and empathic clinical practice. *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, 17(2), pp.281-292.
- Agosta, L., 2015. *A rumor of empathy: Resistance, narrative and recovery in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy*. New York: Routledge.
- Agosta, L. 2017. *Empathy, Capitalist Tool: Lou Agosta interviewed by Brandon Hamilton about business and empathy*. [O]. Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OVUFELiT9w&ab_channel=LouAgosta Accessed on 2022.08.13
- Agosta, L. 2019. Empathy in cyberspace: The genie is out of the bottle. In *Theory and practice of online therapy* (pp. 34-46). Routledge.
- Arnett, R.C. and Nakagawa, G. 1983. The assumptive roots of empathic listening: A critique. *Communication Education*, 32(4), pp.368-378.
- Battarbee, K., Baerten, N., Hinfelaar, M., Irvine, P., Loeber, S., Munro, A. and Pederson, T. 2002. Pools and satellites: intimacy in the city. In *Proceedings of the 4th conference on Designing interactive systems: processes, practices, methods, and techniques*, pp. 237-245.
- Battarbee, K. and Koskinen, I. 2005. Co-experience: user experience as interaction. *CoDesign*, 1(1), pp.5-18.
- Brown, T. 2008. Design thinking. *Harvard Business Review*, 86(6), pp.1-9.
- Brown, T. 2009. *Change by design: how design thinking transforms organizations and inspires innovation*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Buchanan, R. 1985. Declaration by design: Rhetoric, argument, and demonstration in design practice. *Design issues*, pp.4-22.
- Buchanan, R. 1992. Wicked problems in design thinking. *Design Issues*, 8 (2), 14-19.
- Buchanan, R. 1995. Rhetoric, Humanism, and Design, in *Discovering design: explorations in design studies*, edited by Buchanan, R. and Margolin, V., University of Chicago Press, pp.23-66.

- Buchanan, R. 2001a. Design and the new rhetoric: Productive arts in the philosophy of culture. *Philosophy & rhetoric*, 34(3), pp.183-206.
- Buchanan, R. 2001b. Human dignity and human rights: Thoughts on the principles of human-centered design. *Design issues*, 17(3), pp.35-39.
- Buchanan, R. 2001c. Design research and the new learning. *Design issues*, 17(4), pp.3-23.
- Buchanan, R. 2004. Human-centered design: Changing perspectives on design education in the East and West. *Design Issues*, 20(1), pp.30-39.
- Buchanan, R. 2019. Systems thinking and design thinking: The search for principles in the world we are making. *She Ji: The Journal of Design, Economics, and Innovation*, 5(2), pp.85-104.
- Chia, R.C. and Holt, R. 2009. *Strategy without design: The silent efficacy of indirect action*. Cambridge University Press.
- Cooper, A., Reimann, R., Cronin, D. and Noessel, C. 2014. *About face: The essentials of interaction design*. Fourth edition. Indianapolis: John Wiley & Sons (Inc).
- Coyne, R. 2005. Wicked problems revisited. *Design studies*, 26(1), pp.5-17.
- Cross, N. 1982. Designerly ways of knowing. *Design studies*, 3(4), pp.221-227.
- Cross, N., 1999. Design research: A disciplined conversation. *Design issues*, 15(2), pp.5-10.
- Cross, N. 2001. Designerly ways of knowing: Design discipline versus design science. *Design issues*, 17(3), pp.49-55.
- Cross, N. 2006. *Designerly Ways of Knowing*. Germany: Springer-Verlag London Limited 2006.
- Cross, N. 2011. *Design thinking: Understanding how designers think and work*. Oxford: Berg.
- Dandavate, U., Sanders, E.B.N. and Stuart, S. 1996. Emotions matter: User empathy in the product development process. In *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting*, 40(7). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, pp. 415-418.
- De Lille, C.S.H., Roscam Abbing, E. and Kleinsmann, M.S. 2012. A designerly approach to enable organizations to deliver product-service systems. In *International DMI Education Conference: Design Thinking: Challenges for Designers, managers and Organizations*, 14-15 April 2008, Cergy-Pointoise, France. DMI.

- De Oliveira, N. 2012. Heidegger, Reification and Formal Indication. *Comparative and Continental Philosophy*, 4(1), pp.35-52.
- De Vignemont, F. and Singer, T. 2006. The empathic brain: how, when and why?. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 10(10), pp.435-441.
- Dervin, B. 1983, January. *An overview of sense-making research: concepts, methods and results to date*. International Communications Association Annual Meeting.
- Diethelm, J. 2015. Situations of Significance: Late Modern Design Thinking. [O]. Available: https://www.academia.edu/12012142/Situations_of_Significance_Late_Modern_Design_Thinking Accessed on 2022.08.13
- Dorst, K. and Cross, N. 2001. Creativity in the design process: Co-evolution of problem-solution. *Design Studies*, 22, 425–437.
- Dunne, J., 2009. *Back to the rough ground: Practical judgment and the lure of technique*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Ferencz-Flatz, C. 2015. The element of intersubjectivity. Heidegger's early conception of empathy. *Continental Philosophy Review*, 48(4), pp.479-496.
- Finlay, L. 2005. "Reflexive Embodied Empathy": A phenomenology of participant-researcher intersubjectivity. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 33(4), pp.271-292.
- Friedman, M. 2002. Overcoming Metaphysics: Carnap and Heidegger. In *Heidegger reexamined: Art, poetry, and technology*, edited by Dreyfus, H.L. and Wrathall, M.A. Taylor & Francis, pp.157-191.
- Fry, T. 2012. *Becoming human by design*. London: Berg.
- Fry, T. & Willis A.M. 2017. Design for/by "The Global South". *Design Philosophy Papers*, 15(1), pp.3-37.
- Fulton Suri, J. 2003. Empathic design: informed and inspired by other people's experience. In *Empathic design, user experience in product design*, edited by Koskinen I., Battarbee K. and Mattelmäki, T. Helsinki: IT Press, pp.51–57.
- Gadamer, H.G. 1994. *Heidegger's ways*. Suny Press.
- Gasparini, A. 2015. Perspective and use of empathy in design thinking. In *The eighth international conference on advances in computer–human interactions (ACHI'15)*, pp.49–54.
- Geertz, C. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

- Gieser, T. 2008. Embodiment, emotion and empathy: A phenomenological approach to apprenticeship learning. *Anthropological theory*, 8(3), pp.299-318.
- Greenson, R.R. 1960. Empathy and its vicissitudes. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 41, p.418–424.
- Guignon, C. 2005. The History of Being. In *A Companion to Heidegger*, edited by Dreyfus, H.L. and Wrathall, M.A. Victoria: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., pp.392-406.
- Hall, H. 2002. The other minds problem in early Heidegger. In *Heidegger reexamined: Art, poetry, and technology*, edited by Dreyfus, H.L. and Wrathall, M.A. Taylor & Francis, pp.219-226.
- Hatab, L., 2002. Heidegger and the Question of Empathy. *Heidegger and practical philosophy*, pp.249-270.
- Heidegger, M. 1962. *Being and Time*. Translated by J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco.
- Heidegger, M. 1973. "Messkirch's Seventh Centennial." Translated by T. J. Sheehan. In *Listening*, 8, pp.40-57.
- Heidegger, M. 1977. Letter on Humanism. In *Basic writings: from Being and time (1927) to The task of thinking (1964)*, edited by D.F. Krell. London and New York: Routledge Classics.
- Heidegger, M. 1981. "Only a God Can Save Us": The *Spiegel* Interview (1966). In *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, edited by Sheehan, T. Chicago: Precedent Publishing, Inc., pp.45-67.
- Heidegger, M. 1982. *The basic problems of phenomenology*. Translated by A. Hofstadter. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Heidegger, M. 1985. *History of the concept of time: prolegomena*. Translated by Th. Kisiel. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Heidegger, M. 2001. *Zollikon seminars: Protocols, conversations, letters*, edited by M. Boss. Northwestern University Press.
- Heidegger, M. 2004. *What is Called Thinking?*. Translated by J. G. Gray. Perennial.
- Heidegger, M. 2006. *Mindfulness*. Translated by P. Emad and T. Kalary. Continuum.
- Heylighen, A. and Dong, A. 2019. To empathise or not to empathise? Empathy and its limits in design. *Design Studies*, 65, pp.107-124.
- Honneth, A. 2008. *Reification: a new look at an old idea*. Oxford University Press.

- Husserl, E. 1960. *Cartesian Meditations: An introduction to phenomenology*. Translated by D Cairns. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Jahnke, M. 2012. Revisiting Design as a Hermeneutic Practice: An Investigation of Paul Ricoeur's Critical Hermeneutics. *Design Issues*, 28, 20–30.
- Jamal, T., Kircher, J. and Donaldson, J.P. 2021. Re-visiting design thinking for learning and practice: Critical pedagogy, conative empathy. *Sustainability*, 13(2), pp.964.
- Johansson, U. and Woodilla, J. 2010. How to avoid throwing the baby out with the bath water: An ironic perspective on design thinking. EGOS Colloquium 2010, 30 June 30-3 July, Lisbon, Portugal.
- Johansson-Sköldberg, U., Woodilla, J. and Çetinkaya, M. 2013. Design thinking: past, present and possible futures. *Creativity and innovation management*, 22(2), pp.121-146.
- Kim, B. and Tan, L., 2022. Design Thinking the Future: Critical Perspectives on Design Studies, Design Knowledge, and Education. In *Design Praxiology and Phenomenology*. Singapore: Springer, pp.3-15.
- Klein, G., Moon, B. and Hoffman, R.R. 2006. Making sense of sensemaking 1: Alternative perspectives. *IEEE intelligent systems*, 21(4), pp.70-73.
- Kolko, J. 2011. *Exposing the magic of design: A practitioner's guide to the methods and theory of synthesis*. Oxford University Press.
- Koskinen, I., Battarbee, K., and Mattelmäki, T. 2003. *Empathic design, user experience in product design*. Helsinki: IT Press.
- Kouprie, M. and Sleeswijk Visser, F. 2009. A framework for empathy in design: stepping into and out of the user's life. *Journal of Engineering Design*, 20(5), pp.437-448.
- Koycheva, L.V. 2020, October. Empathy, More or Less: Scaling Intermediary Experiences of Emotion and Affect in Innovation. In *Ethnographic Praxis in Industry Conference Proceedings*, 2020(1), pp. 243-262.
- Krippendorff, K. 1989a. On the essential contexts of artifacts or on the proposition that "design is making sense (of things)". *Design issues*, 5(2), pp.9-39.
- Krippendorff, K. 1989b. Product semantics: a triangulation and four design theories. In *Product Semantics '89: Proceedings from the Product Semantics '89 Conference. 16–19 May, 1989*, edited by Vakeva, S. Helsinki: University of Industrial Arts, pp.a1–a23.
- Krippendorff, K. 2004. Intrinsic motivation and human-centred design, *Theoretical Issues in Ergonomics Science*, 5(1), pp.43-72.

- Krippendorff, K. 2006. *The Semantic Turn: A New Foundation for Design*. Boca Raton: Taylor and Francis.
- Köppen, E. and Meinel, C. 2015. Empathy via design thinking: creation of sense and knowledge. In *Design Thinking Research* (pp.15-28), edited by Plattner H., Meinel C. & Leifer L. Understanding Innovation. Springer, Cham.
- Ladner, S. 2014. *Practical ethnography: A guide to doing ethnography in the private sector*. Routledge.
- Lawson, B. 2004. *What Designers Know*. Oxford: Architectural Press.
- Lawson, B. 2005. *How Designers Think: The Design Process Demystified*. Fourth edition. Oxford: Architectural Press.
- Leonard, D. and Rayport, J.F. 1997. Spark innovation through empathic design. *Harvard Business Review*, 75, pp.102-115.
- Lindgaard, K. and Wesselius, H. 2017. Once more, with feeling: Design thinking and embodied cognition. *She ji: The journal of design, Economics, and Innovation*, 3(2), pp.83-92.
- Lipps, T. 1903. Einfühlung, innere Nachahmung, und Organempfindungen. *Archiv für die gesammte Psychologie*, 1, pp.185–204.
- Louis, M. R. 1980. Surprise and sensemaking: What newcomers experience in entering unfamiliar organizational settings. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 25, pp.225-251.
- Louis, M.R. and Sutton, R.I., 1991. Switching cognitive gears: From habits of mind to active thinking. *Human relations*, 44(1), pp.55-76.
- Madsbjerg, C. 2017a. *Founder shares insight on human-centered approach to building businesses*. [O]. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLAbKu7rCjA>
Accessed on 2022.08.13
- Madsbjerg, C. 2017b. *Sensemaking: The Power of Humanities in the Age of the Algorithm*, 1st ed. London: Little Brown Book Group. epub ebook file.
- Mattelmäki, T. and Battarbee, K. 2002. Empathy probes. In: *Proceedings of the participatory design conference 2002*, Binder T., Gregory, J., and Wagner, I. eds. Palo Alto CA: CPSR, pp.266–271.
- Mattelmäki, T., Vaajakallio, K. and Koskinen, I. 2014. What happened to empathic design?. *Design issues*, 30(1), pp.67-77.
- McDonagh-Philp, D. and Denton, H. 1999. Using focus groups to support the designer in the evaluation of existing products: A case study. *The Design Journal*, 2(2), pp.20-31.

- Nelson, H.G. and Stolterman, E. 2012. *The Design Way: Intentional change in an unpredictable world*. Second edition. MIT press.
- New, S. and Kimbell, L. 2013, September. Chimps, designers, consultants and empathy: A “theory of mind” for service design. In *proceedings of 2nd Cambridge Academic Design Management Conference*, pp. 139-152.
- Nussbaum, B. 2011. *Design Thinking is a Failed Experiment. So What’s Next?* [O]. Available: <https://www.fastcompany.com/1663558/design-thinking-is-a-failed-experiment-so-whats-next>
Accessed on 2022.08.13
- Olafson, F.A. 1987. *Heidegger and the Philosophy of Mind*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Rittel, H.W. and Webber, M.M. 1973. Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. *Policy sciences*, 4(2), pp.155-169.
- Rogers, C.R. 1975. Empathic: an unappreciated way of being. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 5 (2), pp.2–10.
- Rowe, P. 1987. *Design Thinking*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Ruijsch Van Dugteren, J. 2014. *The dynamics of empathy within participatory design pedagogy and practice* (Master’s thesis, University of Cape Town).
- Scheler, M. 2008. *The nature of sympathy*. London: Transaction Publishers.
- Schön, D.A. 1983. *The reflective practitioner: how professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.
- Segal, L.D. and Suri, J.F. 1997. The empathic practitioner: Measurement and interpretation of user experience. In *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting*. 41(1). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, pp.451-454.
- Seitz, T. 2019. *Design Thinking and the New Spirit of Capitalism: Sociological Reflections on Innovation Culture*. Springer Nature.
- Simon, H.A. 1996. *The Sciences of the Artificial*. Third edition. London: MIT press.
- Sipiora, M.P. 1991. Heidegger and epideictic discourse: The rhetorical performance of meditative thinking. *Philosophy today*, 35(3), pp.239-253.
- Snodgrass A. & Coyne R. 1997. Is Designing Hermeneutical? Architectural Theory Review, *Journal of the Department of Architecture*, The University of Sydney, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp.65-97.

- Stein, E. 1989. *On the problem of empathy*. Third edition. Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications.
- Stueber, K. 2018. Empathy. In *The stanford encyclopedia of philosophy* (Spring ed.). Stanford: Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University.
- Surma-Aho, A. and Hölttä-Otto, K., 2022. Conceptualization and operationalization of empathy in design research. *Design Studies*, 78, p.101075.
- Svenaesus, F. 2003. Hermeneutics of medicine in the wake of Gadamer: the issue of phronesis. *Theoretical medicine and bioethics*, 24(5), pp.407-431.
- Svenaesus, F. 2014. Empathy as a necessary condition of phronesis: a line of thought for medical ethics. *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, 17(2), pp.293-299.
- Teal, R. 2011. Foundational history: An integrated approach to basic design, history, and theory. *Journal of Architectural Education*, 64(2), pp.37-45.
- Thoreau, H. D. 2004. *Walden*, 150th Anniversary edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Tonkinwise, C. 2008. Knowing by being-there: Explicating the tacit post-subject in use. *Studies in Material Thinking*, 1(2). Auckland: Auckland University of Technology, pp.1-14.
- Vallega-Neu, D. 2008. Rhythmic delimitations of history: On Heidegger and history. *Idealistic studies*, 38(1/2), pp.91-103.
- Wallas, G. 1926. *The art of thought*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Weick, K.E. 1995. *Sensemaking in organizations* (Vol. 3). Sage.
- Weick, K. E. 2004. Designing for Thrownness. In *Managing as Designing*, edited by R. J. Boland and F. Collopy. California: Stanford University Press, pp.74-78.
- Wendt, T. 2014. *Design for Dasein*. Self-published.
- Wendt, T. 2017. Empathy as Faux Ethics. [O].
Available:
<https://www.epicpeople.org/empathy-faux-ethics>
Accessed on 2022.08.13
- Willis, A.M. 2006. Ontological designing. *Design philosophy papers*, 4(2), pp.69-92.
- Wright, P. and McCarthy, J. 2008. Empathy and experience in HCI. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on human factors in computing systems*, pp. 637-646.
- Wylant, B. 2008. Design thinking and the experience of innovation. *Design Issues*, 24(2), pp.3-14.

- Wylant, B. 2010. *Design thinking and the question of modernity*. The Design Journal, 13(2), pp.217-231.
- Zahavi, D., 2001. Beyond empathy. Phenomenological approaches to intersubjectivity. *Journal of consciousness studies*, 8(5-6), pp.151-167.
- Zahavi, D., 2011. Empathy and direct social perception: A phenomenological proposal. *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 2(3), pp.541-558.
- Zahavi, D. 2014. *Self and other: Exploring subjectivity, empathy and shame*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zahavi, D. 2019. Second-person engagement, self-alienation, and group-identification. *Topoi*, 38(1), pp.251-260.