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Empathy. A Schelerian Perspective in the Contemporary Debate

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Coordinator: Prof.ssa Lavelli Manuela

Signature _____

Tutor: Prof. Cusinato Guido

Signature _____

Doctoral Student: Dott.ssa Bruttomesso Maria Chiara

Signature _____

Table of Contents

Abstract	5
Acknowledgments	11
Introduction	12
1. Grounding empathy on the lived body. <i>Leib</i> and <i>Leibschema</i>	20
1.1 At the roots of the body schema. An overview of the literature	23
1.2 Scheler: the false certainty of self-knowledge, the <i>Leib</i> and ordinary/pathological embodied experiences	32
1.2.1 An early sketch of the body schema	32
1.2.2 Reading Scheler’s <i>Die Idole</i> through pathologies affecting the body schema: the cases of sensory neuropathy and schizophrenia	37
1.3 «Das Schema unseres Leibes». The body schema in Scheler’s <i>Formalismus</i>	46
1.3.1 The “jail example”. Solitary confinement, the body schema, and minimal self.....	51
1.3.2 Not recognizing one’s own feet – Scheler’s example of the newborn, body schema and infant research.....	60
2. The lived body as an expressive field: expressivity and perception	64
2.1 More about infant research – the relational aspect	64
2.2 Scheler and the primacy of <i>Ausdruck</i> . How to understand expressivity	68
2.3 <i>The smile on your face</i> – Are expressions universal?	73
2.3.1 Charles Darwin and the analysis of expressivity in mankind and animals	74
2.3.2. Paul Ekman and the universality of basic emotions.....	83
2.3.3 The non-universal grammar of expressivity: objections to an innate and universal <i>Ausdruck</i>	87
2.3.4 The lexicon of expressivity: a proposal to distinguish among visible emotions, expressions and gestures.....	91
2.4 Other-perception and value-ception: understanding empathy through affective grasping	95
2.5 Scheler’s <i>Fremdwahrnehmung</i> and interaction theory.....	100

2.6 Back to schizophrenia: The impairment of expressivity and the solipsism of schizophrenic autism	106
3. Back to empathy itself. Defining the concept.....	116
3.1 A lexicon of sympathy. Scheler’s account	117
3.1.1 <i>Sympathieethik</i>	118
3.1.2 <i>Gefühlsansteckung</i>	118
3.1.3 <i>Einsfühlung</i>	120
3.1.4 <i>Nachfühlen</i> as “empathy” and a response to some critiques.....	123
3.1.5 <i>Mitgefühl</i> or <i>mitfühlen</i>	127
3.1.6 <i>Einfühlung</i> , as a projective kind of empathy.....	128
3.2 Alternative theories of empathy	134
3.2.1 Etymological roots and the origins of the concept.....	134
3.2.2 The theory theory	136
3.2.3 The simulation theory	140
3.2.3.1 Problems in the explicit version of ST: incommunicability and egocentricity.....	140
3.2.3.2 The subpersonal version of ST: a critique of Gallese’s account	144
4. Sharing, empathy and the “we”	154
4.1 Sharing first or interaction first? Re-examining affective contagion and unipathy.....	156
4.2 Extended affects	162
4.3 Emotional sharing. The grieving parents and <i>Miteinanderfühlen</i>	171
4.4 Is the concept of we-intentionality exhaustive?	175
4.5 Scheler’s Theory of the Social Essential Unities	177
4.5.1 Level 0: the “Robinson” mental experiment	177
4.5.2 To be unaware of sharing: the herd and the mass	179
4.5.3 The stream of experience in the life-community.....	180
4.5.4 The artificial unity of society	185
4.5.5 <i>Gesamtperson</i> , the personalistic system of solidarity, the community of persons. The “we” of solidarity	187
Conclusions	196

References to Max Scheler's <i>Gesammelte Werke</i>.....	200
Other references	201

Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to reassess empathy from a Schelerian perspective, taking into consideration and keeping abreast with contemporary debates on the matter. Although Scheler's best-known books (GW II, GW VII) are being widely examined in the current phenomenological discussions on empathy and we-intentionality, the complex view that emerges from his texts of different periods is still largely overlooked by current phenomenological discussions. My studies show that a clarification of the problematic concept of empathy can be better achieved by adopting adequate Schelerian instruments, so they have been applied when investigating the relations of empathy with the phenomena of body schema, expressivity and we-intentionality.

Firstly, as Scheler grounds other-perception on the expressive possibilities of the lived body, I delve into the concept of body schema, which has been scarcely studied in Schelerian terms so far. After examining the interdisciplinary literature on the topic, I highlight the viewpoint which stems from *Die Idole der Selbsterkenntnis* and *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos*, since it lets us understand the body schema both as a pre-reflective dynamic structure allowing fluid interactions with the world, and as the first level of individuation. Moreover, I study two examples from the *Formalismus* – the “jail example” and the “example of the new-born” – and, to indicate an early distinction between the body schema and the body image, I compare the first case with the experience of solitary confinement and the second with up-to-date evidence from infant research. Through this inquiry, I draw attention to the body schema as the minimal form of self-individuation necessary for ordinary experience, and as a space between self and others which both allows empathy and is shaped by it.

Secondly, by shedding light on the interrelational aspect of the body schema, I argue that others highly contribute to its development, and interactions themselves depend on bodily expressivity and affective exchange. Infant research shows the newborn's early – if not innate – acquaintance with the implicit grasping of the affective meaning of some expressions, which can be compared with Scheler's thesis of a universal grammar of expressivity. To ascertain how universal this grammar is to be conceived, I carry out an analysis of Darwin's and Ekman's

accounts, and of the counterarguments to the universality of any expression. I dismiss such objections, state that a difference exists between universal spontaneous expressions and gestures, and claim that the universality of certain emotions extends beyond the visibility and expression of them (e.g. jealousy). This is followed by the claim that what is called the “direct perception” in the contemporary debate implies an axiological dimension for Scheler, a theory of values which gives a further nuance to the non-neutrality of perception. If we did not access expressivity and values directly, but through explicit attention and reasoning, our perception would become solipsistic and similar to schizophrenic autism.

Thirdly, the inquiry into the roots of empathy (the lived body and expressivity), is followed by the study of the very concept of empathy. In order to reassess how Scheler can help define the difference between similar phenomena, his theory is compared to what is being discussed in current interdisciplinary debates. Although Scheler locates unipathy at the foundational level for empathy, I counter the view that sees the acquisition of an affective state as a requirement for empathy, for Scheler’s *Nachfühlen* presupposes detachment and awareness of the feeling pertaining to the other agent. Moreover, such a thesis does not fall into the solipsistic problems of the theory theory and the simulation theory; in particular, a focus on the latter points out that it causes egocentrism on the ethical level, and that even the embodied simulation – which states that empathy is bodily grounded – leads to multiple theoretical impasses.

The final section deals with the question whether empathy or “sharing” is primary, and the attempt to understand the connections between the two. I take sharing to have a broader meaning than we-intentionality, and to start already from what Scheler calls “sharing without awareness” in unipathy and affective contagion. In this regard, the comparison with the theory of extended emotions can help understand that affects are not actually locked in the bodily dimension. Scheler’s hotly-debated example of the grieving parents and the four group-forms that he lists are taken into account to prove that empathy can have a genetic role for we-intentionality, but not always a constitutive one. The highest degree of interconnection (solidarity and absolute responsibility) also corresponds to the

highest individuation (the person). Lastly, I argue that the “co-execution” (*Mitvollzug*) of personal acts (GW II; Cusinato 2015b, 50; 2017, 48) represents a unique kind of sharing, and read it as the ethical direction that is essentially absent in empathy, although sharing becomes possible thanks to the non-solipsistic roots examined at the beginning of the dissertation.

Abstract

In questa tesi, riesaminerò l'empatia da una prospettiva scheleriana in costante dialogo con i dibattiti contemporanei sul tema. Nonostante le opere più conosciute di Scheler (GW II, GW VII) siano prese in considerazione dalle teorie contemporanee sull'empatia e sulla *we-intentionality*, la complessa visione che emerge da testi di periodi diversi rimane ampiamente trascurata dalle presenti discussioni fenomenologiche. Sostengo che una chiarificazione del problematico concetto di empatia possa trarre vantaggio dall'adottare adeguati strumenti scheleriani, e li applico per indagare le relazioni con i fenomeni dello schema corporeo, dell'espressività e della *we-intentionality*.

In primo luogo, dato che Scheler fonda la percezione dell'altro sulle possibilità espressive del corpo vivo, indago il concetto di schema corporeo, che è stato finora scarsamente studiato in termini scheleriani. Dopo aver esaminato la letteratura interdisciplinare sull'argomento, esploro il punto di vista che emerge da *Die Idole der Selbsterkenntnis* e *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos*, che porta a comprendere lo schema corporeo come una struttura dinamica e preriflessiva, la quale permette di interagire in maniera fluida col mondo, e come il primo livello di individuazione. Inoltre, considero due esempi dal *Formalismus* – l'“esempio della prigioniera” e l'“esempio del neonato” – per indicare una prima distinzione implicita tra lo schema corporeo e l'immagine corporea, e confronto il primo caso con l'esperienza nelle prigioni d'isolamento e il secondo con *l'infant research*. Tramite quest'indagine, arrivo a concepire lo schema corporeo come una forma minima di individuazione necessaria per l'esperienza quotidiana, e come uno spazio tra sé e gli altri che permette l'empatia e allo stesso tempo è plasmato da essa.

In secondo luogo, cerco di fare luce sull'aspetto interrelazionale dello schema corporeo, poiché gli altri contribuiscono al suo sviluppo, e le interazioni stesse dipendono dall'espressività corporea così come dagli scambi affettivi. *L'infant research* mostra una precoce – se non innata – familiarità e comprensione implicita del significato affettivo di alcune espressioni, aspetto che può essere confrontato con la tesi di Scheler della grammatica universale dell'espressività. Per determinare quanto universale sia da pensare tale grammatica, intraprendo un'analisi delle teorie di Darwin ed Ekman, e degli argomenti contrari all'universalità delle espressioni.

Respingo tali obiezioni sostenendo una differenza tra espressioni spontanee universali e gesti, e affermo che l'universalità di certe emozioni si estende oltre la loro visibilità ed espressione (es. la gelosia). Per quanto riguarda Scheler, sottolineo che quella che viene chiamata la "percezione diretta" dal dibattito contemporaneo comporta per lui una dimensione assiologica, una teoria dei valori che aggiunge una sfumatura ulteriore alla non-neutralità della percezione. Se non accedessimo direttamente all'espressività e ai valori ma avessimo bisogno di attenzione esplicita e ragionamento, la nostra percezione diverrebbe solipsistica e simile all'autismo schizofrenico.

In terzo luogo, dopo aver indagato le radici dell'empatia (il corpo vivo e l'espressività), prendo in considerazione il concetto stesso di empatia e riesamino, comparando la sua teoria con i dibattiti contemporanei interdisciplinari, come Scheler possa aiutare a definire la differenza fra fenomeni simili. Nonostante Scheler collochi l'unipatia al livello fondativo per l'empatia, rigetto la prospettiva che vede l'acquisizione di uno stato affettivo come un requisito per l'empatia, dato che il *Nachfühlen* di Scheler presuppone distacco e consapevolezza dello stato affettivo come appartenente all'altro agente. In aggiunta a ciò, tale tesi non ricade nei problemi solipsistici della teoria della teoria e della teoria della simulazione; in particolare, mi concentro sull'ultima per evidenziare che essa può condurre all'egocentrismo sul piano etico, e che anche la simulazione incarnata – la quale afferma che l'empatia sia fondata sul corpo – conduce a varie impasse teoretiche.

Infine, mi chiedo cosa sia primario fra la condivisione ("sharing") e l'empatia, e cerco di comprendere le connessioni fra le due. Considero la condivisione come avente un significato più ampio rispetto a *we-intentionality*, ed essa inizia già da quella che Scheler chiama "condivisione senza consapevolezza" nell'unipatia e nel contagio affettivo. In questo senso, il paragone con la teoria delle emozioni estese permette di comprendere che gli stati affettivi non sono rinchiusi nella dimensione corporea. Prendo poi in considerazione il dibattito esempio scheleriano dei genitori in lutto e le quattro forme di gruppo che egli elenca, per giungere alla conclusione che l'empatia possa avere un ruolo genetico ma non sempre costitutivo per la *we-intentionality*. Il più alto grado di interconnessione (solidarietà e responsabilità assoluta) corrisponde anche alla più alta individuazione (la persona). Sostengo che

la “co-esecuzione” (*Mitvollzug*) di atti personali rappresenti una particolare forma di condivisione, e la leggo come la direzione etica che è costitutivamente assente nell’empatia, anche se, in ultimo, essa è possibile grazie alle basi non solipsistiche esaminate all’inizio.

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Introduction

What is empathy and why has it been and is still the hub of tangled interdisciplinary discussions? In this dissertation, I shall develop and defend the thesis that empathy can be fruitfully reassessed from a Schelerian perspective, keeping at the same time a constant dialogue with the relevant contemporary debates. So far, most analyses on Scheler in the contemporary debate on empathy have taken into account his best-known texts – the *Sympathie-Buch* above all – while the complex view that emerges from other works written in different periods has been overlooked by many philosophers of empathy.

Phenomenology concerns the phenomena themselves, so this dissertation is not meant to be an exegetical contribution. Yet, an original account of empathy that adopts Schelerian instruments should also display an adequate knowledge of his main theories, in order to deal with alternative past and present-day hypotheses.

Specifically, the chapters are centered on four aspects considered of core importance to understand the empathic phenomena: the lived body as the first level of self-individuation and interaction with others (chapter 1); expressivity, affective perception, values and emotions (ch. 2); the definition of empathy, and its distinction from similar phenomena (ch. 3); “sharing” in its multiple forms, and its possible connections with empathy (ch. 4).

The first chapter deals with the following question: how can a phenomenology of empathy claim that our first encounter with others is possible thanks to the lived body? If interaction and expressivity allow to communicate even pre-reflectively, an investigation of embodiment becomes necessary. The first step is to analyze the concepts of body image and body schema, which have not been extensively studied in Schelerian terms so far. In the literature on the body schema, it has been widely ignored that Scheler introduced that concept quite a long time ago («das Schema unseres Leibes» GW II, 409), in fact the sketch of a distinction between schema and image is already envisaged in his works. The body schema is taken into account both in the early ones where the concept of an impulsive structure prevails, and in the later ones where Scheler focuses on the *Bilder* as anticipatory schemata of experience (Cusinato 2008, 130-142).

Starting from Scheler's theory, the thesis of a pre-reflective form of embodied individuation can be found in Cusinato, who conceives the body schema as the first form of individuation, not only with reference to the possibilities of movement of the lived body, but also to its expressive possibilities:

every organism individualizes itself through the schemata of possibility of movement, interaction and expression of one's own lived body (*Leib*). In this sense, it can be supposed that to each individuation process corresponds a specific form of expressive-body-schema. In the primary individuation, the expressive-body-schema coincides with the impulsive structure of the organism, which determines the possibilities of movement and interaction with the environment; in the secondary individuation, it corresponds to the «*body-image*», meant as a socially recognized image; in the tertiary individuation, it overlaps with the *ordo amoris*, to be conceived then as an order of feeling that expresses itself in the body and thanks to the body (e.g. in the feeling of shame). It is essential here to intend the expressive-body-schema not only as a schema for motor possibilities, but also as a schema for expressive possibilities. (Cusinato, [2014] 2017b, 235-236).

And in fact, reassessing the body schema in Scheler brings to a twofold result: on the one hand, it clears up some of the theoretical ambiguities in the literature on the body schema, and on the other hand, it dismisses the criticism often addressed to his theory of the 'undifferentiated flux'.

To clarify how to understand the two terms of 'body schema' and 'body image', I refer to past and present interdisciplinary literature, where, however, I find puzzling and contrasting views that alternate excessive differentiation with blur between subpersonal and experiential dimensions. I therefore argue that Scheler's view can help resolve such impasses, and scrutinize the development of the body schema in his works, like *Die Idole der Selbsterkenntnis* (GW III) and *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* (GW IX). By reading Scheler, one discovers that the body schema constitutes a form of primary individuation that already involves consciousness – though not a reflective one. I also aim at highlighting the successful application of such body schema to some pathological cases of sensory neuropathy and schizophrenia, where an explicit attention to the body (body image) leads to disturbed experiences. If – as Guido Cusinato asserts, drawing on Max Scheler and Bin Kimura – schizophrenia is to be conceived as a relational disorder which

inhibits the direct perception of one's own and others' expressivity, then the relation with one's own body is clearly affected.

I then examine the body schema as it emerges in the *Formalismus* (GW II), particularly from two examples. The first one can be called the "jail example", as it concerns the lived body in the isolation of a prison, hence the comparison with the experience in solitary confinement (Guenther 2013), and the conclusion that the body schema is not a static structure, but rather a dynamical one that is built and modified through social interchange. The other example, "of the new-born", also confirms the primary individuation of the body schema and so refutes the several criticisms against Scheler's 'undifferentiated flux'. Furthermore, this example is compared to the basic self-other differentiation proved by empirical studies in infant research (Rochat 2003, Fogel 2011, Meltzoff&Moore 1977, 1983, 1990, Welsh 2006). Such a space between self and others ultimately sets the possibility for empathy, which contributes to shape the body schema.

The second chapter starts with the investigation of the deep interrelation between the body schema and the role of others in its development. Unlike animals, a human neonate is born with an underdeveloped bodily structure (neoteny), and this requires care from others in order to grow in its plasticity and unique possibilities (Cusinato, 2017b). Such interactions depend on expressivity and affective exchange. A certain trend in infant research has also revealed that the newborn displays an innate tendency to sociality and an early kind of communication, one that is bodily-affectively understood (Trevarthen 1997, 2011; Stern 2005; Lavelli and Fogel 2002). Such evidence has never been explicitly compared with Scheler's account. However, it is directly connected with his theory of the primacy of the body schema, as well as with the universal grammar of expressivity, a topic that I have chosen to study in order to set the bases for the discussion on empathy (GW VII, addressed in Cusinato 2008, 2012, 2015, 2017).

As a consequence, I try to answer the question of how universal such a grammar is by critically assessing Darwin's analysis of expressivity in mankind and animals, and Ekman's theory of basic emotions. Such hypotheses are however controversial, so I question counterarguments from the literature against the universality of expressivity (Jack et al. 2012, Parkinson, Fisher and Manstead

2005). After this inquiry, the conclusion is that universality pertains only to some spontaneous expressions that must be kept distinct from gestures, and that the universality of certain emotions extends beyond the visibility and expression of them (e.g. jealousy). The way expressivity is “metabolized” depends on the levels of individuations, that are the ones of the lived body, of the psychological/social ego, and of the person (Cusinato 2017b).

If according to Scheler, emotions themselves are present in expressions, how does the grasping of them happen? Here the very concept of perception is problematic in the variations mentioned by Scheler of direct perception (*unmittelbare Wahrnehmung*), other-perception (*Fremdwahrnehmung*) and value-perception (*Wertnehmen*) (cf. Cusinato 1999, 167-175; 2011). Although in the contemporary debate it is mainly read as “direct perception” (e.g. Gallagher 2008), it should be remarked that Scheler intends perception as never *wertfrei* (neutral, free from values), which leads here to a discussion on his theory of values (GW II, GW VI, GW VII). The axiological dimension adds a further dimension to the contemporary Interaction Theory (supported by Gallagher&Varga 2014, Gallagher 2008, Gallagher&Zahavi 2008, De Jaegher 2009, Krueger 2011). The comparison between this account and Scheler’s proves that four of IT’s five main claims are shared: the contrast of IT versus simulation theory and theory theory, the direct perception claim, the centrality of expressivity, the importance of the context – while the enactivist variation of IT is more problematic.

Last, I read schizophrenia in the light of a mental experiment that shows us what a neutral perception incapable of grasping expressivity means: when the relationship with the others’ bodies is impaired and we lose contact with their *leiblich* character, i.e. their expressive field (Cusinato 2015b, 77-78), we fall into an irremediable solipsism, where the world and others become unpredictable and scary.

As the first encounter with others occurs thanks to our lived bodies and the universal grammar of expressivity, the main subject of the third chapter is whether the concepts of expressivity-grasping and empathy can be equated. Does a wasp have empathy if she stings a spider in the right spot to paralyze it? And when someone goes to a party and unwillingly acquires the cheerful mood from others’

expressivity, is it a case of empathy? The examples are to be kept distinct, but presuppose an implicit expressivity-grasping, which has been argued to be the ground for empathy. The *Sympathie-Buch* (GW VII) can help us define the concept of empathy, distinguish it from similar feeling-functions, and contrast some past and current theories that have misunderstood its phenomenal nature.

I examine therefore Scheler's definitions of *Sympathieethik* (the ethics of sympathy), *Gefühlsansteckung* (affective contagion), *Einsföhlung* (unipathy, literally "feeling as one"); *Mitgeföhl* or *mitföhlen* (affective co-feeling), *Einföhlung* ([projective] empathy), and especially *Nachföhlen* (affective re-feeling), also referred to as *nachleben* (re-live) or *nacherleben* (re-experience), which is the concept that best individuates the idea of empathy supported in this dissertation. The distinction among affective contagion, unipathy and empathy is particularly significant, since it implies that when agency is blurred – as in the first two phenomena – there can neither be any proper 'thou', nor any awareness of sharing, as will be argued in the last chapter. Among the foundational laws of sympathy, Scheler locates unipathy at the ground level, for his metaphysical theory of the universality of expressivity presupposes an *All-leben* shared by all living beings.

Does this imply that empathy presupposes an acquisition of the target's affective state, as in unipathy and contagion? The reply is negative, since *Nachföhlen* is a feeling-function – it intentionates another's feeling, without the transmission of its content. Consequently, I contest the opposite theory by Jacob (2011), that targets either affective contagion or co-feeling. Although the recognition of the affective quality from our unipathic belonging is essential for empathy, *Nachföhlen* presupposes detachment and clear awareness of the feeling pertaining to the other agent. The wasp is able to grasp expressivity, nevertheless, according to Scheler, it has no awareness of two distinct subjects: it is only a matter of instinctive identification. Such aspects, features of empathy-*Nachföhlen* prove that unipathy/contagion cannot be *present* in empathy, that is not a co-feeling either, since even a sadist can empathize with her victim and an antisocial person with others.

When reassessing Scheler's arguments, it is important to notice that empathy is all but a matter of self-projection onto the other, the view that instead stems from

both the theory theory (Wimmer&Perner 1983, Baron-Cohen, Leslie and Frith 1985, Nichols&Stich 2003, Decety&Cowell 2014) and the simulation theory, which are still prevailing, despite the expansion of a phenomenological/direct-perception account (Cusinato 1999, Gallagher&Zahavi 2008, Overgaard forthcoming, Zahavi 2011). As it concerns the theory theory, it is argued that a theory used to interpret others should be grounded on the repetition of elements already found in previous experiences. Yet, the meaning of such experiences must be rooted in value-ception – in its turn rooted in the universal grammar of expressivity – to avoid a *regressus ad infinitum* where one can only be acquainted with oneself. However, the main focus is on two aspects of the simulation theory. First, it ultimately hides solipsistic premises, and Scheler states in the *Sympathie-Buch* that the ethical implication of it is egocentrism: to project what we simulate onto the other provokes a “usurpation of agency” (Slaby 2014). Second, I examine Gallese’s version of ST that seems more coherent with what I have asserted so far, as it claims to be based on the body (embodied simulation) and to entail a phenomenological level. Yet, I shed light on multiple problems: on the 1) functional/neuronal levels, 2) on the problem of a ST/TT interpretation of the mirror system, and 3) on the phenomenological level.

Given that the unipathic level is foundational for empathy, what is primary between interaction and sharing? In the fourth and last chapter, I consider the relation between empathy and “sharing”, a topic that has been debated only recently and that arouses multiple, even contradictory interpretations of Scheler’s theories of *Miteinanderfühlen* and of the essential group-forms (Cusinato [2014] 2017b; Schloßberger 2016; Schmid 2009, 2015; Salice 2015; Szanto 2016). Following Cusinato’s widening of the concept, I give “sharing” a broader meaning than “we-intentionality”, and argue that the phenomena of affective contagion and unipathy have been overlooked in the contemporary debate or taken into account only for their role of group-reinforcement. In contrast, Scheler considers such phenomena as “sharing without awareness”. Although it is quite a minimal form of sharing and is experienced from an “I”-perspective (that is, without the Searlian sense of us), it also presupposes the minimal form of individuation, coherently with the fact that

the higher in values-sharing the group-form is, the more subjective individuation a person undergoes.

The topic in the next section is the very recent debate on extended emotions (Krueger&Szanto 2016; Krueger 2014; León, Szanto, Zahavi 2017). As a consequence of this new viewpoint, another interpretation of the forms of affective phenomena from a Schelerian perspective would be to claim that they are – in Krueger (2011)’s terms – *scaffolded* by bodily expressivity and the consequent visibility. Yet, the involuntary transmission of a feeling can also be included in the hypothesis of environmentally extended emotions, as for Scheler the grammar of expressivity is shared by humans with all the realm of nature. So the claim that sharing entails even minimal forms without we-awareness is reinforced, and affects can be conceived as co-dependent on others and not as locked in our lived body.

The case of the grieving parents before their dead child (GW VII) is more complex than sharing without awareness and is Scheler’s most discussed example in the we-intentionality debate. It raises harsh discussions on whether there is a token-identity emotion (Schmid 2009) or not (León, Szanto, Zahavi 2017), and on the consequent primacy either of the we-mode or of empathy. I argue that empathy may play a genetic role but there is a further bond that gives the protagonists involved a strong sense of ‘we’, because they share some previous narratives, experiences, etc. I also dismiss the objection that an emotion is shared only if the same happens to the bodily feelings. Those parents’ emotion is being directed towards the same situation in the same affective mode, yet the feeling is “metabolized” (Cusinato 2008) in different ways, depending on their personal order of values, cultural background and experiences,

The last section is the examination of the theory of essential social unities that Scheler exposed mainly in the *Formalismus* and in the *Sociology of Knowledge*. After proving the intrinsic sociality of any human being through the example of Robinson, Scheler lists four group forms, namely the mass, the life-community, society and the community of persons. While the first concerns sharing without awareness, the second recalls the grieving parents’ example, and this brings back attention to the relation of sharing with empathy. Therefore, I take into account a different form of sharing, joint attention (Tomasello 2008). When it arises in a

bottom-up mode, sharing does not stem from empathy, it only plays a role, for instance in building the common background, or in the verification of the other's expression.

Differently, in society there is no proper shared experience, but only an explicitly-set shared commitment: this is why it needs the original we-experiences of the life-community in order to exist. The last to be examined is the highest form of sharing, the one that Scheler defines as a personalistic system of solidarity. Challenging the stance of critics against his alleged reference to a "collective" and "encompassive" person, this level corresponds instead both to the highest degree of interconnection (solidarity and absolute responsibility) and of individuation (the person). The last part discusses the "co-execution" (*Mitvollzug*) of personal acts (GW II, Cusinato 2015b, 50; 2017, 48), including acts of love, and reads it as the possible ethical direction that is essentially absent in empathy, but is nevertheless the consequence of Scheler's fundamental denial of solipsism, as it is shown in the previous chapters.

1. Grounding empathy on the lived body. *Leib* and *Leibschema*

In order to pursue any embodied interaction with alterity, one has to grasp another's intentions or emotions through visual, auditive, tactile acquaintance, in a never-neutral quality of perception that already contains information, prior to any dualistic split between physical and mental elements.¹ When one sees, for instance, an infant with contracted inner corners of the eyebrows, closed eyes and a wide-open mouth she immediately recognizes it is crying. The same happens whenever she hears the newborn crying without actually seeing it, just by recognizing what that auditory experience means; or, in a tactile example, when the baby can be soothed by being held by her mother and feels care and warmth in her hug. These are all cases of emotions perceived thanks to the bodily dimension: in order to describe a third alternative to the theory theory (TT) and the simulation theory (ST) – the main accounts on empathy that I will attempt to refute – a renewed focus on the bodily dimension is needed.

In his effort to keep a “Diary of a Body”, Daniel Pennac defined this peculiar way of describing his own body as «(...) not a treatise on physiology, but my secret garden, which is in many ways our most shared territory» (Pennac 2012, 13). It is a dimension that is not present as first and foremost to one's own perception, but rather a shared territory continuously exposed to the gaze of others, and at the same time a performative structure that allows someone to pay attention to the world, while becoming usually marginal in experience.

How do I move in the environment without explicit attention to my movements? How can *I* grasp the joy in *your* smile? And how is it possible for us even to interact prior to any linguistic communication? When one is involved in a task or focuses on something, including the empathic grasp of others' expressivity, one's own body acquires a quality in experience that can be described by the metaphor of transparency. There is a tendency to almost forget about the existence of one's own body and to move with a fluid movement towards the desired destination or object. One might be concentrated on the goal, like holding a glass

¹ I will deal with this aspect more extensively in the next chapter.

of water, on something occurring in the surrounding environment as a bird that suddenly flies near the window, or even walk deep in thought and at the same time avoid all or most hindrances with no need of explicit attention. For example, one could cross a room while thinking about a challenging philosophical problem and avoid a table or a chair without a cognitive focus on the body. Besides, others will be able to catch our intention from our hand reached out towards a glass, or our emotion in the involuntary smile when we see the bird at the window. This sensorimotor engagement with the world without an explicit effort in movements and expressivity-grasping is possible thanks to what has been called the *body schema*. Differently, the step of making our body become an object of observation, reflection or emotional directedness corresponds to the temporary transition from the condition of bodily transparency to what can be defined as *body image*. Yet, the distinction between the two dimensions is not always clear-cut, due to a partial overlapping of both into experience and, above all, to the conceptual confusion present in the fields of neurosciences, psychiatry, and phenomenology.

The concept of body schema was born between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, with the first theorization of an “absence of schema” (*aschématie*) in Paul Bonnier’s works on medical disorders, and the “postural schema” theorized by Head and Holmes which combines proprioception and a neural map of the body. In the field of psychiatry, an eminent example is Paul Schilder, who was influenced by and influenced Scheler, nevertheless causing a certain puzzlement about the distinction between schema and image. In the field of phenomenology, authors like Merleau-Ponty and, more recently, Shaun Gallagher have taken a very active part in the debate, in the effort to discover its role in experience.

Yet, although the *Formalismus-Buch*’s influence is explicitly recognized in Schilder’s *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body*, Scheler is rarely quoted for his phenomenological theories concerning the problem of *Leib* and everybody’s spatial relation to her own body, topics that are usually related to Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. It has often been neglected that Scheler was most probably the first phenomenologist to use the still-debated term of body schema and among the first ones to introduce the concept of *Leib*, and few scholars acknowledge the role of

embodiment developed by him. With some exceptions, even fewer thinkers remark the presence of the concept of body schema in his works, a notion that clearly emerges when digging into his more and less known texts.² It has even been claimed by one of the major Husserlian scholars in Italy that «the important point that differentiates Husserl's account from Max Scheler's one (...) is the insistence on the necessity of the lived body» (Costa 2014, 124, my translation).

Howbeit, Scheler's attempt to requalify the body and the body schema tends both to contrast a certain Cartesian dualism (GW IX) and to respect the phenomenon of our ineluctable embodiment, that shapes the way we perceive the other human beings, the world around us and our body itself. Already since the *Idols of Self-Knowledge* (GW III), published in 1912, Scheler adopts the distinction of *Leib* and *Körper* and stresses the priority of the first one in perception, due to the originary givenness of it over the abstraction of a pure physical dimension.³ While in this text he sketches a first and implicit characterization of the body schema in describing the normal phenomenology of goal-directed movements, a proper use of the term emerges with the phrase «das Schema unseres Leibes» in the *Formalismus* (GW II, 409), where a differentiation between body image and body schema emerges from some specific examples, as I will show. In Scheler's third period,⁴

² These exceptions are today Guido Cusinato and Roberta Guccinelli, who are the authors of a careful analysis of Scheler's conception of the lived body connected to the impulsive structure and to the selective attention coming from it, together with mention of the presence of a body schema in Scheler's theory. See Cusinato (for a theory of the 'imaginific' body, 2008, 130-141; 2015, 61, 69-71) and Guccinelli (2013, XVII-XCVIII). A contemporary of Scheler, both influenced by and influencing him, was Paul Schilder, who explicitly referred to him in *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body* ([1935] 1950). The work by Lorscheid (1962) represents a systematic overview on Scheler's account on the body.

³ Before the phenomenological movement, the distinction between *Leib* and *Körper* can be traced back to the beginning of German idealism. Fichte poses a difference between an animated, unitary *Leib* that is the possibility for the entrance into the world and for freedom, and a physical, "necessary" (*notwendig*) *Körper* (Fichte, 1962-2012, especially 360-423). Cf. also Grätzel (1989).

⁴ I adopt Cusinato's division of Scheler's production into three periods, according to his most important publications, namely: the first period (by 1912), the intermediate one (1913-1921, which includes the *Formalismus* and *Vom Ewigen im Menschen*) and the last one (1922-1928, which

the topic is discussed especially in *Erkenntnis und Arbeit* (GW VIII) where the selective role of perception is pinpointed, and in *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos*, in which he extensively investigates the role of the body schema for mankind and animals, correlated to an elementary level of “retroaction” or “feedback” (*Rückmeldung*).

In order to show the relevance of Scheler’s theory for the debate and for the phenomenological dimension itself, first of all I am going to provide an overview of the literature concerning the problem of the body schema, with a particular focus on the impasses emerging from the conceptual confusion in the use of the term, though denying that the term should be eliminated. Once having highlighted the theoretical problems in the debate, I will proceed to scrutinize Scheler’s contribution in the mentioned works, and to enhance the efficaciousness of his description in the light of contemporary cases of disruption of the pre-reflective dimension of movement-control.⁵

1.1 At the roots of the body schema. An overview of the literature

Where does the concept of body schema stem from? In 1905, psychiatrist and neurologist Paul Bonnier defined a set of medical disorders as “aschématie”, a term that, he writes, derives «from schema, topographic representation, posture» (Bonnier 2009, 401). It describes a pathological condition in which «some parts of ourselves cease to be part of the idea we have of our body» and «the anesthesia [is] limited to the topographic idea, the spatial representation, the distribution, the form, the posture» (*ibidem*). However, Bonnier’s concept can be traced back to 1893, when, although in different terms, he had used the phrase “*sens des attitudes*” in his work *Le Vertige* to shed light on the reciprocal orientation of the bodily parts to one

contains works like *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* and *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos*). Cf. Cusinato (1999, 36).

⁵ I discussed a preliminary version of the following topics at the phenomenological seminar of the Center for Subjectivity Research, University of Copenhagen, on 1st November, 2016, and at the Scheler Colloquium that took place from 17th to 19th November, 2016 at the Maynooth University. I am grateful to both audiences for comments and critical assessments.

another and in relation to the whole (Bonnier 1893, 38). He first refers to spatial localization, focusing ambiguously both on the localization of bodily parts, internal organs included, and on neurological psychology, besides stating that different kinds of sensations are localized in different cerebral regions.

Yet, soon after he highlights the experiential dimension of a – we could say – pre-reflective bodily control which enables orientation with respect to the objects, the environment and our position in it, and the localization of sensations in the body itself (e.g. a pain or a movement, Bonnier 1893, 38). When this schema is disrupted, because of “labyrinthine dizziness” or other types of pathology, his patients report strong and increasing lack of sensory-field localization, suspension of any sensation of personality, loss of consciousness, spatial hallucinations with agoraphobia, a feeling of the body – or some parts of it – becoming huge (Bonnier 2009 [1905], 402), a sensed absence of body or even the impression to be divided in two. Ultimately, such conditions involve aschematic, hypo-, hyper- or paraschematic. Though the range of pathologies appears so differentiated that it cannot lead to a unitary notion of body schema, it is important to pinpoint some of their characteristics. First, the relationship to the body is tightly connected to the psychological dimension and to the personality, something that will become more evident in Schilder and in Gallagher who envisage a libidinous or emotional aspect of the body image. With an interesting non-dualistic perspective, Bonnier defines this particular aspect as «the intraorganic localization, which is the attribution to a somatic personality extended and distributed in space» (Bonnier 2009 [1905], 403). Secondly, the loss of schema is connected to the loss of spatial localization, an aspect that will be crucial for Head’s postural schema.

In fact, one of the first definitions to become quite well-known in medical, neurological and philosophical contexts is the one originally created by Henry Head and Gordon Holmes who elaborated such concept in their *Sensory disturbances from cerebral lesions*. The terms were “schema”, “schemata”, “postural schema”, and the notion that is being discussed here was described as a «combined standard, against which all subsequent changes of posture are measured before they enter consciousness» (Head&Holmes 1911-12, 187) and «organized models of ourselves» (Head&Holmes 1911-12, 189). Similarly to Bonnier’s focus on the

reciprocal orientation of bodily parts, it includes a schema for the registration of our posture or movement and one for the localization of a stimulated surface of our body. When Head takes up the concept again in the second volume of *Studies in Neurology*, he describes pathologies that may involve one's relation to her own body connected to cortical lesions. However, he underlines two main features of any body schema, the first being that it is continuously built up in a dynamic way, in relation to postural changes and previous physiological dispositions. For Head, a "direct perception of posture" would be impossible, since the grasping of the localization of any bodily part is always relative to something that has preceded it (Head 1920, 722). The second aspect to be pointed out is that the focus on the neurological aspect leads the author to problematic theoretical claims, as the body schema is stated to be grounded entirely behind the threshold of consciousness: «[r]ecognition of posture and movement is obviously a conscious process. But the activities on which depend the existence and normal character of the schemata lie for ever outside consciousness; they are physiological processes with no direct psychological equivalent» (Head 1920, 723). It is right to relate some pathologies of the body schema to observed cerebral lesions, but if there is no direct psychological equivalent and at the same time impaired experiences are entirely determined by physiological substrates, isn't this theory wavering between reductionism and dualism?

Only few years later, psychiatrist Paul Schilder titled a book *Das Körperschema*, a notion he defined as «[t]he spatial image that anyone has of herself. It may be assumed that this scheme includes the individual parts of the body and its mutual spatial relation to one another» (Schilder 1923, 2).⁶ He had apparently read Head, not only because he quoted him at the very beginning, but also because of the clear influence on the qualities of spatiality and the mutual relation of bodily parts that were present in the neurologist's definition. However, as I will examine further in Scheler's conception, the terms *Leib* and *Körper* in phenomenology refer to two distinct aspects of the body, the first implying a mere physical and mechanical side, while the second indicates the body in its animation and 'being alive'. In his second work on the topic, *The Image and Appearance of*

⁶ I owe my interest in this author to Guido Cusinato.

the Human Body published in 1935, Schilder recognized his terminological inaccuracy and quoted Scheler's *Formalismus* to reassess the difference between *Leib* and *Körper* that the German phenomenologist had introduced in his works already in 1912, in *Die Idole der Selbsterkenntnis*. He might also have adopted the expression «das Schema unseres Leibes», used in the *Formalismus-Buch* to describe a perceived structure that would remain present even in the absence of any sensory activity (GW II, 409). Schilder writes:

We are here in better accord with the philosophers, especially with Scheler (...). He uses for this inner body the German word 'Leib'. In his opinion the 'Leib' is independent of the sensation of the inner organs; it is different from single sensations and different from any other object. He emphasizes that our body (Leib) is always given to us as a unit with some more or less vague structure (Schilder 1950 [1935], 283).

Schilder theorizes an interesting perspective of multiple body schemas that are continuously built, destroyed and built again in order to find unity: they change dynamically with experience, contacts with others and the emotional (or “libidinous”) relationship with our body.⁷ Despite such valuable descriptions of ordinary bodily phenomenology, he misreads Scheler's account. He is imprecise when he describes the *Leib* as “inner body”, or claims that, according to Scheler, the body schema arises from inner perception. In the next sections, I am going to argue through the analysis of Scheler's texts that the *Leibschema* is a unity that is certainly independent from sensorial contents, but not confined in a merely internal sphere. Moreover, Schilder is criticized by Gallagher (1986) for using the terms “body schema” and “body image” as interchangeable, as he asserts openly in the first pages of his *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body*: «The image of the human body means the picture of our own body which we form in our mind, that is to say the way in which the body appears to ourselves (...) Beyond that, there is the immediate experience that there is a unity of the body. (...) We call it a schema of our body or *bodily schema* (...). The *body schema* is the tri-dimensional

⁷ In Gallagher's account, this dimension becomes the emotional aspect of the body image (Gallagher 2005a), though it should be noticed that the relationship between image and schema is often quite intertwined: for instance, we move clumsily when embarrassed or insecure, more fluidly when self-confident about our body. Gallagher's distinction appears in this sense too neat.

image everybody has about himself. We may call it ‘*body-image*’» (Schilder 1950 [1935], 1). He does tend to leave the difference between representation, pre-reflective and subpersonal dimensions indistinct, but this is probably due to the fact that in everyday experience these dimensions influence one another and cannot be distinguished completely.

Merleau-Ponty is the best-known phenomenologist in the investigation on the body schema, so I chose to give only a short sketch of his account on the theme, that has a conceptual importance but which I consider as already well-known both in philosophy and in psychology. Following the path traced by psychologist Piaget (but also by Scheler, since he quotes him in *Les relations avec autrui chez l’enfant*), Merleau-Ponty investigates a *schéma corporel* conceived as an evolving image that develops since infancy. Other aspects of the same body schema are viewed through categories of *Gestaltpsychologie*, that is through the concept of “form” configured as an undivided perception of one’s own limbs, with the addition of some dynamicity. This opens to possible and actual tasks in a so-called *spatialité de situation* and so lets the world become an *espace orienté* where we move and act. Through an efficacious metaphor, Merleau-Ponty conceives the body schema as a pre-reflective experience, a transparent background that enables the individual to focus on the world and actions rather than on the body itself: it is «the darkness in the theatre necessary for the clarity of the performance, the ground of sleep or the reserve of vague power against which the gesture and its purpose stand out» (Merleau-Ponty [1945] 1976, 117, my translation).

No doubt, thanks to the different conceptions of the body schema in the literature from Bonnier onwards, the notion is rather vague and ambiguous. It has been even suggested to substitute or eliminate it, on the grounds of its being too equivocal to explain neurological correlates of experience, of gathering too many medical/neurological pathologies without due differentiations, or of being too static, so unsuitable to define a pre-noetic background that makes us usually move without an explicit effort. Haggard and Wolpert (2005), for instance, further puzzle the debate since they mistake the neural with the experiential levels and create another term, “body scheme”, to define their concept. When analyzing the concept of body schema from a neuroscientific perspective, they claim that the brain

contains multiple representations of the body aroused firstly by inputs from the skin and proprioceptive receptors correlated to a map of the body and its segments. Their account appears somewhat unconvincing, since they start with the differentiation between body schema and body image, conceived as «two different higher-order body representations» (Haggard&Wolpert 2005, 261). Soon after, however, they claim that the body schema rarely reaches awareness, and so raise a question about the difference between the neural dimension and the sphere of consciousness, that means, implicitly or explicitly, something that can reach the threshold of felt experience. Their lack of clarification about the possible bridge between the two dimensions is baffling, too: the concept of “neural representation” meets with problems with its application of an experiential concept to a non-experienced level (the neural one). Therefore, when they write that «a common body scheme is used to represent both one’s own body, and the bodies of others» (Haggard&Wolpert 2005, 263), their more neutral term “body scheme”, instead of the long-debated “body schema”, is confusing, phenomenologically inconsistent, and does not avoid theoretical impasses.

Among the authors willing to eliminate the term “body schema”, Poeck and Orgass (1971) assert that this concept is not inclusive of all the pathologies gathered under that name, because they are based on different neuropsychological disorders. Yet, on the experiential level, some pathologies present a split between a pre-reflective dimension (schema) and an explicit one (image), and I will quote some empirical cases in the light of Scheler’s account on the topic.

Maxine Sheets-Johnstone criticizes the terms body schema and body image as they, more than focus on movement tend towards a static direction that does not clarify how feelings, cognition and experience are rooted in kinetic dynamics. This last is a new attempt to redefine the experiential dimension outside the controversial body schema debate, since she proposes the definition “corporeal-kinetic-patterning” (Sheets-Johnstone 2005). Her attention to the kinetic dynamics pertains to a correct description of the human bodily experience, but are we sure that the body schema does not imply such a conceptual shade? A sharp differentiation between schema and image is not possible, since the schema itself goes through changes when we learn new movements by explicit attention, but it is not clear how

any sort of pre-reflective experiential unity could emerge from simple kinetic patterns. Viktor von Weizsäcker's develops an enlightening conception of the difference between intuitions in physics and in biology in *Der Gestaltkreis* (von Weizsäcker [1940] 1997): in biology, the investigation is not only about movement, but about a movement *accomplished by oneself*. The subject and the related movement are to be viewed as an encounter between organism and environment that can be reduced neither to physiological, anatomical spatiotemporal data, nor to the mere motoric dynamism. This means that, if we were to consider only movement to define the fundamental qualities of the lived body, as Sheets-Johnstone does, her corporeal-kinetic-patterns could be easily applied to particles or to inanimate *Körper*, too. There is no automatic connection between the kinetic and the affective dimensions, if a subject of experience is absent.

Sheets-Johnstone presents also an argument versus the subpersonal reduction in the concept of body schema. Her calling into question an objectification of the body in a neural map is phenomenologically incorrect for an investigation that, as I have written, should follow an experiential and phenomenological path instead of being limited to mere cerebral mechanisms. Yet, this does not imply that body schema and body image are not adequate concepts to describe the roots of experience, especially when referred to pathological cases. She concludes her chapter by quoting Stanghellini's theory of bodily-objectification (it can be defined as *Körper-ization*) and the lack of sense of animation and of 'being alive' in schizophrenia (Stanghellini 2006). She claims that this concerns a more basic dimension than the one pointed out in the two target concepts. It is well-known that schizophrenia involves not only direct disturbances in the bodily dimension, but also the problematic self-individuation and encounter with otherness that start with the embodied presence (this is not highlighted in Sheets-Johnstone's text). I find it quite evident that in such a psychiatric disorder the immediate and transparent ground that allows normal movements is impaired, often in association with the abnormal perception of one's own body (depersonalization, de-localization of organs, changes in the experienced body size, and so on).⁸ That is, the body-schematic aspect is impaired. I am going to show that in *Die Stellung* Scheler points

⁸ On this topic, see for instance Mishara (2005), Gallese&Ferri (2013), Graham et al. (2014).

to the body schema as the primary individuation for all animals, and, similarly to Stanghellini's (2003) reference to an objectified body, in *Die Idole* he describes the pathological way of moving in the world as one not centered on a fluid, pre-reflective body schema. There is no need, therefore, to substitute the above-investigated terms, since: 1) the body schema is not static and describes a pre-reflective normally experienced dimension, including movement; 2) Sheets-Johnstone's "corporeal-kinetic-patterning" does not refer to an experiential subject; 3) evidence in the psychiatric literature proves that in schizophrenia the impairment concerns movement, but, more than that, also the objectification and a lack of individuation that are both grounded on the body schema.

Although Shaun Gallagher is the first philosopher to state a sharp difference between the body schema and the body image (cf. below), a similar conception by Donald Purdy (1968) is mostly ignored.⁹ In a chapter entitled *The Bodily Self and Psychological Space*, he posits a transitive and an intransitive awareness of one's own body, that is, a "bipolar" awareness where one's *bodily self* can either be the object of perception (transitive aspect) or the ground for the perception of external objects. Intransitive awareness corresponds to the pre-reflective body schema – the background darkness necessary for the clarity of the show, to use the metaphor by Merleau-Ponty, which is always present in our interaction with the world, without the need for our body to be thematized. Interestingly, in fact, the intransitive use is necessarily present in the transitive one but not vice versa (Purdy 1968, 95). Transitive awareness, on the other hand, has similarities with the body image since the *bodily self* becomes «phenomenally, an "objective" thing, like a chair or a football or any other environmental object» (Purdy 1968, 97). Yet, such an awareness can be bipolar since the two sides are necessarily connected in one's owned body – in the unity of what Purdy calls 'haptic interperception' (Purdy 1968, 95). In other words, his analysis proves to envisage Gallagher's distinction but with the insightful recognition of a close interconnection between the two characters, which is mostly missing in Gallagher's theory.

⁹ I am thankful to Alessandro Salice for this bibliographic suggestion.

In this section I have exposed the diverse conceptions of the topic, and explored the reasons why ambiguities still exist, due to a kind of interchangeable use of the two terms ‘body schema’ and ‘body image’, as well as to the insufficient differentiation among reflective, pre-reflective and sub-personal levels. It is true that in our ordinary experience the two aspects influence each other without always reaching the level of explicit attention. A body schema progressively developed through explicit attention and learning is essential for a child to achieve the way to move fluidly, and it is also habitually experienced that this schematic dimension changes in daily life when we get self-confident in a certain sport or kind of dance, for instance.

However, if Shaun Gallagher tends to overlook this connection, he points out a possible phenomenological difference. He examines the impasses in the previous and contemporary literature (Gallagher 1986), showing the necessity of a univocal characterization. Is it possible – he wonders – that the body schema is at the same time a conscious representation, a thematized image, a physiological image and a neural map? Some years later, he defines the *body image* as an «intentional content of consciousness that consists of a system of perceptions, attitudes and beliefs pertaining to one’s own body» (Gallagher 2001, 149), and as «a complex set of intentional states and dispositions – perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes – in which the intentional object is one’s own body» (Gallagher 2005a, 25). At a different and more basic level, the body schema is a dynamic system of sensory-motor functions, which implies «a set of tacit performances – *preconscious, subpersonal* processes that play a dynamic role in governing posture and movement» (Gallagher 2005a, 26, emphasis added). This leads to close-to-automatic movements and allows one’s attention to focus on other tasks or objects. A very simple example is that, when one is deeply intent on reading a novel and wants to grasp a glass of wine on the table, she does not reflect on her arm stretching, the fingers extending, the single muscles contracting or decontracting. Yet, does Gallagher not fall back into the same ambiguous trap when he describes the schema as a neural (supersonal, not experienced) and preconscious (again, not experienced) dimension?

I share Zahavi’s criticism to the impasses in Gallagher’s distinction, which includes a pre-reflective body awareness and a nonconscious physiological process.

A twofold imprecision can be detected here: the first is that he uses what Zahavi judges too narrow a concept of consciousness and also includes subpersonal, neural processes in what he calls an «active, operative performance of the body» (Gallagher 1986, 548-49; see also Gallagher 2005). The second is that, like most of the scholars who explored the problem, Gallagher did not even mention Scheler's works, although Scheler was, as far as I know, the first phenomenologist to introduce the term body schema, and his account can provide a rich theory that involves lived dimension, perception of the world and of other living beings, and individuation. Gallagher quotes convincing evidence to prove the historic vagueness of the two terms, as it has been ascertained through the overview in the present chapter, but a sketch of such distinction between a pre-reflective system of sensorimotor capacities (schema) and an intentional attitude toward the body as an object (image) was already foreseen in Scheler's *The Idols of Self-Knowledge* and in the *Formalismus-Buch*, and in some parts of *The Human Place in the Cosmos* and *Knowledge and Work*.

1.2 Scheler: the false certainty of self-knowledge, the *Leib* and ordinary/pathological embodied experiences

1.2.1 An early sketch of the body schema

Some weeks before his death, in 1928, Scheler gave a conference paper to the publishing house Otto Reichl in Darmstadt – a text that was later published with the title *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* (GW IX). There, Scheler referred to an elementary level of individuation as opposed to the spiritual level that can be achieved by the person, namely a dimension linked to the “retroaction” or “feedback” (*Rückmeldung*) that corresponds to the animal *Leibschema* and its contents. An animal is individuated 1) thanks to the separation of its sensorial system from the motoric one and 2) thanks to the continuous retroaction of its body schemata and of its sensible contents.¹⁰

This point is particularly important since it highlights that the lived body, thanks to a Schelerian view, connects the fields of the structure of drives in the lived

¹⁰ Cf. Cusinato, 2000, 12-17.

body and expressivity. In other words, the self and the forms of sympathy. What is then the role of the first-personal quality of experience in the animal body schema?

There are some statements in *Die Stellung* that seem at a first glance to contrast even with a minimal individuation, and that sketch the animal as immersed in the flow of the world, without the capacity to attribute an “I” pronoun to itself. Even the animal’s impulsive structure (*Triebstruktur*), which orients it in the world through the perception of values in objects (e.g. the attraction for a certain kind of plant as a source of food), is perceived as a dynamical flux coming from the things in the environment (GW IX, 35). The *Leib* is the first core that directs value-ception and our posture in the world, as well as the perception of the expressive field (cf. Cusinato 2008, 130-142).

One of the characteristics that distinguish mankind from animals, in fact, is self-consciousness (*Selbstbewußtsein*, GW IX, 34). Scheler’s words, especially the ones related to the basic embodied phenomenon of the impulsive structure, are certainly not so clear. Does he mean that there is no minimal, bodily individuation, and that an animal is just an unconscious part of its environment? Then, how to explain, for instance, that an animal can feel a threat to its own individual existence? I argue that Scheler’s differentiation between consciousness (*Bewußtsein*), that pertains to all animals, and *Selbstbewußtsein* (which I translate as explicit self-consciousness), that pertains only to mankind, is still underpinned by a bodily self-awareness. In some following lines, indications can be read of an ontic center that builds itself *its* spatial-temporal unity and individuality (GW IX, 35).

According to Scheler, the animal exists on a self-referential level of life, and is not able to differentiate itself from the milieu and to retroact on a second stage, where the effect can retro-act to its own cause or, in other words, create a “world” that exceeds the environment. It is the stage which allows a human being to achieve the “re-flexio” or explicit self-consciousness that individuates a personal center (GW IX, 34 ff; cf. Cusinato 2008, 86-89). Nevertheless, the animal differentiates itself from the plant, which is the first example mentioned by Scheler of an animated, living being. In addition, the animal has sensations and *consciousness*, that is, it can undergo a centralization of the retroaction of its variable organic states. It is individuated, though on a first level, *thanks to the body schema*. Differently

from the human beings, however, the animal cannot have objects. It is not able to *objectify* its *Leib* and its movement, both in the visual and in the conceptual sense. This implies that it can neither turn the perception of its body into a *body image* nor explicitly think of itself as an “I”.¹¹ I skip here the discussion that refers to the personal sphere, in order to refute the notion that only the highest level constitutes the human being as such, as a dualistic interpretation of Scheler would claim. Scheler provides indeed fruitful hints by showing how to understand the embodied dimension that is an intrinsic element to explain normal, everyday interactions and our relationship with the world and others. When this level is impaired, pathological conditions arise.

The above-mentioned contemporary debates draw attention to this text, part of Max Scheler’s late production, that approaches the problem of the body and the body schema in an explicit way, but the roots of his theory should be traced back to more than ten years before. Although research studies on the *Leib* focus mainly on Husserl to discuss the origins of the concept, Scheler introduced the same term at the very beginning of the phenomenological movement, in 1912 in *Die Idole der Selbsterkenntnis*.¹² The harsh criticism to the Cartesian dualism in *Die Stellung* can be foreseen there in the basic claim that «Leben und Leib» (life and lived body) constitute «an ultimate elementary fundamental class of phenomena» (GW III, 231). The alleged reliability of internal perception in comparison with the external one is nothing more than an illusion, based on the fact that, while external perception concerns an object, the internal is directed to the echo of that object in the subject. It does not necessarily regard my-*self* or the ownership of, for instance,

¹¹ When he discusses the immersion of the animal in its environment that makes it perceive its impulsive structure as dependent on it, Scheler makes the example of a primitive man. He is so immersed in the flux of the tribe (what Scheler calls later *Einsföhlung*, in GW VII) that he uses the impersonal form (“this thing is a taboo”) instead of the first-person pronoun (“I loathe this thing”); cf. GW IX, 35. I claim that this is a further sign of Scheler’s use of *Selbstbewußtsein* as an explicit, reflective, or even linguistic self-consciousness, different from a more basic embodied self-awareness.

¹² On the origin of and influences on Scheler’s interest in the theme of the body in philosophy, cf. Cusinato (2010).

an emotion, as it happens in emotional contagion, when an emotion is experienced by subjects in whom it was not authentically originated.

Moreover, external and internal perceptions do not touch the psychical sphere, but concern the “I” only through an “internal sense”: sensorial data, including the ones coming from this internal sense, depend on the lived body. As a consequence, internal perception can be directed to the body too. Scheler states that the *Leib* should be clearly distinguished from any *Körper*: the (owned) *Leib* is a matter of fact, an immediate evidence that recalls the transparency of the aforementioned body schema, since it is given immediately to one’s internal and external perception, without any need of attribution or doubt about it being the same. Here is the excerpt from the German version:

Wie irrig ist, äußere und innere Wahrnehmung auf den Leib relativ zu setzen, das zeigt am besten die unumstößliche Tatsache, daß der «*Leib*» – ein Tatbestand, den man doch vom «*Körper*» scharf scheiden möge – uns sowohl in inneren wie äußerer Wahrnehmung gegeben und unmittelbar, nicht durch Zuordnung, uns als «derselbe» gegeben ist. (GW III, 242-3).

Scheler goes on stating: «it is “the same hand” that I see here and in which I find this ache» (GW III, 243). The hand might be a misleading example, because of its “touched-touching” character, which recurs in Husserl’s *Cartesian Meditations* and in Merleau-Ponty’s analysis of the hand touching another hand in the discussion on the body schema, in *Phenomenology of Perception*. I maintain that here Scheler is trying to focus on something different: in currently-debated terms, it can be called *sense of ownership*.¹³ Here, the body schema is already associated with the body image, and this seems to emerge during development, as I am going to prove thanks to the example of the newborn in the *Formalismus*. The

¹³ This concept crosses the definition of body schema as part of the features that allow normal movements and the relation to our corporeality. I envisage the sense of ownership as the first-person character of experience, that is, a pre-reflective certainty «that I am the one who is undergoing an experience» (Gallagher 2000, 15). It is usually taken for granted, as the following example by Wittgenstein shows: «there is no question of recognizing a person when I say I have toothache. To ask “are you sure that it’s you who have pains?” would be nonsensical» (Wittgenstein [1969] 1998, 67). About the possible roots of a sense of bodily ownership, cf. Tsakiris (2011).

main point is that this example concerning the body schema means to demonstrate an immediate coincidence of pain, ownership and unity which is experienced as a primary fact without any more or less explicit associations.

While preserving the immediately present qualities of ‘being owned’ and ‘being the same in its unity’, as they might be called, the body in external and internal perception is given respectively as *Körperleib* (for instance, when we watch our arm) and *Leibseele* (which also includes sensations from single organs) (GW III, 243). More than a dualistic distinction between the soul and the body, this theory of internal and external perception can so be seen in accordance with the notions of body image and body schema. It is the immediate evidence of ownership and sameness as part of the schema’s tacit performance and of perception as individuating a body image (generally, the body as an intentional object). This also explains why later on, in the *Formalismus*, Scheler insists on the body schema as the residuum of the lived body without organic sensations (GW II, p. 409), being itself an intrinsic unity and the *basis of any organic sensation*.

In a way that anticipates Gallagher’s conception of the body schema and the body image, he recognizes that the *Leib* is usually a pre-reflective background which does not need to be explicitly represented, thematized or perceived, as mentioned before. In everyday life, the schematic structure of our body is translated into quasi-automatic movements that need neither noetic attention nor visual contact, and one’s attention can be focused on other tasks that do not imply the body as an object. Scheler writes that

normal volition aims for the realization of the desired *content* directly, e.g. to leave the room. Any volition of the means necessary for this purpose, like “step up to the door”, “press the handle”, the execution of the movements necessary to the aim, and so on, is subordinated to that finalistic content and occurs through quasi-automatic impulses, insofar as no specific hindrance comes up (GW III, 258).

Here he claims that, phenomenologically, we experience a prevailing focus on the external world rather than on our body, that is why we can move fluidly when we are involved in a task. This is also proved by the fact that, when we bump into an obstacle, we tend to impute the cause of our collision first to it and only after, in

case the obstruction cannot be eliminated, attention turns towards our bodily dimension.¹⁴ Any theory based on the necessary representations of one's own movements and on the memory of the same movements performed previously, refers to an anomalous condition. As we read in *Die Idole*, does a child who is learning to write a letter need to represent her movement, in order to copy the teacher's way of writing it? Usually, the child gets to know the "sensations of movement" only through the realization of the very intentions of movement: in other words, the kid does not need to observe her bodily sensations to perform that new task.

According to Scheler, only a supervening break of the natural link between the intentions of movement and what is seen, leads to the necessity of this kind of representation. Otherwise, it implies a split between the willingness of an action and the fulfillment of it, an anomalous condition of the body schema, which is the ground of any bodily action. This condition can range from an ordinary lack of coordination between intention and action in wrong movements, to more or less permanent diseased conditions.

1.2.2 Reading Scheler's *Die Idole* through pathologies affecting the body schema: the cases of sensory neuropathy and schizophrenia

Scheler's intuitions prove valid also regarding pathological cases, as he himself asserts. Impairments that concern the body schema can be much differentiated, and some hints about their variety are present in the paragraph on the literature overview. Scheler's mention of the normal and pathological volition described through the bodily dimension and of the body schema as a principle of individuation (in GW IX), seems to explain the modifications on the bodily level in cases of neuropathy and schizophrenia and to support the sketch of a distinction between "schema" and "image" in his works.

¹⁴ For instance, in case of eyestrain, it has been noted that the reader tends to attribute the cause of it to the difficulty of the text or to the diminished light, before realizing that the condition is actually due to eye fatigue. Cf. Buytendijk (1974, 62) (quoted in Gallagher&Zahavi 2012, 134).

There is an emblematic example of body-schema disturbance in *Pride and a Daily Marathon*. Jonathan Cole writes about Ian, a patient affected by sensory neuropathy which impairs his feelings of movement, touch and bodily position and causes abnormal consequences to his proprioception and to the bodily structure that we usually take for granted when moving inside the world:

He could feel nothing from the neck. Nor could he feel his mouth and tongue. Not only couldn't he feel anything to touch, he had no idea of where the various bits of his body were without looking at them. He could not feel anything with his arms, his legs or his body. That was frightening enough, but he had no awareness of their position either. It wasn't that the muscular power was affected, since he could make an arm move. But he had no ability to control the speed or direction of the movement. Any movement happened in a totally unexpected way. It was pointless to try (Cole 1995, 12).

After Ian got affected by sensory neuropathy, he could not feel his body from the neck downward, the nerve damage making him lose proprioception except for the sensations of temperature and pain. If we read this case through Scheler's reasoning, Ian could surely try to represent his bodily movements, but that would not help him move: the core explanation concerns the body schema. As my analysis has highlighted, one of the main features attributed to the body schema is localization. Because of this serious flaw, i.e. without the implicit knowledge of the presence and position of his own body and without reflective or visual attention, how could Ian regain his motion capacity? During the years, by a lot of rehabilitation and a great cognitive effort, he has learnt again to walk, to use tools, even to handle eggs, but only after the preliminary step to watch his limbs move or to make an imaginative effort in the case of gestures. Gallagher and Cole (1995, 377) claim that the part of Ian's body schema that has not been impaired by sensory neuropathy includes inputs from vestibular, equilibrical sources, and visual proprioception, a subpersonal processing of visual information while moving in the environment. Therefore, if Scheler's description of standard volition is right, Ian's fluidity of normal movements is now damaged, since it requires great effort of explicit attention, thinking, and the visual control of his limbs.

In order to explain Ian's ability to move despite his condition, Gallagher and Cole claim that the patient has integrated some motor programs into the *body image*, which does not have the quasi-automaticity of the body schema but has allowed him to move with a less conscious effort after years of practice. Scheler's description confirms that the split between an overdeveloped body image and the body schema when accomplishing even simple purposes is far from the direct realization of the desired content. The «set of judgments or internal motor commands» (Gallagher&Cole 1995, 382) is not comparable to the ordinary experience of enactive engagement with the world. However, a memory of the bodily localization might still persist since Ian's phenomenological reports prove that he does not need to control every single muscle cognitively, (Gallagher&Cole 1995, 382), as he claims to focus on the fact of moving one single arm or finger.

Schizophrenia is another pathological and more evidential condition that illustrates the importance of the *Leibschema* in the Schelerian sense. To be sure, a PhD thesis in philosophy cannot provide the definitive answer to such a complex pathology, since it is still a widely debated illness with a variegated number of forms, symptoms and triggers (DSM V, 99ff). The heterogeneity of the manifestations does not allow a univocal explanation. Yet, what I propose is to read some of its associated features in the light of Scheler's phenomenology, and in particular, inappropriate affective responses, depersonalization, derealization, and social cognition deficits (DSM V, 101). This may help clarify the bodily (this section) and the relational (section 2.6) sides of the problem, at least in some of its core experiential dimensions.

Starting from the first version titled *Über Selbsttäuschungen, Die Idole der Selbsterkenntnis* mirrors Scheler's interest in psychiatry, further shown by the fact that he attended medicine courses in Munich and Berlin. When in Munich, he also got into contact with the group of psychiatrists led by Wilhelm Specht and published in Specht's journal «Zeitschrift für Pathopsychologie».¹⁵

¹⁵ Cf. Cusinato (2017).

In *Die Idole*, he describes some psychoses as having a common anomaly in the way of experiencing one's own body compared to the normal purpose-oriented actions quoted above. In pathological cases, the world is given as their representation, and usually attention is focused on bodily states (the body as an object, so the body image). A sort of transposition of idealism, that Scheler criticizes for falsely claiming that the world is our representation (GW III, 256) can be individuated in his description of the ordinary condition lived by those psychiatric patients, who lose the immediate relation to the world in its autonomous existence and focus on themselves. In the anomalous attempt to press a handle, their attention will not be addressed to the task, but to the movement itself, that is to separate contents which are the object of an *explicit* tendency (GW III, 260). The patients feel the desired purpose as something to be achieved, detached from the activity, and the normal non-mediated sequence of attention world-us is inverted. In normal perception, expectations guide us, grounded on pre-reflective "familiarity" and "certainty" that things will appear in such and such a way, that an action will have such and such consequences, and so on. Thanks to this basic attitude, we do not usually *think* about and *judge* what is going to happen, or in what way we should move to accomplish the purpose. For instance, if I find myself in front of a car speeding along the wrong side of the street, I expect it to be real, to have adumbrations that I would see from another point of view, and also fear it is dangerously going to run me over, so I immediately realize the car does something against my habits and shared social norms. In my attempt to avoid it, I will not reflect on my bodily limbs to verify if they work in their usual way, nor will I ponder whether the world I am interacting with is illusory or real.

The meaning is implicit in what we perceive. When we start to jump back, the consequences of our movement are pre-reflectively foreseen, and we do not need to thematize them. When those pre-reflective certainties about our personal corporeal sphere and the world are lost in ordinary situations – so when there is no interaction with external objects that would make us resort to a reconfiguration of action, or reaction at least – there is a lack of what phenomenology calls the *natural attitude*, that is said to be defective or missing in schizophrenia (Blankenburg 2001). From a slightly different perspective, this appears as a focus on the body

image which is abnormal in comparison with the normal use of the quasi-automatic body schema. In the next chapter I will argue that the dimension of *Leiblichkeit* and the one of expressivity are lost in schizophrenia and so impair an otherwise taken-for-granted component of perception. Some psychiatrists name this abnormal condition *hyperreflexivity* and *diminished self-affection*.

In a significant article that analyses ipseity disturbances in schizophrenia, Sass and Parnas (2003) associate the tacit awareness of the kinesthetic and proprioceptive aspects of the body schema with the pre-reflective self-awareness, that is usually present in intentional acts. Since this bodily dimension is the medium for the sense of ownership, any disturbance in it also affects the relation to the self and the world. As Sass writes, «a fragmented and alienated sense of the lived body tends to disrupt the world-directedness as well as the normal fluidity and flow of affective experience and expression, leading to a sense of disharmony, artificiality and distance, both in the patient's own experience of emotion and in the expression visible to others» (Sass 2004, 135-6). Moreover, contrary to Scheler's description of the normal purpose-centered and quasi-automatic action, referable to the focus on interaction with others too, the body schema in schizophrenia is apparently altered and this affects one of the basic qualities of ordinary emotional experience: «[w]hen bodily states and processes replace persons and situations as the focus of awareness, the affective experiences in question are deprived of an essential component of normal, targeted emotional meaning» (Sass 2004, 136). Therefore, according to this thought-provoking trend, there are two intertwined aspects that characterize one's relation to her owned body in schizophrenia. One is hyperreflexivity, an explicit-consciousness feature that usually pertains to bodily or object-observation, and the second is the related diminished self-affection, that seems to consist in a diminished sense of *Leiblichkeit*. In such a condition, the experienced vitality of oneself and the sense of agency and cohesion, or unity, of the self are severely impaired (Sass and Parnas 2003, 428). Ipseity is connected to this basic feature of awareness, and for Sass and Parnas «the experiential sense of being a vital and self-coinciding subject of experience or first-person perspective on the world» (Sass and Parnas 2003, 428) is indeed what is disturbed in this pathology.

Despite this high-level attention to normally quasi-automatic aspects, the schizophrenia spectrum, as defined in the last DSM, often results in a *loss of control* over one's own bodily or reflective aspects. This happens in cases of delusions of control, thought insertion or thought withdrawal (DSM-V 2013, 87), and also in abnormal motor behavior in any form of goal-directed action, ranging from unpredictable agitation to diminished reaction to the environment in catatonia (DSM V 2013, 88). The DSM V mentions a somatic type of disturbance that involves bodily sensations or functions, too and enumerates, among the associated features of schizophrenia, bodily- and self-related disturbances like depersonalization, derealization, somatic concerns, abnormalities in sensory processing, and anosognosia.

Sass and Parnas criticize the absence of the notion of self in the diagnostic criteria (in the DSM IV, but this omission is not resolved in DSM V either), while it is an essential aspect that is lost in schizophrenia. In ordinary experience, «the sense of *self* and the sense of *immersion* in the world are inseparable; we are self-aware *through* our practical absorption in the world of objects» (Sass and Parnas 2003, 430). This very tacit, embodied *self-individuation* – so it might be called in Schelerian terms, referring to the body-schema individuation – is contained in every experience, but is missing in hyperreflexivity and diminished self-affection. The schizophrenic patient needs to thematize her own first-person perspective and is then split between *Leib* and *Körper*. As in Ian's case, the body schema has become an object of explicit attention, abnormally under the sphere of the *body image*.¹⁶ In sensory neuropathy as well as in some cases of psychiatric disorders like schizophrenia, the fluidity and easiness that characterize actions and expressions thanks to the body schema are absent and can originate delusions of influence (Sass and Parnas 2013, p. 432).¹⁷

¹⁶ Sass and Parnas acknowledge that, in schizophrenic hyperreflexivity, the body schema slides into the body image. I agree with their definition of the schema as «an implicit or background awareness of one's own body as a sensorimotor *subject*» (Sass and Parnas 2013, 430), yet it is not clear how an *unconscious* (i.e. out of consciousness, therefore out of experience) representation could be objectified or objectifiable (*ibidem*).

¹⁷ Cutting (2009) investigated psychopathologies from a Schelerian perspective. He speaks of hyperreflexivity in different terms using Scheler's metaphysical concepts of *Geist* and *Drang* and

While Ian Waterman's condition does not allow him to move in a fluid way physically, schizophrenic patients cannot do it in the world of social contacts and self-relation. They perceive themselves and others as discrete elements with a faded sense of alive-ness or, as I am going to elaborate further in the next chapter, as a lack of expressivity. In the excessive self-reflection and impairment of the *Leiblichkeit*, the world and others are not *directly* significant for them. In my opinion, hyperreflexivity and the impaired affective dimension can also be read as a problem in *relationality*, both with oneself and with others. A lived body is never isolated from the environment, and though the body schema constitutes individuation at a primary level, it should not be understood in a solipsistic way as an unalterable core. It is not just a transcendental first-person perspective, but the structure for bodily sensations and perception, a quality which can be modified through interaction and sharing.

Such a clarification agrees with an interesting theory by Matthew Ratcliffe (2017), who explains schizophrenia in relational terms and related to a "sense of distrust". This is the definition of the schizophrenic loss of the primitive, pre-reflective reliability, consequently of the expectation that things happen in such and such a way. In the cases I have analyzed so far, reliability could mean the trust that, for instance, I will reach that spot in the room without any effort and visual attention to my limbs (impaired in the case of Ian Waterman) or that I am the author of my thoughts (impaired in some cases of schizophrenic delusions with thought insertion, cf. Gallagher 2015).

However, for Ratcliffe the problem at stake, the question of a minimal self, is connected to, but not coincident with, the one of the body schema. This last has been stated to concern a primary individuation and to contain some innate seeds in interaction and imitation, so Ratcliffe's claim of a *socially constituted* basic

claiming that this pathological condition is comparable to Scheler's phenomenological reduction, in which one suspends her vital or animal center of experience, that is, the spheres of reality, dynamics, of 'having life' in general. This might be another way of expressing the phenomenon that Sass and Parnas call diminished *self-affection*. Using a Schelerian framework, Cutting envisages some unperceived spheres of value in schizophrenia that imply affective experiences different from the ordinary ones. Since I have not explained the concepts of value and value-ception yet, I mean to take them into account in the following chapters.

dimension of the self has to be defined more in detail. Assuming that an originary individuation is connected to the body schema – and the body schema, as stated by Scheler, does not depend on sensory activity but rather originates it – then this structure is primary and only *modified* by the encounter of others. In other words, the body schema is modifiable, but it is first of all innate and its primary existence does not depend on socially shared contexts. It can change by interactions and learning, for instance when we learn a new movement, or when a person raises an emotion that makes us move with a different quality, like a cheerful mood that modifies our gait. In the paragraphs concerning solitary confinement and infant research, I will consider Zahavi's notion of the minimal self and give my interpretation of the primacy of a lived-body individuation, by means of reference to Scheler and some empirical evidence.

Despite its objection to the primacy of a relational self, Ratcliffe's definition takes an interesting course when it analyzes its social aspect. Without using the more neutral terms of *commonsense* (Blankenburg) or *natural attitude* (Husserl), that imply an already given dimension, Ratcliffe indicates the same taken-for-granted bases of experience and expectations and focuses on affectivity and relationality. Is there any connection, in this sense, between Ian's case and schizophrenia? Is relationality involved in both situations? It might be objected that in Ian's case there is no we-dimension involved: his body just does not respond to his will. A counter-objection is, instead, that he relies on previous corporeal habits but after his illness he distrusts the normal anticipation of movement. It may not be a kind of relationality that involves other human beings, but one with his own body, that seems to "betray" his normal protentions. Trust is in fact an intentional feeling: we trust something or someone. Ratcliffe's hypothesis is that after traumatic events «[a] habitual confidence and sense of continuity is replaced by a pervasive sense of unpredictability, uncertainty and threat» (Ratcliffe 2017, 162), and this has a major influence in the many cases of schizophrenia where some traumas happened before the illness manifested itself.

Schizophrenia could be conceived as a relational pathology, just as Bin Kimura's view of that same illness as an *aida* (between-ness) pathology. I draw inspiration from the proposal to compare Bin Kimura and Max Scheler for a

phenomenological psychopathology by Cusinato (2017, 2018), where he argues that understanding schizophrenia as a disturbance in the ‘*aida*’ also implies that the interrelational dimension of expressivity is involved. In other words, according to his theory, the layers of the *ordo amoris* and of emotional sharing are at stake in such a pathology.¹⁸

Kimura ([1992] 2013, 58ff) stresses that the “common sense” is an implicit background, shared by a community and continuously shaped by practical interactions among its members. This can be compared to the “sense of distrust” that Ratcliffe describes as the deceived primary expectations that modify a person’s way of perceiving in schizophrenia. The most interesting point in Kimura is that he explains this pathology by bringing up an impairment in the *intra-personal* relation, too. Why and how is this view connected to a relational body schema in schizophrenia and to Scheler’s concepts taken into account so far?

Kimura ([1992] 2013) points out a not-yet-objectified embodied dimension and stresses its importance as a basis of one’s individuation and relation to otherness, a relation that is profoundly impaired in schizophrenic patients. Such intra-subjective individuation is defective in schizophrenia. This kind of “self-differentiation”, though Kimura does not use this definition, first occurs on the bodily level. He explains that there are two levels of embodied “self” in the Japanese language: *mizukara*, “something that originates from my body” or “from my flesh”, quite similar to the notion of sense of ownership, and *onozukara*, that means “from itself” in its anonymity and spontaneity, connected to the manifestation of the flux of nature (Kimura [1992] 2013, 3-4). Kimura states that such interrelation shows the difference in the concept of self between the European languages and Japanese: in Japanese, it implies so strong an interdependence of the self and nature that the “self” does not presuppose identity to itself (Kimura [1992] 2005, 4). It takes place through a negation of itself, that is constantly established by the interpersonal encounter and, in general, by the participation to the constant movement of nature: the subject is something that has to be continuously regained (Kimura [1992] 2005, 37).

¹⁸ I will go back to the interpersonal disturbances in schizophrenia in the next chapter.

The two concepts of *mizukara* and *onozukara* do not correspond completely to the distinction between body image and body schema, they refer to an internal experiential differentiation inside the body schema alone. Kimura remarks that the *aida* (the between-ness), which is the Japanese term for the background from which all relations emerge and individuals can encounter one another, is also intra-personal, as the double bodily aspect described shows. Individuation occurs through the bodily level (Kimura [1992] 2005, 37), and an intra-personal individuation is just what is defective in the schizophrenic patient. A person affected by this pathology undergoes an impaired relation to her-self, from the body-schematic dimension, up to the more complex psychological ones. Only an intra-subjective *aida* is able to relate to another intra-subjective *aida*; the schizophrenic patient falls prey to the solipsism of a non-completely formed individuation, and even her body schema, may be split and perceived as something alien from her own “self”.

So far, I have highlighted that the phenomenology of normal and impaired volition supported in Scheler’s *Die Idole der Selbsterkenntnis* goes towards a definition of the concept of body schema, as a pre-reflective and quasi-automatic element that underlies ordinary experience and without thematizing the body in order to reach a goal. It is possible to apply it to two cases in which the body schema seems to be impaired in its pre-reflective character. This provokes an abnormal reliance either on a visual body image (Ian Waterman and his sensory neuropathy) or on a hyper-reflexivity that hinders the fluidity of movements coming from the taken-for-granted bases of experience (schizophrenia). As Scheler asserted, (GW IX) the body is the ground for self-individuation or, in other words, for an intra-personal *aida*. Only some years later in the *Formalismus*, however, Scheler referred to the term “body schema” explicitly, and the mentioned cases of its impairment can help to understand his theory.

1.3 «Das Schema unseres Leibes». The body schema in Scheler’s *Formalismus*

I have highlighted some pathological conditions of the body schema lacking the spontaneous, quasi-automatic aspect which constitutes the bodily “knowledge” for our actions, since an abnormal body image substitutes the schema. It has been

observed that Scheler's thesis on goal-directed movements is confirmed by the case of Ian who, after suffering from sensory neuropathy, is compelled to use a cognitive, explicit attitude that requires judgments, visual control or imagination to perform even the most habitual tasks like walking. Likewise, schizophrenia can be regarded as an ailment of the body schema in which the taken-for-granted roots of movement, that should remain implicit, are the object of hyper-reflection, and cause a reduced sense of "self", a diminished self-affection. From a different but complementary point of view, this might be read in a relational way as an impaired intra-personal bond to oneself, owing to a detachment from one's own embodied roots.

Such evidence finds further theoretical grounds in what Scheler writes about the body schema in his *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, some years later. As he asserts, «we can express almost as a law that the biological automatisms (psychical too) become disturbed and ill, when they are performed deliberately (*bewußt*) and are accompanied by explicit choice and attention (*von bewußter Wahl und Aufmerksamkeit*)» (GW II, 290, my translation).¹⁹ This explains why both in schizophrenia and in Ian's sensory neuropathy movements become less fluid, due to the fact that they undergo an explicit attentional effort.

As mentioned in the introductory part of the chapter, it is in this book that the phrase «das Schema unseres Leibes» (GW II, 409) can be traced for the first time in Scheler's production. It has been shown that in *Die Idole*, Scheler points out the notion that the body schema is the background for our movements and perceptions, and it works by remaining non-thematized but also the "same" in its unity. This last aspect is highlighted in the *Formalismus*, where he gives a clearer but negative definition: it is a structure that exists for us in its unity and would continue to exist even in the *absence* of any sensation. The experienced unity of our lived body cannot arise from sensorial data like vision or touch plus some "organic sensations"

¹⁹ I chose to translate the terms *bewußt* and *bewußter* as "deliberate", in order to avoid the ambiguities between 'conscious' and 'unconscious' mentioned before. It has been remarked that Scheler speaks of "quasi-automatic" processes, that can therefore be inscribed in the pre-reflective dimension, and not in the non-aware one. If it is true that Scheler does not ascribe all knowledge to consciousness, it should also be remarked that the non-conscious and ecstatic knowledge is usually referred to plants, therefore to the living forms that do not go through the primary individuation of the *Leib*. Cf. GW IX.

(*Organempfindungen*, GW II, p. 398). The body schema, in other words, is there *prior* to any kind of observation of the body image. Otherwise, we would never be sure about the ownership of our “image”. Therefore, it is wrong to state that one simply adds proprioception to the owned body taken as a *Körper*.

What Scheler says in *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* about the encounter of embodied others, can also be applied to what I am going to explain: «Only to a surgeon or to a natural scientist can anything be given in this fashion, i.e. to somebody who abstracts artificially from the primarily-given phenomena of expression» (GW VII, 21). Our body is not given to us as ‘physical body+animation’, so to speak: we do not add proprioception to an owned body observed as a *Körper*. The unity of our lived-body (*Leibseinheit*) is «an immediate, clear content, given as materially identical and as a whole».²⁰ This can clarify why the body schema is an originary structure that configures the possibilities of any sensation and primary individuation.

In the *Formalismus*, Scheler expands the example of the hand that he had sketched in *Die Idole* (GW III, 243, cf. p. 34), and he does so in order to discuss the body schema (GW II, 399). If the body schema is what originates sensations and perceptions, our body is given to us both as a unity of internal consciousness (i.e. as the existence and the conditions of one’s own body) and as an external perception of one’s own *Leibkörper*, that we can perform for instance through vision or touch. The unity of the body schema implies that the *Leib* is not simply a physical body with animation added: according to Scheler, such a thesis would mean to «throw away the lived body by performing a volt (*den Leib wegzuvoltigieren*)» (GW II, 398). Here the hand is also connected to the “touched-touching” problem. It is a neat differentiation between the schema and the image: he states that there is a process of learning which concerns the link between the “internal consciousness” of one’s lived body (i.e. the existence and shape of it, the movement of fingers, pain, and so on) and the (same) thing that one is touching with the other hand and to which her optic image corresponds. One learns the connection between her pre-noetic aspects of proprioception, pertaining to the body schema, and the optic image

²⁰ «ein unmittelbar anschaulicher, material identischer Gehalt und als Ganzesgegeben» (GW II, 158).

of her hand, pertaining instead to the body image. This can be verified in the rubber-hand illusion, where the sense of touch deceives the felt “ownership” by confusing the person about the optic image of her hand.²¹

As Scheler specifies, the aspects that need to be learnt are two: 1) coordination: the coordination of homologous *parts* of the two sides of the lived body, in which, however, the *immediate identity* (*unmittelbare Identität*) of the whole body is already given both internally and externally; and 2) the relation between the phenomena (*Erscheinungen*) and their “real” (*dinglich*) meaning, or between them and their function as symbols (e.g. of the *thing* “hand”. GW II, 399). A partially positive definition is given below: we do not need to learn the body’s unity, and the lived body comes to evidence as independent of any organic sensation, as «a completely unitary [*einheitlicher*] phenomenal state of affairs, and as the subject of «feeling» in such and such condition (*So- und Anders«befindens»*)» (GW II, 399). It not clear whether Scheler refers to the body schema or to the lived body, or and if there is a radical difference between the two terms. Howbeit, even if there is some imprecision in dividing the *Leib* from the *Leibschema*, I state that Scheler suggests the way to find some transcendental characteristics of the body schema, that are its unity and its first-person perspective on the general condition of the body.

Although the terminology of these elements remains vague in Scheler’s *Formalismus* there are two remarkable examples from which the theoretical distinction between body schema and body image can be detected.

- 1) I call the first mental experiment the “*jail example*” (GW II, 400). If someone spends her whole life in a prison, her hand is potentially seen with the same regularity as the jail walls. But – Scheler states – this would in no case imply that she could mistake the walls for her own lived body. She would already have the experience of a distinction between her own *Leib* (since the body schema is an originary matter of fact that represents the first individuation for every animal) and any *Körper*, that applies to her own “physical” body (whose perception, as stated, is the result of an

²¹ For experiments on the rubber hand illusion, cf. for instance Ehrsson, Spence, and Passingham (2004).

abstraction from the lived dimension) and to the room partitions. I am going to discuss this claim by comparing it with Lisa Guenther's phenomenology of solitary confinement that shows a more complex set of problems. In such an extreme case, the body schema seems to reveal a necessary relational dimension, since the *Leiblichkeit* and its first-personal experience become impaired by the lack of interpersonal contacts. Scheler's example may be considered naïf when contraposed to the evidence coming from actual experience in intensive confinement, but according to my research his general theory is not called into doubt. In fact, solitary confinement and its effects on one's embodied dimension indicate that the body schema is not a static structure, but a dynamical one, built and modified through social interchange.

- 2) The mental experiment mentioned here indicates an already incorporated recognition of one's own body image: the observed hand is perceived as pertaining to one's own body. Body image and body schema overlap in normal experience. Nevertheless, only the body schema is innate, although subject to variations: for Scheler, the link between the schema and the image seems to be learnt through experience. This phenomenological claim can be detected in his "*example of the newborn*" (GW II, 402). When a child sees her feet for the first time, she tries to hit them, as if they did not pertain to her own body, and she needs to learn that the optic image (*das optische Bild*) of the bed sheets is distinguished from the optic image of her body. How could she accomplish this task, if she did not have a body-schematic dimension beforehand? How would she presuppose the differentiation between her own bodily sphere and the environment, if she did not have any proprioceptive experience? What she learns to distinguish is *which optic image* pertains to one sphere or to the other. That is, the body image – its visual aspect, at least – is not yet formed and connected to the schema. After studying Scheler's claim I discuss some insights present in the lively debate on intersubjectivity in infant research. I mean to highlight that Scheler provides important keys to go into such a topic, and that the body schema is confirmed as an originary phenomenon, a

unitary structure that constitutes the ground for any sensation, the bodily optic image included.

1.3.1 The “jail example”. Solitary confinement, the body schema, and minimal self

Scheler’s example of a person living in a jail all her life presupposes an originary and tacit distinction between the living and non-living dimensions (*Leib* and *Körper*, cf. above), especially between the owned lived body (the hand) and the physical, non-owned and non-living one (the wall). It has been stated that the body schema corresponds to a pre-reflective structure that forms the background which allows attention to be focused on a purpose and not on the body itself. The body schema is “innate”. According to Scheler, it constitutes the first individuation for any animal, when, metaphorically, it raises its head from the ecstatic condition of total immersion in the flow of the environment, and creates an *Umwelt*. Besides, the *Leibschema* is animated and is primarily attracted to animation and what is alive, as Scheler states in *Wesen und Formen*.²² The *Leiblichkeit* of our body is part of the common sense through which we interact with the world, and there is no need to reflect on it if pathological conditions do not arise. Hence the logical consequence would be that we could be put in any kind of prison and still we would never mistake the walls for a limb of our body, despite the fact that our visual contact with both happens with the same frequency. If the body schema is the primary structure of animal individuation, and we are *born* with it, then no confinement should affect

²² I have quoted a passage on expressivity that sees the *Körper* as an abstraction from the expressive *Leib*, given artificially to the scientist or the surgeon (GW VII, 21). The body in this sense is perceived as similar to a machine, and observed or scrutinized as an engine or robot might be. On the contrary, the *Leib*-perspective has an intrinsic dimension of spontaneous movement, and at the same time our experience shows that, when something moves, we tend to focus on the movement rather than on motionless objects. Animation is a primary phenomenon, as an essential component of the *Leib*, and therefore it is not an addition to a physical, *körperlich* level; this is why Scheler argues that «(...) “learning” is an increasing de-animation (*Ent-seelung*) – not an animation (*Beseelung*)» (GW VII, 233). A child does not have to learn that the world is animated, only that not all in the environment is alive. I will deal with this subject in the second chapter (section 2.2).

our perceptual system up to the point of making it lose that bodily distinction with others and the environment.

This is consistent with Scheler's theory of the body schema. It seems the normal prosecution of what remains silent in experience and is not affected by any extreme situation and is the challenge of the mental experiment of the jail. Is this really confirmed by experience, though? Let us analyze what happens if a person is physically confined in a room with no possibility to encounter other human beings or if her sensory stimulation is reduced to the minimum level, because of total darkness and silence. What occurs when her experience brings to the elimination of all sensory stimuli, animation and relational dimension? Lisa Guenther investigated solitary confinement from a phenomenological perspective, and her book *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and its Afterlives* demonstrates that the body schema is no more an experiential certainty when someone is in such extreme conditions.²³

Guenther's claim is that the implicit experiential features of being the owner of pain or not, of distinguishing between perception and hallucination, and even one's fundamental sense of being alive or dead becomes blurred in the absence of relational dimensions or in being treated as *Körper* in overcrowded spaces. That is what prisoners experience in intensive confinement. The body schema proves to be much more dependent on otherness than suggested by the jail example. First of all, while Scheler states that the walls are undoubtedly an inanimate body that is perceived in a different way from our *Leib*, it seems that the affective relation that we entertain with such boundaries *changes* many fundamental aspects of our embodiment:

[i]n nonincarcerated space, walls tend to function as supports for embodied personhood: constitutive limits that carve places out of pure depth, both stabilizing and continuing the dynamics of embodied, relational consciousness. Walls offer protection and privacy; they mediate between inner and outer space. But what is the experience of walls like in a supermax unit, where the walls have no windows and the door does not open from the inside—where the white or gray ganzfeld gives the eyes almost nothing to “gear” into, just a smooth homogeneous surface or, in older

²³ I am grateful to Thomas Szanto for suggesting me this reading.

prisons, a pockmarked surface carved with traces of other inmates, now absent? (Guenther 2013, 182).

If I imagine I share the condition of such a prisoner and experience complete solitude, I live an unusual experiential condition. I suffer from full sensorial deprivation (a *ganzfeld*), so I am surrounded by a monotonous, neutral, homogeneous surface with almost no objects to focus on. My possibilities of movement are reduced to few meters, affordances are almost absent, visual, vocal and tactile contacts with other human beings, usually guards, are limited to violent or emotionally neutral interactions, in which there cannot be any affective reciprocity. I also experience an almost contradictory absence of privacy, since the walls that should isolate and hide me from external sight are always open to the gaze of watchmen through video cameras. The prisoner is denied anonymity (Guenther 2013, 179), the possibility to withdraw from sensorial deprivation and to hide from external gazes, that walls or other physical barriers allow elsewhere. The walls are not just an inanimate thing from which the body schema of a prisoner differentiates itself, but provide an affective protection for the normal preservation of such body schema.

A person in solitary confinement has to cope with a de-animated reality, too. I have remarked that Scheler significantly stresses the original *leiblich* animation that pertains to our mode of perception. In the *Sympathie-Buch*, he states that for a child «(...) “learning” is an increasing de-animation (*Ent-seelung*) – not an animation (*Beseelung*)» (GW VII, 233). If this is true, then solitary confinement, with its sensory deprivation and its lack of interrelational possibilities, makes the prisoner experience a constant de-animated condition that contrasts with the human ordinary perceptual constitution. So, what happens if a subject is put in an exclusively *körperlich* dimension, except for her own body?

Apparently, she experiences something opposite to what Scheler describes as normal learning: a delusional *Ent-seelung*. Guenther describes the phases of a prisoner that tries to regain a relational dimension from the death-like condition she is living. First, the silence becomes unbearable, and it makes her fantasize about other prisoners. Then she starts imagining hidden figures who glare at her and even end by occupying her perceptual space in the cell and her sleep. The walls

themselves acquire a different affective quality, since they become dreadful and the ceiling an animated but impersonal gaze that does not leave her any time to experience some solitude (Guenther 2013, 21). If Scheler supports the stability of an implicit difference between the prisoner's *Leib* and the surrounding *Körper*, it is clear that in solitary confinement hallucinations falsify at least the basic fact that the walls should be perceived as mere physical structures, in contrast with the owned body. A person who is left without any human contact seems to undergo a delusional process in order to regain this fundamental experience.²⁴

Not only the prisoner starts to imagine fictional other beings, but she is also a victim of other serious symptoms of mental impairment called by Grassian the "SHU syndrome" (SHU being the acronym for Security Housing Unit). Such a pathological condition is a specific mental illness caused by the sensorial and interrelational deprivations in solitary confinement. According to Grassian, it presents a set of seven symptoms that are not detectable in any other psychiatric illness. They are: a) hyperresponsivity to ordinary external stimuli; b) perceptual distortions, illusions and hallucinations, like the animation-related one described above; c) panic attacks; d) difficulties of thinking, concentration, and memory, sometimes even acute psychotic and confusional states; e) intrusive obsessional thoughts, and emergence of primitive aggressive fantasies against the prison guards; f) overt paranoid and persecutory fears; g) difficulties with the control of violent impulses towards oneself and others (Grassian 2006, 335-336).²⁵

What does such syndrome reveal about the relationality of our body schema? It proves that a solipsistic condition like the one in solitary confinement modifies the normal grounds of our sensations and perceptions. Intrinsically, the *Leib* seems to need to deal with affordances and Scheler speaks of an impulsive structure (*Triebstruktur*) active in selecting stimuli from the environment according to a

²⁴ When Guenther discusses Dicken's description of prisoners in solitary confinement, she highlights that neither the contact with non-human animals nor some coloured painting of the walls are enough to preserve a person's condition of mental sanity. (Guenther 2013, 22).

²⁵ Guenther (2013, 153) shares Sharon Shalev's view that interprets compulsive self-harm as a way of feeling something rather than nothing, and ultimately as a way of establishing one's own existence when there is no shared recognition of it.

value-ception (e.g. objects are perceived as useful or dangerous).²⁶ Since the body schema and this impulsive structure are both characterized by Scheler as *leiblich* pre-configurations of experience (cf. e.g. GW II, GW VIII, GW IX), one may infer that in the absence of existing intentional objects, the prisoner's perception has to focus on delusional situations. An almost complete de-animation of the surrounding world is such a deeply abnormal condition, that hallucinations might be an implicit strategy to "feed" the impulsive structure.

The absence of regular bodily contacts with other human beings has, according to the experiences in solitary confinement, a peculiar effect on one's self-individuation as well. Even the embodied sense of "mineness" of some prisoners analysed by Guenther – simply the first-person perspective of any experience – seems to be eroded. The very individuation of the subjects who feel pain is blurred. They are not able to distinguish whether they are being harmed or harming themselves, or they recognize to be the experiential subject of an action only *a posteriori*. To exemplify this body-schematic impairment, Guenther quotes a description by Jack Henry Abbott, who spent twenty-three days in a blackout cell: «I heard someone screaming far away and it was me. I fell against the wall, and as if it were a catapult, was hurled across the cell to the opposite wall. Back and forth I reeled, from the door to the walls, screaming. Insane» (Abbott 1991, 27, quoted in Guenther 2013, 183). One could individuate in such reports a dualistic spilt into *Körper* and animation, almost a case of Cartesian cogito. As a matter of fact, perception becomes delusional, and to identify the certainty of one's own existence, one has to infer it *after* the experience itself. Here, a systematic de-animation of one's own *Leib* underlines the loss of the Schelerian vital-values dimension, and consequently the lack of the "owned" dimension of experience.

To sum up, some of the most important radical changes that occur in experience in solitary confinement are, according to Guenther: 1) the prisoner is denied anonymity, because her body is always exposed to the gaze of others; 2) the emergence of hallucinations, like a delusional animation in the absence of any social and environmental stimuli; 3) the de-animation of one's own lived body, that

²⁶ Cf. also Cusinato (2008, 135-137). I will resume the Schelerian concept of impulsive structure in the next chapter.

is converted into a *Körper*, when the sense of “mineness” of certain experiences becomes blurred.

Scheler’s example of the jail may undergo heavy objections, if one analyses some substantial modifications of the *Leibschema* in solitary confinement. The general description of the body schema provided by him is valid if one deals with normal experiences and the development from birth to childhood, as I will attempt to show in the next section. However, the weak point in this mental experiment lies in not highlighting possible unpredicted changes in the basic structure of our perception when all human contacts are denied. The essential (or not) aspect of relationality for the body schema may be an interesting topic for the contemporary debate on the minimal self. Some of Scheler’s claims must be examined now. It has been stated that, for Scheler, a prisoner could never mistake her hand for the room walls, even if she had the same protracted visual contact with both. His certainty is due to the tacit distinction between the “physical” bodies and the “lived” ones. Moreover, in some pages following the example he asserts something significant concerning the first-personal quality of experience:

Just as all the mental experiences are only lived “together” through an “I”, in which they are bound in a specific way that constitutes a unity, analogously all the organic sensations are necessarily given “together” in a lived body. (...) The state of affairs of the lived body makes it also the underlying, situated form in which all the organic sensations come into connection; thanks to it, they are the organic sensations of *this* lived body and not of any other one. (GW II, 401).

The individuation that any lived body brings to a living being, therefore, gives experience a basic, intrinsically subjective character, that seems impaired in the quoted reports of solitary confinement. The prisoner locked inside Scheler’s prison does not mistake the walls for her own hand, yet she may not feel her hand moving, or any corporeal sensations as pertaining to her lived body, as it happens in the report of Abbott who screams and realizes only afterwards he was the acting subject.

Guenther points out that a person’s «subjectivity is not merely a point but a hinge, a self-relation that cannot be sustained in absolute solitude but only in relation to others» (Guenther 2013, xiii). Such impairment of the sense of

“mineness” poses a radical question about the kind of subjectivity under scrutiny. If such a basic aspect of perception weakens or disappears in the absence of human contacts, does the body schema ultimately rely on a “minimal self”, or rather on a socially constituted one? In the second hypothesis, how could it arise from an undifferentiated and non-individuated phase? The bodily individuation which pertains to any animal being seems indeed to be nullified in the condition of extreme solitude and absence of perceptual stimuli. In order to find the response to this two-faceted question, a more in-depth analysis of the concept of minimal self is required.

By the term “minimal self” Dan Zahavi defines «the first-personal character of phenomenal consciousness» (Zahavi 2017, 195). It refers to a pre-reflective form of self-awareness (Zahavi 1999, 138) that constitutes any experience.²⁷ No matter how implicit, pre-noetic and “self-forgetful” the subject is while walking towards the room door, having nausea, or when focusing on the bouquet of a complex wine. Even when our mind is intent on objects and situations, the reflexive (not reflective) character is inseparable from what we are feeling, seeing, smelling, thinking about. According to Zahavi, it is not possible to have an experience without an experiential subject and this is not just a “self-qualia”, to be added, for instance, to the smell of ripe apples and pineapple in a Chardonnay. He argues that «all experiences regardless of their object and regardless of their act-type (or attitudinal character) are necessarily subjective in the sense that they feel like something for *someone*» (Zahavi, forthcoming). For this reason, he has recently called his perspective “experiential minimalism” (Zahavi, forthcoming), to claim that a non-subjective experience is – simply – no experience.

The examination of the SHU syndrome makes me doubt whether the sense of being mine of an experience can persist in the absence of relationality. In the last quoted text, Zahavi does not go thoroughly into the relation between the psychopathological loss of the first-personal character of experience and the role of others in it, when he mentions cases of schizophrenia and depersonalization. The instability of the first-person perspective, that he endorses from Parnas and Sass’s account, is defined by him as an impairment of the usual and familiar obviousness

²⁷ This is the sense in which he defines his own account as the “experiential approach” (Zahavi 2014, 90).

of the “for-me-ness”, which is usually neither addressed to as an object nor doubted in normal experience. Such an exception to the first-personal quality, makes it *prima facie* unclear whether this can be explained by envisaging a more minimal level of selfhood that is preserved even in the absence of such “for-me-ness”, or by considering the self as relationally-dependent on its most basic ground. This is quite controversial when we study the case of solitary confinement in which the psychopathological condition emerges in non-ill subjects, apparently because of the lack of interpersonal contacts.

The recent developments in the debate on the minimal self highlight this tricky side of the problem as they involve two opposite claims, the primacy of a minimal self or of a socially constituted one. Scholars like Cusinato (2018, in press), Ratcliffe (2017), Ciaunica&Fotoupoulou (2017), Ciaunica (2017), Kyselo (2016) contrast the Zahavian notion of the minimal self (1999, 2014, 2017) as too weak on its relational side. The debate recalls an early-phenomenological rift: on the one hand, there is a certain way of interpreting Heidegger’s and Scheler’s concepts of *Miteinandersein* (Heidegger 1923; GW II) and *undifferenzierte Strom* (GW VII); on the other hand, the notion of a minimal, experiential self, akin to Husserl’s primordial sphere of the ego (Husserl 1973). The role of relationality is no doubt of crucial importance. Yet its striking consequences for perception and the “sense of mineness”, make me infer that the distinction between sense of ownership and sense of agency could still help, and would not clash with the experiential minimalism that Zahavi supports, or the primary individuation of the body schema. In the light of those two concepts, the “sense of mineness” (or for-me-ness) can be interpreted as composed of two parts, at least in pathological experiences. Gallagher defines the sense of ownership as the simple experiential level of being «the one who is undergoing an experience», while the sense of agency is «the sense that I am the one who is causing or generating an action» (Gallagher 2000, 15). Ultimately, the loss of a first-person perspective would be an impairment of the second concept, not of the first one. When the prisoner claims to hear someone screaming and realises only afterwards that it was he who did it, the scream is in any case first-personally experienced (it is me who hears the sound: sense of ownership) but not perceived as “mine” (it is not me who originated the sound: lack

of sense of agency). Therefore, a *prima facie* objection to Zahavi's minimal self tends to disregard a "more minimal" distinction, that arises in pathologies or in the total absence of interpersonal contacts.

To sum up, the investigation on solitary confinement led to a problematization of the relational dimension of selfhood, since the lack of sociality is directly linked to an impairment of some features of the body-schematic individuation and of the sense of agency. It has been proved that a minimal form of self is not destroyed. This dimension is not sufficient for a person to live experiences in the ordinary way: when the sense of agency is not given together with the sense of ownership in "my" actions, when the minimal self is detached from the relational one and my body schema does not encounter other lived bodies, then the roots of perception, of the shared world, and even of the self are seriously impaired. Though Scheler could be naïf or wrong about self-perception in jail, this does not invalidate what he claims to be a primary individuation through the body schema. A different reading can be that a depersonalised perception of one's own hand could actually correspond to a detachment of the body schema from the body image.

My analysis so far has not entailed that the minimal self and the body schema are equivalent: however, the concepts of sense of agency and sense of ownership clarify in what sense it is still true that thanks to the body schema «they are the organic sensations of *this* lived body and not of any other one» (GW II, 401). That is to say, in what sense my sensations remain "mine" – as in the contemporary phenomenological concept of sense of ownership – even in cases of depersonalisation. To claim that I hear someone screaming and I realize only afterwards that the agent is me, implies that I still need *my* body schema to have such an experience and that the experience is happening to *me*. My purpose is to prove that the primary individuation supported by Scheler is a convincing objection to those who interpret him in the light of a panpsychistic reading of his theory of the undifferentiated flux. If the minimal self is to be compared to the "conscious", first-personal character of experience, then all animals possess it, whether they are reflectively self-conscious or not, as Scheler argues in *Die Stellung*. This concept can be best highlighted by his example of the new-born and I mean to verify this bodily-schematic self-individuation in infant research as well.

1.3.2 Not recognizing one's own feet – Scheler's example of the newborn, body schema and infant research

Shortly after the jail example, Scheler provides further breeding ground to discuss the concepts of body schema and body image by a small paragraph on a newborn. As mentioned, this example claims that a newborn is surprised when she sees her feet for the first time, and at the beginning she seems not to associate the optic image of them with what has been called a “sense of mineness”, or to have the proper visual distinction between her feet and the bed sheets. But it is experientially sure that there is something primary on which such differentiation is rooted: «the difference between the spheres “lived body” and “external world” is *presupposed* since longtime; she “learns” to distinguish not these spheres themselves, but rather which *visual things (Sehdinge)* pertain to the one or to the other» (GW II, 402). After the investigation on the minimal self and the sense of ownership, the first-person perspective is not dismissed from such an account: it is not as if the infant lacked any bodily individuation before acquiring a stable perceptual image of her body. On the contrary, «the interconnection (*Zusammenhang*) of “I” and “lived body” is actually an essential interconnection (*Wesenszusammenhang*) for all finite consciousness – so not an inductive-empirical or associative connection». Scheler's argument here is not distant from Zahavi's minimal self, and it perfectly applies to the infant who knows pre-reflectively that her body is experienced in a different way from the external world. At the same time, in this example the distinction between body schema and body image (Gallagher would say in its perceptual aspect) shows that a basic individuation – a unique first-person perspective and a pre-noetic “knowledge” of one's own lived body – is already present at birth, while an image still has to be learnt and formed.

According to this interpretation, a neonate comes to the world self-individuated, though an objection might be found in a specific sentence from the *Sympathie-Buch*. The child is immersed in a unipathic flux, so that she raises her mental head from this *undifferenzierte Strom* only slowly (GW VII, 241). Is this argument not in contrast with the bodily self-individuation then? The answer has to be negative, since it has been shown that the *Leib* involves a form of consciousness

already. In an interesting paragraph dedicated to Scheler, Merleau-Ponty criticizes him in the *Sorbonne Lectures* for reducing the problem of consciousness to a sort of pan-psychism, in which «there is no individuation of consciousness» (Merleau-Ponty 1988, 44). Since the reasoning focuses on the uncertainty of one's own consciousness for oneself and on the concept of expressivity, Merleau-Ponty most likely misunderstood some passages from *Die Idole* on the illusions of self-knowledge. He seems to have confused explicit consciousness with a more minimal individuation, and some other claims from the *Sympathie-Buch* on other-perception and unipathy, not last the one that sees the infant as immersed in the influences of his acquaintances and of tradition. However, to suggest that the child «finds herself as a being who also, at times, has feelings, ideas and tendencies of his own» (GW VII, 241) does not imply that she has no minimal, pre-reflective consciousness, but that her *psychic* self is not yet completely developed and individuated. In other words, an explicit self-consciousness and a critical detachment from her social environment will emerge only with time.

A more recent criticism that could also refer to Scheler's theory is Talia Welsh's (2006) about the claim of neonatal imitation in the experiments by Meltzoff and Moore. In their works, they made several attempts to verify the possibility that infants can imitate certain facial gestures, like tongue protrusion and mouth opening, from their first hours after birth to their third week (Meltzoff&Moore 1977, 1983, 1990). Their results demonstrate the presence of a body schema at birth, since a newborn could not otherwise be able to generate the same expression without having seen her own face beforehand: a pre-reflective localization of their facial muscles seems the most plausible hypothesis. Welsh maintains that to interpret Meltzoff and Moore's results as effective imitation is still questionable, and even if it was proved, this would not be a necessary index of a primitive sense of self- or other- awareness.²⁸ Yet, does she refer to the same basic self-awareness as the one discussed so far in bodily individuation? Her definition takes a different path: to be "self-aware" means for her

²⁸ A well-argued defense of neonatal imitation and its importance for social cognition can be read in Vincini, Jhang, Buder, and Gallagher (2017).

[s]ome ability to recognize my own subjective experience as my subjective experience would lay the foundation for distinguishing self-awareness from awareness. (...) I don't think my cats understand that my feeding or not feeding them is based on my own internal decision-making process». (Welsh 2006, 222)

Her concept relies more on self-reflection, as she argues when denying it to animals: «[w]e have no reason to believe that cats have the kind of second-order reflection that would be constitutive of self-awareness – some kind of ability to reflect upon his desire for the bird as his» (Welsh 2006, 222). This capacity is linked to the *theory of mind*, that is, to a reasoning on others' mental states. Plus, Welsh criticizes Gallagher and Meltzoff (1996) for their claim that infants' behavior suggests both a body schema and a body image; but, as it can be deduced from the example of the newborn, Scheler denies any completely formed body image at birth.

Does this kind of explicit self-awareness invalidate a body-schematic individuation? I state that Welsh underestimates the role of embodied consciousness, not only in the light of a Schelerian reading, but also because infant research demonstrates such corporeal differentiation between oneself and otherness. Rochat (2003) pinpoints five levels of self-awareness, that develop chronologically from birth to the age of 4-5. Level 1 corresponds to a self-world differentiation; level 2 involves a situated self, i.e. a sense of how the body is located in relation to others and to the environment; level 3 shows the emergence of a proper “me” in the second year, that means an explicit, representational self-awareness able to connect one's body image in the mirror with the body experienced from within; level 4 and 5 involve a self lasting over time and an evaluative and cognitive self-awareness. Remarkably, Rochat is sure that a newborn does not come to the world with a *level 0* of self-awareness, in a complete, confusional immersion in the environment (this would be an erroneous interpretation of Scheler's undifferentiated flux, as well). On the contrary, he supports that neonates' level 1 of self-awareness already makes them non-cognitively distinguish between themselves and the world, between self- and non-self touch and stimulations of which they are the agents and the external ones (Rochat 2003, 722). In other words, there is an originary – though implicit – I-thou differentiation or, in Schelerian terms, a primary individuation.

In a similar way, Fogel (2011) attributes the infant an embodied self-awareness (ESA), which is composed by 1) interoception or the capacity to experience feelings as coming from one's own body (comparable to Scheler's vital values, e.g. a general feeling of wellbeing) and the related emotions; 2) body schema, that involves sense of ownership, localization, pre-reflective boundaries that distinguish the owned body from the world. Yet, the infant is not a creature that lacks so much self-individuation that she is a neutral and impersonal part of the stream of life, and that in her attachment to the caregiver does not have first-personal feelings until she acquires reflective and symbolic knowledge.

The bodily individuation described, however, may risk being misinterpreted as a bodily, monadic solipsism. In the next chapter, I am going to prove that a one-sided interpretation is misleading: according to Scheler, the primacy of the lived body applies not only to self-awareness, but also to other-perception, and this is why the concept of expressivity is a core argument for empathy. As infant research also shows, the bodily schema is not detached from an interactive and interrelational dimension made of neonatal imitation, affective attunement, co-regulation, and vitality affects. In order to motivate the intrinsic connection among the bodily level, expression and empathy, I will continue the discussion on infant research in the next chapter and highlight how Scheler's theory of expressivity can be applied to such psychological interpretations.

2. The lived body as an expressive field: expressivity and perception

2.1 More about infant research – the relational aspect

A newborn comes to the world with an implicit body schema: she reacts to external stimuli, as she already implicitly acknowledges the difference between her lived body and the world, and she is able to imitate basic gestures much before recognizing herself in the mirror. Does this imply that the child is born completely self-sufficient, isolated like a monad, and that the body schema is a transcendental structure that does not undergo any changes during development and interaction? Although individuation has been shown to be a primary phenomenon, it is just one side of the problem, since interaction modifies the infant's lived body and its capabilities greatly. Moreover, the newborn shows an innate tendency towards the interrelational dimension and, as some experiments in developmental psychology show, expressivity and expressivity-grasping.

When a cub is born – for instance, a dolphin or a foal – it is usually already autonomous in its movements: it can walk or swim immediately after birth, that is, it has a sufficiently developed body schema. In contrast, a human neonate is born with an insufficient development of the cortical region, and that allows her a great learning plasticity, also dependent, however, on external stimuli (Cusinato, 2017b). Her body schema still lacks the capacity to walk, the coordinate movements to obtain food, and so on. In other words, she would not survive without other people's care, and she could not have a proper cognitive, bodily and emotional development without interaction. This exclusively human condition has been called *neoteny*, after Bolk's coined term in *Das Problem der Menschwerdung*, and it can be read both as an intrinsic flaw and as an intrinsic "world-openness", in Schelerian terms.²⁹

So, what would happen if the child and the caregiver only communicated through explicit reasoning, and the body was only a clue to be cognitively interpreted? Caregivers could only guess what the child's needs are, without directly understanding whether her crying means an unpleasant condition like

²⁹ On the advantages of culture and social life for infant development thanks to the neotenic condition cf. Cusinato (2015).

stomach-ache, a request for food, help or something else. An infant would not learn to understand people's intentions, emotions and thoughts prior to 4-6 years of age (Wimmer&Perner 1983), when a theory of mind is said to arise: therefore, she could not return one's smile before that age, or engage in joint-attentional situations. She would not even be affected by any lack of affective regulation between herself and her caregiver; this, however, is proved to be untrue by the cognitive and emotional impairments in children that receive hostile or poor expressive responses from their post-natal depressed mothers (Murray, Cooper, Fearon 2014). Besides, it would not explain why newborns respond to tongue protrusion few hours after birth: even if we accept Welsh's criticism that this phenomenon is not a proper imitation but just a way of exploring the world (Welsh 2006, 228), couldn't it be an attempt to establish interaction?

According to the theory of neoteny and to infant research, conversely, babies are sensitive to emotional regulation in interaction, and that they are attracted to expressions, bodily interactions and social learning. In other words, they are constitutively *social*. Trevarthen argues in favour of an innate intersubjectivity; even if this term is quite problematic from a Schelerian perspective – since it could misleadingly indicate a mere bridge between two already-formed subjects, and not a co-formation (Cusinato 2008, 246) – it refers to the innate tendency of infants to engage into communicative and cooperative relationships through bodily interchanges (Trevarthen 2011, 124). Trevarthen highlights that even before birth there are some organs and cerebral structures connected with human communicative expressions that grow during the early foetal stage, especially neural regions regulating eye movements, facial expressions and vocalizations (Trevarthen 1997). Therefore, infants

perform actions that are adapted to motivate, and invest emotions in, an imaginative cultural learning (...). Their Intelligence is prepared to grow and be educated by sharing the meaning of intentions and feelings with other humans by means of many expressive forms of body movement that may be perceived in several modalities. (Trevarthen 2011, 121)

According to him, infants are, in fact, particularly prone to act in emotional-expressive ways (smiles, frowns, interested focus, etc.) as a “public” display of self-regulation, and at the same time they show preference for only certain kinds of human signals, such as cadences of movements, colours, sounds or forms that correspond to people, and so on. This is said to be a way of provoking in caregivers reactions, such as synchronized negotiations of an arbitrary action, that is, neonates can start or engage in interactive, even teasing plays with adults. Such elements show a clear sensitivity to adapt to the behaviour of others and to the affective/rhythmic quality of an interactive experience, which is a sign of communicative intents.

Trevarthen’s innate intersubjectivity is akin to Stern’s concept of “core intersubjectivity” (Stern 2005), present from birth and already presupposing a self-other differentiation. Although intersubjectivity has been argued to be an ambiguous word, Stern’s distinction between a state of fusion and an implicit knowledge of the separation between the infant and the external sphere – i.e. the *conditio sine qua non* for intersubjectivity – might be compared with the claim of a body schema as a primary individuation. Remarkably, Stern ascribes to infants a sort of evaluative perception that erases the split between cognitive and affective ways of learning, and comes true in the “conforming” and “contrasting” patterns of experiences, including the social ones (Stern 1985, 42). That is, a non-neutral perception can be seen as the basis for what later becomes an “affect attunement”, by which Stern means the affective tonality of mutual interactions between an infant and a caregiver, that can be kept or coherently developed in interplay.

This implies that both the baby and the adult have an implicit (affective) understanding of the affective quality that may match the shared context that has been established. Therefore, an infant does not primarily understand the single clues (e.g. the high speed, the rapid acceleration, the being addressed to me) and then sum them up to recognize the affect at stake (aggressiveness, or simply a “rush”). Stern uses the phrase “vitality affects”, indicating «those dynamic, kinetic qualities of feeling that distinguish animate from inanimate and that correspond to the momentary changes in feeling states involved in the organic processes of being alive» (Stern 1985, 156). Hence, such qualities do not only apply to basic emotions

– the Darwinian categorical affects, like anger, joy, and so on – but they can also express a way of feeling, instead of a specific *content* of feeling, e.g. the “explosiveness” of a smile, which is still an affective dimension but is not explainable through mere emotion (Stern 1985, 56).³⁰

Although according to Stern the affect attunement emerges only after the second month, it is plausible that an affective competence is present much before. For instance, Reddy, Hay, Murray and Trevarthen (1997) argue that a 3-week old is usually interpreted to be almost passive in communication, and yet she influences the caregiver’s response with her display of moods and attentiveness. Furthermore, from that stage she progressively develops the ability to respond adequately to the affective dynamics manifested in the rhythm and pitch variation in the other’s voice.

Even if one does not count the “innate intersubjectivity” as an affective interchange, but just as an implicit acknowledgement of the affect and a consequent response, further complexity emerges after the first two months. In the so-called second-month transition, such marked inclination towards the expressive world of others and communication increases thanks to neural and motor development and, above all, to the different interplay that infants have with caregivers – also their being less hugged improves the chances of face-to-face interactions (Lavelli&Fogel 2002).³¹ In this time span, researchers observe that there is a certain quality in communication that is bodily-affectively understood and tends to be implicitly synchronised: a “co-regulation” starts to arise, i.e. a dyadic relation in which infant

³⁰ In this thesis, I consider “affects” as a general term that includes not only emotions (like joy, anger, and so on), but also what Scheler calls “affective qualities” and “affective states”, which can be perceived in a non-intentional way and can be non-intentional themselves (e.g. moods, cf. chapter 3 on affective contagion). Since the debate has widely discussed the distinction between affects and emotions, I will not enter into detail. An example might clarify what Stern means. The fact that we perceive a rash, abrupt, quick movement towards us as a potential threaten (affective quality) does not imply that we grasp an emotion (anger) in the agent, as we would grasp the same dangerousness even if the movement was performed by a machine.

³¹ According to Reddy, Chisholm, Forrester, Conforti, and Maniatopoulou (2007), the second month is also a crucial phase for the interest in the expressive world of the displayed self, since infants start to distinguish between contingent and non-contingent displays of the self (the abovementioned body image as seen on an external support like videotapes).

and caregiver coordinate their actions and are open to mutual influence, a process that originates new information. This affective, dynamic matching is seen for instance in postural modifications and vocal and facial gestures, and it shows an active engagement in communication by both partners.³²

To sum up, how should a Schelerian-based perspective on empathy read such findings in infant research? The above-mentioned theories and experiments tell us that not only is a neonate born with a body schema, but she also *understands others* through their body schemata. This is evidence of their grounding their implicit knowledge on the *Leib* and not on the *Körper*, that is, they do not perceive a sum of single elements that they would need to interpret inferentially, but rather pay attention to the gesture or the affective quality. Movement and some kinds of expressions seem to be directly grasped from the very beginning of life (neonatal imitation, innate intersubjectivity), and babies appear to be both prone to show expressivity and clearly sensitive to the expressive qualities in interaction (co-regulation, affect attunement). Such results prove to be an impressive empirical demonstration of Scheler's primacy of expressivity and animation. If one conceives empathy to be a form of direct grasping of the other's affective states, emotions, and even meaningful actions, based on the lived body, then a careful investigation on expressivity and on the kinds of phenomena perceivable in expressions is required.

2.2 Scheler and the primacy of *Ausdruck*. How to understand expressivity

Imagine that all at once you can no more trust the meaning of what you see in others' faces, movements, or actions: a smile becomes a random facial movement that can hide both joy and anger, a person's unexpected approach with a knife might be a sign of love or of violence. You do not even perceive that a stranger on the street is tacitly asking you for more room on the footpath, the signals of which are her quick gait, the reduced distance between you and her, and her brusque manners

³² Fogel (1993). Cf. also Lavelli (2005) as it concerns a qualitative change in dyadic co-regulation with the 2nd-month transition.

– until she starts using language, yelling at you to let her pass. What would happen if you could not be sure how to interpret what you see in her body and behaviour? You might remain perfectly calm because you do not perceive the irritation in her tone and in her eyebrows’ inclination, or start panicking because you do not know how to react. After all, you cannot rely on expressivity, so you cannot be sure that she needs more space to walk, and her manners could mean hostility or attraction, a cheerful mood or distress. In any case, your interactions with the surrounding world and others would become unpredictable, or make the use of language necessary: no embodied interaction would be possible anymore. Even if you discovered some new rules to interpret emotions and actions, you would have to apply them reflectively at the beginning, and then take your time to incorporate them into habit.

Contrary to such a picture, it has been shown that infants tend to react pre-reflectively to some qualities of movements and facial features, and they imitate gestures after just few hours of age (Meltzoff&Moore, 1977, 1983). Therefore, if the certainty of expressivity disappeared, we would all of a sudden have to forget something that we have taken for granted since birth. We would also fall prey to dualism, according to which the *res extensa* and the *res cogitans* are irreparably split. Only a reasoning or a dialogue would tell us which emotion the other person is experiencing, and, to be sure, it could always happen that the other person is lying, and we cannot verify it through her behaviour or unusual attitude. In short, a trustworthy root for empathy and communication lies in the body, not in its *körperlich* dimension, but rather in its *leiblich* one, since it is the bearer of some directly perceivable emotions and intentions, or, as Scheler would have it, it is a field of expression. In order to ground the phenomenon of empathy on immediate and embodied encounters, a crucial theoretical step is to take Scheler’s theory of the universal grammar of expressivity into account.³³

³³ An important aspect to which Cusinato (2008, 2015, 2012b, 2017) has rightly drawn attention. In his view, it emerges clearly as the necessity to reassess the theory of expressivity for a radical interpretation of the theory of intersubjectivity. In fact, although Scheler’s account has been received in the literature as the ‘direct perception’ theory, the metaphysical aspect of the unity of life has been neglected (Cusinato 2015b). However, this does not imply that expressivity has to be reduced to the

The immediate grasping of expressivity is the ground on which everyday communication is based: I see the relief in a student's face after her getting a good mark in the exam, the joy in my dog's behavior when I come back home, even the danger when a fire risks to burn me and "invites" me to escape. Affects and emotions "paint" our body schema which is exposed to the gaze of others: when I see someone walking, the fact of the person's having bent shoulders, a slow step, the eyes and lips slightly bent downward, is immediately an index of her mood, without any need of summing together clues or of making either an inference, or a simulation with our body.

The German word *Ausdruck* (expression) means literally to "push out". At a first glance, this term might suggest that movements and specific facial modifications are expressive because they represent – in the external, visible dimension – something that happens inside. Does the concept of expressivity entail a new dualism, then? Not at all: According to Scheler, the feeling comes to be *present* in the expression directly or, in other words, the proper expression is part of the emotion itself. This implies that we do not perceive in a split-driven manner – *first* a physical body and *then* an emotion – nor do we have to guess and make an inference about a person's hidden, mental state, if she clearly shows it in her facial features, movements, tone of voice, and so on. We are indeed able to perceive the others' emotions and intentions, since we grasp their lived body as a field of expression (*Ausdrucksfeld*) of their experience. It is possible to experience the feelings shown in expressions, though we cannot access the what-is-likeness related to the others' body, that is, bodily states, organic sensations and sensorial feelings (GW VII, 250; GW II, 337). In a dense excerpt from *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*, the primacy of expressivity and animation over perception is highlighted:

unique layer of the organism; rather, expressivity as a creative possibility generates singularity, that is, an 'expressivity overflow' (*eccedenza espressiva*) (Cusinato 2015).

Following the insight of reevaluating Scheler's expressivity, a partial attempt to clarify the connections between empathy and expressivity is in Bruttomesso (2015, 2016). I will extensively deal with the definition of empathy in the third chapter.

(...) expression is even the very first thing that man grasps in what exists outside him, and (...) he grasps any sensorial appearance only insofar and inasmuch as unities of psychological expressions (*seelische Ausdruckseinheiten*) can be “represented” in them (...): primarily among what is generally given is “expression”, and what we call development through “learning” is not a belated addition of psychical components to a physical world (*Körperwelt*) that is already given, “inanimate” (*toten*), and structured *in rem*, but rather a constant disappointment with the fact that only some sensorial appearances turn out to be functions of representation of expression – whereas others are not. In this sense, “learning” is an increasing de-animation (*Entseelung*) – not an animation (*Beseelung*). (GW VII, 233)

Some researches on neonates and pre-linguistic children have proved that they are attracted to certain gestures/expressions, and even to some qualities of movement, that tend to be kept or avoided in interaction. Scheler supports an even more radical claim, that could explain why children are particularly prone to follow gazes and movements, to imitate gestures, and to react with discomfort to still faces, i.e. faces that display no animation or expression (Murray&Trevarthen 1985). What is primarily given to our perceptual field is animation, and particularly the expressive dimension of it, so that when an infant interacts with an adult she does not add the characters of being “alive”, “animated”, “expressive” to a merely physical, machine-like body. Conversely, the consequence of Scheler’s claim is that the child even perceives any moving thing, like tree leaves shaken by the wind or a robot dog-like toy, as alive and what she needs to learn is that not every moving thing auto-generates its motion. During childhood, we slowly come to distinguish such aspects, but our perception retains the primacy of expressivity-givenness also in adult life. For instance, if an enraged person runs towards us with a knife and a threatening grimace, the emotion in her face and the danger of the situation immediately affect our attention threshold, while most probably we will never be able to remember precisely what she was wearing. The same usually happens when we like someone: if a handsome man or a good-looking woman enters the room, the salience of their attractiveness will “cover” the *körperlich* aspects like the skin smoothness, the wide shoulders, the perfect teeth which are not the prevailing and sufficient elements to explain why their allure is having such an strong effect on us. The other person is a field of expression, so what is primarily given in this case is

her/his elegance, *allure*, charm – only the retrospective gaze of a good novelist will presumably be able to detect some specific elements of that person that influence our salience-detection.

In a well-known passage from the *Sympathie-Buch*, Scheler mentions the possibility of perceiving directly certain kinds of states that the other is experiencing.

Certainly, we hold that we are directly acquainted (*direkt zu haben*) with joy in the laughter, with another's grief and sorrow in her tears, with her shame in her blushing, with her plea in her begging hands, with her love in her affectionate gaze, with her rage in her teeth-grinding, with her threat in her menacing fist, with the meaning of what she means in her wording, and so on. If anybody told me that this is not "perception" ("*Wahrnehmung*"), since it "could not" be so, and it could not, as a perception is nothing but "a set of physical sensations" and there cannot be any perception of the other's psychical sphere – and certainly any stimulus – I would ask her to avoid such questionable theories and to go back to the phenomenological facts. (GW VII, 254)

Although the excerpt is often quoted in the studies on empathy, it has not been properly remarked yet that Scheler seems to provide a proto-distinction between specific phenomena that are perceivable in expression, namely basic emotions, like joy, more complex or culturally-influenced emotions (shame, love – if love can be considered as an emotion), gestures, even the ones that are culturally related to habits (the begging gesture, the fist), and finally the meaning of a sentence in someone's words.³⁴ The metaphysical level that grounds the possibility of expressivity-grasping is in fact the *unity of life* that allows living beings to understand the elementary roots of connection underlying the links between experience and expression. There is a universal grammar of expressivity which is the core of every language and of all living beings' gesturality (GW VII, 22). This explains why – with Scheler's examples – a landscape communicates a certain feeling, different species of animals are able to interact, even why we can understand the despair that we see in a person who is about to drown, and we do

³⁴ Although Cusinato (2017, pp. 246-249) reinterprets Scheler for his theory that the universality of expressions is only the starting point after which a process of 'singularization' follows, in which emotions metabolize an increasing individuated expressivity.

this without having experienced or experiencing the same deadly anguish ourselves. Moreover, just as science abstracts the physical body from the primary-perceived lived one, it also makes a symbolic and functional abstraction of the expressivity of nature, which is instead perceived in the phenomenological attitude:

despite such necessary, but artificial behavior of science, the nature that is given in the fully phenomenological way remains an enormous totality of expressive fields of cosmic-vital acts (*ein ungeheures Ganzes von Ausdrucksfeldern kosmovitaler Akte*), inside which any appearances have a *connection of meaning (Sinnzusammenhang)* that is above them and a-mechanistic, understandable through the universal mimicry, pantomimic and grammar of expressivity, and that mirrors the internal stimuli of the global life (*Alleben*). (GW VII, 112)

Scheler's theory of the universal grammar of expressivity can be further seen as validating the claim of the universality of certain emotions, since their expressions would not be decided randomly or under an overwhelming cultural influence. At the same time, they would not just be the product of a supposed social instinct nor would they emerge after living in a society. Scheler levels this criticism at Charles Darwin and opens here the way to the lively debate on the universality or relativism of emotions and their related expressions. In the next sections, I shall investigate the state of the art on this issue, and argue in favor of the universality of certain expressions, to be kept partially distinct from the notion of universal emotions and from the concept of 'gesture'.

2.3 The smile on your face – Are expressions universal?

Imagine that you receive an email from an old friend with whom you spent your childhood holidays. In a moment of nostalgia, she thought about you and started recollecting and writing all the episodes that you had lived together: playing hide and seek with other kids in the small town where you spent your summer, stealing a piece of coconut while the seller on the beach was not watching, talking about your first crushes when your parents could not hear... You cannot restrain a smile, and a person who enters the room might ask you: "what are you reading, that makes you smile like that?". You suddenly realize that you have indeed that expression on your face, and try to hide it, while the embarrassment of being caught

smiling alone while recalling old memories might make you blush and look away from the other person's gaze. The emotion has manifested itself on your mouth and eyes without your control, and now you are trying to restrain it by paying explicit attention to your facial muscles. If one assumes, as Scheler does, that expressivity is universally shared and that we can understand each other thanks to it, the other person should be able to catch the joy in your face even if she comes from an isolated tribe of the rainforest and has never met any other civilization before. That is, joy is a simple and universal emotion, and there are some elements in the related expression that can be recognized as that specific emotion by anybody.

2.3.1 Charles Darwin and the analysis of expressivity in mankind and animals

Scheler's claim has a certain similarity to a Darwinian sentence, which says that when dealing with expressivity in human beings «we are particularly liable to confound conventional or artificial gestures and expressions with those which are innate or universal, and which alone deserve to rank as true expressions» (Darwin [1890] 2009, 52). Scheler's interconnection between *Ausdruck* and emotion also matches well with Darwin's claim that «[m]ost of our emotions are so closely connected with their expression, that they hardly exist if the body remains passive» (Darwin [1890] 2009, 249).

Darwin examines some categories of basic animal emotions and their relation to evolution in his book *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, which has become a milestone for the theory of the universality of emotions. Darwin individuates three main rules connected to expressions in any animal being: 1) the principle of serviceable associated habits, 2) the principle of antithesis, and 3) the principle of actions due to the constitution of the nervous system. In partial contradiction with the universality of emotions, yet, Darwin supports a theory that highlights the emergence of expressions, reactions and reflexes also from habits, specifically from habits that are established for specific purposes, like satisfying a desire or relieving a particularly strong sensation. Such habits might therefore not only arise as a successful response to a need but they can be, in a Spencerian sense,

inherited and transmitted to the following generations. This would imply the existence of non-universal, yet innate expressions, in offspring.

The result is that an expression remains associated with specific psychological or bodily states, and according to Darwin this is the explanation of its manifestation even if, at that moment, it does not have the purpose that started the habit. An example can be a man that acquires the habit of scratching his head when reflecting on a perplexing matter, and he does so as if he was experiencing an uncomfortable bodily sensation like the itchiness on his head (Darwin [1890] 2009, 33). After creating such a habit, he will *pre-reflectively* tend to repeat the gesture whenever he faces a cognitively-demanding problem, and the gesture is hence expressive of his concentration.³⁵

The second principle supported by Darwin is antithesis, which is connected to the first one since, when a state of mind opposite to a habitual expression is induced, an animal being tends to perform opposite movements – even without any practical use – as in the expressions coming from serviceable habits. Such thesis is certainly quite ambiguous as it attributes the emergence of an expression only to a contrary impulse, and not to the feeling itself: why would a pet’s display of affection be just the reverse of the act of attacking a prey, and not the visible part of the affection it feels? However, it is worth noting that Darwin also remarks in this principle the universality of some expressions: «[i]n these cases of the dog and cat, there is every reason to believe that the gestures both of hostility and affection are innate or inherited; for they are almost identically the same in the different races of the species, and in all the individuals of the same race, both young and old» (Darwin [1890] 2009, 59).³⁶ The criteria for the universality of expressions are clearly stated and can be applied to mankind as well,³⁷ though Darwin takes here into account

³⁵ Darwin states that when a habit is established «[t]he most complex and difficult movements can in time be performed without the least effort or consciousness» (Darwin [1890] 2009, 30).

³⁶ The fact of being innate is not in contrast to their being also inherited, according to Darwin ([1890] 2009, 63).

³⁷ The notion of race was at the time applied to human beings as well, and can be found quite often in Darwin’s study on expressions.

only animals, in order not to confuse the innate expressions with the culturally-acquired ones.

This chapter of my dissertation defines the reasons for Scheler's criticism to Darwin in *Sympathiebuch*, mainly against the belief that the principle of antithesis in expression originates from intercommunication in a same community. It is not hard to detect where the incompatibility between Scheler's and Darwin's views lies. Scheler's theory claims that the grammar of expressivity is universal and not acquired by living in a community, or, in other words, that expressivity is the ground for any community since it allows the intercommunication between members and the phenomena of sympathy. The ability to grasp expressivity pertains to all living beings, and the creation of any social form *presupposes* it, instead of being its cause (GW VII, 139-141). Scheler's reasoning proves correct especially if applied to the Darwinian claim that certain expressions are universal, for how could they be recognized, for instance, by members of different species or of two civilizations that had never entered into contact with each other before? If expressions were inherited, they could easily differ from one population to another, and from one species to another.

Darwin's third and last principle is called "the principle of actions due to the constitution of the nervous system, independently of the will, and independently to a certain extent of habit", or "principle of the direct action of the nervous system". This principle holds that some movements which are recognized as expressive stem from the direct effect of the nervous system, differently from the two previous principles, which can, however, be combined with this third one to explain expressivity. Darwin's examples include trembling, which can be elicited by several situations, like fever, excessive fatigue, but also fear, great anger and joy; the modifications in the rhythm of heartbeats, that can be accelerated by external stimuli, (but surely also by fear, rage, and so on); perspiration, respiration and circulation that may be strongly affected by pain, fatigue, rage. What this principle reveals, if read in the Schelerian anti-dualist perspective, is that the simple physical elements do not tell us enough to detect an expression, and that bodily feelings (sensations) are not subject to sharing and empathy. If we perceived only isolated elements, it would require an elaborated procedure to detect an expression:

shivering is for instance an index of fear, but also of illness, rage, so one would need to stop and try to discover other clues, such as paleness, frowned eyebrows, or wide-open eyes, and then make a deduction – that could only result from previous experience, therefore posing a problem to the innate character of such expressions, since their meaning would be acquired only culturally.

Yet, the third principle points to two important aspects. First, expressions are not under the complete control of the will, given that the direct effects of the nervous system are not easily restrained. Darwin considers weeping as the primary expression of suffering both in bodily pain and emotional distress, and it is particularly hard to restrain tears and to prevent the associated muscles from slightly twitching or trembling (Darwin [1890] 2009, 160). In case of strong affections or pain, it is harder to prevent the emotion from being visible, than to suppress it, and this datum confirms the primacy of expressivity supported by Scheler.

Expressivity is not limited to the face, but involves other visible manifestations such as sweating, tensing of muscles, breathing faster, etc., which tend to be forgotten by many theories on emotions, as it will become clear below, where I shall discuss Ekman's account. Moreover, the vitality affects considered by Stern can well explain the universality of certain affective tones in movement that are discussed by Darwin as well, like the slow motion and the tendency of any animal's limbs to "fall down" in sadness and to "shake off" pain by repeated convulsive movements in agony. Even if one denies the universality of basic emotions in facial expressions, it is hardly debatable that we immediately guess or sense that a snake is in agony and about to die from its uncoordinated, quick and convulsive movements, before recognizing its death when any motion ceases. Animation and expressivity are then shown once more to be primary, as Scheler argues.

How about the universality of specific emotions and their recognizability in Darwin's analysis? Emotions visible in expressions are divided by him into seven main categories: 1) low spirits, anxiety, grief, dejection, despair; 2) joy, high spirits, love, tender feelings, and devotion; 3) reflection, meditation, ill-temper, sulkiness, determination; 4) hatred and anger; 5) disdain, contempt, disgust, guilt, pride,

helplessness, patience, affirmation and negation; 6) surprise, astonishment, fear, horror; 7) self-attention, shame, shyness and modesty, related to blushing.

Not all of them can be defined as innate emotions, since morality, the others' judgment, the rules and habits of a specific society and the personal development and education of the individual may influence their emergence and visibility, as it happens for shame, disdain, jealousy. Nevertheless, Darwin searches for the universally detectable manifestations of emotions, and the seven categories are divided according to the mentioned criteria: for an expression to be universal, it must be recognizable in all cultures and from youth to old age. It is easy to understand, then, why Darwin includes more complex emotions like shame and shyness into his analysis, since they show in all cultures some shared visible "symptoms", like the tendency to avoid the other's gaze, the will of concealment, and blushing. Such emotions arise some years after birth, as Darwin himself remarks, but despite their not being present from birth, they seem to be actually spread among all populations.

In the same way, the category of "sadness" is not completely developed in the neonatal period, since according to Darwin such emotion includes *de facto* a difference among mere pain, suffering, passionate cry, and grief, the last of which cannot be felt by a neonate. Yet such feelings have similar visible characters, such as weeping, drooping eyelids, down-turned corners of the mouth, paleness, pants and sighs, furrows in the forehead (the so-called grief-muscles). One could also add from experience that movements become slower for the loss of energy, shoulders stoop down, the pace slackens, and so on.³⁸ Universally recognizable expressions and styles of movement seem to appear in the category of "joy" as well. Here Darwin highlights more the animation than the facial features, for joy gives the body a special source of energy which may lead to a series of purposeless movements, like dancing, clapping hands, and above all laughter, which can shake the body when particularly strong amusement is present: these arise spontaneously and are not learnt through imitation, as even a blind person exhibits them (Darwin

³⁸ On the variation of gait styles under the influence of some emotions, cf. the analysis by Roberta De Monticelli (2015) of Niko Troje's human animation developed in *BioMotionLab* (<http://www.biomotionlab.ca/Demos/BMLwalker.html>).

[1890] 2009, 207). Moreover, joy or cheerfulness affect the posture in the body making it more erect and the head upright, while the eyes acquire brightness and sparkle, the mouth corners retract, the upper lip rises in smiles and laughters, and the zygomatic muscles tend to contract. In a less convincing way, in the same chapter Darwin includes manifestations of affection and devotion which are highly dependent on cultural habits, and also sympathy, which seems in his description to be related to imagination or to a contagion of more basic emotions and expressions (Darwin [1890] 2009, 227). Such phenomena therefore do not pertain to the research on universality, and I even doubt whether they can all be considered as emotions.³⁹

It may surprise that, in the inquiry on universal expressions, the third category is about more complex emotions, attitudes or personality features like being resolute or deeply meditative, and they are not easily captured by one common definition. When puzzled, concentrated in a deep thought or on something difficult, a person frowns involuntarily, and this is true for any human being, (Darwin [1890] 2009, 234), hence it does not depend on cultural variations. Darwin adds that the clearness and steadiness of the eyes allow to distinguish such countenance from expressions and attitudes of pain, disgust, and peevishness. Frowning is present also when one screams for any kind of distress, and could therefore have some similarity with other categories of feelings and emotions (physical pain, jealousy, fear, etc.), or simply might show an attempt to discern something distant or in the strong sunlight. Frowning is even connected with another main category, the one including irritability (being “ill-tempered”), sulkiness and determination, often with a certain degree of anger as well. However, in meditation or when being “lost in thought” – the third phenomenon in the category – the eyes appear vacant and one sometimes accompanies the act of thinking with gestures, such as raising a hand to the forehead or chin, just as the abovementioned scratching of one’s head when perplexed or the chin resting on a hand in Rodin’s statue *Le Penseur*. According to Darwin, such expressions are not universal and innate, but gestures acquired through habit.

³⁹ I will investigate the terminology of sympathy and its nuances in chapter 3, and explain why sympathy is a feeling-function and not a feeling itself.

Anger and rage do not pose particular problems, as it would be counterintuitive not to recognize such emotions in a person whose mouth is tightly closed, teeth clenched together or even bare, countenance frowning and respiration quick. Darwin claims such countenance to be present in any culture, and so does Ekman, as it is for both one of the so-called basic emotions. The same applies to the category of surprise, astonishment, fear, horror, which includes two of the basic emotions considered by Ekman (surprise and fear) and involves such primary instincts of survival that it is not hard to believe that they are universally expressed in the same way. Ekman's account is going to be discussed further.

Nevertheless, as it concerns the category of disgust Darwin chooses again to mix some basic reactions – like the disgust-grimace with upper lips raised, eyes squinted, nose wrinkled, etc. – with more complex emotions, like disdain and contempt which, though sharing some of the facial features of disgust, are highly dependent on moral judgments, culture, and etiquette. In a metaphorical way, it is as if the despised person “smells offensively” (Darwin [1890] 2009, 268) or tastes bad (the meaning of disgust), so that we could not even stand the sight of her just as we do when faced with rotten food, since one of the first reactions of disgust and contempt is to turn away one's gaze from the unpleasant object. In a sense, the whole person becomes the bearer of a possible contagion of negative values, and it is not uncommon in some languages to transfer disgust into the moral sphere when a person is morally deplorable (“mi fai schifo” in Italian, “me das asco” in Spanish, “tu me dégoûtes” in French, “you disgust me” in English). Some gestures might of course vary across cultures – like the Tibetan use of clapping hands that was performed in front of an English official, but only in order to shoo the demons that his presence carried. Yet disgust seems to be universally recognizable as a primary bodily reaction that makes one move away from the fetid food (the head tends to move back) and even spit it out (all this coupled with a grimace, the stomach-spasm, the impulse to vomit, etc.).

The last category focuses on blushing as a universal expression, connected to shame, shyness, and modesty. Scheler himself remarked that one can directly perceive shame in a person who is blushing, and in fact such an expression seems to be universally detectable, but implies a context and subtle narrative nuances that

allow us to distinguish such emotion from slightly different ones like modesty and shyness. According to Darwin, it is an exclusively human expression, since even the great apes and monkeys redden just in case of passion, and even if other animals are claimed to exhibit signs of embarrassment or shame, those seem not related to the act of blushing.⁴⁰ Unlike laughter or tears, blushing is not an expression that can be caused willingly or simulated and when one tries to hide it by a stronger self-attention, it is most likely that it will just increase. However, ontogenetically, the sense of shame and embarrassment is considered to be a tardy acquisition – not an innate emotion – since it requires the social knowledge of being exposed to the gaze and the judgment of others, and this is grounded both on the awareness of social norms and on a formed body image, which has been claimed not to be present from birth. Darwin himself remarks that blushing does not seem to be present in infants before one year of age (Darwin [1890] 2009, 329). Moreover, although this phenomenon is observed and recognized as a feeling related to shame in all cultures, not all human beings have the tendency to blush when embarrassed. Such an emotion can be expressed in other ways, for instance by avoiding the gaze of others, by tightening up, bending the head or/and, in order to conceal it, by lowering the tone of the voice, or even in some specific ways that the acquaintance with that person makes recognizable (e.g. one might bite her nails or her lips).

To sum up, what does such analysis lead to infer as regards the universality of emotions? First of all, that expressions are primary and pre-reflective manifestations of emotions, from which they can hardly be separated, and in many cases it is even harder to restrain than to express them. Consider in this respect the following quotation from *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*:

⁴⁰ According to Masson&McCarthy (1995), animals that seem to have the capacity of feeling shame or embarrassment include porpoises, chimpanzees, dogs; there is as well some evidence of shame in the bonobos, who have been studied by anthropologist De Waal to prove the strong role of empathy in their social lives (De Waal 2013).

However, even in the claim that the macaws which have bare skin on their cheeks can blush after falling accidentally from a perch, there is no evidence that such a reaction is due to embarrassment and not to fear or anger (Masson&McCarthy 1995, 333).

I put my face close to the thick glassplate in front of a puff-adder in the Zoological Gardens, with the firm determination of not starting back if the snake struck at me; but, as soon as the blow was struck, my resolution went for nothing, and I jumped a yard or two backwards with astonishing rapidity. My will and reason were powerless against the imagination of a danger which had never been experienced. (Darwin [1890] 2009, 40)

A person who was observing the scene could have perceived Darwin's fear in his wide-open eyes, his gaping mouth, and above all in his unexpected and fast jump backwards – which proves that expressions are not only facial, but highly visible in the style of movement, too.⁴¹

According to Darwin, there are expressions that can be recognized by all populations and by both the younger and older representatives of mankind. Suitable examples are smiles and weeping, which are expressive respectively of joy and pain/sadness, while others, like jealousy, require the knowledge of the specific context and narrative to be detected. However, it has been shown that the correspondence between the emotion and the expression is not always univocal, as is the case of blushing, which is always caught as a sign of shame/embarrassment, but can also be absent from the expression of such feelings. Therefore, I argue that Scheler's thesis is right in inferring that we directly perceive the meaning of an expression, even in the case of a culturally acquired habit, and that the universal grammar of expressivity acquires strong evidence from scientific observations, too. What's more, the literature in favour of the universality of emotions does not distinguish between the universality of emotions *and the one of expressions carefully enough*. Does the so-called thesis of the universality of basic emotions involve more than universal expressions? This is not a claim for a renewed dualism between expressions and emotions: an expression can be the direct sign of a specific emotion and be immediately recognized as meaningful by people of any culture.

⁴¹ This seems to be a crucial point in the recognition of emotions in expressions. It has already been mentioned that infants develop primary forms of interaction not only thanks to what is displayed in the facial features, but also to the kinetic qualities that Stern calls "vitality affects" (Stern 1985). However, there is evidence that not only in infancy, but also in adult life kinematics, posture and dynamics help significantly in the grasping of emotions in gestures and expressions (Hatkinson&Drittich 2007).

Yet the same feeling can also be expressed in other ways or its expression might not be correlated directly to one single or specific basic emotion but still be universally detectable, as it happens in the case of shame. Together with the scarce focus on movement, I believe this is the shortcoming that can be remarked in Ekman's theory, as I shall argue in the next section.

2.3.2. Paul Ekman and the universality of basic emotions

Being sceptical about Darwin's claims on the universality of expressions, psychologist Paul Ekman started cross-cultural researches to prove that expressions and gestures are socially and culturally interdependent and relied on the advice of scholars belonging to the same "expression-relativism-school" like Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson. He then began to make studies and experiments with photographs, videos and other relevant ways in the United States, Japan, Brazil, Argentina, Indonesia, the former Soviet Union, and above all with a population from Papua New Guinea that had no or scarce contact with other civilizations. By examining some videos in which people from that hidden corner of the planet were recorded, Ekman realised that he could recognize all their expressions, and started to question his previous thesis on the cultural variability: how is it possible, in fact, for a complete outsider to share the same "bodily grammar", if emotions are differently expressed in each community? He therefore decided to verify such a doubt in person, and asked the tribe from Papua New Guinea to create stories that corresponded to the facial expressions shown in a photograph, or conversely to choose the picture of the emotion that fitted best in a story told to them; the results were impressive in their evidencing the universality of a set of emotions in human countenance (Ekman 2003).

The basic emotions universally perceived in facial expressions are, according to Ekman, six, namely sadness, anger, surprise, fear, disgust/contempt, and pleasurable emotions (happiness). To define them as universally recognisable does not mean that they are expressed with the same intensity in each and every culture. However, a person from the abovementioned tribe of Papua New Guinea is able to recognise the meaning of a smile in a European face, as well as an American can

detect sadness in the facial features of a Japanese. Again, the correspondence between the concepts of expression and emotion is not to be taken for granted: there might be more universal emotions than the visible ones, or the detection of one of the basic emotions might happen thanks to the style of movement and the rapidity of a gesture. Besides, if the differences among similar expressions are only caught through the context, yet style, rapidity and other incidental factors might be indexes of universal emotions as well.⁴² It should be remarked here that the concept of emotion differs from moods like serenity, grumpiness and others, which tend to last longer and predispose us to experience one emotion than another but, unlike emotions, are not *intentional*. In other words, a mood does not have a proper object and we are not always able to understand why we are in such a state, although it may form a background for our intentionality (Ratcliffe 2010, 350). As Ekman claims, what is facially expressive is not the mood itself but rather the emotion in it: for instance, the visible expressions of irritability are related to the episodes of anger that are its cause (Ekman 1994, 57).

As in Darwin's account, according to Ekman an emotion is visible thanks to several components, which include the tone of the voice, the modification of facial features, and the emotional impulses to physical actions. The last one, however, cannot be considered as a proper signal, since it was not selected through evolution with the aim of conveying information (Ekman 2003, 61), and it is easier to be

⁴² For instance, a recent study by Rychlowska and colleagues (2017) supports that there are three types of smile that depend on the social context and express different emotions and intents: reward smiles, affiliative smiles and dominance smiles, which correspond respectively to the simple communication of positive feelings or intentions, to an encouragement for maintaining social bonds, and to the display and negotiation of the social status. While the first and the second are, according to the experiments, less distinguishable, the third one seems to have some facial expressions in common with disgust, anger and sensory rejection, and to be grasped more easily when compared with the other two. It would be interesting to investigate whether such differentiation is common to all humankind or culturally-dependent. However, so far participants from nine countries in North America, Europe, and Asia have detected the dominance smiles as clearly distinguished from other more negative emotions, since neutral and disgust countenances were not perceived as smiles (Rychlowska et al. 2017, 9). This might be the sign of a universally detectable emotion, though it is not among the basic ones listed by Ekman; in alternative, it could be fruitful to verify how Ekman's basic emotion of contempt and the dominance smile are interrelated.

inhibited than the other two components, though being pre-set just like facial expressions for basic emotions. What remains ambiguous is how Ekman would consider the relation between “expression” and “signal”, since there is no convincing evidence that proper expressions have been evolutionarily selected for their *purpose* to transmit information, though they represent a strong advantage for communication and social life, and in human animals beings a considerable component of the emotion is displayed in the face. Consider the following statement by Ekman: «[t]he sadness and agony in facial and vocal expressions call for help from others. That social support, the caring of friends and family members, is healing. A person who is medicated so as not to display sadness and agony might receive less of that healing attention» (Ekman 2003, 88).

If Ekman’s theory is right, when a person is in a situation of emotional distress, grief or sadness, we immediately recognize her feeling, despite the society of origin, the sexual difference or the colour of the skin. This improves our chances to perceive her expression as an “affordance” – in the Gibsonian sense – or, in other words, as a call for help. Such a person might display different degrees of movement: in the case of grief, she may express discomfort and unwillingly attempt to “shake off” the pain with a motion that is similar to physical agony, while in sadness she would become slow, passive and with a bent-down posture, as in Darwin’s description. Both emotions are inscribed under the same category owing to common facial features when, for instance, the inner corners of the eyebrows angle upward, the upper eyelids droop, the mouth is tight-lipped and the lower lip is pushed up, the muscles of the cheekbones tauten and there is a frowning look– what Darwin calls the “grief muscle”.

In a similar way, the other emotions listed by Ekman are recognised from standard characteristics of the countenance – of course, the claim here is not that isolated physical clues need to be connected and interpreted through reasoning, but that experiments present a recurring set of elements whenever a specific emotion is detected. Therefore, in the case of anger one observes glares, which are expressions where the brows are lowered, and the upper eyelids raised, the lips firmly tensed or the jaw is tightly clenched and the teeth exposed. In surprise and fear, the eyes become wide open, the eyebrows are raised, and the jaw drops open (surprise) or

the mouth is strained, half open and the lips are stretched back toward the eyes (fear). In disgust and contempt, typical expressions are a wrinkling nose and raised upper lip and cheeks. Differently, one can recognize pleasurable emotions from smiles, although they vary in type and intensity, depending on the kind of positive emotion that is experienced (e.g. the well-known Duchenne smile which involves the outer part of the eyes and displays frank amusement or joy).⁴³ Unlike Darwin, Ekman believes that more complex emotions like shame and guilt cannot be so easily distinguishable from one another and from sadness, while blushing (related to embarrassment) cannot be a universal expression since it does not appear in dark-skinned people's faces (Ekman 2003, 217). Nor does he consider jealousy an emotion, since there are more basic nuances connected to a specific situation. Similarly, envy would not display the so-called signals, therefore it would not pertain to the set of basic emotions which can be universally detected. But is such universality so universally accepted?

Some scholars have disputed that the categories of basic emotions exhibited in facial expressions are the six ones individuated by Ekman, and reduce them to «happy, sad, fear/surprise (i.e., fast-approaching danger) and disgust/anger (i.e., stationary danger), which are only later more finely discriminated as six emotion categories» (Jack, Garrod, Schyns 2014, 191). Even if Darwin's and Ekman's categories of basic emotions and expressions need to be refined, however, the claim of their universality is not countered, and this supports Scheler's theory about the universal grammar of expressivity. But – one might wonder – while the danger of a rapid movement against us is immediately perceived by any animal, and provokes a quick withdrawal, the peacefulness of a sunset is probably not perceived by a bat that is waiting for the night to go hunting. Moreover, facial expressions may be universal in humankind, but not so in non-human animals, partly because of physical differences. For instance, humans have a wider white part in their eyes, which implies that the direction of the gaze and the eye-expressions are more easily detected, they have fewer or no hairs on their faces, which makes blushing possible and visible.

⁴³ I refer to the descriptions provided by Ekman (2003).

Does this invalidate Scheler's hypothesis? The phenomenologist would reply that we can directly perceive the anguish in a bird that is about to die, its liveliness, or its weakness (Stern's so-called vitality affects that pertain to movement; GW VII, 77), as well as it is possible to grasp emotions like joy in a dog that is wagging its tail and in a tweeting bird. (GW VII, 22). Yet, even if one restricted the universality of expressions to the human dimension, what would happen to such a metaphysical hypothesis and consequentially to expressivity-based empathy if expressions were only the product of cultural variability or of group membership?

2.3.3 The non-universal grammar of expressivity: objections to an innate and universal *Ausdruck*

From what has emerged in Ekman's account, one may object that expressions appear as isolated images deprived of their context, almost as solid bricks that need some kind of glue to give rise to interaction. If I perceive the expression on your face directly, and you do the same and grasp it on mine, are we keeping on a merely observational mode? Where is the fuse that fires interaction? Are emotions between interacting people so radically separated and well-identifiable, or are they mutually evolving, inter-changing, movement- and context-dependent, and related to culture as well? The claim that expressions are not universal but involve a set of rules and habits within a group still challenges Ekman's theory of basic emotions and, although Scheler's thesis of the primacy of expressivity-perception is not affected – the emotion is caught, its elements are not “read” or “summed up” (GW VII, 256-257) –, the validity of his grammar of expressivity is certainly challenged. A further step is to dig deeper and try to understand why emotions are claimed to be the product of social learning and, above all, of social interaction. The stress, emphasis on the universality of *Ausdruck* might in fact be misinterpreted as “expressions are simply innate and unchangeable”, whether there is intercommunication or not, attunement or misattunement, whether a person is present or not, while actually an emotion becomes visible on our faces without the society playing a role in it.

The cultural relativity of emotions involves several different elements: one of them is the familiarity with the expressions of the same group, which can influence a person to be more or less ready to detect the emotions they reveal. For instance, Elfenbein&Amba (2003) analysed how accurate and quick the Chinese located in China and the ones in the United States, Chinese Americans and non-Asian Americans were in individuating emotions in Chinese and Americans, which turned out to be dependent on the frequency of their exposure to the group. The same happened with Tibetans living in China and Africans living in the United States when they were asked to detect the emotions of a person of the host society. However, since the participants were after all able to detect the correct meaning of expressions, this study only shows that cultures may influence some different nuances in the display of emotions, yet they do not affect the universality claim.

Other scholars claim more radically and explicitly that the six basic emotions are not universal: variations are observed in facial muscles in the representation of emotional intensity and of the temporal dynamics connected to basic emotions (Jack et al. 2012). Again, the equivalence between basic emotions and basic expressions is not to be taken for granted, in fact some researchers claim that «facial expressions of emotion are culture specific, refuting the notion that human emotion is universally represented by the same set of six distinct facial expression signals» (Jack et al. 2012, 7242). For instance, East Asians show and recognize specific signs of emotional intensity, like fear, disgust, and anger, mainly in the eyes only – but the same scholars acknowledge that this datum is already mirrored in the literature about the restrained expressivity of Asian habits (Matsumoto et al. 1998, Ekman 2003). Jack and his colleagues' claim that traditional investigations do not consider some emotions particularly important for Asian cultures, such as shame, pride and guilt, is not to be overlooked, but, on the other hand, such feelings may simply correspond to universal expressions and not to basic emotions – which, I have argued, are not always equivalent.

Parkinson, Fisher and Manstead (2005) question if cultural variability clashes with the claim that basic emotions and basic emotion expressions exist. I state that they are right to dispute the definition of basic emotions: first, it is not clear whether there are four or six emotions under such label (see above on Jack, Garrod, Schyns

2014); second, other expressions, like blushing, are universally shown and recognized, though pertaining to a more complex emotion and it is possible to avoid the tricky definition of “basic emotions” by referring instead to “universal expressions”; third, the excessive focus on the facial expressions of basic emotions makes them appear as something completely isolated from the context, interaction and the consequent creation of emotional responses to the observed expression. It is worth noting in Parkinson and his colleagues’ work that they do not dismiss the universality of biological constraints and of some evolutionary pressure in them, but they also argue that «the evidence strongly suggests that pronounced cultural variations exist not only in how emotions are represented but also in the ways that people experience, express, and regulate them. Further, many of these differences seem to relate closely to corresponding differences in cultural beliefs and concerns» (Parkinson, Fisher and Manstead 2005, 83-84).

For instance, the differentiation between more collectivistic and more individualistic societies, like the Japanese and the American ones, proves that the Japanese give lower ratings to the intensity of facial expressions than people from Western countries (Ekman et al. 1987; Matsumoto 1989), and this can be related to the collectivistic tendency to suppress the display of emotions in order not to damage social bonds. This also explains the difference in rating the experienced intensity of an emotion, higher in the Japanese, and in the perceived intensity of the emotion in an expression, higher in the Americans (Matsumoto, Kasri, and Kookan 1999). While «in individualistic cultures (...) emotions are important not as indicators of social position and relation but in their own right and for their own sake, because they are believed to reflect the true and inner self» (Parkinson, Fisher and Manstead 2005, 67), it is as if in collectivistic cultures expressions were used more as gestures and had the role of social communication rather than of a personal spontaneous emotion. In fact, the expression that tends to appear in facial features has to be controlled and in some cases restrained, if that risks to compromise the social situation. Since the awareness of others is constantly present for members of such societies (Parkinson, Fisher and Manstead 2005, 68), when an expression manifests itself it has quite a striking effect; then, the restrained visibility of

emotions becomes a habit, a quasi-automatic procedure which after some exercise puts a pre-reflective control over one's own movements, attitudes and expressions.

One further remarkable argument in Parkinson and colleagues (2005, 170 ff) is their focus on expressivity as a dynamic element in interaction, the assumption that when one sees an emotion displayed in the behaviour of another, she responds consequently. As it happens for infants and the phenomena of attunement and misattunement described above, the emotional tone is sometimes maintained and the expressions matched, even leading to mimicry, thus proving the tendency to adopt an expression similar to the one of the person in front of us (e.g. I see you laughing out loud for a joke and I start smiling too).⁴⁴ However, a coherent response in interaction could also be the display of distress by a child that is first in a condition of emotional attunement and all of a sudden has to deal with her mother's still face (Murray&Trevarthen 1985, cf. above). Parkinson and colleagues are right to point out that an expression is never merely or passively received, but provokes a return expression which depends on the person we have in front of us, on the context, on her personal narratives, and so on.

For, as universal as the language of expressivity can be, it does not concern isolated snapshots deprived of their specific style of movement, situation, modification in dynamical interaction and even in a specific culture. However, I do consider such arguments useful to enrich the individuations of some slight nuances that constitute expressivity, versus a limited vision of the universal grammar that would reduce expression to rigid categories of basic emotions, perceivable by all human beings and from birth to old age. First of all, universally perceived expressions may include more complex emotions, like shame and, even when connected to a cultural habit or a narrative we are acquainted with in many cases we do not need any reasoning to perceive their meaning directly. Finally, in the notion of expressivity I mean to establish a difference among more or less visible emotions, their expressions as their spontaneous bodily part, and gestures.

⁴⁴ Such an example may also be seen as a case of emotional contagion, a notion that I am going to inquire about further in the next chapter.

2.3.4 The lexicon of expressivity: a proposal to distinguish among visible emotions, expressions and gestures

As Scheler, Darwin and Ekman pointed out in their different ways, there are emotions that affect our expressive behaviour universally. When a person is sad – and she does not voluntarily control her movements – the emotion becomes visible in the slowness of her gait, in her bent shoulders, furrowed eyebrows and so on. In the same way, one would no doubt start running away if a person moved against her with a grimace and holding a knife. To mention non-basic emotions as well, one would immediately recognise a child's shyness or shame by her blushing, trying to hide behind her mother, talking in a low voice or not at all. I do not mean to carry on the discussion on basic emotions only, since that there are other ones which are similarly visible, shared by all the human beings and deserving further consideration, although they may not be innate, as in the case of shame. In this sense, to adopt the notion of “universal expressions” instead of the limiting concept of “basic emotions” could help to acknowledge Scheler's metaphysical claim on the universal grammar.

In contrast with such visible expressions that are meaningful even with scarce knowledge of the context, there are other ones more difficult to grasp in the mere visible features and I find Darwin's question about the difficulty of painting the feeling of jealousy very cogent. He writes:

[a] man may have his mind filled with the blackest hatred or suspicion, or be corroded with envy or jealousy; but as these feelings do not at once lead to action, and as they commonly last for some time, they are not shown by any outward sign, excepting that a man in this state assuredly does not appear cheerful or good-tempered. If indeed these feelings break out into overt acts, rage takes their place, and will be plainly exhibited. Painters can hardly portray suspicion, jealousy, envy, &c, except by the aid of accessories which tell the tale; and poets use such vague and fanciful expressions as “green-eyed jealousy.” (Darwin [1890] 2009, 83)

Darwin also points out that jealousy is hard to grasp without the aid of other expressions (e.g. rage), and especially without the aid of some narrative. That is to say, there is no proper universal expression of jealousy. Here is an example from Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*. If, instead of paper and ink, Proust had had

oil colours and a canvas, how would he have represented the deep jealousy that Swann feels for Odette? He could have painted a scene in which a man is holding the lady's hand, and a second man is watching the two people with a grimace and a frown, or is looking at them with sadness displayed on his face. But the mere faces are not enough to let us interpret the emotion: first of all, such scene is already a narrative and not just a facial expression, and second, an external person could also read the jealous observer as a brother worried about his sister in love with a non-reliable man, or as a moralist upset by the loosening of the proper social rules between men and women. Similarly, if we imagine we are in Proust's novel and follow Swann during his first episode of jealousy but we know absolutely nothing of the previous events, what we see can be described more or less as follows: he walks restlessly through the city, particularly keen on looking inside cafés. He displays apprehension, because he frowns, darts searching gazes everywhere, and, as if in strong pain and agony, he cannot stay still. Such behaviour clearly shows the concern of a person who is looking for something or somebody. Yet, without knowing the narrative that is worrying him so much, we could easily misunderstand it as a parent's desperate attempt to find his lost child – and paternal affection is quite different from the feeling of jealousy that we would immediately detect in Swann if we were a friend of his or if we had been at the party with him and observed the way he had looked for Odette before.

It is undeniable that jealousy is a universal emotion, at least in humankind, although its reasons and above all its expressions depend highly on cultural variations.⁴⁵ Certainly, its manifestation is related to other emotions such as anger or sadness, and it is not as easily detectable as the other two. A person, in fact, might show few visible signs, even hard to be grasped by someone who is observing the situation unacquainted with the narrative. Does such a case alter a Schelerian perspective on the universality of expressivity, and its direct perception as primary? Jealousy is an example of differentiation between more and less visible emotions, but does not question that some expressions are recognized universally and

⁴⁵ Cf. for instance the well-known controversy between Mead ([1928] 2001), who claims to have found in the Samoas a culture with little jealousy, and Freeman (1983), who contradicts her results by showing the violent and possessive attitudes of the same population.

immediately. Moreover, such an expressivity-grasping does not imply that *all* the person is displayed in expressivity and given to the gaze of others. Scheler himself states that there are spheres of the other that it is not possible to grasp: together with the exclusion of others' bodily sensations from what can be caught through the various forms of sympathy, he states that the noetic acts of a person cannot be understood by her mere expressions (GW VII, 110). More simply, when we observe Rodin's statue of the thinker, we most likely perceive its meditative expression, but we do not grasp *what* he is thinking about. To understand such contents, the language is also needed, therefore the other can conceal them, too.⁴⁶ Besides, empathy as expressivity-grasping goes as far as the vital and psychic egos are involved, but, according to Scheler, in order to unravel the personal dimension an act of love is required (GW VII, 110).

To sum up, the first concepts to be distinguished are the more from the less visible emotions, and universal emotions from universal expressions. The role of culture has also been mentioned as contributing to the difference of expressions from one society to another; in this regard, we are exiting the field of spontaneous and universal expressions and entering the one of *gestures*. If we go back to Scheler's statement about what we are acquainted with directly in expressivity, the last example mentioned is the person who is making a plea with her hands, or the threat seen in a menacing fist (GW VII, 254). A gesture can be distinguished from a spontaneous expression for its communicative *intent* – that is, an expression does tell something about the affective state in which a person is, but it emerges with no *purpose* to make that feeling visible, while a gesture has the function of carrying a message, even when it becomes habitual and pre-reflective.

While spontaneous expressions are universal and in most cases innate, gestures are usually culturally related. As Guido Cusinato asserts, the process of anthropogenetic individuation – i.e. the process of formation (*Bildung*) of a person – is connected to the one of expressivity, that is, if a human being undergoes a primary individuation through the lived body, a secondary one through her culture

⁴⁶ Dan Zahavi (2014, 119ff) also highlights this aspect in Scheler, *contra* any theory of the transparency of the person in empathy.

and social role, and a third one through the specific, personal *ordo amoris*, her expressivity changes accordingly. For instance, even if each civilization displays common features in expressing fear, a specific culture can adopt a particular variation, which is im-personal even though not universal. On the third level, the one of the personality, the expression acquires a unique tone that corresponds to that specific person only (Cusinato 2017b, 246-249). Such a claim does not clash with the universality of expressivity, as all living beings come from the same expressive root of the lived body. It rather implies that, starting from such a shared ground, the “metabolism” of emotions acquires a progressive degree of individuation, and, we could say, it ranges from spontaneous expressivity to gestures, which show intents of communication in the social world. Moreover, it is plausible that more complex levels of meaning are present in expressivity and therefore directly perceivable, as when we are habitually acquainted with that specific person,⁴⁷ or pertain to the same community.

As regards this last case, let us consider for instance Ryle’s ([1968] 2009) famous distinction between a twitch and a wink: if one adopts a merely physical description of single bodily movements, such as the contraction of the external corner of one eye, when one eyelid closes while the other one remains open, there is no difference between the two movements. As Durt (2017, 71-72) rightly remarks, both are observable behaviours, but in order to tell the difference between a movement that arises involuntarily and the other one that is meant to signal something, we need another level of description that entails significance. This does not imply that to understand the meaning of a wink, one has to think reflectively and propositionally. Just as we become immediately aware of the possibility to move forward when in front of a green traffic light in the right context (Durt 2017), anyone who already knows the function of a wink perceives in it a higher level of significance that displays intimacy, conspiracy, a tacit indication of a shared knowledge, or even flirtation – the meaning depending on the specific situation. This example is suitable to show that gestures are culturally-related and that culture influences perception: while a westerner detects a shared intention in a wink, in

⁴⁷ On narratives and the narrative competency that shapes the perception of singular persons, cf. for instance Hutto (2007) and Gallagher (2006).

Asian countries and India it is considered impolite (Smit, Snoeks, Tiemes 2012). Gestures acquire meaning through the sharing of common rules, culture, habits – so a wink would imply nothing more than a disturbance in the eye like a twitch if there was no agreed communicative content in it. Even when the meaning of gestures is perceived directly as a consequence of shared acquaintance, this cannot be said to be “spontaneous” in the universal and innate sense of expressions, because also involuntary gestures arise more from the habit of a communicative intent than as the innate visible part of an emotion.

Therefore, in the lexicon of expressivity, three notions should be kept distinct, namely the more or less visible emotions, gestures, and the universal expressions, most of which refer to what Scheler theorizes to be the “universal grammar” and Darwin claims to be the only ones deserving the rank of true expressions. In this way, if any human being is able to identify the joy of a person living in totally different societies, this does not affect the fact that, even when perceiving a culturally-related gesture as meaningful, it is still a case of direct perception and not a Cartesian judgment. However, if so far the notion of direct perception has been taken for granted in order to explain the importance of expressivity and lay the foundations of the notion of empathy, it is now time to discuss such intertwined aspects and to analyse the primacy of value-ception.

2.4 Other-perception and value-ception: understanding empathy through affective grasping

In the *Sympathie-Buch*, Scheler not only refers to the direct perception of an emotion in expressivity, but also gives his last chapter the title “On the other ego” (*Vom fremden Ich*), and the third paragraph of it “The other-perception” (*Die Fremdwahrnehmung*). Is it possible – Scheler wonders – for us to internally perceive the “I” and the experience of others (GW VII, 242)? After the analysis carried on so far on the visibility and direct manifestation of emotions in expressivity, the positive answer from a Schelerian perspective can be determined easily; but how is the concept of “perception” to be intended as a root for the

empathic process? And what is the difference between the two related terms of *Wahrnehmung* and *Wertnehmung*, that he uses alternatively to describe a kind of non-passive perception in which the affective grasping or intuition precedes the rational knowledge?

As Guccinelli (2016, 181) remarks, *Wahrnehmen* can be translated as “taking something to be true” and *Wertnehmen* as “taking something to be worthy”, which means that when something reaches the threshold of perception it is indeed “worth perceiving” because it has already been selected pre-reflectively by impulses and interests. In the previous while dealing with the body schema, I discussed the Schelerian notion of impulsive structure (*Triebstruktur*) in terms of actively selecting stimuli from the environment according to the values that are caught by animals in objects or situations. For instance, a bright red strawberry is attractive, an unexpected movement towards us immediately breaks the threshold of perception and raises fear of danger or surprise, and so on. Values such as “inviting”, “useful”, “threatening” are part of the grasping of an object since our perception is far from neutral and aimed at a pure cognitive judgment, and so show the primacy of value-ception over a purely passive reception.⁴⁸

Values are defined by Scheler as «material *qualities* possessing a determinate order of ranks with respect to “higher” or “lower”» (GW II, 39). I will try to clarify this definition and its implications. First of all, even if he claims that values do not exist on their own, he does not ground his phenomenology in a relativistic, purely subjective dimension that would lead to a monadological solipsism. Values, as qualities, are *functionalized* in the things themselves, and being our perception first of all a value-ception, we cannot perceive anything detached from its value, just as we do not perceive an expression detached from its emotion. Although the order of values (*ordo amoris*) can vary from person to person, sometimes including illusions, as well⁴⁹ values in themselves are objectively positive or negative: we could never say that shivering while having a flu is pleasurable, nor that *ressentiment* leads to higher values (on the contrary, it is for Scheler a perversion

⁴⁸ Such primacy of the *Wertnehmung* has been widely investigated by Cusinato (1999, 2011).

⁴⁹ As he describes in *The Idols of Self-Knowledge*, GW III.

of the way we feel values).⁵⁰ Being values objective and – potentially – universally experienceable in the entities in which they are given as qualities, they are also intersubjectively verifiable. An illusion as such might indeed consist in mistaking a lower value for a higher one, but that does not change the value's place in the rank.

There are values experienced through the personality-sphere, as well as values experienced with the body schema in animals and human beings. Each dimension has its own relevance, asceticism and hedonism represent opposite ways to focus on only one aspect of a human being, who is instead a “spiritual” personality inseparable from its lived body. Scheler's value-rank includes (from the highest to the lowest ones): 1) values of holiness, that can be given through the act of praying as much as through the feeling of humility; 2) “spiritual/mental” (*geistige*) values, such as the aesthetic, philosophical and juridical ones; 3) life-values, that involve the whole organism (like the feelings of well-being, strength, relaxation, and so on) and can be also traced in the environment (e.g. light is better than no light); 4) pragmatic values, especially regarding usefulness (e.g. the perceived potential use of a pair of scissors in front of us); 5) sensible values (as in the pleasure of the warm sunlight on one's forehead in a cold winter day).

If *Wertnehmen* involves a pre-reflective dimension of the feelings and emotions that affect the way we perceive values in objects, our preference in a choice between a higher and a lower value should lead us to the higher one without the need of any inferential judgments. “Feeling states” (*Gefühlzustände*) – in the broadest affective sense, from the corporeal level to the experience of the highest values – are for Scheler *bearers* of values, in a hierarchy of depth that partially corresponds to the one of values themselves: 1) sensorial feelings (*sinnliche Gefühle*), 2) lived-body feelings (*Leibgefühle*) and vital feelings (*Lebensgefühle*), 3) pure feelings of the “soul” or of the I-sphere (*reine seelische Gefühle, reine Ichgefühle*), 4) spriritual feelings or feelings of the personality (*geistige Gefühle, Persönlichkeitgefühle*). *Wertnehmen* implies that values are *felt* and not understood through a judgment: «Also, when I feel “something”, e.g. a certain value, then I'm

⁵⁰ Cf. *Das Ressentiment im Aufbau der Moralen (Über Ressentiment und moralisches Werturteil*, 1912), in GW III.

tied to that value through its function in a closer way than I would be through representation» (GW II, 334). This can explain why in the *Sympathie-Buch* Scheler states that the enthusiastic lover (*Liebhaber*) always has to precede the man of knowledge (*Kenner*), and two years after the first edition, he devotes an essay to the primacy of love over knowledge, as the intentional act that truly unveils the world:⁵¹ love grounds knowledge, not only in the sense that affective grasping and interests guide our experience of the world, but also that through such an act the grasped object comes to its full being and value through self-revelation (GW VI, 97). Objects are never *wertfrei* (‘devoid of value’ or ‘value-neutral’) and our perception never neutral towards them, therefore it should be clear now in what sense value-ception precedes perception, and why expressivity and animation are grasped prior to any judgment or simulation. This will become a key point in my discussion on empathy below.

In order to motivate my viewpoint further, I am going to clarify now that there might be certain basic phenomena which catch our immediate attention because of primordial mechanisms, and one of those is certainly animation. However, if we take *mechanical* animation as an example, at a certain point of our life we learn that, when facing a car, we are not in front of a lived body capable of spontaneous movement. This will change the way we perceive it, erasing the “animistic” attribution that we had given it previously. It will most probably invite us to interact with it in a different way and to treat it as a machine and not as a living being. Moreover, if we develop a preference for a certain kind of cars, let us say old cabriolets with a Gatsby-period style, a certain sound typical of such cars and their beauty will catch our prevailing attention and make us ignore everything else around us. In this case, attention is polarized by an axiological unity that is phenomenologically given, that is, a value-unity to which the object of my attention belongs and that I grasp through an act of feeling (since they are *fühlbare*

⁵¹ I refer to the essay “Love and Knowledge” (*Liebe und Erkenntnis*) of 1915, now in GW VI. The difference between love and a simple reaction to a preferred value is that the former has the capacity to discover the values themselves. In this sense, love is a “pioneer” to affective perception; cf. GW II, 267, and the essay *Ordo Amoris* in GW X.

Phänomene; cf. GW II, 39). Interests select different parts and aspects of the milieu that literally “jump” to our eyes: they play a role in shaping the meaning of the contents that come to the threshold of our acts of noticing. Quoting a significant Schelerian example, two farmers negotiating over a farm have a different perception of the building that is at the same time being watched by a painter (GW II, 161). They have different expertise and interests, and so grasp different values and goods in the same location. Further on, staying with the same case, we could infer that if the farmer takes painting lessons, he may change the way in which he perceives the same environment, depending on the context, on the purpose, and so on.⁵²

As it has been shown in the paragraph concerning the body schema, primary individuation is connected to the lived body (both in mankind and animals): through this, animals – human beings included – can move in the environment with little effort and explicit attention on the body. The *Leibschema*, according to Scheler, both produces and is modified by pre-reflective “protentional” images (*Bilder*) which anticipate the embodied experience that could come from an interaction with the world (GW VIII). Although the term “image” can be quite controversial, since it is here associated to a non-representational quality – Scheler wants to point to a pre-reflective tendency to interpret situations as meaningful for a possible interaction, already at the embodied level. And, as I will argue in the next section when discussing the so-called “interaction theory”, empathy typically is not a static situation in which an observer merely receives the feeling of another. Rather, it is grounded on the possibility of bodily responsiveness: expressions themselves, as mentioned in the case of despair and sadness, “call” for help, sharing, stepping back or getting closer, and so on.

⁵² The concept of values seems a suitable basis to interpret the plasticity of brains, as brain neurotransmitters influence and are influenced by new experiences; to infer which, Gerald Edelman uses the remarkably Schelerian phrase “value systems” (Edelman 1992). I discussed Scheler in relation to Edelman in more detail in Bruttomesso (2016).

2.5 Scheler's *Fremdwahrnehmung* and interaction theory

Interaction Theory (IT) refers to a thesis in social cognition which claims, similarly to Scheler's conception, that our primary contact with others happens through direct perception and proneness to pragmatic exchanges. As Gallagher explains,

before we are in a position to theorize, simulate, explain or predict mental states in others, we are already in a position to interact with and to understand others in terms of their gestures, intentions and emotions, and in terms of what they see, what they do or pretend to do with objects, and how they act toward ourselves and others. (Gallagher 2001b, 90-91)

With reference to the language of values and affordances, Shaun Gallagher and Somogy Varga state that

(...) my perception of your action is already formed in terms of how I might respond to your action. I see your action, not as a fact that needs to be interpreted in terms of your mental states, but as a situated opportunity or affordance for my own action in response. The intentions that I can see in your movements appear to me as logically or semantically continuous with my own, or discontinuous, in support or in opposition to my task, as encouraging or discouraging, as having potential for (further) interaction or as something I want to turn and walk away from. (Gallagher&Varga 2014, 189-190)

To sum up, according to the authors who support the interaction theory, it involves five main theses:

1) *The contrast of IT versus simulation theory and theory theory.* Empathy – although it is usually called intersubjectivity, social cognition or else – is not primarily a matter of inference from a set of bodily and separately detected elements whose meaning is given by reasoning. Nor is any prior simulation of a bodily movement or expression needed to understand the other's intention or feeling.⁵³ I will examine this claim further when discussing the contemporary theory theory and simulation theory.

⁵³ The primacy of direct perception does not imply a complete dismissal of a multi-layered explanation of empathy, as the "pluralist" account of social cognition entails; cf. Fiebich, Gallagher, and Hutto (2017).

2) *The direct perception account.* According to this account, roughly, the first encounter with others runs through direct perception, which implies a ‘smart’ perception to grasp the meaning inside phenomena in an immediate way (Gallagher 2008). In other words, according to Gallagher perception is immediately informed or shaped by *gestaltic* structures, context, meaning, emotional coloration, etc. This clearly echoes the Gibsonian conception of affordances and the Schelerian value-perception. In fact, both highlight the primary attraction of perception towards what is most significant to that particular living being and its active role in shaping the phenomenological datum itself. Perception is not passive, but actively guided by salience, and such salience makes objects and situations “jump” up to our perceptual threshold as already forming *gestaltic* unities of meaning.

3) *The centrality of expressivity.* The meaning perceived in social encounters is in fact the intention or emotion expressed in motion, both being intrinsic and visible in the structure of any movement (Gallagher&Varga 2014). Such description can well apply to the concept of expressivity explained above, and in particular to universal expressions.

4) *The importance of the context.* The socially meaningful action is in fact perceived jointly with its context (Gallagher&Zahavi 2008), that is, situated in a specific social, bodily and environmental domain. At the same time, it makes our action depend on the other subjects involved, on the hindrances in our path, and so on, but also on our bodily conditions that may alter or not the action itself (Gallagher&Varga 2014).

The similarity to Scheler’s view, detectable in points 4) and 2), is to be found especially in the *Formalismus*, where the bodily dimension is connected to the environment (*Umwelt*). Although it is not yet the “world” correlated to the personality sphere and to the secondary individuation of the person, it pertains to a primary individuation, the one of the *Leibschema*. It is experienced as a dynamic selection of contents that are meaningful (*bedeutsam*) and effective (*wirksam*) for the unity of the lived body, and becomes therefore a *milieu* in its practical valence, with positive and negative connotations (GW II, 158). Hence, interests “shape” our milieu: by presupposing the perception of effectiveness already in things, they select elements that surge to the threshold of and the objects in the milieu that

determine perception (with their affordances) and so give rise to a mutual dynamic interplay. Von Uexküll, from whom Scheler took a new conception of “*Umwelt*” and “*milieu*”, was the first to contest the concept of the (animal) individual’s passive and merely neutral perception,⁵⁴ “affected” by sensations in the same way as a silver plate is etched by a jeweler. Scheler’s novelty consists both in the theory of values in perception and in the assumption that, contrary to Von Uexküll’s animal that is locked in its species-milieu with its advantages and disadvantages, man is capable of world-openness thanks to his personal sphere.⁵⁵ This means that mankind can access new spheres of values, and also avoids any traces of determinism hidden in the previous conception, though without isolating it, from its pragmatic context. Gurwitsch’s (1979, 33) criticism to Scheler’s alleged dismissal of the context in his theory of the *Ausdruck* is proved then to be groundless (Cusinato 2017b) and close to interaction theory.

5) *The enactivist claim.* Being one’s actions dependent also on the external world, they involve a mechanism of feedback. In other words, social perception is enactive, implicitly attentive, responsive to the affordances and changes produced by actions, and ready to interact correspondingly (De Jaegher 2009; De Jaegher, Di Paolo, Gallagher 2010).⁵⁶

There is general agreement on the importance of interaction for social cognition, yet a slight variation is worth mentioning here. De Jaegher (2009), criticizes Gallagher’s account of direct perception for not contrasting the cognitivist theories of intersubjectivity and poses an even more radical claim. She argues that social perception is not primary, but grounded on enaction itself, which implies that the direct experience of another’s feelings is possible thanks to skillful interaction with others: social interaction is the root of social understanding. The most

⁵⁴ Cf. Von Uexküll (1909). Scheler discusses such ideas in GW II and in a review to Von Uexküll, now in GW XIV.

⁵⁵ On the connections between Von Uexküll’s and Scheler’s theories, cf. Cusinato (2008), Brentari (2015), Guccinelli (2016).

⁵⁶ As Overgaard (forthcoming) points out, there are some theoretical differences between enactivism and direct social perception (DSP). He argues that DSP cannot be explained without a representational content, in contrast to the main enactive accounts that favour the anti-representationalist theory.

interesting point of her thesis is that social cognition does not begin when a single individual merely observes another: a subject is no more the starting point for the empathic process or even for social perception. Organisms engage in a participatory sense-making (De Jaegher & Di Paolo 2007), that is, they actively produce meaning in what is valuable for them (values detected in the environment), and they do that dynamically by interaction and social coordination.

So, the subjects are not immersed in a situation passively, but play a creative role: intentions and emotions vary during and through social interaction. In Scheler's example of the people in front of a farm in the *Formalismus*, the person negotiating the building might change the price offer according to the other's bodily language that might display irritation for the exorbitant proposal or naivety. As a consequence, the actions of the person who intends to buy the farm may become more or less aggressive, because he or she is not merely trying to grasp the seller's expression in order to carry out his business, but is also having an actual reaction, maybe unawares.

However, participatory sense-making entails a further assumption. «Sense is made by living beings in interaction with their world» (De Jaegher 2009, 538), that is, the world has a meaning and value not according to internal representational processes, but through the constant interchange of the individual with the world. In such engagement with the other-than-oneself, the embodied subject tends to start mutual coordination in expressivity and movements and even a mutual incorporation grounded on the extended emotions and intentions. All that gives rise to intercorporeality (Fuchs&De Jaegher 2009).

I contend that the criticism of such an account contrasts the notion of the “passive observer”, as Fuchs and De Jaegher call it, that is incompatible with expressivity and value-based perception. If perception is affectively guided, it is incoherent to assume a neutral onlooker that does not have the slightest reaction. A person who sees someone in grief can hardly resist the compulsion to become sad herself (contagion), or to try to relieve the other's pain (compassion). She might become uncomfortable if she feels the other is expecting help or comfort from her but does not know how to give it. Expressions carry affordances, affordances carry the possibility of interaction. Furthermore, it is advisable now to highlight the

dynamics of expressivity, that seem to have been forgotten in many accounts (see above): «social understanding is not realized by ‘snapshot’ activities of one individual’s theorising or simulating but arises in the moment-to-moment interaction of two subjects» (Fuchs&De Jaegher 2009, 466). Nor is it the perception of a series of isolated expressions. Participatory sense-making entails that the meaning of a situation is all but static and is constantly modified during the interplay itself. In Scheler’s example of the two people bargaining over the farm we find a relevant case, but a person crossing the road and the car that stops in front of her are a suitable case of interaction as well.

I confute though the assumption that the notion of “coordination” of the enactive version of interaction theory can explain the primacy of direct perception, that the mutuality of bodily responses is the key to social understanding, and that perception really needs action to be effective. Does it in any case require behaviors to be coupled in a common system (De Jaegher & Di Paolo 2007), if I can experience the one-sided direct perception of a feeling? When I see a person in grief but she does not notice me, I may still feel the tendency to comfort her, or rejoice at her troubles if I fall a prey to what Germans call *Schadenfreude*. I am not a neutral observer, even if the fact that I perceive her feelings does not necessarily involve mutuality or coordination. When Fuchs and De Jaegher (2009, 470-471) differentiate between “coordination to” and “coordination with”, the first being one-sided and the second entailing co-regulation, they argue that only the latter involves interaction, and by so doing they assume that empathy and direct perception are grounded on the phenomena of joint attention, dyadic coordination, synchronization, and so on. To state that direct perception is rooted in such a kind of interaction is far more radical than to claim that it is rooted in the *possibility* of interaction.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ About this topic, De Jaegher and Fuchs (2009, 482) state that «social understanding is primarily based on intercorporeality; it emerges from the interactive practice and coordination of the persons involved». This is the version defended, e.g., by Gallagher & Hutto (2008).

Ultimately, then, how direct is social perception, if Scheler's theoretic frame is chosen to understand IT?⁵⁸ I have summed up such a theory into the five main points of 1) The contrast of IT versus simulation theory and theory theory, 2) the direct perception account, 3) the centrality of expressivity, 4) the importance of the context, and 5) the enactivist claim.

From a Schelerian phenomenological perspective, four of them can be related to the inclusion of the concept of values in the "directedness" of perception, that can be guided by them without a cognitive or inferential content.⁵⁹ Enactivism is more problematic in that it conceives perception as rooted in actual interaction and coordination, already pertaining to the we-intentionality that I will discuss in the fourth chapter. In so doing, it overplays the role of empathy, which is a form of direct perception without the need to be two-sided.

Value-ception entails that when perceiving an object or an expression we are guided by our interests and value-system into the potentialities of interaction. When we see a person, for instance, the range can be from sensible values (if the woman is attractive, "it would be pleasant to touch her arm" or, if she looks annoyed, "her reaction may be embarrassing) to pragmatic values ("she is of hindrance/of help to reach a certain object"),⁶⁰ to life-values (an infant may feel pleasant relaxation and well-being when in the arms of her mom), to spiritual (*geistige*) values (such as the aesthetic appreciation of elegance in someone's movements), to the values of holiness (e.g. the feeling of humility near a morally outstanding person). The

⁵⁸ I take up the question from Michael&De Bruin (2015), although in a different perspective.

⁵⁹ The focus here is on the conditions which make empathy possible, so I will not enter the discussion on the representational content of direct perception. Cf. Overgaard (forthcoming).

⁶⁰ It would be interesting to investigate to what extent the perception of this kind of values is related to empathy. In the case of antisocial personality disorder (or sociopathy, as it is usually called), the affected persons seem in fact to be able to perceive some expressivity, since they are particularly successful in exploiting others in instrumental and manipulative ways to fulfil their own interests, profit or pleasures (DSM V, 660). In other words, others are perceived as carrying the instrumental values of usefulness/uselessness. However, there is no convincing evidence that, as the DSM V claims, individuals with antisocial personality disorders completely lack empathy, since they have direct perception of most expressivity and psychological states. It is also interesting that they have impairments in detecting expressions of fear (Marsh&Blair 2008), which might be related to their inability to feel any moral pressure.

potential interaction is part of the perception of an expression or of a gesture, but it does not necessarily become effective and two-sided or originate a form of dyadic interaction/joint attention. I may smile back at a person who smiles on a screen (coordination), or react with a grimace of disgust to a racist speech by the recently elected president of the United States (misattunement). My response comes automatically, yet such people have no possibility to interact with me. Moreover, the opportunity of interaction shapes perception, but perception cannot coincide with interaction perfectly. They influence each other, because we would act randomly without any perceptual verification.

So far, I have examined the conditions that allow to speak of “direct perception”, plus Scheler’s theory of values and without the actual-interaction claim. Before starting to discuss a notion of empathy grounded on the two concepts of expressivity and direct perception, I deem it relevant to reassess a psychopathological topic debated in the first chapter, namely schizophrenia. In addition to the dimension of the body schema, such illness shows an impairment in the perception of expressivity, and therefore constitutes evidence to the ordinary experience of other-perception.

2.6 Back to schizophrenia: The impairment of expressivity and the solipsism of schizophrenic autism

Imagine you suffer from a certain form of schizophrenia. You stay at the window, watching people that happen to be in the street below. You focus your gaze on two tall, dark figures wearing hats and coats, yet you do not perceive a dimension of animation or a particular expressivity. You are not sure whether they are automatons or men, since you cannot grasp their expressive unity as human beings at first sight.⁶¹ You may do nothing but reduce them to a sum of adumbrations, in a sort of non-requested phenomenological *epoché* of the natural attitude which is the condition to make ordinary interaction with the world possible

⁶¹ I give here a description that derives from the well-known Cartesian example in *Meditations* (Descartes [1641] 1984, 21), in which the certainty of the figures being men and not automatons can only come through a judgement. I am going to analyse the bracketing of perceptual certainties that seems to be quite similar to the schizophrenic experience.

without questioning the theoretical premises of your perception:⁶² living beings have lost their immediate salience, and perception has lost its certainty. Consider Stanghellini's following transcription of a schizophrenic person experiencing such a de-realization:

When I watch something, I would like to see it better. While watching, say, a tree, I can but scan with my eye its profile and count its sides. For instance, a dog is seven parts. I called this counting, because for me everything in this way is reducible to a certain number according to its sides. It started as a sort of game, then it turned into a kind of obsession. I become aware of my eye watching an object. (Stanghellini 2006, 131)

Instead of seeing a dog – whose motion transmits cheerfulness, playfulness, and so on – the patient is perceiving a *Körper* of which he counts the parts, as if it was an unanimated piece of matter. Concerning the link between corporeality, expressivity and sense of reality, Guido Cusinato makes a comparison between Scheler's theories and Marguerite Sechehaye's *Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Girl*. A hypothesis to interpret such a pathology is that one loses contact with the expressive field of reality and life, hence the capacity of direct perception of one's own and others' expressivity. This lack leads one to perceive the *Leib* as an inanimate *Körper*, and to interpret the expressive movements of the lived body as pertaining to a robot or a mechanical puppet: «through the loss of contact with the expressive layer of reality, even the lived body of a known person becomes a mechanical physical body lacking in expressivity. When Renée sees an old friend approaching, she sees her coming forward as a mechanical puppet» (Cusinato 2015b, 77-78, my transl.).

A detachment from the “lived”, gestaltic unity bears heavy consequences, not only limited to the perceptual dimension. If I – a hypothetical schizophrenic person – am not able to perceive you as an animated human being, and focus instead on the transcendental conditions that are behind my perception, how do I encounter otherness? If I am not very expressive and cannot display interest or my psychological states, how do we engage in interaction? Ultimately, how do I exit

⁶² Since Blankenburg (1969), one of the prevailing interpretations of such de-realization in schizophrenia is a form of bracketing common sense and the existence of the world, therefore an involuntary performance of the phenomenological reduction.

the solipsistic sphere in which I am confined by my lack of immediate expressivity-grasping and the hyper-reflexivity⁶³ on the grounds of perception? Not only the relationship with one's own body schema is impaired by such schizophrenic symptoms (cf. the previous chapter), but also with the body schemata of other living beings; in other words, the patient is locked in a *schizophrenic autism*.

Although autism spectrum disorder and schizophrenia are kept well distinct in the DSM V, many scholars with a phenomenological perspective on the psychopathology of schizophrenia point out its intrinsic condition of solipsism. It is not the mere lack of emotional resonance, but the impossibility of being in contact with the expressive field (Cusinato 2015b; Parnas, Bovet, and Zahavi 2002; Stanghellini 2003; Cutting 2012; cf. also empirical investigations on the impaired recognition of facial expressions by Silver, Bilker, and Goodman 2009). As Parnas, Bovet and Zahavi describe with reference to Minkowski's account, «[a]utism is not a withdrawal to solitude (it cuts across the categories of extro- and introversion) or a morbid inclination to daydreaming, but a deficit in the basic, non-reflective attunement between the person and his world, i.e., a lack of “vital contact with reality”» (Parnas, Bovet and Zahavi 2002, 132). In normal experience, objects have affordances which are perceived directly and pre-reflectively with their meaning-for-us, as corresponding to a higher or lower value in our value system, and as a unity of expression instead of a sum of single parts.

For some schizophrenic people, on the contrary, it might even be hard to get a whole, gestaltic experience from isolated sensations. It is as if «he is having a sensation, elaborating this sensation, and structuring its parts and the context in which it takes place in a meaningful whole (...). A schizophrenic person is sometimes like the spectator of the single steps of his perceptive processes» (Stanghellini 2006, 130-131). If even the taste of a soup requires from the patient a reconstruction of its single ingredients (Stanghellini 2006, 130-131), what normally would be an immediate grasping is reduced to an assemblage of static, fragmented snapshots. Even what has been listed as the fourth characteristic of interaction theory and as a primary element in Scheler's theory of expressivity, the importance of the context, is lacking. At the same time, while the meaning of and the adaptation

⁶³ Cf. the previous chapter, especially on Sass and Parnas (2003).

to the specific situation and environment is normally a matter of pre-reflective selection thanks to the *Triebstruktur* and to the value-salience, in a social encounter the schizophrenic may manifest the need to cognitively learn the “rules” for the situation (Stanghellini 2006, 132), having lost the immediate contact with the implicit pragmatic possibility of interaction linked to social perception. Stanghellini claims that disorders of self-awareness and disorders in social cognition are connected because of the simulation routines. I contest his assumption that attunement would imply the capacity to simulate actions implicitly (Stanghellini 2003, 145), and in the next chapter I will argue why the primacy of expressivity and of simulation to explain empathy are incompatible. I claim, however, that he is indeed right when he points out the importance of the objectifying attitude both towards the self and towards others, since the ultimate deficiency at the roots of the pathological condition is the loss of the dimension of being alive and of expressivity. If the body becomes a non-living *Körper*, the same happens when other organisms are perceived.

For a schizophrenic person, social situations can be puzzling, unpredictable as in the mental experiment described at the beginning of chapter 2.2: expressions and movements are deprived of their intrinsic meaning, incomprehensible and need explicit laws to be interpreted. The pre-reflective predictions that accompany any perception of actions are suspended, a smile is just an aggregation of muscle contractions, and one never knows what is going to happen next. As a schizophrenic patient stated, «[i]t also occurs that in this state I get lost when I stay with the others. What I lack is the common thought. I have nothing to share with them. In this way, the others become incomprehensible and scaring» (Stanghellini 2006, 142). The pre-reflective knowledge that guides interpersonal relations is not present in the schizophrenic patient, who lacks the very perception of the meaning intrinsic to purposeful gestures, the implicit requests of expressions, the tacit set of social rules that one learns through experience and applies in social contexts without always revising them reflectively.

Within a Schelerian framework, I have said that expressivity and value-ception are compromised in schizophrenia. But does such a claim refer to all the five categories of values listed, namely the values of the holy, mental values, life-

values, pragmatic values, and the sensible ones? According to psychiatrist John Cutting, who has both worked on schizophrenia and studied and translated some of Scheler's texts, such a pathology affects the values related to impulse and embodiment. This is consistent with the reported experience of the patient's loss of the dimensions of animation, emotions, bodily feelings and unity. They are the three "lowest" values, related to the feeling and expressivity of the whole body, to the pragmatic potential of objects and people, and to the sensorial feelings – these latter concerning only the self as they cannot be grasped in direct perception.

In order to understand Cutting's psychopathological interpretation of Scheler, a brief explanation is necessary. According to Scheler's metaphysical conception (GW XI), there are three types of reductions that can be performed: the phenomenological, the Dionysian and the positive-scientific one. All the three presuppose the metaphysical differentiation between the dimensions of *Geist* and *Drang*, which correspond to the mental/spiritual and the drive-based/impulsive principles of what exists.⁶⁴ While the scientific reduction isolates the value-level of utility, the *Dionysian* refers to the act of bracketing the *geistige* components in order to focus on the impulse-driven ones. Differently put, the phenomenological reduction concerns the essences (*Wesenheiten*), leaving aside the *dränglich* part which is associated to the impulsive structure described in the previous chapter with reference to GW IX. Because they pertain to the mental/spiritual principle, such essences are negative, being the actual impossibilities of what are instead the firstly given possibilities of reality. More than that, they are *ineffective* (*wirkungslos*, GW XI, 252). Such a definition connects to Scheler's metaphysical idea that the *Geist* is powerless if it does not intertwine with the impulse. However, as Cutting (2009, 150) explains, it also means that in the absence of the *Drang*-related dimension we do not perform the value-ception that pertains to our normal pre-reflective experience of the environment:

[w]hat Scheler, however, realized, unlike Husserl, who concluded that the experience of an apple tree in blossom in the form of an introspected

⁶⁴ In order to focus on the psychopathological problem under examination, I do not enter the details of such metaphysical theory. Cf. Cusinato (2008, 2012) for an anti-dualistic interpretation of the two principles as an interpenetration (*Durchdringung*).

representation in consciousness would differ not one jot from the experience of a real blossoming apple tree in the external world, was that the reduced object would be markedly different. Why? For one thing, the object experienced would be ‘adynamic’—a static image—because the real events governing the fluctuating appearance—wind blowing the branches about, scurrying clouds affecting the pattern of sunlight and shade—would be put out of contention. Second, the object experienced would be shorn of all partisan interest: it would no longer be an apple tree of interest to a gardener, or fruiterer, or timber merchant, because all such vital, dranghaft, utility concerns are deemed out of the question in the reduction. (Cutting 2009, 150)⁶⁵

What the phenomenological reduction brackets, therefore, is the vital dimension, starting from its very basis of animation, salience and embodied expressivity, and living beings even appear as *Körper*. It has been shown through theories and reports that some schizophrenic patients perform a continuous and unwanted phenomenological reduction. More precisely, according to such an interpretation, we could rather say that they do not *perform* the phenomenological reduction but actually *live* in it, since they are not able to pre-reflectively access reality through the perception of bodily values. Contrary to a philosopher who practices the reduction and trains to make it become a habit, a schizophrenic patient is not able to switch back to the values that one brackets with the *epoché*. The schizophrenic experiences reported, which concern the objectification of living beings and the difficulty to predict the others’ behavior in social interaction, then must be seen in the light of the perceptual loss of the vital value-qualities that are normally present in the objects/living beings themselves.

In those cases of schizophrenia, the social dimension, which cannot be directly touched if such value-ception of expressivity is impaired, disappears or becomes scary. There is no space where the thou and the I make their first encounter and enter into contact with the expressive reality of bodily emotions, animation and intentions (cf. the notion of *aida* in 1.2.2). The schizophrenic patient is confined in

⁶⁵ I will not join here the diatribe concerning Husserl’s vs Scheler’s account. Cf. Sass (2009) that targets Cutting’s article for oversimplifying his criticism to Husserl. The fact that Cutting does not take into detailed consideration Husserl’s texts neither affects the significance of his contribution to a Schelerian framework for psychopathology, nor the claim that an experience deprived of the embodied values has similarities with the schizophrenic one.

her “autistic”, solipsistic world because she simply cannot access the totality of values that are at the disposal of a non-ill person. She has lost the affective or emotional opening (*Durchbruch*) towards the world, where the vital dimension is shared by all living beings (Cusinato 2018 in press, 2017, 2017b, 75-81). Ultimately, it impairs what in Husserlian terms would be an intersubjective world, and in Schelerian terms a *mit-geteilt* one. The lived body plays in this sense a crucial role for relationality, and is in turn shaped by it. As Fuchs (2015) defines it, schizophrenia involves *disembodiment*, in the three aspects of impaired basic sense of self, disorder in the implicit dimension of bodily governing and perception, and the relational bodily communicative dimension called ‘intercorporality’, which allows to build a shared world.⁶⁶ In fact, if embodiment entails a fundamental condition of affectivity perceived and interacted through affordances, then intercorporality also involves interaffectivity, ‘mutual incorporation’ of my body schema with other body schemata, and implicit relational knowledge (Fuchs 2016), i.e. a coordinative interaction which can give rise to we-intentionality (cf. ch. 4). When the immediate roots of interaffectivity are disrupted, there certainly is a lack of expressivity-perception, which also impairs the formation of a shared situation.

From a slightly different perspective, the extended-mind hypothesis can help clarify the relational aspect of schizophrenia (cf. also 4.2), for it highlights the connection between the lived body and the necessity for expressive contact with other living beings and objects. An aspect that significantly explains the confinement into a solipsistic condition of schizophrenic autism, is the “scaffolded self” (Krueger 2011; forthcoming). According to the extended mind theory, cognitive and emotional processes extend over our brains and bodies, and are *scaffolded* – structured or helped – by external objects (e.g. notebooks, laptops, agendas) as well as by others’ expressions (e.g. the occurrence of a joyful mood in a party through the scaffolding of people’s smiles, cheerful movements, and so on).⁶⁷

⁶⁶ On the notion of sharing, cf. chapter 4.

⁶⁷ For an in-depth analysis on the extended mind hypothesis and especially on extended affects, cf. 4.2. I intend to examine the literature concerning this topic in the last chapter, since it plays a crucial

Krueger's notion of 'scaffolded self' importantly remarks that in schizophrenia we do neither encounter a mere neurological disorder, nor a simple disturbance of ipseity. Instead, the relational dimension is profoundly at stake, that is, the capacity of the affective side of the self to be shaped and regulated through bodily and emotional engagement with others and objects. Some cases of schizophrenia provoke a condition where one loses the direct grip on expressivity and affordances that should provide affective scaffolding (e.g. someone's smile to display joy and to possibly provoke the same emotion in me, or the serene quality of the Moonlight Sonata to acquire a peaceful state of mind). The hyperreflexivity which defines unworlding and derealization can also be explained as me – the hypothetical patient – being «forced to recalibrate my affective experience and self-regulative strategies through explicit attention and effort» (Krueger forthcoming, 25). The spontaneous and direct access to the dimension of expressivity, we could say by slightly modifying Krueger's claim, is crucial for our sense of confidence and pre-reflective trust that what surrounds us will scaffold our affective experiences; hence the emotional impairments that occur when such an access is not immediate anymore.

Now, if we compare schizophrenic autism with the SHU syndrome provoked by solitary confinement (cf. 1.3), there are certainly some differences, since the latter is induced by a form of torture and implies in some cases a sort of hyper-animation, as in the hallucinations that see other people appearing in the walls or in the excessive sensitivity to external stimuli. Yet, there are also striking similarities.⁶⁸ Both schizophrenic autism and the SHU syndrome can entail a lack of contact with the lived and animated dimension of one's own and others' body, and as a consequence, a condition of solipsism coming from the essential alteration of perceptive structures. This is consistent with an impairment of the extended dimension of the expressive body, for a schizophrenic or a person with the SHU syndrome can be unable to display affectivity and consequently to be an affective

role for we-intentionality, and also because I intend to focus on the discussion of schizophrenia in this paragraph.

⁶⁸ I am thankful to Joel Krueger for pointing out a possible connection between the relational side of the body schema, schizophrenic autism and the solitary-confinement condition.

scaffold for the transmission of emotions to others.⁶⁹ In other words, not only there is a fracture between someone's body and her emotions, but she is also unable to start an interbodily communication – even a pre-reflective one – and so feels more and more immersed into solipsism. Moreover, in both schizophrenia and the SHU syndrome there occurs a loss of contact with the *gestaltic* unities of objects, the former due to a deficit in perception, and the latter to an artificially induced condition. Is the loss of material stimuli and scaffolding from external objects part of such disorders, then? It seems to me that, according to the need for relationality and extension of the lived body demonstrated above, when no element comes to integrate and support the affects and actions of the body schema the person is compelled to substitute those pre-reflective scaffoldings with delusional or hyperreflective alternatives.

In sum, unworlding, depersonalization and derealization seem connected to the relational character of our lived body, which body schema is profoundly affected when relational possibilities and affective scaffolding are impaired. What has been argued so far should prove that the encounter with another without the affective perception of her expressivity does not bring about the schizophrenic's exit from her solipsistic sphere. We could make an inference about the other's mental state by looking at her face as a sum of single snapshots, and think that "if a person contracts her muscles in such and such ways, it is said that she should be joyful", but we cannot be certain that she is really experiencing the emotion that we attribute to her. Ultimately, does the premise of the direct perception of expressivity justify the validity of empathy as a real exit from the solipsistic sphere of other theories? What are the conditions that allow to distinguish it from slightly different social phenomena? In order to answer these questions, in the next chapter I shall investigate the terms used to define the concept of empathy in Scheler. I shall attempt to show that, even if he used the term in another sense, it is possible to read in it the characteristic of a minimal form of empathy, and to contrast it with similar phenomena that not always find a proper differentiation in the literature. I will

⁶⁹ Cf. the notions of inter-bodily and intra-bodily resonance in Fuchs (1996), and of extended body in Froese&Fuchs (2012) and Fuchs (2015).

therefore proceed to a critical assessment of alternative theories that, according to a Schelerian phenomenological perspective, are limited to the egoic sphere and mistake other “terms of sympathy” for such minimal, embodied empathy.

3. Back to empathy itself. Defining the concept

In the previous chapter, I have outlined the premises for empathy, namely its being grounded on expressivity, which relates to the body schema, to the visibility of certain emotions, and to the direct perception account. From a Schelerian perspective, this last involves interests and values, that shape the perception we have of objects, living beings, and situations, and at the same time they are shaped by experience. I have argued that, from birth to ordinary embodied interactions in adult life, one is able to grasp the expressivity of others in the forms of vitality affects, intentions, and emotions thanks to the qualities that are displayed in the facial features and in movements. Such capacity, according to Scheler, is explainable thanks to a universal grammar of expressivity. Since Scheler makes a universality claim, I have entered the debate on the universality of emotions: are there any basic emotions (Ekman), which can be recognised by all civilizations and from both young and old members of the species (Darwin)? And how would they be related to universal expressions?

In order to clarify this, I have supported a distinction among more and less visible emotions, universal expressions and gestures. In all of them, what is primary is the direct, pre-reflective perception of the meaning: affective perception, or in other words, value-ception precedes perception, if conceived as a neutral act aimed at a rational knowledge. The same holds true for other-perception, since Scheler argues that the first encounter with the other's expressivity is a *Fremdwahrnehmung*, and would – I have claimed – share many of the assumptions of interaction theory (IT). I have also examined some cases of schizophrenia as empirical examples of an impaired direct perception of expressivity. In such conditions, the ill person is precluded an entire sphere of the world, and more radically, she is confined into a dimension of solipsism, namely schizophrenic autism. The reactions of others become for such people unpredictable; they do not even have a direct encounter with another, since they perceive living beings (and sometimes objects as well) as a sum of *körperlich* sides.

The two concepts of expressivity and of direct perception are the grounds which allow one to enter into contact with alterity: without them, one would simply try to guess what the other is intending or feeling, since there would be no direct

corroboration. What is then to be included in a concept of empathy rooted in the lived body and its expressive possibilities? And what is the border between solipsism and keeping instead a differentiation between the empathising subjects? Although Scheler does use the term “empathy” in the a negative, I am going to prove that he had such a concept in mind, and that he provides a sharp differentiation between it and similar phenomena within of the field of sympathy. Moreover, I mean to prove that his account constitutes a successful alternative to the solipsistic biases of the theory theory and the simulation theory.

3.1 A lexicon of sympathy. Scheler’s account

The term “empathy” has been used with so many different meanings, that it is hard to establish its real scope. Is it a form of bodily understanding, a cognitively demanding task, a self-projection, or even the positive constituent of cooperation and the origin of morality? I will attempt to narrow its meaning – at least for what concerns its minimal form – by referring to Scheler’s particularly well exposed account in *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*. Although it has been quoted by most contemporary phenomenologists who have studied the empathic process, there is still a certain confusion in interpreting his lexicon of sympathy, consequently much more has to be dug in it. After the highlighted theoretical grounds for empathy in the previous chapters, namely the lived body, expressivity, and direct perception, what constitutes the process itself?

Scheler provides a precise distinction among different phenomena which are all present in the social sphere, yet cannot be reduced to the same process: *Sympathieethik* (the ethics of sympathy); *Gefühlsansteckung* (affective contagion); *Einsfühlung* (unipathy, literally “feeling as one”); *Mitgefühl* or *mitfühlen* (affective co-feeling); *Miteinanderfühlen* (reciprocal feeling with one another); *Einfühlung* ([projective] empathy); *Nachfühlen* (affective re-feeling), also referred to as *nachleben* (re-live) or *nacherleben* (re-experience), this last being the concept that best individuates the idea of empathy considering the three abovementioned roots.

3.1.1 *Sympathieethik*

First of all, Scheler means to contrast the concept of empathy as conceived by the ethics that ground morality on the co-feeling (Hume, Smith). As it will be explained when dealing with *Mitgefühl*, such an intentional stance presupposes empathy-*Nachfühlen* which is blind to moral values (*wertblind*), since it makes it possible to rejoice at of another's agony. On the one hand, the ethics of sympathy presuppose what they intend to prove, as they ground the higher or lower ranking of a value on the emotional reaction of the observer. In other words, we could say by the *Formalismus* terms that they fall prey to the subjectivism of values; for instance, it is morally positive only to rejoice with another's joy which *already* possesses an ethical value. On the other hand, they break what Scheler calls "the rule of preference" where the spontaneous, morally positive acts are to be preferred to the mere reactive ones (as the co-feeling is, unlike an act of love).

3.1.2 *Gefühlsansteckung*

Empathy as a way of primary encounter with another has to be separated from the phenomenon of affective contagion, where the distinction between the subjects of the feeling is blurred. There is, in other words, a confusion in the sense of agency: someone's suffering, cheerfulness, etc., is not given to me as her feeling, but as mine.⁷⁰ *Ansteckung*, in fact, can also mean "infection" in the medical sense, and just as one can be infected by a disease, so she can unwillingly assume an affective state from others. For instance, Scheler states that if one enters a room during a party, she most likely assumes the cheerfulness of the surrounding environment, and she does not realise that her affective state has changed all of a sudden because of the context. In the same way, she may not understand where her sadness comes from and notice only afterwards that the feeling has emerged after being with a group of people by whose melancholic state she has involuntarily been affected. Emotional contagion is quite different from empathy and from what will be later clarified in the process of co-feeling (section 3.1.5).

⁷⁰ Which is instead crucial for empathy, as I am going to clarify when examining Goldie (2011) and Slaby (2014).

Here there is neither affective *intention* towards the joy or the suffering of another, nor any participation to her experience. Moreover, it is characteristic of emotional contagion to occur just between affective *states* (*Gefühlszuständen*), and that it does not require at all any knowledge of the other's joy. (...) There is nothing in such sorrow that shows its origin; through inferences and causal reasoning it becomes clear where it comes from. Such «contagion» does also not necessarily need another's *affective* experiences. Moreover, the *objective* qualities of similar feelings that adhere to and are given in the objects of nature or of a «milieu», like the cheerfulness of a spring landscape, the gloominess of a rainy weather, the pitifulness of a room, can in this sense affect our affective states by contagion. (GW VII, 26)

Here Scheler is stating that in the case of contagion there is no affective intentionality – as it would instead be the case if we were directed towards the emotion of another person in order to grasp it – this being rather a spread of affective states. A person who experiences such a situation is not fully aware of the origin of this affective stream (sense of agency), though she experiences it with a first-person perspective (sense of ownership). Moreover, for their being non-intentional, the types of affective states prone to contagion include the notion of mood, whose origin becomes clear only a posteriori and through reasoning (GW II, 262).⁷¹ Moods are not object-oriented emotions but mere affective tones in the background which determine the conditions of possibility for the emergence of emotions or for the variability of the environment salience. For instance, when in a melancholic mood, we may tend to perceive the degraded elements of a urban landscape with more intensity, or to give more importance to a negative fact than to a positive one, and to fall prey to sadness (as an emotion) more easily. The other's expressivity can

⁷¹ Although I am not referring to what he calls “existential feelings”, cf. Ratcliffe (2010) for a good analysis of moods and a differentiation between experiencing an intentional emotion and being in a certain mood. Moods may also have an influence on the predisposition to perceive the other in a certain way, and to the being prone or not to enter an affective contact with her. For instance, though Peter Goldie criticizes the so-called empathetic perspective-shifting, his remark on the influence of moods on it may be extended to the openness and disposition to the direct-perceptual encounter: «If B is feeling irritable from drinking too much coffee and A is not, A's attempt to perspective-shift to B's psychological states may well fail for this reason; for example, if A is wondering what B will decide to do if he (B) sees someone queue-barging in front of him» (Goldie 2011, 311).

mediate contagion, but the characteristics that distinguish such a phenomenon from an empathic perception are basically: a) in contagion, the borders between subjects are blurred, since the origin of the feeling is not clear, b) there is no directionality towards the feeling as pertaining to the other, and c) the subject who falls prey to contagion unwillingly acquires the same affective state as the one she has been acquainted with.

3.1.3 *Einsföhlung*

An extreme case of emotional contagion is unipathy, or “feeling as one”. Here, not only the affective state is transmitted without clear awareness of its origin and the border between the subjects’ agencies is blurred, but there is also an actual, involuntary *identification* of one’s own individual “I” with another. One example is the well-known case in Lipps’ theory of empathy. If we observe an acrobat walking on a rope, such a bodily and affective identification occurs so that we are ‘carried in him’. There is an affective participation in his movement, to the point that – according to Lipps – only the real I of the observer remains separated from the observed one. Scheler criticizes Lipps’ account as a case of projective empathy that overlooks the direct givenness of affectivity in the expressive phenomena, as it will become clear in the analysis of the term *Einföhlung*.

Scheler takes into account a long list of other unipathic phenomena,⁷² such as the identification of the members of some tribes with the supposed animal contained in a totem or an ancestor or the ecstasies into which an initiate to religious mysteries goes, when she experiences a fusional identification with the whole realm of being, with a god or with life in general. Other cases are the identification of a hypnotized person with the hypnotizer and the pathologic, “hysteric” transmissions described

⁷² When unipathy reaches the point of a complete absorption of one ego into the other, Scheler distinguishes two kinds of unipathic identification, namely ‘idiopathic’ and ‘heteropathic’ (GW VII, 29 ff). In the first mode, the ‘I’ of the other is – so to speak – absorbed in my own at the level of consciousness, while in the second case it is my self that is eclipsed in favor of the other, so that I live ‘in the other’, as if I lived *through* her, adopting her essential attitudes. In other words, in both cases the alterity (of myself or of the other) is compromised in experience, at least at the psychological level. Cf. also 4.1.

by Freud in *Mass Psychology*. Also, the unipathic identification of an infant in a game when she believes a pretended situation to be real; some cases of schizophrenia, in which the patient identifies for example with a historical character or the “genuine” (*echte*) unipathy of two lovers in a sexual intercourse, where they intend to participate in the stream of life and to forget about their individual “I”s. Finally, the fusion among the members of non-organized masses, where a single stream of affects influences all its parts,⁷³ and last, the unipathic relation between mother and infant as a psycho-vital unity – although it has been shown in the first chapter that the theory of the undifferentiated flux does not erase the possibility of a bodily individuation.

It is important to notice that, despite the negative turns that it can generate, like the excesses of mass enthusiasm, unipathy is what Scheler claims to be the fundamental metaphysical root of expressivity. It has already been explained that the immediate grasping of an affective meaning from all living beings is possible for their sharing a common grammar and pertaining to the same *All-leben*. All of them are given a “vital consciousness” – the centre of affects, instincts, vital impulses – and a *Leibschema* that constitutes the mere primary level of individuation, since in unipathy they are still immersed in the – psychologically – undifferentiated flux. Such a condition allows not only humans to establish embodied interaction with one another, but animals as well. Quoting here an example that Scheler had read in Bergson, some wasps are able to paralyze spiders, beetles and caterpillars by a sting, and to lay their eggs in them; it is surprising how those hymenoptera are as capable, as a surgeon, to detect the precise spot where to sting in order to paralyze the animal without killing it. It is as if they could perform an empathic act and detect the right regions of vulnerability.

According to what Scheler calls the “foundational laws of empathy” (GW VII, 105ff), unipathy grounds the phenomena of *Nachfühlen* and *Mitgefühl*, and in Scheler the proper border between the basic and the higher levels might *prima facie* appear problematic. Does such a claim entail that we need identification in order to

⁷³ This point will be further examined when discussing the we-intentionality, in the last chapter.

experience empathy?⁷⁴ In other words, does this foundational law imply that *Nachfühlen*-empathy is a multi-phased process, possible only after experiencing a state of fusion? Scheler claims explicitly that the foundation he has in mind is of a metaphysical kind, and this is the reason *Nachfühlen* and *Mitgefühl* are two originary phenomena that cannot be reduced to simpler facts of a psychogenetic kind, so they cannot be reduced to a developmental process from unipathy to empathy (GW VII, 66). The main difference between contagion/unipathy and empathy is that the latter is a feeling-function: it presupposes an affective understanding that differentiates it from a mere transmission of feeling-states like the abovementioned moods. It is not clear, however, where the line between empathy and unipathy lies in living beings that possess consciousness but only an embodied individuation, because the psychological “I” involved in empathy – as I am going to explain – would not allow them such an ability. Can we have the certainty that a wasp performs only an identification with the caterpillar’s organism through a vital centre, given that it can individuate the perfect spot where to sting in a different body (GW VII, 40), just as we can understand the meaningful movements of a dog? The wasp is able to perform a *Wertnehmen*, an affordance-grasping, since it seems to individuate the precise vulnerable but non-lethal spot. Despite this, it cannot be said that unipathy/contagion are *present* in empathy: expressivity and its consequences on the impulsive structure, its meaningful dynamics, its perceived potentialities for interaction are all basic elements for the emergence of empathy. Yet, this in no way implies that an affective state has to be acquired by the empathizer in order to be understood, or that the two “I”s have first to identify and then differentiate. In this sense, I cannot agree with Stephen Darwall’s definition of emotional contagion as «[t]he most rudimentary form of empathy (...) as when one “catches” a feeling or emotional state from another, not by imaginative projection, but more directly» (Darwall 1997, 264). Unipathy/contagion and empathy are both immediate, and both involve pre-reflective acquaintance with the meaning of expressivity, but the crucial point lies in the subjects’ differentiation. Contagion/unipathy blur the sense of agency, and in

⁷⁴ I am thankful to Henning Nörenberg, who made me realize with a similar question the possible misunderstanding hidden in Scheler’s laws of foundation of the phenomena of sympathy.

some way the subject who undergoes them lacks the intentionality that is directed either towards the subject as experiencing a certain feeling, or towards the feeling as experienced by that subject. If I enter a room where a party is going on, I more or less tacitly perceive the general mood, while individual subjects are not targeted.⁷⁵ Let's examine now what we mean by the term "empathy" from a Schelerian perspective.

3.1.4 *Nachfühlen* as "empathy" and a response to some critiques

At a first glance, this term might misdirect us towards a simulation or imitation of what another feels: does it concern the need to reproduce in ourselves what the other is experiencing? *Nachfühlen* is in fact the concept that I consider as the Schelerian proper definition of empathy, for its being grounded on the lived body and the direct perception of expressivity, but also entailing something additional if compared to unipathy or emotional contagion, in that the subjects are individuated and do not lose their sense of agency. Such a term has been translated in many misleading ways that suggest an incorrect imitative or simulationist account of empathy in Scheler. The English translation of *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* (Scheler 2008) mentions *Nachfühlen* as a reproduced, vicarious feeling; Owens (1970) uses "affective reproduction" to indicate it; Sánchez Guerrero mistakes the Schelerian re-feeling for the criticized projective empathy of Lipps, since he states that «[t]he sense of connectedness at issue here is, thus, not a matter of what Theodor Lipps (1905) calls *projective empathy* [*Nachfühlen* or *Einfühlen*]» (Sánchez Guerrero 2016, 6). However, Scheler contrasts an imitative interpretation of his concept, as he states:

Imitation (*Nachahmung*), even as a mere «tendency», presupposes rather to have somehow already the other's experience and cannot then explain what it should here explain. For instance, if we imitate (involuntarily) a gesture⁷⁶ of fear or joy, the imitation is never purely triggered by the optic image of such gesture, but an impulse of imitation

⁷⁵ I will come back to this point in 4.1 and 4.2.

⁷⁶ Scheler uses the term *Gebärde*, although I believe that spontaneous expressions and gestures should be kept distinct (see chapter 2).

always occurs if we have, first of all, already grasped the gesture *as* the expression of joy or fear. Should that grasp be possible – as Lipps thinks – only through a tendency of imitation and, caused by it, a reproduction of a joy or fear previously experienced (+ a projective empathy of what is in this way reproduced in others), we would move inside an evident circle. (GW VII, 21)

According to Scheler, such a phenomenon is therefore not an imitative process but rather an *erkennender Verhalten*, that can be translated as a perceiving/recognizing/understanding behaviour. In fact, for an affective reaction to emerge in us (the co-feeling), it presupposes the acquisition of the affective quality at stake through unipathy – which grounds the *Nachfühlen* –, and then «some form of knowledge of the fact of the other’s experiences, of their nature and qualities, as well as, certainly, of the experience of the *existence of others’ psychic essences (fremder seelicher Wesen)*, which is the condition of possibility for such knowledge» (GW VII, 19). It is worth remarking that its being an affective process distinguishes it from a mere *Verstehen*.⁷⁷ Such “knowledge” is instead to be intended as an immediate grasp of meaning and values in perception and neither as an inferential judgment – that is, neither as an analogical reasoning – nor as an impulse of imitation.

This implies that a) *Nachfühlen* presupposes a distance from ‘I’ and ‘thou’, since, according to Scheler, a *Ich überhaupt* is already given in an experience. The difference between an experience *for me* and an experience for the empathized person is then a pre-reflective, intuitive datum. It is well possible to grasp experiences in the expressive phenomena directly, and it is also a matter of *internal* perception since we perceive their lived body as the expressive field of their experiences. Nonetheless, it is never assumed that the other is entirely transparent or that her feelings are given to me in the first-personal mode; b) the quality of another’s feeling is affectively grasped without the need of it being transferred into

⁷⁷ That is why Krebs (2015, 120) criticizes Peter Goldie who, in his book *The Emotions*, recognizes only the understanding (*Verstehen*) as a prerequisite for the real co-feeling, leaving aside *Nachfühlen*. Understanding implies, however, that we have first of all grasped a feeling *affectively*, as otherwise we would have to infer it from detached elements, and to affectively respond with the sharing implied by co-feeling would thus be less immediate and no more reactive.

us – which would be a case of emotional contagion – or the consequence that a real, identical feeling originates in us; c) the I-thou difference present in the phenomenon of *Nachfühlen* also means that we can perceive someone's feeling but remain perfectly indifferent, therefore not participating in it at all. This is a clear reference to the criticism to the theories which see empathy as the morally positive origin of ethics. For instance, we could perceive the expressivity in someone else's facial display of surprise and shame clearly, but use it for our own interests or even feel indifference for her condition of uneasiness – as it happens in case of the antisocial personality disorder, (mentioned in the previous chapter, p. 103, footnote). Scheler uses indeed the term “empathy” in the negative, namely for the Lippsian account of self-projection onto the other and his impulse of imitation. However, this is according to me the most appropriate definition, as he would not agree on the term “inter-subjectivity” that might suggest a radical split between the individuals and the conception of them as two already-formed, monadic entities.

The second point (b, see above) is particularly significant to respond to Jacob's criticism (2011) to the direct-perception account of empathy. In order to do that, Jacob bashes Zahavi's reading of the Schelerian view, therefore it is worth examining the “root cause”, that is the Schelerian account itself in the light of Jacob's conditions for empathy. With regard to the term “empathy”, Jacob states that «the word is meant to apply paradigmatically to the experience of one individual (the empathizer) who comes to share another's (the target's) affective or emotional experience (e.g. pain) as a result of her awareness of the other's experience» (Jacob 2011, 520). But does empathy-*Nachfühlen* really concern the *sharing* of an affective experience, given that, from what has been argued so far, one could in theory respond to an agony expression with indifference, or most likely with a different affect? According to Jacob, it actually does.

The scholar means to pinpoint a 5-condition based account of empathy, in order – he writes – to distinguish it from affective contagion, sympathy, and mindreading (Jacob 2011, 523). Such requirements are: a) the affectivity condition, which restricts empathy to affective states, and claims that both the empathizer and the target must experience one; b) the interpersonal similarity condition, which implies that both subjects must experience a similar feeling (like some kind of pain

or fear); c) the causal path condition, which is linked to the second one and claims that the empathizer is in that specific affective state because of the target's one; d) the ascription condition, that concerns the appropriate attribution of a feeling to the target; and last, e) the caring condition, which supports that the empathizer must be interested in the other's feelings. Claim e) has already been dismissed by the analysis of Scheler's theory: it is possible to grasp the other's affective state but respond with indifference. Moreover, the arguments carried on in the first two chapters should make it clear that the concept of "care" is too cognitively demanding to correspond to the salience of things that catch our attention according to our value system. For instance, we may not "care" specifically for a person who is drowning, but at the same time not be able to avoid the immediate, invasive "call" of her frantic movements, facial expression of agony, and the general contest of danger.

However, the major problem concerns the claim of a similar affective state (b) that originates in the empathizer from her contact with the affective state of the target (c). Despite Jacob presupposing a self-other differentiation in point d), how would empathy differ from emotional contagion, if a feeling passes from one individual to the other, and this is the only way to know what the target is experiencing? If we admit a reproduction in ourselves of the other's feeling, then it would require the occurrence of a *real*, similar feeling in us – even if it lasted just for some moments (GW VII, 22). This would mean that we could understand a person's anguish while she's drowning only if we experienced it ourselves, or that, while reading a crime novel, we empathized with the murderer's sense of guilt and worry about being caught only if we assumed them in ourselves or we had committed a murder and recalled those same feelings.

To explain Jacob's proposal, we should appeal either to an affective stream that flows from one subject to the other and makes them acquire the same affective state, *non-intentionally*, or to a more complex process than empathy involved by the similarity condition. This would presuppose an identification with the other's feeling, that is, a direct expressivity-grasping of what the other is experiencing. Such identification is however inserted *after* Jacob's imitated affective state, and after an adequate response, which according to him corresponds to the acquisition

of the same feeling. However, if we take the example of grief, an expression of great sadness is actually more an implicit call for help than an attempt to make the empathizer sad in her turn. So, Jacob's account is not only phenomenologically incorrect, but also a hybrid concept that resembles either emotional contagion or what Scheler calls co-feeling, that presupposes *Nachfühlen* but adds a response of affective participation in the other's condition, such as co-suffering, co-rejoicing, and so on.⁷⁸

3.1.5 *Mitgefühl* or *mitfühlen*

In Scheler's 'order of foundation' of the sympathetic phenomena, *Nachfühlen* obviously grounds the sharing of feelings in the forms of "immediate co-feeling" (*Mit-einanderfühlen*), which concerns already the emergence of a we-intentionality – for this reason I will investigate it in the last chapter –, and the intentional co-feeling (*Mitgefühl an etwas*), like the co-rejoicing "in" another's joy, or the co-suffering "with" her sorrow. Moreover, unlike the previous sympathetic forms, co-feeling entails the *intention* to feel the affective condition of others (GW VII, 24). Two distinctive acts – such as my co-suffering and another's suffering – are here at stake, differently from any sense of 'we', as co-feeling and its presupposed distance between subjects are the origin of the phenomenon that we are taking into account. One can co-feel another's joy for she intends it as an affective function in itself, distinct from her agency, and to which she can respond with an affective participation. Feeling as a function, distinctly from the non-intentional moods transmitted by contagion, is in fact intentional (GW II, 261): no matter how directly it can grasp values and expressivity, it still refers to an *object* with which we do not "merge" or confuse.

Here the possibility to grasp expressivity without a clear sense of agency (unipathy, contagion) and the hypothetic indifference of the mere empathetic perception (*Nachfühlen*) are to be excluded, although they are both conditions for the emergence of *Mitgefühl*. Co-feeling is in fact a *reaction* to another's feeling and to the corresponding value-attitude, which are given in the *Nachfühlen*. It is

⁷⁸ For a thorough critique of Jacob's article, cf. also Zahavi (2011).

however different from it, as the *Nachfühlen* may even be in contrast with the co-feeling of the same affective state of the other, or in simpler words, it is possible for a sadist to respond with pleasure or even joy to a victim's suffering (GW VII, 25). Co-feeling is also different from the empathetic phenomenon described by Jacob, as in no case it presupposes that the two subjects experience the same affective state. It is a *function*, which means that the feelings of the two or more people remain separated. A function leads to the *other's* state, it does not involve an intention towards one's own affective state. The other's feeling is not transferred, and an identical one is not produced in the subject who co-feels. The other remains "other". Although the *theoretical* solipsism is already contrasted efficaciously by the possibility of direct perception in expressivity, since subjects are not confined within a "mental", "inner" world that has no windows, according to Scheler it is only in co-feeling that the *real* solipsism (*Realsolipsismus*) is overcome ethically, i.e. in its meaning of egocentricity (GW VII, 107).⁷⁹

3.1.6 *Einfühlung*, as a projective kind of empathy

It might be bewildering that the term "empathy" has been used so far to translate *Nachfühlen*, despite Scheler's insertion of *Einfühlung* – the German word for empathy – in his analysis of the forms of sympathy. However, I remark once more that the two kinds of empathy are to be kept very well distinct: *Nachfühlen* is what I mean for a phenomenological empathic process, grounded on the lived body and on the perception of expressivity in it, yet keeping the agencies of the subjects well distinct. Conversely, by *Einfühlung* Scheler refers only to a projective kind of empathy which was proposed by Lipps as an embodied impulse of imitation. Some hints of the criticism to Lipps' theory and the example of the acrobat have been exposed in the last paragraphs, as Scheler believes that a projective account leads

⁷⁹ By egocentricity, Scheler means «the illusion of mistaking one's environment [*Umwelt*] for the world [*Welt*] itself, i.e. the deceptive givenness of one's own environment as "the" world (...) i.e. the inclination to the identification of one's own values with the *Umwelt*-values, and of one's own *Umwelt*-values with the world of values» (GW VII, 69). Such egocentricity is declined into the three forms of solipsism, egoism, and autoeroticism, referring respectively to the grasp of the reality of objects, to the will and the practical attitude, and to the attitude that one keeps in love.

to an evident impasse which contrasts with the primacy of perception in the encounter of others (GW VII, 21). Only for sensorial feelings (*sinnliche Gefühle*), i.e. affective sensations (*Gefühlsempfindungen*), a reproduction is needed in order to understand and co-feel them (GW VII, 59; GW II, 408). I can, for instance, neither understand the pleasure of a sweet litchi fruit before I taste it, nor the sensorial enjoyment of a sadist who sees her victim's suffering, or even the sensorial feelings of a bat hunting mosquitos. However, once this category of values has been excluded, it would be contradictory to apply the necessity of a simulation to the entire empathic domain. As it has been shown regarding unipathy, Lipps' theory is not incorrect in itself, but it is misleading because it expects to explain what Scheler calls *Nachfühlen* – which presupposes a distance between the subjects, and not identification, as in *Einsföhlung*. In other words, the observer, from a Lippsian perspective, “feels as one” with the acrobat.

It should also be remarked that Lipps was happening at the beginning of the century. He founded in fact the *Akademischer Verein für Psychologie* in Munich, a society that later hosted debates among early phenomenologists, including Scheler himself, who attended its meetings from 1907 on (cf. Salice 2015). A short clarification is necessary here to explain Lipps' novelty, compared to the previous theories of empathy. By assuming a bodily resonance, Lipps meant to contrast a too abstract argument from analogy in social cognition. This argument claims in fact that we can be acquainted with the “other minds” only by the explicit, inferential recognition of a similarity between me (the first system) and the other's behavior or physical appearance (the second system). In other words, if the other looks and behaves like me, then she should also be given consciousness; besides, the other's affective states or intentions are explained by appealing to what I experience when I perform a certain behavior, like laughing when I am amused. As Scheler remarks (GW VII, 234), such an analogical reasoning leads to a four-layered impasse. It presupposes, in fact, that we have already perceived the other as a living, animated being, and we have knowledge of that for its expressive movements. It does not allow to infer the *existence* of another animated being, but only if something *similar* to mine is experienced, and which quality of experience is then taking place, pleasure, attention, a memory, etc. It is not clear how such argument would justify

our being able to understand the expressive movements of beings, like animals very different from us, such as the fear in a fish that we have already caught. Finally, it would lead to the logical mistake of the *quaternio terminorum*, to a fallacious syllogism in which the two “I”s are intended in two different ways – my ego and the other’s ego – so that, if the reasoning was correct, it would only explain the existence of *my* self or of an identical one.

Lipps was well aware that the argument from analogy contained fallacious assumptions, and assessed it critically, since its Cartesian roots lead to the impossibility to explain the other’s unity of consciousness and her similarity to my consciousness: it presupposes at the same time the statement of another’s emotion from my experience, but an absolute difference between the two (Lipps 1907). My anger, for instance, would have nothing to do with yours, especially if the situations of occurrence were different. Although he does not use the concept of a pre-reflective *Leibschema*, Lipps correctly points out that the argument from analogy is too cognitively demanding: if I perceive expressive movements (*Ausdrucksbewegungen*) and gestures, how can I be sure, and straight away too, that someone else’s expression corresponds to mine? On the contrary, I know the way my feeling of anger is displayed in my face because I am already acquainted with how it appears in other people (Lipps 1907, 699). So far, the influences on the Schelerian theory are quite evident in the rigorous criticism to the argument from analogy, in the need for finding a more direct and embodied clarification of the empathic encounter, and even in the claimed primacy of our encounter with others’ expressivity, since living beings are unities of consciousness. However, Lipps’ account is problematic in its appeal to an embodied tendency of simulation to interpret such direct understanding of other’s affective states or intentions:

There is something like an impulse of imitation (*Trieb der Nachahmung*). (...) Let us take a trivial and perhaps not too personal example. I see someone yawning, i.e. I see occurring in his body a certain process which cannot be described in detail here. And now in myself arises inexplicably a tendency to “yawn”, i.e. to produce the corresponding muscular innervations, briefly, to practice the internal activity from which the same change develops in my body (*Körper*). Perhaps this tendency is not actualised in me; so I do not really yawn, either because decency forbids me to yawn or because I am sufficiently

in control of myself. Perhaps also the tendency in question is abolished by opposite tendencies of physical activity (*körperlicher Betätigung*), or it is done by counterbalancing, so that it cannot be felt at all (*gar nicht fühlbar wird*). However, apart from such counter-tendencies, the tendency still exists. It would otherwise be incomprehensible why others are brought by the perception of the yawning to the actual co-yawning. (Lipps 1907, 716, my translation)

Yawning is certainly a good example of a tendency of imitation: when we see someone yawning, it is hard not to do the same, and this is in fact “instinctive” in the sense that it arises spontaneously, without any explicit, cognitive control. Other examples of a tendency to mimicry can be quoted, like the unreflective smiling back when a baby smiles at us, or the involuntary going the same way as a stranger in the street in front of us, with the risk of bumping into each other. Yet, rather than an example of empathy, the case described by Lipps appears as contagion: it involves expressivity-grasping – the yawn is not a simple *körperlich* movement without a meaning, being perceived as a sign of sleepiness, drowsiness, and so on. The person who is “infected” may just have seen someone yawning, and have performed the same action without realizing that she was actually not sleepy before. In other words, as in emotional contagion, the borders of the sense of agency are blurred, which is what differentiates it from empathy.⁸⁰ To the imitation-tendency, Lipps adds a tendency to display emotions through gestures, and one to co-experience (*Mit-erleben*) another’s feeling. He does not deny the importance of expressivity for empathy since, like Scheler, he believes that the affect is directly present in the gesture, but wavers between a direct grasp of it and the need to take the same affective state (imitation, co-feeling) in order to experience its meaning.

⁸⁰ This may be controversial: Norscia&Palagi argue that yawn contagion and «[t]he ability to share others’ emotions, or empathy» (2011, 1) are connected. Just as there are empathy- and emotional regulation-related biases due to group membership (cf. e.g. Szanto 2017), Norscia&Palagi have found evidence of an increased tendency to experience yawn contagion when it originates from people one has a strong social bond with, both in terms of the occurrence and of the frequency of the action. However, their ultimate claim is that empathy may be rooted in the emotional contagion that we experience in infancy with our closest people like caregivers (Norscia&Palagi 2011, 1), and not that yawning can be labelled under the concept of empathy.

In fact, he claims that direct perception occurs only if one has already experienced that particular feeling before – giving rise to a problematic conflict with the abovementioned evidence in infant research. With such a premise, according to Lipps the grasped affective state resonates with our previous experience of it and is automatically reproduced in us, so that we can understand what the other is going through. He states:

[o]n the one hand, the affect is understood (*hineingedacht*) in the gesture, or conceived as being present in it, and on the other hand the affect is experienced in the gesture. (...) When I see the gesture, I feel the tendency, by virtue of the instinct of imitation, to call it into existence. And this is the affection which I naturally bind to this gesture. But this bond only exists after I have first experienced and expressed (*geäußert*) the affect. (...) A reproduced feeling of anger is then co-given to me by the gesture of anger, immediately when I see it. For me, such a reproduced affect lies, or is present immediately inside it. And I can also express it in this way: for me, the feeling is envisaged or understood in it (*hinein vorgestellt oder hineingedacht*). (Lipps 1907, 719, my translation)

In short, according to this view empathy would require a) a previous experience of the feeling, b) a bond between expressivity and the relative feeling, but c) the presence of the empathized affect only when it is co-experienced in myself, therefore when I fall prey to affective contagion. It may be true that we hold a degree of contagion, together with empathy, which is why we tend to avoid collective sad situations like funerals, for we would both perceive the emotion (empathy) and be affected by the mood without the possibility to control it completely (contagion). Yet, we not always feel a tendency to imitate the movements bodily or to take on the feeling that we are perceiving. Let's think of our prompt lifting a baby who is about to fall – which is a reaction, and surely not an imitation of her action – or of our freezing at or escaping from somebody's sudden attack. Let's also imagine to watch the sadist mentioned above and to experience a strong sense of disgust at his satisfaction while torturing the victim. And in fact, if we had knowledge of the other's feelings and intentions only through imitation/simulation, the options would be: a) we grasp the other as a *Körper*, and then try to imitate it in ourselves, by attempting to observe what happens in us when

we perform an expression. Yet we have seen that animation, intentions and feelings are primary when we deal with another living being, and Lipps himself refuses an explicit process. b) We try to remember what feelings we were experiencing in a similar situation, but then a new or completely extraneous condition would make it impossible to empathize with them (e.g. how a paralysed person experiences the world for a non-paralyzed one). c) We *guess* what the other one is experiencing by trying to imagine, more or less explicitly, how she might emotionally react, therefore we have no certainty to be right. The meaning of an expression comes only afterwards, and is not directly significant: the “expressive unity” is split into external and internal dimensions, falling again prey to a Cartesian error.

If conceived as a projective kind of empathy, this concept would meet contradictions that do not allow to “reach” the other person properly: we would metaphorically run in circle trying to grasp the other’s affective state, and end up discovering that what we believed to be another’s feelings were nothing more than mine. And such a solipsistic impasse makes Lipps’ theory keep a degree of kinship with the argument from analogy that he intended to contrast, for although the role of the bodily and affective encounter is recognized as previous to any abstract reasoning, it still retains the problematic circularity according to which we could be only mediately in contact with another’s affective world. That would ultimately make expressivity unreliable. In the contemporary debate, such an account would be called *simulation theory*, while the cognitive version of the reasoning from analogy would go under the label of *theory theory*. Even if much has been said in contemporary phenomenology to contrast those two main tendencies in social cognition, Scheler’s account is rarely taken into consideration as a third alternative to contrast them, and when it is, the debates often display only a partial knowledge of his complete theory of empathy. To show the solipsistic biases that simulationist and theory-theory accounts originate, in contrast with the Schelerian view of empathy that has been argued, I will first present the origins of the notion of empathy and then assess the contemporary debate critically.

3.2 Alternative theories of empathy

3.2.1 Etymological roots and origins of the concept

Where does the conception of “reading into other minds” arise from? Even prior to the explicit formulation of the argument from analogy, and before the Cartesian split between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, the reasons why empathy is so often conceived in terms of *mind*-reading might lie in the etymological roots of empathy, originally in the Greek language (*empathia*) and then in German (*Einfühlung*). As a matter of fact, the two concepts involve a partial tacit dualism. With regard to “em-patheia”, the possibility to experience another’s emotions or intentions has to go through a spatial directionality of “feeling in” someone, as if we could transport ourselves literally “inside” her, adopt her perspective and feel what she feels. Inside the Ancient Greek philosophical tradition, Plato’s *Ion* reveals that a certain concept of empathy was used to define the identification of the audience with the rhapsode, a feeling that the rhapsode himself was able to recognize in them by watching their emotional reactions. If they reacted by crying, being appalled and astonished, it meant that he was well guiding them into the world of the declaimed epic poem, in which he himself had to feel part, with the appropriate emotional response. Aristotle’s *Poetic* suggested the “suffering with” a tragic hero by the public as it takes place in a theatrical piece; the drama leads the audience to a detachment from passions through a process of *katharsis*. Therefore, empathy in the ancient Greek tradition relied both on the direct perception of expressivity and on an implicit, affective identification that partially recalls what has been said about unipathy so far.

Similarly to the Greek term, the German word contains the concept of “feeling in”, but it derives from the Romantic notion of universal attunement with nature and mankind – what Scheler would insert in the “unipathy” field. It made its first appearance in one of Johann Gottfried Herder’s works as *hinein fühlen*, to express that we can feel ourselves only *in* the others (Herder [1778] 1892, 188). *Einfühlung* was then the term coined by the philosopher of aesthetics Robert Vischer, who claimed that we can feel a universal sympathy for mankind through empathy with another human being (Vischer [1872] 1927). Here as well the notion of empathy has a nuance of Schelerian unipathy – for Herder conceives it as a feeling of

participation in the commonality of nature. Vischer's notion has also some similarities with the Schelerian foundational laws of sympathy: as for Vischer empathy with a single human being can lead to sympathy for entire mankind, so can co-feeling (*Mitgefühl*), ground the universal love for mankind (*Menschliebe*, *Humanitas*) according to Scheler (*Menschliebe*, *Humanitas*) (GW VII).

After this short analysis of the origins of the concept, it is no surprise that "empathy" is still a debated term, with numerous attempts to substitute it – with intersubjectivity, perspective-taking, and so on – and with various ambiguities that make it trespass onto other 'reactive' attitudes. The origins of the concept of empathy show therefore a certain connection with expressivity, though they also include related phenomena which have been proven not to correspond to a notion that sees embodied affective perception as primary, together with a preserved distance between subjects and with moral neutrality. Furthermore, the etymological roots seem to suggest an implicit spatial distinction between an inner and an outer dimension. This interpretation of empathy presupposes a "movement", if it can be defined so, *inside* a person and therefore, by locating emotions, thoughts and intentions in the inner sphere, it sets a basic incommunicability between the mind and what is considered as a mere physical body.⁸¹ The embodied level is either overlooked or considered as a source of the process of simulation, through which the other's experience is supposed to be understood. This dualism reaches its most famous peak in Descartes' *Second Meditation on First Philosophy*. What would happen if we could reach the other only through a judgment, if even the perceived animation of living beings was only an illusion, and we could not trust our senses? The Cartesian metaphysical research leads him to reject any of those certainties: «[i]f I look out the window and see men crossing the square, as I just happen to have done, I normally say that I see the men themselves (...). Yet, do I see more than hats and coats which would conceal automatons? I *judge* that they are men» (Descartes [1641] 1984, 21). And, as seen in the previous chapter, if our normal perception worked in this way, with the need of a reflective inference whenever we

⁸¹ This results today in the so-called "invisibility thesis" (Zahavi 2014), which overlooks the primacy of a direct empathic encounter, as if we could grasp others' affective states and intentions only through a simulation in ourselves or an explicit reasoning.

are in the presence of another living being, and given the related unpredictability of expressivity and social interactions, we would fall prey to a state of anxiety similar to the one described in some cases of schizophrenia.

After Lipps – whose work has been analyzed in 3.1.3 and 3.1.6 – the role of embodiment starts to be taken into growing consideration and is further elaborated in the phenomenological movement, especially but not exclusively by Husserl, Stein, of course Scheler, and Merleau-Ponty. I do not intend to focus here on the declinations of empathy in the early phenomenology,⁸² as it would require a much broader space and would lead the reader astray from the main argument, that is a critical discussion with contemporary accounts of empathy. For this reason, I am going to skip to the *theory theory* and *simulation theory* directly, to prove their relation to the “indirect” ways to interpret empathy, present in the origins of the concept and in the reasoning from analogy.

3.2.2 The theory theory

One of the two prevailing accounts to explain empathy is the so-called theory theory which, as the name indicates, interprets the process in question as a cognitive prediction in terms of inferences. Not so far from the argument from analogy expounded above and partially recalling the Cartesian importance of a rational judgment, the theory theory explains empathy as a more or less explicit reasoning *through* which we can reach the other’s intentions and emotions. Although there are many different accounts under this label, we could say that the general claim is that the other’s mental states are only indirectly knowable through a prediction-system that is modelled on a logical or scientific deduction from a set of contextual elements, previous experiences, behavior, and so on. One of the first formulations, in terms of a “theory of mind” (Premack&Woodruff 1978), has been exemplified by the well-known Maxi Test, created by Wimmer and Perner, in which children are asked to make a correct inference on a puppet’s thoughts in a concrete daily situation, by putting themselves “in its shoes”. In other words, pretending that Maxi (the puppet) is an animated and conscious being, children have to guess where Maxi

⁸² Two extensive analyses of this topic are by Zahavi (2011) and Jardine&Szanto (2017).

will look for an object that has been hidden in a certain place while it was away, a place that was different from the one it had seen before. According to the children, will Maxi look for the object in the first or the second hiding place? This test aims at measuring the ability to detect a false belief, using a «representation as a frame of reference for interpreting or anticipating the other person's actions» (Wimmer&Perner 1983, 106).

Thus, there is a 'non-a' situation (i.e. the object is not in the place Maxi saw before), but the puppet does not see that 'non-a', therefore it has also no reason to believe that 'non-a'. Empathy would work just like a syllogism, even though it is hard to see this cognitive-demanding example as the basic situation that occurs in everyday interactions – there are much simpler cases in which there is only embodied interaction without so complex a narrative. It is worth remarking that this kind of ability does not emerge prior to 4-6 years of age: the theory theory focuses on *mind-reading* skills, and not on embodied interaction and the immediate attribution of meaningfulness to actions.⁸³ In fact, it is connected to the capacity to formulate correct inferences on a narrative, but certainly not to affective perception. As Baron-Cohen, Leslie and Frith (1985, 38) put it, «a theory of mind is impossible without the capacity to form 'second-order representations'».

A more recent version of TT is the one provided by Nichols&Stich (2003), who from the start explicitly adopt the term “mindreading” as they believe the empathic capacity should be regarded with awe – an aura of mysticism opposite to claiming the immediate grasp of some emotions in expressions. Their thesis is certainly less cognitively-demanding, as they support a representational account of cognition which does not exclude that propositional attitudes might underlie structures not necessarily quasi-linguistic. However, their account still relies on a cognitive theory of pretense as an essential capacity for empathy, clearly connected to the theory of mind examined above. They even envisage a split between the capacity to anticipate behavioral patterns and the one to detect goals. Without the *notion* of goal, a prey that sees a wild beast on the verge of attacking it would only react on a behavioral basis, but could not detect the intention hidden in the beast's expressivity. And, beyond considering such expressivity only as a form of behaviorism, since

⁸³ See also Baron-Cohen (1995) and Leslie (1991).

expressions would be only *cues* (Nichols&Stich 2003, 79), they also differentiate such basic, implicit predictions from mindreading, and understanding a desire from understanding a belief, which would emerge only after the age of three.

Does an infant have no empathic capacity before that age then, and why should empathy be a cognitive skill rather than an affective-based perception? Instead of grasping a meaning in expressions from the very beginning of her life, why would an infant have an experience of others similar to the affectively detached one described in some cases of schizophrenia, or of patients suffering from the Möbius syndrome?⁸⁴ The traditional differentiation between cognitive empathy and affective empathy tends to equate the former with affective contagion or even identification – i.e., with the transmission of the same feeling from the target to the empathizer. It is as if, in order to experience that one is grief-stricken, we would have to grieve ourselves. Decety and Cowell, for instance, define it so: «[t]he emotional component of empathy involves the capacity to share or become affectively aroused by others' emotions (at least in valence, tone, and relative intensity). It is commonly referred to as emotion contagion, or affective resonance, and is independent of mindreading and perspective-taking capacities» (Decety&Cowell 2014, 337). Therefore, according to this view, individual differences would be preserved only in cognitive empathy, which can be a “rational choice”, an effort of imagination, a mere perspective-taking as in the Maxi test, or even a detached form of utilitarianism that criticizes affective empathy for being morally biased (Bloom 2016). I will not discuss morality here, as it has been shown that empathy-*Nachfühlen* can be successfully performed by a sadist or by a person affected by anti-social behaviour.

As far as the doubts about “emotional” empathy are concerned, it has been argued that its differentiation from affective contagion lies in the fact that, since it

⁸⁴ The Möbius syndrome is a rare congenital neurological disorder that, among other symptoms, causes facial paralysis and the impossibility to perform facial expressions. Cole (2001), who has analyzed patients with such a disease, shows in this sense the relation between the possibility of bodily expressing emotions and empathy. Not only in fact they struggle to recognize feelings in others, but they also report to have a less intense affective response, up to the point that they rationalize (“think” of) affective states rather than feel them. Cf. also Krueger (2009).

consists in an intentional kind of feeling-function, it can be directed towards the other or to a feeling as pertaining to the other: no matching of an affective state is required. Of course, the whole range of empathic relations is not explainable through embodied encounters. The importance of a reflective kind of empathy – which can be present in linguistic interactions, in the act of reading fiction, and so on – is certainly not to be dismissed, but it cannot be applied to all cases of everyday empathic encounters. Then, if empathy has been claimed to be first of all a feeling-function, affective states (intentions included) do not need any reasoning to be grasped while, at the same time, the individuals keep a distinct identity or a distinct emotion. In order to anticipate “behavioural patterns”, as Nichols&Stich (2003) call them, an embodied affective grasping is sufficient without any pretense or a theory of mind; nor can empathy be reduced to the detection of false belief. For instance, a child could easily detect that Maxi is not looking for the chocolate in the right place by observing his repeated unsuccessful attempts to find it. The theory theory overlooks the role of direct perception, and sees emotions and intentions as invisible states hidden in a Cartesian-like mind.

Ultimately, an exclusive inferential-like theory to interpret the empathic encounter with others leads to a solipsistic confinement that resembles the one described by Lisa Guenther of people in some extreme prison conditions (cf. chapter 1). There, one could not properly encounter lived bodies, but only *Körper* in the same manner as inanimate objects, to which a consciousness that has no possibility of interpersonal corroboration attributes meaning. A logical deduction, as in the detection of a false belief, should be grounded on the repetition of elements already found in previous experiences, whose meaning must be rooted in a value-ception, unless we intend to end up in a *regressus ad infinitum* where I can only be acquainted with myself and the others become either a complete mystery or the shadow of my ego. On the contrary, solipsism and egocentrism can be overcome through a theory of empathy based on expressivity; as Scheler states,

Therefore understanding (*Verstehen*), empathy (*Nachfühlen*), and co-feeling (*Mitfühlen*), both as others’ states and of others’ felt values and value-attitudes (*Wertverhalte*) (a complex of pure co-feeling and of value-feeling), can *expand* our life and lead us *out* of the constrictions of our real experiencing, and can also bring about this and another real

experience, under the determining condition of bringing life to its fullness, that is given to the open heart through understanding and co-feeling with states or values of the environment or of history. (GW VII, 60)

On the contrary, a theory that does not presuppose an originary openness towards expressivity leads to a solipsistic jail:

According to the other theory here rejected, we would first be necessarily locked in the prison of our particular experiences, that are so different on the levels of individual, nation, and history, and all that we could understand and co-feel would be only a *selection* of this life actually experienced by *us*. (GW VII, 60)

Once it has been demonstrated that the theory theory retains the same biases as the reasoning from analogy, a less explicit form of analogy has to be taken into account: the simulation theory.

3.2.3 The simulation theory

3.2.3.1 Problems in the explicit version of ST: incommunicability and egocentricity

Since Lipps argued in favor of an instinctive identification with the other as the process that arouses empathy, the so-called simulation theory has gained increasing consent, nowadays especially in the cognitive sciences and in neuroscience. Overall, the simulation theory claims that we are able to understand another's intentions or affective states through a simulation of some sort – either explicit or implicit – that allows us to resonate with, imitate, or neurally simulate with others, or even “putting ourselves into their shoes” (perspective-taking). In other words, the simulation theory does not necessarily coincide with the argument from analogy – as in many versions it is not based on an inferential structure – but it does keep a solipsistic drawback, due to its claim that I need to refer to *my own* feelings in order to understand the other.

Like the theory theory, the simulation theory involves several different nuances present in various authors, among whom one of the best-known is Alvin Goldman. He grounds the empathic experience both on a theoretical stance and on a simulative one. In fact, according to him empathy is based on a three-phase

process, which involves pretended states, imagination and finally the attribution of them to the other person. He writes:

First, the attributor creates in herself pretend states intended to match those of the target. In other words, the attributor attempts to put herself in the target's "mental shoes". The kinds of mental states that can be pretended range across the mental spectrum and include perceptions, desires, beliefs, hopes, plans, sensations, and emotions. The second step is to feed these initial pretend states into some mechanism of the attributor's own psychology, e.g., a decision-making or emotion-generating mechanism, and allow that mechanism to operate on the pretend states so as to generate one or more new states. (...) Third, the attributor assigns the output state to the target as a state the target will undergo (or has already undergone). (Goldman 2005, 80-81)

As in the TT version by Nichols and Stich (2003), the understanding of affective states is based on a cognitively-demanding pretense. After this first step, one performs a perspective-taking, based on what could be the specific emotional or rational process for that specific other individual, in order to balance what the empathizer has generated in herself trying to match the target's experience. Then, and last, one should project the resulting "mental state" onto the other, and find out what the target is actually experiencing. Here, no affective identification is at stake, i.e. the sense of agency is not blurred, as it happens in affective contagion instead. Although this requirement for empathy is respected, it is hard to see why the target's affective state should not be simply *guessed*: how can one be sure that the simulated emotions correspond to the ones experienced by the other subject, if one can only "imagine" them? And why would one attempt to get into the other's same affective state – even supposing such an explicit process to be possible – when perception is enough to achieve empathy?

Yet, here we do not face only a problem of incommunicability that concerns the most basic grounds of empathy. It may happen, in fact, that when the direct perception of expressivity is not enough in a context – e.g. for a lack of narrative information – or when the interaction involves more complex levels of communication, one is compelled to stop and use a cognitive effort in order to understand the other, or a simulation to imagine what the other might be

feeling. A simple example can help. I meet an old friend for dinner, and all of a sudden, she smiles embarrassed, she does not look at ease, and goes away with an implausible excuse. I start to examine my behavior, to analyze if anything in it could have bothered her. I know, for instance that she becomes prickly when someone praises World War II partisans for her grandparents got killed in the “foibe” massacres in Istria. If I have not had the same experience in my family, I may have expressed my overall good opinion of the partisan movement. I try to understand how she may have felt when I said all that, according not only to the expressivity that she displayed at the moment, but also to her personal history, being well acquainted with her usual reactions.

According to an explicit version of the simulation theory like Goldman’s, then, it would be possible to empathize in cases like the one just described, but provided you experience the same feelings in an affective sharing. It has been proved that this process does not individuate the roots of empathy. Is it really possible then to assume the other’s perspective in simulation, or is the expectation to take in someone else’s viewpoint rather an act of theoretical arrogance – an “usurpation of agency”, as Slaby calls it, and an act of egocentrism in Schelerian words? Goldie (2011) criticizes any “empathetic perspective shifting”, that defines a cognitive dimension for empathy in its explicit intention to reach the other’s experience. Such a process, he notices, would occur *by assuming the other’s perspective*, through an act of imagination that would lead us to share in ourselves the same affective state, but still keeping the subjects distinct, just as we read in Goldman’s theory. The risk is not only to face an imaginary mind created by ourselves, but to replace the other’s agency with ours inside the empathic relation.

When we are in a high-level empathic relation, guessing “how it might feel” for another and claiming that we are adopting *her* perspective are two very different statements, not only in a terminological way. Actually, the second statement entails the a priori assumption of the other person’s transparency – which is far more radical than claiming the presence of emotions in the lived body. The complete background of another’s feeling cannot be entirely known, or the second-person perspective would become a first-personal one, with the

violation of the self-other differentiation requirement for empathy. While this happens in emotional contagion/unipathy, it is unlikely to occur in higher-order empathy: for Goldie (2011) that would require to overstep four conditions, which I sum up below:

- a) the target most likely has different intellectual abilities and emotional dispositions that pertain only to that specific person (*differences in psychological dispositions*);
- b) the subject might be in a certain mood or emotional state that intensifies what we have called the perception of certain values rather than others. In other words, in the example of the prickly friend, her negative reaction might have been intensified by her bad mood during that day (*non-rational influences on thinking*);
- c) a certain affective state could not be clear even to ourselves, as it happens for moods whose origin is detected only a posteriori, or for more complex feelings that need some time to be metabolized into the personal sphere (*confusion*);⁸⁵
- d) when a person is taking a decision, usually it is because there are alternatives that she has to take into account, affectively and most times also cognitively. Her agency is complex and intertwined with so many variables, that it is hard for the empathizer to have knowledge of all of them and to predict with certainty which ones will prevail (*conflict*).

To recap, would be an act of arrogance, and not of empathy, to reason in terms of “I know exactly how you feel”. Even when we perform an other-oriented act of imagination, we can know only the other’s emotions and intentions visible in expressivity – which allow the elimination of the problem of other minds, but still do not make the whole personal sphere perceivable. There is a “blind spot” in such a mistaken conception of empathy, a shortcoming that is not only theoretical but also leads to a “usurpation of agency” (Slaby 2014) in which we objectify the unobjectifiable – others’ affective states – and

⁸⁵‘Metabolization’ of feelings is a concept used by Cusinato (2017b) to indicate the processing of chaotic affective states into more definite emotions that are meaningful in someone’s formation, and consequently modify her order of values.

impose our perspective, instead of performing the desired perspective-shifting. As Slaby puts it, «[a]s agents, we are in an important sense irreplaceable: fully-fledged agency is in each case essentially someone's, there is an ineliminable moment of authentic ownership» (Slaby 2014, 255), so it is possible to apply here the Schelerian claim that solipsism, in its ethical sense, is egocentricity (GW VII, 107). The criticized simulationist account not only leads to a monad without windows and to the impossibility to reach others – if we take it to be the very root of empathy –, but also to a perspectival egocentricity, a substitution of the person's unique agency with our own.

The simulation theory embraces several variations. For instance, differently from Goldman, Stueber's (2006) account is grounded on a quasi-perceptual basic empathy, but is ultimately a simulationist view as it is followed by what he calls re-enactive empathy. It is the use of our cognitive abilities to imitate the thought processes of the other in order to understand the reasons of that rational agent and her more complex social dimension. An inadequacy of the mere TT is a common trait of all simulationist theories, yet there is disagreement concerning the possible use of reasoning, the presence of introspective awareness, and the reducibility of simulation to processes of resonance or reenactment.⁸⁶

There is however a less cognitively-demanding version of ST, that is mainly based on the discovery of the mirroring neural circuit and on a supposed resemblance with the embodied claims of phenomenology. I will next address Gallese's simulationist account.

3.2.3.2 The subpersonal version of ST: a critique of Gallese's account

A brain-based version of the ST is supported by Italian neuroscientist Vittorio Gallese. His view is grounded on the so-called “mirror neurons”, a neuronal system that was observed for the first time by Rizzolatti's research team (Rizzolatti, Fadiga, Gallese, Fogassi 1996) – of which Gallese was also

⁸⁶ Cf. Spaulding (2016, 2017) for an extensive analysis of different kinds of simulationist accounts.

part – in the area F5 of the macaque premotor cortex. It is well known that the peculiarity of such neurons is that they fire both when we perform a meaningful action, and when we just observe it. Let us go back to Scheler's description of quasi-automatic movements. In order to leave a room, I step as far as the door, I press the handle and open the door (GW III, 258). Those are all meaningful movements, aimed at a purpose, which are performed in a quasi-automatic way through our body schema. In the same way, it should become clear at once when another is performing such movements in order to reach the door and leave, and Gallese would say, the mirror-neuron system would be activated in both cases, implying that we immediately recognize the meaning in the perceived action just as we are aware of the same meaning present in ours. So why should Gallese's theory pose any problems for a phenomenology of empathy, if it claims for an embodied other-understanding?

Because, according to him, such neural activity is not a sign of direct, embodied perception but rather shows that our motor system *simulates* the action implicitly when we observe it: in other words, it supports an *embodied simulation*. Simulation here is no more a matter of explicit pretense and perspective-taking, nor does it maintain any kinship with the theory of mind to explain the emergence of other-understanding. Gallese and Goldman (1998) combined the explicit theory of empathy by Goldman abovementioned with the interpretation of mirror neurons as a neural simulation. Their main assumptions, then, are: a) the firing of mirror neurons generated from outside stimuli is functional to the attribution of a mental state to somebody, as it follows the schema of simulation provided by Goldman; b) the activation of the cerebral area connected to the mirror-system is also pragmatically aimed at planning how to perform that specific action, even for a subject who just observes it. According to this view, then, "the subject of the MN activity knows (visually) that the observed target is concurrently performing this very action" and such knowledge – since it does not produce any actual motoric execution – is compatible with a neural simulation.

A few years later, Gallese theorizes what he calls the "shared manifold hypothesis". It involves the definition of "shared" since it is possible for the

simulation to occur thanks to the similarity of our body schemata, emotions, and somatic sensations (Gallese 2001, 44).⁸⁷ According to this hypothesis, it is possible to understand that the person in front of me aims at grasping a glass of wine, for instance, because agent and observer share the embodiment of the action goal, so that it is not a pure and detached observation that occurs. And such capacity, grounded on simulation, would be the explanation of infants' ability to imitate facial gestures from birth (Gallese 2001, 41). In a way, it presents similarities with Scheler's notion of a universal grammar of expressivity. Being based on embodiment, it presupposes – in different terms – a body schema which guides our quasi-automatic actions, and above all, as it happens for unipathy, arises from a shared ground as a metaphysical ground for empathy. However, according to this hypothesis expressivity, including meaningfulness in actions, would not be firstly perceived but understood through simulation, showing that Gallese adopts a neutral and *wertfrei* concept of perception. A *direct* perception based on values is to be excluded in his account, as it is rather mediated through an implicitly pretended emotion/intention in the self.

In fact, Gallese's simulationist argument for empathy is built on three levels: subpersonal, functional, and phenomenological. It relies on an "as if" system, which can be defined as subpersonal and relational, since it is based on the neural level and on its openness to others through an *embodied simulation* (Gallese 2007). He argues that «[a]lthough we do not overtly reproduce the observed action, nevertheless our motor system becomes active *as if* we were executing that very same action that we are observing. To spell it out in different words, action observation implies *action simulation*» (Gallese 2001, 36). In such a theoretical framework, the "as if" system constitutes the functional level, and it allows us to create *models* of others. The subpersonal level, as it is easy to guess, corresponds to the results of the claimed mirror-neuron matching, both in an expressive mode (it is me who performs the action/express an emotion)

⁸⁷ Yet it would be hard to have any philosophical certainty about the similarity of our somatic sensations, if it was not for the universality of some expressivity. Let's remember that, according to Scheler, it is not possible to empathize with the sensorial level of another.

and in the receptive mode (the other is the agent). Finally – although Gallese does not clearly connect it with the cerebral level – there is a phenomenological level, that is, we experience a sense of sharing of others’ emotions, actions and sensations that makes them become meaningful for us. We can so feel a sense of similarity with others and even a sense of being part of their same community. In this sense, Gallese claims to find theoretical grounds for his empirical evidence in phenomenology, especially in Husserl’s notions of *Paarung* from the Cartesian Meditations and Ideas II, since this concept would indicate the basis for an intersubjective transfer of meaning (Gallese 2003, 175). Hence, intercorporeity and interaction become a non-conscious neural mechanism of pretense.

Gallese’s simulation theory is certainly more cognitively parsimonious than the TT or even than Goldman’s explicit version of ST; despite his reconsideration of an embodied empathy, though, the following ambiguities emerge.

1) On the functional/neuronal levels: “mirror neurons” are still a controversial discovery in neurosciences. First of all, it is still a matter of debate whether there is a correspondence between the mirror system observed in the premotor cortex of macaques and humans: Lingnau, Gesierich, Caramazza (2009), for instance, dispute any evidence of mirror neurons in the human brain, while Rizzolatti’s group and Kilner et al. (2009) acknowledge it.

It has even been proposed to abandon the hypothesis of purpose-detection, as to understand a meaning in action-observation a more complex neuronal process would be required (Steinhorst&Funke 2014). Csibra argues that it is doubtful whether mirror neurons are involved in the meaning-detection of an action «because (a) MNs [mirror neurons]’ activation reflects not the commencement but the conclusion of action interpretation, and because (b) MNs do not ‘mirror’ observed actions with sufficient accuracy for effective simulation» (Csibra 2005, 1).

2) About the problem of a ST/TT interpretation of the mirror system: Spaulding (2012) even argues that mirror neurons are not an index of simulation, but on the contrary part of an information-rich mindreading process,

that is, they ultimately fit better in the theory theory framework. Though remaining in the neural and non-conscious dimension, she claims that «there is some evidence that mirror neuron activity is involved in “low-level” mindreading, i.e., mindreading that occurs automatically and subconsciously» (Spaulding 2012, 519). According to this theory, mirror neurons would play no simulationist role or, if they did, they would in any case be involved in a larger non-simulating process. On the experiential level, cognition – the context, the specific history of the person, the learnt meaning of gestures – would demonstrate that no simulation could be possible without TT. Spaulding’s account does not prove convincing, as it claims a priori that an information-rich account needs to be associated with the theory theory – while in the previous chapters perception has been demonstrated an information-rich process on the pre-reflective level. Yet, it is interesting to notice that mirror neurons do not necessarily set in motion a simulationist process; plus, they are part of a more complex neural process, so the neural correlates of empathy cannot be said to lay only in the mirror system.

3) On the phenomenological level: even if we accept that mirror neurons involve simulation – still a problematic assumption – it is not easy to justify how to get to a *sense* of motoric implicit simulation from the neural level. It would mean that in the Lippsian example of the acrobat we experience an embodied simulation ultimately caused by the activation of the same cerebral area as would fire also in case we were executing the action, and not merely observing it. Gallese tacitly raises the mirror system to the rank of consciousness, since the firing of some cortical areas is seen as a direct pre-reflective experience of simulation. Yet, there is a clear difference between “neural” (subpersonal) and “pre-reflective” (already phenomenological, experienced). Moreover, a weak point of his theory is the solipsistic side, since again we are dealing with a self-reference in order to understand the other. It would make the comprehension of other kinds of expressivity difficult, e.g. to detect threat in an animal different from us. This «suggests that reuse, supposedly the core of simulation, still involves resemblance» (De Bruin&Gallagher 2012, 99), which limits our empathic capacity quite a lot.

Furthermore, it would imply a conception of our body as a “model” for the other ones, bodies then deprived of their individuality, as neural simulation would just see the other’s action or expression as something that my bodily structure could perform as well, forgetting the dimension of the subject who is the agent in that specific situation.⁸⁸ It would also involve a poor concept of action/emotion-understanding, since in this way the context neither has a place in such hypothesis of empathy, nor value-ception any role for the empathizer.

One more shortcoming, pointed out by Zahavi (2012), is that, despite Gallese’s appeal to Husserl’s theory, he mostly limits his references to the Ideas II and Cartesian Meditations. Actually, Husserl exposed a more variegated account of empathy, with a number of differences during his life (see also Zahavi 2014). Without any doubt, there are some resemblances between Gallese’s view of a simulation based on a common embodiment and Husserl’s notions of *Paarung* and analogical transference. Husserl even criticized Scheler for taking empathy into account as a primitive fact that cannot be further analyzed (Hua 14/335, Zahavi 2012) – although he himself admits empathy to be an outer-perceptual act, in other words, an apperception. So, if he means to interpret mirror neurons as simulation based on resemblance, it seems appropriate for Gallese draw on a phenomenologist like Husserl rather than Scheler, since the latter grounds empathy as affective perception on a universal grammar of expressivity and not on the similarity between the lived bodies. Yet, Husserl also specifies that empathy does not imply seeing a mere analogue in the other or a mere sign of her; rather, the other becomes perceptually present as *the other* (Zahavi 2012, 229). It means that through empathy I do not get acquainted with a mere reproduction of myself – contrary to, as already stated, what appears as a problem of other-anonymity in Gallese’s embodied simulation. Gallese’s comparison with Husserl’s notion of pairing is then only partially correct, and would require a broader analysis in which, in any case, simulation as the basis of the other-understanding would not be admitted in a Husserlian account.

Finally, if Gallese’s reading of mirror neurons has to be compared with the Schelerian account, a contradiction on the problem of perception arises. In fact,

⁸⁸ I am thankful to Roberta Guccinelli for suggesting me this direction of criticism.

despite claiming that the mirror system implies a simulation, he also expresses his theory of empathy in terms of “perception”. For instance, in Gallese (2007b) he states that «(...) when we see the facial expression of someone else, and this perception leads us to experience a particular affective state, the other’s emotion is constituted, experienced and therefore directly understood by means of an embodied simulation producing a shared body state» (9). He even seems to interpret mirror neurons in perceptual terms: «[s]everal studies using different experimental methodologies and techniques have demonstrated also in the human brain the existence of a mirror neuron system matching action perception and execution» (6), speaking moreover of «social perception» (9) and of «a direct form of ‘experiential understanding’» (1).

Gallese argues the mirror system to be a significant part of empathy, and admits that «[e]mpathy, at difference with emotional contagion, entails the capacity to experience what others do experience, while being able to attribute these shared experiences to others and not to the self» (Gallese 2007b, 11). However, besides this direct-perception claim, he proposes examples of spontaneous mimicry (yawning, expressions of disgust), to reinforce the claim of embodied simulation – while it has been shown that such kinds of contagion do not correspond to the phenomenon of empathy, for they do not involve a feeling-function of another subject’s intention or affective state. So, does the primacy ultimately pertain to a simulation process, or to a perceptual one? If the mirror-neuron matching system «enables a direct grasping of the sense of the actions performed by others, and of the emotions and sensations they experience» (Gallese 2007b, 9), simulation should precede perception, according to Gallese. But how can we simulate something that we do not have initially perceived, and be sure that we are actually matching the correct affective state? For instance, even if we accepted the correlation between mirror neurons and experiential dimension, how would it be possible to implicitly simulate the act of grasping a glass to drink if we had not perceived it together with its meaning, first? Either simulation follows perception, so that the second process becomes redundant (Gallagher 2005, 222), or the encounter with another occurs already as first-

personal simulation, and then the other is never reached, thus falling back into the problem of solipsism.

Conclusion

In the first part of the chapter, I have tried to clarify the Schelerian lexicon of sympathy, in order to distinguish a number of phenomena that have been confused with empathy in the literature. Although Scheler uses the German term *Einfühlung* as a target of his criticism – since it was the notion implied by Lipps to intend a kind of embodied projection into the other that entailed an instinct of imitation – he refers to *Nachfühlen* as to what constitutes the concept of empathy outlined so far. Namely, it is a feeling-function that presupposes intentionality towards the affective state or intention of another, who is nonetheless kept distinct from the empathizer, since it is possible to perceive the emotion present in an expression directly, but never from a first-personal perspective.

This is what distinguishes it from affective contagion and unipathy, where, instead, the sense of agency is blurred up to the point of having an affective identification, and where non-intentional feeling-states are “infected” from one subject to others unwillingly. For such reasons, it has been claimed that empathy cannot originate from the instinct of imitation supported by Lipps, nor can it fulfill the isomorphism condition of Jacob’s theory, which makes empathy possible only if a similar affective state is experienced by the empathizer. Also, I have specified in what sense to intend the Schelerian foundational law that conceives unipathy as a metaphysical root for empathy. This, however, does not contradict the fact that they are two original phenomena: we do not need identification or contagion in order to understand the other’s expressivity.

I have then examined the contemporary debate, that, outside phenomenology, remains centred on the theory theory and the simulation theory. TT presents not only a Cartesian assumption that loses the affective character of the empathic act, but also a degree of kinship with the argument from analogy, that, according to a Schelerian perspective, locks the subject into a prison of *solipsism* and *egocentrism*. If empathy started with a logical

reasoning, we would simply infer what the other is experiencing, without any certainty that we are predicting her affective state in the right way. Only empathy and co-feeling lead us out of such confinement, through a direct encounter with another.

Problems of incommunicability and, above all, of egocentrism also affect the explicit version of the simulation theory, which keeps the explicit reasoning of the TT but asserts that one's own self is the model for predicting the other's affective state. Even if we admitted that this view can explain a higher-order empathy after we have posed the grounds on the embodied encounter, to imagine the other's experience in no way implies assuming her perspective. In fact, the latter claim would be an act of theoretical arrogance or "usurpation of agency" (Slaby 2014), for it presupposes either the transparency of the other person or the imposition of our perspective upon her.

Finally, I have considered Gallese's subpersonal version of ST, which is not in striking contrast with the phenomenological view, for it takes into account the fundamental role of the body in empathy. Gallese maintains it is compatible with Husserl's notion of pairing, but interprets the activation of the motor-related mirror neurons as neural simulation. Eventually, I have expounded some objections to his version, namely 1) the dubious interpretation of mirror neurons, 2) the applicability of them to the TT instead of the ST, and 3) the incongruences on the phenomenological level, that ultimately put into question the interpretation of the mirror neuron system, and lead back to the phenomenological primacy of the direct perception of expressivity.

In these last years, phenomenological and enactive theories have been increasingly building a well-structured alternative to TT and ST, as shown when examining the interaction theory in the previous chapter, and in the phenomenological proposal by Zahavi (2011). Yet, I believe that Scheler's viewpoint presents an aspect that distinguishes it from other accounts. It is the primacy of a dimension of *sharedness*, in the claim of a universal grammar of expressivity that grounds the possibility for empathy. It has been proven that such an undistinguished psychological dimension does not imply a fusion, since embodied individuation is present from birth. Yet, it appears problematic to

establish any precise borders between empathy and sharing, and between *sharing* and *we-intentionality*, as I will attempt to clarify further on.

There are questions to be answered, too. Can the notion of sharing encompass affective phenomena that do not involve intentionality, like contagion and unipathy? When does the sense of having an experience as a “we” emerge, instead? Is empathy the ground for we-intentionality or vice versa? And finally, what is the role played by the sharing of emotions in the Schelerian lexicon of sympathy? In the attempt to shed some light on the relation among empathy, sharing and we-intentionality, I am going to examine Scheler’s account in comparison with the latest debates in social ontology and epistemology.

4. Sharing, empathy and the “we”

We are immersed in expressivity. A simple landscape can trigger off a joyful mood, along with a deep sense of communion, of shared-ness we could say, with nature and all creatures.⁸⁹ In a different way, a newborn interacts almost immediately after birth, and, according to a Schelerian perspective, she is able to do that thanks to the common, implicit grammar that all living beings share: the one of expressivity. When affectively involved in a mass protest, we may even forget our own individuality, and therefore “feel as one”, *as* an entity that transcends the single bodies and has unified will, shares the same affective states, that are transmitted from one to the other and spread as fast and uncontrollable as an avalanche. Or we may take part in a particularly touching moment like a wedding, and be profoundly moved though we barely know the groom and bride. We feel somehow “infected” by their affection and joy, identify with the two people on their important day, yet share such affects in an immediate way, without any involvement of our will.⁹⁰ Such experiences can be inscribed into affective contagion and unipathy, the latter being for Scheler the metaphysical foundation for empathy, which presupposes the differentiation between the subjects. However, it has also been shown that a primary individuation comes from the mere fact of being a lived body, and so it allows interaction from birth.

Differently from the examples of contagion and unipathy, there is a further level that emerges from joint attention, common purposes accomplished through joint actions and shared emotions. A newborn from the ninth month on usually

⁸⁹ Paul Klee describes affective contagion and unipathy while contemplating nature: «In earlier days (even as a child), the beauty of landscapes was quite clear to me. A background for the soul’s moods. Now dangerous moments occur when Nature tries to devour me; at such times I am annihilated, but at peace» (Klee 1992, 122).

⁹⁰ In this chapter, I will mainly focus on the affective side of collective phenomena, such as affective sharing and contagion, extended emotions, and so on. I intend such an aspect to be a newly born line of research inside the debate on collective intentionality, and for this reason I will restrict my analysis to this recent topic instead of taking the whole literature into account. Cf. Schweikard&Schmid (2013) for a complete overview on collective intentionality. Furthermore, the affective aspect is crucial in Scheler’s account of ‘sharing’, as this chapter means to show.

displays the capacity of triadic joint attention, that is the ability to engage in an attentional triangle that involves an adult, an object and herself (cf. e.g. Tomasello 2000). It can be the baby's simple pointing a dog to her mother, after which they will be both focused on the third element, the dog in this case. On a more complex level, imagine that my friend and I are playing tennis against two other people, and that we share the knowledge of the game rules and the common purpose to win the match. We struggle to reach our goal through interaction, joint actions, and cooperation, and we are aware of having the same aim. As it concerns emotional sharing – narrower than affective sharing, which could also involve moods, as in contagion and unipathy – two people's feelings are directed towards the same situation/object and have the same emotional nuance (grief, amusement, and so on). They are also implicitly aware of experiencing that particular situation together, which shapes the affective quality of the experience itself. For instance, I can experience joy in strolling in Paris with my partner, an emotional quality that comes from sharing that particular moment and being pre-reflectively aware that we are feeling the same intense emotional quality directed towards the common experience. It is quite different if one is there alone, and feeling happy for a sense of adventure and independence, or if the tour of the new city is made with a non-affectively meaningful person like a guide. In this second group of examples, differently from the phenomena of emotional contagion and unipathy, there is a "sense of us" (Searle [1990] 2002), also called "sense of ourness" (Sánchez Guerrero, 2016), which indicates two distinct subjects that are aware of the first-person-plural character of their experience without erasing the experiential borders of their agency.

Which of the two is originary, interaction or sharing? Is empathy a necessary condition for the emergence of a "we", or, conversely, is the individual a product of the shared world from which she gradually emerges? To a certain extent, the two views are complementary, and Scheler's theory can help distinguish among different levels of phenomena.

4.1 Sharing first or interaction first? Re-examining affective contagion and unipathy

As the short introduction to chapter 4 suggests, I take “sharing” and “we-intentionality” to have dissimilar nuances.⁹¹ I consider sharing as a broader phenomenon, that does not necessarily entail intentionality or the feeling of being a “we”, at least in its most basic forms. I take Schweikard and Schmid’s definition of collective intentionality – which I consider as a synonym of we-intentionality – and namely «the power of minds to be jointly directed at objects, matters of fact, states of affairs, goals, or values» (Schweikard&Schmid 2013). I argue, though, that there are less individuated forms of affects that can be shared without concerning a precise intentional object, or having a clear sense of agency as a “we”. In his *Sociology of Knowledge* (GW VIII), Scheler describes the empirical relations of participation to another’s experience. Among what he calls “forms of transmission” (*Übertragung*), he refers explicitly to contagion as a form of sharing without awareness: «first of all, *co-experiencing* (*das Mit-erleben*) – without knowledge of co-experiencing – by virtue of “contagion”» (GW VIII, 53).⁹² Unipathy as an extreme form of contagion, as Salice (2016b) points out while analyzing Scheler’s

⁹¹ I partially refer to Cusinato (2017, 2018), for his idea of a need of extending the meaning of emotional sharing. I agree with the general purpose and with the importance of the practices of emotional sharing for the formation of the person. However, I intend here to restrict my analysis to the problem of a primacy of empathy or of sharing and argue that they can – depending on the cases – both be primary. In other words, I do not believe sharing to come necessarily before empathy. Moreover, I have pointed out the importance of a bodily individuation that precedes any fusional feeling, which excludes a certain interpretation of Scheler’s undifferentiated flux as a panpsychist theory, and as empathy being grounded on contagion and unipathy.

⁹² Of course, this is to be differentiated from co-feeling (*Mitgefühl*) as a functional directionality towards the other *as another* (empathy requirement) that involves the intention to feel in ourselves her affective state (cf. the previous chapter). In the *Sociology of Knowledge*, Scheler is attentive in specifying the unaware *Mit-erleben* present in contagion from *Mitgefühl* (GW VIII, 53).

Mit-erleben is then conceived by Scheler as a broader term that includes sharing with mutual awareness (*Miteinanderfühlen*) and more basic forms of sharing like contagion. I am aware, therefore, that this chapter mostly restricts the discussion on we-intentionality to its affective aspect, but this is meant to shed some light on a particular side of the problem which has been emerging only during the latest years, and that could profit from Scheler’s focus on affective sharing.

group forms, can be interpreted as a form of identification with another or a group, both in the nuances of idiopathic or heteropathic unipathy. Salice rightly highlights that the two forms of the life-community and the community of persons are differentiated first and foremost by the awareness – or not – to be part of a ‘we’, according to the corresponding forms of collective intentionality (cf. 4.5.3 and 4.5.5).⁹³

Contagion and unipathy do not always bear negative consequences for the subject’s individuation, as it happens when we do not choose to fall prey to a bad mood infected by a certain situation, and we do not manage to elaborate or “metabolize” it further into our *ordo amoris* (Cusinato 2017b). As stated in the previous chapter, there are cases of contagion and unipathy that are listed by Scheler among positive experiences, like the ‘feeling-as-one’ with nature or the fusion with one’s partner in erotic love. In all these examples, both positive and negative, ‘sharing without awareness’ does not *necessarily* lead to we-intentionality, even when there is a sharing of moods, affective attitudes, and so on. This may be the reason why simpler forms of sharing are rarely taken into account in the contemporary debate on we-intentionality,⁹⁴ while, as a matter of fact, they form part of our everyday life as much as collective experiences do. They are not necessarily connected to the formation of the more complex collective emotions or to the bonding among group members (as Kelly, Iannone, and McCarty 2014 stress

⁹³ Cf. the description of heteropathic unipathy by Salice: «the I can be the bearer of collective thoughts, volitions or emotions, believing that these are his or her thoughts, volitions or emotions, exclusively. In these cases, the subject does not realize that he or she is only a co-author and a co-owner of these mental states – but still, he or she is involved in a collective mental state» (Salice 2016b, 284).

⁹⁴ With the exceptions of Salice (2015b), who examines affective contagion in Scheler and inscribes it among the “forms of togetherness”, and Nörenberg (forthcoming), that includes the sensitivity to atmospheres into the concept of “elementary affective sharing”. Krueger (2016) mentions only briefly emotional contagion among the forms of shared emotions, to claim that «while we have similar types of emotions, they remain numerically distinct token episodes» (269). Schloßberger (2016) rightly points out the Schelerian distinction between the two forms of contagion/unipathy and *Miteinanderfühlen*, though he inserts both into “collective intentionality”, which I find misleading since the former does not entail a sense of us.

instead), but should be investigated in their own specific phenomenal dimension. I attempt to show that empathy/interaction can play a constitutive role in collective experiences, though it is not so obviously involved in simpler forms of sharing.

In the previous chapter, I have differentiated *Gefühlsansteckung* and *Einsfühlung* from empathy: both unipathy and empathy are originary phenomena, so they cannot be reduced to simpler processes. Empathy-*Nachfühlen* presupposes neither affective contagion – the empathizer acquiring the same affective state as the target – nor unipathy – that is identification with the target up to the point of blurring one’s own psychological individuality. Yet, on the metaphysical level, Scheler’s foundational laws of sympathy assume that unipathy grounds empathy: the direct perception of another’s expressivity is possible because we *share a common grammar of expressivity*. And in fact, if we were born with no shared terrain – e.g. the value-ception of what Stern calls the vitality affects (cf. chapter 2), i.e. the affective qualities present in movements, such as aggressiveness, affection, and so on – no communication would ever be possible.

Every living being would just stay within its own monad, giving rise to interactions only by accident, and never to joint actions. Differently, Scheler conceives psychological individuality, especially the formation of a reflective sense of self in the infant, as a slow achievement from an “undifferentiated flux” of unipathy in which she is immersed. This may be consistent with a primary form of sharing, not a we-intentionality yet but already the affective sharing of non-intentional feeling-states. I have already given my interpretation of Scheler’s connection to infant research in the first and second chapters, and argued that his theory of the psychologically undifferentiated flux does not contradict a primary embodied individuation. Yet, I have also shown that the role of others is crucial to the infant’s development, even in its bodily aspect. Therefore, this minimal form of individuation is present from birth but influenced decisively by social contacts. An objection to that might be Ciaunica’s (2017) claim that sharing precedes empathy, since the fetus engages in a primary form of tactile “togetherness” with the mother when in the womb. I agree with her in arguing that the caregiver’s touch plays a crucial role in the development of the infant’s body schema, and that one of the most minimal forms of social encounter is based on touch. However, Ciaunica does

not specify if the fetus possesses a minimal self-other differentiation, a condition that, as I have discussed, is present from birth (Rochat 2003, Fogel 2011, Meltzoff&Moore 1977, 1983, Welsh 2006; cf. also section 2.1). I do agree that a basic form of sharing is possible at a very early stage, yet the claim of a primary, embodied form of individuation is not countered by her argument. This is crucial to remark that the state of undifferentiation which Scheler refers to the infant is not to be intended as the emergence of a bodily “I” from a “we”, but rather as the slow formation of a psychological identity.

The form of sharing that Scheler has in mind is unipathy, where there is a “feeling as one” which does not lead the members of such collective form to the sense of being a “we”. For instance, when listening to a charismatic leader and falling prey to her/his influence, we all share the same affective state without we-intentionality, and the mood needs expressivity to infect the crowd, but this is not a form of empathy.

Cusinato (2015b) takes the same way when pinpointing, from a Schelerian perspective, the gradual emerging of a unique and creative singularity from a shared background and the practices of sharing. The forms of sympathy, as I am going to analyse further on, give rise to different kinds of groups, the first of which – the mass – is originated from the primary form of sharing that unipathy is. As seen before, individuality consists of different levels which are connected to the order of values, the last of such levels being the person. In Cusinato’s interpretation, the person is “hungry for being born completely”, a process that she achieves only through the practices of sharing. In other words, a progressive individuation comes from a shared background, and more and more complex levels of *Mit-teilung* make each personality level flourish in a unique and creative way. Therefore, sharing is the ground from which we emerge as – psychological – individuals, and persons afterwards. That is why Cusinato (2008) refuses to use the term inter-subjectivity: the starting point are not two monads that encounter and form a “bridge” in order to have a contact, but a continuous development of individuation and formation that is never fully accomplished in the whole life. There are never two completely achieved subjects prior to the practices of sharing.

Similarly, for Michael (2011) “sharing” is something primary with respect to a we-intentionality, as he argues that it is possible to share feelings that are not intentional. His account of emotional sharing also includes «two classes of affective phenomena that are distinct from but related to emotions, that can be shared (...) in the same ways as emotions, and that can have similar coordinating effects within joint actions» (Michael 2011, 362). Such affective forms are moods and sentiments, intended as dispositions towards things, situations and people, that make us more prone to one than another emotional reaction, like the tendency to instant joy when we see a person we are fond of. Michael’s criteria are in fact quite minimal: «(a) x expresses his affective state (verbally or otherwise); (b) y perceives this expression; (...) criterion: (c) y’s perception of x’s expression leads to effects that function as coordinating factors within an interaction between x and y». Criterion (c), however, is typical of but not necessary for shared emotions (Michael 2011, 363), a characteristic that makes it suitable for the already given definition of contagion and unipathy. I do not agree with the expression “shared emotions” – as emotions are only a specific part of affects – but it is interesting to notice that, outside we-intentionality, there are more minimal forms of sharing that can occur without interaction, and more extensively, without empathy.

In a similar way, Sartre (2004) gives the example of the “queue” or “grouping” waiting at a bus stop. Here, it is not even possible to assume a we-intentionality, as there is no joint action/intention towards a common aim. The purpose to get to the bus door is felt by each individual, but the presence of other people is not relevant to reach this goal.⁹⁵ Sartre deals with a «plurality of isolations: these people do not care about or speak to each other and, in general, they do not look at one another; they exist side by side alongside a bus stop» (Sartre 2004, 256). Such isolation

⁹⁵ I do not agree with Sartre’s claim of there being a *common* interest (Sartre 2004, 258 or at least a specification needs to be made. In a queue to reach the bus door, all have the same interest, but it remains an individual matter: it is irrelevant whether the others fulfil their purpose or not, and there will be no “sense of us” (Searle [1990] 2002) either when one is waiting for or inside the bus. What matters is to accomplish one’s own aim: using the terminology of Sánchez Guerrero, everybody has the same aim individually, and *alongside each other*. Instead, when there is a joint purpose, something to be made together, all people are directed towards one goal, and joint action will allow the realization of it.

differs from individuation, since the subjects are mere numbers without a specific role for a common aim, there is no reciprocity, nor any empathic interaction with one another is necessary.

All the same, there is some form of sharing with semi-unawareness, like in unipathy: just as Scheler relates unipathy to the mass group-form, Sartre states that the queue as a display of isolation shows «the degree of massification of the social ensemble» (Sartre 2004, 257). In Schelerian terms, there is a certain “feeling as one”, as long as the queue is distinct from the cars on the street, of from other people simply passing by, and as long as they move as one towards the same object. Inside the isolation and interchangeability of the subjects, everyone implicitly «knows that they exist as a finite and indeterminate plurality of which he is a part» (Sartre 2004, 258). This is not enough for the emergence of a we-intentionality, or for the “we-mode”, that is, for a quality of experience different from the first-personal one in its experiencing as a we (like in Scheler’s *Miteinanderfühlen*, as I will discuss later on). Still, it is a primitive form of sharing that does not require empathy.

As I have shown, humans already display subjectivity from birth. And in fact, Scheler admits the body schema to be the most basic level of individuation which allows from the start to have embodied interactions. These last presuppose two distinct subjects with some sense of self, at least in the form of an embodied sense of self-other differentiation connected to the sense of ownership and sometimes to the sense of agency, too.

Is sharing primary compared to empathy, then? Yes and no. I do not agree with the claim that mimicry and affective contagion are precursors of empathy, and direct precursors of collective emotions, as Hatfield, Carpenter and Rapson (2014) instead do. After all, they use different terminology to argue that interaction is based on contagion and mimicry, an isomorphist claim that has been proven not to be necessary for empathy. They give collective emotions the meaning of what Scheler calls “unipathy”, while I argue that in “collective” or “we”-intentionality the individuals’ agency ought to be preserved and not blurred like, for instance, in mass hysteria. I agree on a more complex level of sharing that is not limited to unipathy, following Sánchez Guerrero’s distinction «between a highly coordinated

(aggregate) pluripersonal behavior and a genuinely joint action. For one can certainly perform a number of actions alongside certain others, i.e. in a purely parallel manner, in a way that is, nevertheless, highly coordinated with certain actions and goals of the relevant others» (Sánchez Guerrero 2016, 80).

The forms of unipathy are extreme cases of emotional contagion, for they involve non-intentional feelings like moods, and such feelings grow exponentially when more and more people are affected. Therefore, contagion/unipathy as a minimal form of sharing does not necessarily precede or follow empathy, as if empathy was a multi-layered process that required the acquisition of the same affective state and then a distance from the target. Unipathy and empathy are both originary phenomena, grounded on the universal grammar of expressivity. Since there is a bodily individuation from birth, as well as an affective embodied *Wertnehmen*, expressivity can be directly perceived without the need of acquiring the same affective state. Though Scheler inscribes the mother-infant relation among the forms of unipathy, he does not deny that the child has a certain degree of individuality: both the contagion of moods and empathy as a form of interaction are present in infancy.

Yet, sharing can be said to be primary if we intend it as what Scheler defines the common metaphysical background of life. The fact of being lived bodies makes us share the preference for certain values rather than others, and some values seem to be commonly understood as meaningful. Among them, a well-being condition is better than pain, having some nourishment is better than being hungry, abrupt and fast movements mean danger, a slow pace usually indicates illness or sadness, and so on. Thanks to this sharing of an implicit grammar, it is possible to have the direct perception of affective states in empathy.

4.2 Extended affects

I have argued so far that unipathy and contagion are primary forms of sharing. There is in fact an involuntary transmission of feelings from one person or multitude of people to others, and an involuntary acquisition of it. This occurs through expressivity – through an implicit grasping of the affect in the expression itself. In this sense, a person that enters a room with people displaying a good mood chatting

and smiling, and with a friendly attitude, is most probably affected in a positive way. It is as if the good mood was not confined inside the individuals: not just displayed in their movements and facial features, but, more than that, “spread”. It is true that emotions are embodied in a non-dualistic way, but there seems to be a further level to be examined in such basic phenomena of sharing. If it is possible to share emotions and feelings, can they be defined as extended?

The extended mind hypothesis originated from a proposal by Clark and Chalmers (1998), who conceived the borders of cognition not to be limited to the body or to the brain, but to involve the environment too (*active externalism*), up to the point of having *coupled systems* that play an active causal role on behavior as much as “internal” processes do. In other words, the extended mind hypothesis – at least in its first formulation – involves a parity principle, which states: «[i]f, as we confront some task, a part of the world functions as a process which, were it done in the head, we would have no hesitation in recognizing part of the cognitive process, then that part of the world is (so we claim) part of the cognitive process» (Clark&Chalmers 1998, 8). This implies that such coupled systems are to be considered ontologically part of consciousness, and not only from an epistemological point of view, since the system would be affected from the removal of external components as much as of internal ones. To play such role, the external devices must fulfill the criterion of being reliably coupled, that is, be there any time the subject needs them (Clark&Chalmers 1998, 10).

The well-known example used by Clark and Chalmers describes two characters, Otto and Inga, both willing to visit the Museum of Modern Art of New York. While Inga relies on her memory to reach the place, Otto suffers from the Alzheimer disease, and uses a notebook in which to write down important information that he can later consult when his memory fails, and that, according to the authors, plays for Otto the role that memory plays for Inga. They can in fact reach the MoMA, which was for them the trigger of action, and for both its address was available but not present before consulting their respective instruments. This makes the authors claim that in both cases the piece of information is present in a reliable manner to consciousness any time it is needed, and the directions were previously accepted on the conscious level.

The Otto example is as well-known as the critiques to Clark and Chalmers. This is in fact only the “first wave” of the extended mind hypothesis (Sutton 2010), which is more concerned with desires and actions and on the functional parity principle. The second wave focuses on integration and complementarity, giving a wider space to socio-cognitive practices and to the dynamicity of their processes (Sutton 2010, Wilson 2010). Recently, the extended mind thesis has started to consider the possibility that emotions are not confined inside our bodies or our “mental” life, and that social contacts as well as artifacts can *scaffold* affective processes or play a regulative process for emotions. Expressivity, direct perception, the possibility of sharing emotions/affective states, are all elements that help overcome the concept of affective internalism in favor of a certain version of the extended mind. As a consequence, a new hypothesis considers the possibility that affective sharing is not merely something that happens within the realm of lived bodies that encounter others, and inserts sharing into a true “extended emotions theory” (EET) (Krueger&Szanto 2016; Krueger 2014; León, Szanto, Zahavi 2017). And if we examine cases of emotional contagion and unipathy, we can easily understand it as a not always positive phenomenon, like in the episodes of emotional “invasion” and emotional self-alienation (Szanto 2017).

But what kinds of affects are suitable for being extended? And in what sense are they extended? Krueger (2014) recognizes the universal background of expressivity and upholds the thesis that even such an aspect can be considered as extended (hypothesis of bodily extended emotions – HEBE). In fact, «the physical expression of an emotion—facial expressions, gestures, posture, movement, etc.—may be part of the vehicle needed to realize its experience» (Krueger 2014, 534).

Now, let’s reconsider the definition by Clark and Chalmers of the parity principle which connects to the notion of coupled systems performing an active causal role on behavior. In the case of feelings and emotions, we could modify the abovementioned quotation of Clark and Chalmers (1998, 8) as follows: “a part of the world – expressions – functions as a process which, were it done in our affective sphere, we would have no hesitation in recognizing part of the emotional process”. In other words, even when we do not recognize that the affect we feel is not firstly produced by us, expressivity can generate the corresponding affect in us – through

contagion or unipathy, vehiculated by an implicit affective perception of a feeling. Even if involuntarily, we become part of a coupled system: for instance, the other's expression plays a causal role on our mood and behavior, our mood influences other people's mood and behavior through expressions, and so on.

Therefore, another way to interpret the forms of affective phenomena from a Schelerian perspective is to claim that they are – in Krueger's terms – *scaffolded* by bodily expressivity and its consequent visibility. In other words, affective contagion, unipathy, empathy, and even emotions themselves would not occur – or they would be much weaker – if they were not intertwined with embodied expressions, as the Möbius syndrome shows (cf. previous chapter, p. 138, footnote).

What Krueger claims about music can also be applied to affects and emotions vehiculated by others. Music is, according to him, an «external tool for feeling: it can enable the listener to cultivate, refine, and explore familiar emotional experiences in new ways —or even, in some cases, develop emotional experiences they may not otherwise have» (Krueger 2014, 538). Similarly, when we enter an empathic relation with another or even simply experience affective contagion and unipathy, we may experience some affective nuances that are new for us. In this sense, others “scaffold” such affects or emotions that can be shared or just experienced by us, and open new worlds of values or new perspectives on the same values. As in music, others can elevate our mood (e.g. we are often tempted to call friends when we feel down) or lower it (for instance by displaying grief, if we are susceptible to contagion in that moment). They can have a *complementary* role in triggering or performing an action, or in arising affective/emotional sharing; they can generate and sustain an affect. The complementary role, or integration, can be highlighted by a further comparison with Krueger's description of musical experience: «the listener integrates with musical dynamics in a reciprocal, mutually-modulatory way—what we hear determines how we respond, which shapes what we hear, which in turn informs our further responses—and, within this integration, new regulative processes and forms of emotional motor control emerge that are unique to this integrated system» (Krueger 2014, 544). The encounter with others' expressivity is affectively – not neutrally – grasped; besides, it usually triggers an affective and motor response, and implicitly shapes value-ception itself.

However, in my view, the involuntary transmission of a feeling from one person to another – that indicates the primary forms of sharing – also involves what Krueger calls the hypothesis of environmentally extended emotions (HEEE). He states that «there are cases where emotions literally extend beyond the agent’s body in that they are partially constituted by factors and feedback external to the agent» (Krueger 2014, 536). Hence, the extended mind hypothesis is not limited to external *artifacts*, like the notebook for Otto, or an MP3 player with a song that “infects” us with a good mood. It also includes others’ expressivity. Ultimately, the extended mind hypothesis is consistent with the Schelerian idea of value-ception, i.e. the theory that sees affective perception as a primary phenomenon of grasping values in the world.⁹⁶

Let me clarify this point further. Two connected aspects in Krueger (2011) are particularly relevant in order to develop the discussion on affective and emotional sharing. First, expressivity viewed as material scaffolding for intentions, cognition and affect/emotion, from infancy on. Second, the notion of ‘we-space’ as a co-regulated system built through social interaction and bodily communication, based on attentive coordination. It seems to me that there are two different layers of sharing involved in these two concepts, for the second is rooted in the first one, and adds to it the conditions of awareness of the ‘we’ and focused interaction (Krueger 2011, 645), which are not necessarily present in the scaffolding of expressivity. In fact, if we reinterpret Scheler’s examples in those terms, unipathy and contagion occur through the unaware scaffolding of expressivity in the others’ lived bodies. That is to say, we can be affected by a mood because we perceive it in others’ expressivity but we do not realize the reason of the emergence of such a feeling in ourselves. As Krueger rightly highlights, extended emotions do not entail a pure transmission of affects received passively: they often trigger motor-expressive responses in me – e.g. mimicry and synchronization – so that the affect is not confined to my or another’s body, but becomes extended, and can expand and spread like Scheler describes.

⁹⁶ Intended both as *Umwelt* (environment) and *Welt* (world), the latter of which is for Scheler a prerogative of the personality sphere.

Plus, social affordances usually appear as more salient than other kinds of stimuli – e.g. affordances coming from non-animated objects – and this can trigger a constant adjustment of actions and interactions, which constitutes – when involved in focused interaction – the bodily negotiation of the we-space (Krueger 2011, 644). Since it requires active embodied engagement and attention, this we-space corresponds already to a ‘sense of us’ (pre-reflective or reflective, depending on the case), an aware ‘we’ by definition absent in the ‘feeling-as-one’. More than an active and attentive coupling, in *Einsföhlung* there seems to be an encompassing mood or affect which is only scaffolded by others’ bodies, but not reducible to them.⁹⁷ In this sense, the cases of schizophrenic autism and lack of expressivity-grasping can be said to impair the layer of affective sharing, since patients in such a condition are precluded direct access to the lived-bodily participation which can originate a more or less aware form of sharing. In other words, they become isolated bodies, in contrast with the normal condition of extension where we are able to be responsively attuned with others’ affects. This is why schizophrenia is suggestively defined by Krueger (forthcoming) as a disturbance in the *scaffolded self*, and not only a disorder of ipseity (cf. 2.6).

As a consequence of the notion of we-space being grounded on the scaffolding of expressivity, it is possible to conceive extended emotions as entailing both we-intentionality and more basic forms of sharing in which we do not realize where the affective state has originated, and we mistakenly attribute it to ourselves. Again, my aim is not to reduce the entire notion of we-intentionality to affective and emotional sharing. Joint attention, for instance, is a case where we may be directed towards the same object or situation, while looking at it with a different affective attitude. In this sense, we-intentionality is not reducible to extended or shared affects, as it can involve more or less complex layers of rational engagement – e.g. we agree to paint a house together, or we are jointly focused on the house – but divergent emotions – you look at it with boredom for the imminent task, whereas I feel enthusiasm. Yet, since I have argued from a Schelerian perspective that affective perception precedes rational knowledge, the affective layer represents a

⁹⁷ The notion at stake is close to the concept of atmosphere as proposed by Schmitz, which I cannot assess here for reasons of space and focus on the main argument.

crucial dimension of our reflective and pre-reflective experience, especially when speaking of social cognition. Whoever loses the capacity to enter directly into this extended layer, is inevitably precluded the interbodily/affective we-space.

Another significant text for the debate on we-intentionality and extended affects is the one by León, Szanto and Zahavi (2017), who rightly argue that more importance should be given to the *Socially Extended Emotion Thesis* in the extended mind debate, since extended-emotions systems do not arise only between environment and subject, but also in the interpersonal domain. Here, though, there might be an objection to the inscription of shared affects – in the broad sense which also includes contagion and unipathy – in the “extended” hypothesis. I believe that León, Szanto and Zahavi are using the phrase “shared emotions” meaning them as already inscribed in the we-intentionality dimension, necessarily linked to the “sense of us”:

the causal coupling typical of emotional contagion lacks the deeper constitutive synchronic and diachronic integration that is distinctive of shared emotions. Moreover, the feeling of togetherness characterizing the latter, where the other subject is experientially registered as an *other* with whom one shares an emotion, doesn't seem to play a similar role in emotional contagion. In emotional contagion and other forms of affective crowd dynamics I am causally affected (and infected) by the states of somebody else and as a result come to experience the state as my *own*. I do not experience the emotion as *ours*, as one that *we* are having. (León, Szanto, Zahavi 2017, 5)

What they claim about affective contagion – that it lacks a sense of us and a sense of self-other differentiation of the affective source – is experientially correct. However, they also presuppose that *sharing* necessarily entails a more complex form of affects, that is, emotions. Ultimately, they limit the precondition for sharing to the “sense of us”, not taking into account the possibility of extended affects, that can be spread – thus becoming shared – without us having a sense of shared-ness. I claim instead that subjects can be in a relationship of constitutive integration – forming then an extended system – without necessarily relying on the subjective character of one's emotional experiences, which, according to León, Szanto and Zahavi (2017, 4) is extended and incorporates another individual's emotional

experience as a ground for the integration. I do not mean to deny the subjective character of the affective experience, which, as already argued, comes from the very basic individuation of embodiment. My point is to avoid narrowing shared-ness to we-intentionality. When Scheler describes feelings growing and spreading as an avalanche in unipathy, he actually refers to a constitutive integration without any sense of us. The affect is indeed extended, in that it is displayed in the expressivity of some people and seen by others, who are infected by that affective state. Their expressivity changes accordingly and being grasped in turn contributes to the further growing and spreading of the feeling.

An objection might be that the inclusion of shared affects into the ‘extended’ hypothesis leads to the “token identity account” of emotional sharing. Such a definition is used by Brinck, Reddy and Zahavi (2017) to describe Schmid’s (2009, 2015) claim that, in cases of shared feelings, the affect at stake is one and the same and many agents take part in it, until a sort of phenomenological fusion occurs.⁹⁸ Actually, it is not completely wrong, in a Schelerian perspective, to conceive affective contagion or unipathy as the same affective state experienced by different individuals, who feel as one or identify with others involuntarily. This does not mean that one receives it passively: one could be more prone to contagion because of a bad mood in that precise moment, than another individual who had good news shortly before and feels nothing can waste her day. Each person, in her social and creative dimensions, *metabolizes* the affect in different emotions and narrative experience due to the influence of culture, society, individual past events and feelings, and so on (Cusinato 2017b). Lastly, it is not to be denied that the basic individuation, the one associated to the sense of ownership of any experience, remains. It can be deduced, then, that the affect has the same general quality for the agent and the “infected people”, who also contribute to its spread. There would be no contagion or unipathy if each individual felt differently. Yet, the affect is experienced in a way that comes from the intrinsic embodied individuation and the further levels that include the social self and the personality sphere. The “token

⁹⁸ Schmid often refers to the grieving parents’ case that Scheler uses in the *Sympathiebuch* to describe the notion of feeling-with-one-another (*Miteinanderfühlen*). I will examine this concept when discussing the more complex forms of sharing.

identity” becomes valid, if we accept that the same affect is elaborated in different nuances according to such levels of individuation.

So far, I have claimed that the dimension of sharing is not to be restricted to a “sense of us”, but starts from the very basic forms of sympathy that are affective contagion and unipathy, rarely taken into account as proper forms of extended emotions. I have argued that such phenomena are crucial for determining the borderlines among them, empathy, and we-intentionality. A bond among the three is not denied, but emotional contagion and unipathy – in the rare cases when they are taken into consideration by the social ontology debate – are examined just as precursors or reinforcements of more complex “we” phenomena. Actually, inside the debate of social ontology Scheler is the bearer of a “maverick” thesis, for he considers the metaphysical background of empathy – the universality of expressivity – to be already a form of shared-ness, and therefore sharing to be a state of – psychological – undifferentiation from where individuation is gradually conquered. Plus, affective contagion and unipathy involve sharing already, without having to wait for the emergence of a we-intentionality, and on the phenomenological level they are as originary – i.e. not reducible to simpler phenomena – as empathy is. I am going to argue that if the we-intentionality is also grounded on empathy and interaction, the same cannot be held for the involuntary sharing of affective states. Both empathy and unipathy are based on the implicit recognition of expressivity, but this does not constitute a form of *Nachfühlen* – as in the case of the wasp, that recognizes the weak point where to sting a caterpillar without killing it.

This point is crucial to understand the most quoted example of emotional sharing, the one described by Scheler in the *Sympathiebuch*. It is the episode of the grieving parents standing in front of their child’s dead body, and we abandon the field of unintentional affective states that are perceived as *me* being the agent, to access the often mentioned “sense of *us*”. Here, as well, it is debatable whether empathy or sharing occurs first. In fact, whether such phenomenon of co-feeling involves empathy first is a controversial matter, and I maintain that it does in a genetic sense, but that there are at the same time some characteristics that prevent us from reducing it to *Nachfühlen*.

4.3 Emotional sharing. The grieving parents and *Miteinanderfühlen*

In the third chapter, after illustrating the forms of sympathy in Scheler's theory, I have argued that *Mitgefühl* constitutes a further dimension than empathy-*Nachfühlen*, since it is rendered possible by it but also entails a co-feeling, that is, the sharing of an emotion. Scheler differentiates between the simple *Mitgefühl* and *Miteinanderfühlen*. The first form has been said to have an intentional meaning, that is, the feeling-function has a precise object, but there is also the intention to enter another's same affective state. Here, there is no "sense of us". For instance, when I see a friend's great joy after having gotten the job of her life, I co-feel her happiness and so transcend the limits of my egocentrism. Yet, in no way we could claim that we are experiencing such feeling in a we-mode: my friend feels her uncontrollable joy for being in such and such condition, but I can only understand and participate in her happiness from an external perspective, and indeed her experience is not lived as if we had both got the job. We feel joy for the same fact, but are clearly aware that there are two "I"s in such co-feeling.

Differently, there is immediate *Miteinanderfühlen* in Scheler's probably autobiographical example of the parents in front of their child's dead body. Scheler writes:

Father and mother stand beside their beloved child's dead body. They feel «*the same*» suffering with-one-another (*miteinander*), «*the same*» grief. This does not mean: A feels this suffering and B feels that too, and they furthermore know that they are feeling it – no, this is feeling-with-one-another (*Miteinanderfühlen*). A's suffering will be in no way «given as an object» (*gegenständlich*), as e.g. it will be instead for their friend C, who joins them and and co-suffers (*Mitleid... hat*) «with them» or «with their grief». No, they feel it «with-one-another» in the sense of a feeling-together, experiencing-together (*Miteinander-erlebens*) not only the same state of value, but also the same affective readiness towards it. The «sorrow» as a state of value and grieving as quality of the function, are here *one and the same*. (GW VII, 23-4)

It is the most investigated example in the debate on collective intentionality, yet it displays such a rich ground for multiple discussions that it is worth spending

some lines to comment on it. What is Scheler telling us about the formation of a we-intentionality? First, that such co-feeling-with-one-another is not reducible to empathy. This is not a situation where one parent understands the emotional state of the other by his or her expressivity, and the other does the same. Empathy presupposes a *Wertnehmen* of expressivity that does not require reciprocity. It is perfectly possible for the target not to be aware of the other empathizing with him, and the empathizer does not have to *share* her same affective state. Empathy also implies a self-other distinction by which the other's experiences is given in a non-ordinary way, i.e. not in a first-personal mode as it happens for unipathy (GW VII, 105). It should be remarked, though, that Scheler does not reject expressivity-grasping – it is simply not mentioned – but only the objectification that would imply two separated psychological subjects and not a first-personal one.

However, empathy may have allowed the emergence of such feeling-together. Scheler claims that empathy grounds co-feeling, and this is true for the parents who have a shared emotion that can originate only from a common experience, like the moments shared together with the child, in which interaction has played a fundamental role. Let us imagine that both parents remember playing in a park with their kid one day. They were then both attentive to their child's expressions and actions, ready to intervene if he tried to run too far, or fell down, etc., and they were coordinating by empathic interaction in order to make him have fun. The child was paying attention to their expressions, too, as the affect attunement was built and reinforced through them. Again, it should be underlined that this does not mean reducing a we-experience to empathy. Yet it is hard to imagine the emergence of an experience in the we-mode without the individuals implicitly communicating intentions and emotions through expressivity, which is grasped in turn in order to proceed with sharing. Thanks to the previously shared experiences, «the child's parents (...) are affectively bound up with one another, integrated, on multiple levels and time-scales», as Krueger (2016, 271) remarks. In other words, they can experience the *Miteinanderfühlen* that is instead precluded to the friend. He can only co-suffer with them or with their grief, but not feel-together with them the same state of value and the same affective readiness towards the situation, because he cannot experience the tragedy from the “inside”, since he is not part of the “we”.

The example gives also a hint about the elements of the emotions that can be shared. As it has been discussed while explaining Darwin's view of expressivity, an expression involves typical bodily manifestations – e.g. anger is usually associated with a visibly tense countenance, increased speed in movements, accelerated heartbeat, muscular contraction, and so on. Does emotional sharing entail also the sharing of sensations, then? Can we co-suffer with another, if she is in a state of physical pain, or is emotional sharing only possible for psychological suffering? Scheler argues for the second option (GW VII, 24), and as seen excludes sensorial feelings even from empathic grasping. He claims: «[t]here is no «co-pain». The category of sensorial feelings (...) are essentially precluded such highest form of co-feeling. They must become somehow «objectified» (*gegenständlich*). They induce only the co-suffering «with» and «for» the suffering of another who is in pain» (GW VII, 24).

This counters one of the objections that can be applied to *Miteinanderfühlen*. Steven Connor's criticism to the possibility of collective emotions relies on the fact that such a collective emotion would also require a collective body to experience it, as an emotion involves a set of bodily manifestations.⁹⁹ However, we do not enter a state of physical pain ourselves when we see another suffering. We cannot even be sure about where and how much she is feeling her pain, whereas we can perceive an emotion in expressivity or share its affective quality and attitude towards a situation.

If emotional sharing does not involve the sensorial component, the criticism by Connor collapses immediately. In the example of shame that he uses to defend the intrinsic embodiment of emotions, it is not the fact of blushing or sweating or having hammering heartbeats that *allows* to share the emotion. Shame would be shared and the sign of it, blushing, would be manifest to the people involved, not the other way around.¹⁰⁰ There is no need for a collective body, when we-

⁹⁹ This argument, also criticized by Schmid (2015), was given by Connor for the History of Emotions annual lecture at Queen Mary, University of London, 9th October 2013.

¹⁰⁰ The Schelerian claim for a sharing that involves affects and emotions, but not bodily feelings, also resolves a weak point for which Gilbert is often criticized, that is, the phenomenological

intentionality is conceived as entailing a “sense of us”, with the subjects keeping their individuality. Plus, it is true that expressions manifest in the body, but they cannot be located in a precise physical spot¹⁰¹ – otherwise they would be mere sensorial feelings, like itching or a pain in the knee.

Ultimately, does Scheler’s example concern an “identity token emotion”? After all, the two parents can immediately feel-together the same grief for their common experiences and are not external observers or compassionate friends, but the “we” that is concerned with the situation in a first-person-plural mode. It is “the same” grief, no individual external to the couple could experience it that way, for it would otherwise be given “as an object” and not lived in an originary mode – it could only be *nach-* or *mit-*felt. It is also, somehow, “extended”, as they are not just two people who experience their grief “in the inside”, each being merely aware of the other’s emotion. The we-mode changes the quality of an experience, that would not be the same for e.g. a single mother who has lost a son that she had raised alone. Her shared experiences with her child would be different and she would probably feel she has no one left in the whole world. Yet, such a claim by Scheler does not imply the unification of the two parents into one collective person: they neither identify with one another nor “feel as one”, and metabolize the emotion according to the different attitudes, culture, religion, personal narratives, past events, and so on. Plus, the “reciprocity” involved in the *mit-einander* term indicates an implicit (not objectified) awareness of being two, and of experiencing grief *together* – not as an “I”, then.

Such a situation of emotional sharing and being together concerning the same object leads us to discuss a term that has been almost taken for granted so far: the notion of we-intentionality. The forms of sympathy examined so far correspond in Scheler’s theory to different forms of group, which lead to ask: where is the border

accompaniment of collective feelings, or in other words, the sharing of “feeling-sensations” (Gilbert 2002).

¹⁰¹ As Schmid (2015, 108) remarks, by distinguishing bodily experiences (shame) from experiences of the body (the tickling in a finger). In a similar way, Salice (2015b) asserts that, from a Schelerian point of view, only mental affects can be shared, and they are not localized in the body: the difference here is between grief and physical pain.

between sharing and we-intentionality? Does an increasing individuation of a person have a reflection on the group-forms as well?

4.4 Is the concept of we-intentionality exhaustive?

I have argued that for Scheler affective sharing begins from the levels of contagion and unipathy, but the concept of we-intentionality is not applicable to those two cases, owing to the lack of a we-awareness and of an intentional object. When I am infected by a mood, for instance, I do experience it as an “I” without realizing that I am *sharing* that feeling with other people; I may even happen to identify with them, with a temporary loss of the sense of my psychological and personal individuation. On the contrary, in the case of the grieving parents, there is not a mere feeling-alongside-each-other. There are not two emotions of grief running in parallel: as Scheler is very careful to remark, none of them has a simple understanding that the other is going through that tragic feeling as well. It is a proper case of we-intentionality, where a “sense of us” is present and shapes the experience itself in a way that is not the one of a friend empathizing or co-feeling with them.

Though not examining in depth the contemporary debate on the concept of we- or collective intentionality, the aim in this chapter is to show how such an example can respond to the criteria that define it, and to highlight its difference from the minimal forms of affective sharing analyzed previously. Sánchez Guerrero elegantly summarizes the conditions for two or more subjects to be jointly directed towards the same intentional object. They have to

(a) be similarly open to this object’s being, i.e. they have to share a basic understanding of its mode of being, and (b) be open to one another as subjects who share a common world and are, to this extent, candidates for some joint intentional act. In order to actually be intentionally directed towards something in a joint manner two or more individuals additionally have to (c) be in a particular intentional state that is directed towards the relevant object, where it is fundamental that (d) this intentional state be such that it can be argued to tacitly refer back to some particular ‘we’ they, in the relevant situation, jointly constitute. (...) Finally, (e) the fact that the participants’ intentional states refer back to one and the same group cannot be a matter of sheer coincidence. That is to say, the individuals involved must stand in a certain objective relationship to one another. This is a relationship that warrants the claim

that their understanding themselves as members of the relevant ‘we’ is not misleading. (Sánchez Guerrero 2016, 86)

If we examine the two parents’ example in the light of such schema, a) the parents share the emotional response to the event, which presupposes a basic understanding of its mode of being (the unavoidable reality of their child’s death, for instance); b) they are most likely open to joint intentional acts, like the organization of their child’s funeral; c) they are implicitly aware of their sharing the same emotion (grief) in the same situation (their child’s death and his body in front of them); d) as argued, they have construed a “we” through common shared experiences, which is not (e) a matter of coincidence, for no one else could have the same quality of grief, just as the relation to the child would be different for a relative, a friend, and so on. What is shared are both intentionality and the emotion, the being-directed towards the same situation in the same affective mode. This is not reducible to the mutual understanding of two feelings that run in parallel – which would be a mere “feeling alongside each other” – to contagion, unipathy, empathy or even *Mitgefühl*.

My aim is to prove that the “being-directed towards the same situation in the same affective mode” is crucial in Scheler’s theory of sharing, notably in his hypothesis of the four group types, or “social essential unities” (*sozialen Weseneinheiten*) – mainly exposed in his *Sociology of Knowledge* (GW VIII) and *Formalismus* (GW II). Concerning this, Cusinato (2017b, 275-276) – building on Scheler’s theory – analyses a possible correlation between the forms of emotional sharing and the four forms of social unity. Salice (2016b) suggests to read the forms of sympathy and the group forms together, to compare the ‘collective person’ with today’s accounts in social ontology. Vendrell Ferran (2016) reads the social essential unities in the light of the stratification of values and affective intentionality.

Considering the growing importance Scheler’s group forms are acquiring for the debates on we-intentionality, the novelties that his account brings about can be summed up in the three points that will be highlighted in the following analysis of the specific group forms.

1) Contagion and unipathy have been excluded from the discussion on we-intentionality, or reduced to a reinforcing role of the “sense of us”. From a Schelerian point of view, sharing is instead a broader concept than we-intentionality, as it involves a metaphysical common ground (expressivity, a priori knowledge of sociality) as well as forms in which subjects are not aware of the sharing itself.

2) Many we-intentionality theories rightly claim that, in order to have a “we”, the distinction between the individuals involved must not be blurred, as in a sort of collective subject. Further than that, Scheler claims that the highest group form entails the highest level of individuation – the personal one. I am going to show that, despite the misleading definition of *Gesamtperson*, the group-form related to the person is all but encompassing the subjects’ individuality.

3) The phenomenological trend in the contemporary debate claims that affective sharing concerns world-directed feelings (Schmid 2009), so the human ability to feel-towards together (Sánchez Guerrero 2016). Similarly, the joint attention described by Tomasello can be said to entail not only the attempt to focus on the same object, but also the sharing of an *affective* experience. I maintain that such claim could lead even further: whether with a particular intentional object or not, the *affective attitude* can be shared and make a difference in our relation to the world. From Scheler’s theory of group forms, we can deduce that the social essential unities imply different positioning towards the world (values and affective functions) and various degrees of world- and other-openness.

4.5 Scheler’s Theory of the Social Essential Unities

4.5.1 Level 0: Robinson’s mental experiment

Scheler’s mental experiment of Robinson points out that there is an innate tendency to sharing in man. Even a hypothetical Robinson Crusoe would experience social belonging (*Gliedsein in einer Sozialeinheit miterleben*)¹⁰² and feel

¹⁰² GW II, 511. Interestingly, after the *Formalismusbuch* Scheler goes back to the same example and characterizes it also as a proof for the originarity of the I-thou relation, moreover switching from *Sozialeinheit* to *Gemeinschaft* (community). Cf. GW VII, 229-230.

the lack of social acts only because a bond with other human beings was presupposed pre-reflectively. Actually, this mental experiment has undergone critiques of innatism and circularity in its envisaging an already-formed person capable of spiritual acts that should instead emerge thanks to social contacts. Moreover, Itard's *Mémoire* (1801) and *Rapport sur Victor de l'Aveyron* (1806) have demonstrated that the consequences of an isolated life for the development of a human being are emotionally and cognitively more complex than the mental experiment described by Scheler. Yet, it is important to remark that one of Scheler's basic claims is the falsity of solipsism in front of the world-openness of a *nie abschließbar Totalität*, a definition that contains the meanings of "never-locked" and "never finished". In this sense, a *representative* lack of relationship with alterity would not be necessary, as it has been shown for the general theory of value-based perception.¹⁰³ It is as if Robinson *felt* – pre-reflectively – the lack of an "us", as if he was confined in a schizophrenic world where the basic, shared grounds of the interpersonal corroboration of the world do not exist. Not only the lack of a sense of us then, but the felt impossibility of its emergence. Later on, in the second edition of the *Sympathiebuch*, Scheler refers to an intuitive ground (*Anschauungsgrundlage*) for the lack of emotional acts related to others, such as love, or mental/spiritual acts that can acquire an objective sense only by means of possible counteracts (GW VII, 229-230).

The recurrent statement of a human being living more in the society than in her own "I" is to be interpreted not only in the sense that the psychological (explicit self-knowledge) and then the personal individuations emerge from a state undifferentiated-ness, but also that «the knowledge of any man of being a member of a society in general (*einer Gesellschaft überhaupt*) is not an empirical knowledge, but rather an "a priori"» (GW VIII, 52). In theory, it is possible for that hypothetical Robinson not to have explicit self-knowledge – the reflective "cogito, ergo sum" – yet to feel pre-thematically the absence of any possibility of sharing.

¹⁰³ I agree here with Cusinato's (2010b) argument on the Robinson's mental experiments and his analysis on the criticisms addressed to it.

According to Salice's (2016) analysis of the internal conditions for the formation of a group in the different accounts of collective intentionality, most theories in the contemporary debate ground the emergence of a "we" either in the subject of a mental state or in its content, and focus excessively on intentions as the main key to explain how and why groups emerge. Differently, one of the original points in Scheler's account is that «the constitution of a group is accompanied (if not: initiated) by the fact that the members share some relevant feelings» (Salice 2016, 329).¹⁰⁴ The next section starts with the form of group that Scheler presents first, and is in a way problematical for some views of we-intentionality.

4.5.2 To be unaware of sharing: the herd and the mass

I have argued above why sharing acquires for Scheler a broader meaning than we-intentionality, for it is applicable to unipathy and contagion, where we fall prey to an affective state without being able to detect that it is shared. Such states are described as experienced from an "I", and not entailing a "sense of us" – yet sharing can occur through identification or through the unwilling participation in the mood in a room. For example, if we enter a place (e.g. during a party) crowded with people laughing, dancing, and displaying a relaxed attitude, we are most likely infected by the general atmosphere, to which everybody manifesting that mood contributes. We nevertheless perceive it in an I-mode – at least, until we focus empathically on the others' expressivity as pertaining to those specific individuals. Even more evident is the case of unipathy, where the identification is so strong that one can misunderstand a feeling and believe it originates from her directly, while it is only a "transmission" (*Übertragung*). Another way of reading this phenomenon, is to state that feelings can be "participated", therefore shared, even without awareness (without a "sense of us").

According to Scheler, those are the two forms of sympathy that characterize the essential structure of the herd – for animals – and of the crowd – for humans. In those kinds of group, there occurs in fact a *Mit-teilung* without the knowledge of

¹⁰⁴ Cf. also Cusinato (2015b, 51-52).

co-experiencing (GW VIII, 53, GW II 515).¹⁰⁵ Affective states, expressive movements and even “tradition” as a form of imitation are examples of transference through contagion or involuntary imitation. Not only affective states, but also opinions and evaluations are subject to contagion, so that the less the psychological and personal spheres are individuated, the more one is prone to be infected by others’ beliefs without explicit awareness and control. In this sense, culture can “spread” among the masses (GW VIII, 21).¹⁰⁶

Though it represents just an “essential” group form, therefore never fully manifested without the other forms, this unaware sharing has also a genetic aspect, for contagion is experienced more likely in childhood or in certain kinds of cultures, especially the animistic ones. Paradoxically, this indicates that, although the experience is in the I- and not in the we-mode, it is the least individuated social form. Among the three levels of individuation described – the bodily, the psychological and personal ones – it involves only the first. The world-openness is minimal – there is a more or less voluntary “imposition” of affective states, i.e. of ways to be more or less prone to certain intentional emotions. For instance, while infected by the cheerful mood of the party people, we may be more inclined to co-feel joy, or when listening to the unpleasant or nasty speech of a politician we might be more prone to anger. There is a continuous interchange between individuation and sociality: higher social forms contribute to the individuation of a subject, while the more she is individuated, the more she contributes to higher forms of sharing.

4.5.3 The stream of experience in the life-community

The following group-form reaches a higher level of individuation, where sharing acquires awareness: it is the case of the life-community (*Lebensgemeinschaft*). This group-form entails *Nacherleben* and the different

¹⁰⁵ On the importance of this term by Scheler for the phenomenology of alterity, cf. paragraph 12) *Mit-Teilung der Expressivität als Grundlage der Phänomenologie der Andersheit* in Cusinato (2015b, 66-68).

¹⁰⁶ A misunderstanding might easily arise here. Scheler does not hold the elimination of lower forms of sympathy and sharing once the higher ones manifest: all social forms should find a balance, just as the feeling-functions (empathy, co-feeling and so on) do not substitute one another.

nuances of co-experiencing, such as co-feeling, co-striving for, co-thinking, co-judging (listed in GW II, 515). It is interesting to notice that Scheler refers here to *Nacherleben* but, immediately afterwards, he denies the understanding (*Verstehen*) that has been said to be characteristic of empathy (GW VII). This shows that he had not fully developed the relation between this form of sympathy and we-intentionality. Consequently, three questions arise: why is empathy mentioned in this group-form; does it play any role at all; how is we-intentionality declined in the life-community?

The problem taken into account in this section has already been found in the parents' example,¹⁰⁷ in fact the form of sympathy that most characterizes the life-community is "*Miteinandererleben*", which is to be read as a general concept including the *Miteinanderfühlen* of the *Nature of Sympathy*.¹⁰⁸ Again, Scheler remarks that such a phenomenon is not to be thought of as something that follows an objectification of the other's feeling, that is, the perception of another's affective state as hers, and only afterwards an act of sharing, but entails rather an *identity of content* of the co-feeling itself (GW II, 516). For instance, if my partner and I go to the cinema together to enjoy a movie by Lars von Trier, I do not merely empathize with him on experiencing a common disappointment when we are told that the film has been substituted by a documentary on the weapons of World War II. I knew that he is not interested in such kind of topic, and, more important, we had a common desire and tried to fulfil it together by reserving the seats, driving to the cinema and so on.

Given the common background, I am not only disappointed because I hoped to have a good aesthetic experience while watching the movie, but also because it was supposed to be a *shared* affective experience. So, the consequent negative feeling is not a mere sum of empathy plus inferences on the underlying narratives, but is already a feeling-with-one-another. In other words, the agency between the subjects is not blurred as in affective contagion or identification, but I pre-

¹⁰⁷ To which he explicitly refers in a footnote (GW II, 516).

¹⁰⁸ In this I agree with Schloßberger (2016, 193), though I would be more careful with the claim that Scheler completely excludes empathy from this phenomenon, for there is a contradiction in his mentioning *Nacherleben* at the beginning of his exposition of the life-community.

reflectively know that we are both annoyed. With the due individual differences of bodily feelings and affective metabolization, the expression I can see on his face is the visible part of *our* emotion.

Scheler does not exclude the ability of grasping of the other's expressivity, but denies an objectification of his/her feelings as if the emotion that arises pertained to the other first and only afterwards to *us*. A friend who should happen to be at the cinema and see our disappointed expressions, for instance, would understand our feeling through empathy, but not participate in it from a *we*-perspective.

A slightly different form of "we" that might give rise to questions on the relation between sharing and empathy should be taken into account next. It is the first form of awareness in sharing which arises during an infant's development, the capacity of joint attention that emerges after the 9th month (Gallagher 2010, Tomasello 2000, 2008). As I have argued, the practices of affective sharing are based on the fact that we have a *milieu* in common – in Schelerian terms – with others: in this case, the affective experience starts from the attempt or the occurrence of heading towards the same object or event – a uniquely human capacity, according to Tomasello. I hereby start from Cusinato's (2018b) idea of taking Tomasello into account for a theory on emotional sharing.

Such an early form of *we*-intentionality could prove the relation with empathy-*Nacherleben* that Scheler left unsettled in *Miteinandererleben*. Although an experience in the *we*-mode does not objectify the other's feeling, the example of the baby and her mother stresses the need of interaction and of the child's detection of her mother's gaze turning towards the target that she intends to show her, hopefully while she displays an encouraging expression of interest or amusement. Unlike the case of the grieving parents, here the feeling-with-one-another comes from a top-down mode, so to speak, since it emerges from interaction. As Tomasello (2008) remarks, in fact, the fundamental difference between a great ape's and an infant's pointing is that the first only aims at *requesting* something, while the second one can point to the object just to *share* an experience. The child means not only to make an adult do something (behavior), but also to *inform* her and to influence her intentional states (Tomasello, Carpenter, Liszkowski 2007). This presupposes a former common background – according to which, the child believes

that seeing a dog wagging its tail is an interesting fact to be shared – and a check that the object has reached the other’s attention, too. Consequently, the child and the caregiver communicate about it in a we-mode, that could imply a smile, cheerful sounds, and so on.

Such joint attention allows the child to learn how to affectively deal with the world through the caregiver’s response, or in other words, which value-positioning to adopt before she is able to perform a personality-individuation, and to establish an attunement with the adult (cf. chapter 1) about the world itself. Moreover, both are aware of their we-perspective that is not the mere A paying attention to x and B doing the same, because they are also monitoring each other to increase their sharing of affective response, a reciprocity claim that is grounded on empathy but not reducible to it. As in the Schelerian description of the life-community, there are independence between the subjects – missing in the mass group-form – and a feeling-with-one-another in which they are creating a common “stream of experience” and participating in it. But the case of the child pointing a dog to her mother is quite different from the one of the grieving parents.

When an intention is not the origin of joint attention, this could arise in a bottom-up mode, as Tomasello (2008) argues. This may happen if an external event supervenes, and we know that we are all aiming to the same target, perhaps because what we were doing has been interrupted, or we have shared certain experiences and narratives in the past, as is the case of the grieving parents. Even at this stage, some more or less explicit perception of the other’s expressivity is hardly avoidable if we are to *verify* the actual sharing of the affective quality of the experience. Here, sharing does not arise from empathy: empathy only plays a role in it, for instance in building the common background through interaction, or in the verification of the other’s expression. Yet, as Scheler says, the two parents are participating in the same stream of experience.

The concept of a common “stream of experience”, though, does not lead to the unification into a single subject that would absorb the individuals, or to an identification that would fall into unipathy, or even with the fusion of bodily sensations that are not subject to empathy or sharing, as specified before. On the

contrary, we read in the *Formalismus*, with a terminology that recalls the extended-emotions thesis:

[m]oreover, if we are to turn our gaze from the *unitary* act of experiencing-with-one-another (*Miteinandererlebens*) to the (objective) individuals and their experiencing, then the act (in its structure varying again and again) of experiencing-, hearing-, seeing-, thinking-, hoping-, loving- and hating-with-one-another, floats (*schwebt*) like an *autonomous stream of experience* (*eigengesetzmäßiger Erlebnisstrom*) between the individuals, which subject is the reality of the community itself. (GW II, 516)

After reading these lines, it is not difficult to detect why Schmid is a strenuous supporter of the token-identity thesis about Scheler's theory of we-intentionality: not only the same *type* of emotion occurs within members of a life-community, but the very same emotion itself. Differently from the mass, however, a form of solidarity (*vertretbare Solidarität* – representative solidarity) is possible because the experiences of single individuals are given, at least as *individual members* of the community. The level of individuation in such a group-form entails the possibility of a sense of us, though the lived experiences of a subject are intrinsically tied to the community and not singularized acts of a person; in fact, they «vary depending purely on the flowing (*Ablauf*) and the content of the variation of the common experience (*Gesamterlebens*)» (GW II, 516). The individual participates in such experiential flowing and in such solidarity not as a creatively individuated person, but with a representative *role* in the community. A reassessment of the Schelerian comparison shows that it is an over-singular unity of lived body that reveals its irreducibility to mechanisms (*life-community*), but still obeys to implicit and involuntary tendencies to prefer and postpone which in such a community are manifest in customs, traditions, celebrations, etc., but not in the full responsibility of a subject or in a unitary will. In such tendencies, described by Scheler through the metaphor of the *Leib*, the affective attitude is shared without a creative metabolization. In other words, we adopt an axiological posture towards the world that sees us as partially individuated, but not yet as free individuals, like the infant that seeks her mother's affective response in joint attention.

4.5.4 The artificial unity of society

Although it is inscribed by Scheler into the group-forms, in the society as a pure form we lose the originary we-mode that manifests itself in *Miteinanderleben*, proper of the life-community. A society (*Gesellschaft*) is «an artificial unity of single individuals (*eine künstliche Einheit von Einzelnen*)» (GW II, 517). Such an ideal form could correspond to ‘empathy’ as it is conceived by the theory of mind, that is, to the inference from analogy (*Analogieschluß*, GW II, 517). As in this indirect encounter with another, an abstraction is superposed on the direct contact with the originary dimension of expressivity. The “positive” difference in comparison with the life-community is that the individual can have self-knowledge of herself as individual (*Einzelwesen*), as an *irreplaceable individuality*, and not as a mere element of a group-form. However, this is not the highest form of individuation because, even if the subjects are kept distinct in their agency, it does not allow to reach the person conceived as autonomous and spiritual. As I will explain in 4.5.5, this characterizes the *Gesamtperson* instead.

To be sure, neither the prevailing axiological modalities here nor the ones pertaining to the lived body as a unity are the highest of the holy or the mental sphere. In society, one is oriented to the sensible sphere and pursues mainly pleasantness (society intended as sociability) and usefulness (society as bringing civilization), while it is inferable from the *Leib*-metaphor that Scheler believed the life-values – which are at a higher level than the sensible and the pragmatic ones – to be prevailing in the life-community.¹⁰⁹ He does not credit society with a positive nuance, and, as the argument from analogy indicates a solipsistic route, society alone puts individuals into a self-conscious isolation. Likewise, in the sociologist Tönnies’ ([1887] 2005) distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, the latter keeps individuals separated despite the unifying elements. Scheler himself states that the prevailing sensible-relative modalities «according to their nature, do not gather, but rather *separate*» (GW II, 517-518).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ In a similar way, Vendrell Ferran (2016, 225-226) attributes the life-community a prevailing relation to vital values.

¹¹⁰ This is the thesis about society that Scheler maintains during the *Formalismus* period (cf. Frings [1997] 2012, ch. VIII). After his intermediate period, as it is evident for instance in the *Sociology of*

According to the metaphor of the *Leib*, the community corresponds to the unity of the lived body, while the society (*Gesellschaft*) is tied to the reflective abstraction of such a dimension into the physical dimension of the body. In this group-form, Scheler thus separates the originary experiencing from understanding, the *körperliche* expressive gestures – which are given as *leiblich* in the community – from the experience that the other lives (GW II, 517). That is the reason why such an experience can only be inferred by analogy and not empathized directly. As I have explained in the third chapter, Scheler makes only a short reference to *Nachfühlen* while discussing the essential social unities, and places it in the previous group-form: it should be clear by now that the inference from analogy has nothing in common with the direct feeling-perception of the other's affective states which is described in the *Sympathiebuch*.

Just as the physical body-*Körper* is an abstraction of the *Leib*, society is not an originary we-mode: it is a *künstliche Einheit*, and necessitates a life-community in order to exist. As I have pointed out more than once, according to Scheler the individual lives more in the community than in herself, i.e. the community is originary (see Robinson's mental experiment) while society is artificially construed. In other words, individuals get together in a society through their sharing not of an emotion or an action, but of an explicitly-set commitment,¹¹¹ a promise (*Versprechen*), a contract (*Vertrag*), or even conventions (*Konventionen*) and usual practices (*Usancen*). As long as the society is considered completely separated from the life-community, there is nothing in it that motivates its elements to experience something as a “*gemeinsam*” (GW II, 518), unless this is achieved by fiction (*Fiktion*) and authority (*Gewalt*), that are imposed to individuals through the fictional concept of a common will and the force of the majority principle. Therefore, the affective attitude towards one another cannot be co-responsibility and surely not solidarity (what Scheler calls, with an idiomatic expression, «“*Einer für Alle*” und “*Alle für Einen*», GW II, 518): in society, its members relate to one

Knowledge, he elaborates a more articulated view centered on the society as built by different forms of knowledge.

¹¹¹ A Schelerian view would deny the opposite claim that Margaret Gilbert supports in her works, as her account of collective intentionality *presupposes* a shared commitment.

another not as a “we” acting and cooperating together, but as alter-egos to be *distrusted*.

However, as the lived-body experience is foundational for the one of the physical-body, and as the *Miteinanderleben* is a condition for the objectification of the other’s experience into an inference from analogy, the dimension of the life-community is also a prerequisite for the constitution of any society. The single individuals inside a society must have experienced, at one time of their lives, a form of life-community that allowed them to recognize the meaning of a “promise” and a “contract”. The obligation to keep any mutual promise in a contract needs a foundation that cannot be a *regressum ad infinitum* to other contracts, and Scheler individuates it in the solidaristic duty to fulfil the contents of such promises *as members of a community* (GW II, 520). A contract would not be possible without an originary, a priori content that is desired “in common”, in other words, a joint commitment – a shared experience that, being in the we-form, is possible only in the life-community. Otherwise, «[i]t would be merely the expression and statement of a temporary, hypothetical readiness of the will (*Willensbereitschaft*) to do something on condition that the other does something, while she states, likewise, the same temporary, hypothetical readiness» (GW II, 520).

As the analysis of society has made evident, the group-forms are not exclusive essences untied from one another: an individual can be the member of a society and at the same time of a family, a tribe, or different groups – demonstrated by the fact that a life-community *can* exist without a society. Such a specification is important in order to understand the social unity that Scheler considers as the highest form of individuation and, at the same time, of solidarity and cooperation, that is the *Gesamtperson*: to share a mutual bond and yet not to be absorbed into a tyrannical unity is possible because such a group-form is related to the life-community and the society and so carries both autonomy and solidarity to the highest level.

4.5.5 *Gesamtperson*, the personalistic system of solidarity, the community of persons. The “we” of solidarity

If it is true that a translation is never the same as the original, this problem is well evident for the concept of *Gesamtperson*, as any wrong nuance can lead to

crucial conceptual misunderstandings. Such a term is certainly subject to criticism if we translate it as “encompassing”, as if meaning an ontological overarching unity above single persons that absorbs them until any individual uniqueness is annulled.¹¹² Even the definition of a “collective” person would be misleading and wrong, for it could suggest a collectivistic turn, which Scheler’s view actually opposes (cf. also Szanto 2016). As a matter of fact, the term is seldom used by Scheler himself who, after the *Formalismus*, substituted it, for instance with “personalistic system of solidarity” in the *Sociology of Knowledge* («der Form des *personalistischen Solidaritätssystems*», GW VIII, 33) or “group-unities of solidarity” in the *Sympathiebuch* («*solidarischer Gruppeneinheiten*», GW VII, 228). In order to highlight that Scheler’s fourth group-form entails the highest form of individuation, I will avoid the misleading term *Gesamtperson* in this chapter and prefer “community of persons” or some synonyms.

The unity of single, autonomous, spiritual, and individual persons generates the highest group-form; no doubt such a unity cannot be an ‘encompassing person’, since its members would otherwise lose their autonomy and individuality – and how can a community of persons be constituted by non-persons?

Every finite person is, at this level, at the same a time a single person (*Einzelperson*) and a member of a community of persons (*Glied einer Gesamtperson*), and the fact of *being* like this and to *experience* it lies absolutely in the essence of a finite person (in her recognized full essence) (GW II, 522).

This is what differentiates it from the *life-community*: in the personal community, the individual is the bearer of full responsibility towards herself and co-responsible for the group, while in the vital one she is only a bearer of her role-responsibility for the communal life. In Scheler’s theorization of the fourth group form, the principle of interchangeable solidarity of the life-community – where the individuals are represented through their role as a part of the ‘we’ – is substituted according by the *irreplaceable* solidarity of an individual person that is unique and

¹¹² An interpretation of Scheler that Salice (2015) is right to dismiss.

keeps an individual conscience (GW II, 522-523).¹¹³ In other words, the system of solidarity changes the status of the individual from a replaceable role/member to an irreplaceable person.

Furthermore, Scheler is very explicit in pointing out that the “spiritual person” – here a synonym for the personal community – is dynamic and changes according to its individuals – i.e. it is neither a fixed substance as in the Boetian definition of the person as a “*rationalis naturae individua substantia*”, nor one experiencing the same relation as in the life-community, comparable to the lived body:¹¹⁴

Since the spiritual person (*geistige Person*), as a concrete center of acts (*Aktzentrum*) and center of any act that she executes (*Akvollzüge*), behaves neither as an immutable substance towards its mutable properties and qualities, nor as a “collective” (*Kollektivum*) towards its members, and not even as a whole towards its parts that can be added up (*summierbare*), but rather as a “concrete” towards an “abstract”. (GW II, 526)

It can be inferred from Scheler’s argument that what is shared in the community of persons is not a mere content as in the token-identity description and not only values (cf. Vendrell Ferran 2016), but, more importantly, the very posture as well (*Stellung*). Here, not only emotional sharing occurs, but, and above all, the sharing of a certain meta-affective attitude. This attitude implies an affective and ethical commitment to make the other and the community itself reach the highest peak of her value-possibilities. In other words, while society is ruled by a ‘contract’, here the subjects *feel* the responsibility to contribute to a mutual solidarity toward the other’s and the community’s personal growth. Even though such a group-form may sound utopian and Scheler is not necessarily accurate and convincing in proposing concrete examples (e.g. the church), it suggests something crucial inside the debate on we-intentionality. Unlike the theories that give preference to explicit normative judgments and systems of obligation (List&Pettit 2011) or to joint

¹¹³ On the differences between we-intentionality and the principle of solidarity, cf. Cusinato (2017b, 277-279). Cf. also Salice (2016b) for an interpretation of the difference between life-community and personal community based on the awareness of being part of a ‘we’.

¹¹⁴ On the contrary, the life-community is in such a relation to the spiritual one that the former constitutes, so to speak, «the *communal lived-body* (*Gesamtleib*)» of the latter (GW II, 532).

commitment (Gilbert 2013), the personalistic system insists on love and affective sharing as grounds for an absolute solidarity which exceeds *rational* responsibility and bonds.

The personal community is ideally the highest form of other- and world-openness, that gives each person her unique space where to flourish and perform the metabolization of shared feelings – to speak in Cusinato’s (2017b)¹¹⁵ terms – in her own irreplaceable manner. It also houses positive, spontaneous acts of love and solidarity to make the others flourish, since the personal community is responsible for the single person as much as she is responsible for the community. Besides, any ethical (*sittlich*) act performed by the community of persons retro-acts on the essence and value of its individual member, and so *transforms* her (GW II, 526). The “personalistic system of solidarity” therefore is all but collectivistic: it is responsible for the maximum level of individuality of its members, gives them the possibility to reach the greatest freedom and could not even exist if the individuals did not bear their own absolute, autonomous responsibility in their turn.

To sum up the main points of the argument, a higher form of sharing is made possible in this fourth group-form. Cusinato (2008, 2012, 2017b) interprets the concepts of *Mitvollzug* (co-execution) and *Mit-teilung* (sharing) by Scheler as entailing the specificity individuating the person as a center of act-sharing. That is, the person constantly shapes itself and is shaped through acts of emotional sharing guided by solidarity.¹¹⁶ The general concept of “act” is to be kept distinct from the mere shared *actions*, for acts include internal and external perception and, inter alia, the consciousness of one’s own lived body, love and hate, representation, judgement (*Urteilen*) and memory (GW II, 385). All those acts have their center and ground in the person, that is «*the concrete, essential unity of being of acts of different nature, that in itself (...) precedes any essential difference of acts (...). The*

¹¹⁵ «Every solidaristic experience of sharing an act, an experience or an emotion corresponds therefore to a further birth – be it big or small – and implies a step forward into the process of individuation for all the persons involved» (Cusinato 2017b, 280).

¹¹⁶ This thesis, which bonds together solidarity and singularity, is at the roots of Cusinato (2017b): «I believe that the originality of this work consists in focusing on the connection between the process of individuation of the singularity and the germination of desire which occurs in the solidaristic practices of emotional sharing» (16).

existence of the person “founds” (“fundiert”) all the essentially different acts» (GW II, 582-3).

If the essence of an act is concrete, then it can be grasped intuitively only in view of the person that is the executor (*Vollzieher*) of such an act (GW II, 583). In this manner, the person opens the way to a radically new dimension, which – unlike functions such as empathy, co-feeling, etc. – is not related to the egoic individuation. At the same time, it is not a void “container” of acts, nor is it “behind” or “above” them: in every act, there is the whole person, who in her turn changes through every act, without its essence being altered as something pertaining to the phenomenal time. Therefore, in order to understand a person, her unique style is to be grasped in her acts by intuition, so that we can be open to the knowledge of her world. To achieve this – Scheler states – we have to co-execute her acts, or at least re-execute or anticipate them (*Mit- oder Nachvollzug oder Vorvollzug*), which cannot lead to objectification (GW II, 386) otherwise the person and her style would be “concealed” and become transcendent immediately and absolutely. In an ideal personal system of solidarity, each member is encouraged to express itself according to her style, in a way that it is impossible to objectify her hallmark: we can only glimpse it through co-execution, and give her the freedom and solidarity to develop it. If this kind of intrinsically ethical attitude was only based on rationality and objectification, the personality would instead hide and conform to the pre-set rules of society or to the encompassing character of the life-community.

This analysis could explain the fact that Scheler individuates three forms of sharing, but lists four group-forms: somehow the described co-execution of personal acts is to be considered as the fourth, since it is a kind of participation in the other’s personal sphere.¹¹⁷ Although Scheler states that the first person can

¹¹⁷ Salice (2016b) argues that there is a difference between the life-community and the personal one, where the subject remains at the level of collective intentionality, while the form of sociality is still *Miteinandererleben*. I believe, though, that the co-execution of spiritual acts and especially of the ones of love – as it involves the personal sphere – brings about a completely new dimension of sharing. Here, not only the subjects understand themselves as single units in we-intentionality, but there are also co-creativity leading to a non-predictable result and the possibility to start a trans-subjective dimension that exceeds both the division of the mere “psychological” egos and the dependence on the unique stream of experiences.

emerge from the society level, she can only reach her never-ending accomplishment through this personal co-execution and a creative structuring of acts. A further development of Scheler's reasoning highlights that any act – as well as the person who executes it – is unique, so its being shared by different persons gives rise to an unrepeatable result (Cusinato 2008). The logic of personal acts is to be open to the emergence of novelty, that is not the projection of an anticipating structure (Cusinato 2008, 206), as – metaphorically – it happens in 'empathy' considered as a projection of one's own simulation. In such a perspective, like in the four-hand creation of a work of art, the outcome remains unpredictable when two persons cooperate to express something. If everything was chosen and settled from the beginning, it would reduce the creation to the result of a mechanic procedure. In the same way, sharing an act of love transforms our personal sphere and opens it to unprecedented values and their metabolization.

A peculiar kind of acts can be shared on this personal level. It is an "act" and "affective movement" that Scheler describes as active and spontaneous, then not linked to the ego but rather to the unobjectifiable person. It is not the affective perception given in functions but is rather possible only through co-execution: it is love (GW VII, 146-7). In the *Formalismus*, love is intertwined with the concept of full responsibility: each act of love can be considered as an affordance, since it calls for being requited, reciprocated. Whenever this does not happen, the person is responsible, that is, a 'positive' lack – not a mere negligence – is generated. In fact, «[t]he mere understanding of a love, e.g. an act of goodness towards me, implies at least the co-experience (*Miterlebnis*) that in the essence of such act lies the *request* for requited love (...). I state: the bare *understanding* implies this» (GW II, 524). The community of persons is founded upon love, in other words, each person is responsible for the flourishing of the others through shared acts of love. These acts truly make the person and her "style" become manifest to our spiritual eyes and reveal the highest values she can attain by her *creative* possibilities.

As concrete manifestations of such a group-form, Scheler individuates the cultural community – on which he focuses mainly in the *Sociology of Knowledge*, for that he wishes for cooperation in a European university – and the Church, where the persons should be united by an act of love for God. However, more promising

than a religious community is the creative co-execution of the acts of a *Vorbild*, or exemplarity, not to be mistaken for norms and social models, (GW II, 558 ff, *Vorbilder und Führer* in GW X).¹¹⁸ Sharing at the personal level entails a positive axiological connotation that leaves an open space to the unique possibilities of each personal entity and group of persons. An interesting challenge in the we-intentionality debates would be to go beyond the transcendental analysis of the shared experience, in order to engage more with the dimension of the person and its ethical development. This could reveal how to extract solidarity from the slightly utopian features of Scheler's examples, and help applying it to actual groups – not only to essential unities.

In a Schelerian perspective, the capacity to exceed egocentricity can develop on multiple levels. At the layer of unipathy, there is no given “other”; at the level of empathy, another and her feelings, intentions, and so on, are instead given in affective perception as hers, yet there are neither participation nor an ethical connotation. For Scheler, co-feeling involves the overcoming of egocentricity, but the experience is not participated as a “we”. In *Miteinanderfühlen*, the experience is truly given from a we-perspective, but still lacks the positive and negative axiological connotations related to the person in her uniqueness, a dimension that emerges and is co-executed creatively only in the personal community. The path followed in this dissertation poses the grounds for dismissing solipsism in favor of an intrinsically direct contact with others and argues for the intrinsic intertwinement between individuation and sociality. If its aim has been achieved, then the highest form of this dynamical process – the person and personal acts – is the consequential, open question to be further investigated in future works.

Drawing a conclusion

The chapter has moved from the analysis of the foundations of empathy – the lived body, affective perception, expressivity – to the phenomena of sharing. I have tried to explain why sharing is to be distinguished from the narrower concept of we-intentionality. There are, in fact, several degrees of sharing, that start with the phenomena of affective contagion and unipathy (sharing without awareness), but

¹¹⁸ Cf. Cusinato (2017b, 448ff) for a relation between solidarity and exemplary testimony.

are still mostly ignored by the we-intentionality debate, where the discussion is limited to their contribution to the “sense of us”. Scheler’s interesting view of a “stream of experiences” has been proven to bear a correlation with the current debate on extended emotions. This view has led me to stress the dimension of shared affective experiences, and to overcome the theoretical limitation of affective experiences inside the lived bodies.

I have furthermore critically assessed Scheler’s theory of the four group-forms, namely the level zero of Robison’s felt lack of a community, then the mass, the life-community, the society and the community of persons. Especially in the example of the grieving parents and in the form of the life-community, such an analysis was the attempt to find a relation between empathy and sharing, a topic that is starting to be debated in the we-intentionality accounts nowadays. I have compared the example of the grieving parents to Tomasello’s description of joint attention, in order to argue that empathy plays a role in sharing – constitutive or not depending on the different situations, while the “we” entails a further dimension that exceeds the I-thou relation. As a matter of fact, sharing in its higher forms implies increasing interconnection and increasing individuality at the same time.

As the recent criticism by Bloom has pointed out, empathy lacks a positive direction towards morality: it can entail biases against non-group members, or even be ethically neutral, as in the case of the sadist described in the *Sympathiebuch*. Then the positive moral value is to be searched out in other forms of sympathy and sociality, such as the co-execution of acts by persons in the personal community. As in the spheres of individuation of a human being pointed out by Scheler – the lived body, the psychological dimension, and the personality – all forms of sociality represent a different yet necessary way towards a continuous development. In other words, the hierarchy of the social forms presented is not to be intended a series of steps to reach the highest form, after which the lower ones are supposed to disappear. The community of persons takes autonomy and individuality from the society, solidarity and a real common unity from the life-community, all of them being essential for its constitution.

To sum up, Scheler shows that the three aspects of individuation are part of the human being and should be analyzed from their own criteria. Ultimately, the

higher spheres of individuation are not possible without the contribution of others, from the affective-perceptual encounter with others in empathy, to the forms of affective and moral sharing. In fact, we are not born in a condition of solipsism, but in a common world, where the very conditions allowing mutual intercommunication – the universal grammar of expressivity – are innate and can be developed further in unpredictable manners. Affects, emotions, social acts, common efforts of solidarity are not just and fully re-elaborated in the darkness of a solipsistic inner space. Though preserving their private dimension in each person, they constitute a shared, extended dimension, which makes the virtuous circle of individuation-solidarity possible.

Conclusions

As this dissertation comes to a close, a recap of what has been achieved may be useful for the reader. The main claim in it has been that a Schelerian framework can provide useful phenomenological instruments to clarify the often-misinterpreted term ‘empathy’ and to resolve many theoretical impasses that arise in the contemporary debates on the subject.

I have inferred in my studies that empathic relations cannot be conceived as mind-reading. In order to avoid a solipsistic turn where empathy would become just a matter of self-reference and projection onto the other, it must be acknowledged that the first acquaintance with the other occurs through the expressivity of our lived bodies. While most interdisciplinary debates focus on the neural correlates of the body schema (subpersonal level), the present phenomenological discussion is directed mostly to better-known philosophers like Merleau-Ponty, and overlooks Scheler’s contributions to the topic. Therefore, I have examined the literature and pointed out where his account is helpful to overcome either the excessive differentiation between body schema and body image, and any confusion between the two. The body schema, though, is not a transcendental structure without development: it is a pre-reflective dynamical structure, or in other words, it is both a primary individuation and the condition for interaction and affective exchange, whose effect is essential for its development. Once the concept has been clarified, I have shown that it can be applied to pathological cases like sensory neuropathy and schizophrenia. Although I did not aim at reducing such pathologies to an impairment of the body schema, and much has to be still investigated, I have shown that normal ‘volition’ and ordinary experience are grounded on such a structure.

Moreover, since the body schema ranges between self-individuation and the influence from others, two questions have been recently and hotly debated: is the minimal self primary, or are we intrinsically social from the very beginning? And does Scheler’s theory of the undifferentiated flux mean that we are born without individuality? The body schema conceived as the first level of individuation is the negative reply to the second question.

The concept of minimal self is undergoing a new wave of criticism, that does not deny it, but rather sees it as relational. The comparison between the “jail

example” of the *Formalismus* and the experiences in solitary confinement is problematic for the primacy of a bodily individuation. When the individual lives in complete isolation, even the body schema becomes de-animated and the experienced borders of agency blurred. In other words, even the embodied sense of “mineness” is put into question. This impasse has been successfully resolved in my thesis by stating that only the sense of agency – not the sense of ownership – of the body schema is impaired.

The same bodily individuation is highlighted by some up-to-date infant research. However, I have opposed a misinterpretation trending towards a bodily, monadic solipsism by applying the primacy of the lived body not only to self-awareness but also to other-perception. The body schema is in fact the structure that allows interaction and shows innate expressivity and the immediate understanding of it in others as well.

I have analyzed a certain convergence between the studies of Darwin and Ekman and Scheler’s claim of a universal grammar of expressivity. However, several scholars argue in favor of the cultural dependence of expressions, but I have attempted to counter this posit by assuming the existence of a layer of spontaneous universal expressions, that are to be kept distinct from universal emotions – which can be more or less visible, or built on expressions of other related emotions – and gestures. Further reinforcement from empirical research is required to support this distinction and to ascertain which universal emotions are not always associated to universal expressivity besides jealousy, already taken into consideration. Yet, the verification of Scheler’s universal grammar is still essential to proceed with the analysis of empathy: there is a shared ground without which no interrelation would ever start.

For Scheler, perception can be imbued with the grasping of different kinds of expressivity. My aim has been to stress that according to him, perception is first of all a *Wertnehmen*, as it is always shaped and guided by values and the individual value-order, from the starting embodied level up to the personal sphere. In other words, values shape the potentialities for our relations with others who in their turn shape our order of values. When such an immediate contact with values is impaired, the state in which we are confined is thought to be similar to schizophrenic autism.

In what way does expressivity affect the empathic phenomenon? If the two were the same, even a wasp would perform empathy towards the victims of its sting. Moreover, Scheler's notion of empathy is often simply equated with the notion of direct perception. Even the literature and the English translation of Scheler's *Nature of Sympathy* seems to equivocate his concept of *Nachfühlen*, so I have highlighted that it presupposes an implicit understanding of the feeling pertaining to another. This point distinguishes it from unipathy, affective contagion and projective empathy, therefore such conception differs from the recurrent claim that the acquisition of another's feeling is necessary for empathy. I have demonstrated that empathy as conceived by the simulation theory leads ultimately to egocentrism, for although empathy is not ethical yet, it is – from a Schelerian perspective – a consequence of the solipsistic premises that ground the simulation theory. Even considering an *embodied* simulation as a necessary root for empathy – an interpretation of mirror neurons that I critically discuss, though – the problem of understanding others would remain, if their expressivity was not perceived immediately.

A further development of my discussion on empathy has been achieved by connecting it with the debate on we-intentionality, specifically with the notion of “sharing”. Most of the current debate on we-intentionality appeals to a “sense of us”, and there is a significant trend towards grounding such phenomenon on empathy and interaction. This is mostly coherent with the perspective I have argued, however by adopting a Schelerian viewpoint I have shown the limits of considering only the sense of us. In Scheler's theory, social phenomena range from unipathy and contagion – “sharing without awareness”, so without a “sense of us”, made possible by expressivity but without empathy – to an ethical kind of sharing which affects the human developing process through the co-execution (*Mitvollzug*) of personal acts (Cusinato 2015b, 50; 2017, 48). Hence the need for a broader concept, that could include unipathy and contagion besides we-intentionality and joint commitment and so highlight the affective and not only the intentional dimension of the “we”. For that reason, the preference went to “sharing”.

Undoubtedly a Schelerian account can bring about some novelties in the contemporary debate on the “we”. In addition to the two above-mentioned further

layers of sharing, it highlights also that the highest form of group (the community of persons) should entail the highest level of individuation (the person and its flourishing). Moreover, Scheler's theory of the essential social unities implies different postures (*Stellungen*) towards the world and various degrees of world- and other-openness to be achieved through the sharing of values and affective functions.

There are certainly limits in this research, that could be developed further. One them is that, being this dissertation primarily a study of Scheler's perspective compared with the contemporary debates to find answers to the problem of empathy, the focus on the exegetical part has been deliberately limited. There is still much to be investigated in other texts.

The claim that empathy lacks an ethical dimension has undergone some criticism. To be sure, empathy alone does not give rise to ethical feelings and theories, but it can be the minimal condition for them to develop, for it both involves anti-solipsism and a distance between the subjects which allows the other a space for her individuation. A solution, in this sense, is to be sought in the last section of the dissertation, which also poses two important questions that I would like to develop by further studies: how is the co-execution of personal acts to be conceived in we-intentionality and how should the problem of personhood be discussed in terms of sharing?

One of the goals of this thesis was to arouse new attention to the complexity of Scheler's theory and other current unresolved issues. A reader interested in or familiar with the recent debates on embodiment, empathy, emotions and we-intentionality may find some new answers – and several new questions – on such topics, and realize why the encounter with others is much more immediate than mind-reading or the mere act of “putting ourselves in someone else's shoes”.

To sum up, I have shown that there are good reasons for reassessing empathy from an embodied perspective that entails expressivity, and provided further hints with the purpose to elicit answers to the still-open question of the relations between empathy and we-intentionality. The perspectives of I, thou and we are strictly connected, and much more theoretical research should be done on the matter.

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All the translations from German to English in the dissertation are mine.

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