# The Phenomenology of Shared Emotions: Reassessing Gerda Walther

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*Thomas Szanto*

## Introduction

Is it possible to literally share experiential properties? If so, what is it like not only to have but to share experiences? And given that the experiential domain, phenomenologically conceived, involves some first-personal phenomenal qualities, does experiential sharing then involve, and maybe even necessarily so, emotional sharing? These are the questions I shall address in this article. I will do so by exploring a still little-known author from the early phenomenological movement, Gerda Walther, who has tackled these issues in exceptional thoroughness. To be sure, Walther's account is not without some shortcomings, and it is certainly not easy to translate her often rather idiosyncratic or outmoded jargon. However, I shall argue that her dissertation *Zur Ontologie der sozialen Gemeinschaften* (1923) not only deserves to be reassessed against the background of contemporary theories but indeed provides intriguing insights that any attempt to explain experiential and emotional sharing ought to take into consideration. I will proceed as follows: in the first section, I will introduce the key issues and questions concerning shared emotions (SE) and set up three requirements that any theory of SE ought to fulfill. Next, I will sketch the contemporary landscape as a contrast foil and point to some problems in three dominant recent accounts vis-à-vis those requirements. I will then critically explore Walther's own requirements for SE and complement it with a congenial construal that we find in the work of her phenomenological 'ally', Edith Stein. Ultimately, I shall argue that Walther's phenomenological account can indeed accommodate all the requirements and addresses most of the desiderata of any complete theory of SE.

## 1. Emotional Sharing: The Guiding Questions

To get an initial grip of what is and, in particular, what is not at stake in the phenomenology of SE, it is helpful to distinguish four dimensions of the sociality of emotions. As we shall see, the phenomenology of emotions, in the sense in which I will explore Walther's account, is primarily, though certainly not exclusively, concerned with the

fourth dimension. Roughly, the three first layers or levels in which social relations and facts come into play in the affective life of individuals and groups, are: i) the interpersonal, ii) the group and intergroup, and iii) the sociological and sociocultural dimensions. Whereas most phenomenologists, and certainly Walther, touch upon the interpersonal and group-level dimensions (especially in terms of empathic understanding (*Einfühlung*) and analyzing various collective and group phenomena[1]), the intergroup and sociological and sociocultural levels have been mined extensively by sociologists, as well as cross-cultural and social psychologists.[2] Here is how the social psychologists Parkinson, Fischer and Manstead concisely delineate these dimensions:

> what people get emotional about can be social in three ways. At the interpersonal level, things that other people do or experience depress or elate us in different ways depending on our relationship with them. At the group level, outcomes experienced by in-groups and out-groups are of emotional concern. And finally, at the cultural level, pre-existing conventions, norms, values, and rules define what is emotionally significant and provide guidelines about appropriate or proper response. (Parkinson et al. 2007, 11)

Regarding the fourth dimension—*shared* emotions proper, and the sense in which it is marked off from the other three, it is useful to reconsider the locus classicus for all subsequent phenomenological accounts, a passage from Scheler's *Sympathy*-book. Since this rather brief passage has recently lent itself to some conflicting interpretations[3], it is worth quoting at length:

> The father and the mother stand beside the dead body of a beloved child. They feel in common the '*same*' ('*dasselbe*') sorrow, the '*same*' anguish. It is not that A feels this sorrow and B feels it also, and moreover that they both know they are feeling it. No, it is a *feeling-in-common* (*Mit-einanderfühlen*). A's sorrow is in no way 'objectual' (*gegenständlich*) for B here, as it is, e.g., for their friend C, who joins them, and commiserates 'with them' or 'upon their sorrow'. On the contrary, they feel it together, in the sense of a feeling- and experiencing-in-common, not only the self-same value-situation but also having the same emotional agility (*emotionale Regsamkeit*) toward [the situation]. The sorrow, as value-content, and the grief, as characterizing the functional relation thereto, are here *one and identical.* (Scheler 1912/26: 24)

We can reconstruct Scheler's example by distinguishing three dimensions of how the typically other-directed or social emotion of grief (grieving for somebody)[4] is embedded in a complex of further social relations:

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[1] One should also mention, first and foremost, Scheler's analysis (1926b) of the different strata of affectivity (esp. emotional contagion and feeling-in-common, or *Miteinanderfühlen*) corresponding to different social formations (see Szanto 2016c and Zahavi forthcoming), Husserl's analysis of communal spirit (*Gemeingeist*) (cf. Szanto 2016a), or Hildebrand's account of social emotions (see Salice 2016).

[2] For sociology, see, e.g., Rimé 2009; Collins 2004; Rivera and Páez 2007; Sullivan 2015; for psychology, e.g., Parkinson et al. 2005; Smith et al. 2007.

[3] See, e.g., Schmid 2009; Schmid forthcoming a; Zahavi 2015, Krebs 2016; Schloßberger 2016; Sánchez Guerrero 2016; León, Szanto, Zahavi forthcoming.

[4] Surely, grief is not necessarily other-directed, in the sense of involving other persons; though arguably non-standard cases, think of grieving for one's own lost childhood or the loss of some good or value. For an intriguing phenomenological account of grief as a form of social cognitions, see Ratcliffe 2016.

(i)   I (personally) grieve for *our* child.
(ii)  I *as* a parent or family member grieve for *our* child.
(iii) We *as* parents grieve for *our* child.

Notice that in (i) and (ii)—although the subject undergoing the emotional state of grieving is an individual—either the intentional object of the emotion or the specific mode in which the emotional state is experienced is shared with individuals or a group. In (i) the sharedness is built into the shared intentional object ('*our* child'); in (ii) it is built into the very intentional structure of (shared) emotions. The sharedness here is build into the very 'affective intentionality' or "feeling-towards" aspect of the emotion, to use a term famously introduced by Goldie (2000, 19, 58-9).[5] The feeling-towards the shared object (here: the grieving directed at *our* son) is experienced already *as a member* of a specific social grouping, and partly by means of 'identifying with'[6] those others or groupings (my partner, family, etc.).

But how are we to account for (iii), where the subject seems to be a collective and is typically expressed in the first person plural? In other words, how can individuals share an emotion in the sense of (iii)? As unproblematic as statements such as that expressed by (iii) seem to be, *prima facie* they entail a paradox. The paradox seems to arise if we consider three requirements that I contend any plausible theory of emotional sharing has to account for:[7]

(1) Intentionality and (Mutual) Awareness Requirement
(2) Integration Requirement
(3) Plurality and Self/Other-Differentiation Requirement

As should already be obvious from these labels, the three requirements seem to be in tension, especially when considering the latter two. However, I shall argue that Walther (like most other phenomenologists) can indeed accommodate all three. But before showing that in the next section, let me briefly explicate them in turn.

(1) The first requirement is meant to contrast instances of shared emotions with what is often called 'emotional contagion'. Emotional contagion is a much-discussed psychodynamic phenomenon that refers to a non-intentional, causally being-affected by

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[5] For Goldie, the idea is somewhat more precisely that emotional experiences have an intentional, object-directed as well as affective or 'feeling' aspect. The two aspects are intrinsically interlinked. Thus, if I am affectively directed toward an object or person, the object is given as something that *already* and *directly* has a certain emotional import; I am "emotionally engaged" with it. To put it differently, affective intentionality picks out certain irreducibly emotionally salient properties of the emotional target. Schmid (2009: 64-77) has also suggested construing shared feelings in terms of Goldie's account of affective intentionality (see also Szanto 2015 and Guerrero 2016). However, as we shall see, he arrives at different conclusions.

[6] For more on the relevant notion of 'identifying-with' in this connection, see León, Szanto, Zahavi forthcoming.

[7] Cf. also Szanto 2015 and León, Szanto, Zahavi forthcoming; I have argued elsewhere for similar requirements for collective mentality (Szanto 2014) and collective intentionality (Szanto 2016b).

some affective states of others. The affective state that one experiences 'in tandem with' others is not properly speaking shared, since it is typically characterized by the lack or blurring of a common intentional focus. Imagine that someone enters a bar and is affected by the cheerful or aggressive atmosphere without perhaps even realizing that this atmosphere is caused by the people having just finished watching an exciting sports event on an already turned-off screen (cf. Scheler 1926a; Hatfield et al. 1994). In many typical cases, one will not even *enter* into the situation of such affective 'commonality' by means of an intentional or deliberative procedure (as opposed, for instance, to the situation in which someone decides to partake in a public viewing event precisely for the sake of sharing the excitement of watching the game together with others). Consequently, there might be a certain affective mimicry here, but this is precisely non-intentional, and typically there is no such mimicry, let alone mutual awareness of sharing any affective states. Even if I might be aware that I am sharing the excitement with others, it might still be that no one else realizes that I am present or undergoing the same or similar emotion. That is not to say, of course, that no properly shared emotional focus may even come into relief eventually, and possibly also a mutual awareness of this. On the contrary, many contemporary authors rightly suggest (Hatfield et al. 2014; Salmela and Nagatsu 2016b) that emotional contagion often lies, genetically speaking, at the bottom of proper emotional sharing—without, to be sure, presupposing that it is a necessary or sufficient condition, or constituent, of the latter. This is ultimately an empirical claim that many classical phenomenologists including Walther, Stein or Scheler would, I take it, have no hesitation in subscribing to.

(2) Concerning the second requirement, bluntly put, the claim is that we have no proper emotional sharing without accounting for a robust sense in which the affective lives of individuals are deeply interconnected or *integrated*, constituting a genuinely novel emotion that results from or supervenes on precisely this integration. As we will see in a moment, some contemporary authors who are in fact inspired by classical phenomenological accounts have gone too far in their attempt to safeguard this requirement and have tried to account for it in terms of a "phenomenal fusion" or strict "token-identity" of the respective emotional episodes. However, just as there can be no proper sharing without something that is common and rightly integrated, there is just as little room and no need for sharing if there is not a plurality of individuals who actually engage in sharing. To put it in a formula: no sharing if there is nothing *common* to be shared, but no sharing either if there is nobody (who is other than oneself) to share *with*.

(3) This, then, is the reason why the third requirement is needed. As should be clear from the double characterization of the third requirement ('plurality' and 'self/other-differentiation'), it not only states the just mentioned and rather obvious fact that there is no sharing without two or more individuals who actually engage in sharing (hence: plurality) but also states that those individuals—their deep and robust integration notwithstanding—actually differ and have a clear *awareness* and understanding of precisely not being intermeshed, fused, let alone identical, in their affective lives. Rather, in various aspects, which I specify below, they exhibit intentional and experiential variations and differences vis-à-vis one another (hence: self/other-differentiation).

Surely, it will not suffice to just state these requirements. In addressing them, any account of emotional sharing will have to answer at least the following guiding question: first and foremost, 'in' which intentional aspects or structural features should we 'tie in' the sharedness of emotions: in terms of a shared or plural subject, content, or mode, or in terms of the expressive, emotion regulative, cognitive, and/or behavioural component of emotions? Secondly, what mechanisms are responsible for the integration of emotions in the first place? As we shall see, one of the merits of Walther's account is that it is, in particular compared to some 'unilateral' contemporary accounts within the analytic tradition, 'liberal' in the best sense of the term when it comes to answering these questions. Walther resists the simple reduction to either of these components or mechanisms. Furthermore, when it comes to the integration and plurality requirements and the role of the (plural) subject of SE, an obvious question is how to guarantee that the integration of subjects, or assumption of a plural subject, does not lead to implying some supra- or extra-individual subject to be the 'bearer' or 'performer' of SE. Finally, I contend that there are two further crucial but in contemporary accounts still rather neglected desiderata for any convincing account of SE: first, what, if any, normative requirements are at play in SE? Secondly, is there a certain stratification of types of groups and collectives constituted in different instances of experiential sharing, and are there different types of shared emotions according to different mechanisms underlying emotional sharing?

## 2. Three Contemporary Accounts of Shared Emotions

Before showing how Walther answers these questions, it will be helpful to contrast her account with some contemporary alternatives.[8] On the one hand, we have Margaret Gilbert's normativist construal of collective emotions, which draws heavily on her highly influential analysis of collective intentionality (e.g., Gilbert 1989, 2009). On the other hand, there are two congenial, phenomenologically inspired accounts recently put forth by Hans Bernhard Schmid and Joel Krueger. As we shall see, none of these accounts succeed in accommodating all three requirements or answering all the aforementioned guiding questions. However—and I wish to emphasize this—all three accounts, and in particular Schmid's and Krueger's phenomenological ones, highlight key features of a proper phenomenology of SE, and indeed point in the right direction. Their respective problems, I believe, are rather due to the fact that the authors overextend the implications of their initially correct insights.

First consider Gilbert's account of SE. Gilbert defends what might be called the *joint commitment view of SE* (Gilbert 2002, 2014; cf. also 2009). The following concise definition captures her view best: "[p]ersons X, Y, and so on […] are collectively E [where E stands for the emotion in question] if and only if they are jointly committed to be E

as a body" (2014: 23). It is certainly not a coincidence that Gilbert's normativist conception takes as paradigm cases emotions that have a rather obvious moral or normative significance, such as collective guilt or patriotic pride (Gilbert 2002, 2009).[9] Notice that the joint commitment view fares well in safeguarding the integrity requirement. Gilbert's technical account of 'plural subjects', a notion that was first introduced into the discussion on collective intentionality by Gilbert (1989), also could be reconstructed in line with the plurality and self/other-differentiation requirement. Moreover, it gives an elegant answer to how to dissolve the alleged tension between a deep sort of integration of subjects who act as one or in Gilbert's terms 'emulate' one body, on the one hand, and a plural subject that remains plural and supervenient on the individual's (joint) commitments to integrate and does not end up being some emergent supra-individual, on the other hand. Finally, and rather obviously, Gilbert offers a head-on answer to how normativity plays a constitutive function in emotional sharing, since, for Gilbert, SE are (nothing but) joint *commitments* of individuals to feel as one.

But here precisely lurks a problem. Gilbert counter-intuitively reduces *all* there is to shared emotions—i.e., not only their cognitive, normative, or behavioural but also their phenomenological, feeling or experiential aspect—to the normative function of 'being committed'. Surely, Gilbert uses a very precise and technical notion of commitment here. She uses it as a technical concept to highlight the difference between 'joint' and 'personal' commitments to collective beliefs, agency or emotions.[10] In her view, when the respective parties jointly commit themselves to a shared intention, goal, or belief, they must see to it "as far as possible to emulate, by virtue of the actions of each, a single body that intends to do the thing in question" (Gilbert 2009, 180). The single body thus emulated constitutes precisely the plural subject of the action. By doing so, the parties are *jointly* committed to the intentional action. In marked contrast to *personal* commitments, none of the parties can suspend the normative force of the commitment *individually* or *separately* but rather only through *joint* deliberation. But even given this notion of joint commitment and its specific normative structure, ultimately, the joint commitment view still fails to account for the specific phenomenology of SE. And even if there might be, and Gilbert is in fact surprisingly rather silent on this issue, something to *what it's like to be jointly committed* to feel—above and beyond that—there will eventually be something it is like to *feel* together, to wit, once one has *already committed* oneself to feel thus.

Contrast this with two intriguing contemporary phenomenological accounts of SE, which escape the core problem of Gilbert's account, namely the ignorance of the feeling or experiential dimension of SE. The following representative quotations from

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[9] Schmid (2009: 61) critically and rightly points out that the emotions favored by Gilbert for shared affectivity, in particular collective guilt, presuppose a link to actions (I typically feel guilty for actions I have or have not done) that makes them more amenable to the conceptual tools of Gilbert's joint commitment account of collective intentionality and agency, inadequate tools, however, which Gilbert then simply reapplies to collective emotions.

[10] Notwithstanding my criticism of Gilbert's joint commitment account of SE (see also Szanto 2015), I do think that she makes an important and correct claim when it comes to collective *intentionality*, *agency* and *beliefs* (for detailed criticisms, see however e.g., Schmid 2005, 2014, and Salmela 2014).

Schmid and Krueger give a general outlook of what might be called the *phenomenological fusion* or *token-identity account* of SE:

> there is a sense in which it is literally true that when a group of people has an emotion, there is one feeling episode, one phenomenal experience in which many agents participate. Group emotions are shared feelings. Shared feelings involve some "phenomenological fusion." They are "shared" in the strong straightforward sense in which there is one token affective state in which many individuals take part. (Schmid 2014, 9)

> In cases of collective emotions, a token emotion extends across multiple subjects; here, one emotion is collectively realized by multiple participants. The possibility of collective emotions is philosophically intriguing because it challenges the common intuition that the ontology of emotions is such that they can only be realized by individuals. (Krueger 2016, 269)

Interestingly, in all their similarity regarding the token-identity construal, Krueger and Schmid defend opposing views when it comes to the implications of this very construal. On the one hand, both Schmid and Krueger correctly highlight that, notwithstanding emotional sharing, token-identity must allow for some fine-grained variation in the experiential (and expressive) dimension across individuals.[11] Krueger, for example, writes:

> it is unclear to me why we ought to ascribe the numerically same emotion to all members of the group. Even if the shared joint attentional framework within this context provides a crucial enabling condition for realizing specific emotions, it is still possible that the specific kind of emotion realized is going to vary by individual—despite the presence of this common framework. (Krueger 2014, 61)

Similarly, Schmid, maintains that:

> The feelings are different according to the participating individual's particular concern within the shared project […] Thus it seems that there are actually different emotions involved in the apparently collective case. Doesn't this prove that the feelings involved in apparently shared emotional episodes are separate rather than joint, or "fused"? The feelings which participants in shared emotional episodes experience are parts of a whole in some way; however, the parts differ qualitatively from each other, depending on a wide array of circumstances. (Schmid 2014: 12)[12]

However, Schmid and Krueger draw opposing conclusions from their diagnoses. While Schmid aims to accommodate the 'qualitative differences' of individuals' emotions in a shared concern-based (and still fusional) model of SE,[13] Krueger takes issue with the very possibility of genuinely shared or collective emotions, precisely because he believes

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[12] See also Schmid's 'difference condition' (2009: 79).
[13] On such a concern-based account of SE in terms of what we *care* about as something that matters to *us*, see also Schmid forthcoming b. The most sustained (and convincing) different but still concern-based account of SE has recently been developed by Salmela & Nagatsu (2016a, 2016b).

that this—admittedly problematic—conception is the only viable route to accommodate the integrity requirement.[14] However, Walther has indeed an alternative route, or so I shall argue in the following two sections.


## 3. The Phenomenological Account

### 3.1 *Walther on 'Communal Experiences' and the 'Feeling of Belonging Together'*

In order to fully appreciate Walther's account of SE, it is crucial to delineate the scope of the account in two respects. First, Walther seems to have no truly *independent* interest in the analysis of affective sharing. Rather, her account of SE is deeply embedded in her overall project of providing a full-fledged taxonomy and ontology of social community. This project is very familiar to her contemporaries. From the 'grandfather' of German sociology, Ferdinand Tönnies (1935), to less well-known but influential German sociologists such as the unduly forgotten Theodor Litt (1919) or Alfred Vierkandt (1928), and virtually all early phenomenologists[15], have engaged in painstakingly thorough attempts to distinguish different types of social formations. These formations range from more or less primitive or temporary crowd- or herd-formations (*Masse*, *Herde*), characterized chiefly by emotional contagion, to instrumental associations or societies (*Verbände*, *Gesellschaft*), bound together by diverse, often purely egoistic interests or values, to complex, collaborative and highly cohesive forms of communities (*Gemeinschaft*). Some, such as Scheler, have still further stratified the latter types, for example into life-communities (*Lebensgemeinschaften*) or personal communities (*Gesamtpersonen*) (cf. Szanto 2016c), or communities simpliciter and "communities in-and-for-themselves" (*Gemeinschaften "an und für sich"*), as Walther, explicitly drawing on Hegel, proposes (1923: 80-84). All this matters, because it is in large part precisely the different types and mechanisms of *affective* unification that do all the work in the stratification of social communities.[16] For Walther, the core affective mechanism, the so-called 'actual' or 'habitual unification' (*aktuelle* or *habituelle Einigung*), is exclusively reserved for the latter type of community. It is the key constitutive element of them. Without an essentially affective—rather than instrumental or purely cognitive—unification, there is for Walther simply not enough glue to build and bind communities in-and-for-themselves.

But before moving ahead, let me mention the second caveat. Walther's account of SE is just an aspect of her account of "communal" or "we-experiences" (*Gemeinschaftserlebnisse*, *Wir-Erlebnisse*). To be sure, that should not be particularly surprising,

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[14] For a much more detailed criticism of Schmid's and Krueger's token-identity view, see León, Szanto, and Zahavi forthcoming; for a view of put forth by Krueger that is much closer to the present account of the different but strongly related issue of (socially) extended emotions, see Krueger and Szanto forthcoming.

[15] In particular Scheler (1926a, 1926b), Stein (1922), or the equally unduly forgotten Otaka (1932), but also Husserl (cf. Szanto 2016), Gurwitsch (1931) and the later Sartre (1960).

[16] For useful concise explorations of the different social formations and the role of we-experiences, empathy, and shared emotion therein, esp. concerning Scheler, Walther and Gurwitsch, see León and Zahavi 2016; Zahavi and Salice 2017; Chelstrom 2016, and Zahavi forthcoming

especially given that the German term *Erlebnis*, and even more so its compound forms associated with collectives, is certainly richer on different levels than the notion of 'experience' and connotes subjective, normative, and precisely certain affective and qualitative dimensions (cf. Schmid forthcoming a). However, as we shall see in a moment, the exact location of the emotional domain and the role of emotional sharing proper in the constitution of we-experiences is far from clear-cut in Walther's account.

With these caveats in mind, let me now review how Walther sets out to provide a complex account of the experiential integration of communities, of which emotional sharing is just one, albeit crucial, component. I will do so by outlining in broad strokes the following requirements, which Walther takes to be necessary and jointly sufficient for two or more individuals to instantiate communal experiences:

(1)     Intentional reciprocation;
(2)     Sharedness of intentional objects and contents;
(3)     Knowledge of one another;
(4a)    Unification or Feeling of belonging-together;
(4b)    Reciprocation of the unification

For Walther, these requirements also represent jointly sufficient constituents of communities in-and-for-themselves. Recall that not all social formations and types of communal experiences but only those of communities in-and-for-themselves must fulfill *all* these requirements. Let me now explicate them in turn and point to some problems, in particular regarding the latter two.

(1) First, genuine communities must exhibit what Walther calls *intentional reciprocation (Wechselwirkung)*, roughly, an influence upon or modulation of each other's mental or affective lives, expression and behavior. Notice that influence doesn't have to involve any deliberate intentional act of influencing each other (1923: 22). Rather, it may assume direct forms in face-to-face encounters, but may also be indirect and non-simultaneous (1923: 90ff.). But as the example of people who insult or hit each other and reciprocate in this sense readily shows (1923: 22), this will certainly not be enough for *communal* reciprocity.

(2) The second requirement is that individuals share intentional objects or contents (*Inhalte*), or a shared focus by which shared objects are intentionally referred to (1923: 22-29). Importantly, shared contents need not be identical; all that is needed for Walther is a general harmony (*Gesamtharmonie*) or certain coherence and convergence of noematic sense (*Sinn*) through which objects are represented for the individual members. This allows for individual variation in the intentional and especially sensory contents (1923: 25ff.), by means of which shared objects are given, and which, *qua* intentional, are not necessarily identical to 'external' objects of reference. Walther mentions a group of children representing a community of being together 'in the service' of a good fairy. The children's frame of reference is not only no 'real' object but will typically also

be represented differently with different representational and sensory qualities, as well as different emotional accentuation (*Gefühlsbetonung*).[17]

(3) Next we have a version of what I have introduced as the 'awareness requirement'. Walther spells it out in terms of a specific form of knowledge, a knowing-of-each-other (*Wissen-um-einander*) (1923: 20). Note, however, that, though this is a specific form of knowledge, it doesn't carry much cognitive overload, hindering for example the group of young children from engaging in it, or certain epistemological problems of regressivity associated with higher-order or meta-cognitivist accounts (see more on this below). Rather it is a *non-reflective* knowledge of my fellow members' intentional and affective lives. It's important to see that this is not just mutual empathic understanding (*Einfühlung*), but that this specific knowledge-of-others includes the grasping of others' intentionally being directed at the same objects as me, and ultimately of their intentional 'unification' with me (see requirement 4). In other words, it is a certain pre-reflective awareness of their being others sharing experiences with me, or of *our* being aware of who belongs to us (and who doesn't). More specifically, Walther discusses three forms of such knowledge: an intra-group awareness, holding between individuals (*Wissen um Mitglieder*); a group-level one between groups and members (1923: 94-95, 118-119); and finally knowledge of intergroup relations and distinctions between groups (1923: 121-122). Importantly, certain forms of this knowledge, and in particular the more complex group-level and intergroup ones, can be indirect, without face-to-face bodily contact between the members, mediated, for example, by third-parties or symbols (1923: 82-83).

Now, according Walther, (1), (2) and (3), though necessary, are not sufficient for the constitution of proper communities. They can also be fullfilled by collectives that would only constitute Weberian associations or societies (1923: 29-30). What more is needed? The crucial additional requirement is precisely the so far missing affective component of sharing.

(4a) Thus, certainly the most important but unfortunately also most hermetic and problematic requirement in the constitution of proper communities is a form of affective attunement or alignment that Walther calls 'inner unification' (*Einigung*) or alternatively 'feeling of belonging-together' (*Gefühl der Zusammengehörigkeit*) (1923: 33ff.). The terminological source of the latter notion Walther explicitly mentions is Tönnies (1935), who also uses this affective element to distinguish communities from societies; but systematically, Walther instead acknowledges Pfänder's use of unification in his account of the affective attunement in "positive sentiments" such as love (Pfänder 1913: 56ff.; see Caminada 2014). Now, the important and problematic point here, already criticized by early phenomenologists, such as Gurwitsch (1931); cf. Salice & Za-

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[17] Stein (1922: 126-127) gives virtually the same example, and draws congenial conclusions for communal forms of imagination; see Szanto forthcoming.

havi forthcoming), is that it simply seems wrong to assume that belonging-together is built upon only and exclusively *positive* sentiments.[18]

Thus, in her intriguing work on largely *negative* political emotions and sentiments, such as collective hatred or fear, Ahmed has convincingly argued that out-group hatred is a forceful power in group identification and in-group alignment. As she puts it:

> what is at stake in the intensity of hate as a negative attachment to others is how hate creates the 'I' and the 'we' as utterable simultaneously in a moment of alignment […] we can see that an 'I' that declares itself as hating an other […] comes into existence by also declaring its love for that which is threatened by this imagined other (the nation, the community and so on). (Ahmed 2011, 51)

Similarly, the phenomenologist Kolnai (1936) has argued that interpersonal but also out-group directed hatred involves a certain 'personal engagement' (*persönlicher Einsatz*) or 'existential unity' (*Daseinsverbundenheit*) of individuals who typically belong to different social groups and have conflicting world-views. What seems to happen in hatred is precisely an alignment similar to unification, but a sort of negative, instead of positive, affective alignment. And even if we don't have such extreme sentiments as hatred involved, the affective alignment in the feeling-of-togetherness surely doesn't have to involve Pfänder's and largely Walther's paradigm of unification, namely love.[19]

What is, however, clear and important in Walther's conception of unification is that it again doesn't necessarily require actual, face-to-face or direct encounters with others. On the contrary, Walther distinguishes *actual* unifications, which are interpersonal and direct evidences of approval (*Billigung*) and supposedly (she doesn't elaborate) entail emotional expression, communication or approving behaviour, from *habitual, potential* and *unconscious* ones (*habituelle, potentielle und unbewußte*). Without going into detail, all these non-actual forms of unification involve some shared affective background. This will include experiential typicalities, shared affective norms or typical appraisal patterns, rules of emotional expression in rituals, etc. (1922: 38-44; cf. Caminada 2014).[20]

But regarding habitual and unconscious unifications, insofar as they entail a feeling-component, a further potential worry might arise. The question is how emotions can be unconscious or how one can have feelings one is not occurrently aware of having. The problem becomes even more pressing if we consider shared emotions. How can you share emotions with someone if either you or the others are not aware of hav-

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[18] To be sure, Gurwitsch (1931: 173-179) attacks the more general claim that emotions and feelings as such—not only positive ones—are necessary for the constitution of communities (see also Schmalenbach 1922, 54ff.). But as I try to show this is a criticism that Walther cannot (and should not) accept, at least not when it comes to communities sharing an *experiential* domain.

[19] In this connection it would be worthwhile to discuss Solomon's (1994) "shared selves" conception of love, which involves a non-fusional conception of unification, see Krebs 2015.

[20] For intriguing contemporary sociological elaborations of such 'feeling norms' and 'rules' (see Hochschild 1979 and von Scheve & Ismer 2013) and a congenial conception of 'emotional habitus', see Illouz 2007.

ing them (together)? Recall that this was already the issue in distinguishing emotional contagion from sharing. However, notice first that habitual emotions and sentiments and the background of affective appraisals or concerns are not identical with unconscious emotions, as Walther clearly acknowledges. Secondly, Walther holds that even potential unifications working "behind the backs" of the individuals must, at least in the case of mature persons, eventually result in actual unification or conscious approval, while *habitual* ones must have been established previously in actual ones and can only eventually become sedimented. Ultimately, Walther speculates whether one should reserve unconscious unifications only for those fusional sorts of communities that Scheler discusses under the heading of *Lebensgemeinschaften* (1922: 36-38).[21]

Consider now yet another already mentioned problem with this requirement regarding the link between emotional sharing as a constituent of communities and the role of shared emotions within already constituted communities. The question is whether the emotional sharing expressed in this requirment, i.e. the specific feeling of belonging-together, is to be identified as just an instance of shared emotions within an already constituted community, or whether we might view it rather as its own—be it unique or not—*type* of (social or shared) emotion. If we endorse the former possibility, the feeling of belonging-together would be just *one* of many other possible shared emotions, such as collective guilt, joy or fear. If we embark on the latter route, one suggestion might be to list it alongside other distinctive *types* of emotions. Feelings of belonging-together could then be viewed as the unique paradigm of shared emotions, which in turn would have their place in the taxonomy of types of emotions alongside, for example, social, other-directed or socio-moral emotions, of which shame, grief, pride, embarassment, or *Schadenfreude* are proper instances.

As indicated, this issue is not sufficiently resolved by Walther. Also, when we look at other phenomenologists such as Stein and Scheler, it is probably no coincidence that their paradigm cases of shared emotions are already other-directed *and* collectivity-involving emotions, notably grieving for somebody who was part of *us* (our child, our leader, etc.). However, I believe that this is not simply a mistake on the part of these authors, even though they admittedly would have been well advised to at least raise this issue. Rather, in order to understand the complexity here, we have to understand the fundamental and irreducible role of emotions in experiencing (*Erlebnis*) in general, and in the constitution of communities, in particular. Thus, most phenomenologists, but certainly Stein and Scheler, upon whom Walther draws heavily, and even, if to a lesser degree, Walther herself, or later phenomenologists such as Heidegger or Sartre, converge on the idea that all experiences, whether shared or not, have certain crucial affective components above and beyond their notoriously vague phenomenal or qualia aspect that analytic philosophers of mind like to cite (cf. Szanto 2012). Intentional experiences are typically, to use a favourite metaphor of Stein's (1922), deeply

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[21] For a further possible reply, see Roberts' convincing analysis according to which one can indeed have both emotions that one does not feel and emotions that one is unaware of having (2003: 60-69, 318-323).

'coloured' (*Erlebnisfärbung*), or modulated by certain sensate or psychic qualities and moods (such as boredom, sluggishness, etc.). Put differently, the above mentioned built-in affective intentionality is at play in them (see sec. 1). But if this is the case, and if experiential sharing is part and parcel of what constitutes communities proper, then there will always be an emotional layer involved in the constitution of communities proper. Viewed as such, intentional unification as a constitutive dimension of communities will also always have an emotional component. This may be an affective attunement of the members elicited by positive sentiments towards each other, a feeling of belonging, or the cohesive power of other shared emotions.

With this in mind, consider the following 'mixed' view, which I favour, regarding the relation between emotional sharing and communal life: whereas certain emotional components that are more complex than simply positive sentiments, namely forms of shared appraisals and concerns, or joint focuses of import ('I care about x because it is important to *us*'; '*we* see x as valuable, hence it is valuable to me', etc.), are necessary constituents of communities proper, communities might not eventually instantiate other shared emotions (e.g., collective joy or grief). But *if* they do, these will certainly contribute to greater group cohesion and robustness. In a similar vein, Nussbaum (2013) recently argued that this even applies to highly complex social formations, such as nations and their political and moral values. What we need, according to Nussbaum, are not just good arguments for justice, solidarity, etc. but love of justice or feelings of solidarity. Without the underlying emotional basis, as Walther and other phenomenologists anticipated, such normatively ambitious and abstract notions will be at risk of losing precisely their *import* for us.

(4b) But in any case, whether the unification involves positive or negative alignment, Walther requires more than just unification. The final requirement is a *reaction* or *reply to the affective unification (Erwiderung der Einigung)*. This should not to be confused with the first requirement, *intentional reciprocation*; rather it is a reciprocation in which every member of a community *experiences* the unification with all other subjects of the community. Only if we thus have what Walther also calls 'mutual unification' (*Wechseleinigung*) (1923: 63-66) do we have a full-fledged experiential community. This mutual unification is primarily based on intentionally grasping the shared object of appraisal, and not necessarily on direct emotional expression, communication, or interpersonal behaviour. And since this 'reciprocation' is *experiential* and requires *sensate* beings capable of affective reciprocity in the first place, this, Walther argues, proves that experiential sharing can only take place between persons of flesh and blood, and not between, say, a person and an inanimate, fictional or mythological person (1923: 64). However, note that, for Walther, this does not exclude the possibility of sharing experiences and emotions with imagined or deceased (i.e., only absent, not fictional) persons or communities.

We now have a complete set of *requirements* that according to Walther communities have to fulfill in order to share experiences. But we still don't have a sufficiently clear *analysis* of how the unification and awareness of such come about.

Arguably the most famous part of Walther's account of communal experiences is her analysis of the intentional structure underlying 'we-experiences'. To make it utterly clear, note again that not all communal experiences are we-experiences, but only those *actual* and typically unmediated, face-to-face forms of experiential sharing in which there is a possibility for the members to have some form of empathic encounter with one another. It is crucial not to misunderstand the role of empathy here: it in no way implies that Walther (or any other phenomenlogist) would hold that empathy involves some form of experiential sharing, but quite the contrary (1923: 73-75; cf. Zahavi and Rochat 2015; Zahavi forthcoming).

But however fascinating and complex her account indeed is, I think it is highly misleading to put it at the center of her account, as commentators usually, and mostly critically, do. The reason why it should not be overempahsized as the kernel of Walther's account is not only that it is indeed not fully immune to certain technical problems; rather, the reason is simply that her analysis only applies to a very specific kind of experiential sharing, *viz.* we-experiences properly speaking. Consequently, the core notion that this analysis employs—(iterative) empathy (*Einfühlung*)—cannot be taken as a necessary, let alone sufficient, requirement for experiential sharing as such. In fact, one might best view it as just a specific sort of the awareness requirement, a specific version of (3), rather than a full-blown analysis of communal experiences *simpliciter*.

So, here is a minimally modified version of Walther's much-quoted analysis (1923: 85-86), building explicitly on Stein's account of iterative and reflexive empathy (Stein 1917: 18, 88-89).

(1a)   A's experience intentionally directed at object O;

(1b)   B's similar (*ähnlich*) experience of O;

(2a)   A's experience of O, going hand in hand with the empathic grasp of B's O-experience;

(2b)   B's experience of O, going hand in hand with the empathic grasp of A's O-experience;

(3a)   A's unification (*Einigung*) with the empathically grasped O-experience of B;

(3b)   B's unification with the empathically grasped O-experience of A;

(4a)   A's empathic grasp (via iterative empathy) of B's unification with A's experience;

(4b)   B's empathic grasp (via iterative empathy) of A's unification with B's experience.

In his illuminating contribution to this volume, Schmid (fothcoming c) critically discusses this model and the unification requirement, and rejects Walther's account of experiential sharing based on this criticism. In a nutshell, the objection is that Walther

cannot escape a certain infinite regress or iterability built into any form of mutual awareness. According to Schmid, instead of explaining we-experiences distributively, as Walther allegedly does, by aggregating or building up the collectivity of experience from a complex of reciprocal or mutual attitudes, we ought to account for we-experiences in terms of what he labels 'plural self-reflective self-awareness': the "collective element does not consist of a structure of reciprocal attitudes. Rather, it consists in the way experiences are always experienced as subjective. In the same way the experiences I'm making present themselves to me as mine, the experiences we are making together present themselves to us, pre-reflectively, as ours" (Schmid forthcoming c; cf. also Schmid 2014, and critically Szanto 2014: 108f.; 2015: 507).

I think Schmid is right in pointing out the imminent threat of a regressive and ultimately circular analysis when it comes to Walther's analysis of iterative empathy and the mutual awareness of unification in we-experiences. However, again we ought not overlook the complexity of Walther's analysis of various forms of *properly shared* communal experiences, of which 'we-experiences' are but a special, and indeed rather rare, case, and certainly not their kernel or only paradigm. Just as important and surely more pervasive are communal experiences that are constituted by indirect and non-simultaneous reciprocal influences, intra-, intergroup or group-level 'non-reflective knowledge-of' between members, and the indirect and habitual background of shared appraisals. And remember that these indirect forms of—not necessarily synchronous and hence not necessarily mutual—awareness are cashed out by Walther *not* in terms of iterative empathy but by different forms of non-reflective knowledge-of. But these escape the regressivity-issue (cf. León and Zahavi 2016) or issues with 'common knowledge' accounts of sharedness (cf. Blomberg 2015). But even if one does not accept this reference to those forms of communal experience that do not entail the *mutual* awareness condition as a sufficient reply to disperse worries concerning the regress-problem, we might still find a solution in a very similar phenomenological account of communal experience.

In concluding, I now wish to show how we find in Stein's account of SE an important element that leads us towards a solution to the problem exposed by Schmid, to wit, a solution that is, however different in detail, congenial not only to Walther's account but also to Schmid's own plural self-awareness conception. I have discussed Stein's complex account, which in many ways overlaps with, but in some important aspects differs from, Walther's (Szanto 2015). Here, I only want to focus on one crucial aspect of the theory, which I propose to call the *double aspect intentionality of SE*. Stein distinguishes two intentions in every experiential sharing, involving two intentional levels of directedness and correlatively two relations of fulfillment: (a) there is an "objective intention" (*gegenständliche Intention*), which is directed upon a shared intentional object of affective import (e.g., losing *our game*); and (b) intrinsically built into the very same intentional act is an intention directed towards the *sharing* itself, which Stein calls an 'intention upon the communal experience' (*Intention auf das Gemeinschaftserlebnis*) (e.g., that *we share the experience of* losing our game; 1922: 137f.). It is little known that Scheler offers a similar suggestion when he writes that, "in a certain class of acts, an intention

directed upon a possible community is essentially co-given in the nature of those acts" (Scheler 1926b, 509). Surely, at this point, one might again wonder whether this account of affective sharing is too cognitively demanding. In particular, one may ask whether it entails that individuals need to be reflectively aware of their sharing, in which case we are not better served by this than by Walther's iterative empathy account, especially when viewed as just a version of her knowledge-of requirement. So all depends on how one cashes out the intention directed towards the sharing: as reflective, higher-order, or meta-representational, or else as some form of pre-reflective awareness of a given emotion, which is pre-reflectively given (to me) not only as my experience but as mine precisely *insofar as it is shared* by others. Though Stein is silent on this matter, the most charitable reading seems to qualify this intention not as a higher-order reflection but rather as a specific mode of apperceiving one's own emotion as shared. This reading is supported by the fact that the two intentional directions are intrinsically linked, or, better, just two aspects of one and the same intentional experience. And in this specific respect the dual aspect account comes close to Schmid's model of plural pre-reflective awareness. When someone "claims to realize" a shared emotion, as Stein writes, one realizes one's own emotion in the "name of the group", or in the first person plural ('We are grieving') (Stein 1922: 116f.). Accordingly, there are two distinct relations of intentional fulfillment of shared emotions: they can be fulfilled insofar as (a) the "intention to realize the communal experience is fulfilled" and (b) the intention "does justice" to "what the object demands" (ibid.). For Stein, the two relations of fulfillment can come apart if the first is fulfilled and the second is not; according to Stein a shared emotion can be fulfilled in the second sense even if only one single member appropriately realizes the shared emotion. I have discussed elsewhere the problematic implications of the latter sort of fulfillment: first concerning the normativity of SE at play, and second that it seems *prima facie* wrong to suppose that one single member could adequately realize a shared emotion (see again Szanto 2015). Suffice it to say here that regarding the latter issue Walther's account of (non-synchronous) habitual unification offers an elegant way out, since someone may be appropriately affectively unified with others by means of actualizing the habitualized affective background, even if those others are not around.[22]

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[22] Regarding the normative implications, within the framework of the double aspect account, we may ask at least two sorts of questions: (a) what is appropriate of the individual's and the collective's emotions vis-à-vis the evaluative target and (b) what is appropriate vis-à-vis the sharedness, i.e., in Stein's terms, what is "required" of an individual emotion to be part of or match a shared emotion, and what is "required" of a shared emotion to be appropriately shared and adequate to the respective group? See esp. Stein 1922: 117. Though Walther doesn't dwell much on such normative questions, she does briefly discuss the issue of authentic and inauthentic communal experiences (*echte, unechte*), namely when individual experiences "in the name of a group" and the experiences "from the standpoint of the group" itself come apart (1923: 107-109).

**Conclusion**

Where does this complex picture of Walther's communal experiences leave us vis-à-vis the above-stated requirements that any robust account of SE ought to fulfill (intentionality and awareness, integration, and plurality and self/other-differentiation)? And how does Walther's account fare compared to the three contamporary accounts and with a view to the reasearch desiderata?

First consider the intentionality and (mutual) awareness requirement. Arguably, Walther succeeds in spelling out the fine-grained intentional structure of SE in accounting for the distinctions between shared objects, their sensory and intentional contents and the subject(s) of sharedness. Moreover, she explicates the different forms and mechanisms of the awareness of sharing (pre-reflective knowlegde-of and iterative empathy). And however *prima facie* these are prone to technical concerns (regressivity, cognitive overload, etc.), read in the light of Stein's double aspect account of sharing, I have argued that her explication withstands those concerns. In doing so, Walther provides precise criteria against the blurring of boundaries between emotional sharing and emotional contagion.

As regards plurality and self/other-differentiation, Walther offers a strong alternative to token-identy and phenomenal fusion accounts. First, she allows for individual variation and difference in sensory contents within a shared experiential episode—a general convergence or harmony of intentional senses is sufficient (but, to be sure, this is also the case for Schmid); secondly, her iterative empathic account of we-experiences as well as her notion of *mutual* unification and reciprocation only works by assuming a clear preservation *and* awareness of self/other-boundaries.

At the same time, and this leads us to the third requirement, Walther's account clearly goes beyond individualist projects of reducing emotional sharing to either an aggregation of individuals or normativist reductions in the manner of Gilbert. Rather, her conception of mutual unification and the way she explicates its affective *and* intentional aspects, in particular, provides a robust sense in which individuals' emotional experiences are integrated—to wit, without assuming some supra-individual subject. At the same time, and here we come to one of the central desiderata of any adequate account of SE, Walther's differentiation between various forms and mechanisms of unfication (actual, potential, and habitual) and the respective differences in the thus constituted shared experiences (communal experiences broadly conceived vs. actual we-experiences) allow us to distinguish different types, grades and layers of emotional sharing. For example, it allows for distinguishing between those instances of emotional sharing where there is no direct, actual bodily or perceptual contact or where there is mediation by proxy, and those where we have direct empathic encounters. Thus, if my reading is fair, notwithstanding some still not fully resolved problems I have pointed to, the phenomenological account presented by Walther has sufficient merits to be taken as a key point of reference for any future account of emotional sharing.

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