

Collective Affective Intentionality and Phenomenology of Togetherness

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Abstract

In this paper, I seek to challenge some contemporary accounts of collective affective intentionality by arguing for irreducibility of ontological autonomy of individual affective experiences. By elaborating on several requirements for reciprocal affective responses, I propose that instead of endorsing tendency of experiential unification, phenomenal fusion and token identity accounts and conceiving of single body of collectivity in terms of extended self, as the ontological bearer of affective intentionality, one has to maintain at least minimal asymmetry of self and other. Moreover, I discuss the role of embodied interaffectivity and mutual incorporation accounts for collective affective experiences.

Keywords: phenomenology, affectivity, intentionality, embodiment, fusion

1. Introduction

Apart from sharing cognitive (belief) and conative (intentional) attitudes, what is a role of affective (emotive) sharing in constitution of community and to what extent are emotions intentional? In a debate about collective intentionality, the role and function of affectivity has been generally neglected. Are we able to experience certain emotions collectively and in what sense does it constitute a “we-

* **Acknowledgments:** This article was supported by Joint Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia-German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) research fellowship at the University of Cologne, Germany. I would like to thank Thiemo Breyer for being my academic host. I would also like to thank Erik Norman Dzwiza-Ohlsen for his support.

community”? According Robert Solomon, feelings cannot be intentional, because they “do not have directions” (Solomon 2003, 4). In contrast to that claim, Hans Bernhard Schmid proposed phenomenological interpretation of collective affective intentionality, he claimed that one has to overcome the dichotomy of intentionality and feeling and therefore considered unintentionality of emotions as “the deep-seated preconception” (Schmid 2009, 63).

There are different layers and degrees of togetherness. One might join the forces with others to achieve certain common goal; I would call it *instrumental unification*. Such kind of collaboration does not necessarily presuppose the robust notion of “we” and the membership of community constituted by shared beliefs and the system of values. One can even does one’s part within the given organizational structure without feeling the sense of belonging to community and without sharing axiological patterns and affective states with other members. I would call it *deliberate operative membership*, in which concomitant predisposition of the subject is alienation from the work one does. One can remain the member of an organization or social structure without maintaining affinity to the group and experiencing the lack of the sense of togetherness. One of the main consequences of modernity is the structural transformation of the forms of communication, which enables us to interact with each other “as if” we succeed in elimination of physical distance. In such kind of disembedding of space and restructuration of time the sense of togetherness takes the form of virtual association in which shared perspectives and goals might unite participants. Having a shared view is the precondition for experiencing something like the sense of belonging to each other and to the broad community, however, I would argue that, not all forms of togetherness constitute the “we”. Individuals can feel something and act alongside with each other but not together. Feeling and acting together presupposes not only certain parallelism of intentional directedness of each person to the external object, but their reciprocal awareness of shared modes of feeling. In virtual communication via zoom or other platforms, expression of individual emotional stances and

affective intentional unification is very rare and almost impossible. There are numerous artificial images for expressing variety of complex emotional experiences, for example putting an icon of heart in message box for articulating love, emoji of smiling or distressed faces for communicating respective affective states, and even bodily gestures and postures aiming at compensation or virtual representation of certain emotions.

However, in an absence of embodied interaction, devised as a supplement and a certain prosthesis of body, these virtual images cannot function as the precondition for collective affective intentionality and bodily resonance. In the debate about the possibility of shared emotions, cognitivist account dominated the field about individual as well as collective intentionality considering affective dimension within the framework of shared intentionality and shared belief (Schmid 2009, 61). Hans Bernhard Schmid indicated on the necessity of an overcoming of cognitivist bias as well as feeling theorists account regarding unintentionality of emotions. By developing the conception of phenomenological fusion of consciousness during the process of sharing an emotion, he tried to bridge the gap between intentionality and feeling and provided phenomenological account of collective affective intentionality. The main question is about the possibility of the existence of one single body of collectivity as the ontological bearer of affective intentionality. How is it possible for collective to have affective intentionality? In her influential article about “mental commons”, Annette Baier having declared that we all have been brainwashed by Descartes asked the question “why should we take the first person singular to be more self-explanatory than the first person plural”? (Baier 1997, 18). She criticized accounts of analytic philosophers of action for their individualist biased perspective. Baier designated Gilbert’s theory as “weak analytic individualism”, Searle’s philosophical stance as “methodological individualism” and blamed Bratman’s account for being broadly individualistic in spirit. Schmid from his part referring to Gilbert’s account of “collective guilt feelings” wants to avoid the connection with tendency of action and to use his own words chooses “cooperatively less marked examples” (Schmid 2009, 61) of collective feelings, as

the shared grief, because in contrast to guilt it does not presuppose an action. Schmid's replacement of guilt by the grief is for avoiding cognitivist explication of shared emotions. As Gerhard Tonhauser remarked, "Cognitivist theories can simply treat collective affective intentionality as a special case of collective intentionality" (Tonhauser 2018, 102).

To what extent is intentionality necessary component for experiencing collectively certain affective state? In that context, should we have to consider intentionality in a distributive way as a mere aggregation or summation of which might be the precondition of collective affectivity? How is it possible to share emotion with others without being mutually aware of an affective state of each other? For the sake of the simplification, let me consider the moments of joy and exaltation during the sport match. Attending the match on the stadium, fans of the football team might experience different affective states such as happiness, sadness, disappointment, irritation, pride and excitement. Would it be legitimate to assume that if their beloved team win the match, experienced positive emotions can be shared with other fans without being mutually aware in a presence of each other? I would like to assume that fans being intentionally directed at the target of feeling do not have to be necessarily co-present at the stadium. One can watch a football match through TV and after the final whistle experience the same emotion as someone attended physically the game at the stadium. In that case, despite having the same target of feeling, there cannot be any rational discussion about collective affective intentionality, because fans do not experience a joy or happiness together and are unaware even in an existence of each other. Even those having attended the match at a stadium, do not reciprocate emotionally and do not recognize each other personally. Such collective celebration and collective experience of positive affective states are fragile, transient and temporarily short-lived. I do acknowledge an importance and necessity of plurality and integration requirements for shared emotions, but I would like to differentiate between weak notion of plurality and strong one. It is truism that one cannot share emotional episodes with others if literally there is no other. Sharing requires not an auto-affectivity, but hetero-affectivity,

in other words, one cannot share an emotion in an absolute loneliness.

However, getting back to and explicating an idea of weak plurality, I would assume that plurality does not yet imply that we experience certain emotion together and thus have the sense of “us”. Under the notion of weak plurality, I understand the situation when people share the common space without experiencing something together and without being affectively interconnected with each other. Moreover, for having collective affective intentionality there has to be embodied and not an abstract plurality. Therefore, I would like to propose, that for having collective affective intentionality embodied co-presence and interbodily affective resonance is needed. Apart from sharing an underlying concern, I think that the solid and temporarily enduring sense of us as being together with one another requires mutual awareness and embodied affectivity.

There are at least two possible forms of being together. The first one is physical localization of individuals and sharing of one spatial dimension, when they are mutually aware in the presence of each other. Another one is physical remoteness of subjects who identify themselves to the same community and share some cognitive or conative experiences with each other. When two or more scientists are working remotely from the different countries on the same project, they might share their research findings and cooperate with each other without being affectively unified. In that case, one can argue that there is some kind of disembodied collectivity without affective intentional states and that these scientists represent instrumental type of association. Where exactly to locate collectivity and how does it relate to plural subjectivity. Margaret Gilbert is one of the most prominent defenders of the plural subject conception. According to her proposal, for experiencing certain affective state collectively as a plural and not as a singular subject, the members of a given group should have been jointly committed to do something as body. As Gilbert herself writes, “there is a collective that intends to do something if and only if the members of a given population are jointly committed to intend as a body to do that thing” (Gilbert 2002, 115). Therefore, Gilbert aims at criticizing Kutz’s account

of individualism of feelings and rejection of collective affective states by holding on an idea of plural subjectivity, while Hans Bernhard Schmid despite sharing Gilbert's basic claim regarding collective affective states of plural subject, proposed alternative account that plural subjecthood can be conceived in terms of phenomenal subjectivity, while maintaining ontic claim about qualitative primacy and richness of individual emotions (Schmid 2009, 68). Schmid developed the concern-based account of collective affective states. According to him, "Feelings can be ascribed to groups by virtue of their member's experiencing their feelings as members of the group" (Schmid 2009, 68). Thus, if Schmid's assumption is correct, collectives can only have and not feel¹ an emotion as the phenomenal and not an ontic subject. In what follows, I will consider phenomenal fusion account and will juxtapose it with ontological primacy of individual affective experience.

2. Phenomenal Fusion or Ontological Autonomy of Affectivity

One of the remarkable and at the same time terrifying stories told by Max Scheller in his "The Nature of Sympathy" is well known and much cited scene of parent's grief of the dead son. In this episode, mother and father share, the content of the work of mourning and thus, their affective intentionality might be conceived of in a collective form, not as his or her feeling, but their feeling:

Two parents stand beside the dead body of a beloved child. They feel in common the 'same' sorrow, the 'same' anguish. It is not that A feels this sorrow and B feels it also, and moreover that they both know that they are feeling it. No, it is a feeling-in-common. A's sorrow is in no way an 'external' matter 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 that they feel and experience in common, not only the same value-situation, but also the same keenness of emotion in regard to it. The sorrow, as value content, and the grief, as characterizing the functional relation thereto, are here one and identical (Scheler 2008, 12-13).

Ingrid Vendrell Ferran analyzing affective intentionality and different forms of being with one another commented upon Scheller's example of "immediate community of feeling" - "it is a

form of shared affective intentionality in the sense that two interrelated individuals share the same object and type of feeling” (Ferran 2016, 224). According to her account “sympathy” or “fellow feeling” in Scheller’s taxonomy of collective emotional life and forms of togetherness might also be characterized in terms of shared affective intentionality. As she writes, “Only ‘community of feeling’ and ‘fellow feeling’ can be considered shared forms of affective intentionality” (Ferran 2016, 225). As we have seen, Ferran qualifies this dramatic example of grieving parents as shared affective intentionality, which is correct. However, does the notion of “sharedness” entail the same valence as the term collective? For having collective affective intentionality at least, two or more participants have to share either mode or content of feeling. According to phenomenal fusion account developed by Schmid, by sharing the target and mode of feeling, parents are phenomenally intertwined with one another and they experience the grief from within as ours. In a received literature about collective affective intentionality and about the shared feelings, there are multiple interesting analysis and interpretations of this dramatic example; however, I would like to draw attention to what Joel Krueger called “synchronic bodily and spatial intimacy between parents and their dead child” and “diachronic narrative intimacy” (Krueger 2016, 270). In Scheller’s example, parents are physically co-present to each other and their feeling in common might be underpinned by the memory of shared experience. Similar idea to diachronic narrative unity can be found in Scheller’s work itself, in the notion of “life community” constituted by what he called co-experience (*Miteinander-Erleben*) (Ferran 2016, 225):

In the immediate experience of the life-community, there is no division between the experience of the self and that of the other: the content of this co-experiencing is identical. The self has an understanding of others, itself, and of the mutual belonging to a community (Ferran 2016, 225).

Such kind of construal of collective affective intentionality through co-experiencing seems to eliminate the difference between an experience of self and other and unifies them in one single collective or plural entity. Despite that we-

mode of shared experience with identical content, one has to maintain a distance between self and other; otherwise, the very sharing of affective experience would not be possible. Even phenomenal fusion account of shared feelings would have been undermined easily without presupposing genuine distance between two experiential subjects. Let us assume for a moment that parents are not standing together beside “the dead body of a beloved child”, In that case, to what extent can the claim about straightforward sharing of feeling would be justifiable, despite the “same” grief felt by each of them while being physically distanced from each other. However, this does not rule out the possibility of shared diachronic memory of parents. Diachronic constitution of parent’s plural experience as “ours” can persist without bodily synchronization. They can reflect upon the valuable episodes from their life, which are experientially owned by both, without being together and sharing their memories with one other:

“When gazing at the corpse of their beloved child, both parents draw upon this common stock of family knowledge; since they share this narrative intimacy, the child will, as an object of their mutual grief, be experientially given in a similar way, that is, via a similar network of memories and associations” (Krueger 2016, 271).

Both Schmid and Krueger have supported phenomenal fusion account and joint ownership thesis (Szanto 2018. 91; See also León, Szanto, Zahavi 2019). Ontological individualism claims that emotions or mental states can be owned and experienced only by individuals. Whereas epistemological individualism is committed to an idea that we have unmediated first-personal access to our own mental states and are not able to directly, grasp a mental state of other individuals (Schmid 2009, 72, 74; See also León, Szanto, Zahavi 2019). From Schmid’s and Krueger’s perspectives, both ontological and epistemological individualist bias should be somehow avoided in order to justify a phenomenal fusion and token identity theses. Schmid opposes the view that when sharing certain emotional experience, individual does not have a token of the same type of experience (Schmid 2009, 69; León, Szanto, Zahavi 2019). Instead, he insisted upon the numerical identity of the same token emotional episode and seems to extend ontology of

individual self to the ontology of plural self. Joel Krueger is also the proponent of a token identity account and argues against ontological individualism by claiming that “In cases of collective emotions, a token emotion extends across multiple subjects; here, one emotion is collectively realized by multiple participants (Krueger 2016, 269).

However, despite having first personal access to experience and being able to synchronically regulate each other’s emotions and diachronically unify experiential field of memory, this would raise the doubts about the possibility of dual ownership of the very same experience, when two individuals share allegedly numerically token state of feeling. Dan Zahavi for instance, thought that an account of shared token affective states might be fundamentally incoherent and based upon Scheller’s misinterpretation (See Zahavi 2014, 245). He indicates that on later pages of *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*, Scheller elaborated on the different account of that episode:

The process of feeling in the father and the mother is given separately in each case; only what they feel — the one sorrow — and its value-content, is immediately present to them as identical (Scheler 2008, 37).

According to Zahavi “If the process of feeling is given separately to the father and the mother, it is certainly not obvious that Scheler should be defending the view that the same token experience is shared by several individuals” (Zahavi 2014, 245). For affective state to be shared, two or more individuals have to be perceptually co-present as embodied subjects and reciprocally aware in each other’s affective experience. Briefly, let us go back to Scheller’s example of parent’s grief and consider the third-person perspective of a friend who joins them and “commiserates upon their sorrow”. Parents are reciprocally aware in the grief of each other and share their affective states with one another, while a third person observing them from a distance and might also be in a same affective state, remains out of the parent’s horizon of grief. Therefore, for sharing an emotion, other awareness has to be reciprocal. The participants of the same emotional episode are aware not only in their own affective state, but also in the

fact that other, let say my teammate, experiences the same emotion and is aware that I am experiencing qualitatively identical emotion too. Reciprocal other awareness condition is not sufficient for emotion to be shared. Two or more participants might be reciprocally aware in their respective affective state, without necessarily experiencing the same emotion and having the same target. What follows from that premise? In order to share emotion across multiple subjects, individuals have to be intrinsically interrelated with each other and the sense of togetherness and belonging to the same experientially unified community might be the precondition. The members of that community should be able to synchronically and simultaneously identify and refer to the shared emotions as ours and not as just an individually experienced episode of affection.

Hans Bernhard Schmid argued that having the same target and focus is not necessary condition for affective state to be shared (Schmid 2009, 67). Two subjects might have the same target but different focus and in an extreme case different target and different focus. Schmid, then bring forth the powerful example of what he called “affective meeting of two minds” from Homer’s *Iliad*, referring to King Priam’s encounter with Achilles, who for the sake of revenge, murdered King’s son-Hector. Priam’s decision to sneak in the camp of an enemy discloses an act of unconditional self-donation and certain preexisted expectation or hope that Achilles can affectively attune with Priam’s condition, would be able to emphatically understand him, and thus hand him over the body of killed son.

Respect the gods, Achilles, and take pity on me, remembering your own father. I am more piteous far than he, and have endured what no other mortal on the face of earth has yet endured, to reach out my hand to the face of the man who has slain my sons.’ So he spoke, and in Achilles he roused desire to weep for his father; and he took the old man by the hand, and gently pushed him away from him. So the two remembered – the one remembered man slaying Hector and wept loudly, collapsed at Achilles’ feet, but Achilles wept for his own father, and now again for Patroclus; and the sound of their moaning went up through the house (*Iliad*, Book 24, 503–512).²

According to Schmid’s interpretation of that powerful passage of affective encounter, Achilles recognized something

similar to Priam in his own grief, which resulted in his decision to restore the world order by handing over the body of Hector to Priam. Schmid considers that Achilles “recognizes that the feeling is shared”. However, in what sense the feeling is shared? Did Achilles decide to show his goodwill towards Priam only after the recognition of shared feeling? In that case, the target and focus of feeling is different, Priam mourns his son, while Achilles “weep for his father” and for Patroclus. Despite that asymmetry of target and focus, both their affective experience is shared by similar underlying concern “behind the target-focus relation”. In another article, Schmid remarked, “Achilles's weeping is not a case of emphatic co-weeping. Achilles is far from weeping for Hector together with Priam”³ (Schmid 2013, 473). This might be right that Achilles does not weep for Priam’s dead son, but for his father and friend, or for himself. Sánchez Guerrero pointed out that their connectedness, which is affective in nature, is a “matter of Achilles’ capacity to (by means of a series of abstractions) ‘put himself in the shoes of Priam. At best, we can speak here, thus, of a case of sympathy ‘about something’ (Guerrero 2016, 123). According to Thiemo Breyer “In this interpersonal situation, the decisive factor is interaffectivity, not active empathizing with others”⁴ (Breyer 2015, 211). To what extent can this capacity of emphatic or sympathetic abstraction amounts to affective sharing? Does interaffectivity precede an empathy or are they equiprimordial? First, it is unclear whether putting oneself in other’s place amount to empathy or sympathy, in history of philosophy these terms have been frequently used interchangeably⁵. For example, according to Thiemo Breyer, what David Hume and Adam Smith meant by the term, sympathy “is usually called empathy today” (Breyer 2020, 434). Achilles and Priam do not share diachronic narrative; the grief of both is directed at the different object of remembrance. Achille’s capacity of affectively respond to Priam’s embodied grief has been preconditioned by Priam’s speech, which stirred in Achilles the desire to go through his own misery again. However, despite Priam being a cause for Achilles’s affective developing, he is not a focus of Achilles’s concern. Empathy is not necessarily a reciprocal experience, but it is oriented on other and according to

linguistic approach is “able to cognitively make sense of another subject’s psychological life, or to share an affective state with them” (Breyer 2020, 429). In the given example, one might be tempted to argue for emphatic comprehension of other’s affective experience, which can generate an affective response in empathizer. However, I think that Achilles does not put himself in Priam’s shoes, rather, he is more self-centered and though King actualizes his own grief. The same can be applied to Priam himself. In that case, one can argue that Achilles comes to his own grief through empathic understanding of Priam’s affective experience, or by identifying his own emotional predisposition with Priam’s affective experience. However, Schmid’s and Breyer’s interpretations seems to be more appropriate and that there is no preceding emphatic act, rather embodied interaffectivity. There is no “we” of affective response in this episode. They might lament together not as a “we” having shared one target and focus, but as opposed subjects having the same content and similar concern. Achilles does not experience sympathy either. Sympathy “is not so much a matter of what we understand or what we feel; rather, it is more about being concerned for the other (Breyer 2020, 429). Having the same concern beyond the target and focus, does not mean that Achilles is concerned for Priam, rather, he might be concerned for himself, or for the lost beloved persons. My point is that, before arguing for affective unification or for affective sharing, it would be reasonable to consider empathy as possible precondition for affective sharing⁶, but in that particular episode, there is no any sign of empathizing other’s experience, rather interaffective relatedness. Zahavi and RoCHAT critically reviewed arguments of contemporary theorists⁷ of empathy regarding the thesis that affective sharing is an essential structure and presupposition of empathy. Empathizing with someone does not necessarily entail mutual or reciprocal intentional response; therefore, it is an experience of empathizer, which does not conflate with an experience of empathized subject and maintains a substantial asymmetry (According to Zahavi and RoCHAT asymmetry is persisting existential fact) between an experience of self and other. In contrast to empathy, “affective sharing is necessarily

reciprocal” (Zahavi and Rochat 2015, 551), but at the same time, it is similar to it, because it does not also eliminate the asymmetry of self and other, rather is hinged upon it. Not all kind of interpersonal relatedness constitute the sense of “us”, or belonging to a larger “we”. For instance, emotional contagion is self-oriented and empathy despite being primarily an experience of empathizer originates from embodied cognitive and affective capacities of virtual comprehension of other’s minds. Thus, it is other oriented, while emotional sharing, in contrast to emotional contagion and empathy itself presupposes affective reciprocation between two or more participants and it might be the proper candidate for the constitution of a “we”. However, I would assume that “we” does not instantiate undifferentiated homogeneous entity and that it does not entail a status of ontological bearer of affective, cognitive or conative states. As it has been shown above, in order to share an affective state underling concern of each person is required. For rationalizing the mode of feeling, one has to be concerned about something. According to Schmid, “our concerns structure our lives in allowing us and others to make sense of our attitudes” (Schmid 2009, 65). However, such affective states might not always be intentional, as Salmela and Nagatsu underscored, their intentionality is a matter of contingency, while evaluative content is necessarily intentional and is always directed to some object of emotion (Nagatsu and Salmela 2016). Jan Slaby in contrast, assumes that “affective states in humans are (or essentially involve) intentional feelings” (Slaby 2008, 430).

I would argue that if affective states might be contingently intentional, in contrast to them, affective responses are always intentionally directed on certain emotional objects and are very similar to what Fuchs and Koch elsewhere called affective affordances (Fuchs, Koch 2014), when in given situation things appear to bear important and valuable features for us. The substantial difference of affective states and affective responses, has been drawn by early phenomenologist Dietrich von Hildebrand, according to whom:

As soon as the affective response is torn apart from the object, which has generated it, from which its sense and justification stem and to which it has a subordinated position, it will be reduced to mere

affective state, which ontologically stands even lower than a state such as fatigue and alcohol-induced hilarity. Because affective responses legitimately claim another position and another layer of the person, or, rather because they are essentially intentional, this separation from the object destroys their inner sense of being, dignity and seriousness⁸ (Hildebrand 1967, 28).

To go back to the paradigm of affective meeting of minds, I would argue that Achilles evaluates the content of Priam's grief and affectively responds to it by means of recognizing the same underlying concern. Priam's embodied grief generates Achilles's affective intentional response. Without Priam's affective self-disclosure, Achilles would have remained on lower ontological level of affective state. He could be able to respond internally to his loss, (which might not be always intentional) without reconceiving his identity as son, which enables him to recognize his grief in Priam. It is important to note that despite affective experiential resonance between these two, there is no merging or phenomenal fusion of Priam and Achilles in one single ontological bearer of emotion, because of their extreme polarity as enemies, the distance between self and other cannot be eliminated. I think that their emotional interlocking should be understood in terms of embodied interaffectivity and synchronization of their feeling.

Third and last example of interpersonal affective connectedness is another pinnacle of affective experiences in world literature – Shakespeare's Hamlet – The Prince of Denmark. Despite being enemies, situated on the different margins of experience, there is some kind of emotional correspondence between Hamlet and Laertes. Their affective intentionality is directed on the same target, Ophelia, who was Laertes's sister and Hamlets' beloved. However, extreme polarity of self and other, impede affective sharing between them. Both are revenging sons and they experience the double grief. Therefore, they have the same affective content, mode and concern. In case of father, target and focus of their mourning is different, but there is an underlying concern behind it, they both lost the father and they seek to revenge. However, despite having the same affective experience regarding Ophelia's death, they are emotionally alienated from each other. My point is that, despite having the same target

and concern and being bodily co-present at Ophelia's grave, there cannot be any affective convergence between them. Until a very last moment, they do not recognize each other's affective concerns. Now let me quote the passage from the play, which demonstrates unidirectional emphatic understanding and consequent affective identification with other's experience:

But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself,
For by the image of my cause, I see
The portraiture of his. I'll court his favours.
But sure the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion (Shakespeare 5.2.75–135).

Hamlet sees Laertes's "portraiture" through his own experience; he finds something similar to himself in his enemy and this emphatic understanding of other's grief precedes and provides the ground for affective attunement with Laertes. Through introspective self-analysis, Hamlet is able to identify and see Laertes's affective experience and only after grasping his grief, he finds himself in "towering passion". Hamlet can have an understanding of Laertes's experience only by going through himself, by being centered on his own self; he can see other's image. Richard Meek relying upon Rene Girard's provocative reading of Hamlet suggests the different interpretation.

Hamlet becomes the other, or temporarily changes places with him. The play implies, perhaps, that moments of sympathetic 'recognition' are often about self-recognition, and that the distinction between the self and other in such moments becomes complicated or even collapses altogether (Meek 2019, 82).

This might be right, in case of accepting Girard's suggestion of reversed positions between self and other. According to Girard, Hamlet could say, "By the image of his cause I see the portraiture of mine"⁹ (Meek 2019, 82). This reversal would amount to introjection, in which Hamlet takes and internalizes external affective states of Laertes. I do not think that Hamlet even temporarily conceives of himself as other and by doing this blur the distinction between himself and Laertes. "Sympathetic recognition" of other and "self-recognition", might be dialectically interdependent, but in this

concrete episode, Hamlet's reflexive self-recognition precedes and conditions emphatic understanding, which leads to affective identification with other.

3. Embodied Inter-affectivity

The question about the possibility of collective affective intentionality rests upon an understanding of the very notion of collectivity. There are two radically divergent perspectives regarding it. First, we can conceive of collectivity in terms of ontologically autonomous plural subject having some kind of body with an ability to experience the certain affective state. Should we have to refer to it in first personal singular or first personal plural mode? I am far from accepting the proposal that it can be understood as an extended or larger I with its own embodied experience. If ontological individualism regarding feeling of emotions is right, and I think it is, having a certain affective experience or to feel an emotion is an a priori possible only within the confinement of our bodies. Gerhard Thornhauser raised the doubt regarding the possibility of collective emotions, according to him, "If the ability to experience emotions is necessarily linked to having a body, conceiving of collectives having emotions appears impossible (Thornhauser 2017, 102).

In examples I have already touched upon, understanding of other's emotions does not amount to sharing; rather it might be one of the preconditions of it. Such kind of intuitive understanding of others happens through bodily resonance (see Fuchs 2016, 195) and through interbodily modification of each other's affective states. Therefore, in order to share affective state or to have joint intentional affective experience, embodied synchronization of felt emotions might be the significant prerequisite. As I have already discussed, in face-to-face encounter of Achilles and Priam, they not only know each other, but they also have the background knowledge of each other's experience of grief.

Against predominant idea that emotions primarily reside in individual's inner mind, Thomas Fuchs claims that world around us

is not bare of affective qualities. “We feel, for example, the hilarity of a party, the sadness of a funeral march, the icy climate of a conference, the awe-inspiring aura of an old cathedral or the uncanniness of a sombre wood at night” (Fuchs 2016, 196).

According to Thomas Fuchs, embodied interaffectivity precedes and somehow provides the possibility for intuitive emphatic understanding and that subjects are intertwined in a process of bodily resonance (Fuchs 2016, 196). To apply this proposal to Achilles’ and Priam’s affective meeting, it turns out to be that they are affectively co-dependent upon each other, not only by sharing the same concern, but also by being entangled in circularity of intercorporeal affective space. They co-constitute each other’s affective state through circular inter-bodily resonance and “mutual incorporation”. Before discussing affective mutual incorporation of subjective lived-bodies, let me first consider what Fuchs and Jaegher called “unidirectional incorporation” (Fuchs & Jaegher 2009, 472). According to Fuchs and Jaegher, “incorporation is a pervasive characteristic of the lived body” (Fuchs & Jaegher 2009, 472), when objects or instruments might become an integral part of one’s bodily schema and function as additional phantom limb. “Instrument is integrated into the body motor schema like an extension of the body, subjectively felt as ‘melting’ or being at one with the instrument” (Fuchs 2016, 198).

Taking place on a pre-reflective level, examples of unidirectional incorporation might be a skillful play on musical instruments such as piano, when “fingers find their way by themselves; or when a blind man probes his environment with a stick and feels the surface at the top of it” (Fuchs, 2016, 198). Unidirectional incorporation does not necessarily imply a proximity of internalizing objects with us and it might be directed towards expressive and agentive acts of another person. Apart from unidirectional incorporation, Fuchs and Jaegher introduced the notion of “mutual incorporation”, which, as in case of other awareness should be reciprocal. Does Achilles’s and Priam’s affective encounter amount to mutual incorporation? As I have already stated, in that episode, participants are not phenomenally fused and they do not

experience the same token affective episode. It is possible that Achilles incorporate the Priam's affective experience, but this does not presuppose the concept of coordination, which has a characteristic of action tendency. According to Fuchs and Jaegher "mutual incorporation implies coordination with" (Fuchs & Jaegher 2009, 474). In dyadic framework of affective exchange, participating subjects function as "affective affordances" for each other, which makes emphatic understanding and sharing of emotional experience possible. Mutual incorporation does not presuppose merging of two divergent individual experiences into one ontological bearer of mental and affective states, rather, according to Fuchs and Jaegher, it "implies a component of autonomy and otherness that is absent in unidirectional incorporation" (Fuchs & Jaegher 2009, 475). From that perspective, having collective affective intentionality presupposes certain differentiation of self and other within the collectivity itself. Two subjects might be directed together on the same target and focus of a feeling, as well as they can share certain affective experience by having the same underlying concern. This means that they might refer to their own affective experience in first personal plural form such as "our" sadness, "our" grief and our "joy", without eliminating the privileged perspective of first personal singular experience. That is to say, affective "we" is possible through affective "I" and is constituted by the relational pre-reflective "intercorporality".

4. Conclusion

In a received literature about collective intentionality, researchers until sometime directed their focus on the concept of action and overlooked or even neglected an affective aspect of our togetherness. The questions touched upon our ability of cooperative intentional activity and did not sufficiently explore affective component of collective intentionality. However, as I have shown in this article, contemporary philosophers have been developing different proposals about the possibility of collective affective intentionality and emotional sharing.

How do we have to understand that conceptual coupling of intentionality and affectivity and to what extent might it be collective? While there are less doubts about intentional directedness of emotions, the question regarding the structure and nature of collectivity remains open and obscure. There are so-called phenomenal fusion and token identity accounts presupposing the unification of the subjective affective experiences, which might be resulted in ascription of the status of ontological bearer of emotion to collectivity, conceived of as a singular or extended “I” having its own body. According to another proposal, one can experience certain emotional episode together as a “we”, however, this does not eliminate, rather requires the difference between self and other.

Relying upon different theoretical frameworks and examples, I have presented few possible requirements for collective affective intentionality and supportive arguments for the later proposal. I think that for emotional sharing the distance between self and other has to be maintained. For sharing certain affective state, subjects have to be co-present and have to identify a similar concern apart from target and focus relation, beside this, another crucial requirement is reciprocal other awareness and mutual incorporation of each other’s feelings. I have also discussed the relatedness of empathy, emotional sharing and interaffectivity and got to the position that empathy might be the precondition for emotional sharing, but there are some cases, for example Achilles’s and Priam’s affective meeting, in which one can argue about the presence of interaffectivity without emphatic understanding of other.

NOTES

¹ Here, I am refereeing to Schmid, who accentuated that Knobe and Prinz discovered that people are reluctant to say that collectives feel emotions, rather than have emotions. See: (Schmid 2009, p. 68).

² Quoted from Schmid 2009, 67.

³ “Achilles’s Weinen ist kein Fall einführenden Mitweinens. Achilles is weit davon entfernt, mit Priamos gemeinsam um Hektor zu Weinen”.

⁴ “Interaffectivität ist in dieser zwischenmenschliche Situation also das Entscheidende, nicht das aktive einfühlen in den Anderen, die kognitive Einsicht, die Selbstreflexion oder das Subsumieren unter ein Allgemeines”

⁵ For detailed conceptual and philosophical-historical analysis, see Thiemo Breyer, *Empathy, Sympathy and Compassion*.

⁶ Zahavi and Rochat developed the same argument in the following article-*Empathy ≠ sharing: Perspectives from phenomenology and developmental psychology*. According to them, empathy does not involve sharing, but it might be the precondition of it.

⁷ I quote the following authors from Zahavi's and Rochat's article. Pfeifer and Dapretto wrote that "shared affect between self and other" constitutes the experiential core of empathy" (2009, 184). Zahavi and Rochat noted that Preston refers to empathy as "a shared emotional experience occurring when one person (the subject) comes to feel a similar emotion to another (the object) as a result of perceiving the other's state" (2007, 428).

⁸ "Sobald die affektive Antwort von dem sie erzeugen- den Objekt losgerissen wird, aus dem ihr Sinn und ihre Berechtigung stammt, dem gegenüber sie eine dienende Stellung hat, wird sie selbst zu einem bloßen affektiven Zustand herabgewürdigt, der ontologisch noch tiefer steht als etwa Müdigkeit und alkoholisch bedingte Lustigkeit. Weil aber affektive Antworten legitim eine andere Stellung und eine andere Schicht der Person beanspruchen, oder vielmehr weil sie wesenhaft intentiona sind, zerstört diese Trennung vom Objekt ihre innere Seinsfülle, Würde und ihren Ernst." (Translation is mine).

⁹ I quote Girard from Robert Meek's article.

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