THE SEMANTICS OF SHARED EMOTION

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ABSTRACT

The paper investigates semantic properties of expressions that suggest the possibility that emotions are shared. An example is the saying that a sorrow shared is a sorrow halved. I assume that such expressions on sharing an emotion refer to a specific mode of subjective experience, displayed in first person attributions of the form 'We share E'. Subjective attributions of this form are intrinsically ambiguous on all levels of their semantic elements: 'emotion', 'sharing' and 'We'. One question the paper seeks to answer is whether and in what respect these semantic ambiguities mirror an indeterminacy of emotional experience. Discussing 'aggregate sharing' (of a determinate) in distinction of mere 'distributive sharing' (of a determinable), I argue that there is no sufficient criterion to determine which mode of sharing an emotional experience shaped as 'We feel E' displays. Disambiguation of this intrinsic indeterminacy must recur to situational parameters of individuals' *de re* relatedness.

Key words: we, emotional experience, aggregate sharing, determinate sharing, intersubjective mind

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RESUMEN

El artículo investiga la semántica de expresiones que sugieren la posibilidad de que las emociones se compartan. Un ejemplo es 'las penas compartidas son menos penas'. Asumo que tales expresiones acerca de compartir una emoción refieren a un modo específico de la experiencia subjetiva, que se exhibe en atribuciones de primera persona de la forma 'Nosotros compartimos E'. Las atribuciones subjetivas de esta forma son intrínsecamente ambiguas en todos los niveles de sus elementos semánticos: 'emoción', 'compartir' y 'nosotros'. Una cuestión que intento responder es si, y en qué respecto, estas ambigüedades semánticas reflejan una indeterminación de la experiencia emocional. Al tratar el 'compartir agregado' (de algo determinado) en contraste con el 'compartir distributivo' (de algo determinable), argumento que no hay criterio suficiente que determine qué modo de compartir exhibe una experiencia emocional expresada como 'Nosotros compartimos E'. La desambiguación de esta indeterminación intrínseca debe recurrir a parámetros situacionales de la relación *de re* de los individuos.

Palabras clave: nosotros, experiencia emocional, compartir agregado, compartir determinado sharing, mente intersubjetiva

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To the memory of Jean-Pierre Cornée and Tamar Adar

MANY EXPRESSIONS OF COMMON LANGUAGE suggest that emotions can be shared. Sayings such as '*A sorrow shared is a sorrow halved, a joy shared is a joy doubled*' imply that not only emotions are shareable but also that sharing them modifies their hedonic quality. These expressions suggest that an emotional experience reveals through some feature of its quality or intensity whether it is shared or not. One way to account for this kind of differences in the experiential quality is to say that the emotion is experienced in a We-mode or in an I-mode[1]. This distinction assumes that experience in general is self-focused and formally corresponds to first-person attributions of experience predicates. Usually, we take it that experience is cast in the form 'I*Y*', corresponding to a non-shared way of experiencing. Since first-person attribution also has a plural form, it is plausible to consider experiences occurring in the form 'We*Y*' as experiences that are shared with others. One question to be addressed with regard to these assumptions is under what conditions an experience is going to happen in the singular or plural mode. Another related question concerns the possible nature of the sharing implied. A fundamental distinction with regard to sharing emotions is between what I will call 'determinable sharing' and 'determinate sharing'. The first refers to a mere distributive sharing of an emotion type, realized as a set of type-identical but numerically distinct emotional experiences. The second, however, refers to the sharing of a concrete emotional episode or state, realized in the distribution of a unique experience on a plural number of individuals[2]. The concept of 'determinate sharing' implies that emotional states are not exclusively individuated by natural individuals, or, in other words, that mind is a partly intersubjective property. Such a conception of mind or mental faculties need not amount to the conception of an 'objective mind' or the refusal of naturalism. It can be construed in terms of a dynamic relational property that is existentially dependent on the physical support of natural individuals. In view of a relational and dynamic conception of the mental and the ensuing possibility of determinate sharing of emotional experience, I propose the notion of 'aggregate sharing' to account for a way of participating that is thicker than membership in a property distribution.

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[1] Accounts of We-mode and I-mode are developed by Raimo Tuomela 2006.
[2] Note that I use the term 'determinate' exclusively for determinates that are not themselves determinables.

Assuming that experience is self-focused and formally corresponds to first-person attributions of experience predicates implies that the form such attributions take provides some information concerning differences of experience. If the difference of the pronouns 'I' and 'We' indicates a distinctive feature of experience, then we should expect the logical grammar of these terms to elucidate —up to a certain point— in what respect shared emotion is distinct from unshared emotion. More generally, investigating the grammar and semantics of expressions that report or express shared emotional experience might shed some light on characteristic features of this phenomenon. In the following, I shall first present some considerations on common language expressions of shared emotion, and then, in a further section, reveal inherent ambiguities on several of their semantic levels. In the subsequent section I shall outline Max Scheler's phenomenological approach of shared emotion, showing in what respect it mirrors the problems of the diagnosed semantic ambiguities. Scheler claims that the highest form of one's feeling *with* another is to share a determinate emotional experience. Many authors relate this specific kind of sharing to the experience of a genuine 'We' in which no individual 'I' or 'you' can be distinguished. I think this move is inappropriate: it suggests that the prominent or proper function of 'We' is to refer collectively. The logical grammar of 'We', however, reveals a formal nature that is indifferent to a priority of collective over distributive reference. Its referential flexibility as both a plural and a deictic term enables the pronoun 'We' to realize a variety of references. While its formal nature opens 'We' to a variety of meaningful uses, it is the actual context of use that funnels the variety of possible references into the 'right' one in the circumstances. Similarly, the formal conditions Scheler gives for the presumed determinate sharing of emotional experience do not allow delineating determinate sharing from determinable sharing. These conditions must be supplemented to a high degree by features of the situational setting of emotional experiences. But even contextualization may fail in fully disambiguating the kind of sharing involved. I conclude that the conception of determinate emotional sharing —although very plausible in view of certain phenomena— is not an absolutely compelling conception.

1. Shared emotion in common language

A FIRST DISTINCTION THAT SEEMS IMPORTANT for the present investigation is the distinction between objective and subjective attributions of shared emotional states. This is the classical distinction between the observing and

the experiencing point of view,where the function of the former is descriptive and the function of the latter mainly expressive. Consider the following example from *The Weekend Telegraph*, 31.01.1965:

i. "Not since the war has there been such a shared emotion."

Here, the journalist reports on the funeral of Winston Churchill. Whether s/he comments the shared emotion on this occasion in a purely objective way or whether s/he reports her partaking in the experience is not evident from the isolated sentence. The use of the past tense indicates, however, that the function of the utterance is descriptive. It reports the occurrence of an emotion against the background of a great statesman's funeral, with people gathered at a certain time in a certain place, directing their attention and other mental states to one common object. The emotion shared in function of this common attendance and focus on a common object obviously had a strong enough 'atmospheric reality' to be perceived by an observer of the scene. Although the sentence above is not explicitly attributive, we can assume that the writer implicitly attributes the shared emotion to the plurality of people gathered at the funeral. A quite different case of attributing a plural realization of an emotional state is stated in the following words:

ii. "We express our deep remorse and heartfelt apology."

Such words were uttered, for example, by Japan's former Prime Minister Koizumi when he acknowledged Japanese war crimes and apologized for them. Here, the grammatical form of the sentence suggests that the remorse feeling is 'ours'. The present tense and the We-mode of first person plural attribution suggest that the obtaining of the feeling is not primarily reported but rather displayed or expressed. The displaying function of We-attribution is even emphasized by the use of the explicitly performative verb *'express'*. On the surface of the sentence, then, this utterance is apt to express the shared experience of an emotional state. Drawing on the morphology of this sentence, we could be led to state that the general form 'We feel E' indicates the experience of a shared emotion E. Compared to the previous case, however, the obtaining of the shared experience seems less dependent on a simultaneous physical presence of the sharers.

In spoken and written language, we find many cases where the functions of descriptive and expressive attributions of shared emotional experiences overlap. As already pointed out, my first example is not unambiguous in this

respect: in virtue of the impersonal form the author adopts s/he might report the shared emotion not only from an outsider's but also from an insider's view. Suppose the same utterance is made, not in the past tense in a journal, but in the present tense, made by a radio or TV reporter in a live broadcast. In these circumstances, the utterance could very well directly display the sharing of an emotional experience, expressed by one of its actual sharers. From this observation it seems to follow that resuming an emotional state E in We-mode and present tense is not necessary for displaying the sharedness of the state. The question of the sufficiency of We-mode shaping as indicator of the sharedness of a state will be raised in a later stage of this investigation. With regard to the topic of mixed attributions, consider meanwhile a third example:

> iii. "We love the concept of car-sharing ... Unfortunately, not everyone shares our enthusiasm."

Here, the first part of the utterance bears the formal sign of a shared emotion's expression. We can assume that it even contains a touch of a commissive attitude, given that the utterance is made by environmentalists. The second part, however, is clearly descriptive in that it reports a fact. Taken together, the two parts of the utterance seem to suggest that the class of the lovers of car-sharing is open in the sense that everyone from the class of non-lovers of car-sharing can join in. It suffices for them to change their attitude to car-sharing in order to become participants of the shared enthusiasm or love for car-sharing. This in turn seems to induce a very weak notion of emotional sharing, where the sharedness requires no more than identity of emotion type and identity of emotional object. It purports the conception of emotional sharing that I call 'determinable sharing' and that denotes an open class or set of type-identical emotional experiences. Even if we insist that environmentalists love of car-sharing is an emotional type that is distinct from the love of car-sharing of, say, economically motivated people, it does not rule out that the shared enthusiasm of both groups for car-sharing seems to be no more than an instance of 'determinable sharing'. Which brings the question to the focus whether there can be more than different degrees of determinable sharing in emotional sharing, or, in other words, whether a distinction between 'determinable sharing' and 'determinate sharing' makes sense with regard to emotions.

2. Semantic ambiguities

WITHOUT DIGGING DEEPER INTO DIFFICULTIES and semantic possibilities of common language utterances such as the aforementioned, it is easy to see that the notion of 'shared emotion' or 'sharing emotions' is systematically ambivalent. Roughly, we find ambivalences on three levels. On a first level, there is an ambivalence of meaning (or extension) of the term 'emotion' which is due to different explanations and definitions of emotions. Whether an ascription 'x has emotion E' is true depends on whether x falls under concept E. Whether x falls under concept E depends – among other things – on the meaning components of E. Different theories of emotion give different sets of meaning components of E. So it might be possible to conceptualize emotional sharing, even in the sense of determinate sharing, within the frame of one theory of emotions, while an opponent theory can exclude such a conception. On a second level, there is semantic ambivalence in the term 'sharing', depending essentially on its complementary term. Whether the variable x in 'sharing x' substitutes the term 'cake' or the term 'guilt' apparently makes a difference. And finally, there is an intrinsic ambiguity of reference of the pronoun 'We', which is due to its double character of first person pronoun and plural term. The latter trait confers the specific problems of plural reference to the pronoun 'We', while the former makes it an essentially context dependent term. In the following, my concern with these ambiguities will mainly focus on level two and three, to wit on the semantics of 'sharing' and 'We'. With regard to the ambivalences of the term 'emotion', I shall make a few rather sketchy remarks. Concerning emotion theory, I shall assume that

(i) E is an emotion iff E is a feeling that has intentional content;

(ii) F is a feeling iff F is a bodily/embodied experience and F is not cognitive or conative in nature and F is not a perception of the (external) senses.

These assumptions resume an understanding of emotions that was championed by the early realist phenomenologists who combined the Brentanist view of the intentionality of mental states with insights of sensualist theories. Trying to get grip on the phenomenon of feeling itself, philosophers among which Max Scheler, Edith Stein and Alexander Pfänder developed carefully reflected accounts of emotion that respect, on the one hand, the

intuition that emotions bear essential relations to some *cognitive* element, and, on the other hand, that emotions are essentially *felt* states of the mind[3]. After quite a long period of one-sided cognitivism in contemporary emotion theory, these views are presently revived. It is more and more acknowledged that feeling cannot be separated from having an emotion[4]. Even for convinced judgmentalists it is difficult to avoid expressions such as '*feeling* guilt' for undergoing or having or experiencing the emotion of guilt. This seems to show that we can hardly conceive of a 'bare' emotion, stripped off entirely of its feeling mode[5]. Instead of siding feelings with mere sensual experience and emotions with judgment, it is more promising to consider feelings to instantiate a mental category —the affective— and to distinguish between feelings that are emotions in virtue of specific intentional content and feelings that are not emotions. My point here is that such a complete view of emotions will considerably influence the question of how to account for emotional sharing. Adopting it calls for an explanation of sharing both — the intentionality (or cognitive element) *and* the feeling of an emotional experience.

Let me turn now to the second ambivalence mentioned, the ambivalence of the term 'sharing'. In common language, the term 'sharing' is used in many different contexts and applied to a heterogeneous class of objects. We can share cars, jobs and desks, but also views, beliefs and joy or grief. The first point I want to make with regard to the semantics of shared emotion is that the term 'sharing' does not imply part-whole ontology. This is the strong claim. Its weaker sister would consist in saying that 'sharing' has a basic meaning which implies part-whole ontology, and that the meaning of 'sharing' in certain uses is derived or parasitic on this basic meaning. Such use is often called 'metaphorical' and often considered suspect for purposes of theoretical approach. An answer to the question of whether or not people can share emotions and if yes in what sense they can depends to a large

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[3] For a detailed overview on the emotion theories of early phenomenology see Vendrell Ferran 2008.

[4] For a discussion of some varieties of how to bridge the intentionality-feeling gap in emotion theory see Ratcliffe 2008, chapter 1, 'Emotions and Bodily Feelings'.

[5] If, for example, S's emotion of guilt is equivalent to S's judgment that she did wrong and no feeling component is necessarily involved in that emotion, why then say that S feels guilty? Why not simply say that S judges or thinks guilty or 'emotes' guilt?

extent on the stance one takes towards questions of secondary or metaphorical use of terms. If one assumes that 1) only the 'literal' sense of a term is primary in that it confers its 'real' understanding and 2) the literal sense is always given in terms of physical processes, then one tends to deny that emotions can be 'really' shared. Unless one assumes in addition that emotions —and intentional states in general— are entities that are individualized not only by natural individuals but equally by complexes of individuals. But even in this case it seems difficult to consider group members sharing one group emotion like they share a cake or a car. Emotions just are not the kind of things that —in order to be shared— can be cut to pieces like a cake, or split into time-intervals like the use of a car.

I think the term 'sharing' is a good example for a term whose wide array of application cannot be accounted for in terms of primary and secondary, or literal and metaphorical meaning. Instead of taking the cake as the paradigm of a shareable item it is more promising to consider those meaning components of 'sharing' that characterize all its different uses. I take it that the main semantic component of 'sharing' is 'distribution' and the second —related to it— '(relative) parity'. If n people share F it firstly means that person 1, person 2, …, person n-1 and person n fall under the concept F, *viz*. have the property F. If F is 'having cake', then they all have cake. People just looking at those having cake or smelling the fragrance of cake do not share in having cake. Similarly, if n people share a car, then they are all users of the car, if they share a job or a desk, they all are working or sitting at the desk. Usually, this meaning of distribution carries with it the notion of more or less equality. Even if a cake may be cut in unequal pieces, cake sharing usually means that all sharers get a portion of the cake that can decently be called a 'piece of cake'. Those recycling only crumbs do not fit the notion of sharing a cake. Similarly, a person sitting only accidentally in the car used for car sharing or at the desk of desk sharers would not be considered as sharing car or desk, for lack of fulfilling the condition of relative equality. The condition of relative equality does not concern in the first instance a mere degree of sharing, in a quantitative sense. Rather, it is related to a qualitative distinction, to an important way in which those that are sharers differ from those that are not. Take the example of car sharing. I said before that if n people share a car, then they all are users of that car. While exemplifying the property of using that car is a necessary condition for car sharing it is by no means sufficient. Suppose the car is taken to the garage twice a year and the garagist always makes

a test run. When he runs the car outside the garage, the garagist certainly uses that car, especially when he combines the test run with some other errands. Nevertheless, he does not share the car sharers' use of the car. In addition to exemplifying the property indicated by the object term of 'sharing', sharing requires its subjects to stand in certain specific relationships to each other. It is these relationships that to a large extent determine the aforementioned 'equality' condition. Car sharers, for example, stand in a contractual relation to each other, whereby the contract regulates the details of the use and its allowances. Those who share a plate might just happen to sit next to each other and not being hungry enough to eat a plate of their own, or they might stand in a biological relation of parent and child, or in the emotional relation of a couple being in love. Whatever this relation is, whether normative or not, it determines the sharers having a relatively equal share in the car or the plate. It assures that the dog eating the crumbs or the hungry waiter in the doorway or the dustbin in the kitchen are not of those that share the plate.

This characterization of the term 'sharing' is admittedly quite fragmentary and sketchy. Yet I do not think that a broader analysis, supported by examples of many different applications of the term, would result in a much better account of sharing, or one that is more useful for my present purpose. As I remarked in the beginning, the ambivalence and underdeterminacy of 'sharing' is only one aspect of the ambivalence involved in the notion of shared emotion. Another aspect was localized in the semantics of the term 'emotion' itself, and a third can be found in the semantics of 'We'.

The importance of 'We' for the topic of shared emotion partly depends on the view of emotions one adopts. I take it that emotions are a kind of experience that human (and maybe some non-human) subjects undergo. Subjective experiences might be observed and/or reflected from an objective point of view, be it by an external observer or by the subject herself. The reflection of one's own emotion is itself experiential and might be called a 'thought' in the widest sense of the term. Normally, such reflection does not take the form of third person attribution, but resumes the original experience in a first person attribution of the form 'I feel E'. Resuming one's own emotions can be considered simultaneous with or consecutive to the original experience. In the first case, resuming has a mainly displaying function, shaping the experience itself, in the second case its function rather lies in the constitution of self-consciousness. Often, it is assumed that resuming

one's emotional experience naturally shapes it in the form 'I feel E'. In the following, I shall argue that such reflecting can also shape experiences in the form 'We feel E', the form of first person *plural* attribution. In this case, too, we can distinguish a displaying function and a function of constituting self-consciousness. Consequently, my present approach implies that 'the self' is not identical with a 'Me' or 'I', but is a two-sided entity consisting in a singular and a plural side. I do not think, however, that necessary and sufficient conditions can be given to determine when an emotion is reflected in the singular or plural form of first person attribution. How an experience is primarily reflected rather depends on various situational parameters. It seems plausible to suppose that there is a threshold value, which, in function of situational parameters, determines a paradigmatic class of reflective We-attributions.

The pronoun 'We' is a term that carries mainly two aspects of semantic indeterminacy. The first is due to its deictic character of first person pronoun: the first person pronoun singular 'I' 1) indicates the source of an actual utterance in a given situation and 2) identifies this source with the referential object of the uttered predication. It marks what Karl Bühler calls the "origin of the deictic field" of language, which is the "coordinate system of 'subjective orientation'" (Bühler 1990, 117f). In a concrete situation of speech, each use of the pronoun 'I' is embedded in a "sympractical surrounding field" where all participants take the physical source of the utterance as its respective reference (*op.cit*. III.§10). Unlike a proper name, 'I' is a pure deictic sign whose diacritical function is intrinsically bound to the situation of use. Apart from its function (or deictic meaning) of pointing to the role of the sender of the signal it does not carry any symbolic meaning: "What characterizes the person identified by the word *I* is primarily nothing other than the role of the sender in the present exchange of signals" (*op.cit.* 94). Thus, in a standard linguistic exchange, several instantiations of the term 'I' refer to different objects. In the case of 'We', however, the situation is more complicated since the sign indicates more than the role of its sender and refers to more than one person.

> As does the word 'I', the word 'we' naturally presupposes a deictic clue for its fulfilment; but from the very beginning it seems to be a step further removed from the limit value of a purely deictic sign than is the word 'I'. It somehow requires the formation of a class of persons; the inclusive 'we', for example, requires a different group formation than does the exclusive 'we'. But the formation of classes is precisely the prerogative of naming words, of the conceptual signs of language (*op.cit.* 160).

Here, Bühler points out that 'We' belongs to those words that are partly "released" from the circumstances of speech, in virtue of their being "anchored" in the "symbolic field of language". In the symbolic field of language, the main actors are not deictic but naming words (nouns) that are "fulfilled and made definite" by their embedment in the "synsemantic" surrounding field, which is the linguistic context (*op.cit.* IV.§25). From the mere utterance of 'We' in a verbal exchange it cannot be univocally decided who is and who is not included in the "class of persons" the speaker refers to. From a purely grammatical point of view it can be hold, however, that the utterance of 'We' is like the utterance of 'I' in that it points to the role of the speaker. Yet, while the use of 'I' identifies the source of the linguistic sign with its reference, the use of the sign 'We' identifies its source with only part of its reference[6]. So far, the meaning of 'We' is functionally or deictically fixed. But the question who else belongs to the referential object or who else might belong to the sender must be answered by means of additional clues such as anaphoric reference. Anaphoric reference considers a term's or a noun phrase's embedment in its semantic context, in the pattern of a conceptual tissue woven in the process of discourse or narration. That semantic context is needed for a successful disambiguation of 'We' can be recognized in what linguists call the "clusivity" problem. It consists in the lack of a morphological clue indicating whether the addressee of a 'We'-utterance is included or excluded in its reference. Suppose you are the addressee of an utterance 'We want to eat'. If 'We' is used inclusively, the utterance could be an invitation to join the meal of the group in front of you, or to join them in hunting or in collecting or preparing food. If 'We' is used exclusively, it could be a signal that you are to prepare their meal, or it might even signify that you are chosen to be their meal. Yet the "clusivity" problem does not only reign with regard to the addressee, but with regard to the intended extension of 'We' signs in general. It has been repeatedly shown that 'We' is not as "intention-proof" as 'I' is[7]. The intentions of a speaker

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[6] "*I* means that the one who speaks is the one he speaks about. …*We* means that the one who speaks (or those who speak) is (are) of those he speaks (they speak) about" (Gardies, 126f).

[7] "There is another contrast between 'I' and 'we'. The former is intention-proof. [...] Things are different with 'we'. Part of the referent of an utterance of this expression is bound to be the speaker. But intentions may play a major role in the determination of part of the referent. By saying that we went to Paris, I may mean that my wife and I went there. By using 'we', I referred to myself and another object I intended to refer to, namely my wife" (Vallée, 223).

concerning her We-utterance can usually be read off from contextual parameters that determine to a large degree whether a given instance of 'We' is intended to mean 'those present here and now', 'part of those present here and now, 'I and some people not present here and now', 'I', and so on. Reflecting on the genus 'pronoun' of which personal pronouns are a species we might say that part of the task of determining the reference of an instance of 'We' consists in figuring out the noun it stands for. Since 'We' is a plural pronoun, the noun it stands for must be a plural term. One well known problem with plural terms is that they can take the grammatical form of a plural sortal noun such as 'student*s*', or the grammatical form of a singular noun such as 'group'. It is generally assumed that if 'We' stands for a term of the latter kind, it refers collectively, if it stands for a term of the former kind, it refers distributively. A difference of these two modes of plural reference in the use of the first person plural pronoun has been pointed out by Jean-Louis Gardies who claims that a distributive meaning of 'We' allows inferring an I-predication from a We-predication, whereas a collective meaning of 'We' makes such an inference impossible. So while the sentence

    1. 'We are out for a walk'
    allows inferring
    2. 'I am out for a walk',
    the sentence
    3. 'We killed 30,000 enemies'
    does not allow inferring
    4.'I killed 30,000 enemies' (Gardies, 127f, note 8)[8].

It seems obviously right that from a grammatical point of view this distinction is correct. Generally, it can be stated then that *a*) substituting a collective noun such as 'group', 'team' or 'orchestra', or *b*) relating to a collective predicate ('We are eleven.' 'We meet at 3p.m.' 'We are the

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[8] It is worth noting that Margaret Gilbert explicitly denies the properness of a distributive understanding of 'We are out for a walk'. In her account, We-sentences have a genuinely *collective* plural reference, since for her the correct use of 'We' presupposes a "joint commitment to do something as a body", the normativity of which binds the participants into an intentional 'pool'. Gilbert suggests that distributive interpretations of We-sentences do not render the proper sense of 'We' (Gilbert 1990).

Beatles.') the pronoun 'We' calls for a collective interpretation of thev predication made. It is also possible, however, that a collective interpretation of a We-utterance applies to cases where 'We' substitutes a plural *sortal* noun. Consider the proposition 'These books are expensive', in which there is neither a collective noun nor a collective predicate. Nevertheless, the logical grammar of the proposition allows for two different but equally correct analyses: the distributive analysis takes the proposition to be true if each of the books is expensive, the collective analysis takes it to be true if the collection of books referred to is expensive. Indeterminacy of distributive or collective reference is an intrinsic feature of plural terms that is inherited by the first person plural pronoun 'We'[9].

Now grammar must not be the predominant issue in investigating the topic of shared emotion. As I pointed out earlier, the grammar and semantics of expressions that report or express shared emotional experience is taken into account mainly for two reasons: 1) most accounts of collective, joint or shared intentionality rest on a distinction between I- and We-states, attributing specific weight to 'We' or 'Us'. 2) It is usually assumed that mental states or attitudes ψ are experienced by a subject S in a personal mode; we are accustomed to render this fact in the form 'I ψ'. If we ground our accounts of personal experience on the grammatical category of deictic pronouns, then we have to consider the semantic characteristics implied by their logical grammar in our approach of the immediacy of experience. In the introduction to this section I assumed a point of view according to which emotions are essentially a kind of subjective experience. I also assumed that a subject resumes the original unshaped experience in a first person attribution, suggesting that this resuming shapes the experience in the form 'I feel E' or 'We feel E'. Based on these assumptions I argued that the personal self manifests both as a singular and a plural self. I think it is justified to speak of 'the self' in the metaphysical sense of the core of a person and her individuality, while it is less justified to speak of 'the I/Me' or of 'the We/Us'. The latter reify a mere pronominal function. Related to intentionality, such reification enhances the idea that states resumed in a We-mode are experienced and reflected by 'a We' and states resumed in an I-mode by 'an I'. This leads to ontological constructions of 'I' and 'We'. With these remarks I do not intend to claim that endeavors to establish the ontology of

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[9] "The idea of togetherness is no more part of the meaning of 'the men' than it is of the meaning of 'we'" (Vallée 229).

collectives or collective persons are futile as such. 'Collective' and 'person' are concepts that allow for ontological considerations, while 'I' and 'We' are grammatical functions whose reification leads to difficulties that are comparable to those provoked by the reification of the logical operation of negation.

It might be objected that the term 'self' is equally problematic with respect to reification and also leads into thorny thickets of labyrinthine notions that are chasing their own tail. I admit that 'self' is a difficult borderline case and that I might not be able to defend in a detailed and well argued manner the claim that it is better suited for reification than 'I' or 'We'. I neither crusade against the propagation of ontological entities nor for an exact mapping of linguistic properties on the ontological realm. My point rather is that it is senseless to summon terms with so high a deictic character and so low a semantic content as 'I' or 'We' to characterize classes of mental modes without taking into consideration the principal function of such terms in interpersonal exchange. Considering the logical grammar of 'I feel bad' reveals that a thought or utterance of this form does not display the experience of an entity being an 'I/Me', but of a *person* feeling bad and expressing this fact in a field of interpersonal relations[10]. What need would isolated or monadic individuals have to reflect their experiences in an 'I-mode'? If isolated monads do have an intrinsic need for reflecting expressions of their experiences, it suffices for them to satisfy that need in the form 'feeling bad'. Resuming experiences in the form 'I feel bad' or 'We feel bad' is required in a field of interpersonal relations where a feeling needs to be located and needs to be allocated to its proper personal source.

3. Phenomenological positions

THE TOPIC OF SHARED EMOTION has been approached repeatedly in philosophical accounts. The focus of philosophical interest thereby lies, on the one hand, on emotions having a reciprocal structure (love) and, on the other hand, on ways how people together feel towards a certain object[11]. In the first case it is

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[10] Compare Mead 1934, ch. 24-29. According to Mead, the experience of personal identity presupposes an experience of other things in the sense of taking the attitude of another toward one's own organism. Experience of identity is not possible for an isolated entity, or for an entity that only reacts to its surrounding.

[11] For a concise summary of these two aspects of understanding emotional sharing see von Hildebrand 1930, ch. 3. Here, von Hildebrand distinguishes the "original mode of I-you-connection" and the "original mode of We-connection".

assumed that some emotions are 'social affections' or 'social acts' of the mind, and, as such, are not only directed to another person but also require an 'uptaking' by the person they are directed to. A state of love, for example, is not complete or satisfied in this view if it is not grasped and understood as an act of love by the person it intends to 'hit'. This integrates, so to speak, the object of the emotion into the subject. The subject of the completed act is not only the person who initiated it but, rather, the dual subject of initiator and uptaker. If 'sharing an emotion' is understood along this line, the corresponding grammar of 'I love you' is 'I-you love' or 'We$_{I\text{-}you}$ love'. An early account of 'social affections' and 'social acts' construed along these lines can be found in Thomas Reid's essays on the active and the intellectual powers of the human mind. A similar idea is developed in a finer grained way in Adolf Reinach's account of the 'social act' of promising, where Reinach shapes the notion 'need of uptake' (*Vernehmungsbedürftigkeit*) to designate an essential criterion of social mental acts[12]. And finally, it is explicitly applied to the emotion of love in Max Scheler's phenomenology of persons[13]. A basic idea implied in all these accounts is that in certain mental states the mental, even if it originates within an individual and is bound to its physical support, extends beyond this source, not only in that it is directed to another individual mind, but in that it reaches this mind and shares its state with it. Martin Buber expresses this conception of the mind as an interpersonal relational property in the following words: "Spirit is not in the *I*, but between *I* and *Thou*. It is not like the blood that circulates in you, but like the air in which you breathe." Interestingly, this claim is introduced by relating it explicitly to language use: "Speech does not abide in man, but man takes his stand in speech and talks from there – so with every word and every spirit" (Buber 2004, 36). Buber apparently assumes that not only language is inseparable of the mind, but that the nature of language as intersubjective property maps the intersubjective nature of the mental.

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[12] See Reinach 1913. For a detailed review of Reinach's account of reciprocally structured mental acts see Mulligan 1987.

[13] See for example Scheler 1973, I.6, 'Formalism and Person', where Scheler treats the "*essential reciprocity and reciprocal valueness*" of basic types of social acts. He states: "This reciprocity is not based on the contingent reality of these acts. [...] It rests on the ideal *unity of sense* of these acts as acts of the *essence* of love, esteem, promising, giving orders, etc., acts that require as ideal correlates responses of love, esteem, accepting, obeying, etc., in order to bring about a fact of uniform sense" (535f).

Conceptions of the mind as relational property allow developing an account of emotional sharing that reaches deeper than a mere distribution of type-identical individual emotional states. A social mental act such as an act of love in Scheler's sense is an episode of emotional sharing, and it is of the type of determinate sharing. In the following, I shall test the relational conception of the mind by applying it to emotional sharing that is not based in the reciprocal structure of the emotion. The question will be whether it is plausible to state that *n* people together feel one and the same emotional episode or state E towards a certain object y, and, if so, how such emotional sharing can be distinguished from people sharing a type-identical feeling E towards y. In order to better relate the distinction of 'determinate sharing' and 'determinable sharing' to the conception of the mind as relational property, I further propose the terminological distinction between 'aggregate sharing' and 'distributive sharing'. This is somehow awkward, since I assumed that 'distribution' is the main semantic component of 'sharing'. The terminology chosen now is supposed to express that determinable sharing is a mere distributive kind of sharing, while determinate sharing requires the distributed property to be aggregated. The notion of 'aggregate sharing' provides an explanatory element that shall help to understand how determinate sharing of mental episodes can be conceptualized. I use the term 'aggregate' in the specific sense of denoting the dynamics of ongoing unifying processes, such as they are modeled in the Lehrer-Wagner system of trust and consensus[14]. I also use it in contrast to the term 'collective' as it is used in certain theories of collective intentionality, where the collective plural subject is seen as a normatively established subject, that becomes — again— an individual subject, but of another ontological kind than natural individuals. My account of aggregate sharing tries to relate the conception of the mind as relational property with the grammar of 'We', assuming that 1) mental properties are experienced and resumed in a first person mode, 2) an experience in the first plural mode integrates experiences of several individuals, 3) experience integration requires mental aggregation, 4) mental aggregation is a dynamic process and 5) mental aggregation does not result in an individual of another kind. The grammar of the pronoun 'We' is suited to display these features of a shared mental episode. Although it is an integrative term with the power to substitute a collective singular term such as 'group', 'army' or 'team', it preserves the fact of an essentially plural

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[14] For a detailed account of the Lehrer-Wagner model and its application on emotion see Lehrer 2001 and 1997.

ownership, which is shown by its uncompromising requirement for a plural predicate term. This is a requirement easily overlooked in English or other languages that do not morphologically distinguish between singular and plural predicates. But in all languages that consequently conjugate verbs the difference between singular and plural predication is morphologically clearly displayed. And as far as I know, in all those languages the subject term 'We' requires completion by a verb conjugated in a plural form. This implies that those who master the use of 'We' are aware of the fact that by using 'We' they refer not to an individual of some kind but to individual*s* in plural number standing in certain relations to the user in a situation of use. Similarly, we can state that whenever emotional episodes or states are experienced or displayed in the mode of 'We', those who experience them are aware of there being more of them undergoing this experience.

4. Determinate sharing of emotional experiences

WITH THESE PRELIMINARIES IN MIND, I shall turn to the phenomena that Max Scheler subsumes under the term 'co-feeling' (*Mitfühlen*). My special focus will be on so called 'immediate co-feeling' since Scheler claims that this notion denotes feeling states shared by more than one individual. It is fairly clear from Scheler's exposition of the example that —when he says that two parents grieving for their dead child experience the *same* sorrow— 'the same' qualifies the feeling determinate and not one of its determinables[15]. Since, in addition, the example is not on the sharing of an emotion with reciprocal structure, 'immediate co-feeling' names what I refer to as 'determinate sharing' of feeling, and what I try to get into better grip by applying to it the alternative term of 'aggregate sharing' of feeling. Unfortunately for my project, Scheler is not very helpful concerning positive features of this mode of feeling. He mentions two main criteria for 'immediate co-feeling'; but even taken together, they do not suffice to delineate 'immediate co-feeling' from type-identical feeling that is directed to a common object. It seems to me, however, that some features of Scheler's example for 'immediate co-feeling' might be fruitfully combined with considerations on the semantics of shared emotion, leading to a better understanding of this feeling mode.

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[15] For a discussion of this point see also Schmid 2008

In his *The Nature of Sympathy* (*Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*, 1912) Max Scheler develops a phenomenology of 'co-feeling' (*Mitfühlen*) or 'fellow feeling' as the English translation renders the term. In what follows, I will stick to the not very attractive term 'co-feeling' in order not to lose out of sight the conception of *'with'* or *'together'* implied in the German word '*Mit*fühlen'. In his phenomenological in-depth study Scheler ranges the following feeling modes under the term 'co-feeling': 1) 'immediate co-feeling' or 'feeling together' (*unmittelbares Mitfühlen*, *Miteinanderfühlen*), 2) empathy (*Nachfühlen, Einfühlen*) and 3) sympathy (*Mitgefühl*) as understanding-based types of co-feeling, and 4) 'affective contagion' (*Gefühlsansteckung*) with its pole of 'one-feeling' or 'feeling fusion' (*Einsfühlung*). For Scheler, 'immediate co-feeling' ranks highest in the value hierarchy of co-feeling, since it preserves indefeasibly the personal individualities of all its sharers within one singular emotional episode. Scheler's discussion of the different modes of co-feeling implies that the term 'immediate' is used to distinguish this mode of co-feeling from those where 'togetherness' of feeling is mediated by some cognitive objectualizing of the other participants. Both empathy and sympathy are 'mediate' in this sense, since they presuppose that an individual S is directed to the state of mind E of another individual S' and, understanding the state of S', 'joins' it in empathy or sympathy. In the case of empathy, the perceived emotional state E is reproduced in S by some kind of imitation or copying process. Thus, S and S' both experience their own emotional episode E. Their empathically triggered sharing of E is not 'determinate sharing' but 'determinable sharing'. It is a mere property distribution with no additional aggregate character. The case of sympathy, in contrast, is different. Scheler suggests that sympathy is an emotional type of its own, not a mere mode of co-feeling. If S sympathizes with the emotional state of S', S does not join S' in her feeling E by producing a parallel instance of E. Rather, S joins S' in her feeling E by making her instance of E the *object* of his emotion of sympathy, where the latter has a phenomenality of its own, not that of E. As in the case of empathy, in sympathy obtain two emotional episodes, which cannot even be qualified as 'determinable sharing'. There is no common property (emotion type) distributed in the emotional episodes of S and S'. Properly speaking, ranging sympathy in the same box with empathy, affective contagion and immediate co-feeling seems to be a categorical mistake. While the former is an emotion of its own, the latter are modes of experiencing an emotion. If I conceive it right, S and S' can immediately co-feel sympathy

with S'', or S can empathize with the sympathy of S' for S'', by reproducing an episode of sympathy for S''. On the other side, it is not possible to immediately co-feel empathy or to empathize immediate co-feeling.

As outlined before, it is apparently 'immediacy', in contrast to mediation by means of cognitively objectualizing the others' mental states, which accounts —at least partly— for the possibility of 'determinate sharing' of emotional episodes. Let us consider now the way Scheler brings this element to play in his example and discussion of 'immediate co-feeling'. The paradigmatic example given for 'immediate co-feeling' is a father and a mother's grief over their deceased child. Scheler claims that the two parents "feel in common 'the same' sorrow, 'the same' anguish", and explains the specific feature of experiential 'sameness' by the fact that it is not due to mutually 'objectualizing' their individual states of grief (Scheler 1954, 12). If, say, the father of the child would objectualize his wife's state of mind in his feeling episode, his feeling would be directed to her feeling grief, and he would empathize or sympathize with her grief. Unavoidably then, there would be two feeling episodes, either two episodes of grief, or an episode of grief and an episode of sympathy. The enabling condition for sharing one feeling episode is the feeling's immediate responsiveness to one and the same object. A second condition —seemingly trivial— is that the emotional response has only one phenomenal quality. In the case of the grieving parents, Scheler holds that they together experience the same "state of values" (*Wertverhalt*) and the same emotional response (*Regsamkeit*) to it: "The 'sorrow', as value-content, and the grief, as characterizing the functional quality thereto, are here one and identical" (*ibid.*). The condition of one identical phenomenal quality is, in spite of its apparent triviality, significant for the following reason: In Scheler's view, immediate co-feeling unites individual persons with their intact individual personalities as sharers of a feeling episode. It is not a feeling having a collective higher-order subject, irreducible to the individuals involved in it. In collectivist accounts, it is often hold that the collective or plural person can have an intentional state E while part or even all individual members are in state ØE. According to such views, a nation might feel guilty for a wrong committed, even though only a few of the nation's citizens feel guilty for what has been done and a lot of citizens are proud of it and a lot of citizens are indifferent[16]. It is claimed that such a configuration represents one feeling episode, namely the feeling of the nation. But this is

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[16] For a collectivist account of guilt feeling see Gilbert 2002

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clearly not the way Scheler conceptualizes determinate emotional sharing. In his conception, an emotional episode E is shared by *n* individual persons, and E cannot be an emotional episode shared by *n* individual persons if not *n* persons feel E.

As far as I can see, there is no problem in agreeing that the two conditions Scheler mentions are necessary for immediate co-feeling. The worry rather is that they seem by far not sufficient to delineate immediate co-feeling from type-identical feeling that is responding to one and the same object. People feeling desperate towards the state of values of crashing stock markets fulfill both characteristics without immediately co-feeling their despair. It is quite the same worry encountered in the semantics of 'We': the formal conditions of 'We' and of 'immediate co-feeling' contain nothing that imposes a distinction between aggregate and purely distributive construal. They neither contain evidence that justifies a preference for an aggregate construal over a distributive. They just leave open the possibility for aggregate construal. The assumption that the shape 'We feel E' is necessary for a determinate sharing of emotional experience has already proven to be shaky —remember the broadcasting reporter. As for sufficiency, the case is even worse. If a subject S resumes an experience in the form 'We feel E', then S might resume quite different modes of experience in this shape. S might have, for example, the experience of consisting of several parts each of which feels E. Or S might feel not only being the source of a feeling E, but also a node in a web of sources of feeling E. Or S might feel being the source of a feeling E that is directed toward a feeling E of a subject S'. Or S might feel being the source of a feeling E and of a cognitive state C whose content is: 'S' feels E'. Or S might feel being the source of a feeling E and of a volitive state V whose content is: 'S' feels E'. The logical grammar of 'We' does not prioritize one specific possibility but gives them equal rights with regard to the label 'We-emotion'. 'Nevertheless', we might object, 'as far as linguistic use of 'We' is concerned, its various contextual parameters usually determine unambiguously its reference'. And from this we infer by analogy that various situational parameters sufficiently disambiguate what case of We-emotion or which mode of sharing is at stake. Grammatical analyses of the term 'We' present the possibilities of its meaning as a disjunctive list of the conjunctions 'I and you$_{singular}$',   'I and s/he', 'I and you$_{plural}$', 'I and they', 'I and you$_{singular}$ and s/he' etc., holding that the first option represents the 'thickest' meaning of 'We'. It is the one most closely tied to an actual situation of speech where many deictic clues

such as the sound of the speaker's voice, the direction of her eyes, her mimics and gestures and many other perceptual data are at the hearers' disposal, indicating clearly who of those physically present is the addressee intended to being included in the reference of the We-utterance. The more the meaning of 'We' transcends the actual situation of speech, the more difficult becomes the exact determination of reference and correctness conditions of the performed speech act. This feature of 'contextual immanence' (and 'contextual transcendence' respectively) has its counterpart in the feature of 'situational immanence' that characterizes subjective experiences. With regard to emotional sharing, the degree of 'situational rootedness' of the experience determines, so to speak, the 'thickness' of its being shared. If the formal criteria of determinate emotional sharing apply to an experiential setting, it is the specificity of the setting's configuration that determines whether the occurring experiences are instances of determinate or determinable emotional sharing.

   Scheler's paradigmatic example of a determinate sharing of grief shows how situational parameters fulfill this task. Although the outline of the example is kept quite scarce, it suggests that aggregate sharing of an emotional episode —contrary to mere distributive sharing— presupposes very specific kinds of relations, both between the sharers of the emotion and between them and their emotional object. The case of the grieving parents suggests pre-existing relations of marital love and marital life between the sharers of the feeling, as well as the relations of biological maternity, of care giving and of parental love to the object of the shared feeling. In addition, the example suggests that the sharers of the feeling are also physically closely related, "standing beside the dead body of a beloved child" (Scheler 1954, 12). The feeling episode is embedded in a situational setting constituted by a host of diachronical and synchronical relations between the sharers of the feeling and its object. The diachronical dimension of the parental relation is realized as a web of commonly experienced situations, involving mutual knowledge and feelings, as well as memories of happiness and despair, of success, frustration and failure. The synchronical dimension of their relation is rather realized as a web of perceptions and sensations, and their ensuing feelings, desires and thoughts. It involves being in some kind of physically mediated touch in the situation of mourning, a touch that transmits their feeling state to each other. This is not the same as knowing about the other's feeling by mutually objectualizing it and supplementing one's own grief by such awareness. The touch of feeling is perceptively mediated, transmitting

directly the other's feeling quality into one's own. It seems to me that this element of physical relatedness is to be essentially included in the criterial properties of aggregate emotional sharing. Without this additional level of affective binding, emotional sharing shrinks to sameness of content and feeling quality and we are back to mere distributive or determinable sharing. I am uncertain whether Scheler includes bodily mediated touch of feeling in his analysis of immediate co-feeling; maybe it is contained implicitly in the condition of 'the same emotional response'. The example he gives suggests, however, that the nature and force of *all* the relations implied determine whether the parents' sharing their grief is of the aggregate or the mere distributive kind. Had the parents lived separated for a long while, or would they not love each other, or would one of them have neglected care-giving, or were they not both physically present at the bed of their dead child, they might also share their grief, but not in the way of aggregate sharing.

So my assumption is that determinate sharing of an emotional experience obtains as a function of both the diachronic and synchronic dimension of the parties' relatedness in the experiential situation. The synchronic dimension is understood mainly in terms of physical or perceptual relatedness in the actual situation of occurring experience. It involves processes often termed as 'emotional contagion' and understood as mechanisms by which emotions of others are 'caught'. According to empirical research in the field, emotional contagion includes "automatic and continuous mimicry and synchronization of [one's] movements with the facial expressions, voices, postures, movements, and instrumental behaviors of others" (Hatfield *et al*., 4f). Although emotional synchronization is partly operating on low levels of subjective awareness, as for example in mirror neuron steered processes, the subjective emotional experience is "affected, moment to moment, by the activation and/or feedback from such mimicry" (*op.cit*.). The notion of 'contaminating' processes that shape emotional experience gives a certain body not only to the notion 'touch of feeling' but also to the notion 'aggregate sharing'. Emotional synchronization by way of 'contagion' can be represented by models of aggregate properties: individual and shared aspects of feeling permeate each other, often to a degree that makes it impossible to resume them univocally as an I-feeling or a We-feeling.

In Scheler's conception of 'immediate co-feeling', however, the contagion dimension is excluded. Although 'emotional contagion' figures in his taxonomy of co-feeling, it is ranged there as a category of its own.

Scheler claims that emotional contagion obtains when the expressive features of an emotional episode E experienced by individual S are perceived and taken up by individual S', producing in S' a similar emotional state E. He strictly denies that emotional contagion can count as immediate co-feeling, since it does not fulfill the criterion of value state identity. S can get infected with the joy of S' by taking up some mimics or sounds expressing the joyful state of S' without taking up the content of the joy of S'. The feeling S is infected with is 'empty', a mere shell lacking its proper object and content, or being filled with a different content. The problem with this account is that Scheler apparently has only very specific situations in mind, situations like certain mass phenomena where *only* emotional contagion is at work. This restricted view blocks the integration of emotional contagion among those features that explain immediate co-feeling.

Adopting the view that determinate sharing of an emotional experience obtains as a function of both the diachronic and synchronic dimension of the parties' relatedness in the experiential situation, we can conceive that determinate sharing obtains even if one dimension is very prominent and the other very weak. Consider the following scenario: two devoted kindergarten teachers ignorant of each other go on a mushroom foray on the same day in the same forest. Coming from different sides they happen to encounter in the place where a child was killed. Don't you think that — in the face of the dead child— they might experience pain and sorrow in the determinate sharing mode? Although the diachronic dimension of their relatedness is very weak, the synchronic dimension of situational relatedness is so strong that, as a function of both of them, their feeling pain and sorrow may aggregate into one shared experience. On the other hand, people that are related for many years in very intimate relationships might share an emotional episode in the determinate mode even if the synchronical dimension of their relatedness in the emotional situation is very weak. They may be physically almost completely separated, their situational contact reduced to a defective phone connection, and nevertheless share their responsive feeling in a not merely distributive way. Although such cases are conceivable, they should not be seen as standard cases of determinate shared feeling. As is shown by Scheler's paradigmatic case of 'immediate co-feeling', standard cases of determinate shared feeling require, in order to obtain, certain threshold values both on the synchronic and the diachronic side of the parties' situational relatedness. I assume that in configurations confronting physically related people with a common objective value state, the 'touch' of their

responding feeling leads these situationally related individuals to resuming their experience in the plural mode 'We'. Resuming the felt response as 'We feel E' integrates an awareness of *de re* relatedness, manifesting that the self to which the experience is attributed is not identical and not reducible to 'an I'.

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