

Pre-Reflective Self-Awareness and Experiential Selfhood: Singular and Plural

Seminar with Dan Zahavi

Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, Belgrade, June 2017

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Introduction

Research on self-consciousness and intersubjectivity has been a main concern of mine for many years. Whereas my PhD was primarily focused on exploring the link between intersubjectivity and objectivity, my Habilitation dealt with the nature of self-consciousness. During the ensuing 15 years, my work continued to be engaged with both topics. What is the nature of selfhood? What is the relation between experiential subjectivity and the first-person perspective? How do we come to understand each other? What is the role of bodily engagement and face-to-face interaction? About 5 years ago, however, I also started getting interested in the link between the I, the you and the we. What is the link between social cognition and collective intentionality? How might the I-thou relation impact or perhaps even enable forms of collective intentionality? How does one come to experience oneself as 'one of us', and how does group-identification modulate the first-personal senses of agency and ownership? Are genuine we-phenomena compatible with a wide variety of different models of self, or should the existence of the former make us reject overly solipsistic and disembodied accounts of the self?

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Given my interest in questions like these, I couldn't help being intrigued by some recent texts by Hans Bernhard Schmid, where he argues that a proper understanding of collective intentionality and we-identity requires a convincing account of the "sense of 'us'", that headway can be made regarding the latter by drawing on classical theories of self-awareness, and that plural pre-reflective self-awareness plays the same role in the constitution of a common mind as singular pre-reflective self-awareness plays in the case of the individual mind. In a recent text that constitutes the background for our common discussion, I try to assess these claims.¹ How helpful is the appeal to

¹ Zahavi, D., "Collective intentionality and plural pre-reflective self-consciousness", *Journal of Social Philosophy*, in press.

pre-reflective self-awareness when it comes to an understanding of we-intentionality, and might the differences between the singular and the plural case ultimately overshadow their similarities?

To summarize my conclusion, I agree with Schmid that a convincing theory of we-intentionality has to factor in the experiential dimension. I endorse the idea that what individuals think and feel when they do it together is not independent of their relation, and I also think it is very important to account for pre-reflective we-relationships, i.e., we-relationships that are lived through rather than being thematically observed or reflectively articulated. I do, however, also think that a closer study of singular and plural pre-reflective self-awareness will reveal that the differences dwarf the similarities. One of our significant disagreements concerns the question of whether a proper account of we-intentionality and communal being-together requires an account of how individuals are experientially interrelated. On my view, any plausible account of the we has to factor in the embodied face-to-face relationship. Schmid by contrast has repeatedly denied that the we is founded upon an other-experience and in any other way involves or presupposes some kind of reciprocal relation between self and other. Furthermore, on my view, singular pre-reflective self-awareness and plural pre-reflective self-awareness do not have the same explanatory power since they are not equally fundamental. If one accepts the standard account of singular pre-reflective self-awareness, which considers it a constitutive feature of phenomenal consciousness as such, it does not depend on and presuppose plural pre-reflective self-awareness, but is rather a condition of possibility for the latter.

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Intersubjectivity may have been at the heart of Husserl's project, as you convincingly suggest. Husserl's project thus can be plausibly interpreted as a sophisticated philosophical account that is not confined to general Cartesian assumptions concerning the nature of the human mind, as usually thought. Yet, looked at from our historical distance, his methodology, and in fact the methodological framework of the debate among phenomenologists, is in some important respects a mirror-image of those in the traditional analytic philosophy of mind. Thus, in both of these strands of the philosophical study of the mind one assumes that adequate categories and general distinctions characterizing consciousness, as well as mental properties in general, can be devised through a step-by-step conceptual deliberation. Intersubjectivity thus enters the analysis as yet another concept that is expected to be slickly conceptually delineated in the web of other relevant concepts, e.g. by

distinguishing various types of emotional co-engagement of subjects (a project started by Scheler), or rather assimilated by a concept in Heidegger's case.

Yet, I contend, figuring out how exactly, and at what exact points of psychological, biological, and evolutionary trajectories, various (including conscious and pre-reflective) aspects of mind become embodied, enacted, or extended into and with the world, must constitute a carefully empirically informed quest, coordinated with the studies of diverse mental experiences across diverse cultures. The task is indeed daunting, yet in a way that Husserl may not have anticipated it. The challenge is then to find ways of adequately employing phenomenological analysis in this comprehensive approach, as a generator of fruitful models and directions for the study of mind, rather than as a foundational account. Thus, a phenomenologist suggests, rather than discovers, adequate mental categories that could be further studied in the above-characterized interdisciplinary way. The question is whether and exactly how, in broad terms, your phenomenological account can fruitfully respond to this challenge and whether it is one of its priorities at all.

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Dan Zahavi

Thank you for these questions. Let me respond in a twofold manner. First, what is the best way to characterize the relationship between the methodological framework of the phenomenologists and that of traditional analytic philosophy of mind? Are they really mere mirror-images of each other? I am not so sure. First of all, I do not think that one can talk about analytic philosophy in the singular, as if it was really a well-defined school of philosophy. I think one should rather view 'analytic philosophy' as an umbrella term covering a lot of diversity and heterogeneity. For the same reason, there is not one way that consciousness is being investigated and treated by analytic philosophers. If we consider the way consciousness has been approached by classical analytic philosophy of language, the difference to phenomenology is certainly striking. More generally speaking, however, one might also consider the difference between an analysis that tries to stay close to the messy details of the phenomena and one that proceeds by a priori reasoning.

Now, in response it might be pointed out that analytic philosophy of mind during the last 20-30 years has increasingly opted for a more naturalistic approach, where armchair philosophizing has been replaced by a more interdisciplinary approach. I think there are both advantages and disadvantages to such a move, but I would actually also argue, and this brings me to the second part of my reply, that this openness to empirical research is by no means alien to phenomenology. Indeed, as I have argued in the past, if a naturalized phenomenology means for phenomenology to engage in a fruitful dialogue with empirical science then we should welcome such a naturalization. It will

be beneficial to both sides of the debate. Phenomenology can question and elucidate basic theoretical assumption made by empirical science, just as it might aid in the development of new experimental paradigms. Empirical science can present phenomenology with concrete findings that it cannot simply ignore, but must be able to accommodate; evidence that might force it to refine or revise its own analyses of, say, the role of embodiment, the relation between perception and imagination, the link between time-consciousness and memory, or the nature of social cognition. So yes, to conclude, I would welcome your proposal. I want to retain the difference between philosophy and empirical science. I don't think the former should be absorbed in or replaced by the former. But that doesn't mean that philosophy shouldn't interact with the sciences. Indeed, I would be slightly suspicious of philosophical analyses and distinctions that entirely lacked relevance for and impact on empirical science.

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My question has to do with two research results from developmental psychology.

The first one concerns the case of children with autism. Currently, the criteria for defining and diagnosing autism are closely tied to behavioural problems in three important areas of human functioning: social interaction, social communication, and imagination. These three are known as the triad of impairments (Wing, 1992). What this basically means is that children with autism mostly have trouble reading other people's minds: they have trouble inferring how other people feel and what they think and usually do not know how to communicate their needs to others. Also, they do not get social cues and have a hard time learning what socially acceptable behaviour in a particular situation is. These social impairments are often accompanied with the delay in pretend play, role play, and language development. However, even when children with ASD do develop language sufficiently, the way they use language is rigid, literal and lacks pragmatic function. Their ability for imaginative and abstract reasoning remains limited throughout their life.

Do you think that the case of autism could support your thesis that there could be singular pre-reflective self-awareness without plural self-awareness? In other words, could it be that children with autism lack pre-reflective we and hence don't engage in social orienting, social referencing, and joint attention which further compromises their language acquisition? Or you think that there would be a way for Schmid to respond?

The second research result concerns self-regulation. The world in which the child is born is intrinsically social as the child needs a caregiver if she is to survive. The caregiver needs to be there for the child not only to feed her but to regulate her arousal states so that the child gets enough sleep as well as enough external stimuli that are necessary for normal physical and psychological development (see e.g. Shanker 2013). The child at birth does not have the required regulatory systems in place so the caregiver serves as a sort of the external regulating brain (Tantam 2009) to a child.

Can these insights about development of self-regulation bring some new angle to the discussion on singular pre-reflective self-awareness and plural self-awareness? Would it be easier to interpret them as more compatible with Schmid's or your thesis? Or would you treat the whole issue as irrelevant?

Dan Zahavi

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I think you are absolutely right when wondering about whether the case of autism might not constitute a challenge to Schmid's theory. I would even want to develop the challenge a bit further. Consider the case of a young adult with autism who reports that he only realized that there were other people when he was around 7 years of age, that he still doesn't really know what to do with other people, and that he could never have a friend. If we assume that this indicates an impaired ability to adopt and maintain a we-perspective, i.e. plural pre-reflective self-awareness, is there then also reason to think that this goes hand in hand with an impaired ability to have singular pre-reflective self-awareness? Is it accompanied by a lack of phenomenal consciousness and subjective experience? Well, some theory-theorists such as, for instance, Carruthers, have actually defended such a view and have argued that individuals who lack a theory of mind also lack an access to their own mental states and therefore also lack phenomenally conscious states. I would however consider this a *reductio ad absurdum* of the position in question. Furthermore, according to Schmid, social cognition is not a relevant precondition for plural pre-reflective self-awareness. Indeed, if anything it is the latter that is supposed to explain the former. But such an account makes it rather inexplicable why individuals with autism do have difficulties with adopting a we-perspective. An account like my own, which by contrast wants to insist on the importance of second-personal engagement for group-identification and we-membership, will have a much easier time. It is precisely because individuals with autism have impaired social cognitive skills, that they also have difficulties with collective forms of intentionality.

When it comes to your second question, I think we need to distinguish two different claims. It is one thing to argue that we *de facto* live together with others in a public world from birth onwards. It is something else to argue

that first-personal experience is constitutively dependent upon social interaction. To put it differently, we need to distinguish an acknowledgment of the *de facto* co-existence of singular selfhood and intersubjectivity from a claim concerning their constitutive interdependence. I can see plenty of empirical evidence supporting the former view. Indeed, the famous cases of hospitalism discussed by Spitz, suggests that we might not survive in the absence of proper caring and affection, even if we do receive sufficient nutrition. But even such extreme cases fall short of showing that experience, i.e. phenomenal consciousness is constitutively dependent upon social interaction.

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I agree with much of your criticism of Schmid's theory of the „we“ and would like to add some points. As I see it, phenomenology of subjectivity shows us that pre-reflective self-awareness always points to one self or one dimension of subjectivity, one unifier or bearer of experiences; a single experiencing subject. On the other hand, Schmid's „we“, points to many, though these are not fused into one subject or self, as is made explicit by Schmid. Therefore, plural pre-reflective self-awareness is very different from singular pre-reflective self-awareness, contrary to Schmid's claim. If there is only one feeling of sorrow in a group, then „we“ is one as a whole, and only as one subject could it have this experience. In that case two people cannot be separate subjects. Pre-reflective self-awareness („me“) seems to be irreducible unlike its plural counterpart, the „we“, if it is understood in the way Schmid understands it. The phenomenological and the ontological cannot be dissociated as Schmid would want them to be. His account could, perhaps, work if there was only one „we-subject“. It is more plausible to claim that there is *pre-reflective other-awareness*, co-subjectivity, co-subject awareness, that is, being pre-reflectively aware of others as subjects in the „we“, but there is no fusion of such subjects into a singular „we-subject“.

In the light of this comment on Schmid's plural self, I would like to ask a more general question: what is your view on the relation between ontology and phenomenology? Can phenomenological datums of consciousness help us shape our metaphysical theories of consciousness, selfhood and experience? Could we get to metaphysical conclusions about the nature of the self from phenomenological findings?

Dan Zahavi

Your question touches upon a much debated and controversial issue, one that goes far beyond the current focus on individual and plural selfhood. The question is controversial not only because of conflicting views about what

phenomenology has to offer, but also because of persisting disagreements about the relation between Husserlian phenomenology and post-Husserlian phenomenology. Some authors have argued that whereas Husserl's phenomenological project entails a suspension of questions concerning being and reality and a focus on how things appear and what meaning they have for me, later phenomenologists all abandoned this methodological restriction and were quite explicit about their own ontological commitments. As Heidegger famously wrote, "there is no ontology *alongside* a phenomenology. Rather, *scientific ontology is nothing but phenomenology.*" In my view, however, the Husserl interpretation in question is mistaken, and so is the alleged claim concerning a radical difference between Husserl's thinking and that of later phenomenologists. Rather than making reality disappear from view, the aim of Husserl's phenomenological method is precisely to allow reality to be investigated philosophically. This certainly also holds for the reality of consciousness and selfhood. Indeed, when dealing with these topics the absurdity of a non-metaphysical reading of phenomenology should be particularly evident. If we for a moment assume that Husserl's method is indeed not concerned with reality but only with an analysis of meaning and that his phenomenological investigation has consequently no implication for what exists, then his rich exploration of consciousness should in principle be compatible with eliminativism about experience. I think that conclusion is absurd. Now, affirming that phenomenological analyses of consciousness can help us shape our metaphysical theories of consciousness, selfhood and experience is, of course, not to say that phenomenological findings are infallible, or that we are always justified in making the move from what seems to us to be the case to what is the case. But just as I think we are entitled to posit the reality of consciousness based on the fact that we are experientially acquainted with it, I think we are entitled to affirm the reality of (experiential) selfhood on the basis of our self-experience.

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Meine Frage schließt sich in etwa an das an, was Sie zuletzt gesagt haben und die Frage der Metaphysik und der Phänomenologie betrifft. Das bezieht sich vor allem auf die Funktion des Wahrnehmungsbegriffs, auch des Anschauungsbegriffs. Meiner Meinung nach, scheint das hier aus phänomenologischen Sicht ein Problem zu sein. Und möglicherweise ahnen Sie schon aus welcher Perspektive diese Kritik kommen könnte – aus heideggerschen wahrscheinlich. Zusammen also mit Heidegger gesprochen, handelt es sich hier um einen phänomenologischen Ansatz, der nicht ganz metaphysikfrei ist. Wie gesagt, hier ist vor allem Husserls Begriff der Anschauung ausschlaggebend, der, wie wir aus den *Logischen Untersuchungen* wissen, oft mit dem

Wahrnehmungsbegriff vermengt wird. Dem würde ich hinzufügen, dass er nicht nur mit dem Wahrnehmungs-, sondern auch mit dem Urimpressionsbegriff vermengt wird. Das war also die erste Bemerkung.

Zum zweiten: Um dem phänomenologischen Gebot „zu den Sachen selbst“ gerecht zu werden, schlage ich zusammen mit Heidegger vor, nicht bei der Wahrnehmung oder Anschauung bzw. bei der Gegebenheit oder (wie auch immer verstandenen) Präsenz, sondern bei der Absenz und der „Sorge“ anzusetzen. Also nicht bei der Selbstwahrnehmung, Selbstgegebenheit, sondern bei der antizipativen, zukunftsorientierten Selbstsorge. Die Frage lautet, ob sich so was wie Gegebenheit, Präsenz ursprünglich selbstkonstituieren kann, oder ob eher dem Zukunftsbezug, dem Entwurf (Seinsentwurf) das Primat bei der Frage der Konstitution zukommt. Man kann auch fragen, was Gegebenheit ist, wie und warum etwas uns gegeben ist. Marion etwa operiert auch mit dem Begriff der Gegebenheit. Mir ist aber nicht ganz klar, wie diese Art der Evidenz (der Gegebenheit) zu rechtfertigen ist.

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Dann zur dritten Bemerkung: Verweilen wir doch noch bei dem angesprochenen Anschauungsbegriff von Husserl. Dieser scheint mir nämlich wenig differenziert zu sein. Korrigieren Sie mich, falls ich bei Ihnen doch etwas falsch verstanden habe. Wie wir und bestimmt auch Sie, da Sie darüber geschrieben haben, aber aus den *Logischen Untersuchungen* wissen, stellt sich die Sache mit dem Anschauungsbegriff dort etwas komplizierter dar, als man es am Anfang vermutet. Es wird stets von der Gegebenheit, der Wahrnehmung, der Präsenz gesprochen, doch wenn es um die Husserlsche Auffassung der kategorialen Anschauung geht, wird die Sphäre der schlichten Wahrnehmungsakte überschritten. Denn ausgehend von den schlichten Wahrnehmungsakten, werden im Zuge der eidetischen Variation die kategorialen Inhalte konstituiert. Und das ohne reflexive Momente. Husserl spricht in diesem Zusammenhang nicht von der Reflexion. So handelt es sich bei der Konstitution des kategorialen Inhaltes „und“ um die Verbindung zweier schlichter Wahrnehmungsakte. „Und“ ist ein kategorialer Inhalt, der in der schlichten Wahrnehmung nicht gegeben ist. Es wird aber auch keine Kategorie vorausgesetzt, über die wir dann sich reflexiv auf die Wahrnehmung beziehend eine solche die Wahrnehmung überschreitende Verbindung konstruieren. Und wenn Sie von der Selbstgegebenheit des Selbst sprechen, und dabei etwas mehr als nur einen schlichten Wahrnehmungsakt meinen, wäre interessant zu sehen, wie dieses Selbst konstituiert wird, insofern es bereits kategoriale Momente beinhaltet. Oder andersrum: Wie kommt ein Selbst zustande, wenn wir innerhalb von dem Konzept der eidetischen Variation verbleiben.

Nun kehren wir zum Schluss wieder zu Heidegger und zu der Frage nach der Zukunft, der Absenz und der Antizipation zurück. Wenn wir also an der Annahme von dem konstitutiven Vorrang der Zukunft - nicht also der Präsenz

und der Gegebenheit – festhalten, dann bleibt immer noch die Frage, ob sich auch die kollektive Intentionalität mit diesem radikalen Zukunftskonzept (Sein zum Tode, Sein zum Ende) in Einklang bringen lässt. Oder: Lassen sich Kollektive und ihre Intentionen aus dem radikalen Sein zum Ende konstituieren. Man muss schon zugeben, dass der Heideggersche Ansatz gewissermaßen in der Tat solipsistisch ist, so dass davon ausgehend nicht ganz klar wäre, wie sich ein Kollektiv aus der Möglichkeit seines Endes konstituieren könnte. Wie „stirbt“ ein Kollektiv, wenn die Formulation erlaubt sei. Ungeachtet dieser Schwierigkeiten mit dem Gedanken der radikalen Endlichkeit in Bezug auf die Kollektive und die kollektive Intentionalität, würde ich mich doch für diese Annahme einsetzen und die Möglichkeit bejahen, und zwar indem ich nicht wie bei Heidegger der Fall die phänomenale Aufweise einer „Todesgewissheit“ liefere, sondern indem ich diese Annahme von dem konstitutiven Vorrang der Zukunft in gewisse Weise operationalisiere: denn womit haben wir bei der Differenzierung der kollektiven Intentionalitäten zu tun, wenn nicht mit der Differenzierung im Hinblick auf den Umgang mit den gemeinsamen Seinkönnen. So unterscheidet sich ein kollektives Wir (Selbst) etwa einer Liebesbeziehung von einem kollektiven Wir (Selbst) einer Geschäftsbeziehung nicht aufgrund einer in der Selbstwahrnehmung evident gegebenen Differenz zwischen diesen zwei Gestalten der kollektiven Intentionalität, sondern aufgrund unterschiedlichen Bezugs zu den eigenen Möglichkeiten. Hier geht es um die modalen Unterschiede: der Möglichkeitshorizont einer Liebesbeziehung ist ein anderer als jener einer Geschäftsbeziehung.

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Dan Zahavi

Just one word of clarification. The notion of metaphysics is of course very ambiguous, and when I was talking about how phenomenology might have metaphysical implications, and when we now hear about how Heidegger was accusing Husserl's phenomenology of having certain metaphysical presuppositions, we are dealing with two different notions of metaphysics. I guess the main way to understand Heidegger's criticism is that Husserl's phenomenology, on his view, has certain implicit, tacit presuppositions; presuppositions coming from the history of philosophy that have not been sufficiently scrutinized. Of course, this is not what I had in mind when I was talking about the metaphysical implications of phenomenology.

But back to the main issue. I would basically question your whole setup, because you kept saying that I have talked about self-perception and self-intuition, but I've never used those terms. I talked about self-awareness, I did not talk about introspection nor did I talk about self-perception. You seem to be arguing that Husserl and I are understanding self-awareness on the basis of perceptual acts. But I would dispute that. I just don't think it is correct, even though it is a classical criticism, and it is also a criticism that von

Herrmann for instance has been promoting. I really think it's a misunderstanding to view Husserl's investigations as just taking all the insights coming from his discussion of how we perceive perceptual objects and using them to understand the way in which we are aware of our own minds. As I see it, the whole point of Husserl's investigation into self-consciousness, primarily as you find it in his investigations of inner time-consciousness is to try to describe phenomenologically a relation that is utterly different from the kind of act-intentionality that he started out describing in the *Logical Investigations*. So, I would dispute that part of the criticism.

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Then there is another criticism which initially might seem more true: it could be that even if self-consciousness is not about *Selbstanschauung*, *Selbstbeobachtung* or self-introspection, perhaps there has been a privileging of presence, of *Urimpression*. And is that not somehow missing out on the importance of temporality, the importance of the future? Just to complicate matters, consider the very different criticism that Husserl has been exposed to by Derrida on the one hand and Michel Henry on the other. They are trying to push Husserl in two completely different directions when it comes to this notion of presence. So, Derrida famously argued, continuing the Heideggerian criticism, that Husserl was a metaphysician of presence, that he was operating with a naïve understanding of self-giveness and that what a proper phenomenological account should recognize would be the priority of absence. Compare that to Henry's criticism, which is the complete opposite. Henry has been criticizing Husserl for putting too much emphasis on absence in his discussion of inner time-consciousness, and has basically argued that Husserl was never able to really capture the full self-presence of immanence, because he kept understanding that self-presence in temporal terms, thereby introducing absence into the very structure of that presence. There seems to be a disagreement within phenomenology about how exactly we should understand Husserl's reflections on this matter. My own view would be that Husserl recognizes the equiprimordiality of presence and absence. I think on his account (this is something I have addressed in one of my previous books) self-consciousness really has to do with this presence/absence interplay. There is no naïve prioritization of a kind of uncontaminated presence, but nor is there a clear prioritization of absence, as if absence can explain presence. Rather, I think that Husserl wants to say that presence and absence go together. One way to understand that is by saying that he precisely took time seriously. Of course, I think that there is still a difference between that view and Heidegger's view, because this is not to say that future is suddenly what is most important. So, I don't think that there is no difference between Husserl and Heidegger. But I do think the claim that Husserl naively prioritised presence, is a misreading. So, I do think that for him time and absence play a role in his account of how *Selbstgegebenheit* has to be understood.

Then there was this issue of categorial intuition. I am not sure, I fully understand your point. I don't think there is any categorial intuition at play in the most fundamental levels of inner time-consciousness. But, of course, those first levels are only the beginning. Husserl would never say that everything important about selfhood and personhood could be captured through an investigation of the infrastructure of time-consciousness, just as I would never argue that everything worth knowing about selfhood and personhood could be understood simply by focusing on pre-reflective self-consciousness or the minimal self. There is a much, much, richer story to be told, which Husserl also discusses, of how personal identity is constituted through commitment to values and norms, how it's constituted within an intersubjective horizon. I think in order to start considering those levels, of course the future would play a role, as well as categorial structures.

The final thing was this issue about whether Heidegger might be able to account for collective intentionality given this appeal to the importance of future. I think you're right, he might be able to do that, but I couldn't quite see why that was supposed to be a criticism of my view, and of my highlighting of the importance of the face-to-face relationship. To take an example, I go to the cinema, I sit next to somebody that I've never met before. We are seeing the movie together and somehow we end up enjoying the movie together, in the sense that I am having an enjoyment that I wouldn't have had just by myself and vice versa. This would have been a very small, very brief, joint collective emotion. Of course, even that has a certain diachronic structure, it's not entirely synchronic, so to that extent even a short-lived emotion has temporality. But I don't see why it should necessarily involve long-term plans for the future. So again, I don't see why your reference to *Seinkönnen* and the future, why that should be an objection to anything I have said. If the claim would be that each and every shared emotion necessarily has to incorporate long-term future plans, then I would say I don't find that convincing. I think there can be very short-term dyadic interactions that can also give rise to certain shared experiences.

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First I would like to mention that without bodily experience we cannot establish that in fact pre-reflective self-awareness genuinely exists. For example, if someone asks me today whether I have been drinking water or writing on my Mac or listening to the discussion, my answer is based on a clear sense of what I have been doing. That is, I think, the only argument that phenomenology can give us in favour of pre-reflective self-awareness.

Thus, it is clear that pre-reflective self-awareness is ‘non-objectual’, ‘non-objectifying’, ‘non-observational’, ‘non-thematic’, ‘non-conceptual’, ‘intrinsic’, ‘implicit’ or ‘tacit’. But if we think this ‘sense of us’ as ‘sense of agency’, then that is the sense that I am the one who is causing an action. For example, that I am the one – as your colleague Gallagher said once – who is generating a certain thought in my stream of consciousness. Bearing that in mind, we could make a distinction between, let’s call it, a ‘feeling of agency’ and a ‘judgment of agency’, i.e. between pre-reflective self-awareness, which is based on sensorimotor processes, and reflective self-awareness, or belief-like processes.

That’s why I believe that you are right in criticizing Schmid’s introduction of normativity in his notion of plural pre-reflective self-awareness. For sure, it is not plausible at all how Schmid can successfully defend his thesis that, I quote, “[p]lural self-awareness is the normative pressure that drives us towards a unified shared perspective with a coherent set of attitudes that commit us, jointly.” – Especially if plural pre-reflective self-awareness is also based on sensorimotor processes.

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As I already mentioned, I’m working right now with Schmid on my thesis on the constitutive account of social ontology, and I believe that only a constitutive account can help us to form a proper understanding of group agency or collective intentionality, because groups are constituted by normative principles and entertain normative relations to others. At least that is true for large groups – corporations, universities, political parties and so on. Institutions need a normative identity – mainly through founding (written or non-written) acts and constitutional norms – that direct their practices. For example, a decision to launch a company, establish a cartel, found a university are all examples of forming group agents. I think that Bernhard Schmid tied his notion of plural pre-reflective self-awareness more to the way in which Margaret Gilbert is doing her social ontology, that is more to the notion of joint commitment, and to small, dyadic groups.

But if one bases social ontology on the analysis of joint commitment within small groups, one cannot show the experiential fact that we can still identify ourselves with a group even when we have reasons to criticize its ways of acting. Social reality often entails that we are members of particular groups – but in doing so, we have to ask ourselves whether this makes sense, not only from the perspective of us as a part of the group agent, but also from our individual perspective. Surely, you are acquainted with how Edith Stein began with the analysis of *Einfühlung* and ended in the Abteilung “Individuum und Gemeinschaft” in her *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften* with the analysis of leaders of groups, with some kind of authoritarian social ontology. I quote „Das Vorhandensein einer Führerschaft aber ist konstitutiv für die Gemeinschaft...

Ein einziger starker Führer kann ausreichen, um eine Gemeinschaft zusammenzuhalten...“ I do not think that Schmid’s notion of plural subjects could comprehend this, or Gurwitsch’s objection that *Einfühlung* is not enough for properly describing the ‘sense of us’, which also entails different kinds of hospitality (what you mentioned yesterday).

To summarize, Schmid’s concept of plural pre-reflective self-awareness is more suitable for small, dyadic joint commitment groups, than to large groups, which are also and perhaps essentially constructed through a group agent’s normative self-understanding, self-conception and through founding legal acts and documents. This in turn drives us more to the political sphere of social life, and to plural subjects without pre-reflective self-awareness, but with the constitutive normative self-determination.

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I have three brief questions. First question is very general, about your understanding of other-directedness and empathy. I am coming here from the perspective of affective intentionality *sui generis*, defended today mostly by Peter Goldie, Jan Slaby and Bennett Helm. You used this term, intentionality *sui generis*, referring for example to Edit Stein. So my question is: why do you use this term, and what is the typical mark of we-intentionality, why is it *sui generis*? For example, some of the most obvious marks used to describe affective intentionality *sui generis* are that how something is felt constitutes intentionality, but also that affective intentionality is directed practically, that we have direct engagement with the world. These notions are very important also when you refer to what Husserl says about affectivity, motivation, life, and so on. Where I was a bit confused was when you followed Husserl, and went back to the perception in the question of empathy and other-directedness. Would you say that perception would be some cognitive part of empathy, but that there is also something irreducible to cognition in it, specifically when we speak about motivation and different kinds of empathy, one kind being when we are recognizing the other, having perception of the other, but being passive, whereas in the other cases we have shared feelings with others and we are engaged in a “mutual play”?

My second question, related to the text, is about affective self-awareness mostly as defended by Jan Slaby. It is important for example for Peter Goldie, for the integration of phenomenal consciousness and the feeling theory, so that phenomenal consciousness is actually constituted and is constitutive for the intentional content. For Jan Slaby, briefly, when he speaks about affective self-awareness, it is important that it is at the same time the consciousness of the object

and of the world. For example, when I am afraid of something, it is not only accompanied by me feeling myself vulnerable, but being afraid of something is constituted by me feeling myself vulnerable. We cannot differentiate these parts: we have affective self-awareness and at the same time we have objective directedness to the world. So, my question is related to this fourth requirement: the difference condition. It is not a problem with your objections to Schmid, but I am just confused with respect to how easy the object and the question of object-directedness have just disappeared at some point from the question about the relation of emotion and experience and the we-awareness. To put this another way: when Slaby speaks about object, of course he almost always means situation. When we have affective pre-reflective self-awareness, we are dependent on the situation we are in, and then he speaks about feelings as atmosphere. I don't think this is in general a critique of your thesis, I think it could be very much in line with your argument, but I just needed a better argument of how the object, or rather the situation, disappeared from the question.

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My third very short question is about what you said yesterday at the lecture, and about something that we are doing here: how empathy can become a social act? The important thing here is that, briefly, someone else is conscious of me looking at him, conscious that I am conscious of him, and so on. I think the difficult problem in social ontology, but also if we want to understand social change, is the intersubjective relation, when the other is not here or when we have to mobilize or invite someone, to create an intersubjective relation with a wider range of people. So, could this argument be used to say that what we are doing if we are socially engaged is inviting the other to be conscious that we are consciously engaged in inviting them and that we are changing ourselves in response to how they react to our engagement?

Dan Zahavi

Let me start with two comments to the first speaker. I am not in disagreement about the importance of embodiment and the reason why it might not have featured so prominently in my *Self and Other* book, as in some of my previous books, was not, of course, that I had dropped the idea that embodiment is important. Rather, as I point out in one section, I was trying to present the notion of minimal self in such a way that it would stay neutral vis-à-vis the embodiment question, in the hope of making the argument appealing also to people who might be aversive to a strong embodiment claim. So that's the reason why embodiment doesn't feature prominently in my most recent book, but it's not that I am in any way denying the importance of embodiment for experience and self-consciousness.

Then you very briefly mentioned that the only argument one might give as phenomenologist for the existence of pre-reflective self-awareness was this

ability to somehow recall on one hand what one had been doing in the past. This is the kind of argument you also find in Sartre: had I not been aware of the experience when it happened, I would not be able to recall it subsequently. That's one argument, but it is not the only argument. Another argument would be of a more indirect kind, it would be an argument by elimination, where the point would be that all the other accounts of self-awareness fail. (There might then be a methodological question of whether this is really a phenomenological argument or whether it is more an argument phenomenologists might employ.) But in any case, the idea would be to say that we need something like pre-reflective self-awareness if reflection is to be possible, because reflection cannot ground itself. I think this is also an argument for the existence of pre-reflective self-awareness, which is very different from the argument you are making. So, I think there might be different strategies one could pursue. The argument from memory is not the only one available.

Then, before commenting on the main issue about agency, I just want to mention one thing *a propos* your reference to Stein and the importance of the *Führer*. I think it must have been a question of the time these discussions were taking place in, because you find a comparable discussion in Gurwitsch. In the final part of his book that I was referencing yesterday, Gurwitsch discusses fusional or charismatic groups. Yesterday, I only mentioned two kinds of groups: partnerships and communities, but Gurwitsch actually mentions a third kind, which is a group that is somehow centered around a charismatic leader, some kind of sect basically, where you give up your identity and fuse with other members, and where this process gravitates around the charismatic leader. When you read his text today, this final part seems a bit odd. The difference between society or partnership on the one hand, and community on the other is fairly straightforward. But to claim that fusional groups are equally fundamental, and not simply a rare occurrence, is surprising. Perhaps one reason for Gurwitsch's inclusion of this group formation, and perhaps the reason for Stein's reference to the *Führer* as well, is that they both reflect the political situation in Germany.

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But now to the final issue about group agency. I guess one way to reply is that if we exclusively understand we-intentionality in terms of group agency, then I can better understand why there are these references to the importance of coherence, normativity, etc. But I would have a problem with defining we-formations exclusively as agents. Why is there not a passive dimension to groups as well. What about affective sharing? I don't see why something like enjoying a movie or sunset together should not qualify as a shared experience, even though we are not doing something, trying to accomplish something. I think it has been a major problem in recent discussions that the focus has been so exclusively on joint action, rather than also considering, say, the role of affectivity. I think Schmid would be on board with this,

since he is certainly also interested in emotional experiences. But then we are back to the question of why normativity has to play such an important role.

As you point out, there might be a need for a very different analysis when it comes to smaller groups *vis a vis* corporations, but as far as I know, Schmid has recently been talking about corporations. There are these examples he gives of General Motors regretting their past environmental policies, so he certainly has examples featuring big corporations. He is not only focusing on the commitments of small groups.

(To Igor Cvejić) I am not sure I got the second question unfortunately, but the first question was this issue of to what extent empathy can be classified as a *sui generis* act, when perception somehow seems to be a precondition...

Igor Cvejić

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Is perception crucial, or is something that is *sui generis* emotional crucial?

Dan Zahavi

The way I have presented it in some of my articles is that empathy shares certain features with perception, but that it also in important ways differs from perception. Consider Husserl's classical distinction between different modes of intentionality, you can think about the Eiffel Tower, see a photo of the Eiffel Tower, or you can stand in front of the Eiffel Tower. These are three different ways of intending the same object: signitive intention, pictorial intention and perception. The question is then, where should we fit empathy? Is it more like signitive intentions, is it more like pictorial intentions or is it more like perceptual intentions? My argument would be that I think there are important differences, but if we had to choose between those three, I think empathy has most in common with perception. Why is that? Because I think one of the classical arguments Husserl provides for the primacy of perception when it comes to act-intentionality is that perception presents us directly with the object itself in *propria persona*. If I am looking at a photo of the object by contrast, there is a clear way in which I can get epistemically closer to the object, namely by perceiving it. When it comes to empathy, you can contrast empathy as a way of understanding others with far more indirect and inferential ways of understanding others. For example, imagine that you are paying a visit to a friend of yours, who is not at home. When you enter his office, you see that all his letters from his ex-wife have been torn to pieces and spread around the room. You infer: "My friend is upset about his divorce". This manner of coming to understand the other is a very inferential, indirect way. Contrast that with the case where you are sitting in front of your friend, you are talking about the divorce and

suddenly he starts crying, and you then have an understanding of him being distressed about his divorce. I think the latter for Husserl would be a case of empathy. The claim would be that that is the most direct way you can come to grasp the others' distress; it is a much more direct way than to infer the other's distress because you see all the torn letters. That's what makes empathy more perception-like. There are of course also important differences, one of them concerns the issue of elusiveness. Empathy provides us with an understanding of the other, but it's a way that also preserves the otherness of the other, because we can never grasp the experience of the other in the same way as that experience is given to the other. So, I think empathy might have something in common with perception, but it cannot be reduced to perception, and it cannot be accounted for by simply adding something else to perception. In short, I don't think it's possible to reductively explain empathy. The only question one could then still ask is this: Assume that you were blind and deaf and paralyzed, etc., in short, imagine that you were deprived of all your perceptual abilities, would you then be able to empathize with somebody else? I would say no, because you cannot engage in a face-to-face interaction with somebody else if you have no sensory faculties. That perhaps seems to suggest that even if empathy is irreducible, it still has perception as a certain precondition.

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The last question had to do, if I understood it correctly, with whether some of the insights coming from the discussion of the relationship between empathy and social acts involving bidirectionality, mutual reciprocity, recognition, whether that model could be expanded to also include interaction between groups of people who are absent. Can we scale it up? I think we need to recognize the presence of some important differences here, which is why I don't think one could simply scale it up. Imagine for instance that you are the U.S. president and that you are signing a law giving equal rights to all Americans, despite their different skin color, ethnic background etc. That act could certainly be seen as amounting to a recognition of a certain group. But even so, it is an act of recognition that differs dramatically from what is at stake in the face-to-face interaction. In the latter case, there will be a constant feedback from the addressee, there will be a constant calibration: I am doing something, you are reacting, that is somehow influencing me and vice versa... You will not have this real-time reciprocity when you are engaged in acts of recognition vis-à-vis absent groups. But I don't think that is to say that an investigation of these larger-scale situations should completely dispense with small-case scenarios, because I think it would be very unlikely that you would be able to engage in large-scale acts of recognition, had you not been exposed to and engaged in the small-scale ones. I think we acquire certain capacities and certain interpersonal understanding in those dyadic, triadic, small group encounters that we are drawing on when we want to engage in

large-scale ones. So I think we have to recognize the difference, but I would also want to say that small scale interaction is a precondition for large scale policies. I think there is a founding relationship.

I just couldn't understand the question about the object disappearing...

Igor Cvejić

If self-awareness presupposes interdependence with situation, then one could argue that plural self-awareness is constituted by the same situation we are in. For me it wasn't that understandable how the problem that they are in the same situation, that they intend the same object, easily disappeared.

Dan Zahavi

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Now I understood it much better. I think it's one thing to argue that self-awareness is not objectifying in the sense that the experience in question isn't taking itself as object in order to be given. To say that is not to deny that there might be objects or situations present in order for self-awareness to occur, because what we have to remember is the kind of experiences that are self-aware in the first place. These are typically intentional experiences, so it's my perception of the bottle that is self-aware, and there wouldn't be a perception of the bottle if there were not an object for that perception to target. So, all this talk about pre-reflective self-consciousness being non-objectifying is not supposed to entail that it doesn't involve a relation to the world. In fact, to think that we somehow cut the link to the world and retreat into an enclosed subjective sphere when we focus on pre-reflective self-awareness is a misunderstanding. We are world embedded, but that goes hand in hand and is fully compatible with the presence of a non-objectifying form of self-consciousness. Now, I think one could say something similar about plural self-consciousness, and this is actually something that Schmid has highlighted, but which you can also find already in Schütz. What Schütz says on some occasions is that a we-experience is primarily pre-reflective in nature in the sense that it is not something we thematize. Now, what does he mean by that? I think one way to understand it is as follows: if we are standing in a dyadic relation, where we pay attention to each other, this is actually something of an anomaly, because normally when we do or experience something together, our focus is not each other, but on the shared context. Schütz says that the moment we start to reflect upon the we-relationship, we are actually already living it, we are already engaged in it, and that the very reflection might actually disrupt it. What this highlights is the question of whether we-relationships should primarily be viewed as dyadic, or as triadic. And I think I would agree, they are triadic, they do involve the world. But these kinds of triadic we-relations are, in my view, possible on the basis of certain dyadic relations, whereas Schmid

seems to say: forget about dyadic relationship, because issues pertaining to social cognition, to interpersonal understanding, to the I-Thou relationship are all just a red herring, and are not going to help us understand the nature of we-intentionality. I would disagree with that, I think that the reason why we can engage in these specific triadic interactions very much depend on specific processes playing themselves out in the dyadic relations.

Srđan Prodanović

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I am a sociologist, so my question will be somewhat directed from my discipline, although I think that phenomenology and sociology had great influence on each other in the constitutive period, and also later. Firstly, I would like to consider some epistemological implications of your social ontology. Namely, coming from the pragmatist tradition, I am very much inclined to agree both with your skepticism regarding those types of accounts of we-intentionality that advocate some sort of “phenomenal fusion”, as well as with your proposition that, following Husserl, we must preserve plurality within our sense of togetherness. However, I was wondering in which way does your defense of this plurality influence efforts of social scientist (and especially sociologists) to understand social reality? For example, if we experience oneself as one of us thanks to our everyday social interactions, then, phenomenologically founded scientific explanation would have to, if we follow Schütz for example, take very seriously common-sense understanding and cannot reject as easily as for example positivism can common-sense norms, common-sense intersubjectivity, culturally given common-sense categories. Furthermore, does this plurality mean that in order to scientifically understand collective action I must in some way follow theoretical cues from Schütz, Goffman or Garfinkel and study the way in which institutions are reproduced in concrete everyday situations? This, I think, raises some old questions and old skepticism regarding phenomenological sociology and its methodological individualism. That is, we cannot consider for example power relations in the emergence and development of institutions, of large structures of we-intentionality.

Second, I would like to hear your thoughts regarding an issue, that many of my colleagues find intriguing, and that is the intersubjectivity of social change. Let me start with a quote from your paper “Intersubjectivity, sociality, community” where you explain Husserl’s take on the communicative engagement:

Both of us, you and I, “look each other in the eyes”, you understand me, is aware of me, just as I am simultaneously aware of you. I then address you and seek to influence you. For instance, I might call your attention to a common

object by pointing at it. If successful, your attention will shift from my expression to the intended object. In this way, my intention is realized in you (Husserl 1973b: 167-168).

I was just trying to explicitly ask the following question: can this attention to object be directed at something that is negative, for example, can I say look at that injustice, look at that bad practice, socially constructed bad practice? And could that act of engagement then constitute a new kind of institution that could bring some kind of radical change, that could go beyond given, concrete social, cultural facts that are commonsensically understood?

Marjan Ivković

*Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory
University of Belgrade, Serbia*

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My question elaborates a bit on Srđan's question. I am also a sociologist and I am also largely interested in your view on the logic of social change and social dynamics. So, I would like to keep focusing on the problem of communication, and I'd like to ask what would be your position with respect to Schmid's argument, namely that communicative action cannot establish shared meanings because it has to rest upon the more fundamental plural pre-reflective self-awareness? Basically, I understand that this is a direct criticism of Habermas and his notion that communicative action generates radically new meanings basically, and that the logic of social change and historical progress is the one of rational expansion of...

Dan Zahavi

So, just to be sure I understood, do you mean Schmid's criticism of Habermas?

Marjan Ivković

Schmid's criticism, of course, and my question is what is your position with respect to Schmid's argument. So, basically Habermas's argument is that over the course of history more and more aspects of social reality become transformed on the basis of communicative action, primarily the political system, which becomes more rational, more reasonable, more prone to questioning. Let me just expand a bit on this, because there is the so called third generation of critical theory, Axel Honneth primarily and also some other authors who have tried to go beyond Habermas, tried to expand this perception of social change. Honneth argues that there is such thing as a normative surplus in social reality, rather than semantic surplus of institutionalized norms of action, and that the way social change occurs is by way of actors experiencing the existing social order as unjust or as insufficient in any respect, and on the

basis of this experience developing what he calls a shared semantics, a kind of new vocabulary which would enable individual actors to develop shared normative orientation and try to institutionalize their new viewpoint within a social system. What I think of Honneth's perspective in light of Schmid's and your arguments, it seems to me that the concept of experiential sharing becomes very important. So, in a way, Honneth would be in agreement with Schmid more than with Habermas, that it is the pre-discursive experience of injustice that is the key factor behind social change. But then there is a question of how does this experience of injustice translate into normative claims. There seems to be a missing link there because if we presuppose that linguistic communication cannot generate radically new meanings, shared meanings, then we have to locate the normative innovation within the realm of experience. Now, this comes much closer to some strands of neo-pragmatism, for example to Richard Rorty, who argues that the way social change occurs is that individual actors start using radically new linguistic terms. And this is the result of some idiosyncratic factors and then gradually their language starts to resonate with the language of some other actors. There is no general theory of how this happens, but people start speaking in a way first actors started to speak and this is how what he called metaphors or radically new terms become internalized, become routinized and generalized within this new social reality. Now, my question is first of all, what is the relation to Schmid's argument about the epiphenomenal nature of communication, and second, how you see these attempts to theorize the normative surplus and experience of injustice and what would be your position?

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Olga Nikolić

*Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory
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First of all, I would like to say that I agree with the basic thrust of your critique of Schmid, I think that there is no plural awareness before singular awareness, but I do think that some points where you are criticizing Schmid can actually make some sense, so I would like to suggest how I can see that they make sense and to hear your thoughts on this. First of all, the phenomenal fusion, I think that in some cases it can actually be a good way to describe certain situations. For example, I think that the concert hall example is maybe not a good one. A better example would be a group of friends, talking, interacting, having a good time, enjoying themselves. This situation actually consists of many individual acts, individual I-Thou relations and we could say that they are somehow fused together, many interchanges are happening, that create some sort of singular mood in which all are participating in their own individual way. So, this is kind of the way I can understand this phenomenal fusion. The other thing is I can also understand Schmid's comparison

of plural pre-reflective self-awareness and singular, how they can work in a similar way because, let's take the situation with a group of friends, we are not reflectively aware of each other, we are not reflecting on ourselves as a group, but this experience in which we are pre-reflectively aware of each other makes it possible to later reflect upon. So, this experience actually enables us to reflect, and to say "we really had a good time, that day" and so on. I wouldn't go further in stressing the similarities between plural and singular case. This is the first question, so what are your thoughts on this?

1056 The second is, I find it interesting to think about how many various forms of we-intentionality there are actually, and how many different ways that the we-intentionality is constituted. There are some that require a feeling of togetherness and some that don't require a feeling of togetherness, just a shared common goal, instrumental rationality, or joint commitment but not this emotional bonding. So, there are many different ways to act as a group, to form a group. And this made me think that maybe there are many ways that we empathize. Maybe there are different kinds of empathy, different ways to empathise, maybe I am empathizing in a different way with a member of my family than with somebody I barely know?

Then, maybe we should also take into account temporal dimension when we are making this distinction, so in the example with the mother and father, their common past actually enables them to have experiential sharing, while on the other hand in the example of the concert hall, I don't think you could say that we have experiential sharing in this strong sense. Maybe the performers, I could understand how the performers could have this joint emotion, this emotional sharing, but the audience, this seems more as an aggregate of many singular experiences plus emotional contagion.

Finally, what about social meanings that are circulating within a community? They can actually affect the way we immediately react to a person and immediately form an I-Thou relation. For example, I can immediately perceive a person in a particular way pre-reflectively, based on what that person is wearing. There is some sort of immediacy here but it's not empathy. Can that influence the way I empathize or the way I form the I-Thou relation?

Dan Zahavi

I think I will start with the last question and then move to the more sociological questions subsequently. So, just to make it clear, when Schmid is talking about phenomenological fusion, he is not talking about states where there is no longer differentiation. Even though you might think that that is actually what he has in mind, he is very explicit about that not being the case. He clearly rejects the idea that a We is simply a kind of bigger scale I. So Schmid

does preserve plurality, he is completely on board with that. Then, of course, you might wonder if that's what he means, isn't it then a bit unfortunate to use the term phenomenological fusion, because fusion seems to indicate that there is no longer any differentiation. But I think this is really a terminological issue, rather than a substantial one. So, I would agree with you, and so would Schmid, that we can be together in ways where there is a preservation of plurality. You then also say that the fact that pre-reflective plural self-awareness precedes reflective plural self-awareness is an area where there is a clear similarity to the relation between singular pre-reflective and reflective self-awareness. Now, I am of course not denying that, the question is merely whether that similarity is sufficient in order to substantiate the more substantial claims of Schmid, i.e., when he claims that pre-reflective self-awareness constitutes the unity of the mind in a similar way in both the singular and the plural case.

Let me move on to the question concerning different forms of togetherness. Perhaps one way to think about it is to consider Walther's talk of *gefühlende Zusammengehörigkeit*. Gurwitsch took this notion to involve an emphasis on the *Gefühl*, such that the social formation is characterized by a specific emotional component. But perhaps one can interpret Walther in such a way that the focus is not on the emotion but on the togetherness, and where the best interpretation would be one that took her to be targeting a specific *sense* of togetherness. If that is the case, then I am not sure it is that easy to find counter-examples, i.e., group formations that do not include it. You mentioned joint commitment, but I don't understand what a joint commitment is, if it lacks this sense of togetherness.

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Olga Nikolić

It is based on some norm that we are all committed to.

Dan Zahavi

Yes, but I think it is important to differentiate between us doing something in parallel because we are all committed to same norm, and us doing something together. I might be convinced that in order to be healthy I have to run 20 km every day. Ten thousand other people in Denmark have been convinced by the same idea, and have embraced the same norm; they also run every morning, so we are all following the same norm, but I don't think this is a joint commitment in any interesting sense of the term. I don't think we would be collectively doing something together.

Having said this, I do of course want to acknowledge that there are importantly different group-formations. Think for instance about the question of

whether we empathize differently with family members and in-group members. Here one question is what exactly we mean by empathy. If you by empathy mean compassion and sympathy, which is how it's often used, then I think it's clear that we have positive biases *vis a vis* family members and in-group members. Indeed, there is plenty of social psychology literature in support of that. So that's kind of uncontroversial. But what if we offer a more deflationary notion of empathy, where empathy is about grasping the psychological significance of expressions? Are there also differences there? The answer seems to be affirmative. We might indeed have an easier time decoding the emotional expressions of in-group members.

Ljiljana Radenović

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There is a number of experiments done by Walker-Andrews, on the development of recognition of facial expressions in infants. The results show that the infants start recognizing facial expressions initially in their mom, but only when it comes together in all modalities, when the kid sees the mom, hears the mom, the mom touches the kid. And only later on the kid starts to be able to differentiate facial expressions only by singular modality, so when the kid sees the mom smiling, but no touching, no vocalisations. So, it goes along this line, so it's not really that weird that we can actually recognize quickly facial expression of in-group members. So, that's interesting.

Dan Zahavi

Let me add two more things. In my book *Self and Other*, I introduced a distinction between the *that*, the *what* and the *why*. There is a clear difference between recognizing the other as sad, or angry or fearful, and recognizing *why* the other person is sad, angry or fearful. Obviously, there are many situations where we can realize the first without yet having any clue about the second. Some phenomenologists would say that these are two different levels of empathy. One level has to do with a recognition of *what* kind of state the other is in, and then there is a richer notion that includes an understanding of *why* the other is in that state. In order to understand why, we need to understand the context, what preceded or what follows, etc. But you could potentially also argue for the distinction between the *what* and the *that*, where the claim would be, in some cases I might think I recognize that you are sad, and then subsequently I realize that you were not sad, you were just nostalgic or absent-minded, so I might have been wrong in assigning this specific emotional state to you, let alone understanding why you were in that state. But even in those cases, when I misattribute a specific emotional state to you, I am still completely correct in ascribing mindedness to you. So, to put it differently, I might misattribute specific emotional states to people with minds,

I don't misattribute specific mental states to bottles. So, even in those cases where I might be wrong about *what* state you are in, I am typically correct about you being in some kind of state in the first place. I think the only cases where we might be wrong about this would be, for instance, if we go into a panopticon and you think this is a statue, but it's actually a guard or *vice versa*. In short, there are of course some limit situations, but they are rare. So the question would be if this recognition of mindedness constitutes the most elementary level of empathy, which if you want to have a naturalistic explanation, would probably concern understanding of animacy and perhaps biological movement. If it does, then we can return to the question of whether there on this very basic level are cultural differences, differences pertaining to ingroup/outgroup differences. I am not convinced there are.

What about typifications? Schütz has done a lot of work there, showing how, in our interaction with all kinds of people, very soon we are beyond the dyadic relation, we are drawing on certain types, typifications that facilitate our social engagement, so every time I meet a new person, I do not have to start from scratch. So, if I meet a new person, say in the academic context, there are all kinds of presuppositions involved that facilitate my engagement with him or her. Of course, I might be wrong, but normally these presuppositions aid my understanding, and might also affect the employment of higher levels of empathy.

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Let me finally try to address the sociological questions, which are more foreign to me. I think we need to distinguish between the claim that an investigation of micro-sociological structures has its own merits and the claim that any kind of more complex sociological phenomenon can be understood on the basis of an investigation of such structures. If you want to understand systemic power hierarchies, it might be difficult to see how investigations of very concrete encounters can help there. I do think you will need diverse models, but what I would keep insisting upon, is that first of all, the respect for this diversity also has to go the other way. One should in short avoid assuming that a focus on macro-structures can explain everything that needs to be explained concerning micro-structures. Secondly, I would ascribe a certain primacy to the micro-sociology. I find it doubtful that one can really carry out an exhaustive investigation of the macro-structures without some understanding of individuals and of dyadic interpersonal relations.

You referenced a quote from Husserl. I think it's a very clear example of what psychologists would classify as a move from dyadic to triadic attention. I think that's basically what he is describing. I don't think you can without further ado take that very basic structure and then talk about how social change might occur. Husserl is interested in how we shift our focus of attention from the two of us to an external object. If you want a model accounting

for and addressing societal change, I think we need a completely different set of tools. This is not simply about moving from the dyadic to the triadic case.

(To Marjan Ivković) So I guess one question one could ask *vis a vis* Schmid's view that any communication basically presupposes shared ground, is the following: if that's the model you are committed to, where does change occur, where do new ideas come from, how do new group formations occur? Because it all somehow seems to be presupposed from the very outset, and that somehow does not strike me as a very appealing theory. It seems to remain a very static model. To say that communication doesn't really change anything is difficult to accept. Even if I want to argue that pre-linguistic communication and pre-linguistic interaction have a very important role to play, we should recognize that the moment linguistic communication enters the picture everything gets so much more complex and sophisticated. To say that this is just an extrapolation of existing structures, and that it basically merely articulates what was already there, is hard to accept.

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But then there was this issue of Honneth, you were saying that he might side more with Schmid than with Habermas, in so far as Honneth is prepared to accept the importance of the pre-discursive dimension. I agree with that, but I also think there are some elements in Honneth's view that seems to align his view with mine. In *Reification*, Honneth talks about the importance of a kind of recognition that takes place at a very basic level, even prior to recognizing and ascribing specific properties to others. I take that to be somewhat reminiscent of empathy on the *that* level, where we are not yet ascribing specific mental states to others, but simply recognizing each other as co-subjects. Schütz talks about a *Du-Einstellung*. In so far as Honneth wants to make room for that kind of recognition on the pre-discursive dimension, I think that moves him much closer to my position than Schmid's position since this recognition, this reciprocal dyadic relation, is precisely something I am emphasizing, whereas Schmid seems to consider it to be of no real importance. In fact, he clearly says that the I-Thou relation is a latecomer, and that it doesn't play a formative role for we-intentionality. In any case, I certainly see Honneth as representing a development of the Frankfurt school that is much more open to phenomenology than Habermas.