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THE PLURAL SUBJECT APPROACH TO SOCIAL ONTOLOGY AND THE SHARING VALUES ISSUE

abstract

I address the issue of the unity of social ontology despite the extreme variety of social entities: groups, money, promises, governments, laws, etc. Then, I focus on Gilbert's account of social ontology as an ontology specifically dealing with groups as plural subjects, and face with Gilbert's concept of shared values as values of plural subjects created by joint commitment. I argue that Gilbert's account of shared values is a cognitivist and extrinsic one: it neglects the specific role of values for the constitution of plural subjects and considers values neither as a necessary nor as a sufficient condition for social unity. I suggest that, unlike Gilbert and the main trend in the contemporary social ontological debate, phenomenology provides an axiology that can allow to account adequately for values and to understand values' crucial role for social unity. I discuss Scheler's dividing vs. sharing values thesis and mention Schapp's collective values thesis. Finally I address the question of the collective feeling value.

keywords

social ontology, plural subject, shared values, collective values, feeling value

1. Social entities, which pervade more and more our everyday life, are extremely various. Examples of social entities are: driver licences, taxes, euro notes, credit cards, bus tickets, judicial systems, health insurances, penal codes, theatres, governments, symphonic orchestras, walks together, football teams, friends groups, philosophical societies, marital couples, promises, marriage proposals, concert performances, elections, governing body sessions etc.
- Variety of social entities and unity of social ontology**
- 1.1 **The extreme variety of social entities** All of these entities are very different from one another. Yet they represent the object of one discipline: social ontology. Social ontology's origins go back to the beginning of the last century – the expression “social ontology” occurs for the first time in Edmund Husserl's 1910 manuscript entitled “Soziale Ontologie und Descriptive Soziologie” [Social Ontology and Descriptive Sociology].¹ However, social ontology's flowering and development started just in the last thirty years in the domain of philosophical and social science research. Today social ontology's reception in academia is quite accomplished: social ontology is a discipline which is taught in universities; there are social ontology societies, journals of social ontology have been founded, and the like.²
- 1.2 **Two essential features of social entities** Despite the extreme heterogeneity of social entities we deal with in our everyday life, I claim that there are at least two features which essentially individuate social entities and distinguish them from other classical ontological types, such as natural entities and ideal entities. These two features are:
- (i) Ontological dependence on intentionality;
(ii) Normativity.³
- 1.2.1 **Ontological dependence on intentionality** Social entities existentially depend on individuals' intentionality (at least two individuals are required) both for their creation and for their maintenance and cessation. Without beliefs, perceptions, desires, intentions, memories, feelings and actions relating to social entities, social entities would not exist. Let us consider some examples.

1 Husserl 1910, pp. 98-104.

2 See the *International Social Ontology Society* (ISOS), the *Journal of Social Ontology*, the *European Network on Social Ontology* (ENSO), the *Collective Intentionality Conference*.

3 I dealt with these two essential features of social entities (ontological dependence on intentionality and normativity) in De Vecchi 2012. On this topic see Searle 2010 and Thomasson 2009.

The promise I did, and its corresponding claim and obligation, are created by my social act of promising; and they will cease to exist only when I satisfy my promise by the corresponding-realizing action. The underground ticket I bought and validated to go to the university would not exist without our collective beliefs according to which that piece of paper is an underground ticket; if we would collectively stop to believe that that piece of paper is an underground ticket, then the underground ticket would cease to exist. Parliaments would not exist without parliamentarians, who let the parliaments live through their actions and acts, and without citizens who elect other citizens as parliamentarians.

Thus, social entities ontologically depend on individuals' intentionality, just like psychic natural entities (e.g. feelings) and non-natural physical entities (e.g. artifacts), and unlike physical natural entities (e.g. trees) and ideal entities (e.g. numbers).

Psychic entities like the pain I feel in my leg for my skiing fall, or the joy I feel getting a good piece of news about a dear friend of mine, or *social entities* like the request I made to my friend or the taxes I paid, or *physical non-natural entities* like the seat of the underground on which I sit or the building where I give my lectures, all these are entities which depend on individuals and on their capacity to be bearers of intentional states and agents of intentional acts and actions. *Physical natural entities*, like trees and mountains, exist independently of individuals and their intentionality about them: this Californian oak exists independently of the fact that I contemplate its beauty; Mont Blanc exists independently of the fact that I ski on Mont Blanc.

Social entities are essentially normative entities. Normativity essentially individuates social entities and distinguishes them from other entities, like artifacts and works of art which, like social entities, depend on individuals' intentionality.

1.2.2 Normativity

Now, the issues that need to be addressed are: what does "normativity" mean when referred to social entities? Why are social entities normative entities?

"Normativity" has many meanings and it may be predicable of other entities which are not specifically social entities, for instance and above all, moral entities like moral laws, moral judgments, moral actions. So, we have to inquire into the specificity of social normativity: What do I mean by "normative" social entities? What kind of normativity distinctively characterizes social entities?

Social entities imply obligations, rights, duties, claims, permissions, authorizations, licenses, awards, commitments, requirements etc. Social entities are bearers of "deontic powers" – I will adopt here Searle's very convincing concept (and neologism).⁴

Let us consider some examples.

Promising implies a promisor's *obligation* and promisee's *claim*. A university professor has the *obligation* to give her lectures, according to her work contract with her university, and she has the *right* to examine her students and evaluate them. Your invitation to your party *authorizes* me to come to your party. Two friends who decide to go to the Picasso Museum together are *committed* to go together to the Picasso Museum. Train tickets *entitle* us to travel with a certain train, directed to a certain destination, on a specific day; if we travel on this train without the corresponding ticket, we would be *liable to penalty*.

All of these kinds of obligations, authorizations, commitments, rights, etc. are not moral, as such. For instance, two criminals, who have committed themselves to bring about a certain criminal action, are consequently the bearers of such commitment, independently of the fact that the content of such commitment is immoral.⁵

⁴ See Searle 1995 and 2010.

⁵ On the issue of the relation between moral normativity and social normativity, see Gilbert 2013, pp. 5-9, and 2015 (in

1.3 Three kinds of social entities I suggest that it is possible and also needed to put the extreme variety of social entities into order. I try to do it, and identify three kinds of social entities:

- (i) *Social objects*: they are specifically objects such as driver licences, train tickets, euro notes, credit cards, car insurances, laws, etc.
- (ii) *Social subjects*: they are specifically collective entities such as symphonic orchestras, governments, societies, football teams, marital couples, groups of friends, etc.
- (iii) *Social acts, events and processes*: social acts such as requesting, promising, promulgating legal provisions; social actions and events such as cooperation activities (e.g. concert performances); social processes such as election or the procedure of the constitution of a state.

These different kinds of social entities are essentially connected to one another. For instance, social objects such as laws would not exist without social acts such as law-making acts performed by the parliaments as collective subjects. Social subjects such as symphonic orchestras would not exist without social objects such as job contracts, which define the position of each single musician in the orchestra, without concert performances and without the cooperative activity of playing together.

Social ontological theories at our disposal on the market provide accounts of social reality which tend to deal specifically with just one of these kinds of social entities. Just to mention some few examples: Searle and his account of *social objects* such as money (Searle 1995, 2010); Bratman and his account of *social actions* such as shared intentions and cooperative activities (Bratman 2014); List-Pettit and their account of *social subjects* in terms of group agency (List & Pettit 2011); Gilbert and her account of *social subjects* in terms of plural subjects (Gilbert 1989, 2013).

2. Gilbert's social ontology of plural subjects I suggest that Margaret Gilbert's social ontology is therefore an ontology of social subjects, and, more precisely, of "plural subjects" – in her terminology.

2.1 An existential approach to social ontology I argue that Gilbert's social ontology of plural subjects is impressive, and it is fundamentally and appropriately characterized by an original existential approach. Gilbert speaks of her social ontology as a "general project of understanding the terms in which human lives are lived" (Gilbert 2013, p. 2). "What puts you in a position to use the collective 'we'? One cannot hope fully to understand the human condition without an answer to this question" (Gilbert 2013, pp. 5-6). Such existential connotation, which is specific to Gilbert's social ontology, strikes positively because of its rarity in the contemporary social ontological debate as well as because of its appropriateness to "the thing itself" (to the proper matter of social ontology). In the end, social ontology is an ontology of the existence, i.e. of the human condition, since the experiences of the collective we (that is, what we live together with other human beings) are central for the existence of every human being.

2.2 The neglect of the specific role of values for social unity and the need of a different account of values Nevertheless, Gilbert's ontology of plural subjects does not adequately account for values. I argue that, astonishingly enough, Gilbert neglects the specific role of values for the quality of "the human condition" and for the quality of the existence of human beings in the social world. Values constitute neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the creation of plural subjects; only as (one of the possible) objects of a *joint commitment*, values become "shared collective values" or "collective values" which unify and bind people together constituting plural subjects (Gilbert 2005).

the present issue), Miller 2014 and 2015 (in the present issue), Searle 2010, chapter V, Reinach 1913, § 2.

In any case, the removal of values is, after all, a constant feature of the contemporary social ontological debate.

In the following part of my talk, I outline Gilbert's plural subjects account of shared values and then sketch some features of a different account of values, that of phenomenology; according to the phenomenological account of values, I try to show that values play a crucial role both for the creation and wellbeing of plural subjects.

I suggest that, unlike Gilbert and the main trend in the contemporary social ontological debate, social ontology should provide an account of values which focuses

- (i) on the *specific nature of values* and
- (ii) on *essentially collective values* such as solidarity or justice.

I also suggest that phenomenology could provide some important and fruitful insights for such account.

I outline Gilbert's account of *shared values*. It represents a perspective on values which is quite typical in the contemporary social ontological debate. Two features of Gilbert's account of shared values are typical of the way in which values are considered by social ontology today: a cognitivist account of values and an extrinsic account of values.

2.3 Gilbert's plural subjects account of shared values

Gilbert proposes a cognitivist account of values: values are the objects of beliefs.

2.3.1 A cognitivist account of values

In order that one have values, then, one must have beliefs or opinions. More specifically, one must have beliefs or opinions to the effect that some item or items have a certain value (Gilbert 2005 (2013), pp. 183-184).

Consequently,

The question about the nature of shared values will then be understood as a question about *shared beliefs or opinions to the effect that some item or items have a certain value* (Gilbert 2005 (2013), p. 184).

According to the cognitivist account of values, the specific nature or matter of values is not taken into consideration. Values are the object of beliefs just as anything else could be the object of beliefs. There is neither an inquiry into the specific being of values nor into a specific kind of intentionality that could grasp values directly (vs. the phenomenological intrinsic account of values: values are qualities which are directly grasped by "feeling value" [*wertfühlen*], that is, values are felt, see *infra* § 3).

2.3.2 An extrinsic account of values

Because of these two features, values do not play a significant role in the formation of social groups (and, consequently, in Gilbert's social ontology in general).

In her account Gilbert addresses the issue of whether shared values can be:

- either a necessary or sufficient condition,
- both conditions
- neither of the conditions

for the existence of social groups.

Gilbert's answer is that shared values are not a necessary condition for social groups, and that they can be a sufficient condition only "if sharing values [is] construed according to the plural subject account" (Gilbert 2005 (2013), p. 200), that is according to the joint commitment *modus*.

2.3.3 Values and social unity

2.3.4
Joint commitment:
on the sufficient
condition

All joint commitments are of the same form. X and Y (and Z and so on) are jointly committed *to do something as a body*. Here “doing something” is construed broadly enough so as to include believing that such-and-such and feeling thus-and-so. What is it to do something “as a body”?
 The joint commitment in the case we are considering is a commitment to believe as a body that some item I has a certain value v (Gilbert 2005 (2013), p. 193)

Gilbert argues that only if individuals commit themselves to believe jointly that a particular item I has a certain value v, such value v is a sufficient condition for the creation of social unity and of a “plural subject”.

In the case in which values are shared in the joint commitment *modus*, Gilbert speaks properly of “collectively shared values” or, more briefly of “collective values” (Gilbert 2005 (2013), p. 200). In other words values are here (cognitively) shared in a genuine collective way, that is in a we-mode, by a “plural subject” – and not in a summative or singularist way.

2.3.5
Joint commitment:
on the necessary
condition

According to Gilbert, people can be jointly committed in a variety of ways. Whatever this way is, the result of the joint commitment is always the creation of a “plural subject”.

[People] can be jointly committed not only to believing as a body that such-and-such, but also to accepting or pursuing a goal as a body, to accepting as a body that A is to be done in circumstances C, and more. In my technical terminology those who are jointly committed to X-ing as a body constitute the *plural subject* of X-ing (Gilbert 2005 (2013), p. 197).

Therefore, concerning the necessary condition,

It would seem that such [collective] values are not necessary, however, for social unity. A plural subject, founded on a joint commitment, need not be the subject of values as opposed to other beliefs, rules of the fiat form, and so on” (Gilbert 2005 (2013), p. 204).

In other words, collective values can be a condition for social unity and for the creation of a plural subject, just as collective beliefs or collective rules can be a condition for it. According to Gilbert, the only fundamental condition for social unity and plural subject is that values, beliefs, rules, emotions etc. be shared in virtue of a joint commitment (see Gilbert 2014, on collective emotions). If values, beliefs, rules, emotions etc. are the object of a joint commitment, then, in virtue of such joint commitment such values, beliefs, rules, emotions, etc., are collective values, beliefs, rules, emotions of a plural subject, and they bring forth social unity.

2.3.6
The core
argument:
justifying
interventions
for unifying
individuals and
binding them
together

According to Gilbert, sharing values, beliefs, emotions etc. in the joint commitment *modus*“ [...] *unifies* people, it *binds* them *together*, and it provides them with the standing to *intervene* in one another’s lives”(Gilbert 2005 (2013), p. 206; italic mine).
 Therefore, collective values, beliefs, emotions, etc. (i.e. values, beliefs, emotions etc. which are shared in the joint commitment *modus*) are a sufficient condition for the creation of social unity and plural subjects because they
 - unify and
 - bind the participants together
 by giving them the standing to *intervene* in one another’s lives, more precisely to make demands on one another and to rebuke one another in order that each participant acts conforming to the joint commitment in question.

Gilbert's account of shared values does not value values with regard to their specific nature. Values are considered as any other possible object of beliefs and as any other possible object of joint commitments. As objects of a joint commitment, values become shared collective values (or collective values) and constitute a sufficient condition for the creation of social unity and plural subjects.

This is just an extrinsic account of values and of shared values. Gilbert does not inquire into the specific nature of values and their role in the constitution of social unity and plural subjects. For instance, she does not address the question if there are *sharable values and not-sharable values per se*. Moreover, she does not take into consideration the role of *essentially collective values* such as solidarity for the wellbeing of a collective of persons, and consequently, for its stability and persistence. All of the "social unity game" played by Gilbert takes place on the field of what can entitle people to intervene in each other life in order to *unify* them and *bind* them *together*. This issue of intervention is not a specific issue of collective values, but rather a general issue, common to collective values, beliefs, emotions etc. In conclusion, the specific contribution of values in the creation, maintenance in existence (stability and persistence) and quality of the existence of plural subjects is not taken into account.

I argue that phenomenology provides an axiology (i.e. a theory of values which deals with their specific ontological nature) that can allow us to account adequately for values and to understand their crucial place in the social world.

I make two points:

- (i) Scheler's axiology (Scheler 1913/1923, 1913/1927), his inquiry into the specific nature of values and *the dividing vs. sharing values thesis*: the more divisible values are, the less sharable they are; and the converse: the less divisible values are, the more sharable they are.
- (ii) The *collective values thesis* (Schapp 1930): there are values which are essentially collective (vs. individual values).

These points should suggest a track for an alternative answer to *the issue of unifying and binding people together* which is, as we have just seen, Gilbert's main issue about the possibility conditions for social unity.

Here I limit myself to sketching some essential features of values which, according to Scheler's axiology, ground the thesis of dividing values vs. sharing values which I present.

- (i) **Feeling value:** Values are the specific and direct object of a particular kind of affective intentionality: *feeling value* [*wertfühlen*]. *Feeling value* is to be distinguished both from perceiving [*wahrnehmen*], which is a cognitive act, and from emotions or sensations, which the act of feeling values can give rise to.
- (ii) **Realism about values:** Values are material qualities which exist independently of individuals' intentionality, and, therefore, are not reducible to mental phenomena like sensations, emotions or beliefs (as, instead, happens in Gilbert's account).
- (iii) **Values and goods:** Values are not reducible to goods, the things which are bearers of values (valuable things). The distinction between values and goods is very important for preserving a transcendence of the type of the value with respect to its instantiations in goods: without such distinction, a value, for instance friendship, would be identified with a

2.3.7 To sum up

3. Phenomenological insights into values and social unity

3.1 Scheler's axiology

certain instantiation of friendship in certain bearers.⁶

- (iv) **Hierarchy of values:** There are “superior” and “inferior” values: values can belong to different spheres, which from the lower to the higher constitute a hierarchy of values:
- values of the “sensibly agreeable” [*Werte des “sinnlich Angenehmen”*]
 - vital values [*Lebenswerte*]
 - person values [*Personwerte*]
 - values of the holy [*Werte des Heiligen*].⁷

Among others, one criterion for values hierarchy is the divisibility of values: the less values are divisible, i.e. the less values must be divided in participation by several, in order to be grasped by several participants, the higher values are; and the converse: the more values are divisible, i.e. the more values must be divided in participation by several, in order to be grasped by several participants, the lower values are.

There is no question about the fact that values are “higher” *the less they are divisible* [*teilbar*], that is, the *less* they must be *divided* [*geteilt*] in participation by several (Scheler 1913/1927, p. 110; En. Tr., p. 93).

3.2
Scheler: the
dividing values
vs. sharing values
thesis

Now, I argue for the following thesis: the *more divisible* values are, the *less sharable* they are. And the converse: the *less divisible* values are, the *more sharable* they are.

3.2.1
Inferior values:
the case of
the values of
the “sensibly
agreeable”

The fact that the participation [*Teilnahme*] of several in “material” goods is possible only by dividing [*Teilung*] these goods (e.g., a piece of cloth, a loaf of bread) has this final *phenomenological* basis: the values of the *sensibly agreeable* [*Werte des sinnlich Angenehmen*] are clearly *extensive in their essence*, and their felt experiences occur as localized and as extensive in the body. For example, the agreeableness of sweet, etc., is spread over sugar, and the corresponding sensible feeling-state over the “tongue”. [...] It is therefore essentially impossible [*wesensgesetzlich ausgeschlossen*] for one and the same value of the values-series of the “sensibly agreeable” to be enjoyed by several beings *without* the division of its bearer and of the value itself. For this reason there are also, in the *essence* of this values-modality, “conflicts of interest” relative to the striving for a realization of these values, and relative to their enjoyment [...]. This also implies that it belongs to the *essence* of these values to *divide*, not to unite [*trennen, und nicht vereinen*], the individuals who feel them (Scheler 1913/1927, p. 110; En. Tr., p. 93).

The lowest sphere of values is that of the values of the *sensibly agreeable* [*Werte des “sinnlich Angenehmen”*], for example the “agreeableness of sweet”. Such kind of values can be grasped by more individuals together only if their bearers (the material goods, in which they are embodied) are divided among the individuals because the values of the *sensibly agreeable* are essentially characterized by extension [*Ausdehnung*] and divisibility [*Teilbarkeit*]. Therefore, values of the lowest sphere (such as the sweet of a food or also the warmth of a blanket) essentially *divide and not unify the individuals*, because, in order to be enjoyed by a plurality of

⁶ See Scheler 1913/1927, First part, First Section «Materiale Wertethik und Guter-Respektive Zweckethik», §1 «Guter und Werte».

⁷ See Scheler 1913/1927, § 3, pp. 110-111. About these features of Scheler’s account of values, see Mulligan 2009 and about the ontological status of values see De Monticelli 2015.

individuals, they have to be divided among the individuals and individuals have to compete with one another to grasp the values. So, the *more divisible* values are, the *less sharable* they are.

In strict contrast to this [values of the sensibly agreeable] there stands a “work of art”, for example, which is “indivisible” [*unteilbar*] and of which there is no “piece”. [...] The most extreme opposite of these values [the values of the sensibly agreeable], the values of the “holy” [*das Heilige*], of “cognition” [*Erkenntnis*], and of the “beautiful” [*das Schöne*], etc., as well as their corresponding spiritual feeling-states [*geistige Gefühlen*], have a totally different character. There is no participation in extension and divisibility with these values; nor is there any need to divide their bearers if they are to be felt and experienced by any *number* of beings. A work of spiritual culture can be simultaneously apprehended [*gleichzeitig erfasst*] by any number of beings and can be felt and enjoyed in its value, for it lies in the essence of values of this kind to be *sharable* [*mittelbar*] *without limit* and without any division and diminution [...]. Nothing *unites* [*vereint*] beings more immediately and intimately than the common worship and adoration of the *holy*, which by its nature excludes a “material” bearer, though not a symbolic one. [...] It lies in the *essence of the intention toward the holy to unite* [*einen*] *and bind together* [*verbinden*] (Scheler 1913/1927, p. 111; En. Tr. pp. 93-94, slightly modified).

3.2.2 Superior values

On the contrary, superior values (for instance “person values” [*Personwerte*] such as the beauty of a work of art, the knowledge, or, above all, values of the holy) can be grasped by a plurality of individuals without being participated in extension and divisibility and without their bearers being divided. The beauty of a work of art is not divisible and there is no piece of a work of art. A work of art can be simultaneously grasped by a plurality of individuals and its value can be felt and enjoyed by such plurality, since it belongs to the essence of superior values to be “sharable without limit and without any division and diminution”. Moreover it lies in the essence of some superior values (especially the values of the holy) to *unify* and *bind together* the people who feel and enjoy them. Therefore, the less divisible values are, i.e. the less values must be divided *in participation by several*, in order to be grasped and felt by several participants, the more they can be felt and enjoyed by several individuals together, that is the *more sharable* they are.

The main idea I argue for is that there are values which are sharable and values which are not. Sharable values are fundamental for the quality of the existence of human beings and for the creation of social unity (groups, societies, communities, etc.): sharing values, which are crucial for the development and flourishing of human beings such as the beauty of a work of art, the knowledge and the truth (think of a group of scientists), the justice of a law, *unifies* people and even *binds* them *together*.

3.3 Sharing values and the issue of unifying and binding people together

Therefore, this phenomenological insight into values provides a track for an account of the problem of unifying and binding people together (in order to bring about plural subjects: groups, collective of persons etc. vs. mere aggregates), which is different from Gilbert’s account focusing just on the title people have to intervene in each other lives.

The phenomenological account implies that certain specific values—and not others—are sharable and that, once shared, they *unify* the people who share them: for instance sharing the justness of a law, brings about unity among people. Thus, people are not unified only by and through the standing to intervene in each other lives (Gilbert’s account); rather, people are also unified by and through the experience of sharing some values which essentially and positively unify—and not divide—people.

3.4 The collective values thesis Moreover, the phenomenological account of values not only focuses on the distinction between values which are sharable and values which are not. It even suggests that, among sharable values, there are values which are essentially collective: as shown by Wilhelm Schapp (1930), we have to distinguish between values which are individual and values which are collective, that is between values which can be enjoyed by only one individual, on the one hand, and *values which are essentially collective*, on the other hand, for they need to be shared and enjoyed by individuals together in order to exist and to be realized. Think, for instance, to the solidarity of behaviour with respect to others, the justness of a law.⁸

The collective values thesis provides a promising path for answering the question of *binding* people *together*, the question of the social bondage, since it seems to me that collective values necessarily imply a bond among the people who share them: without such a bond, collective values can be neither enjoyed nor realized.

3.5 Ways of sharing values Now, the last issue I address concerns the very concept of sharing values: what does sharing values mean? Which phenomena do exemplify the sharing of values? According to Gilbert's joint commitment account, sharing values implies that values are shared in the plural subject mode created by joint commitment. This is a genuine collective we-mode, i.e. not a singularist or a summative way of sharing. In the phenomenological scenario I have just mentioned, in which sense of sharing sharable values (values which can be communicated and shared without limit and division of the goods in which they are embedded) can be shared? According to Scheler people can share values *latu sensu* in different ways corresponding to different kinds of co-feeling. However only one way of sharing values represents a genuine collective way of sharing values.⁹

(i) Collective feeling [*Miteinanderfühlen*] value: we-mode

The only one genuine way of feeling value together is collective feeling. It is, say, the case of two artists who feel together the beauty of the work of art they are creating, or of two parents who feel together the love for their child. In these cases, individuals share values in a genuine collective we-mode: it is not reducible to the I-form plus mutual or common knowledge (I feel the (sharable) value x and I know that you feel the same value x, etc.), that is, it is not reducible to merely individual experiences plus reciprocal knowledge. Why? Because collective feeling value is constituted by the deep interdependence and co-regulation of individuals' experiences and by their reciprocal relation to each other.¹⁰ Therefore, collective feeling value is a very important moment of groups of individuals such as couples, families and communities which are deeply unified and bond together.¹¹

(ii) Co-feeling [*Mitfühlen*]: I-mode

Simple co-feeling is the case in which, say, artist A feels the disvalue "grotesque" of the work of art she is creating together with the artist B; the artist B does not feel herself such disvalue, but she may co-feel the feeling the grotesque of the artist A: B sympathizes the feeling the grotesque of A.

⁸ On Schapp's account of values, see De Vecchi 2016.

⁹ Scheler presents his taxonomy of co-feeling in Scheler 1913/1923: Part I *Fellow Feeling*, Section II *Classification of the phenomena of fellow feeling*.

¹⁰ See Zahavi (2015: 116-117, 245) who discusses the specificity of "emotional sharing" in Scheler's account of co-feeling.

¹¹ A further and deeper analysis of Scheler's collective feeling account would be needed here, but for reasons of length I have to limit myself to the few features I sketched. About this topic, see Schmid 2009, Zahavi 2015, Szanto 2015, Salice 2016, De Vecchi 2011.

In this case, values are shared not in a genuine collective way, not in a we-mode, but just in a singularist way. B co-feels the value felt by A, and so B shares the same value of A. But A may even not be aware of such co-feeling and sharing. Co-feeling is grounded in the refeeling (*Nachfühlen*).

(iii) Refeeling [*Nachfühlen*] value: grounding co-feeling value

It often happens that a value, e.g., the value of a work of art, comes to us in a more adequate form of givenness only through a refeeling of the feeling [*Nachfühlen des fühlens*] of the value concerned; and we often realize through this that our ability to feel [*Fähigkeit*] the type of value in question is very narrow indeed (Scheler 1913/1927, p. 249; En. Tr., p. 243)

I may grasp the value of the beauty of a work of art through my feeling of the feeling [*Nachfühlen*] of the beauty value felt by another person: this is the case of empathy. In other words, in the case of superior values as the beauty (and not in the case of inferior values of the sensibly agreeable) I may increase my feeling of values through the capacity other people have to grasp certain values which I was not able to grasp.

In such case, I grasp the feeling value (e.g. the beauty) felt by the other. This does not imply that I endorse such feeling value. Refeeling value is just an act by which I learn the feeling value of others. Then, I may feel such value personally and share it. But I may also do not feel such value personally.

Therefore, in the case of refeeling value, values may be either co-felt or not-co-felt. If I personally endorse and feel the value felt by another person, I co-feel such value: i.e. I sympathize such value with the other person. Here values which are co-felt are shared in I-mode and not in we-mode. If I just limit myself to grasp the feeling value of the other person unless feeling such value personally, then no value is shared.

(iv) Contagion [*Ansteckung*]: pseudo-we-mode

Another possible case of co-feeling is the case of contagion: this is a pseudo collective sharing values. Contagion is a form of co-feeling which plays a very crucial role in the creation of social groups such as masses in which individuals identify themselves with impersonal collective forms of sociality. For instance: if I belong to a certain tradition, culture, etc., then I may be swayed by that tradition or culture, but I may be not aware of this contagion. In this case, I feel certain values characterizing that tradition or culture and I think that such values are personally mine and that they are grounded in me, because I identify myself with that tradition (but I am not aware of it). I may feel hate for a certain population because I belong to a population that traditionally hates that population; but I believe that such hate is grounded in me, and I am not aware that it is derived by the population I belong to. In other words, there is the creation of a pseudo-we, in which individuals are merged one in the other and the individuals' identities are not preserved, as instead it is the case in the genuine collective feeling.¹²

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¹² See Scheler 1913/1923: Part I *Fellow-Feeling*, Section III *Genetic Theories of Fellow Feeling*.

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