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Mutual and Solidary Incorporation as Elementary Forms of Social Cognition

Abstract

In this paper, I investigate the bodily dimension of elementary forms of social cognition. I argue that the discussions on participatory sense-making and mutual incorporation as its phenomenologically accessible dimension can provide valuable conceptual tools accounting for a pre-reflective, bodily-organised sense of having to do with another subject. I also argue, however, that the bodily sense of sharedness intended in these discussions is less informative concerning recent findings from the discussion on collective intentionality. Therefore, I suggest reconsidering Hermann Schmitz' notion of solidary incorporation as an alternative.

Keywords

Hermann Schmitz, enactivism, social cognition, collective intentionality, sense of us, bodily dimension

Introduction

Two persons try to pass one another in a narrow corridor; two strangers exchange a glance in the metro.¹ These and many more everyday encounters are cases of elementary social cognition. Such encounters can provide us, for instance, with the sense of having to do with another person (sense of Thou) or the sense of sharing (sense of us). Rather than being a matter of complicated reflections or ascriptions of particular contents, the respective senses are constituted on the level of the feeling body's relation to its environment. In this regard, they may be called elementary.

This paper aims to discuss two fruitful ways of conceiving of the bodily dimension of social cognition that have been proposed in the phenomenological and neo-phenomenological tradition. I begin by presenting the notion of *mutual incorporation* according to Thomas Fuchs and Hanne De Jaegher and its role in a rather recent account called 'participatory sense-making'. I argue that this notion can help to elucidate the sense of having to do with another person. However, despite the claim of doing full justice to the 'participatory' perspective, participatory sense-making and mutual incorporation cannot account for

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a sense of genuine sharing as it has been suggested in recent discussions on collective intentionality. I then suggest applying the notion of solidary incorporation that has been highlighted by Hermann Schmitz, to account for the constitution of such a sense on the level of bodily feeling. *Solidary incorporation* is yet another form of bodily contact with others that is irreducible to mutual incorporation (or ‘antagonistic incorporation’ in Schmitz’s terms).

The upshot of my discussion is that there is a high potential for applying the neo-phenomenological notions of *mutual incorporation* and *solidary incorporation* to current discussions on social cognition and collective intentionality.

1. Participatory sense-making and mutual incorporation

1.1. What is mutual incorporation?

When it comes to fleshing out an account for elementary social cognition on the level of bodily feeling, the approach of ‘participatory sense-making’ (De Jaegher/Di Paolo 2007) seems to be a good starting point. The background of the relevant approach is enactivism, a framework derived from classic phenomenology (Varela, Thompson, Rosch 1992), according to which cognition is a function of an organism’s interaction with its environment. The general idea of that approach seems to be the following: In interacting with each other, embodied agents coordinate their respective attempts of engaging with the environment and, in consequence, create a complex of meaning intricate enough to set off a dynamic of its own (cf. De Jaegher/Di Paolo 2007, 488, 493, 497). This meaningful dynamic is conceived of as an autonomous process in relation to which the interacting individuals can be described as participants. The autonomy of each individual, however, is not destroyed, but integrated into the process (ibid., 493). The following example illustrates this:

“Consider the situation in a narrow corridor when two people walking in opposite directions have to get past each other. They have to decide whether to continue walking as they are, or shift their movement to the right or to the left. Occasionally, such encounters unfold like this. Instead of choosing complementary movements that would allow them to carry on walking, the individuals move into mirroring positions at the same time.” (De Jaegher/Di Paolo 2007, 493)

In this case, according to De Jaegher and Di Paolo, the coordination process has, so to speak, gained a life of its own and forces the individuals to remain in interaction with each other. And this is so, despite – and partly also in virtue of – each one’s respective attempt to break from this situation (ibid.; cf. Fuchs/De Jaegher 2009, 471). A complex of meaning that defines the very situation is created.

It is important to understand participatory sense-making not simply in terms of physical processes that would go on without our awareness, but in terms of meaning to embodied subjects (Fuchs/De Jaegher 2009, 471). In other words, there is a peculiar phenomenology of participatory sense-making that is best captured by the notion of mutual incorporation. This notion refers to ‘a pervasive characteristic of the lived body, which always transcends itself and partly merges with the environment’ (Fuchs/De Jaegher 2009, 472).

One of the most famous examples of incorporation is from Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception*: A blind person probing their environment with a stick does not perceive the stick in their hands as an object, but is rather aware of it in terms of a medium through which they perceive the environment (Merleau-Ponty 2005, 165; cf. Fuchs/De Jaegher 2009, 472). This is

possible as the stick has become integrated into that person's body schema, that is, in the complex system of their motor capacities (cf. Gallagher 2005, 34ff.). Another example of incorporation is fascination described by Fuchs and De Jaegher:

“The object or person by whom we are fascinated becomes the external source of the vectors or field forces that command our body. In other words, the centre of the ‘operative intentionality’ of our body shifts towards that of the other.” (Fuchs/De Jaegher 2009, 474)

What I take Fuchs and De Jaegher to be saying here is the following: To the fascinated subject, the fascinating object appears as a source of a bodily apprehended tension as well as it is suggesting specific ‘vectors’ to her motor intentionality. Think of how the pointy shape of a mountain can quite spontaneously catch your eye and direct your gaze to the summit. Deliberately redirecting your attention against the affective force of the object would involve an effort, though certainly more so in the case of fascination. One could even argue that the relevant tension ‘commands’ the subject's motor intentionality not only in the sense of keeping the attention focused on the object but also in the sense of urging towards some sort of completion (Husserl 2005, 104ff., 182ff.). According to this view, there is a subtle sense of tension when that mountain catches your eye, and this tension is not relieved (*gelöst*) as long as the upward trajectory suggested by the mountain's pointy shape and enacted by your gaze is an incomplete gestalt. Again, the effect is much stronger in the case of fascination. As far as I can see, this sort of phenomena is what is intended by Fuchs and De Jaegher's claims about something becoming ‘the external source of the vectors or field forces that command our body’ or of there being a bodily apprehended ‘centre of gravity’ of our operative intentionality (cf. Fuchs/De Jaegher 2009, 475ff.) in opposition to us.

Both described cases would have to be regarded as instances of what Fuchs and De Jaegher call ‘unidirectional incorporation’ (2009, 472f.). The key feature of unidirectional incorporation is this: A person's meaningful engagement with her environment is (re-)coordinated according to the – enabling or drawing – the character of incorporated object. Participatory sense-making, however, is dedicated to specific social meaning and, thus, gives more weight to the interaction of two or more embodied subjects. In such cases, then, the relevant form of incorporation has to be a *mutual* one.

The defining character of mutual incorporation is that “[t]here are now two ‘centres of gravity’ which both continuously oscillate between activity and receptivity, or ‘dominance’ and ‘submission’ in the course of the interaction” (Fuchs/De Jaegher 2009, 476). This is, for instance, the case with eye contact, where the interaction takes place in the exchange of glances. Phenomenologically, glances or gazes can be conceived of as centrifugal vectors implicated in the constitution of the body schema (cf. Schmitz 2011, 38f.). Therefore, eye contact can be a candidate for the oscillation of those centres of gravity that mutual incorporation as participatory sense-making is supposed to be about. As Fuchs and De Jaegher write:

“Just like limbs, the gazes act as extensions of the subjective bodies and form a system of mutual incorporation. I may feel the other's gaze as a pull, a suction, or also as an arrow that hits me and causes a bodily tension; I may feel his gaze right on my face (e.g. when blushing with shame); I may be fascinated by the gaze or withstand it, ‘cast it back’ etc. (...) [W]e certainly do not simulate, e.g. another's angry gaze towards us, even less his anger, but rather feel tense or threatened by the impact of the gaze.” (Fuchs/De Jaegher 2009, 474f.)

The mutuality in question out of which a meaningful autonomous dynamic can emerge comes with the influence that the subject's reaction to the other's

gaze has on his next move (ibid.). If, for instance, my glance, finally, communicates my attention to you while you are talking to me, the ‘dominant’ role in the interaction is momentarily transferred from me to you, regardless of the content of your words (cf. Schmitz 2011, 40f.), whereas my gaze of surprise or my indifferent, empty gaze may come to you as felt forces apt to make you feel insecure and take the dominant role from you (cf. Fuchs/De Jaegher 2009, 475).

1.2. Mutual incorporation and social cognition

How the complex dynamic of mutual incorporation unfolds affects the mutual understanding between persons. Consider, for example, an encounter in which the relevant phenomenon is conspicuously absent or at least diminished. This is sometimes the case in conversations. Let me cite from particular interview situations.² Those who conducted the relevant interviews retrospectively described them in terms of a ‘cool distance’, as there being something ‘rigid’ and ‘dead’. The very interviewees, in turn, were described as remaining ‘withdrawn’, ‘uninvolved’, as if they were ‘not really there’, and proving to be a ‘hard nut to crack’. These descriptions point to a certain type of communication problem that also seems to involve a bodily dimension since they seem to articulate specific qualities we are primarily aware of by the way of bodily feeling (cf. Großheim et al. 2014, 15). In the context of our current discussion, we could conceive of the bodily dimension of the relevant communication problem in terms of absence – or at least depletion – of there being two ‘centres of gravity’ continuously oscillating between activity and receptivity. This at least contributes to (if it does not fundamentally constitute) the ‘rigid’ or ‘dead’ character of the communication in question.

Regarding the depletion of continuous oscillation, this scenario seems closer to unidirectional than to genuine mutual incorporation: It is by and large the interviewer clinging on the words of the relevant interviewee – who, on their part, do not return this favour and seem to be somewhere else (‘not really there’). To be sure, the mutuality is not completely absent here, for otherwise, this would hardly count as a conversation at all. However, the rigidity that is supposed to characterise how the other will respond is quite far from two centres of gravity continuously oscillating between activity and receptivity as Fuchs and De Jaegher would have it. Indeed, in such scenarios, ‘sense-making remains largely an individual’ – i.e. the interviewer’s – ‘activity that is at most modulated by the existence of coordination in interaction’ (De Jaegher/Di Paolo 2007, 497). The rigidity in question manifests a lack of mutual responsiveness, and this seems to be a central factor in what the interviewers reflect as a lack of access to the interviewees in question, no matter how hard they are toiling away at ‘cracking’ the ‘nut’ sitting facing them.

One could also interpret Husserl’s famous example of momentarily mistaking a mannequin for a human person (Husserl 1973, 92) in terms of a lack of mutual responsiveness that, obviously, is more extreme than in the former case: The ‘halo’ of kinesthetically felt possibilities for interaction afforded by the object in question “which gave the sense ‘human body’” (ibid.) in the first place vanishes as mutual incorporation cannot be established, and the sense of having to do with a lifeless mannequin is formed.³

In contrast, the key example for participatory sense-making – the two persons trying to pass each other in a narrow corridor – can be regarded as a case of mutual incorporation: For each of them, the relevant other’s body becomes,

by moving, the attracting centre of one's attention and, at the same time, the source of movement-related cues directing one's movement. Each one oscillates rapidly between activity and receptivity: Seeing the respective other moving to the left, then actively moving to the right to evade collision, only to find the respective other already moving to the left.

Both, the 'rigidity' of the interviews described above and the scenario of two persons futilely trying to pass each other may be seen as extremes between which more moderate forms of two centres of gravity 'oscillating' between activity and receptivity are instantiated. Normal conversation, for example, is characterised by mutual incorporation in which there is more 'oscillation' than in rather unidirectional cases, though the oscillation in question is less rapid than in the narrow corridor scenario. That is, the oscillation between both centres of gravity allows the unfolding of a dynamic in the process of which some sort of meaningfulness is accumulated that seems to be richer and more intricate than in the other cases.

1.3. *Mutual incorporation and collective intentionality*

The main import that mutual incorporation as participatory sense-making seems to have on social cognition is that the second-person perspective gains centre stage: It is the interaction between you and me and the dynamic processes implicated in it, rather than a third-personal, detached looking on others, that is supposed to be the basic situation of intersubjectivity and the understanding others (Fuchs/De Jaegher 2009, 467f.). In this regard, the account in question claims superiority over the various versions of the 'simulation theory' as well as the 'theory theory' of mind (ibid., 467ff.).

Moreover, with respect to the examples such as the 'rigid' and 'dead' character of a conversation as well as Husserl's mannequin, one could even argue that mutual incorporation is a central factor in establishing what Schutz (1967, 164) calls the subject's pre-predicative awareness of being related to another subject (the so-called 'Thou-orientation') or even to a person (cf. Schmitz 2011, 41; Zahavi 2014, 143). This, in turn, has been argued to be a necessary though not sufficient condition for a person's capacity to have experiences of a certain kind, namely such that are given in a *first-person plural perspective* (cf. Zahavi 2014, 243). Thus, by underpinning the second-person perspective, mutual incorporation seems to be involved in various (though arguably not all) forms of what in current debates goes under the name of *collective intentionality* (cf. Searle 1990).

Here it seems apt to point out that experiencing in the first person plural perspective is key to a wide range of social phenomena. In everyday life, there are many experiences that one is inclined to describe as having with another person in the sense of *we*. There is, for instance, a palpable difference between the fact that we are having dinner together and the fact that you are having dinner next to me who am also having dinner. In social ontology, to those cases that are structurally similar to the former a peculiar form of intentionality is ascribed. Most often, this form is called *collective* or *we-intentionality*.

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A description of such an interview situation is quoted in Großheim et al. 2014, 15.

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The comparison between these two cases should of course not blur the differences

between them. Whereas the problem in the former case was to get access to the personal thoughts of the interviewees, the problem in the latter case is that we realize that we are not facing a person at all.

It implies a specific ‘sense of us’, a way of conceiving of oneself as a member of a group that can be explicit or implicit in various degrees.

But how exactly does mutual incorporation relate to collective intentionality? Can the former help establish the latter, apart from providing the necessary though not sufficient condition of the second person perspective? According to De Jaegher and Di Paolo, the interactional coordination of movements peculiar to participatory sense-making is supposed to ground a particular form of sharedness. In particular, it is about the shared meaning that emerges in the relevant interaction processes in which the individuals participate (cf. De Jaegher/Di Paolo 2007, 496). In contrast to such scenarios where the other proves to be ‘a hard nut to crack’, there are cases more characteristic to participatory sense-making in the stricter sense in which the mutual responsiveness is more pronounced. In these cases, De Jaegher and Di Paolo argue, ‘we fully and directly participate in a joint process of sense-making and the whole sense-making activity becomes a shared one’ (2007, 497). In short, a situation’s meaning is in some sense of the word common to both of us, if that meaning has emerged from ‘a joint process of sense-making’ to which we mutually, rather than unidirectionally, contributed. And the peculiar mutuality in question can be fleshed out in terms of two lived bodies incorporating and thus inextricably conditioning each other.

It may be worth noting here that a similar argument has been made based on other approaches within the enactivist camp. Applying the related notion of mutual ‘entrainment’, Krueger (2016, 270f.) has suggested an account of shared grief according to which each partner’s bodily expressions of grief (e.g. the quiet heaving, the sound of weeping) ‘feed back onto, permeate, and modulate’ the other’s feeling state.⁴ More generally, entrainment as another way to spell out mutual incorporation is supposed to be a source of social cohesion, deepened feelings of connectedness, rapport, and cooperation during joint tasks. And, in more recent works, Fuchs himself uses the notion of ‘intercorporeal resonance’ (cf. Froese/Fuchs 2012, 216; Fuchs 2017, 334) in order to address this phenomenon.

Indeed, we can already find examples pointing to a certain sense of sharedness in mutual incorporation in classical phenomenology. Edith Stein, for instance, describes a situation in which a tired person is animated by her friend who is engaged by a problem (1922, 156) and states:

“Where a causal impact takes place, where one subject sweeps another away with him and the second subject feels like he’s being carried along by the first (or, according to the *sense* content of the mental function the first subject himself can have the lead), a mutuality of life feelings is created, and ‘our’ collective deed goes forth afresh. This vigour, experienced as going out from the one and now filling both, turns into a manifestation of a power that both draw upon and that’s their common property.”⁵

For another example of how mutual incorporation may be said to underpin a certain sense of sharedness, let me once more refer to particular interview situations, this time those ones that had been perceived as more successful: In contrast to those ‘hard nuts to crack’ that were mentioned before, another group of interviewees was described as meeting the interviewers with a ‘warm response’. These interviewees were establishing some sort of ‘intimacy’ that seemed to be more influential to the further course of the interview than, for instance, the explicit realisation of existentially relevant differences – in this context: between East and West Germany – that also come to the fore:

“Differences between East and West [Germany] are always addressed. This creates an envious view of the West (‘The West had always been better off than us’). One makes oneself at home in the role of the victim. When one realises that the interviewers come from the ‘West’, the conversation stagnates for a moment – as if one had to consider whether one had said something wrong. The warm, trusting atmosphere, however, remains intact.” (quoted in Großheim et al. 2014, 16)

In the current context, one might interpret the ‘warm atmosphere’ (contrasted with the ‘rigid’ and the ‘dead’ as fundamental characters of the more problematic interview situations) as a fundamental trait of the specific dynamic of mutual incorporation unfolding in the course of these interviews. According to this interpretation, the relevant dynamic of mutual incorporation would establish and maintain a sense of community ‘below’ habitual and even affectively laden forms of group-identification (e.g. East and West Germans). If this were not so, the interviewee’s trust in the interviewer would probably vanish at when the difference is marked. Instead, the conversation stagnates for a moment and then continues.

It seems easy to accommodate these cases in the respective frameworks of participatory sense making or entrainment. In consequence, it seems natural to regard the relevant dynamic of mutual incorporation as the source of some sense of sharedness or the feeling of cooperation. However, it seems equally easy to think of cases of mutual incorporation as participatory sense-making or entrainment that motivate a differentiation between the sense of sharedness in question and the ‘sense of us’ relevant to the discussions on collective intentionality. Already, regarding the paradigm example of participatory sense-making – those two persons trying to pass each other in a narrow corridor – it would be hard to maintain that both persons would conceive of the situation as something ‘we are doing together’. In this case, the jointness or sharedness of the process of sense-making seems to remain completely on a mere structural level of description, that is, it is absent from the phenomenological level.

The problem is even more pronounced if we take Sartre’s example of two fighters – who, in contrast to Searle’s prize-fighters (Searle 1990, 413f.), may not even share a set of rules how to fight (cf. Sartre 1956, 418). It seems obvious that both are mutually incorporated, as each of them is at pains to anticipate the other’s moves that arguably ‘feed back onto, permeate, and modulate’ their relevant states. Both are ‘centres of gravity’ oscillating between activity and receptivity in Fuchs and De Jaegher’s sense, however, without there being a sense of doing something *together*. This is a good illustration for the above-mentioned claim that a mutual second-person perspective is not

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Entrainment means that “two or more independent processes become synchronized with each other” (Krueger 2016, 267). A frequently cited example is two pendulum clocks synchronizing their oscillations when standing in each other’s vicinity (Krueger 2016, *ibid.*; De Jaegher/Di Paolo 2007, 290).

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Stein 1922, 169f. The translation is taken from the English edition (Stein 2000, 189). This example is also often quoted by Schmitz in the context of his theory of mutual incorporation (Schmitz 1980, 55; 2014, 58). Stein adds, that this ‘shared causal occurrence’ is

only possible if the individuals in question are orientated to one another in terms of “a self-opening or being-opened for another which exceeds the receptivity for ‘impressions’ necessary for ‘contagion’, and which is mental in nature” (1922, 169/2000, 188). The context of this latter quote, however, suggests that one could argue with and beyond Stein that the openness in question is not entirely ‘mental in nature’, insofar as it also involves both lived bodies oscillating between what Fuchs and De Jaegher call ‘dominance’ and ‘submission’: Stein herself refers to a ‘spontaneous commitment’ (‘Hingabe’, devotion) of the individuals to one another.

sufficient for establishing a first-person plural perspective. Though we can ascribe the former to those fighters, we cannot ascribe the latter to them.

According to Sartre, it is not before both of them feel gazed at by a third person that some ‘sense of us’ emerges: It seems to be in virtue of them both being jointly attending to the gaze of the Third that such a sense is established. However, at least according to Sartre’s descriptions (Sartre 1956, 417), this form of attention rather seems to be an instance of unidirectional incorporation: The fighters are attending the Third in a similar manner as one is fascinated by an object or a person that ‘becomes the external source of the vectors or field forces that command our body’ (Fuchs/De Jaegher 2009, 474). To account for the character of ‘jointness’ in their joint attention, if such an account is to contribute to a phenomenologically accessible ‘sense of us’, we need to look for conceptual tools other than participatory sense-making, entrainment and, consequently, mutual incorporation.

This is, of course, not to say that the particular forms of sharedness describable within the frameworks of participatory sense-making or entrainment, respectively, would be irrelevant or could not contribute to a much broader construed sense of a shared world (cf. Sánchez-Guerrero 2016, 144, 153ff.). But I hope to have demonstrated that we need to look for something else if we wish to account for the bodily dimension of the ‘sense of us’. This is why I will now turn to a concept proposed by Hermann Schmitz.

2. Solidary incorporation

2.1. *Mutual and solidary incorporation*

The German phenomenologist Hermann Schmitz belongs to the postwar-generation of philosophers such as Jürgen Habermas and Karl-Otto Apel (with both of whom he studied under Erich Rothacker) that was highly motivated to critically understand what had happened before and under Nazi rule. However, unlike Habermas and Apel, Schmitz’s focus has been not so much on the rational conditions of public reasoning, since he thinks that such a project would leave too many questions in that matter unanswered. In short, Schmitz’s argument amounts to the claims that rational discourses as envisioned by Habermas and Apel can only function if they have a basis in what he calls ‘communal situations’ with an implicit core of shared norms and that the relevant types of communal situation are, among other things, dependent on ‘collectively dominant embodied dispositions’ (Schmitz 2012a, 44ff.; Schmitz 2011, 118f.). The latter describes diachronically as well as synchronically variable patterns of being responsive (or, in extreme cases, rather insensitive) to impressions. Collectively predominant bodily attunements are, according to Schmitz, irreducible conditions for something to make an impression on the members of the collective in question. In line with this, such dispositions are supposed to be implicitly involved in defining not only what appeals as a pleasant shape, but also what weighs as a good argument.

Schmitz’s convictions about the central though often neglected role of the bodily dimension seem to have been a strong motivation to him for investigating a plethora of phenomena pertaining to the feeling body (*Leib*). Engaging with earlier phenomenological accounts of the body, Schmitz suggests a notion of the body as something that feels its states (e.g. pain) as well as other entities (e.g. another person’s glance) through various instances of contraction, tension, pulsation, or expansion. From very early on, he has also been

systematically investigating a wide range of phenomena of incorporation for which he has coined the neologism *Einleibung* (cf. Schmitz 1965, 341–349; 1980, 23–43, 2011, 29–50). In this context, Schmitz has provided quite the same distinction between unidirectional and mutual incorporation that has later been suggested by Fuchs and De Jaegher.

What is interesting with regard to the discussion in the previous sections, however, is that Schmitz subsumes unidirectional as well as mutual incorporation under the category *antagonistische Einleibung* (antagonistic incorporation) and contrasts them with yet another form of incorporation that is labelled ‘solidary’ (*solidarische Einleibung*) (Schmitz 1978, 96; 1980, 39 ff., 2011, 47 ff.). Solidary incorporation has at least three participants of which two (or more) relate in coordinate manner to a third by way of unidirectional incorporation. In this way, the members of an orchestra are related to the conductor who becomes the source of the vectors that and field forces commanding the musicians’ bodies (cf. Schmitz 2011, 48). This form of incorporation is called ‘solidary’, because one is not only unidirectionally related to the third (e.g. the conductor), but also, though more laterally, to the others who are also unidirectionally related to the third. Fuchs and De Jaegher do not consider this option as they seem to be more interested in the peculiar dynamic of encounters in the second-person perspective for which mutual incorporation seems to suffice.

However, before I proceed and present an account of how solidary incorporation contributes to the ‘sense of us’ relevant to collective intentionality, I need to address a potential misunderstanding. Schmitz criticises and ultimately rejects the notion of intentionality, so how can any idea of his contribute to the field of collective intentionality? One part of the answer is that target of Schmitz’s criticism is a rather narrow notion of intentionality. More or less, this notion amounts to the subject’s being directed toward a single object and underexposes what already needs to be in place for such being directed to function (Schmitz 2012b, 14 f.). Currently, various other authors, such as Searle or Ratcliffe, are (affirmingly or critically) working with similarly narrow notions of intentionality (Searle 1983; Ratcliffe 2008, 38, 69). On the other hand, there have been suggestions of a broader concept of intentionality such as a ‘pointing-beyond, as an openness to what is other than the subject’ (Gallagher/Zahavi 2012, 133). This broader concept is supposed to be able to accommodate also moods, atmospheres, as well as the subject’s background orientation toward complex situations or the world as a whole. Assuming for the purpose of this paper that such a broad concept of intentionality is viable and also applicable to the discussion on collective intentionality, let me continue in spelling out what solidary incorporation can do in the context of the latter.

2.2. *Solidary incorporation and the ‘sense of us’*

As far as I can see, solidary incorporation should be considered as one of the most elementary sources of a ‘sense of us’ according to which an individual conceives of herself as a member of a group. But exactly what phenomenon is intended with this ‘sense of us’? According to Hans Bernhard Schmid, “the sense in question is neither ‘about’ the ‘us’ nor is it ‘by’ the ‘us’” (Schmid 2013, 12). That is, the individual is not necessarily attentive to the relevant group – neither as the content or object of the relevant experience nor as the bearer. For example, under the performance of *Le Sacre du printemps*, the oboist attends to the conductor and arguably to the music as a dynamic of its own rather than having the orchestra of which he is a part as the object of his

experience or being explicitly aware of himself as contributing to a joint performance. Still he can be said to have a *pre-reflective* and *unthematic* sense of us – the orchestra’s members – performing *Le Sacre du printemps* (cf. Schmid 2005, 99). According to Schmid (2013, 12), the sense of us is supposed to qualify a specific form of experience (“that is ‘ussy’, as it were”), that is, for instance, how the oboist experiences the performance from a shared perspective. The relevant phenomenon is involved in conceiving oneself as a member of a group or collective, something that makes it more natural for the oboist to say ‘we did it’ when the performance is done rather than ‘you and you and you and me did it’.

Assumed that this description is by and large correct, in which way is solidary incorporation supposed to be an elementary source of the sense of us? Consider the following example: After having entered the metro, Antonia is looking for a seat. Meanwhile, the metro starts and speeds up a little bit more rapidly than expected. For a moment, Antonia struggles to maintain balance which includes a complicated manoeuvre to avoid stepping on Benja’s feet. Benja, already having a seat, smiles at her knowingly and Antonia responds.

I think that one of the most plausible ways of making sense of this episode is to say that Antonia and Benja have a tacit sense of being ‘in this together’ (Matthiesen 2006), or a pre-reflective, unthematic sense of us that characterises experiences in the first person plural (Schmid 2005, 99; 2013, 12). Benja’s smile is responding to something she already shares with Antonia rather than establishing it. In other words, Antonia and Benja find themselves in a peculiar communal situation that precedes their interaction. One of the most salient factors in that situation is the force related to the moment of inertia when the metro train rapidly speeds up. Both Antonia and Benja feel the impact of that force, and probably Benja’s smile communicates among other things that she too feels it. In that case, the felt force is the third that temporarily coordinates the people in the metro in solidary incorporation, and this being incorporated in the relevant dynamic is what becomes the common ground from which Antonia and Benja’s interaction emerges. Only because both are already tangibly incorporated in ‘it’, they can have the sense of being in ‘it’ together when ‘it’ becomes a salient theme as Antonia almost steps on Benja’s feet.

Thus, solidary incorporation underpins the sense of being jointly affected by something – be it the force related to the moment of inertia or the atmosphere pervading a place or a situation (cf. Nörenberg 2018). Moreover, solidary incorporation is involved in basic forms of joint attention – especially if the attended object is also affecting the attending subject – and of joint action such as an orchestra performing *Le Sacre du printemps*. What all these forms have in common in terms of solidary incorporation is that the lateral relation to the others is not only some coordinated behaviour to be observed from a third-person perspective – an audience witnessing Sartre’s fighters, for instance – but something that is also tangible to the incorporated individuals themselves. The lateral relation to the others in question is different from relating to the other in mutual or unidirectional incorporation. The oboist performing *Le Sacre du Printemps* does not directly grasp or individuate the other musicians, but is rather aware of them in an undifferentiated, ‘pre-numerical’ manner, as Sartre (1956, 282) would have called it. It is this awareness of being laterally coordinated with others that constitutes an elementary source of the sense of us or being in this together. Being not only ascertainable on the structural level but accessible on the phenomenological level, solidary

incorporation and the sense of us that comes with it are more relevant to the discussion on collective intentionality than participatory sense-making: In solidary incorporation, the participatory aspect is in principle palpable to the participants themselves.

2.3. *More complex scenarios*

However, the pre-reflective sense of us emerging in solidary incorporation need not be made explicit or acted out as in Antonia and Benja's case. Both Benja and Antonia may somehow have been aware of the other metro passengers in their undifferentiated, pre-numerical reality as being co-affected by or solidarily incorporated in the moment of inertia. But usually, the respective sense of 'being in this together' remains unthematic (cf. Schmid 2005, 99) unless something like Antonia's loss of balance would afford what one could call a 'moment of recognition'. The relevant affordance, however, need not be taken up by Benja. Instead, she might have been focused on the potential harm that Antonia could have inflicted on her foot, and the sense of being in this together would have completely remained in the unthematic background.

In some situations, the sense of us in question could also be eclipsed or even overridden by strong individual concerns. That would be the case in a mass panic that Schmitz himself explicitly discusses as an instance of solidary incorporation. Here the concern to get out of the danger zone is often so pronounced that it seems most difficult to think of anything capable to afford a moment of recognition. And indeed, in the literature, the example of mass panic has been cited as a case of mere affective contagion in contrast to genuine instances of affective sharing and sense of us (Schmid 2009, 66). However, the panicking individual seems to have a residual other-awareness insofar as, on a very basic level, it reckons with and anticipates the other individuals' movements to plot its flight. Furthermore, sometimes, when in safe distance from the danger in question, the individuals involved seem to articulate something like a sense of us retrospectively ('some of us didn't make it'). In this case, are they simply projecting a sense of *having been* in 'this' together onto a situation that originally did not contain it or are they, by way of reflection, aware of something they actually experienced, though it temporally had been overridden by focusing on how to get out of 'this'? I cannot afford to pursue this further here, but I believe the latter is true, and that would mean that the connection between solidary incorporation and sense of us in principle also holds in cases of mass panic.

In this sense, solidary incorporation is not always thematic, though phenomenologically accessible. It is something to which you and I make tacit reference when we realise in one way or another that 'we're in this together'. This is something mere mutual incorporation cannot provide, though the role of the latter in providing us with what we might call a 'sense of Thou' is by no means irrelevant to the structure of collective intentionality (Zahavi 2014, 246 ff.). While fighting, Sartre's fighters are mutually incorporated, and they have a mutual 'sense of Thou' insofar none of them confuses the relevant other with a sparring-robot. What Sartre's example suggests is that a 'sense of us' emerges among them in the very moment when they shift from mutual incorporation to solidary incorporation when they are jointly affected by the gaze of the Third. We should not follow Sartre, when he claims that every instance of a sense of us would have to be mediated by finding oneself watched by a Third (cf. Nörenberg 2016). The solidary incorporation presupposed by

the sense of us in question may also feature in instances such as sawing a log together (cf. Schmitz 2011, 47).

This may suffice to elucidate the category of solidary incorporation. However, can we also use these insights to make sense of those cases mentioned in section 1.3, the ‘warm’ atmosphere or the collective vigour and the tacit community they seem to imply?

The sense of sharedness characterising the conversation in a ‘warm, trusting atmosphere’ or the vigour as a ‘common property’ of both friends in Stein’s example has its source in a comprehensive bodily dynamic in which the relevant partners find themselves incorporated. The bodily dynamic in question is a complex one as it has multiple layers or aspects. There is certainly an aspect of mutual incorporation with the characteristic oscillation between initiative and receptivity among the partners involved. But insofar as such oscillation and its further qualifications, say, warmly receiving one another or vigorously pressing one another, constitutes an emergent and autonomous dynamic (cf. De Jaegher/Di Paolo 2007, 493) that is not merely structurally but also phenomenologically accessible, the partners’ participation in it is to be described in terms of solidary rather than mutual incorporation.

Of course, facing one another in mutual incorporation, each one is directly aware of the other rather than laterally. But with regard to the relevant autonomous bodily dynamic – the ‘warm, trusting atmosphere’ or the collective vigour – to which they may refer as their ‘common property’, each one is aware of the other as a co-ordinate participant in that dynamic rather than a mere counterpart. This, again, is an aspect of solidary incorporation, and I have tried to show that this is the source of the sense of us relevant to these phenomena.

Conclusion

If we wish to account for a pre-reflective, bodily-organized sense of having to do with another subject, the discussions on participatory sense-making (De Jaegher/Di Paolo 2007) and its phenomenologically accessible dimension, that is mutual incorporation (Schmitz 1980; Fuchs/De Jaegher 2009), can provide valuable conceptual tools. However, if we wish to account for a bodily sense of sharedness that is more informative than the one intended by participatory sense-making and compatible with recent findings from the discussion on collective intentionality, we should definitely (re-)consider Schmitz’ account of solidary incorporation.

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Henning Nörenberg

Zajedničko i solidarno utjelovljenje kao osnovni oblici društvene spoznaje

Sažetak

U ovom radu istražujem tjelesnu dimenziju osnovnih oblika društvene spoznaje. Argumentiram da rasprave o »participatory sense-making« i zajedničkom utjelovljenju kao fenomenologijski dostupnoj dimenziji mogu dati vrijedne konceptijske alate za predrefleksivan, tjelesno organiziran osjećaj za egzistenciju drugih subjekata. Međutim, isto tako argumentiram da tjelesni osjećaj dijeljenja, kako je naznačen tim raspravama, nije dovoljno informativan kada se u obzir uzmu nedavni pronalasci u raspravama o »kolektivnoj intencionalnosti«. Prema tome, predlažem da se kao alternativa nanovo razmotri pojam »solidarne utjelovljenosti« kako se pojavljuje u djelu Hermanna Schmitza.

Ključne riječi

Hermann Schmitz, enaktivizam, društvena spoznaja, kolektivna intencionalnost, osjećaj za nas, tjelesna dimenzija

Henning Nörenberg

Wechselseitige und solidarische Einleibung als elementare Formen der sozialen Kognition

Zusammenfassung

Mein Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit der leiblichen-elementaren Dimension sozialer Wahrnehmung. Ich will zeigen, dass die Diskussionen zum „participatory sense-making“ und zur wechselseitigen Inkorporation einen wichtigen Beitrag zum Verständnis eines präreflexiven, leiblich organisierten Sinnes für die Existenz anderer Subjekte leisten. Ich möchte aber auch zeigen, dass der leiblich organisierte Sinn der Gemeinsamkeit, der in diesen Diskussionen auch anvisiert ist, vor dem Hintergrund der Ergebnisse gegenwärtiger Debatten zum Thema „kollektive Intentionalität“ zu unbestimmt bleibt. In diesem Zusammenhang lohnt sich eine verstärkte Anknüpfung an Hermann Schmitz' Konzept der „solidarischen Einleibung“.

Schlüsselwörter

Hermann Schmitz, Enaktivismus, soziale Kognition, kollektive Intentionalität, Wir-Orientierung, leibliche Dimension

Henning Nörenberg

L'incorporation commune et solidaire en tant que formes principales de la cognition sociale

Résumé

Dans ce travail, je recherche les dimensions corporelles de la cognition sociale. J'affirme que les débats qui portent sur l'action participative des sentiments et la mutuelle incorporation en tant que dimensions accessibles d'un point de vue phénoménologique peuvent fournir des outils conceptuels de grande valeur; outils relatifs aux sentiments pré-réflexifs qui sont corporellement organisés et qui donnent le sentiment d'être en relation avec un autre sujet. Je déclare, néanmoins, que le concept de sentiment corporel de partage qui est discuté dans les débats présente des lacunes en regard aux récentes découvertes au sein du débat sur l'intentionnalité collective. Ainsi, je propose comme alternative d'analyser le concept d'incorporation collective chez Hermann Schmitz.

Mots-clés

Hermann Schmitz, énaclivisme, cognition sociale, intentionnalité collective, sentiment pour le nous, dimension corporelle