

Group Mind

An Analysis through Collective Intentionality

by
Lovey Vikram

Under the Supervision of
Dr. Bhaskarjit Neog



Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy

CENTRE FOR PHILOSOPHY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI

Date: 27/07/2015

DECLARATION

I, Lovey Vikram, do hereby declare that the thesis entitled, "Group Minds: An Analysis through Collective Intentionality" for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy at Jawaharlal Nehru University is my original work and has not been submitted by me for any other degree or diploma of this or any other University.

Lovey Vikram

Lovey Vikram
Centre for Philosophy
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University

Centre for Philosophy
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi

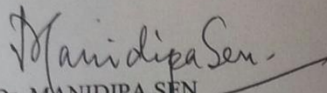



Date: 27/07/2015

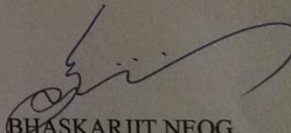
CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, "Group Mind: An Analysis Through Collective Intentionality", submitted by Miss. Lovey Vikram, for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy at Jawaharlal Nehru University, is her original work and has not been submitted by her for any other degree or diploma of this or any other University.

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


Dr. MANIDIPA SEN
(Chairperson)


Chairperson
Centre for Philosophy
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067, INDIA


Dr. BHASKARJIT NEOG
(Supervisor)

SUPERVISOR
Centre for Philosophy
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	
Introductory Remarks	1
Chapter 1: Analysis of Collective Intentions	
1.0 Introduction	8
1.1 The Thesis of Collective Intentionality	10
1.2 Accounts of Collective Intentionality	13
1.2.1 Toumela	13
1.2.2 Searle	17
1.2.3 Bratman	23
1.2.4 Gilbert	27
1.3 Critical Analysis of the Accounts	30
1.4 Conclusion	34
Chapter 2: The Possibility of Group Minds	
2.0 Introduction	36
2.1 Meaning of Group Minds	37
2.2 Necessity of Group Minds	41
2.3 Accounts of Group Minds	44
2.3.1 Gilbert	45
2.3.2 Pettit	48
2.4 Critical Assessment of Gilbert and Pettit	52
2.5 Conclusion	54
Chapter 3: Group Minds and Some other Related Issues	
3.0 Introduction	56
3.1 Features of Human Mind	58
3.1.1 Self-Reflexivity	58
3.1.2 <i>What is it like</i> Condition	61
3.1.3 Memory	63
3.2 Contextualising the Features at the Group Level	65
3.3 The Issue of Extended Mind	69
3.4 Conclusion	76
Concluding Remarks	77
Bibliography	85

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere regards and gratitude to my teacher and supervisor, Dr. Bhaskarjit Neog for his guidance and support. Since it is a relatively new area of philosophical research, it required a lot of discussions and in-depth analysis of the proposed strategy. And, he provided me both. I am indebted to him for showing consistent patience with my errors and encouraging my writing with his scholastic suggestions.

I would also like to express my indebtedness and deep sense of regards to Dr. Manidipa Sen for her invaluable suggestions. Discussions with her help me clear many concepts related to certain parts of the study. In this respect, I also want to express my sincere regards to all my teachers at Centre for Philosophy.

Words are not enough to express my deepest gratitude and love to my papa and didi. I want to specially thank my mother for her constant support and encouragement. The sweetest, and the most innocent strength, was provided to me by my nephew Kush, who has been a source of joy and fulfilment for me.

I am also thankful to my friend Saira for making me feel blessed with her presence in all the difficulties of my life. She has been a source of relentless inspiration and support throughout my all endeavours.

Lastly, I would also like to express my gratitude to all my colleagues, especially Max Karp, for their perpetual help.

Introductory Remarks

Despite tremendous individual differences on almost every conceptual issue, philosophers throughout history have been peculiarly unanimous in accepting the reality of at least one thing—and that is the privileged position enjoyed by individual human subjects. Perhaps, it is because of this privileged position that most of our philosophical debates, discussions, and analyses are grounded in the concept of individuals. In fact, it is hard to imagine any philosophical doctrine that does not seem to presuppose this idea while formulating its fundamental principles. All our discussions concerning consciousness, mind, self, and body have traditionally been constructed in such a way that they incontrovertibly endorse the philosophical legitimacy of individuals. In other words, individuals enjoy a unique status in most of our metaphysical discussions. They have a concrete spatio-temporal location, which is conventionally believed to be beyond any philosophical doubts.

Perhaps, it is because of this reason that the individuals have a rich philosophical history. In modern western philosophy, the unique status provided to individuals is first conspicuously visible in the Cartesian discourse.¹ But, this does not mean that philosophical discussions before that did not attribute primacy or importance to individual subjects. Nevertheless, it was with Deścartes that this trend was established in modern philosophy in a concrete manner, and it continued thereafter in most of the later anglo-saxon philosophical exercises. The Cartesian subject is a thinking thing uniquely extended in space. It is a combination of both minds and body, which interact in a special manner. This view is standardly referred to as ‘substance dualism’.² Though the Cartesian dualism grappled with the mind-body problem, it opened the floodgates of attempts aimed at providing an explanation of individual subjects.³

¹ Deścartes, 1641; Deścartes, 1644.

² The thesis of ‘substance dualism’ holds that there are two kinds of substances—mind and matter or mental and the physical. It is a fundamentally ontological position: it states that the mental and the physical are separate substances with independent existence. Physical things are extended in space and do not possess any thought. Mental things have thought as their very essence, but do not have any extension in the physical world.

³ Mind-body problem deals with the issue of interaction between two diametrically opposite substances, that is, mind and body. It grappled with the question of how can the mind cause some of our bodily limbs to move (for example, raising one's hand to ask a question), and how can the body's sense organs cause sensations in the mind, when their natures are completely different?

One of the most important reasons for the bias towards individuals in our philosophical deliberations is its concrete ontology. The ontological status of individual entities is much more substantial than that of the non-individual entities. Besides, individual entities appeal to our common sense understanding in a way that no other entities can possibly do. There is no denial of the fact that commonsensically one knows one's reality better than what others do. There is a clear-cut first personal immediate understanding of one's own mental states and processes.⁴ One can make claims about oneself with supreme authority, which surely may not be possible for others. There is a privileged position that one enjoys while talking about one's experiences and ways of looking at things. Unless I am sure of what I actually I am, I cannot think of having any accurate understanding of the other. Thus, our understanding of the other and the world is heavily predicated upon our understanding of ourselves as individual human persons. This makes the study of individuals more purposive, meaningful, and justified in the context of philosophical discussions. Moreover, many believe that the individual brain is the threshold point for any objective understanding of human minds in general. Besides, the only entities which are considered to be minded entities in the true sense of the term are individuals. It is the individuals who can be said to have minds or brains of their own, and not anything else.

With this bias or partialistic treatment towards individuals in philosophical musings, the pertinent question that can be raised in any debates of philosophy of mind and action is whether or not can we give an exhaustive explanation of the possibility of the social world or the world around us through an analysis of individual human beings and their interrelations. Can we give an account of our social life with the help of the beliefs, intentions, and actions of the individual subjects alone? Or, does our philosophical account necessarily require to presuppose an entity which is above and beyond the rational world of human individuals? Through the present work I shall be analysing one of the most prominent views in this connection. This view holds that the voyage of any individualistic understanding may begin with an investigation of unearthing the nature of the human individuals, but such an understanding does not necessarily end there. It goes much beyond what ordinarily we see or perceive in the world of matters.

⁴ This is discussed in the Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

My thesis attempts to delve into some such questions keeping in view the recent trends in philosophical gallowes. The main aim of this enterprise is to attempt to understand the idea of an entity which is different, yet not entirely separated from our understanding of individual beings. This is what I call the idea of ‘group minds’. I shall attempt to answer some questions that are closely connected to the very essence of this idea. In other words, I shall formulate my questions in such a way that their answers will eventually be giving us an exhaustive understanding of group minds. The questions are as follows: can groups or collectives be regarded as minded entities? Do they have any minds or brains analogous to the idea of the brains or minds of the individuals that comprise them? Can groups be said to possess mental states in the same manner as the individual human subjects? Whether groups or collectives can do things in a manner that can have meaningful implications not only in the context of performance of those things but also to other spheres such as morality and epistemology?

The opponents of the idea of group minds try to convince us that it is stupid to think anything mental in connection to a group or collective. They hold that a group or a collective is an abstract entity, which cannot be correlated to any predicates that would refer to a brain state or mental state. The idea of group minds or collective minds is fiction. It does not have any concrete *locus standi*. It is just a metaphor. It is poetic. Hence, most of our discussion related to this idea is redundant.

However, we need not buy this line of argument so immediately. We must not be hesitant to restrict such apprehensions just because of the fact that groups or collective are abstract. We need to ask questions such as how they are abstract and in what way they are abstract. In my analysis, I shall try to develop the view that despite all the difficulties the idea of ‘group minds’ overtly or furtively keeps on appearing in any discussion of sociality. It cannot, and must not be regarded as redundant. Here, I shall furnish an analytic framework for understanding the contemporary accounts of group minds. This task shall be performed with special reference to a thesis called collective intentionality.

Before going into an in-depth analysis of all these, it is important to clarify my understanding of the notions cognate to the ‘group minds’. It is important to note that the idea of group or collective is used in this work in a pure technical sense. Groups or

collectives here do not refer to any values or norms which are extrinsic to their construction. They must be understood in a neutral context. We shall be concerned with only those elements of groups or collectives without which their very existence could not be talked about. In my analysis intentionality assumes prime importance. By intentionality, I mean the mental capacity of an individual to refer to objects other than itself. It occurs in the form of beliefs, desires, intentions, and fear.⁵

The intentional states are linked to the world in various ways. In this regard, there can be different directions of fit. Intentional states vary in their direction of fit according to their psychological mode. There can be the mind-to-world direction of fit, world-to-mind direction of fit or null direction of fit.⁶ A belief, for example, represents the things as they are in the world, and so have a mind-to-world direction of fit. On the other hand, a desire represents how we would like the thing to be. Therefore, it has a world-to-mind direction of fit. Moreover, some intentional states despite having a propositional content have a null direction of fit, that is, they presuppose the existence of a fit. They presuppose a fitting relation instead of trying to bring it about or assert it. For example, in the expression, “I am glad that it is raining”, one takes it for granted that it is raining. Every intentional state (with a non-null direction of fit) has “conditions of satisfaction”. These conditions are determined by the content of the intentional state. Hence, a belief is satisfied if it is true, a desire is satisfied if it is fulfilled, an intention is satisfied if it is carried out and so on.

Many philosophers also limit their discussion to ‘intention’ as a phenomenon that explains actions. Here, intention can be regarded as a tool that distinguishes a genuine action from mere happenings.⁷ Many contemporary philosophical accounts have dealt with the issue of intentions to explain actions. One of the most detailed and vivid description of intentions comes from Elizabeth Anscombe. In her much-acclaimed monograph titled, “Intention”, Anscombe lays down three different senses of ‘intention’.⁸ These three senses are —first, intentions for the future, for example, “I am going to do X”; second, acting intentionally, for instance, “I am doing X” and third acting with an intention, for example, “I am doing X with the intention to Y”. In this regard, Anscombe was inspired by Donald Davidson’s construal of intentions.

⁵ This position is held by Searle.

⁶ Searle, 1990.

⁷ Searle, 1979.

⁸ Anscombe, 1957.

Fredrick Stoutland holds that an account of “intention” ought to explain the close relations between these three notions.⁹

In order to properly address the question of group minds, my analysis tracks down a series of debates concerning the very possibility of collective intentional states. It will try to understand the possibility of group minds within the context of the possibility of collective intentionality. Besides, the work will also pay a special analysis of an issue called extended mind hypothesis. This thesis is important for this work because it talks about a very special character of human mind. In chapter 1, I shall address the issue of collective intentionality or collective intentions and review its possibility within a particular philosophical literature. I shall try to evaluate the possibility of any such option by examining the views of four major philosophers. They are Raimo Tuomela, John Searle, Michael Bratman, and Margaret Gilbert. I shall try to show that while Tuomela, Searle, and Bratman remain primarily committed to a doctrine called ‘methodological individualism’, Gilbert and others seem to take a completely different stance for the analysis of collective intentionality.¹⁰ Gilbert’s account has normative overtones as she discusses the obligations and entitlements that the individuals have towards each other while forming the intentional state of a group. The focus of this chapter would be to see whether there is a hidden attempt by all of these thinkers to go beyond the ontology of individual while addressing the issue of collectivity.

The exercise undertaken in the first chapter serves the purpose of answering the core question of the possibility of a ‘group minds’, which is the main concern of the second chapter. When the attempts are made to break the hegemony of individualistic interpretation of mental phenomena such as intentions, the immediate question that arises is that of the possibility of ‘group minds’. Thus in this chapter the meaning of this concept, its historical overtones, and its ontological possibility shall be discussed in a detailed manner. Here, I shall primarily explain the position of both Gilbert and Philip Pettit. It may be noted that though Gilbert herself remains non-committal in accepting anything analogous to the idea of group minds, her analysis of

⁹ Ford, Hornby & Stoutland, 2011.

¹⁰ The doctrine of ‘methodological individualism’ was introduced as a methodological precept for the social sciences by Max Weber. It amounts to the claim that social phenomena must be explained by showing how they result from individual actions, which in turn must be explained through reference to the intentional states that motivate the individual actors. It involves, in other words, a commitment to the primacy of what Talcott Parsons would later call “the action frame of reference”.

the *plural subject* gives us a unique impression of the possibility of the idea. In fact thinkers like David Velleman vividly claims that Gilbert's idea of plural subjects is 'perilously' close to group minds.¹¹ As opposed to Gilbert, Pettit and his collaborator Christian List discuss the notion of group minds taking clue from a jurisprudential principle called the discursive dilemma. Here, I shall also critically discuss the accounts of both Gilbert and Pettit with special reference to critiques developed by some other philosophers.

The last chapter looks at some special features of the mind. These features have a pervasive philosophical appeal, and are discussed extensively by modern philosophers. The features are—self-reflexivity, experientiality condition or *what is it like* condition, and memory. However, the interesting thing about these features is that they are the epitome of individualism. They are primarily conceived from a first-personal point of view. This makes it harder to contextualise them at the group level. This chapter takes up this challenge and analyses these features in the context of groups or collectives. It will investigate the issue of their functionality when they are substantially applied (if at all they could be applied to) to groups.

In the same chapter, at the close of the thesis, I shall take up a prominent theory in the philosophy of minds i.e., 'extended mind' hypothesis. I shall try to understand the meaning of this thesis by discussing the interpretations given by certain contemporary thinkers such as David Chalmers and Andy Clark. Keeping the primary goal of understanding the group minds in view, the extended minds hypothesis shall also be analysed in the context of the group. Here, the basic question would be—can the groups be legitimately treated as extended minds?

Overall, the present thesis opens up an entire corpus of possibilities related to the issue of group. It aims to do so first, by analysing the idea of collective intentions, second, by considering the possibility of group minds in the context of collective intentions, and last, but not the least, by considering the feasibility of applying certain features of individual minds to groups or collective. The thesis as a whole attempts to answer some of the contemporary questions of philosophy of mind and action with regard to the issue of collectivity. In other words, it attempts to shed light on the big

¹¹ Velleman, 1997.

picture of a very fundamental philosophical question, namely—can we consider groups to have minds or brains of their own like the way individuals do?

Chapter 1

Analysis of Collective Intentions

1.0 Introduction

Given that intentions are a matter of individual minds or brains, how do we establish that there is a genuine phenomenon called collective intentions? If individual intentions are required for the explanation of individual human actions, the logic suggests that the possibility of genuine collective actions would also compel us to talk about the possibility of collective intentions. However, can there be something called collective intentions in any non-metaphorical sense parallel to that of individual intentions? If yes, what is the difference between individual intentions and collective intentions? How do collective intentions come into being? Does an understanding of collective intentions have to be routed through the analysis of individual intentions? Most importantly, can we talk about the possibility of collective intentions without referring to the idea of group minds or group consciousness? In this chapter, I shall look into some of these questions within the context of the broader thesis of collective intentionality. However, it may be noted that the thesis of collective intentionality is being analysed here only with reference to the issue of collective intentions.

For the purpose of the present chapter, I shall be specifically concerned with contemporary attempts made by philosophers of mind and action in analysing collective intentions. My analysis would be restricted to four accounts developed by four major philosophers respectively. They are Toumela, Searle, Bratman, and Gilbert. I shall try to look into the core issues highlighted by these four philosophers. Here, the focus would be on the development of the idea of collective intentions by these philosophers. I shall try to answer such questions as: have these philosophers followed the established tradition of keeping individuals at the centre of all philosophical discussions? Or, is it that there is an attempt to go beyond the individualistic explanations of collective intentions in their accounts?

Following the long philosophical tradition with an apparent Cartesian legacy, many philosophers take intentionality to be essentially an individual phenomenon. Most of these philosophers endorse a doctrine called 'methodological individualism'. In the current discussion, the prominent philosophers who hold this view are

Toumela, Searle, and Bratman. Though all of three of them endorse individualism, their positions concerning the thesis of individualism are different from each other. For instance, there are at least two apparent forms of individualism that have surfaced in their analyses. Searle's view are called 'subjective individualism' since he maintains that intentionality of any form, collective or individual, is exclusively in the minds of individuals and independent of anything external. On the contrary, Bratman's position is called 'formal individualism'. It is the view that the 'form' of one's intentionality is individualistic.¹² Both Searle and Bratman deny any conceptual status to group level consciousness. One idea that all of them ardently reject is that collective intentional states could be found outside the heads of the individual members of the group or, in other words, that there could be something like group minds. In fact, Hans Bernhard Schmid is of the view that "fear of the 'group minds' is one important reason why philosophers of collective intentionality resort to individualism".¹³

With the progression of discussion, there is a notable change in stance. The difference becomes evident in the later works of Toumela where he accords metaphorical status to 'groups as a whole'. It becomes more salient and visible in the 'plural subject' theory of Gilbert. Unlike Toumela, Gilbert provides a literal explanation of group phenomena. She holds that in any social action, the plural subject of the action is formed by 'pooling of wills' of the constituent members. This plural subject can be the subject of shared intention, shared belief, or various other shared states and activities.¹⁴

In the last part of this chapter, I shall try to examine critically the accounts discussed before and see their shortcomings. I shall attempt to highlight the explanatory benefits that the collectivistic accounts have over the individualistic ones.¹⁵ The clarity and vigour that is visible in the 'plural subject' theory of Gilbert could not be found in the individualistic explanations of Searle and Bratman. There would also be an attempt to channelize the already discussed views under three heads.

¹² The distinction between subjective individualism and formal individualism is made by Bernhard Schmid (2003). Kay Mathiesen (2002) draws a similar kind of distinction but with a different terminology. She calls it ontological individualism and phenomenological individualism, respectively.

¹³ Schmid, 2003, p. 201.

¹⁴ Gilbert, 1990; Gilbert, 1992.

¹⁵ Here, the collectivistic explanation is that of Gilbert and the individualistic explanation is that of Toumela, Searle, and Bratman.

Those who clearly regard that collective intentions exist in individual minds shall be placed under one head. Prominent thinkers here would be Searle and Bratman. These people reject anything like a group minds outright. Second, there could be a position that somehow attempts to avoid the issue by resorting to the significance of the conglomeration of individual intentional states. Here Toumela would appear in a weak sense and Gilbert in a strong way. Here, there is an attempt made to cross the long established threshold. The third alternative suggests that collective intentions may be something that exist in the minds of the ‘collective’ or something like a ‘group mind’. This possibility would be explored in chapter 2.

It may be considered that the opening discussion on collective intentions will serve as a prelude to venture into the thesis of the group minds. It will help us in answering questions as: how is the idea of group minds inherently mingled in the debate of collective intentions? How does the thesis of group minds invariably emerge in any discussion on collective intentions? How is it rejected and why cannot it be avoided in any discussion of collective action? How tenable the very idea of group minds is? All these questions need further investigation but are to be routed through the understanding of collective intentionality in general and collective intentions in particular.

1.1 The Thesis of Collective Intentionality

Searle is of the opinion that consciousness and intentionality as the two most important problems dealt with in philosophy of minds.¹⁶ As discussed before, ‘intentionality’ is a technical term used by many philosophers to denote the capacity of the minds by which mental states refer to objects or state of affairs in the world other than themselves. If, for example, I have a belief, it must be a belief about something. If I have a fear, it must be a fear of something or that something will occur. If I have a desire, it must be a desire to do something or that something should be the case. If I have an intention, it must be an intention to do something, and so on. Intending is a kind of intentionality like beliefs, desires, fears, and so on.

It is regarded by many that there is a conceptual bondage between an action and the relevant intentions. What separates genuine actions from occurrences and happenings is the intentional involvement on the part of the agent. However, it is a

¹⁶ Searle, 1990.

well-established truth that we do not always act alone. Coordination with others raises interesting questions. Examples of collective actions are evident in our social set up such as, ‘parliament passed a new law against sexual harassment; ‘UPSC changed its examination pattern’; ‘Google launched a new web portal’. All these examples indicate the actions not of any individual but of a particular group. Here, it is not just a bunch of individuals that is being referred to.

The claim that groups can perform a certain action by itself is big enough to propagate on the issue of ‘group minds’. If there are genuine collective actions how are they to be accounted for? What role do intentions play when we talk about actions of a group? Just as individual intentions guide individual actions and help in structuring individual actions can the same thing be said about collective intentions as well? These issues become even more intriguing in view of the fact that intentionality is essentially regarded as a feature of the individual minds. It is the individual minds that possess intentionality. Now if that is so, how is it that group as a whole can be considered as minded entity?

One common sense understanding regarding the ascription of intentional states to groups is that such kind of ascription is merely metaphorical. However, this view is not much accepted in philosophical circles as the attribution of responsibility requires that the groups be construed as literal subjects of intentional states. The focal point is the ‘group as a whole’ and not as a fragmented entity comprising of a loose collection of individuals. We cannot attribute the action or even the responsibility of the action to a single individual or even some individuals.¹⁷ Moreover, the ascription of mental states to groups has explanatory advantages as well. It allows us to predict and explain the actions of groups. However, most of the thinkers are of the opinion that the rejection of the metaphorical approach does not necessarily involve the endorsement of anything of the sort group minds. There may be alternative views which hold that the ascription of intentional states to groups is true, not by virtue of there being group minds, but by the fact that the individuals within the group have certain intentional states.

Another view holds that what we call collective is nothing but a mere aggregation or summation of the intentions of the individual members of the group.

¹⁷ The responsibility factor would not be dealt with in the present work.

This view is referred to as the summative account of collective intentions.¹⁸ Antony Quinton is one of the proponents of the summative account.¹⁹ Those who are opposed to this view hold that collective intentions involve a sense of acting and willing something together and cannot just be regarded as a mere summation of individual intentions. Intentionality is in itself something human beings can share. Individual intentions involved in this enterprise are derived from collective intentions, and the individual intentions that are derived from the collective intentions will often have different content from that of the collective intentions. This view helps in providing an answer to the question—what makes our social life possible? Toumela, Searle, Bratman, and Gilbert endorse the non-summative view of collective intentions. They are primarily concerned with unfurling the complexities involved in the notion of collective intentions as the underlying mental state in any collective action.

Collective intentionality is considered to be fairly a recent term.²⁰ However, Deborah Tollefsen is of the view that concept wise it has been appearing and reappearing in the history of philosophy.²¹ It seems that it is implied in such notions as Aristotle's concept of *koinonía* or common striving, Jean Jacque Rousseau's idea of *volonté generale* or collective will or even notions such as the spirit of people or nations as developed in German Idealism or the Historical School of Law. Moreover, some more explicit conceptions of collective intentionality can be found in early social and sociological theory. It also is reflected in the works of Robin G. Collingwood and Wilfred Sellars.²² These sources focussed on the key issues in the analysis of collective intentionality that persist through history to the present times. For the purpose of the present work, I shall concentrate my attention on one aspect of collective intentionality i.e., collective intentions.

The main philosophical challenge connected with the analysis of collective intentions is in the tension within the expression “individuals as a group”.²³ We can have a first personal understanding of one’s intentions, but any intrusion into the intentions of others is difficult to imagine. So, in most of the cases, collective

¹⁸ Gilbert, 1989.

¹⁹ Quinton, 1975.

²⁰ It seems that in view of the phenomena at issue here it was first coined by John Searle in his 1990 paper “Collective Intentions and Actions”.

²¹ Tollefsen, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/coll-int/>.

²² Toumela, 2013.

²³ Tollefsen, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/coll-int/>.

intentions are ultimately interpreted by considering the relevant attitudes of the constituent individuals. They are dependent on and reducible to the individual intentions. This view is called individualism. However, in certain cases attempts are made to go beyond the individualist construal of collective intentions. These opinions consider the possibility of some supra-individual entity as the bearer of the mental states in question. However, before considering that possibility, it is important for us to consider the major accounts of collective intentions. It is important to examine how collective intentions have been analysed in these accounts keeping in mind their allegiance to a particular set of doctrine, for example, individualism.

1.2 Accounts of Collective Intentionality

In contemporary discussions in philosophy of mind and action, collective intentions are discussed in a variety of ways. As has already been discussed that there could be summative and non-summative accounts of collective intentions. However, the predominant view among the philosophers is non-summativism. It holds that collective intentions cannot just be reduced to a mere summation of individual intentions. We cannot get collective intentions by aggregating several intentional states of individuals. This is also called the irreducibility thesis since it upholds the non-reducibility of collective intentions to individual intentions.

In this section, I shall take up some of the prominent accounts of non-summativism. One of the major aims of this section is to see how the thesis of collective intentionality has progressed through these accounts and how their individual shortcomings are addressed and readdressed by subsequent writers. As we proceed from one to the other, we notice that we reach closer to a collectivistic analysis of collective intentions/action. The accounts that we shall take up are those of Toumela, Searle, Bratman, and Gilbert.

1.2.1 Toumela

Raimo Toumela is a contemporary Finnish philosopher who has contributed enormously to the field of the philosophy of social sciences and the philosophy of action.²⁴ The theory of sociality (collective intentionality, social ontology) has been

²⁴ Some important works of Toumela are—“We-intentions” (1988), with Kaarlo Miller; “Actions By Collectives” (1989); “Group beliefs” (1992); *The Importance of Us – A Study of Basic Social*

his main area of philosophical interest. He deserves the credit of being one of the initiators of the debate surrounding collective actions and intentions. Toumela holds that social actions are distinct from individual actions. They are different in the sense that in social situations other person's actions are also centrally relevant to one's actions and vice versa. This obviously is not the case in individual actions. The joint actions are a species of 'other-regarding' intentions relating to cases of joint social action.²⁵ In social actions, the existence of other agents and social institutions is conceptually presupposed. These actions are performed by more than one agent, for example, carrying a table upstairs, playing badminton, conversing, and so on. Whenever we talk of such joint or collective actions, we must be cognizant of the intentions, which back up such actions.

According to Toumela, the intentions behind collective actions themselves have to be collective. Collective intentions explain not only joint actions but also all the social phenomena and structures that rely on such collective actions.²⁶ One must start with the collective intentions of small groups of jointly acting individuals to arrive at other social notions, such as norms, roles, institutions, and the like. In Toumela's explanatory framework, collective intentions are symbolically represented as "we-intentions" and individual intentions as "I-intentions". The relation between the group and an individual participant could be understood with the help of two schemas:²⁷

1. We will do X.
2. I am one of us viz. the group G.
3. I will do my part of X.

Here, X represents the joint action, and G is the group of the individuals.

In this schema (which they call W1), (1.) is an expression of we-intentions by an agent, and (2.) is the expression of a belief of the agent. If the group G (we) perform a joint action and the individual (I) perform his part of the joint activity, the concept

Notions(1995); "We-Intentions Revisited" (1995); *The Philosophy of Sociality: The Shared Point of View*(2007); "Who is Afraid of Group Agents and Group Minds?" (2013), and so on.

²⁵ It is important to note that here collective actions, joint actions, and social actions are used interchangeably. He is primarily talking of joint intentions pertaining to smaller groups. Nevertheless, for the present purpose they may be taken to be collective intentions.

²⁶ Toumela & Miller, 1988, p. 370; Toumela, 1998, p. 175.

²⁷ Toumela & Miller, 1988, p. 368.

pair “I”-“we” should satisfy this schema. It represents how the individual and the group are connected and what it is for the individual to act as a member of the group of which she is a part. To have a clear understanding of the issue at stake, let us consider a complex schema:²⁸

1. We will do X.
2. A is one of us.
3. Our doing X requires that A does his part of X.
4. Unless I do Y (e.g. Teach A to do something) A cannot do his part.
5. I will do Y.

This schema is called (W2). Here, the individual part performance i.e., ‘doing Y’ is not directly related to the joint action X. It is instead a facilitating action to help some other agent perform his part of X. Y, is therefore indirectly but closely connected to the performance of the total joint action X. Here one must remember that both the schemas (W1) and (W2) hold true of agents who are active participants and not merely free riders in the joint action to be undertaken.

In his much-acclaimed work entitled, “We-Intentions” Toumela along with Kaarlo Miller gave a set of reasons for introducing we-intentions.²⁹ The first reason for the introduction of we-intentions is for the constituent members to internalize the notion of ‘group’ that is to say in order to make the participating individuals understand how the group affects individual thoughts and actions, group notions such as we-intentions are required.³⁰ Second, in order to avoid the conflict between I-intentions and we-intentions i.e., in order to avoid some kind of *akrasia* or weakness of will which may arise while acting on we-intentions as opposed to I-intentions, a concept of we-intentions is required which cannot be reduced to mere personal I-intentions. Third, a conception of individual agents in the social perspective requires something like the social we-intentions in addition to personal intentions (which Toumela and Miller call non-social). Last, the postulation of we-intentions is essential for the formation of any social scientific concept.

²⁸ Toumela & Miller, 1988.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ They were also charged of being circular in their argument. The element of group-ness or we-ness is already to be presupposed (internalised) in any account of we-intentions.

It is important to note that in Tuomela's analysis of we-intentions, an individual agent can be said to 'we-intend' a joint action if she has a respective individual intention regarding her contribution and certain beliefs about the actions and beliefs of the other agents involved. The content of we-intentions, according to them, is the collective action (in this case X) to be undertaken. Also, for any intentional joint action, the agents must share a commonly intended goal. None of the agent constituting the group can be said to perform the joint action intentionally as a collective if any one of them lacked the relevant we-intentions expressing the agents' common goal even if she has the constitutive part intentions (intentions to do one's part in the total action).³¹ For example, in case of a cricket match, a batsman A is interested in doing his part by making the maximum amount of runs but intends to do something by which the team doesn't win the match. Such a player cannot be said to we-intend to do X (in this case we-intend that the team wins the match) even though he has the relevant participatory intentions. An agent, therefore, must act according to two requirements. First, she must perform her part so that the participating agents succeed in doing the collective action X; and second that her doing her part in that situation is conducive to the total action X.

In addition to sharing the relevant we-intentions, each agent must have a belief about every other agent that the other would intentionally do his part of the total action and would strive to attain the common goal by performing his contributory part. Tuomela and Miller call these beliefs among the constituent members, "mutual beliefs". Focusing on cases of joint action and the respective intentional states, they analyse an individual agent's we-intentions regarding a joint activity as consisting of:

- (1) the intentions to do her part,
- (2) A belief that others will to their parts, and
- (3) A belief that there is (or will be) a mutual belief among the agents involved that the relevant opportunities for performing the joint activity will obtain.

They put it in the form of a schema:³²

A member A_i of a collective G we-intends to do X if and only if:

³¹ Tuomela & Miller, 1988, p. 370.

³² Tuomela & Miller, 1988, p. 375; Tuomela, 1991, p. 252; Tuomela, 2005, p. 340–41.

1. A_i intends to do his part of X;
2. A_i has a belief to the effect that the joint action opportunities for X will obtain, especially that at least a sufficient number of the full-fledged and adequately informed members of G, as required for the performance of X, (or at least probably will) do their parts of X;
3. A_i believes that there is (or will be) a mutual belief among the participants of G to the effect that the joint action opportunities for X will obtain.

A mutual belief that everyone will do the joint action X, consists in everyone's believing that everyone will do X and everyone's believing that everyone believes that everyone will do X.³³ In other words, a mutual belief in the performance of an action X is the belief that the other agent (or agents) in joint action would intentionally do her part of the joint action. All the participants in the joint action must share the action prompting we-intentions. Such mutual knowledge or belief is central not only to Tuomela's interpretation of collective intentions but social sciences as a whole.

With the understanding of Tuomela's construal of joint intentions or collective intentions, it will be interesting to see how Searle develops his account.

1.2.2 Searle

John Searle is one of the most prominent figures in the contemporary philosophy of mind and action.³⁴ His recent deliberation on the issue of social phenomena has led to the development of certain theses, which are believed to be crucial for a philosophical understanding of the relation between individual and society. His prime interest lies in understanding the ontology of the society. Searle's whole endeavour revolves around discovering that which makes our intentions and actions social. He is mainly concerned with the reality of social actions. His quest of is made explicit in his philosophical writings where he appeals to make a case for a 'philosophy of society'.³⁵

³³ Tuomela & Miller, 1988, p. 371.

³⁴ Some important works of Searle are—*Intentionality: An Essay In The Philosophy Of Mind* (1983); *Mind: A Brief Introduction* (1990); "Collective Intentions and Actions" (1990); *The Construction of Social Reality* (1995); "Social Ontology and the Philosophy of Society" (1998), and so on.

³⁵ Searle, 1995, p. 143.

In one of his most prominent works entitled, *The Construction of Social Reality*, Searle discusses three essential elements in understanding social reality—assignment of function, collective intentionality, and constitutive rules.³⁶ Later, he added the fourth element of ‘background of capacities’ that humans have for coping up with their environment. For the present purpose, we shall concentrate primarily on collective intentionality since it is the one of the most important tools in understanding social phenomena.

Collective intentionality helps in the depiction of individuals as social beings. The fact that there is collective intentional behaviour as opposed to individual intentional behaviour makes it the case that there may be something like collective intentions to explain such behaviour. Collective intentions, according to Searle, are the most important device that we put to use in our analysis of the social reality. It marks the difference between a genuine cooperative or collective behaviour and a behaviour that merely ‘happens’ to be coordinated with the behaviour of others.

Searle’s account of collective intentions is non-summative as well as individualistic.³⁷ Searle talks about collective intentionality in ‘first person plural’ sense as opposed to ‘first person singular’ sense.³⁸ Searle holds that collective intentions are different from the intentional states of the constituent members. Thus, by endorsing a non-summative explanation, Searle resorts to a collectivistic analysis of collective intentions. However, it is also individualistic in a sense because all intentions—individual and collective—are, according to Searle, ultimately held by the individuals. They are first personal even in the collective case.

It is an obvious fact that collective intentional behaviours exist and are distinct from individual intentional behaviours. This can be experienced by witnessing or engaging in any group activity, for example, playing a football match or being a part of the choir.³⁹ According to Searle, most of the attempts to explain collective intentionality embrace the thesis of summativism which holds that collective intentions are nothing but a mere aggregation of individual intentions. This, for Searle, is an ‘orthodox’ view for the explanation of social phenomena.⁴⁰ It holds that

³⁶ Searle, 1995.

³⁷ Searle, 1990; Searle, 1995.

³⁸ Schmid, 2003, p. 205.

³⁹ Searle identifies collective intentions as ‘we-intentions’ and individual intentions as ‘I-intentions’.

⁴⁰ Schmid, 2003, p. 201.

collective intentionality is ultimately reducible to the intentional states of the individual members. Searle claims that collective intentions cannot be reduced to the mere summation of individual intentions of the form "I intend to do X".⁴¹ In fact, not only that we-intentions (collective intentions) cannot be reduced to I-intentions (individual intentions) but also that they cannot be reduced to I-intentions supplemented with mutual beliefs (the view held by Raimo Tuomela).⁴² This is the focal point of his entire discussion where he tries to explain what collective intentions actually are.

Searle upholds the claim that collective intentions can neither be analysed in individual terms nor can they be understood as a conjoined form of individual intentions. One could not capture the essence of collective intentions by converging individual intentions on a common goal. He explains this with the example of a group of people—

Imagine that a group of people are sitting on the grass in various places in a park. Imagine that it suddenly starts to rain and they all get up and run to a common, centrally located, shelter. Each person has the intention expressed by the sentence "I am running to the shelter". But for each person, we may suppose that his or her intention is entirely independent of the intentions and behavior of others. In this case, there is no collective behavior; there is just a sequence of individual acts that happen to converge on a common goal. Now imagine a case where a group of people in a park converge on a common point as a piece of collective behavior. Imagine that they are part of an outdoor ballet where the choreography calls for the entire *corps de ballet* to converge on a common point. We can even imagine that the external bodily movements are indistinguishable in the two cases; the people running for shelter make the same types of bodily movements as the ballet dancers. Externally observed the two cases are indistinguishable, but they are clearly different internally.

The question that Searle raises at this point is: what exactly is the difference between the two cases? He answers that the difference is that the form of the intentionality in the first case is that each person has an intention that could be expressed without reference to the others, even in a case where each has mutual knowledge of the intentions of the others. But, in the second case, the individual 'I intends' are, in a

⁴¹ We-intentions and I-intentions are the linguistic expression for collective intentions and individual intentions respectively.

⁴² Searle, 1990, p. 404.

way, derived from the 'we intends'. That is to say, in the first case, even if each person knows that the other people intend to run to the shelter and knows that the other people know that she intends to run to the shelter we still do not have collective behavior. In this case at least, it seems no set of 'I intends', even supplemented with beliefs about other 'I intends' is sufficient to get to the 'we intend'. Intuitively, in the collective case the individual intentionality, expressed by 'I am doing act A' is a derivative from the collective intentionality, 'we are doing act A'. It is important to note that according to Searle, a collective action cannot be regarded as collective even by summing up all the individual actions together since there are no collective intentions to back it up. An important element in Searle's notion of collective intentions or we-intentions is cooperation. The mere presence of I-intentions to achieve a goal, which happens to be believed to be the same objective as that of other members of a group, does not entail the presence of an intentions to cooperate to achieve that goal.

Searle's non-summative account gives rise to some very important questions such as: what are the collective intentions constituted of if not individual intentions. Can there be group mental phenomena except what is in the brains of the constituting members? What is special about collective behaviour that cannot be captured by summing up the behaviours of individual actors? And so on.

In the first place, Searle vehemently denies that an analysis of collective intentional behaviour invariably leads to some entity such as group minds, something that hovers above the individual minds.⁴³ Such entity, according to him, is a "dreadful metaphysical excrescence".⁴⁴ The group mind thesis holds that, if collective intentionality is to be distinguished from individual intentionality, it has to be not the single individuals, but the collectives themselves that have such kind of intentions. That is, for collectives to have intentions, some 'collective minds', some 'group minds' seems to be required. According to Searle, such kinds of explanations are "at best mysterious and at worst incoherent".⁴⁵ This claim makes his conception of collective intentions more intriguing and interesting. If the we-intentions can neither be explained in terms of some entity like group minds that is over and above the

⁴³ This point has also been emphasised by Schmid (2003). Schmid says that Searle ultimately resort to individualism in order to avoid any adherence to group minds or group consciousness. I shall discuss it in detail a little later.

⁴⁴ Searle, 1998, p. 150.

⁴⁵ Searle, 1990, p. 407.

individual minds nor by summing up the intentions of constituting individuals, how do we explain their reality? How do we understand them if the idea of group minds is so incoherent? Searle is quite categorical in dismissing the idea of group minds. He says any account of collective intentions and actions must adhere to the following two very important conditions—⁴⁶

1. It must be consistent with the fact that society consists of nothing but individuals. Since society consists entirely of individuals, there cannot be a group minds or group consciousness. All consciousness is in individual minds, in individual brains.
2. It must be consistent with the fact that the structure of any individual's intentionality has to be independent of the fact of whether or not he is getting things right, whether or not he is radically mistaken about what is actually occurring. This constraint applies as much to collective intentions as it does to individual intentions. One way to put this is to say that any account of collective intentions must be consistent with the fact that all intentionality, whether collective or individual, could be had by a brain in a vat or by a set of brains in vats.

For Searle, the society consists of individuals alone. Beyond individuals, there is no entity that constitutes the essence of a society. Besides, for him, all consciousness is in individual minds, in individual brains. There is no conscious mental state which can legitimately be located in any other entity other than individual brains or minds. The individual human beings are the ultimate repositories of all intentionality, whether individual or collective. Even if the intentionality in question makes reference to the collective, it has to be possessed by individual agents only. For example, if I am doing X (I-intentions) as a part of "Our doing Y" (we-intentions), both the intentions are in my mind alone. This is closely connected to methodological individualism. If we can explain social facts in terms of facts about individuals, then we do not need to attribute ontological status to social facts and entities. Though the intentionality involved in collective behaviour makes reference to the collective, it is ultimately possessed by the participating individuals. Hence, there is no need of any metaphysical entity like group minds.

According to the second condition, our analysis must be consistent with the fact that intentionality always remains unaffected even if we are radically mistaken

⁴⁶ Searle, 1990, p. 410.

about the external world. This means all intentionality, whether collective or individual, could be had only by a brain in a vat or by a set of brains in vats.⁴⁷ Searle's account of collective intentions is thus internalistic. It dictates that the we-intentions that one entertains must be contained within one's head and must be independent of the existence of other individuals or anything else. Searle embraces a solipsistic methodology where it makes no difference to the intentions in question that whether the brains are in contact with the real world or dreaming in a vat.⁴⁸

In a way, both the above stated conditions establish the primacy of individuals concerning intentions. In the case of collective behaviour, the individual intentions are derived from collective intentions. The I-intentions are a part of the larger we-intentions. Moreover, it is also quite often the case that in the collective behaviour the derived individual intentions have different content from we-intentions. For example, whereas the we-intentions could be: "we are playing a cricket match", the individual intentions would be: "I am fielding" or "I am balling". This means that the constituting I-intentions exist in the form of a contribution to the overall we-intentions and not as the whole we-intentions. For example, a player A has a contributory I-intention as a part of the performance of the orchestra with a we-intention. The I-intentions is thus shaped up and determined by we-intentions. In a collective intentional action, the means is individual whereas the goal is collective (The goal is; we are doing Y, the means is; I am doing X as a part of our doing Y). The individual act is a part of the collective act. However, ultimately the bearer of the mental states remains the individual.

With the help of the above understanding of Searle's account of collective intentions, we shall now move to another philosophical account of collective intentions, the explanation given by Bratman. It shall be interesting to analyse the similarities and differences between these two individualistic accounts.

⁴⁷ The Brain in a Vat thought-experiment is most commonly used to illustrate global or Cartesian skepticism. One is asked to imagine the possibility that at this very moment one is actually a brain hooked up to a sophisticated computer program that can perfectly simulate experiences of the outside world. If one cannot now be sure that we are not a brain in a vat, then one cannot rule out the possibility that all of your beliefs about the external world are false. It is usually taken to be a modern version of Descartes' argument (in the *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 1641) that centres on the possibility of an evil demon who systematically deceives us.

⁴⁸ Solipsism is regarded as the doctrine that, in principle, "existence" means for me my existence and that of my mental states.

1.2.3 Bratman

Michael Bratman, a contemporary philosopher of action, has contributed enormously to the area of social ontology.⁴⁹ In an influential series of books and papers, Bratman has developed an account of shared activity and shared intentions, which involves a pair of agents. In his construal of collective activity he is not concerned with authority relations and institutional structures. Unlike Searle, Bratman uses the phrase ‘shared intentions’ instead of collective intentions.⁵⁰ But, like Searle he also endorses an account of collective intentions, which is non-summative but individualistic in nature. Intentions, according to him, are distinctive attitudes that are central to our understanding of us as intelligent agents.⁵¹ The most important element in Bratman’s rendition of intentions is ‘planning’. He is mainly concerned with smaller collectives such as singers in a duet, partners in carrying a piano upstairs and so on. For the present purpose, it is important for us to understand how and in what way Bratman provides an answer to the question: “what is it for us to intend to do something together”?

Bratman understands shared intentions to be an ‘interpersonal structure’ of related intentions that serve to coordinate action and planning, as well as structure bargaining between participants.⁵² In his construction of ‘shared intentions’, Bratman rejects the summative thesis and adopts different strategy to explicate the possibility of collective intentions. According to him, having a similar intentions does not necessarily make it the case of a shared intentions. These intentions may just be coincidental with one agent having no idea whether the other one is having the same intention. Like Searle, he also rejects the group minds. Collective intentions, according to him, could not be regarded as “an attitude in the minds of some super-agent” where the minds of the participants are literally fused to give rise to a single mind.⁵³ Moreover, he rejects that shared intentions be necessarily grounded in some such conditions as explicit promise. His rejection is primarily on the ground of the inability to prove the sincerity of such a promise.

⁴⁹ Some important works of Bratman are—“Shared Cooperative Activity” (1992); “Shared Intentions” (1993); *Faces of Intention: Selected Essays on Intentions and Agency* (1999); “Shared Agency” (2009), and so on.

⁵⁰ For the present purpose both the terms will be used interchangeably.

⁵¹ Bratman, 1993, p. 97.

⁵² This shall be made clear in the course of the discussion.

⁵³ Bratman, 1993.

As stated above, Bratman provides an understanding of the role of shared intentions in the lives of the agents by laying down three features.⁵⁴ First, shared intentions help in coordinating the activities of the agents involved in such a way that it facilitates the pursuance of a common goal. Second, shared intentions help coordinate the planning. It helps in coordinating the plans of one agent (for the performance of the task at hand) with the plans of the other agent. Third, it helps in structuring the relevant bargaining as to ‘how’ the task is to be performed. It enables a bargaining between the conflicting preferences of both the partners to allow the performance of the joint action. These three are the characteristic features of shared intentions. Further, the intentions of the participants are subject to the demands of consistency and coherence. It implies that intentions are subject to a demand for stability. An agent who too easily reconsiders her prior intentions would be a less reliable partner in social coordination.⁵⁵ Therefore, the reconsideration of already formed intentions can have significant costs. There is a rational pressure on the agent not to banish easily her relevant intentions.

Shared intentions in Bratman’s treatise consist in the ‘interlocking web of attitudes of the participating agents and the interrelationships between those attitudes. However, it may be asked here that an agent is in control of her actions and, therefore, can intend for herself, how is it possible for a single agent to intend to perform a joint action? A joint action for that matter is not under the direct control of a single agent. How does the conception of the joint action get into the intentions of the individuals?⁵⁶ Bratman attempts to answer this question with the help of the introduction of a new notion of *intending that* instead of *intending to*. The *intending that* enables the joint activity (which he terms as J-ing) to be included in the content of the individual intentions. This condition involves an influence condition whereby one agent can affect the role of the other in the joint action. If one *intends that* something be the case, then one shall play the role of a facilitator. We will make sure that the desired action be brought about even though it is not fully under one’s control. For example, Mr X may intend that his son clear the engineering examination. He would then get his son enrolled in a good coaching institute, provide

⁵⁴ Bratman, 1993, p. 99.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 110.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 101.

him all necessary guidance. In this way, he shall perform such actions that bring about the task at hand.

Bratman introduces a series of views before finally coming to his disquisition of shared intentions. These views shall be briefly discussed here—

View 1: This view holds:

1. We intend to J if and only if I intend that we J and you intend that we J.

Here, J is the joint action performed by two agents.⁵⁷

However, this view according to him is a weak view. Both the agents may intend that ‘we J’ without any knowledge about the intentions of the other. Hence, he proceeds to add the condition of common knowledge in View 2 which states that:⁵⁸

View 2: We intend to J if and only if,

1. I intend that we J and you intend that we J, and
2. 1 is common knowledge between the agents.

This view endorses the common knowledge condition but it does not negate the possibility of coercion where one party in the joint action may coerce the other to perform the action. This shortcoming is addressed in View 3.

View 3: We intend to J if and only if

1. (a) I intend that we J and (b) you intend that we J.
2. I intend that we J because of 1(a) and 1(b); you intend that we J because of 1(a) and 1(b)
3. 1 and 2 are the common knowledge between us.

However, this view also falters with regard to the differences that may arise in the course of action that has to be followed in performing the joint task. It does not account for the sub-plans. For Bratman, one cannot have a shared intentions unless both the partners intend to uphold the sub-plans of the other. For example, both the partners in the joint action may intend that they sing a duet together. However, one

⁵⁷ Bratman, 1993, p. 103.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

partner may intend to sing a classical song and the other may intend to sing a pop song. All this is common knowledge but neither of the parties is willing to compromise. This view fails to take into account the execution of the intended action. Though it may not be possible to strike a complete match between the sub plans, still we need some other view beyond this view.⁵⁹

View 4: We intend to J if and only if

1. (a) I intend that we J and (b) you intend that we J.
2. I intend that we J in accordance with and because of 1(a) , 1(b), and meshing sub plans of 1a and 1b; you intend that we J in accordance with and because of 1(a), 1(b), and meshing sub plans of 1a and 1b.
3. 1 and 2 are common knowledge between us.

This view introduces an additional condition for the meshing (instead of matching) of sub plans. It takes into account ‘how’ the joint action is to be performed. The introduction of the meshing condition enables a relevant bargaining as to how the task is to be performed.

According to Bratman, an overlap of the individual reasons is not a necessary condition for a shared intentions. The individual participants may have separate reasons for participating in the joint action but that does not negate the possibility of shared intentions.⁶⁰ The View 4 takes into consideration all the three essential characteristics of shared intentions i.e., coordinated action, planning and relevant bargaining. Bratman’s construal of shared intentions is ‘individualistic in spirit’ because it consists of primarily of attitudes of individual participants and their interrelationships. The coordinated planning, action, and the relevant framework for bargaining which are the characteristics of shared intentions emerge from a proper functioning of the attitudes of the individual participants.

Bratman’s account of collective intentionality is ‘relationalistic’ i.e., ‘shared intentions’ is obtained by relating individual intentions in a particular way. He tries to include joint activity in the content of individual intentional agency. The content of the intentions of participating individual is collective in the sense that it unifies and

⁵⁹ Bratman, 1993, p. 106.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 107.

coordinates individual intentional actions towards a common or shared goal (this common goal is to be accepted by each participant).

We shall now move to the discussion of Gilbert's account of collective intentions. It is interesting to note that Bratman does not completely agree with Gilbert's notion of collective intentions. He opines that the promise or agreement that Gilbert discusses in her explanation are not the necessary outcomes of a shared intentions. The non-conditional obligation is not a necessary accompaniment of a shared intention.⁶¹ For a proper understanding of this objection, it is important to understand Gilbert's account. It will be interesting to note that her account differs from the above three by moving a step further towards the real essence of collectivity.

1.2.4 Gilbert

Margaret Gilbert is an English philosopher who has made substantial contributions to political philosophy, the philosophy of law, and ethics. However, she is best known for her work in the philosophy of social sciences and more specifically, for her founding contributions to the analytic philosophy of social phenomena.⁶² In her analysis of collective intentions, Gilbert has made the idea of joint commitments as the centre of her account.⁶³ With regard to the explanation of sociality, Gilbert was greatly moved by the works of two founder figures of sociology—Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. She regards social ontology as one of the prime concerns of the contemporary philosophy of social science. Her construal prompts an investigation into the relationship between the individual members and the group as a whole. She begins her discussion of the collective phenomenon by posing some important questions such as: what is meant by a social group? Does the membership of a group require a profound transformation of the individuals involved? If so, what is the nature of such transformation? Gilbert attempts to answer these questions through her understanding of the social phenomena.

Gilbert's approach to the understanding of collectivity is unique. She begins her analysis of a social group or a collective phenomenon, with a bare minimal

⁶¹ Bratman, 1993, p. 111.

⁶² Some important works of Gilbert are—*On Social Facts* (1989); "Walking Together: A Paradigmatic Social Phenomenon" (1990); "Is an Agreement an Exchange of Promises?" (1993); *Living Together: Rationality, Sociality and Obligation* (1996); "Obligation and Joint Commitment" (1999); "Shared Intentions and Personal Intentions" (2009), and so on.

⁶³ Schmid, 2008.

collective of two people going for a walk together.⁶⁴ She considers this case as a paradigm of social phenomenon. This splintered approach attempts to provide an understanding of the structure that constitutes the social groups. It is in this regard that Gilbert's theory comes quite close to that of George Simmel.⁶⁵ Simmel is of the opinion that the process of forming social groups covers an entire spectrum of activities from going for a walk together to founding a family and from the temporary aggregation of hotel guests to the intimate bonding of a medieval guild.⁶⁶ Taking a clue from Simmel, Gilbert also attempts to scrutinise the core phenomenon involved in a collective action.

For Gilbert if two people are walking along next to each other that does not make it the case that they are walking together. What then is required for two people to go on a walk 'together'? Is it logically sufficient that both the partners in the joint walk possess the personal goals of walking alongside each other? Or, is there an additional condition needed apart from this? In answering these questions, Gilbert makes a distinction between the *weak shared personal goals* and the *strong shared personal goals*. In her view, it is not sufficient for both the partners to have individual personal goals for the performance of any joint action. This, in fact, is the *weak sense* of shared intentions. In the strong sense, she includes a condition of *common knowledge* of the goal in question. The common knowledge condition is absent in the weak sense. This condition implies that each partner has a complete knowledge of the other's goal. Whether the common knowledge condition is sufficient for a collective phenomenon is a question that she further analyses.

Gilbert holds that the common knowledge condition is a necessary proviso, but it has to be supplemented by other considerations to make it a true collective case. This condition can not be regarded as sufficient as it lacks the *obligations* and *entitlements* or *rights* that form an inherent part of any collective phenomenon. The crucial elements in Gilbert's characterisation are—an explicit exchange of promise, obligations, and entitlements.

When both the parties involved in the action have *jointly* expressed their willingness to join hands with each other in accepting the common goal (in this case

⁶⁴ Gilbert, 1989; Gilbert, 1990.

⁶⁵ Gilbert, 1990, p. 178.

⁶⁶ Simmel, 1971, p. 24.

to walk in each other's company) a 'plural subject' is constituted. The individual participants then act not in their individual capacity but as a participant in the plural subject. She says—⁶⁷

Each one's (the participants) expression of willingness to walk with the other in conditions of common knowledge, is logically sufficient for them to be plural subjects of the relevant goal, and hence to go for a walk together

A host of questions can be raised at this juncture—what is the nature of the plural subject? What constitutes it? Is the plural subjecthood only a metaphorical ascription or is it a literal formation of a separate entity? How is the relation of individual participating agents to be construed? Is it a mere aggregation of individual will towards the performance of an action? Or, is it something more than that? In Gilbert's analysis, the plural subject is constituted when agents jointly commit as a body to perform an action. The agents have to be jointly committed in some way with each other. The joint commitment must be made under the conditions of common knowledge.⁶⁸ The formation of a 'plural subject' towards a common goal is routed through the formation of 'pool of wills'. The pool of wills is formed when the individual agents offer their individual wills to be bound towards the achievement of the common goal. A plural subject is an entity, or as Gilbert puts it, "a special kind of thing, a *'synthesis sui generis'* formed when individuals bond or unite in a particular way."⁶⁹ This "special kind of thing" can be the subject to which intentional states and psychological attributes are accredited. Gilbert asserts that under certain circumstances individuals performing a joint action form a plural subject and this subject is the legitimate subject of the ascription of intentional states.

Thus, it is clearly evident from Gilbert's construal of plural subject that it is not only a metaphorical ascription, it indicates toward something of a literal makeup. However, in order to understand the fuller implications of Gilbert's plural subject theory, we shall discuss Gilbert's account from an altogether different perspective in the next chapter. But, before that it is important to undertake a critical assessment of the already discussed accounts. This shall help us in a comparative understanding of these accounts and analysing their importance for the idea of group mind as a whole.

⁶⁷ Gilbert, 1990, p. 183.

⁶⁸ Sheehy, 2002, p. 379.

⁶⁹ Gilbert, 1996, p. 268.

1.3 Critical Analysis of the Accounts

From the above discussion, it is clear that any analysis of genuine collective actions necessarily refers to the intentional states of the concerned collective. There is not much disagreement among philosophers concerning the requirement of collective intentions as instrumental in explaining collective behaviour of individual entity. These collective intentional states aid our understanding of various social entities and phenomena.

However, the main point of debate lies in identifying the locus of these collective intentional states. As Hans Bernhard Schmid puts it: “where there is intentionality, it is said, there has to be somebody who ‘has’ it – the good old subject”.⁷⁰ But, where do we exactly locate collective intentions? Can they be located in the minds of the participating individuals or the minds of some super-agent which is over and above the constituting individuals? Since intentionality is a feature of individual minds, can groups, which do not have minds of their own, possess intentional states? Most of the philosophers agree in accepting that collective intentions could not be reduced to the intentions of the individual participants. However, they are not ready to accept any such entity like the group minds or collective minds. They maintain that collective intentions as analogous to individual intentions exist in the minds of individual participants and there is no need of postulating any entity such as a group minds as the locus of these intentional states.

One of the most prominent philosophical reasons for not being able to endorse any such entity as group minds may be the inability to explain a metaphysically doubtful entity. This reason holds that groups cannot be said to exist as subjects in the same way as individual intentional subjects exist. Holding the ontological existence of a collective with a mind of its own is difficult to prove in concrete philosophical terms.⁷¹ Constrained by such considerations, most of the philosophers tried to explain collective intentions within the framework of individualism. Individualism claims that individual participants in a joint action are the ultimate repositories of all mental states individual as well as collective and there is no room for any metaphysically doubtful entity such as group minds that hovers above the individual minds.

⁷⁰ Schmid, 2003, p. 203.

⁷¹ Even those philosophers who accept the notion of group minds in one way or the other shy away from considering them as persons analogous to individual human persons.

The individualistic philosophers do not recognise any entity other than the individual minds or brain. However, how far the individualistic explanations have been successful in capturing the collectivistic essence of collective intentions is an issue worth investigation. If collective intentions have to be ultimately traced back to the individual participants, why can it not be said to be a summation of individual intentions? It is in the course of answering these questions that we develop a thesis of group minds.⁷²

But before undertaking a detailed discussion of the thesis of group minds—its meaning, implications, its analysis by the prominent figures of the philosophy of mind and action, it is important to know how the contemporary philosophers have viewed the idea of collectivity.⁷³ For advancing a methodically correct explanation, we can consider the contemporary philosophical views on collective intentions under three heads—

1. There could be a position that clearly says that collective intentions exist in individual minds.

As far as this position is concerned, the accounts Searle and Bratman are particularly significant. They in their major works have vehemently rejected any metaphysical entity such as group minds. According to Searle, such entity is a “dreadful metaphysical excrescence” and any attempts aimed at its explanations are “at best mysterious and at worst incoherent”.⁷⁴ Like Searle’s view, one of Bratman’s motivations for subscribing to individualism is his adherence to the opinion that shared intentions is not an attitude in the minds of some super-agent. He also rejects any metaphysical entity such as a group minds to which the collective intentional states could be ascribed. Such an entity, according to him, is hard to establish. He says that—“there is no single minds which is the fusion of your minds and mine”.⁷⁵ It implies that for these philosophers, in cases of collective phenomena there is no conjunction of the individual intentions to give rise to the collective in a way such that the individual identity gets blurred to create something new.

⁷² See Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion and prominent accounts of the thesis of group minds.

⁷³ Here, I shall be concerned with those philosophers whose accounts I have discussed so far.

⁷⁴ Searle, 1990, p. 407.

⁷⁵ Bratman, 1993, p. 98.

However, this individualistic construal is not free from problems. It is also claimed by many that the methodological individualists could not avoid the problems that they attempt to surpass by resorting to individualism. Searle's account of collective intentionality has been criticised by various philosophers on different grounds. Schmid, for example, holds that Searle paradoxically tries to break away from the traditionally accepted view regarding individualism (by rejecting the summative account) but finally endorses other form of individualism to avoid group minds (when he upholds methodological individualism and holds that all intentionality is in individuals minds alone).⁷⁶ He says that Searle attempts to provide an account of collective intentions "without letting any genuine collectivity enter the scene".⁷⁷ In Searle's account, the collective is nothing more than a mere by-product of the 'we-intentionality' which 'individuals' have. So, the whole question of the relation between the individual and society is wrongly put.

Antonie Meijers and Margaret Gilbert have also both argued that Searle's account fails to capture the normative element that is an integral part of collective intentions.⁷⁸ When we form a collective intention, we create obligations and expectations among us. As Gilbert notes, if one of the participants in the collective action fails to do her part, the other players have a right to rebuke her. This rebuke is evidence of the normativity involved in the joint action. So, the formation of collective intentions is accompanied by commitments and obligations. Searle's account, according to them, because it essentially allows for solipsistic we-intentions, fails to acknowledge the normativity involved in collective intentionality.⁷⁹

In a similar vein, Bratman's subscription to individualism paves the way for some important questions such as—how can the non-summative account of Bratman be understood as 'reductive in spirit'?⁸⁰ Does the interlocking web that Bratman talks about in his explanation of collective intentions is a new thing altogether or can it be ultimately traced back to the constituting individuals and their relevant attitudes? If it is an altogether new thing, how does his account remain reductive and if it is not new and can ultimately be traced back to participating individuals, how can it be regarded

⁷⁶ Schmid, 2003.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁷⁸ Meijers, 2003; Gilbert, 1993.

⁷⁹ The solipsism in his account is evident in the 'brain in a vat' condition that he puts forth in his analysis.

⁸⁰ Bratman, 1993, p. 105.

as non-summative? His attempt to formulate collective intentions on the basis of external relationality between individual attitudes makes it difficult to be regarded as reductive (and also individualistic in the strict sense).

From the above discussion, it appears that the accounts of both Searle and Bratman could not provide a satisfactory answer to the question of what is it to intend something together. The unifying element, the togetherness among the intentions of the individual participants, appears to be quite weak. Many thinkers are of the view that to avoid any such entity as group minds, Searle and Bratman gives an analysis of collective intentions that remain superficial.⁸¹ Their accounts fail to capture the core of collectivity fully. This missing cohesiveness can be located in Gilbert's explanation of collective intentions. However, before analysing Gilbert's account, it is important to categorise Tuomela's views on collective intentions. Both Tuomela and Gilbert are placed under the second category.

2. There could be a position that somehow attempts to avoid the issue of group minds by resorting to the significance of the conglomeration of individual intentional states.

Tuomela's take on we-intentions could be regarded as something which hold this position philosophically. In some of his landmark books and papers, Tuomela accepts the notion of group agency and group minds from a metaphorical point of view.⁸² Tuomela upholds a view that takes the notion of extrinsically intentional group agent to be very useful from a functional point of view.⁸³ He uses the 'group agent' as a conceptual tool to present his 'we-mode approach' to collective intentionality.⁸⁴

Groups, in Tuomela's view, can never be persons in the flesh and blood sense (this also includes phenomenal experiences). They, in fact, are entities that have some functional features similar to fully intentional human agents. This implies that groups could be metaphorically construed as thinking, wanting, and possessing normative responsibilities. He says: "a we-mode group has a mind functionally constituted by the collection of attitudes (and other mental states) functionally correctly attributed to

⁸¹ Schmid, 2003, p. 206.

⁸² Tuomela, 2007; Tuomela, 2013.

⁸³ Extrinsic intentionality of Group Agents mean that the group members form the group minds collective attitudes (wants, intentions, beliefs), by their collective acceptance or some related group-internal process or mechanism.

⁸⁴ The discussion of the group minds, according to Tuomela, has started in ancient Greece and Rome. It has been prevalent in myths, in the history and philosophy of law and political philosophy and theory.

it”.⁸⁵ The individual agent in this sense is not the primary actor but a representative acting on behalf of the group. So, in Toumela’s analysis, a group is the intentional but not the ontological subject of actions and attributes that are ascribed to it. They can be regarded as agents with minds from a conceptual point of view to facilitate our understanding and explanation of we-intentions as opposed to I-intentions. Toumela’s metaphorical acceptance of group minds is quite distinct from Gilbert’s view that can be regarded as a stronger version of this category. However, Gilbert does not discuss any such thing as group minds but her idea of “plural subject” comes quite close.⁸⁶ Her account equips us with an additional tool that may help us explain the element of cohesiveness and normativity which could not be traced in the earlier individualistic accounts.

3. There could be a third alternative that might suggest that collective intentions literally exist in the ‘minds’ of the group.

An analysis of the above positions prompts us to raise one pertinent question —can there be any third point of view, a view that clearly endorses ‘group minds’? Can there be an account that upholds the ontological existence of groups as a whole apart from the constituting individuals? If that is the case what would such an account be like? Can it be said to fare better than the above-stated views? How would such an account tackle the conditions that led to the vehement denouncement of group minds? It would be an interesting task to discuss these issues in detail. It is true that such an account is not difficult to conceive but has been deliberately avoided or overlooked by the philosophers of minds and action. The outright rejection or diversion makes the issue of group minds even more intriguing and philosophically significant. For its espousal or rejection, it has to be discussed for a fuller understanding of any collective phenomena. I shall attempt to discuss a complete account of group mind with the help of the accounts of various philosophers in the next chapter.

1.4 Conclusion

It is clear from the above discussion that any discussion of a collective action has to be routed through collective intentions. However, philosophers are not much united on the issue as to how these collective intentions have to be understood. It appears

⁸⁵ Toumela, 2013, p. 18.

⁸⁶ This shall be discussed in detail in the next Chapter.

that due to a presupposed denial of a superminds or group minds, the individualists fall short of being able to capture the collectivistic essence of collective intentions. Their vehement disapproval of such a thesis made it difficult for them to maintain a parallel between their versions of individualism and non-summativism and reductivism (in case of Bratman).

On the one hand, are individualists like Searle and Bratman, who grapple with various criticisms for avoiding the spectre of group minds. On the other hand is Tuomela, who could not overlook the explanatory strength of group minds and group agency and ultimately conceded to a milder version of the group minds. Avoiding any extreme claims (accepting the literal formation of a group minds), he is still able to recognise the expounding advantage of the thesis of the group minds. Gilbert's account goes a step further to make room for the normative responsibility. Her explanation certainly has an edge over the other accounts that ignore the normative conditions or consider it too strict a condition to incorporate in their schema.

It is clear from the step by step discussion on the above-stated views that the explanatory expediency which the thesis of group minds is endowed with could not be brushed aside easily. In fact, in the last part of the discussion, there also emerged a possibility where the issue of group minds is dealt with directly without any divergence. I shall try to explore this possibility further in the next chapter, which upholds the ontological sanctity of the group minds thesis.

Chapter 2

The Possibility of Group Minds

2.0 Introduction

In the discussions in preceding chapter, it remained unclear whether the attribution of any collective intentional state to a group necessarily requires the presupposition of a separate entity called group minds. There was no clarity on the issue of whether or not it is ultimately the individual participants who possess the collective intentional states of a given collective action situation. Different philosophical positions endorsed different philosophical stances. Now if this is the scenario of any collective affairs several pressing questions may trouble us philosophically: where does the essence of collectivity reside? Does it reside in the individuals or in the conglomeration of the individuals? Can groups on their own be regarded as the efficacious agency to possess intentional states? In other words, do groups have minds of their own? In this chapter, we shall take up the issue of the possibility of group minds in a more concrete manner.

Bernhard Schmid in one of his most influential articles remarks—⁸⁷

Now if it is claimed that there is such a thing as collective intentionality, and that collective intentionality is to be distinguished from individual intentionality, the conclusion seems to force itself on us that it has to be not the single individuals, but the collectives themselves that 'have it'. And for collectives to have intentions, some sort of a 'collective minds', some 'group minds' seems to be required, something hovering over and above the minds of the individuals involved.

The hardliners wedded to the doctrine of methodological individualism vehemently reject the possibility of group minds from the very beginning of their analysis. According to these philosophers, any mental state has to be ultimately attributed to individual participants. The accounts of Searle, Bratman, and Toumela are the most prominent in this regard. The previous chapter dealt with these view quite substantially. While critically analysing their loopholes the chapter pointed certain shortcomings of their individualistic renderings which have interesting repercussions

⁸⁷ Schmid, 2003, p. 203-04.

to the idea of group minds. These shortcomings eventually give a perspective which is essentially non-individualistic in nature. These non-individualistic views are philosophically very gratifying and intriguing. They open up new possibilities to explore the true essence of collectivity in the performance of collective actions. In the present chapter, I shall investigate this option by looking at the various accounts of philosophers—both historical as well as contemporary.

The second section of this chapter attempts to address some of most pertinent questions related to the idea of group minds. They are— whether the constraints of individualism are such that they do not permit us to embrace any other explanatory possibility other than constituent individual elements? Is the idea of group minds or collective minds philosophically tenable? Is it more than mere metaphor? If it is, than what is more in that? Considering these question as our basic threshold point, the chapter makes an effort of analyzing some of the contemporary accounts of group minds. The accounts that I shall be concerned with here are of Gilbert and Philip Pettit.

Though Gilbert's position has already been illustrated in the previous Chapter, here, I shall try to look at the thesis from a different perspective. I shall attempt to highlight the apparent misalliance between her individualistic avowal and her ideas of 'plural subject' and 'pool of wills'. Unlike Gilbert, Pettit deals with the issue of group minds head on. He uses the term 'group minds' without being dissuaded by the metaphysical baggage that affects Gilbert and other individualists. He provides a rationalistic interpretation of organised collectives or 'social integrates' as he calls it. In the fourth section of this chapter, I shall try to give a critical assessment of the accounts of both Gilbert and Pettit.

2.1 Meaning of Group Minds

It is evident from the discussion of the earlier chapter that there has been a conventional individualistic bias towards minds in the philosophy of mind and action. The reason for this is obvious that there is always a 'first person awareness of one's mental states but any intrusion inside the mental states of others is not an easy thing to think of. Any ascription of 'minds' to entities other than individuals, if at all accepted, is purely metaphorical. The very idea that a 'group' itself a centre of psychological properties has to be taken with a pinch of salt. It is difficult to conceive of any 'group

minds' where individuals are not necessarily the ultimate repositories of mental states about the goal of the group. Despite this initial hitch, the idea of 'group minds' has been able to engage us philosophically, especially those of us who work in the areas of mind and action. Throughout history, different philosophers in different ways have articulated the idea of 'group minds'. Hegelian *Geist*, *plural subject*, and *collective consciousness* are regarded as some such manifestations of the same idea.

R. A. Wilson, an eminent philosopher of mind and cognitive sciences, gives an interpretation of group minds in two different ways.⁸⁸ Firstly, in a literalist sense where the groups can be literally said to possess minds. These minds may not be as rich as individual minds but they exhibit a range of 'individual like' properties.⁸⁹ The second interpretation of the group mind thesis given by Wilson is the metaphorical interpretation. Here, groups are only metaphorically treated as minds-laden entities but they in fact, are not. They can be said to have minds just by courtesy. As we have already discussed in the previous chapter, Toumela is in favour of this interpretation. However, how far can these two interpretations be regarded as exhaustive explanations of group cognition is a debatable issue.

John Searle famously mentioned once that an understanding of any concept has to be routed through history, how it has been understood and analysed historically.⁹⁰ Taking a clue from the same, before coming to the contemporary analysis of group minds, we shall here look at the historical understanding of this idea. Historically, the idea of group minds has been a topic of debate not only in cognitive sciences but also in biological and social sciences. In the late nineteenth century, it was prevalent in social psychology and social theory. Here, mind was regarded as multilevel trait which can be claimed to exist both at the individual as well as at the group level.⁹¹ On the other hand, in the twentieth century, the idea of group minds was prominent in the study of social insects and community ecology. Here it was considered a group-only trait existing at the group level only and not at the level of individual members. The authors working in these two areas were moved by different considerations in the introduction of group minds.

⁸⁸ Wilson, 2004.

⁸⁹ In contemporary philosophical discussions, this line of argument is close to the accounts of Gilbert and Pettit.

⁹⁰ Searle, 1990.

⁹¹ Wilson, 2004, p. 267. He calls it as the 'collective psychology tradition'.

Explaining his position on the idea of group minds, Toumela, in his paper entitled, “Who is Afraid of Group Agents and Group Minds”, opines that the idea of group minds comes very close to the notion of *esprit de corps*.⁹² In this sense, it involves some ‘group spirit’ or group feeling. Traditionally, it has been used to account not only for the mental unity of collectives or groups but also the reflective self-consciousness of a group. The notion of group minds, according to him, has a long historical descent.

This notion can be traced back in Asian myths and discourses in the philosophy of law, political philosophy, and theory especially in that of ancient Greece and Rome. The roman conception of corporation or *corporatio* comes quite close to the group minds. It was understood as a ‘group person’ capable of making promises as opposed to *societas*, a collective of less tightly connected individuals. He holds that there have been discussions of group minds and group agents by sociologists, social psychologists and philosophers of sociality since the mid - nineteenth century. Some early discussion of group minds is also evident in the works of Locke and Hobbes.

With this backdrop of the prevalence of the idea of group mind in various manifestations, it would be interesting to look at the works of certain prominent philosophers of the mid-nineteenth and twentieth century to clarify how the idea of group minds has been perceived historically. These philosophers are—Moritz Lazarus, William McDougall, Ferdinand Tönnies, and Alfred Vierkandt.

Lazarus along with Heyman Steinthal developed an account of ‘national spirit’ or spirit of the people’. He called it, *Volkseist*.⁹³ *Volksgeist* for Lazarus is something that turns a plurality of individuals into a nation. What drew his attention to nations is their large size and the presence of many-sided groups that could take care of basic needs of people. It is the sum of all mental or spiritual activities of persons in a nation irrespective of their particular mentality. It is not something that hovers above the heads of individual members; it rather appears in the form of an internal bond between them. As is generally interpreted, *Volksgeist* is a kind of group mind but it does not involve any group agency in the shape of an objective spiritual agent. It is, in fact, the inner mental activity common to individuals. It can also be compared to

⁹² Toumela, 2013.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

Platonic heaven. Bernhard Schmid however, presents an individualist account of *Volksgeist*.⁹⁴ According to him, Lazarus takes a group to exist as a group only because its members take it so.

William McDougall in his book *The Group Minds*, accepts the existence of group minds as opposed to collective consciousness which, according to him, “is a hypothesis to be held in reserve until the study of group life reveal phenomena that cannot be explained without its aid”.⁹⁵ McDougall’s conception of minds is not metaphysical; it is rather functional or scientific. His account of group minds is a non-reductionist one. In this sense, all the highly organised societies may be said to possess a collective mind. He says—⁹⁶

But it is maintained that a society, when it enjoys a long life and becomes highly organised, acquires a structure and qualities which are largely independent of the qualities of the individuals who enter into its composition and take part for a brief time of its life. It becomes an organised system of forces which has a life of its own, tendencies of its own, a power of moulding all its component individuals, and a power of perpetuating itself as a self- identical system, subject only to slow and gradual change.

Another famous historical account of group mind is of Ferdinand Tönnies. He wrote an influential book entitled *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* in 1887.⁹⁷ After sometime, he published a paper of the same title in which he introduced certain new perspectives. It was translated as “Community and Society”. In this paper, Tönnies gives a normative account of the collective person and collective will. The collective person is a kind of plural person. According to him, there is a group agent who is the carrier of the collective will. This group agent is an artificial, imaginary, and collective person.⁹⁸ He ropes in the normative element in his account as he talks about the duties and rights that the collective will bestows upon the participants. There is a moral imperative to realise the collective will jointly with the other participants. In this way, the collective will provides unity to the whole group. The unification of the group and especially the normative element makes the members strongly

⁹⁴ Schmid, 2008.

⁹⁵ McDougall, 1920

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁹⁷ Toumela, 2013, p. 31.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

dependent on the collective will and makes them function as group members as such.⁹⁹

Vierkandt, a German author, has written a book called *Gesellschaftslehre*.¹⁰⁰ In this book, he makes a distinction between functioning as a private person and functioning as a member of the group. According to him, the members qua members are subjectively bound to the group.¹⁰¹ He makes an interesting distinction between a will that is shared and a will that is societal. He elaborates this with the help of an example of a group of people hunting for a lion. The people may aim at shooting the escaped lion together based on their personal 'affect'. Here, the object that is the lion is the same but, the subjects of willing are different even though the people may coordinate their activities to accomplish the task. He contrasts this with a case of a unit, which form their will and act on it as a group. Here, both the object and the subject (the group) are the same. Some philosophers are of the view that here Vierkandt is indicating at a intentional rather than an ontological subject.¹⁰²

From the above analysis of the historical accounts of group mind it can be understood that historically the idea of group minds was not as frivolous as it is regarded in contemporary times. With this understanding, it is important to look at some of the contemporary accounts of group minds. However, before that we must analyse why the idea of group minds is necessary for our understanding of the social phenomena.

2.2 Necessity of Group Minds

After looking at the historical discussions and analysis of the idea of group mind some obvious questions are to be raised here: if the idea of group minds was such a historically robust concept, what has led to its downswing? In other words, inspite of it being a widely discussed topic historically, what has led to its large-scale avoidance among contemporary philosophers? Is it really a redundant concept, a mere *façon de parler*, a convenient way of summarising facts about a collection of subjects who never actually meld?¹⁰³ Or, is it the case that the contemporary individualists have been deliberately negligent towards it just in order to bring home their theories? All

⁹⁹ Toumela, 2013, p. 32.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.33.

¹⁰¹ Toumela calls it a rudimentary we-mode/I-mode distinction that is evident here.

¹⁰² Toumela, 2013, p. 34.

¹⁰³ Velleman, 1997, p. 31.

these aspects shall be understood through an analysis of the necessity of the idea of group minds.

An understanding of these issues is necessary before coming down to any conclusion about the idea of group minds. Experimental evidence suggests that people readily ascribe the functional components of agency to collective entities like Facebook, but balk at the idea that groups can have phenomenally conscious mental states. Even a modest set of requirements for group agency surely includes the capacity of a group to form representations of one's environment, to entertain a variety of motivational states, and to process them such that, within feasible limits, it can act rationally.¹⁰⁴

Before starting our discussion on the efficacy of group minds, it is important to see why group mind has suddenly disappeared out of philosophical discussions. As many other debates, philosophers have divergent opinions regarding this. For example, as George Theiner says that the emergence of group minds was often expressed with biological metaphors that were borrowed from the vitalist tradition.¹⁰⁵ With the demise of vitalism, the concept of group minds or group agency was also banished from the realm of respectable scientific discourse.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, some thinkers are of the view that with the coming of the enlightenment era, philosophical discourses became more and more individual centric. This growth in individualism has led to the negligence of the issue of group minds.

With this backdrop one must understand that a general approach towards understanding the necessity of group mind is to first look at the probable reasons for avoidance of any avowal of group minds in contemporary philosophical literature and then to analyse how far do these reasons hold true as far as the evasion of group mind is concerned. One of the important reasons cited for avoiding any discussion of group minds is its violation of the principle of parsimony. This is to say that group minds violate the principle of Okham's razor.¹⁰⁷ This principle says that- entities should not

¹⁰⁴ Pettit & List, 2011.

¹⁰⁵ The vitalists believed that life is the product of a mysterious organic force (*visvitalis*) that is fundamentally different from the physiochemical principles that govern inanimate things. It declined as a result of the modern evolutionary synthesis in biology.

¹⁰⁶ Theiner, 2014, p. 302.

¹⁰⁷ Occam's (or Ockham's) razor is a principle attributed to the 14th century logician and Franciscan friar William of Ockham. This principle states that "entities should not be multiplied beyond necessity". Many scientists have adopted or reinvented Occam's Razor, as in Leibniz's "identity of

be multiplied beyond necessity. We should be parsimonious in our approach while providing an analysis of concepts or in giving their explanation. Hence, postulating any entity that is not evidently involved, in this case, any entity apart from the individuals is a violation of this principle.

Another reason cited for the dismissal of group minds is that it violates the principle of individual autonomy of the constituent members. As discussed before, Max Weber is generally regarded as the progenitor of the doctrine of methodological individualism. This doctrine talks about the subscription of a particular philosophical stance which has allegiance or commitment to the intentional autonomy of individual members.¹⁰⁸ Because of this commitment, the subscribers of methodological individualism regard individuals as the only agents of the meaningful behaviour which instantiate genuine human actions.

But, one must try to understand whether such claims are indeed valid. It has to be understood from the discussions undertaken so far that group mind as such is not a unnecessary entity. The very fact that its discussion has accompanied any discussion of the collective phenomena makes it the case that it is an important philosophical concept and should be discussed for a complete understanding of the group or collective phenomena. It cannot thus, be said to violate the principle of Ockham's razor in that regard because it is not any such concept which is unnecessarily added. It has to be explicated in complete philosophical terms to enhance our understanding of social phenomena. Moreover, with regard to the second reason provided by thinkers for avoiding group mind, philosophers like Pettit in their latest exploration have held that the acceptance of the idea of group minds does not necessarily lead to a compromise on individual autonomy of the constituent individual members. Even Schmid is of the view that such kind of apprehension for avoiding any discussion of group mind is a unjustified reason for avoiding a philosophically robust concept.

It may be mentioned that rejection of a particular concept outright is not enough ground to prove its philosophical redundancy. In order to say that group minds is redundant, one must be able to provide sufficient alternative justification why it is not needed. Interestingly the individualist does have adequate alternative

observables". The most useful statement of the principle for scientists is "when you have two competing theories that make exactly the same predictions, the simpler one is the better."

¹⁰⁸ Schmid, 2003.

philosophical resources to claim that the concept of group minds is redundant. The implied resources here refer to vast amount of literature which constantly proves that individual members and their inter personal relationships taken together can give sufficient justification for the constitution of any group or collective affair. However, the important point to be noted here is that despite all these, the individualists are not ready to discuss about the possibility question seriously. They seem to have rejected the idea of group minds in such a way that as if they do not any philosophical alternatives. But, this is not the case. As mentioned about they do have adequate resources to take care of a concept like group minds or collective minds.

One of the reasons why group minds keeps creeping up again and again in most of philosophical discussions of asocial phenomenon is the ineffectiveness of individualist accounts in capturing the essence of collectivity. Philosophers throughout history and present times have either accepted the idea of group mind or rejected it but they could not avoid it. It inevitably appears in all most all the discussions of any collective phenomena. Thus instead of brushing it aside, it is time to analyse it thoroughly with new philosophical resources. It may be noted that in recent time fair amount of work has been done in the area of cognitive science and philosophy of social sciences in this regard.

2.3 Accounts of Group Minds

In the previous sections, we have discussed certain historical accounts of group minds. All these accounts are based on the premise that groups by itself could be the centre of many things which otherwise standardly attributed to only individuals. With the advancement in our investigation, let us move forward to the next step where I shall be mainly concerned with two major contemporary accounts of group minds. The accounts that I shall consider here are of Gilbert and Pettit.

Here, I shall see how Gilbert and Pettit handle the contentious issue of group minds. What is their justification for upholding this idea? How do their accounts differ from that of methodological individualists? What is the difference between their respective positions if both are the accounts of group minds? Besides, I shall attempt to critically analyse how and on what ground Gilbert seems to be hesitant in using the term 'group minds' and prefers a specific concept called the plural subject. I shall also

try to do comparative assessment as to how Pettit overtly accepts the thesis of group minds and call groups as institutional persons.

2.3.1 Gilbert

In her analysis of plural subject, Gilbert was hesitant in compromising her original individualistic commitments.¹⁰⁹ Though the idea of plural subject seems to have worked as an alternative to the idea of group minds in Gilbert's exposition, she remains non-committal in accepting it as group minds. Like other individualist thinkers such as Searle and Bratman, she also calls her account of social phenomena essentially individualistic. In her book, *On Social Facts*, she explicitly holds that her construal of the plural subject is based on a concept of the individual that "does not require for its analysis a concept of a collectivity".¹¹⁰

Gilbert is hesitant in attributing an ontological status to the 'plural subject' that arises out of the joint commitments. She says—¹¹¹

In some places I have written that a joint commitment is the commitment of 'two or more individuals considered as a unit or whole'. I do not mean to introduce the idea of a new kind of entity, a 'unit' or 'whole'. I could as well have written 'a joint commitment is the commitment of two or more individuals considered together' which would not carry any such suggestion.

However, how far it is possible to maintain a concept like plural subjects within the bounds of individualism is a question that requires further justification. What does the 'literal formation of a subject', which she talks about, imply? How does she justify the autonomy of these two concepts? It appears that we must need to take recourse of some prominent interpretations of Gilbert's view that may have implications to these questions.

Gilbert's rendition of the plural subject created some disturbance among her contemporaries. Despite her non-acceptance of anything like a group mind, the commentators of her work hold a diverse opinion. Her construal of the plural subject came very close to something of the group minds sort. Many regard plural subject as a version of group mind only. In light of this view they raise an important question: can

¹⁰⁹ The idea of plural subjects has been discussed in section 1.2.4 of chapter 1.

¹¹⁰ Gilbert, 1989, p. 435.

¹¹¹ Gilbert, 2000, p. 34.

the plural subject be considered parallel to group minds? If yes, in what regard?

David Velleman in his seminal paper on collective intentions entitled, “How to Share an Intention” talks about the ‘literal sharing of intentions’.¹¹² He is primarily concerned about how a single token of intentions can be jointly held by some agents. He poses an important question in this regard: what is it for a group of individuals to participate in a single intention? Velleman is of the view that, all the important accounts of eminent philosophers such as Searle, Bratman, and others falter in attempting to answer this question. These accounts attempt to answer how a group of agents can share ‘individual intentions’ in such a way so as to qualify as joint or collective intentions. However, collective intentions, according to him, are not to be thought as individual intentions coordinated in order to achieve a common goal. Thereby, these accounts miss the very issue that is at stake in collective intentions.

Velleman holds that being able to settle matters is a necessary condition for intentions. This means that intentions deal with matters that are under the control of the agent. He says that intentions “are the attitudes that resolve deliberative questions, thereby settling issues that are up to you”.¹¹³ If this is accepted, what does it mean to share an intention? This seems complicated in his construal of intentions as one person’s discretionary power over a particular issue seems to exclude the discretion of the other. Sharing an intention is different from different intentions leading to the same single result. The real philosophical issue lies in sharing the discretion and not the goal.

In Velleman’s opinion, only Gilbert’s account falls in the category of sharing the discretion. In shared intending, each member of the group participates equally in forming and maintaining the intentions with full recognition of others as equal partners.¹¹⁴ With these considerations in view, Gilbert’s account of ‘plural subject’, according to Velleman, fares better than other accounts of collective intentions as it involves a literal sharing of intentions. The ‘plural subject’, according to him, is a single subject but not singular. It is not a summation of plurality of subjects. ‘Plural subject’ for him, involves the coming together of two or more subjects in such a way that they end up constituting one subject. He says that the “talk of plural subjects

¹¹² Velleman, 1997, p. 29.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 34.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

therefore sounds perilously close to talk of group minds or super agents”.¹¹⁵ Velleman holds that, in Gilbert’s analysis the action of one agent is not conditionally dependent on the other. It is, in fact, the commitment of one agent that conditionally relies on the commitment of the other. By “I will if you will”, Gilbert implies I am willing if you are willing.

A similar attempt is made by Paul Sheehy who tries to provide an explanation of Gilbert’s characterisation of groups. According to him, groups are real entities for Gilbert.¹¹⁶ Sheehy calls Gilbert a realist in the sense that she holds the groups to be objects which could not be analysed or reduced to any other description of the social world. According to him, Gilbert’s ‘groups’ are marked by two features. First, that groups are formed by individuals who share a commitment to certain ends, intentions, attitudes or actions and that commitment is common knowledge among them. Each agent is thus being committed to every other in such a way that they together as a body or unit perform a particular task. And, second, the individuals make the commitment as a unit or body or whole. These features elaborated by her are made evident by the ‘plural subject theory’.¹¹⁷

Gilbert takes plural subject and social groups to be synonymous. The examples of such social group or plural subject are family, community, states, corporations and others. Sheehy says that the ‘plural subject’ is not a mere summation of individual commitments. In fact, it is formed by “symmetrical and reciprocal commitments on the part of each to act together as a body”.¹¹⁸ In this sense, Sheehy holds that such a group can have intentions and act accordingly. It can also be regarded the subject of beliefs and desires.

Sheehy holds that Gilbert is shying away from making any ontological commitment with regard to the plural subject. However, in his opinion it is not the case that the joint commitments bind the individuals in any fashion. They have to be linked or united in a particular way.¹¹⁹ He says that the “individuals are party to a commitment to think or act not only in a way that is coincident, but in a way in

¹¹⁵ Velleman, 1997, p. 29.

¹¹⁶ Sheehy, 2002, p. 377.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 379.

¹¹⁹ Sheehy, 2002, p. 390.

which their actions and attitudes mesh as inseparable elements of a single subject”.¹²⁰ In fact, he regards the plural subject as material entities in the sense that they too are constituted of physical parts that are, one or two human bodies.

It is clear from the discussion of the above mentioned accounts that Gilbert’s notion of plural subject is another way of committing to an entity of the group mind sort. The reason for a possible avoidance of such a stance may be that any commitment to such an entity involves the charge of being ontologically extravagant. However, as Sheehy mentions that we could not involve ourselves in ‘double talk’.¹²¹ If one wants to reap the benefits of adopting a particular stance, then we have to bear the heat also that its avowal bring along. With this understanding, we shall now move to give an account of group mind as given by Pettit. It shall be interesting to see how Gilbert’s account is different from that of Pettit.

2.3.2 Pettit

Philip Pettit is an important contemporary philosopher who has contributed enormously to the field of social ontology.¹²² He has published in recent times quite a few important works related to the idea of group minds. In his analysis, Pettit is mainly concerned with small organised groups. He attempts to identify the conditions under which ‘collective intentions’ could be ascribed to such groups. Pettit aims to understand the role that collective intentions play not only in philosophical discourses but also in the legal and political field. For example, collective intentions can be of big help in trying to understand the intent of a particular constitutional provision or some law or an administrative decree in the legislature. In his landmark paper, entitled “Collective Intentions”, Pettit draws a conclusion that the collective intentions are possible only when a group works to ensure that it satisfies the discipline of reason at the collective level.¹²³ This conclusion is derived with the help of two premises. Firstly, that there can be no intentions without a minimum rationality on the part of the relevant agent and secondly that collectives can display that minimum rationality only so far as they collectivise reason.

¹²⁰ Sheehy, 2002, p.390.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Some of the major works of Pettit are—*The Common Minds* (1996); “Deliberative Democracy and the Discursive Dilemma”, (2001); “Collective Intentions” (2001); “Groups with Minds of their Own” (2004); *Group Agency: The Possibility, Design and Status of Corporate Agents*, with Christian List (2011), and so on.

¹²³ Pettit, 2001.

Intentions for Pettit are the plans that shape an agent's actions at a time and across different times.¹²⁴ The only condition for the presence of intentions in a human agent, according to him, is rationality. That is, there can be no intentions without a bare minimal rationality on the part of the agent concerned. An agent can be called rational if it can take a scroll of its surrounding environment and then act accordingly to achieve the desired goal. Intentionality has to be understood through the spectrum of rationality as the defining feature. Rationality here implies three things—consistency, closure, and completeness. To employ the discipline of reason at the collective level implies that the group must exhibit relevant forms of consistency, closure, and completeness.¹²⁵ Pettit showed that a group could attain these constraints only by collectivising reason.

In his analysis of collective intentions, Pettit also witnesses the same set of questions as are faced by other philosophers of this discipline. If groups can be said to have intentions (in the manner proved above), what could be their locus? Do they exist in minds of individual members? Or, can they be said to exist in the interrelationship between individual members? Or, do they reside in some other sort of entity, the nature of which is yet to be identified? Pettit's approach in answering this question is unique. It could be regarded as a leap towards real collectivity, a part that was missing in the previous approaches especially that of Searle, Bratman, and Tuomela and to some extent in Gilbert as well.¹²⁶

While analysing all these, Pettit raises very important question: can an integration of individuals constitute an intentional subject displaying intentional states such as desires, beliefs, intentions, and judgements, and performing the actions that such intentional states rationalise? He argues that a collectivity is necessarily an intentional subject. It exhibits the degree of coherence and constancy that is expected of any intentional subject. This he attempts to show by saying that collectivity is an integration of individuals and not a casual aggregate. It has a shared purpose and it is in pursuit of that purpose only that it forms judgments and intentions. He argues that every 'purposive group' is confronted with the discursive dilemma of a diachronic sort and it takes resort to premise-centered approach to collectivise reason. He

¹²⁴ Here, he is influenced by Bratman's *Faces of Intentions: Selected Essays on Intentions and Agency* (1999).

¹²⁵ These are the constraints of rationality that he lays down in the first section of his paper.

¹²⁶ This was discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

attempts to show that groups that collectivise reason (in forming those judgements and intentions) deserve ontological recognition as intentional and personal subjects. These subjects exhibit the rational unity associated with intentionality in the sense of being able to preserve intentional attitudes over time and to act on those attitudes.

The claim that there can be a discontinuity between the mentality of the constituent members of a collective and the collective as such is, according to Pettit, an indication that the collective is a subject in its right with a minds of its own. To prove this, he has taken help from doctrinal paradox prevalent in jurisprudence and tried to generalise it in the form of a discursive dilemma (Identified in jurisprudence by Lewis Kornhauser and Lawrence Sager).¹²⁷ This principle indicates that in integrated collectives there is likely to be a problem as to whether the group should make its judgement on a certain issue in a premise centered or conclusion-centered way. There will always be a possibility that those procedures will lead in different directions. The paradox would be made clear by the following example given by Pettit. A bench of three judges has to decide on a case whether a particular individual is liable for a wrongful act in a tort case. The individual could be considered liable if and only if two considerations obtain. Firstly, that his negligence was causally responsible for causing harm to the complainant and secondly that the defendant had a duty of care towards the complainant. The votes of the judges are as follows :

	Cause of harm?	Duty of care?	Liable
Judge 1	Yes	No	No
Judge 2	No	Yes	No
Judge 3	Yes	Yes	Yes
Majority	Yes	Yes	No

As is clear in the above example, the bench can make a decision in two possible ways. If the judges were to decide on the majority view based purely on the liability conclusion, the individual is ‘not guilty’, however according to the majority view of the two premises formed as a conjunction, the individual is found ‘guilty’. This

¹²⁷ Kornhauser and Sager, 1993.

paradox can be found whenever there are more than two judges and more than one premise, which are tied logically together by way of conjunction or disjunction.

This problem becomes graver when there is a choice between such procedures in a diachronic way that is in maintaining a consistency between the judgements over a period. Any group, according to him, could be an effective promoter of its purpose only if it maintains consistency in its judgements across time. That is, any such group should avoid repetitive revision of its past commitments and allow its present judgments to be dictated by the past, i.e., the discipline of reason has to be imposed at the collective level. As far as an integrated collectivity displays all the functional marks of an intentional subject (constancy and coherence) over a period, it can be regarded as a 'subject'.

List and Pettit, however, regard that groups are not the subjects of the usual kind. The collective does not have a memory and faculties of perception and, therefore, is a subject of an unusual kind. In the sense of being the centre of attitudes, which are discontinuous from the attitudes of the members (discursive dilemma), it is distinct from the members. However, it is also not distinct from its constituent members in the sense that it cannot exist in the absence of these members. In other words, individual intentions are not something out of which group intentions is constructed, rather they are the effects brought about by the formation of group intentions.

Pettit goes to the extent of maintaining that integrated collectives are institutional persons. He says—¹²⁸

Integrated collectives are persons in virtue of being conversable and responsible centres of judgement, intentions, and action. But they are persons of a bloodless, bounded, and crudely robotic variety.

This implies that the collectives are persons in the sense that they could be criticized and held responsible in failing to achieve consistency and rational unity in their performance but they cannot be regarded persons in strict natural sense.

¹²⁸ Pettit, 2003, p. 185.

2.4 Critical Assessment of Gilbert and Pettit

It is clear from the above discussion that both Gilbert and Pettit have tried to understand the real essence of collectivistic phenomena by attributing the collective intentional states to a minded entity over and beyond the minds of the individual members. However, it may be conceded that they face their own share of difficulties and objections. In this section, I shall attempt to look at some of the objections raised against their accounts. I shall also try to understand how far does these objections hold ground. I shall undertake this task by analysing their positions one by one. Here, I shall try to provide the critique of Gilbert's account as given by Deborah Tollefsen. I shall also look into the explanations of Pettit's account from the point of view of Hans Bernhard Schmid.

In her paper, "Collective Intentionality and the Social Sciences", Deborah Tollefsen criticises Gilbert's plural subject on ground of circularity.¹²⁹ According to her, Gilbert's concept of the plural subject, is already a part of what is to be explained i.e., the 'explanans'. It is already included in the explanatory premises. In order to instantiate her position, Tollefsen refers to a passage from Gilbert's book—¹³⁰

I do, of course, posit a mechanism for the construction of social groups (plural subjects of belief or action). And this mechanism can only work if everyone involved has a grasp of a subtle conceptual scheme, the conceptual scheme of plural subjects. Given that all have this concept, then the basic means for bringing plural subject-hood into being is at their disposal. All that anyone has to do is to openly manifest his willingness to be part of a plural subject of some particular attribute.

Taking clue from this, Tollefsen holds that Gilbert's notion of a group of individuals acting together to constitute a body is primitive. It is action guiding in the sense that it monitors the actions and thoughts of individuals in the group. It is this notion that tells the individuals about their parts in the joint action. It tells them what they are committed to doing and to do otherwise would be to disrupt the unity within the group and break their semblance of being 'one body'. Tollefsen contends that such a notion

¹²⁹ Tollefsen, 2002; Toumela, 1992.

¹³⁰ Gilbert, 1989, p. 416.

is same as the notion of a plural subject. For a collection of individuals to believe as a body or act as a body is for them to act or believe as a subject, a subject constituted by a plurality of individuals. Hence, she concludes that there is an element of circularity in Gilbert's construal of plural subject where the idea of plural subjecthood is already presupposed in the explanation of plural subject.

Gilbert, however, responds to Tollefsen's remarks in correspondence. She replies that her concept of a plural subject is a technical notion. It is not simply the notion of a subject comprised of individuals but of a subject formed on the basis of joint commitments. In this way, her analysis of plural subject does not contain the technical notion of a plural subjecthood and her analysis is not circular.¹³¹

In addition to the criticism by Tollefsen, Gilbert's account is also termed by many thinkers as limited. It is regarded as limited in the sense that it talks of a very narrow range of collective activities. It is mainly concerned with small groups of people. But, the situation in bigger organised collectives is different. How Gilbert's construal of plural subject would behave in bigger groups is beyond the understanding of some thinkers. One such criticism is put forward by Toumela. He says that Gilbert's account is limited as far as it does not seem to extend to a range of other type of groups to which the intentional idiom extends. The idea of plural subject in this regard is inadequate. According to Toumela, Gilbert in her analysis talks of only small, unstructured group like a reading club, poetry discussion group, and committees with no formal decision method. She does not deal with bigger collectives such as organizations and corporations, which according to him, are the paradigm case of attribution of intentional states to groups

In line with Gilbert, Pettit's account of group minds also has to face certain criticisms with regards to the issue of the compromising intentional autonomy constituent individuals. To the extent that he accepts a minded entity distinct and beyond the individual members it is argued that he has blatantly compromised the autonomy of the individual agents. However, Pettit refutes this criticism. He holds that his account of group minds is perfectly tenable with individualism and it does not hamper individual intentional autonomy in any way what so ever.

¹³¹ Tollefsen, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/coll-int/#SH3c>.

He says—¹³²

[...]consistently with being individualistic about the relation between human beings and the social regularities under which they operate—consistently with thinking that social regularities do not compromise individual agency—we may oppose the atomism that insists on the coherence of the solitary thinker; we may argue that individuals depend noncausally on one another for having the capacity to think.

Bernhard Schmid also holds that Pettit's construal of collective agency is perfectly compatible with individual intentional autonomy. In fact, according to him, the very idea of collective agency presupposes individual intentional autonomy. He says—¹³³

In Pettit's conception of collective agency, plural subjecthood is solidly grounded in the volitions of the participating individuals. Groups have a sort of agency of their own based on the participating individuals' insight into the problems of aggregating individual decisions to collective decisions, and on the participating individuals' choice to get their collective act together in avoiding the pitfalls of the discursive dilemma, and to act consistently and rationally as a group. Forming a collective agent does not compromise or displace, but rather presupposes individual intentional autonomy.

From the above discussions, it can be considered that there are various objections raised against the contemporary accounts of the idea of group minds. However, looking at these objections it can be said that they could not affect the forcefulness of group minds. All these objections are at a very superficial level and could not undermine the importance of the issue of group minds or the explanatory benefits that go along with the idea.

2.5 Conclusion

In continuation with the previous chapter, the journey so far has hinted the possibility of group minds. It analyzes the possibility of there being an independent entity which is above and beyond the reality of individual members. In the first part of this chapter, I looked at certain historical accounts of group minds. In the subsequent section, I discussed the necessity of group minds. Here, I addressed some of the concerns which lead to the avoidance of group minds. I also examined their inefficacy. I concluded

¹³² Pettit, 2003, p. 191.

¹³³ Schmid, 2008, p. 34.

that these constraints of individualism can not belittle the possibility of group minds. In order to substantiate this position, I examined some of the contemporary accounts of group minds particularly that of Gilbert and Pettit. My interpretation of Gilbert suggested that the acceptance of the idea of plural subject is in a way equivalent to the acceptance of group minds. I found Pettit's explanation particularly interesting because unlike Gilbert there is no philosophical ambiguity in his account. He is quite forthright in saying that group minds is real but it is ultimately dependent on the constituent members of the group concerned. However, I think Pettit needs to go one step further if he wants to see group minds as an autonomous and independent entity in the true sense of the term. But, unfortunately despite saying that groups can be said to have minds of their own autonomously, he says that they enjoy that status only in a secondary sense.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Pettit, 2003, p. 191.

Chapter 3

Group Minds and Some Other Related Issues

3.0 Introduction

What does it mean to be human? What is so unique about a human entity? How is a human entity different from other entities? These are some of the important genuine philosophical questions about the reality of human beings which have been bothering us from early ages. One of the most popular responses to these questions is that humans are entities, which have, unlike other entities, minds. Many modern philosophers are of the view that it is only the humans who can be said to have minds or brains of their own. They can be regarded as the only creatures that are endowed with highly developed mental capacities and functions, such as that of abstract thought, self-consciousness, artistic sensibilities, creative powers, and complex emotions.

In modern philosophical writings, Deścartes is often regarded as the most important figure whose prime focus was an investigation into ‘minds’ with respect to the unique character of human beings.¹³⁵ The world, according to him, could be divided into two kinds of substances– the mental and the physical or minds and the body or matter.¹³⁶ Each substance has an essential quality or a trait. This quality makes it the kind of substance that it is. The essential quality or the essence of minds is consciousness or thinking, and that of matter or body is extension. In his terminology, it is *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, respectively. Philosophy is the study of both minds and body. An individual subject is a composite entity comprising of both the mind and the body. Though Deścartes accepts two diametrically opposite substances, he attributed prime importance to minds. In fact, he justified the existence of an individual being with thinking. This is evident in his most popular philosophical expression “*Cogito ergo sum*”, which is commonly translated as “I think” (the premise) therefore, “I am/exist” (the conclusion).¹³⁷ We know our minds immediately,

¹³⁵ Descartes, 1641.

¹³⁶ Though he was not the first person to hold views about minds but his ideas have sparked philosophical debates not only in the seventeenth century but also afterwards. In a way, he could be regarded as the progenitor of the current investigations concerning ‘minds’.

¹³⁷ Descartes, 1641.

without any mediation, which is not the case with the body. Body has to be inferred indirectly from the contents of the minds.¹³⁸ Mind, in his analysis, is free, indivisible, and indestructible, unlike body. The conscious soul is somehow attached to the body and remains attached until the body dies. We inherit the body only temporally and incidentally. We are identical with our soul. Deścartes' views have opened up endless debates in this area, and his contribution as an initiator of the debate could not be overlooked.

In the contemporary times, philosophers like Searle and others maintain that the mental phenomenon forms a bridge through which we are connected with the rest of the world.¹³⁹ Most of these philosophers hold that the various operations of the minds—conscious and unconscious, free and unfree, in perception, in feelings, reflection, and memory, ultimately constitute the entity which we call human life. The questions of the nature of language and meaning, the nature of society, and the nature of knowledge are all in one way or the other special cases of the general characteristics of the minds.¹⁴⁰

In this chapter, I shall attempt to explore the various facets of the human minds. This task shall be undertaken by examining the different features of the minds. These features are those that are regarded by many as essential to the constitution of the minds. Without them, the minds could not be regarded what it is. The features that I shall take up for analysis are—self-reflexivity, *what is it like* or experientiality condition, and memory. These features are of great prominence because of their ubiquitous appeal. They are discussed not only by analytic philosophers of mind but also by phenomenologists. This makes their study more appealing.

By discussing these three features of minds, the issue that I shall be primarily concerned with in this chapter is the applicability of these features for group minds. In this regard, I shall attempt to answer some such questions as—can these features be applied to group minds in the same manner as they are applicable at the individual level? If yes, what implications would such an application have on our already established thesis of group minds? Would it strengthen the idea of group minds or

¹³⁸ For example, I do not directly perceive the book in front of me, what I perceive is only the conscious experience of the book, the 'idea' of the book. The existence of the book is inferred from the presence of the idea.

¹³⁹ Searle, 1990, p. 6.

¹⁴⁰ Kim, 1996, p. 8.

indicate its shortcomings? The task that I attempt to undertake by answering these questions becomes more important because these characteristics are the epitome of the individual minds. They are marked with first-personal characteristics such as subjectivity. It would therefore be an interesting engagement to scrutinise the reverberation of these features in a group setting.

Along with the discussion of the various features of minds, I shall also discuss an emerging and widely discussed issue in the philosophy of mind—the extended mind hypothesis. In this regard, I shall attempt to answer such questions as—what is the meaning of extended mind. How does it widen the horizon of individual minds? What can be the implications of extended minds hypothesis for the issue of group mind? Does it support the thesis of group minds in any way? All these possibilities would be examined by looking at the analysis of Deborah Tollefsen.

Hence, with the help of a host of activities—the analysis of the features of minds, their application to groups, and the explanation of extended mind hypothesis, this chapter explores a new perspective from which the group minds can be looked at. Until now, there has not been much discussion of these features of minds at the level of collective. Thus, it will give us a different viewpoint to look at the idea of the group minds.

3.1 Features of Human Mind

Philosophers hold it without much disagreement that any analysis of human minds must need to consider a few features of the status of the mental. The features that I attempt to analyse in this section have been primarily discussed by philosophers on subjective, qualitative, and first-personal basis. The aim here is not to go into the details of these issues rather to explore the modulation of these concepts for a better understanding of the mind as such.

3.1.1 Self-Reflexivity

Self-reflexivity is regarded as a unique characteristic of mind. Philosophers generally consider this as the subjective aspect of consciousness which can be understood only from the first personal point of view. Deścartes defined the very notion of thought

(pensée) in terms of reflexive consciousness or self-awareness.¹⁴¹ In the *Principles of Philosophy*, he wrote, “By the word ‘thought’ (‘pensée’) I understand all that of which we are conscious as operating in us”.¹⁴²

Later, towards the end of the 17th century, John Locke offered a more qualified claim. He says:¹⁴³

I do not say there is no soul in man because he is not sensible of it in his sleep. But I do say he cannot think at any time, waking or sleeping, without being sensible of it. Our being sensible of it is not necessary to anything but our thoughts, and to them it is and to them it always will be necessary.

Self-reflexivity implies that the same mental state is both an outer-directed awareness, that is, directed at objects other than itself and an awareness of itself.¹⁴⁴ One and the same state is intentionally directed at the outer objects and itself. It simply means that one is not only aware but also aware that one is aware.¹⁴⁵ It is being conscious of the fact that one is conscious, for example, a thought or experience can be regarded as self-reflexive if it is intrinsically about itself, if it contains a reference to or representation of itself.¹⁴⁶ Self-reflexivity is generally regarded as the personal aspect of consciousness, it is manifested always in the first-personal form.

The feature of self-reflexivity is widely discussed and elaborated by phenomenological philosophers to instantiate their explanations of the human self. Almost all the major phenomenologists such as Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre are of the opinion that there is a tacit self-consciousness involved in all our experiences.¹⁴⁷ In this regard, it would be interesting to look at their accounts more specifically.

Husserl, throughout all his major writings has been of the opinion that self-consciousness or self-awareness does not occur only under exceptional circumstances. It accompanies all forms of conscious experience. It, in fact, is the characteristic feature of subjectivity. He says: “To be a subject is to be in the mode of being aware

¹⁴¹ For an overall understanding the terms self-reflexivity, self-awareness and self-consciousness will be used interchangeably.

¹⁴² Descartes, 1644.

¹⁴³ Locke, 1689.

¹⁴⁴ The idea that conscious states involve a double intentionality goes back at least to Brentano (1874) in the 19th century.

¹⁴⁵ As Jaegwon Kim puts it, I am aware that I am in state M (M here is the mental state).

¹⁴⁶ Harman, 2006.

¹⁴⁷ Zahavi, 2005, p. 11.

of oneself".¹⁴⁸ In other words, he is of the opinion that self-reflexivity does not only occur in exceptional circumstances such as when we are attentive of our experiences. It indeed accompanies all our conscious experiences.

Heidegger, one of the finest twentieth century philosophers also maintains a similar view. Like Husserl, Heidegger also maintains that in the intentional directedness of consciousness towards the objects in the world, the self is co-disclosed. We need not reflect upon our conscious experiences to gain a reference to the self. He says: "I am always somehow acquainted with myself".¹⁴⁹ Among the phenomenological thinkers, Sartre can be regarded as one of the ardent proponents of the idea of self-reflexivity. He considered self-consciousness as a necessary condition for being conscious of something.¹⁵⁰ In fact, he goes to the extent of maintaining that it was absurd to imagine any conscious experience that was not accompanied with an awareness of itself. It is to be remembered that in the construal of self-awareness, the phenomenologists deny any form of reflective or introspective analysis. It is an intrinsic feature of the primary experience and not just an aftermath.¹⁵¹ In holding such a view, phenomenologist in a way hint towards the obligatory binding of conscious experience with first-personal accessibility.

In contemporary times, many analytic philosophers have also claimed that reflexive awareness is a central feature of conscious mental states. In line with phenomenologists, Harry Frankfurt is also of the view that self-consciousness is not the secondary consciousness that succeeds the conscious experiences. It, in fact, accompanies all forms of consciousness. To be conscious is equivalent to being self-conscious. Explaining his idea of self-consciousness, he says—¹⁵²

what would it be like to be conscious of something without being aware of this consciousness? It would mean having an experience with no awareness whatever of its occurrence. This would be, precisely, a case of unconscious experience. It appears, then, that being conscious is identical with self-consciousness. Consciousness *is* self-consciousness. The claim that waking consciousness is self-consciousness does not mean that consciousness is invariably dual in the sense that every instance of it involves both a primary awareness

¹⁴⁸ Husserl, 1893.

¹⁴⁹ Zahavi, 2005, p.12.

¹⁵⁰ Sartre, 1976.

¹⁵¹ Zahavi, 2005, p. 24.

¹⁵² Frankfurt, 1987, p. 162.

and another instance of consciousness which is some how distinct and separable from the first and which has the first as its object. That would threaten an intolerably infinite proliferation of instances of consciousness. Rather, the self consciousness in question is a sort of *immanent reflexivity* by virtue of which every instance of being conscious grasps not only that of which it is an awareness but also the awareness of it. It is like a source of light which, in addition to illuminating whatever other things fall within its scope, renders itself visible as well

Searle, on the other hand, interprets self-reflexivity with regard to the intentional contents of a mental state. This may be understood in a context when someone perceives that X only if her experience is caused in a relevant way by what makes it the case that X. The experience is a successful perception only if this condition is adequately met. He takes the “intentional content” of an experience to be its success condition, so he treats this content to be self-reflexive in nature.¹⁵³ An agent’s positive intention to X is successful only if the agent intentionally Xs, where that involves the agent’s X-ing in something like the way in which the agent intended to X. Reflection on cases suggests that, if an agent’s intention to X is a positive intention, the agent intentionally Xs only if the agent Xs because of that intention. So, the success condition associated with a positive intention to X includes that the agent Xs because of that intention—the intention leads the agent to X. And, if the intentional content of an intention is given by its success conditions, then the intentional content of an intention is self-reflexive—the intention is the intention to X in consequence of having that very intention.

From the above discussion it is some how clear that, self-reflexivity implies a first-personal accessibility to our consciousness that is not available to others. There is a ‘direct acquaintance’ first personal condition attached with the feature of self-reflexivity. Here, the experience is direct and without any mediation.

3.1.2 What is it like Condition

The expression “what is it like” was first coined by Thomas Nagel and was used in his famous paper entitled “What is it Like to be a Bat?”¹⁵⁴ This expression later on became famous in philosophical literature as the experientiality condition. The

¹⁵³ Searle, 1983.

¹⁵⁴ Nagel, 1974.

expression refers to the subjective aspect of consciousness. It is the phenomenological aspect that is experienced only by the subject itself. According to this condition, the actual character of an experience is not necessarily reflected in the physiological operations of an organism.

Nagel was of the opinion that an analysis of this subjective element of consciousness can neither be reduced to any analysis of the mental phenomenon nor can it be captured by the explaining the functional states or the intentional states of the individual or by analysing the causal role of experiences in determining human behaviour.¹⁵⁵ He holds that, if an organism has conscious experience it means there is something it is *like to be* that organism.

Nagel tries to explain his position with the help of an example of a bat. The reason he chose bats over other organisms is that their sensory apparatus and activities are very different from human species. A bat has a poor vision unlike humans. Unlike humans, it perceives the external world by sonar, detecting the reflections from objects. It is an obvious thing that this perception is quite distinct from human perception. It is not subjectively like anything we can imagine or experience. On Nagel's account, facts about *what it is like* to be a bat are subjective in the relevant sense because they can be fully understood only from the bat type point of view. Even though we have a perfect understanding of the neurophysiological makeup of the bat, one cannot grasp the essence of *what is it like* to be a bat. Any materialist, functionalist, and a neurobiological account of mind fail to recognise the subjective element envisaged here. In answering questions such as— 'what does it feel like' to be something or to be in a mental state, we are restricted by the resources of our minds.

Nagel takes qualitative consciousness in the *what is it like* sense to be philosophically and scientifically central to the idea of minds. Many regard that the existence of such feelings mark as the threshold point of being a conscious entity. If an organism lacks such a qualitative aspect, which is standardly referred to, as qualia, then it may not be regarded as an entity with proper consciousness.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Nagel, 1974, p. 435.

¹⁵⁶ Qualia is the qualitative feeling associated with any conscious experience. It is associated with all kinds of conscious states.

In line with Nagel, Australian philosopher, Frank Jackson advanced a similar kind of argument in his essay entitled *What Mary Did not Know*.¹⁵⁷ He uses his argument against the physicalist explanation of mental states.¹⁵⁸ In this essay, Jackson talks about a girl Mary who was a scientist. She was brought up in a completely black and white world. Subsequently in her life, she was brought into a coloured world. She had never seen anything coloured before that. Jackson holds that on a neurophysiological level, she had a complete understanding of the colour perceiving apparatus. She had full knowledge of the physics of light and colour spectrum.¹⁵⁹ However, despite such in-depth knowledge, there was something missing in her knowledge. This missing element, he holds, is the subjective component. She does not have an idea as to how a colour looks *like*.

Jackson is of the view that, the qualitative experience of a colour is amiss from the knowledge of Mary. It does not amount to saying that Mary lacks information about any other phenomenon. It, however, means that there is a certain first personal, subjective experience, which she has not yet had. This first personal experience cannot be captured by a third personal knowledge of functional or physiological phenomenon no matter how perfect that knowledge is.

Hence, it can be said from the above discussion that there is a constraint on what it is to possess the concept of a mental state. This constraint is that one needs to be directly acquainted with the mental state in question. Concepts of mental states are only made available to a thinker who can be acquainted with her own states. However, it is clear that the possession and use of physical concepts has no corresponding constraint.

3.1.3 Memory

There is a widely held view among the philosophers that memory determines our existence as social and moral beings.¹⁶⁰ It instantiates the claim that human species is

¹⁵⁷ Jackson, 1986.

¹⁵⁸ Physicalism is the thesis that everything is physical, or as contemporary philosophers sometimes put it, that everything supervenes on the physical. The general idea is that the nature of the actual world (i.e. the universe and everything in it) conforms to a certain condition, the condition of being physical. Of course, physicalists do not deny that the world might contain many items that at first glance do not seem physical — items of a biological, or psychological, or moral, or social nature. But, they insist nevertheless that at the end of the day such items are either physical or supervene on the physical.

¹⁵⁹ Searle, 1990.

¹⁶⁰ Memory is one of the most widely discussed concepts. It is discussed not only in western philosophical tradition but also in Indian schools of philosophical thought.

embedded in time. One common sensical view that has traditionally been endorsed by philosophers is that memory is a storehouse or a recording device. Plato, in the *Theaetetus*, claimed that the mind is analogous to a wax tablet.¹⁶¹ To perceive is to make an impression on the tablet. In this process, we get the exact image or representation of what has been perceived. Memory stores and retains the images and forgetting is a matter of losing those images. This view is upheld by a large number of philosophers in the twentieth century. This view, however, was challenged by the later thinkers.

Recent philosophers have typically imposed a tripartite division on the types of memory: habit memory, personal memory, and factual memory.¹⁶² Habit memory is memory for the sort of everyday procedures one experiences and carries out; an example would be “remembering” how to get home from market. Personal memory is memory for events that one has personally experienced; an example would be one’s witnessing the earthquake in Nepal. Finally, factual memory is memory for facts; an example would be remembering that $2 + 2 = 4$.

Many thinkers are of the view that memory significantly alters the information stored. It selectively stores information, expands the information, and also combine it with other background information adding data from the context, in which the subject later retrieves the information. Hence, memory is the capacity that enables us to remember events, retain past and present information, and reconstruct happenings especially to be used for present purposes. It encompasses many phenomena. It is closely associated with recollection

However, it must be remembered that memory not only encompasses remembering. It is also action-guiding and addresses identity issues. It plays a vital role in the discussion of personal identity as well. Continuity of experiences in the form of memory is an important part of our concept of personal identity.¹⁶³ Philosophers discussing the relation between memory and personal identity tend to focus on personal memory, while those who discuss epistemological issues tend to focus on factual memory. What makes us the same person over a period is in large

¹⁶¹ Plato, 1921.

¹⁶² Locke, 1689.

¹⁶³ This point was mainly emphasised by Locke in his discussion of Personal Identity and later reiterated by Leibnitz’s works.

part determined by our ability to produce conscious memories of the earlier conscious past experiences of our life.

In contemporary philosophical discussions, there is another functionality attributed to memory. Many philosophers regard memory as clubbed with an ability to think about future contingencies. In this way, memory could be considered as one variant of a general capacity for the constructive simulating or imagining of specific events remote from immediate circumstances.¹⁶⁴ Many philosophers regard this ability as unique to humans. Moreover, memory is at the heart of the recent works on embedded, embodied, and the extended minds. It is denoted by the term ‘external memory’ to emphasise the interplay between the internal representation and environment. This aspect of memory shall be taken up in the later section.

Thus it is evident from the above discussion that the standard understanding of memory transcends the traditional philosophical boundaries and touches upon the philosophy of social sciences, ethics, psychology, and epistemology. Taking clue from the historical importance of the feature of memory and its wide acceptance, many contemporary philosophers, especially the philosophers of mind and action, regard memory as an essential feature of the minds.

3.2 Contextualising the Features at the Group Level

After looking at these features of the minds, an important question that any inquiry of mind prompts us to raise is—how far these features are relevant at the group level? Are these features applicable to the group at all? If yes, in what way? If they cannot be applied to groups, what is so specific about them that is so individual centric? I shall attempt to address some such issues in the present section.

Self-reflexivity is one important feature of the minds that in a way excludes both the animal kingdom and human infants. In this context one may wonder whether a group be said to be conscious of the fact that it is conscious? Are groups capable of having such a consciousness that is endemic to individuals? Though nothing much has been discussed by the philosophers of minds and action with respect to these issues, it would be intriguing to analyse how philosophers would respond to these issues given the fact that groups are genuine human entities. Individualists like Searle and

¹⁶⁴ Sutton, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/memory/>.

Bratman, who have not accepted any sort of group consciousness or the existence of any mental phenomenon at the group level, would primarily be of the view that any attempt to apply such subjective feature to groups, would be absurd. Certain phenomenon cannot occur and cannot be imagined at the collective level. Self-reflexivity is one such phenomenon. Such kind of feature is very specific of the individual minds and since there is no existence of the minds at the group level, there is no possibility of the existence of any such feature at the level of the group. In other words, the individualists would perhaps vehemently reject any such applicability.

However, the philosophers with a collectivistic bent may not outright negate the possibility of applying any such feature at the group level. Instead of looking for its fervid rejection, they may look into the philosophical potentiality of such an attempt. There is no doubt to the fact that self-reflexivity is a subjective feature of the individual minds. However, the same holds true for many other features. Keeping in view the above discussion of self-reflexivity one may accept that self-reflexivity may be applied at the group level with regard to the intentions and attitudes of the constituent individual members. The concerned attitudes of the constituent individuals may be said to have a convergence point. They may be said to converge in a particular manner such that the convergence point can be interpreted in a manner of self-reflexive engagement of the constituent members of the collective. Whether and in what form that convergence takes place needs to be answered from a very sophisticated explanation of collective intentionality. One of the interesting ways to understand this convergence is, as a matter of the specific view point of the concerned group. This view point is a view point of the group in question.

The second feature of human minds that has been of our concern with regard to groups or collectives is experientiality. Our discussion in the above section shows that the experientiality is a condition which gets manifested in Nagel's *what is it like*. But, the important question here is whether this condition can be applied at the group level? Keeping in view the subjective and the first-personal element involved in the *what is it like* condition, many philosophers are of the opinion that it cannot be applied to groups. The obvious reason lies in the very individualistic makeup of this condition. The very basis of this condition is its subjective construal that cannot be captured from a third personal view. One of the major proponents of the group mind thesis, Philip Pettit also is not ready to concede any qualitative, phenomenal

dimension to collective persons. He agrees that collectives have mental states and might be ascribed subjecthood but he holds that collectives cannot have any consciousness of their own. There is no *what is it like* to be collective persons or to have the mental states generally ascribed to collectives.¹⁶⁵

However, such construal of *what is it like* condition does not imply its fervid non-applicability at the group level. We must consider the possibility of its application at the group level by virtue of being a member of the group. Being members of the same species, it is not difficult to imagine *what is it like* to be in the group, *what is it like* to intend to do something along with others. One cannot intend on behalf of others but can very well understand *what is it like*. In the course of the discussion, Nagel also leaves room for people of the same species being able to imagine the subjective point of view that the other person of the same species is in to. He says—¹⁶⁶

I am not adverting here to the alleged privacy of experience to its possessor. The point of view in question is not one accessible only to a single individual. Rather it is a type. It is often possible to take up a point of view other than one's own, so the comprehension of such facts is not limited to one's own case. There is a sense in which phenomenological facts are perfectly objective: one person can know or say of another what the quality of the other's experience is. They are subjective, however, in the sense that even this objective ascription of experience is possible only for someone sufficiently similar to the object of ascription to be able to adopt his point of view—to understand the ascription in the first person as well as in the third, so to speak

The third feature of human minds that we are concerned about is, memory. It prompts as answer to some such questions as: can the groups be construed as an entity which can possess memory in the same manner as individual agents? In other words, can we talk of something like a group memory or collective memory? Like other features of the minds, memory is also perceived from an individualistic point of view.

The issue of memory is tricky here because it is often muddled with the idea of being selective about the contents of it. Selectivity implies that one particular happening in the present time may arouse distinct remembrance in different agents.

¹⁶⁵ Schmid, 2009, p. 100.

¹⁶⁶ Nagel, 1974, p. 438.

For example, the same piece of music may arouse happiness in one person as she may remember her marriage but, lead to sadness in someone else as she may mourn the death of her beloved. In this sense, memory is viewed as private, subjective, unverified, personal, and autobiographical. The subjective personal element in memory makes it a very individualistic concept. However, when we talk of collective or group memory, we are thinking about a public, objective verified and interpersonal concept. This contrast makes the issue at stake more interesting and philosophically relevant.

It requires an in-depth philosophical investigation to go beyond the personal, subjective element in memory. What purpose would such an evaluative approach to groups serve? R. A Wilson in his famous paper, “Collective memory, Group Minds and the Extended Minds Thesis” concedes that memory has been regarded as an individual feature especially in the cognitive and biological sciences.¹⁶⁷ However, the picture is different when it comes to social sciences.

The discussion of group memory is not just limited to social sciences. In fact, historian Le Goff provided prolegomena for the history of collective memory. He discussed the ways in which the technologies of memory help in shaping the publicly shared memories such as ceremonies, cemeteries, and museums.¹⁶⁸ There have also been discussions of collective memory in the works of sociologists like Mizstal, psychologist like Wertsch and philosophers cum sociologists like Maurice Halbwachs.¹⁶⁹ Halbwachs, in particular, has been credited for initiating the entire debate surrounding collective memory. The collective memory according to him is historical and social as opposed to individual memory which is very personal.¹⁷⁰ In his view, historical memory provides the social framework, a social context in which the individual remembers the things particular to itself. Both the historical and the autobiographical memories are possessed by the individuals.

Olick in his work on collective memory talks about two cultures within sociology that invoke the idea of collective memory.¹⁷¹ One culture takes an individualistic approach and conceives of collective memory as a mere aggregation of

¹⁶⁷ Wilson, 2005.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Wilson, 2005, p. 230.

¹⁷⁰ Halbwachs, 1980.

¹⁷¹ Olick, 1999.

the memories of the individual members of the group. The second approach is a more collectivistic and holistic approach towards collective memory. It views group memories as the subject of explanation and also one that has to be invoked to explain behaviour.

David Sloan Wilson while discussing group minds hypothesis mentioned that certain activities such as decision-making, memory, and learning are better performed by groups than individuals. This is because in groups the individuals interact in a coordinated fashion.¹⁷² R.A.Wilson, maintains that there is another viewpoint, which has been missed in this construal of collective memory. This view is the social manifestation thesis and extended minds thesis. This view is placed between the individualistic and collectivistic views and it borrows elements from both the views. It is individualistic insofar as it admits that remembering as an activity is performed by the individuals. It is collectivistic because it accepts that this activity is not bound by the individuals. In this sense, it tries to investigate how the society affects the memories of the individuals by constructing traditions and conventions. Collective memory not only discusses one's personal experiences, it rather talks about our interaction with the world. In this way, it goes beyond one's personal experiences. It encompasses commemorative objects, practises, external symbols, and structures.¹⁷³

In the case of memory, the extended mind hypothesis calls for us to take what are sometimes called external storage devices, such as sketchpads or notebooks, not simply as alternatives to or complements of our internal storage devices, but as integral to our capacities to remember.

3.3 The Issue of Extended Mind

Deścartes conceive of minds as essentially immaterial, non-extended substances entirely distinct from the body. The powerful hold of Deścartes' dualistic thesis can still be felt in many corners of our contemporary intellectual development. Taking clue from Deścartes, it seems natural to conceive of mental states and activities as purely 'inner' phenomena that are intimately tied to what's going on inside the head, but only contingently related to our bodies, other people, and the world around us.

¹⁷² Wilson, 2005.

¹⁷³ The extended mind thesis would be discussed in detail in the next section.

In recent philosophical literature, there is a development of certain theoretical frameworks which aim to repudiate the Cartesian legacy, insofar as they advocate that the study of human agency, minds, and cognition as embodied, embedded, extended, and enacted phenomena. These theories in line with cognitive sciences suggest that minds is not bound by skin and bones. For the present purpose, we shall take up the ‘extended minds’ hypothesis for our analysis.

The extended minds is one of the most influential hypotheses about the nature of cognitive processes discussed in cognitive science and philosophy of minds. It was originally proposed by Andy Clark and David Chalmers in their paper, “The Extended Minds”.¹⁷⁴ This thesis has been variously defended and elaborated by a vast amount of literature in the domain. Broadly speaking this hypothesis claims that our minds are ‘hybrid’ entities dynamically assembled from continuous and dense interactions between brains, bodies, and environmental structures such as symbols, tools, artifacts, cultural practices, norms, group structures, or social institutions. In a way, the thesis breaks the hegemony of skin and the skull and sees human as the creatures ‘of the world’. In the following section, I shall first attempt to analyse the thesis of extended minds. I shall attempt to see how this thesis has been understood and interpreted in the philosophical literature. In the later course of the discussion, I shall also look into the implications of extended minds theory on the idea of group minds. The question I would ask: If we allow the assumption that mind is not in the heads by following the thesis of extended mind, can that assumption be said to have removed one of the major hurdles in accepting the idea of group minds?

The Extended minds hypothesis draws its inspiration from the dependence of human agents on environmental supports. Accepting the extended minds thesis means to hold that the mind is not physically bounded by the body, but extends into the external environment of the organism.¹⁷⁵ It advocates an externalist viewpoint about the minds. There is an extension of the cognitive process into our immediate environment. In a way, the environment constrains the development and evolution of cognition. An example of such an extension could be language. The language appears to be a central means by which cognitive processes are extended into the world. In such a scenario, the brain develops in a way that complements the external structures

¹⁷⁴ Clark and Chalmers, 1998.

¹⁷⁵ Wilson, 2005, p. 229.

and learns to play its role within a unified, densely coupled system.¹⁷⁶ The core idea here is that quite divergent elements—internal and external can be simultaneously co-opted into an integrated larger cognitive systems. The properties of such a system would be distinct from those of either inner or outer elements alone.

The extended minds hypothesis is also called ‘active externalism’.¹⁷⁷ This view holds that there are certain aspects of the environment of an individual such as computers, calculators and other artifacts with which the individual is involved in a two-way interaction. These aspects form an active part of the cognitive apparatus of the individual in the same vein as the other parts of her brain. The coupling between these aspects and the human constitute a cognitive system in its right. Thus, these external features play their constitutive role for the cognitive processes by real-time participation in the loop of agent–environment interactions.¹⁷⁸

Chalmers and Clark elucidate this with the help of the example of two persons.¹⁷⁹ Suppose, a person Suzy comes to know about a Workshop on ‘Philosophy of Minds’ at the Convention Centre at Jawaharlal Nehru University. Another person Mary also comes to know about the same event like Suzy. But, unlike Suzy, she has a mild form of Alzheimer’s disease. Suzy recalls that the University is on New Mehrauli Road, and based on her memory, she leaves her place to attend the event. Mary, on the other hand, stores all her information—numbers, names, addresses, and dates in her notebook. She carries her notebook along with her all the time. She looks into the details of the Convention Centre in her notebook to attend the workshop. Now, the question posed by Chalmers and Clark would be— what is the difference between Suzy’s use of her biological memory and Mary’s use of her notebook. Suzy’s behaviour could be explained with the help of her desire to attend the workshop and her belief that the Convention Centre is at Jawaharlal Nehru University, which is on New Mehrauli Road. In a similar manner, Mary’s behaviour could be explained with the help of same desire and belief. The only difference is that, in the latter case, the

¹⁷⁶ Clark and Chalmers, 1998.

¹⁷⁷ Tyler Burge and Hilary Putnam advocate a variety of externalism called, ‘passive externalism’ as opposed to the ‘active externalism’ advocated by Chalmers and Clark. In ‘passive externalism’ the immediate environment is passive or irrelevant. What counts is the historical environment. Active externalism of Chalmers and Clark is also discussed by Tollefsen, 2005. Hurley calls this ‘vehicle externalism’. It signifies that the vehicles of cognitive processes extend out into the external environment.

¹⁷⁸ Gangopadhyay, <http://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/beta/>.

¹⁷⁹ I shall be presenting a conceptualised version of their account.

belief is stored in the notebook as opposed to the biological memory in the previous case. Clark and Chalmers argue that the information in the notebook plays the same cognitive role for Mary as the information in Suzy's biological memory plays for her. Thus, in all relevant respects, Suzy's memory and Mary's notebook are analogous for the cognitive task of going to the Convention Centre to attend the workshop. By the application of a "parity principle", Clark and Chalmers conclude that Mary's notebook plays the same cognitive role for her cognitive tasks as does Suzy's biological memory for similar cognitive tasks. The authors explain the parity principle as follows—¹⁸⁰

Parity principle: if, as we confront some task, a part of the world functions as a process which, were it to go on in the head, we would have no hesitation in accepting it as part of the cognitive process, then that part of the world is (for that time) part of the cognitive process.

It suggests that, the artifacts such as computers, tablets, calculators, and notebooks are not just the tools for aiding the cognitive procedures. They, in fact, in certain cases are functionally parallel to mechanisms like short term and long-term memory, mental images, and mental calculations.¹⁸¹ In other words, it suggests that the aspects of individual's environment, with which individuals have a two way interaction form a part of the human cognition just like other parts of the brain.¹⁸² The intermingling between the cognitive agent and certain external feature of the environment may come to constitute an extended cognitive system, where the external environment plays the role of enabling cognitive processes.

For a non-biological candidate to be included in the coupled system, it must satisfy the following criteria—¹⁸³

1. 'The resource(s) must be available and typically invoked'. Mary always uses her notebook and carries it with her. She refers to it on a regular basis when asked questions such as "Do you know...?"

¹⁸⁰ Clark and Chalmers, 1998, p. 10.

¹⁸¹ Tollefsen, 2006, p. 141.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 142.

2. ‘That any information thus retrieved be more or less automatically endorsed. It is not always subject to scrutiny. It should be deemed as trustworthy as something retrieved clearly from biological memory’.

3. ‘Information contained in the resource should be easily accessible’.

4. Finally, to avoid some obvious objections involving readily available books and internet search engines, the information contained in these resource must have been previously endorsed by the subject. It is Mary who places the information in his notebook. Clark and Chalmers contend that if the information just appeared there then they would probably not grant it the same status as that of a belief.

Here, one must remember that the original formulation of the extended minds hypothesis can be applied to the extension of not only the cognitive processes, but also for at least some instances of mental states or the minds. For example, Clark and Chalmers argue that at least some cases of the mental state of the type “beliefs” may be constituted partly by features of the environment, when these features satisfy the above-mentioned criteria.¹⁸⁴

It is interesting to note that the extended minds hypothesis not only derives its inspiration from such areas as robotics, dynamical systems theories, and social cognition, but it is also successfully applied to these areas. Deborah Tollefsen, an eminent philosopher of social sciences, in her paper, “From Extended Minds to Group Minds”, endorses the extended minds hypothesis.¹⁸⁵ However, she remarks that the accounts of Clark and Chalmers refer to only *solipsistic system*.¹⁸⁶ This is because their account discussed the coupling between a single individual and its environment. There is no involvement of other agents.

Tollefsen explores the possibility and plausibility of collective systems by extending the extended minds hypothesis to coupled systems constituted by humans. In other words, she examines the possibility of extending minds to encompass other individuals. In order to undertake this task, she takes the help of the example given by

¹⁸⁴ Clark and Chalmers, 1998.

¹⁸⁵ Tollefsen, 2006.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

Clark and Chalmers—the example of Suzy and Mary.¹⁸⁷ As already discussed, Mary's notebook functions in the same way as her long-term memory functions and applying the parity principle it was considered a part of her minds. Tollefsen, now brings in another agent John into the picture who is married to Suzy for approximately twenty five years. John is a Philosopher and does not suffer from alzheimers. He, however, often gets lost in his work and has difficulty remembering his appointments, notebook numbers, and addresses. Suzy has a sharp mind and because both the husband wife spend a great deal of time together, Suzy provides John all the information that he needs for his work. Here, Suzy seems to serve the same purpose that Mary's notebook serves her. She is John's external memory. Now the question that can be raised here is that—does such an explanation imply the extention of John's minds into Suzy? Do John and Suzy form a coupled system, a collective system? Tollefsen answers these questions in affirmation. She says that Suzy fufills Clark and Chalmers' criteria of a coupled system in the following ways—¹⁸⁸

1. Suzy is readily available to John and he typically invokes her on a variety of daily details such as, 'Suzy, what time is my appointment with the Doctor?', 'Suzy what is the name of my technical assistant?'
2. The information that Suzy provides John is more or less automatically endorsed. In fact, John relies on Suzy even more than he trusts his biological memory. He often asks Suzy to verify things that he has biologically recalled. 'I think I have an appointment on Thursday. Is this correct?'
3. Tollefsen is of the view that since Suzy is always with John the information contained in Suzy is easy for John to access. Indeed, Suzy is much more convenient and reliable than Mary's notebook. After all, Mary needs to retrieve the note book and then locate where she has put the address. She might forget to bring her notebook or it might get washed. This is not likely to happen with Suzy. Because Suzy is an active participant in the coupled system of which she is a member her presence is more reliable than a mere artifact. A loving and committed, cognitive partner, Suzy is always there – through sickness, health, and memory loss.

¹⁸⁷ Here also I shall be providing my conceptualised version of the example.

¹⁸⁸Tollefsen, 2006, p. 143.

4. Finally, the information that is contained in Suzy is information that John previously endorsed at some time or another. Suzy is not making it up as she goes along. John is partly responsible for the storage of this information. ‘Suzy, will you reminds me that I have an appointment on Thursday at 4?’

In this way, Tollefsen argues that minds occasionally can be regarded to form collective systems that support cognitions and beliefs. Clark and Chalmers concede that the vehicle of both cognition and beliefs can on some occasions be found outside the head. Hence, it can be said that minds is sometimes outside the head because minds is where cognitions and beliefs are. If they can be located outside the head, minds can also be said to exist outside the head. Tollefsen applies the same principle to collective systems. She says that since the minds is where cognitions and beliefs are, so in the collective case also, the minds is where the collective cognitive states and collective beliefs are. It is important to note here that we get rid of one of the major motivations for the denial of the idea of group minds. If the minds and its processes are not bound by the skin then it opens up the possibility that groups could themselves form systems that can sustain cognitive properties and processes.¹⁸⁹ In this regard, she accepts that there are collective minds or group minds which can be regarded as analogous to the individual minds.¹⁹⁰

Keeping in view the above discussion, one must accept the fact that the idea of group minds is at a very nascent stage of its development. It has to be analysed and understood in different various and from various perspective to understand its fuller implications. In this regard, it must be accepted that the extended minds hypothesis provides an entirely different perspective of looking at the idea of group minds than what has been discussed so far. By asserting the idea of group minds or a collective minds, this hypothesis adds to the robustness of the idea. These kinds of endeavours are very vital for the growth of the discipline as a whole. They certainly open up new tracks for discussion of an issue which is generally considered impervious. It can not be doubted that an attempt to go beyond the individualistic construal of the minds is only the precursory steps in this direction. Infact, as already discussed there is a wide arena for the inculcation of new features into the collectivistic domain.

¹⁸⁹ Tollefsen, 2006, p. 147.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I attempted to analyse the philosophical idea of mind in the context of groups. I have examined three major features of human minds that have traditionally been recognized as influential. The rationale behind taking up these features was that they have some ubiquitous uncontroversial appeal towards the uniqueness of the idea of minds. Moreover, in this chapter I also made a modest attempt to examine the applicability of these features at the group level. The last section discussed the extended minds hypothesis which has some immediate philosophical connection to the idea of group minds. This section also paid a special emphasis on the legitimacy of this philosophical connection.

Concluding Remarks

The idea of group minds or collective minds is a philosophically intriguing idea. It has attracted the attention of philosophers from very early days. However, until very recently no systematic effort has been made by philosophers to understand the significance of this concept in the analysis of the social world. Fortunately, in recent years, works in the area of philosophy of minds and action by a particular group of Anglo-saxon philosophers has shown some interesting results in this connection. Their analysis of the thesis of collective intentionality has opened a great deal of opportunity to investigate the idea of group or collective minds. The present work is an effort to understand these attempts in concrete terms by investigating various philosophical accounts of collective intentionality. The basic philosophical question that this thesis aspired to investigate is whether our analysis of group activities or group attributes inevitably rears the idea of group minds. In other words, I tried to understand how our attempts of analysing our social world through the thesis of collective intentionality necessarily land us in the problematic of group or collective minds.

It has been realized throughout the study that whether or not our attempts are essentially intentionalistic, the fact of the matter is that, debates on the constitutive elements of our social world are mostly predicated upon the presupposition of a non-individualistic entity. We may understand such an entity in any number of ways, right from Hegelian *Geist* to group consciousness or collective consciousness. The present work has attempted to unfurl the philosophical essence of what this entity would actually look like in the context of collective intentionality. The work has also closely looked at certain fundamental features of human minds, and tried to connect them with the idea of the group minds. In this context, the work has also paid a special treatment to the much-debated thesis called extended minds thesis.

As mentioned earlier, my work has investigated the problematic of group minds within the thesis of collective intentionality. Intentionality, in my study, is considered to be the capacity of the minds to refer to objects other than itself. It is manifested in the form of beliefs, desires, fear, and intentions and the like. In the course of my investigation, I discussed four major accounts of collective intentions. The question that drove my analysis of these accounts is—whether the formation of

collective intentions necessarily indicates the requirement of an extra-rational entity, above and beyond the individual entities?

It has been shown in the course of our discussion on the positions taken by those thinkers that there is something in the group action or intentions that could not be simply captured by clubbing the constitutive elements of a collective affair. This something can be explicated further in concrete terms only when we refer to the possibility of an extra-rational entity called group minds. Interestingly, almost all the major accounts that I have considered seem to take the locus of the collective intentions to be the individual alone. This means there is nothing that we need to talk about which is over and above the constitutive individuals. This individualistic view point is manifested in different forms in most of these accounts, especially that of Searle, Bratman, and Tuomela. Nevertheless, an interesting twist has been perceived in the account of Gilbert in the form of her idea called ‘plural subjects’.

Along with the individualistic explanations, there were also voices for the literal ascription of intentional states to groups. This means that there is something like a group mind distinct from the minds of constituting individuals to which the intentional states could be attributed. The individualists obviously nipped the very idea in the bud. They reject any such possibility as an outsider which has no *locus standi* in the referred context. However, they could not satisfactorily contain this claim within the limits of a strict individualistic understanding.

It becomes apparent when the individualistic views are legitimately countered by those who have no animosity towards any non-individualistic understanding of a collective affair. These thinkers are clear in their views that without accepting some such extra-rational element we cannot claim to have touched upon the core of any collective phenomena. Any individualist explanation would be, according to these thinkers, highly superficial if they blatantly ignore such an entity just for their doctrinal constraints. Here, I discussed the accounts of two prominent advocates of group minds thesis—Gilbert and Pettit. Gilbert’s concept of plural subjects could be regarded as close to the idea of group minds. This is evident in her analysis of plural subject, pool of wills, and joint commitment. I also looked at the account of Philip Pettit. He along with Christian List has promoted a new account of group minds by showing the discontinuity between judgements of constitutive members in a given

collective and the collective as a whole. This work has paid a special attention to the analysis of their account.

After laying a firm ground for the concept of group minds and accepting its possibility within the realm of collective intentionality, I moved ahead in my analysis to further explore certain basic features of human minds with reference to groups. The features that I discussed were- self-reflexivity, *what is it like* condition, and memory. Among these conditions, self-reflexivity, and *what is it like* condition are discussed widely by phenomenologists in their approach towards human action and minds. Memory condition is one that has a long philosophical history right from Locke and other modern philosophers. Taking into account all of this, I attempted to show the reverberations of these features in the context of a group setting.

In the course of my discussion, I also discussed a prominent issue in the philosophy of mind—the extended minds hypothesis. I attempted to understand its repercussions in a group scenario with the help of the explanation given by Tollefsen. All the above steps have been taken in order to provide a robust analysis of the thesis of group minds. Though I could not provide an in-depth analysis of the idea of minds, the issues I have taken have certainly helped me contextualizing the idea of group minds in a robust form.

After investigating the above-mentioned issues and concerns, I have now come to the conclusion that the idea of group minds or collective minds is not at all redundant, as alleged by the thinkers wedded to the idea of methodological individualism. Group mind is real and it can be philosophically discerned if we give adequate explanation to the relaxed nature of the ontology of individual human beings. The most important lesson learnt in this context is that the collectivistic essence of collective intentions cannot be adequately grasped if we do not allow our explanation to incorporate a certain form of non-individualistic dependent entity.

So far as the my own position is concerned, I may refer back to the three positions I had proposed in the third section 3 of the first chapter. The first position suggested that there cannot be anything called group mind, it states that collective intentions exist in individual minds only. Group mind or collective mind is a myth. The Second position suggested the idea of group mind could be, if needed, articulated though the possibility of the conglomeration of relevant individual intentional

attitudes of the collective. But, this position maintains that group mind or collective mind is not entirely a new autonomous entity having its own *locus standi* separated from the reality of constituent individual members. So far as the third position is concerned, it says that group mind is a reality and it has an independent status of its own. In this work, I tried to roughly maintain this third position.

It must be noted that I have examined the question of group minds within the framework of individualism. I attempted to analyse why certain individualists are reluctant in accepting the possibility of group minds. It has been observed that Searle, Bratman, and others cannot give us any account of group minds. Although a similar individualistic position is also maintained by Gilbert and Pettit, their individualism is of a very different variety as compared to Searle and Bratman. As far as Gilbert is concerned, she is different from rest of the individualist thinkers because she accepts the unique idea of plural subject which is over and beyond the constituent individual members of the group. Pettit's position is also quite close to that of Gilbert. His analysis is comparable to that of Gilbert as he is also discussing the genuine possibility of group minds. In fact, it needs to be mentioned that Pettit has moved one step further in accepting the possibility of a group minds. My analysis has shown that Pettit makes a concrete move in accepting the idea of group minds which is not the case with Gilbert. But, it must be noted that Pettit's account is also within the constraints of individualism. It is evident from his statement that group mind is ultimately dependent on the individual members. In this work, I try to go along with Pettit but with certain cautionary steps. I am of the firm opinion that any account of collective phenomena must take into account an extra-rational entity as real. The reality of group mind always helps us in very many ways. Most importantly, it provides us with an enormous explanatory power in elucidating the reality of sociality. In this regard, I believe that Pettit's position needs to be emboldened even further if we want to break the barrier of individualism. However, I am reluctant to endorse a truly collective stance at this point of time. My prime interest lies in a discussion about the possibility of group minds—whether it comes through the window of individualism or collectivism is not the problem that I am concerned with in this work. If a concrete explanation of group minds comes through individualism, I have no inhibition in accepting it. However, if such a stance is not enough, I also do not have a problem in accepting a non-individualistic or collectivistic explanation.

Given the complexity of this issue, and the limited philosophical literature in the area of philosophy of minds and action, I must confess that this is just a modest attempt of understanding the idea of group minds. In no way, I am in a position to claim that the work has provided an adequate philosophical exposition of the idea of group minds. There are certain lacunas that have come to my notice, but due to certain extrinsic constrains, I could not address them satisfactorily here in my work. For example, my engagement could not address the issue of collective knowledge which has a direct conceptual connection with the idea of group minds. The issue of collective knowledge is important because it attempts to address a fundamental question as to whether groups or collective can be legitimately considered as the bearers of knowledge. While many philosophers, like Gilbert, Tollefsen, and others have claimed that groups and collectives can deservedly own genuine knowledge claims, many others believe that that is not possible.¹⁹¹ One of the most prominent contemporary theses in social epistemology suggests that groups or collectives, such as organizations, committees, schools, and communities are not only capable of beliefs but also capable to genuine knowledge claims. It holds that groups are not just producers of knowledge but they can also have the capacity to make genuine knowledge statements like individuals.¹⁹²

Another important issue that accompanies the discussion of group minds is the issue of moral responsibility. In the current analysis, however, I did not discuss this issue. The issue of responsibility raises a fundamental question of whether or not groups or collectives can legitimately be the bearers of moral responsibility. It should be, by now, clear that when we claim about the genuine possibility of group minds or collective minds, the claim with regard to the issue of groups as responsibility-owing agents is not very difficult to establish. An account of a robust collective responsibility requires the agency of the concerned collective to be equally robust. Because collective responsibility is not just a matter of collection of moral responsibility of constituent members of the collective. It is the responsibility which the collective itself bears as an autonomous entity. Now if we grant that there are collectives which can have genuine minds of their own to decide their course of action, then it is easy to understand that such collectives can legitimately be attributed

¹⁹¹ Gilbert, 1989; Tollefsen, 2004.

¹⁹² In this regard, the knowledge that is being referred to is propositional knowledge and not knowledge 'how' or knowledge by acquaintance.

substantive moral responsibility. Many philosophers have already attempted to argue for such a possibility. Philip Pettit, Virginia Held, Frank Hindriks, and many other contemporary writers have published substantial amount of work on this. However, my work has not dealt with this issue in any manner. I omitted this issue because my primary concern here was to argue for the possibility of a more basic issue, namely group minds or collective minds.

After talking of some of the missing elements in this work, perhaps it is now important to refer to another body of literature that has a unique and interesting connection with the issue of group minds. This body of literature is located mainly in one of the most prominent philosophical trend- phenomenology. Two important figures who have contributed to the issue of collective intentionality and its related issue such as group minds are—Gerda Walther and Max Scheler.¹⁹³ Walther claims that for two persons A and B to share an experience X, certain conditions have to be fulfilled i) A has to experience X, and B has to experience X, ii) A has to empathize with B's experience and vice versa, iii) A has to identify with B's experience and vice versa, and iv) there has to be mutual empathetic awareness of the other's identification. Scheler, on the other hand, holds the view that when people share an attitude, it is not the case that each participant has an attitude of his or her own, but that the intentional attitude at stake here is really one and the same, so that many minds are in a numerically identical state.

In contemporary times some of the brightest phenomenologists, such as Dan Zahavi, Kay Mathiesen, and Hans Bernard Schmid are also involved into the investigation of these issues. Zahavi's latest philosophical rendition of self and other relationship takes a special care of these issues. In one of his most recent works, *Self and Other: Exploring Subjectivity, Empathy, and Shame*, he attempts to analyse some of the important questions related to the issue of self-other relationship. He asks questions like—How do we at all come to understand others? Does empathy amount to and allow for a distinct experiential acquaintance with others, and if so, what does that tell us about the nature of selfhood and social cognition? Does a strong emphasis on the first-personal character of consciousness prohibit a satisfactory account of inter subjectivity or is the former rather a necessary requirement for the latter? Zahavi

¹⁹³ Walther, 1923; Scheler, 1954.

attempts to answer these questions by engaging with debates and findings in classical phenomenology, in philosophy of mind and in other empirical disciplines. Here, he discussed a range of diverse topics as self-consciousness, phenomenal externalism, self-recognition, theory of minds, embodied simulation, joint attention, shame, embodiment, narrativity, and expressivity. He argues that the most fundamental level of selfhood is not socially constructed and not constitutively dependent upon others but, there are dimensions of the self and types of self-experience that are other-mediated.

Another prominent phenomenologist, Kay Mathiesen, defends a collectivistic account of consciousness in her paper entitled ‘Collective Consciousness’.¹⁹⁴ Though consciousness is generally understood as a private and individual feature, Mathiesen holds that individuals can actually share in a collective consciousness by forming a collective subject of consciousness.¹⁹⁵ Mathiesen’s explanation of collective subject reminds us of the Gilbert’s idea of ‘plural subject’. However, Mathiesen’s account has phenomenological overtones. According to Mathiesen, a collective subject can be constituted by the individuals by simulating the consciousness of the collective that they form i.e., by adopting a first-personal plural perspective. The collective subject should have the features of plurality, awareness, and collectivity.¹⁹⁶ She establishes her position by rejecting three widely accepted views of collective consciousness. She holds that the collective subject of the collective consciousness is not anything like a Borg, where the individual minds are all fused into one. Moreover, it is not anything like an emergent consciousness—a second order consciousness that emerges from the interaction of conscious agents. In addition, collective consciousness is not something like a socially embedded mind where the individual consciousness is dependent on the social context. In Mathiesen’s understanding, collective consciousness is such an obvious idea that it needs no argument. It is a familiar and ubiquitous part of our world and is as common as tribes, families, clubs, churches, states, and ethnic groups.

These are some of the most recent works that have dealt with the idea of collectivity from the point of view of phenomenology. But, this work could not incorporate their findings in its analysis. However, I am of the firm opinion that any

¹⁹⁴ Mathiesen, 2005.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 235.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

detailed work, which by no means refers to the kind of work that I have completed here in the project, on the issue of collective minds or group minds must need to judiciously take into account these latest developments. The question of group minds raises some of the most complex fundamental philosophical issues. These issues cannot easily tackled only by looking at a particular trend of philosophical analysis. In order to have a holistic understanding of the genuine possibility of collective minds or group minds, we need to be philosophically sensitive about all forms of deliberations whether analytic or non-analytic.

Bibliography

Books

1. Anscombe, G. E. M. (1957/2000), *Intention*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
2. Anton, F., Hornsby, J., and Stoutland, F. (2011), *Essays On Anscombe's Intention*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
1. Augustine. (1991), *Confessions*, H. Chadwick (ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. Bhargava, R. (1992), *Individualism in Social Sciences*. Oxford: Claredon Press.
3. Bratman, M. (1999), *Faces of Intentions: Selected essays on intentions and agency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
4. Chalmers, D. (1995), *The Conscious Mind: In search of a theory of conscious experience*. New York: Oxford University Press.
5. Deścartes. (1641/1996), *Meditations on First Philosophy*, John Cottingham (trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
6. ———(1644/1983), *Principles of Philosophy*, V.R. Miller and R.P. Miller (trans.). Dordrecht: D. Reidel.
7. Gilbert, M. (1989), *On Social Facts*. London: Routledge.
8. ———(1996), *Living Together: Rationality, Sociality and Obligation*. Lanham/Boulder/New York/London: Rowman and Littlefield.
9. ———(2000), *Sociality And Responsibility*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
10. Guttenplan, S. (1996), *A Companion to the Philosophy of Minds*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
11. Halbwachs, M. (1950/1980), *The Collective Memory*, Francis J. D Jr, Vida Y.D (trans). Reprinted by Harper Colon.
12. Husserl. (1893–1917/1991), *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, John Barnett Brough (trans.). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic.
13. Kim, J. (1996), *Philosophy Of Mind*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

14. List, C. and Pettit, P. (2011), *Group Agency: The Possibility, Design, and Status of Corporate Agents*. New York: Oxford University Press.
15. Locke, J. (1689-1700/1975), *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, P. Nidditch (ed.). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
16. McDougall, W. (1920), *The Group Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
17. Miller, S. (2001), *Social Action*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
18. Pettit, P. (1996), *The Common Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
19. Plato. (1921), *Theaetetus*, H. N. Fowler, Loeb Classical Library (trans.). London: William Heineman.
20. Sartre, J. P. (1943/1976), *L'être et le néant. Paris: Tel Gallimard; Being and Nothingness*, H. E. Barnes (trans.). New York: Philosophical Library.
21. Schmid, H.B. (2009), *Plural Action*. Dordrecht: Springer.
22. Scheler, M. (1954), *The Nature of Sympathy*. London: Routledge.
23. Searle, J. (1983), *Intentionality: An Essay In The Philosophy Of Mind*. Cambridge (Cambridgeshire): Cambridge University Press.
24. ———(1990), *Mind: A Brief Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
25. ———(1995), *The Construction of Social Reality*. New York: The Free Press.
26. Simmel, G. (1971), *On Individuality And Social Forms*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
27. Toumela, R. (1995), *The Importance of Us: A Study of Basic Social Notions*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
28. ———(2007), *The Philosophy of Sociality: The Shared Point of View*. New York: Oxford University Press.
29. Wilson, R. (2004), *Boundries of the Mind: The Individual in the Fragile Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
30. Zahavi, D. (2005), *Subjectivity And Selfhood*. Cambridge. Mass.: MIT Press.
31. ———(2014), *Self and Other: Exploring Subjectivity, Empathy, and Shame*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Articles in Journals and in Edited Volumes

32. Bratman, M. (1992), "Shared Cooperative Activity". *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 101. Pp. 327-41.
33. ———(1993), "Shared Intentions". *Ethics*, Vol. 104. Pp. 97-113.
34. ———(2009), "Shared Agency". *Philosophy of the Social Sciences: Philosophical Theory and Scientific Practice*, C. Mantzavinos (ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 41–59.
35. Burge, P. (1979), "Individualism and the mental". *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. 4. Pp. 73-122.
36. Clark, A. and Chalmers, D. (1998), "The Extended Mind". *Analysis*, Vol. 58. Pp. 17-19.
37. Copp, D. (1979), "Collective Actions and Secondary Actions". *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 16. Pp. 177-186.
38. Crane, T. (1998), "Intentionality as the Mark of the Mental". *Contemporary issues in the Philosophy of Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 1-17.
39. Davidson, D. (1978), "Intending". *Essays on Actions and Events*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp.83-102.
40. Frankfurt, H. (1987/1988), "Identification and Wholeheartedness". *Responsibility, Character, and the Emotions: New Essays in Moral Psychology*, Ferdinand David Schoeman (ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
41. Gangopadhyay, N. "The Extended Mind". <http://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/beta/>.
42. Gennaro, R. J. "Consciousness". <http://www.iep.utm.edu/consciou/>.
43. Gilbert, M. (1990), "Walking Together: A Paradigmatic Social Phenomenon". *Living Together: Rationality, Sociality and Obligation*. London: Rowman and Littlefield. Pp. 177–194.
44. ———(1993), "Is an Agreement an Exchange of Promises?" *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 90. Pp. 627–649.
45. ———(1999), "Obligation and Joint Commitment". *Utilitas*, Vol. 11. Pp.143–163.
46. ———(2009), "Shared Intentions and Personal Intentions". *Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 144. Pp.167–187.
47. Gullick, R.V "Consciousness". <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consciousness/>

48. Harman, G. (2006), "Self-Reflexive Thoughts". *Philosophical Issues*, Vol. 16 (1). Pp. 334-345.
49. Held, V. (1970), "Can a Random Collection of Individuals be Responsible?" *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 67. Pp. 471–481.
50. Hindriks, F. (2008), "The Freedom of Collective Agents". *Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol. 16 (2). Pp. 165–183.
51. Hurley, S. L. (1998), "Active Perception and Vehicle Externalism". *Consciousness in Action*, Susan L. Hurley (ed.). Harvard University Press.
52. Jackson, F. (1986), "What Mary Didn't Know". *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 83. Pp. 291-295.
53. Kornhauser, L.A and Sager, L.G. (1993), "The One and the Many: Adjudication in Collegial Courts". *California Law Review*, Vol. 81. Pp. 1-59.
54. Kutz, C. (2000), "Acting together". *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 61 (1). Pp. 1-31.
55. List, C. and Pettit, P. (2006), "Group Agency and Supervenience". *Southern Journal of Philosophy* (Spindel Conference 2005), Vol. 44. Pp. 85–105.
56. Mathieson, K. (2002), "Searle, Collective Intentions and Individualism". *Social Facts and Collective Intentionality*, George Meggle (ed.). Dr. Hänsel-Hohenhausen AG, Frankfurt. Pp. 185-204.
57. ———(2005), "Collective Consciousness". *Phenomenology and Philosophy of Minds*, David Woodruff Smith & Amie L. Thomasson (ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 235-250.
58. McMohan, C. (2005), "Shared Agency and rational Cooperation". *Noûs*, Vol. 39. Pp. 284-308.
59. Meijers, A.W.M. (2003), "Can Collective Intentionality be Individualized?" *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* (Special Issue: John Searle's Ideas about Social Reality), Vol. 62. Pp. 167–183.
60. Miller, S. (2006), "Collective Moral Responsibility: An Individualist Account". *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. 8. Pp.176–193.
61. Nagel, T. (1974), "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?". *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 83 (4). Pp. 435-450.
62. Narveson, J. (2002), "Collective Responsibility". *Journal of Ethics*, Vol. 6. Pp. 179–198.

63. Olick, J. (1999), "Collective memory: the two cultures". *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 17. Pp. 333–348
64. Pettit, P. (2001a), "Deliberative Democracy and the Discursive Dilemma". *Philosophical Issues*, Vol. 11. Pp. 268-299.
65. ———(2001b), "Collective Intentions". *Intentions in Law and Philosophy*, N. Naffine, R. Owens, and J. Williams (ed.). Ashgate, Dartmouth. Pp. 241-254.
66. ———(2003), "Groups with Minds of their Own". *Socializing Metaphysics*, Frederick Schmitt (ed.). New York: Rowman and Littlefield. Pp. 167-193.
67. ———(2007), "Responsibility Incorporated". *Ethics*, Vol. 117. Pp. 171-201.
68. Pettit, P. and Schweikard, D. (2006), "Joint Actions and Group Agents". *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 36 (1). Pp. 18–39.
69. Putnam, H. (1975), "The meaning of `meaning'". *Language, Mind, and Knowledge*, K. Gunderson (ed.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
70. Quinton, A. (1975), "Social Objects". *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. 75. Pp. 67-87.
71. Roth, A.S. "Shared Agency". <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/shared-agency/>.
72. Schmid, H. B. (2003), "Can Brains In Vats Think As A Team?" *Philosophical Explorations*, Vol. 6 (3). Pp. 201-217.
73. ———(2008), "Plural Action: Concepts and Problems". *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 38 (1). Pp. 25-54
74. Searle, J. (1990), "Collective Intentions and Actions". *Intentions in Communication*, P. Cohen, J. Morgan, and M.E. Pollack (ed.). Cambridge, MA: Bradford Books, MIT Press. Pp. 90-105.
75. ———(1998), "Social Ontology and the Philosophy of Society". *Analyse und Kritik*, Vol. 20. Pp. 143–158.
76. Sheehy, P. (2002), "On Plural Subject Theory". *Journal of Social Philosophy*, Vol. 3 (3). Pp. 377-394.
77. Stoutland, F. (1997), "Why are Philosophers of Action so Anti-Social?" *Commonality and Particularity in Ethics*, L. Alanen, S. Heinämaa & T. Wallgren (ed.). New York: St. Martin's Press. Pp. 45–74.
78. Strawson, G. (2010), "Radical Self-awareness". *Self, No Self?: Perspectives From Analytical, Phenomenological, and Indian Traditions*. Mark Siderits, Evan Thompson & Dan Zahavi (ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
79. Sutton, J. "Memory". <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/memory/>

80. Theiner, G. and Wilson, R. (2013), "Group Minds". *Encyclopedia of Philosophy and the Social Sciences*, B. Kaldis (ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Pp. 401-404.
81. Theiner, G. (2014), "A Beginner's Guide to Group Minds". *New Waves in Philosophy of Mind*, J. Kallestrup and M. Sprevak (ed.). Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave: Macmillan. Pp. 301-322.
82. Tollefsen, D. (2002), "Collective intentionality and the Social Sciences". *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 32(1). Pp. 25–50.
83. ———(2004), "Collective Epistemic Agency". *Southwest Philosophy Review*, Vol. 20 (1). Pp. 55-66.
84. ———(2006), "From Extended Minds to Collective Minds". *Cognitive Systems Research*, Vol. 7. Pp. 140-150.
85. ———"Collective Intentionality". <http://www.iep.utm.edu/coll-int/>.
86. Tuomela, R. (1989), "Actions By Collectives". *Philosophical Perspectives*, Vol. 3. Pp. 471-496.
87. ———(1991), "We Will Do It: An Analysis of Group Intentions". *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 51 (2). Pp. 249–277.
88. ———(1992). "Group beliefs". *Synthese*, Vol. 91. Pp. 285–318.
89. ———(2005), "We-Intentions Revisited". *Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 125. Pp. 327–369.
90. ———(2013), "Who is Afraid of Group Agents and Group Minds?" *The Background of Social Reality*, M. Schmitz, H. B. Schmid & B. Kobow (ed.). Dordrecht: Springer. Pp. 13-35.
91. Tuomela, R. and Miller, K. (1988), "We-intentions". *Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 53 (3). Pp. 367-389.
92. Tuomela, R. and Balzer, W.(1998), "Collective Acceptance and Collective Social Notions". *Synthese*, Vol. 117 (2). Pp. 175-205.
93. Velleman, J. D. (1997), "How To Share An Intention". *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 57 (1). Pp. 29-50.
94. Wilson, R. A. (2005), "Collective Memory, Group Minds, and the Extended Minds Thesis". *Cognitive Processing*, Vol. 6 (4). Pp. 227-236.

