

Knowledge, Emotion, Value and Inner Normativity: KEVIN Probes Collective Persons

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“The whole doctrine of personalism [...] would be ultimately a matter of indifference to ethics if it did not indirectly foster the axiological prejudice [...] that the higher values attach to the persons of the higher order [...] but to man only the lowest moral values.” N. Hartmann

Introduction¹

An important claim in social ontology has it that some social units are person-like and ought to be considered as persons. Explicit claims for the personhood of social units have been made by philosophers of the early phenomenological tradition, for example Max Scheler, whose attempts to found an ethical personalism include a theory of collective persons (Scheler 1973a, 519-572). More recently, some philosophers in the analytical tradition have offered accounts of groups in terms of personal subjects. In his “Groups with Minds of their own”, Philip Pettit argues that “rational unification is a project for which persons must be taken to assume responsibility” and that, consequently, “social integrates” capable of making avowals of intentional states and acknowledging them as their own “are institutional persons, not just institutional subjects or agents”, “on a par with individual human beings” (Pettit 2003, 185, 188). The well known “plural subject” account of Margaret Gilbert takes a similar vein, suggesting that acts of “joint commitment” to being or doing F “as a body” generate *sui generis* plural subjects of intentional attitudes, states or actions F. While Gilbert does not strictly qualify plural subjects as persons, she holds that the general idea of a plural subject “goes beyond the idea of a plural subject of goal acceptance or [...] acting together” and that the first person pronoun “we” – in a non-distributive reading – is the standard form of a plural subject referring to itself (Gilbert 2006, 166). This at least suggests close vicinity to a view of the plural subject as exemplifying personhood.²

¹ I am deeply indebted to Kevin Mulligan whose extensive advice helped improve an earlier version of this paper. Knowing Kevin strongly supports my belief that the ethos of an institution, whatever it might be, is participative, i.e. non-contingently continuous with the individual ethos of its constitutive members. Thank you, Kevin, for your commitment and care!

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² Gilbert sometimes says that the social unit generated in a joint commitment might properly be called a “person”: “Quite generally, if Anne and Ben are jointly committed, they are jointly committed to doing something as a body, or if you like, as a single unit or ‘person’. Doing something as a body, in the relevant sense, is ... a matter of ‘all acting in such a way to constitute a body that does it’. Doing is here construed very broadly. People may be jointly committed to accepting (and pursuing) a certain goal as a body. They may be

Both Gilbert's and Pettit's accounts of personal plural subjects draw on certain essential features of persons, in particular the capacity to exemplify a variety of different modes of intentionality and the rational unification of the exemplified attitudes, states and acts, arguing that they apply to groups as well. Both accounts hold, in addition, that a collective person P's state or behavior F is discontinuous or only contingently continuous with the state or behavior F of any or all of P's members.³ In Gilbert's account, continuity is ruled out by the normative force of the act of joint commitment from which the plural subject of F emerges, while Pettit understands continuity as a constitutive impossibility inhering in the structure of judgment aggregation in terms of which he construes collective rationality.

Whereas the capacity of exemplifying a variety of different types of intentionality as well as the unification of exemplified attitudes, states and acts are widely acknowledged features of personhood, axiological personalism particularly emphasizes the fact that persons are first and foremost axiological beings.⁴ Persons carry specific (dis)values, persons have insight into (dis)values, persons are attached to (dis)values and persons realize (dis)values (Scheler 1973a, Hartmann 2007). This is why persons, in contrast to non-personal entities, are "beings who are interested in others" and as such interwoven into a texture of relations of "disposition, conduct and evaluation". The specific personal "attitude" is manifested in "acts of taking sides for or against" each other, e.g. acts of mutually recognizing, bearing ill-will or loving one another. It is precisely this genuine capacity of axiological attitudes and behavior that distinguishes persons from mere rational subjects and rational agents (Hartmann 2007, 321-324).

On the axiological account, the core or essence of a person is her "individual value-essence" or "ethos", i.e. a specific pattern of values the person is particularly attached to (Scheler 1973a, 489). The content of individual value-essence can be experienced as "pointing to 'me'", thus placing the person "in a *unique* position in the moral cosmos" and "calling" on her in a determinate way. Experiencing one's individual value-essence grounds the normative experience of an "individual ought", i.e. an experience "of the ought-to-be of a content, an action, a deed, or a project through *me*, and in certain cases *only* through me" (ibid.). Scheler comments that this "fundamental experience" of an inner particular normativity is the basis of "the ideas of 'calling' ('vocation'), 'mission', and 'election' for a task" (op.cit. 490, note 121), and that individual vocation obtains independently of whether "the man in whom it is embodied" falls short of responding to its call (Scheler 1954, 123). The axiological

jointly committed to believing that such-and-such as a body" (Gilbert 1999, 147, *my emphasis*). On the other hand, Gilbert uses the qualification "personal" to distinguish individual members' attitudes, states and acts from those of the "plural subject", which seems to suggest that plural subjects are not persons.

3 The discontinuity claim suggests that all predicates *F* applied to groups are per se "collective", no matter whether they are semantically collective such as *playing a symphony* or semantically distributive such as *going for a walk*. It suggests that application of a concept to a group implies the concept's inevitably falling in the scope of the operator "*cum*" or "*together*", and that this *cum*- or *together*-"modality" inhibits any distributive reference of the concept.

4 In the following, I focus on the axiological personalism developed by Max Scheler. For an overview of different strands of personalism see Bengtsson 2006.

theory of the person is intimately related to a theory of affectivity. Affective attitudes and states are essential for a person's having an individual value-essence, for her knowing values in general and her ethos in particular, and for her being motivated to realize values. Attachment to values is considered a basic affective attitude the lack of which disqualifies an x for being a person.

In the following, I shall use the acronym KEVIN for the axiological conception of persons. The letters "I N" stand for *Inner Normativity*, i.e. the function of a person's individual value-essence or ethos to motivate the attitudes and doings of its bearer. The letters "K", "E", "V" stand for the terms *Knowledge, Emotion, Values*, and summarize the general idea that knowledge of values is affective in kind, as well as the more specific idea that knowing one's ethos is feeling the values one is particularly attached to. Knowability of ethos is the condition of apprehending its normative call. Using the acronym KEVIN for the axiological conception of the person pays tribute to Kevin Mulligan, the person honored in this volume. As is well-known, Kevin Mulligan contributed in many ways to reconstructing and developing the KEVIN account of the person that was outlined by Max Scheler in his *Material Ethics of Values* and taken up by Nicolai Hartmann in his *Ethics* (Scheler 1973a [1913-16], Hartmann 2007, 2009, 2004 [1926]). A glance at *A bibliography of Kevin Mulligan's Work* (in this volume) reveals a variety of aspects under which Kevin investigates the panoply of topics involved in the KEVIN conception. The aim of my investigation here is to examine the relation between KEVIN and collective persons. To what extent does the axiological conception apply to collectives? Do groups have and experience an "individual value-essence", as well as an "individual ought" which calls them to do this or that? Can "joint commitment" account for a collective's attachment to values? Can the model of "judgment aggregation" explain the attitudinal property of a collective or group ethos?

Ethos and Vocation

The colloquial practice of referring to an "ethos" of collective entities such as nations, companies or trade unions suggests a positive answer to the question of whether institutional groups have an individual value-essence which qualifies them as persons in the axiological sense. Consider, for example, the view that identifies a group ethos with the group's "constitutive goals and values, norms, standards, beliefs, practices", which are collectively "endorsed" and ground "group reasons" (Tuomela 2007, 18, 3). This view ascribes a role to group ethos that corresponds to the function of a person's individual value-essence to ground her individual "ought-to-be" and thus to determine her course of action. It seems, however, that in spite of this analogy, attributing an ethos to groups is not sufficient to consider them as persons. Raimo Tuomela's notions of "ethos" and first-personal "we-attitudes" are neither linked with the notion of a "collective person" nor with the notion of attitudes that are discontinuous with the attitudes of individual persons. On the contrary, Tuomela defends a "membership account" of collective intentionality that explains group attitudes in terms of their members' we-attitudes and specific membership relations. This example suggests that group ethos is

very well conceivable as a property of which the individual value-essences of singular member persons are constitutive.

Partisans of axiological conceptions of the person likewise credit collectives with an ethos. Scheler reports how the ideas of an “individual ethos of a people and a nation” and of a “peculiar ‘national conscience’” were introduced by Schleiermacher, assisted by Herder and Leibniz (Scheler 1973a, 513, note 155). Moreover, he indiscriminately attributes a “system of concrete value-assessments and value-preferences” to subjects as different as “an individual, a historical era, a family, a people, a nation, or any other socio-historical group”, and refers to axiological systems of this kind as to “the ethos of any such subject” (Scheler 1973b, 98). Just like “individual value-essence”, “ethos” is intimately related to its bearer’s “innermost essence” as well as to affective attitudes: “The fundamental root of this ethos is, first, the order of love and hate” (ibid.). If “ethos” is intended as synonymous with the “inner value-essence” that determines an *x* as a person, and if ethos is exemplified by collectives, then collectives exemplifying an ethos need to be considered as persons in virtue of their ethos.

Scheler explicitly adopts this view when he outlines an account of collective persons in his “*Formalism*” (Scheler 1973a). It is, however, a theory that conceives of collective persons as bearers of attitudes that are essentially continuous with those of individual persons. On the one hand, this is due to the fact that *person* is defined as a twin-entity consisting of an “intimate” and a “social” person which are equally fundamental. In virtue of their social twin – their “social person” – individual persons unite into social units some of which display the properties of persons (e.g. nations). Accordingly, the intimate twin of a collective person – its “intimate person” – is the assembly of the social twins of the collective’s constitutive members. Individual persons’ social twins are no less constitutive of their particular personality than their intimate twins. Therefore, if their social twins unite to constitute the intimate twin of a collective person, properties relevant to their personality are necessarily contained in the collective’s properties. On the other hand, the KEVIN conception requires continuity between a collective person and individual member persons because of the constitutive role that affective attitudes play for the ethos of the person. It is very doubtful that affective and emotional attitudes, the core of a person’s ethos, entirely result from decisions. Individuals can join their wills to collectively support actions, goals and decisions that they would not perform or defend as individuals. But they can hardly join their wills to *feel* in a way that is contrary to their individual emotions. Since they cannot be implemented by committal acts, the collective affective attitudes required by the claim of a collective ethos seem to call for an account that embraces the attitudes of the individuals involved. Even if KEVIN is a conception that can allow for collective persons, it is by no means obvious that it requires them. Nicolai Hartmann, an admirer of Scheler’s personalist value ethics of which he adopts and develops large parts in his *Ethics* (1926), strongly criticizes the claim that collectives ought to be considered as persons. Acknowledging that “social units in a certain sense are also fulfillers of acts,

and that to a certain extent the carriership of ethical fulfillment inheres in them”, Hartmann nevertheless doubts “whether this fact alone is sufficient ground for attributing to them personality in the full and intensified sense” (Hartmann 2007, 335).⁵ The reason for his worry is that a collective’s executing tasks, quarreling or having debts seems to always depend on the initiative of single persons, that communal ends seem to be envisaged by individuals and that wrongdoing and guilt seem to “fall conspicuously upon them” (op. cit. 336). The worry, in other terms, concerns the question whether a collective has sufficient ontological autonomy to count as a person in her own right. And this question, in turn, emerges from the belief that the properties relevant to collective personhood are essentially continuous with the properties relevant to individual personhood, a fact that is considered to set “very definite limits [...] to the possible extension of personality” (ibid.).

Hartmann’s reluctance to attribute genuine personhood to collectives apparently derives from his view that the properties determining personhood are principally the attitudes making up one’s individual ethos. While he agrees that attitudes relevant to an ethos can aggregate to produce a collective or shared ethos, he considers attitude aggregation as a process whose result is never detached from or discontinuous with the attitudes of the individuals involved. Aggregated attitudes and acts may very well “work like a collective act of a communal person and [...] possess value and disvalue”, but this is not tantamount to their “centralization in a corporate personality”. Rather, the phenomenon of aggregated attitudes amounts to “common participation in the ethos and the ontological and ethical connection among the individual personal subjects”, and awareness of this “common possession” of ethos “subsists exclusively in the individuals, and not in the community” (op. cit. 338). The suggestion, then, is that sharing a common ethos or participating in a common ethos immediately follows from aggregating attitudes contained in the ethos of individual sharers. In other terms, ethos sharing is procedural, like the aggregating of attitudes from which a common ethos continually emerges. The primarily affective nature of the attitudes relevant to an ethos, as well as the procedural nature of sharing an ethos, gives a certain plasticity to the common ethos. If Hartmann hesitates to infer collective personhood from the existence of a collective ethos, this is apparently because he considers a collective ethos as insufficiently stable to constitute an autonomous person, or perhaps simply because he thinks that a collective ethos conceived of in terms of “shared attitudes” is a property that does not necessitate a bearer over and above the persons who bear the shared attitudes.

From what has been outlined so far, it follows that attribution of an ethos to collectives does not require us to consider them as persons. Hartmann is right to reject collective personhood on the basis of a distributive view of collective ethos. And this view, in turn, seems to be explicable in terms of the

⁵ In his writings, Hartmann uses the word “*Personalität*” for the property of being a person, which has been translated as “personality” in the English translation of the *Ethics*. Since “personality” is commonly used to refer to one’s individual person or character (in German: “*Persönlichkeit*”), I will use this term only in the latter sense and refer to the general property of being a person by the term “personhood”. Quotations from Hartmann’s *Ethics*, however, contain the term “personality” wherever the translator chose to use it.

nature of ethos constitutive attitudes. Since they are not necessarily propositional, axiological attitudes such as feeling values and value preferences are not aggregated on the model of rational aggregation of beliefs and desires. They need not, therefore, exhibit the discontinuity between collective and individual stance revealed in applications of this model (List & Pettit 2011, 42-58). Moreover, it is doubtful whether ethos relevant attitudes are suitable targets of “joint commitment”, i.e. whether persons can jointly commit to feeling value V as a body.

According to KEVIN, a person’s ethos determines his life in both a non-normative and a normative way. Non-normative determination is “mute”: it runs by way of tendencies the person simply exemplifies. Normative determination, however, “appeals to” or “calls on” the person, making her understand what she must do or avoid. The appropriate response to the call of one’s ethos is to be motivated to behave in a way that realizes the values revealed in the call. The term “vocation” denotes the specifically normative dimension of ethos, its “voice” by which it expresses what values “ought to be” for this particular person. Vocations exercise “valuational pulls”, which, in contrast to the pull exerted by role obligations and moral laws, are not experienced as external to the person, but “as implicated in the individual’s own sense of personal values” (Blum 1994, 105). Experiencing the normative power of vocation has the quality of discovering personal values that are not the “product of any self-determination” (Mulligan 2009, 148).

KEVIN is an account that not only ties the notion of “ethos” to that of the person, but also the notion of “vocation” to that of “ethos”. The axiological perspective, then, seems to require attributing vocations to any x to which an ethos is attributed, hence to any x considered as potential person. Attributing vocations to collectives is, however, not as common a linguistic practice as attributing an ethos. We rarely say now of nations, states or cultures that they have a vocation, except perhaps in the case of peoples considered to be chosen by God, or missionary communities. This fact might be explicable by a specifically anthropological feature of vocation made salient by Husserl in “*Erneuerung als individualethisches Problem*” (1924).⁶ There, Husserl distinguishes “pre-ethical” from “ethical” vocation, the former regulating a specific domain of one’s life (e.g. professional life), the latter one’s entire life. Both pre-ethical and ethical vocations are considered to determine “specifically human forms of life” for which the ability to “*survey one’s entire life as a unit and to universally value it* with regard to realities and possibilities” is constitutive (op. cit. 27, *my emphasis*).

Husserl emphasizes both an epistemic and a normative dimension of vocation when he characterizes it as “a sentiment (*Gesinnung*) of unconditional devotion to valued goals, emerging from their being unconditionally desired” (Husserl 1989, 29). On the one hand, a vocation makes the subject discover that he unconditionally desires certain value-goals, and, on the other hand, it urges him to devote his

⁶ Husserl 1989, 20-41.

life to the realization of these values. Husserl relates both these qualifications to the specifically human awareness of mortality and the limits this imposes on human projects. From this perspective, non-human beings seem to be excluded from having vocations, since gods, angels and collectives are not mortal, let alone aware of their mortality. Neither the Windsor family, nor the Vienna Philharmonics, the Swiss government, the French State nor the Palestinian people can survey the whole of their “life” as a finite whole in a way that calls for devoting it to a value that is not only “appreciated and esteemed”, but “wholeheartedly loved from the innermost center of one’s personality” (ibid.). Awareness of transience and real, foreseeable end of existence is not part of plural subjects’ worldview. They lack the sense of urgency this awareness confers to what one can achieve in life. If anybody can be literally acting *sub specie aeternitatis*, it is rather collectives than individual persons. Husserl’s account at least suggests that vocation’s “call” is unconditional not in the modal sense of impossibility of alternatives (see Williams 1981, Mulligan 2009, 146-151), but rather in the sense of urgency imposed by the human condition. Vocation’s call is unconditional because it presents the person to herself simultaneously as the only one to realize a particular pattern of values and as the one whose life is irrecoverably running out.⁷

Understanding the unconditional nature of vocation in terms of a sense of urgency grounded in awareness of one’s existential transience might indeed explain why vocation is not easily attributed to collectives. Alternatively, we might explain this fact by simply holding that the term “vocation” is out of fashion and has been replaced by the term “conscience”. Attributing a conscience to groups or collectives is a rather well established practice that is often related to their being attributed an ethos and personhood.⁸ Like vocation, conscience is typically conceptualized in terms of a “voice” whose appeal is “heard”, and it is typically considered a “*private* monitor” in the sense that its verdicts are limited to “judgments about the rightness or wrongness of the acts only of the owner of that conscience” (Ryle 1940, 31). Conscience is a self-evaluative device that arguably is not simply the mouthpiece of general moral norms or laws, but assesses its owner’s intentions and behavior on the basis of his own particular moral code. On this view, conscience exhibits the same feature of absolute particularity as vocation does, since it “represents the *individual form of the economization* of moral insight” that is “directed to the *good as such* ‘for me’”, and, consequently, “is *essentially* irreplaceable by any possible ‘norm’, ‘moral law’, etc.” (Scheler 1973a, 324). Moreover, conscience usually loudly

⁷ Hartmann expresses similar views on the essential relationship between vocation and the human condition when he characterizes man as the “appointed mediator” (“*der berufene Mittler*”) between the “realm of reality” and the “realm of the values”: Only man has the “clairaudience” (“*Hellhörigkeit*”) needed to “discern” the “calling” of values, and only man has the ability to realize their “demands”. This “*Weltberuf*” of human beings implies, on the one hand, their having the absolute “freedom of intention attached to ethos”, and, on the other hand, their being in the bonds of an “ethos of participation and attending to values” that is “akin to the ethos of love” (Hartmann 1949, 159-174).

⁸ Scheler considers the ideas of an “individual ethos of a people and a nation” and the idea of a “peculiar ‘national conscience’” as equivalent (Scheler 1973a, 513, note 155).

speaks or calls when it denounces wrongful behavior, whereas it is “quiet” when the behavior monitored is right: “When we say ‘Conscience is aroused’, we understand immediately that it is set against a certain action. [...] [I]t ‘warns’ and ‘forbids’ more than it recommends or commands” (op. cit., 322). In this respect, it is similar to vocations which typically reveal themselves negatively: this or that way of life is *not* for me (Mulligan 2005; 2009, 148).⁹ The important difference, however, is that conscience relates to moral values, whereas vocation is not so limited. A person married for many years may discover by vocation that his mate is not the right partner for him even if he is an attentive husband whose conscience need not accuse him of any wrong behavior.

In spite of being more frequently applied to groups than vocation, conscience also resists simple collectivization. This is partly due to its self-evaluative nature. If George’s conscience calls on him for having cheated in his tax declaration, both the accusing and the responding experiences of “pangs”, “stabs” or “twinges” are his. Compare this to the case of the Christian church praised by the former British Prime Minister Brown as being the “conscience of our country”. In what sense is the voice of the church, say in the form of verdicts against abortion or participation in a war, the self-assessing voice of the nation? And how must we conceive of the British nation’s experiences of “pangs”, “stabs” or “twinges” responding to this voice? Whereas the first question concerns the matter of the legitimacy of an institutional moral authority, the second question concerns the problem of how to account for experiences of institutional bodies. The answers to both these questions must invoke the nation’s attachment to a particular set of values, since the concept of conscience requires that x’s attachment to a particular set of moral values V makes both the call of x’s conscience authoritative and its manifestation felt in a specific way by x. This suggests that the church is authorized to act as the nation’s conscience to the extent that the church enforces the moral values contained in the particular set of values the nation is attached to. By the same token, the nation – because of its being attached to the values invoked in the call – will recognize the church’s call as legitimate warning against a certain way of behaving, and experience the “pangs”, “stabs” or “twinges” resulting from not complying with it. If this is right, it seems that attributing a conscience to collectives presupposes attributing an ethos to them. And if common or collective ethos resists explication in terms of joint commitment and judgment aggregation, we must expect similar difficulties for explications of collective conscience in terms of either of these models.

One such difficulty consists in determining the entitlement to represent the collective in matters of morals. Since the Christian Church is itself a collective body with a particular moral code, it seems as if the Church, in order to represent the nation’s ethos, would have to suspend the commitment to its own ethos. Otherwise, the Church would impose its own ethos on the nation, which is not consistent with the role of conscience: a conscience is “the moral voice” expressing the particular ethos of an

⁹ This is compatible with the fact that ethos reveals her “missions” to a person and that mission disclosing is often positive (e.g. “You/I must design functionally perfect buildings!”).

autonomous moral agent, but it is not a moral agent on its own. If an entity *y*, be it an individual or a collective body, takes the role of the conscience of a moral agent *x*, then *y* represents *x* and the latter's moral code. Gandhi has been called "the conscience of all mankind" because his conduct was supposed to stand for the values of mankind; Henry Hazlitt has been called "the economic conscience of our country and of our nation" because he was supposed to stand for American values of a more particular kind. If an individual's ethos is exemplary of the ethos of the collective the individual is member of, it is in virtue of this exemplariness of ethos that the member's conduct can successfully represent the collective's conscience.¹⁰ Representative exemplariness of individual ethos implies, however, that individual ethos conforms to collective ethos, and it is implausible that such conformity be a matter of mere contingency. The fact that individuals can function as a collective's conscience strongly suggests that individual axiological attitudes are in fact participative of or continuous with collective axiological attitudes.

Knowing and realizing one's ethos

It is not obvious how KEVIN fits collective persons as long as they are modeled on "joint commitment" or "judgment aggregation" accounts. Properties relevant for axiological personalism – like vocation and conscience – essentially involve valuations (*Werthaltungen*), i.e. ways of being engaged in values. Valuations include basic attachment to values, knowledge of values, and being motivated by values. Elsa, for instance, might be attached to the value of perfect musical harmony, even if she never heard an example of perfect musical harmony or else learned about it. Her attachment to this value makes her liable to be "struck" by it, i.e. to immediately know perfect musical harmony when confronted with one of its exemplifications. Elsa's axiological knowledge can take the form of *feeling* values (when she apprehends particular value qualities), or of *preferring* (when she apprehends relations of height between values). Knowing the value of perfect musical harmony she is attached to, Elsa is liable to be motivated to act in ways that will propagate the value that moves her.

Being attached to values, knowing values, and being moved by values arguably are not susceptible to being implemented by willful decision. People can jointly commit to behaving in certain ways, to upholding a maxim, to defending a proposition or to teaching the importance of a value. But they cannot jointly commit to feeling the rightfulness of an acquittal, to being attached to beauty or to being moved by kindness. To the extent that valuations display rather objectual than propositional intentionality – their objects being values, relations between them and goods – valuations also resist to being collectivized on a model that focuses on the aggregation of the propositional contents of beliefs and desires, such as the account of group intentionality developed by Christian List and Philip Pettit (LP-account) (List & Pettit 2011, 42-58). If attitudes of "group persons" are explained in terms of their

¹⁰ Collective conscience so conceived is explicable in terms of an aggregate attitude that concedes more weight to the attitudes of some particular individuals such as experts or a dictator. These cases require that constraints on aggregation functions such as anonymity and/or systematicity be relaxed (List & Pettit 2011, 42-58).

propositional content, and if basic valuations do not have propositional content, then group persons are devoid of the capacity of basic valuing. From KEVIN's perspective, however, lack of the capacity of affective engagement in values disqualifies an entity of being a person.

Since an ethos is defined in terms of a specific pattern of values a subject is particularly attached to, it is, in principle, knowable by way of feeling and preferring. Affective knowledge of the values one is attached to is the condition of vocation, i.e. the ethos' "voice", calling on the person that these values ought-to-be. If the motivational force of vocation succeeds to trigger the person's desire to realize these values, it can lead her to form the appropriate intentions. Arguably, these conative valuations or ways of engaging in values are needed to get affective motivation off the ground, even if KEVIN insists that conative directedness to values is grounded in affective valuations (Scheler 1973a, 83). Thus, a person's experiences of felt value (feeling, preferring) are understood as providing the "pictorial or meaning-component" of her characteristic striving and pursuits. This "content" determines the goal of her conations from which springs the "causality of attraction" immediately experienced in striving. Striving to realize one's ethos, then, involves being attracted or "pulled" by its vocational call the felt experience of which determines the striving's content. Simultaneously, striving is experienced as a "push", as "issuing forth" from an emotional state, their "source or mainspring" (Scheler 1973a, 344). Hence, axiological personalism claims there is a twofold dependency of conations' motivational force on affectivity: her striving requires a person to experience the (epistemic) pulling of feelings and preferences, as well as the (promoting) pushing of emotional states.

Emotional states, in this picture, appear as a person's affective reactions to her knowledge of value. By their specific quality, they establish for the person *that* the value felt *ought* or *ought not to be exemplified*. Emotional lucidity about what ought-to-be can be complete in itself, i.e. without requiring that the subject ought to do something in order to realize the value that ought to be exemplified. George's sadness about his friend's Elsa's illness reveals to him that the negative value of suffering from sickness ought not to be exemplified, yet his sadness need not reveal to him that he ought to do something about Elsa's suffering. In contrast, George's guilt about his having been nasty to Emma reveals to him that nastiness ought not to be exemplified, *and* that he ought to do something in order to realize the not-being of nastiness. George's "I am really sorry!" toward Elsa is mainly an expression of his emotion of sadness, while his "I am really sorry!" toward Emma expresses a positive action, motivated by his desire to enhance the not-being of nastiness, which in turn is triggered by his emotion of guilt which reveals to him that nastiness ought not to be exemplified. Motivation, in particular ethically relevant motivation, primarily resides in the emotional ought-(not)-to-be-exemplified reaction to felt value qualities and relations.

In contrast to the standard way of explaining action motivation in terms of desires and beliefs, the alternative proposal in terms of axiological knowledge and emotional attitudes adopted by KEVIN accommodates the requirement of desire independent reasons for ethically relevant action: in order to

help his neighbor get a fair trial, George neither needs to desire that his neighbor get a fair trial nor to believe that he can bring about a fair trial for him. If, in contrast, he does not react with indignation to the injustice of an unfair trial, he will not be motivated in an ethically relevant way to help his neighbor get a fair trial.

The fact that affective attitudes towards values can be held without an instance of striving shows that values are not simply dispositions “to be striven for or against” (Scheler 1973a, 36), even though desires and conations in general are attitudes which engage in axiological states of affairs. Yet the problem of the relations between conative and affective attitudes towards values remains a thorny one. “Do we first feel the values for which we strive”, or “do we feel them in the striving” or perhaps “after the striving, by reflecting on what is striven for” (op. cit., 35) are questions that need to be borne in mind. Consider two more examples of valuational attitudes which perhaps point to answers to them. Suppose George understands Erna’s indignation about acts of vandalism on the occasion of sports events because he feels the injustice of hooligan behavior. George’s feeling the negative value of such behavior need not be accompanied by the desire that this injustice should not exist. Perhaps he has grown so weary of vandalism that he has lost all interest in its presence or absence. Or perhaps he secretly enjoys hooligan actions as nourishing his sensationalism without experiencing, however, any tendency to hinder or promote vandalism. In contrast, George cannot desire that the injustice of vandalism ought not to exist without *feeling* this injustice. In this case, it seems plausible that affective valuation indeed is prior to conative valuation. This finding is even more compelling in cases of value preferences which reveal an order of values, and need not lead to strivings for or against one of the related values. Eva might prefer George’s beauty over Brad’s without her desiring that George’s beauty rather than Brad’s be realized, say in her husband Tim or in her son Peter, or in any other man she knows.

Aggregating Valuations

If KEVIN is right, a person is essentially constituted of an ethos consisting of particular valuations and the motivations they yield. From this axiological perspective on personhood, a group or collective, in order to count as a person, needs to be liable to exhibit the affective and conative attitudes which are constitutive of an ethos. On first glance, functionalist conceptions of persons as agents, particularly as performers of speech acts, seem to meet this requirement easily, since they usually adhere to a principle of self-ascription. According to such a principle, speech acts, in addition to their fulfilling specific illocutionary roles, are also self-ascriptions of the speaker’s underlying intentional states or attitudes (e.g. x’s declaring “p” ascribes to x the attitude of sincerely believing that p). Since companies, governments, parties and other institutional groups are undeniably suitable partners in exchanges of ordering, promising, requesting and agreeing, the principle of self-ascription seems to provide these collective subjects of speech acts at one go with the whole array of attitudes held by natural persons. This is made explicit in accounts of the “performative conception of the person”,

according to which “to function as a person is to utter words as tokens of one’s attitudes” (List & Pettit 2011, 172).

A main problem for theories that explain collective personhood on the basis of the performative conception is the disparity in accounting for performing collective speech acts and accounting for collective attitudes. Whereas the former resorts to organizational structures and norms, e.g. authority by proxy, the latter does not seem prone to this kind of explanation. The way a company organizes its procedures of decision-taking and assigns responsibilities and authorization validates the speech act of a designed spokesperson as the company’s speech act. But how could these structural features explain a correlative underlying attitude of the company? And, what is more, in what ways could such an organizational attitude be relevant to the performance of the act? List and Pettit’s performative conception of plural persons as “Groups with Minds of their Own” is an attempt to explain group personhood in terms of group attitudes, and to explain the latter as aggregates of individually held representational and motivational attitudes (op. cit. 42). The core idea of the LP-account is that collective decision processes run according to an aggregation function (e.g. majority voting) that maps a distribution of individual beliefs or desires held towards a set of propositions onto the collective attitude held towards these propositions (op. cit. 47-50). Notwithstanding the host of fascinating insights the LP-account provides, there is reason to doubt that collective decision processes really aggregate individual attitudes such as beliefs and desires. Rather, collective decision processes seem to determine, on the basis of expressions of individual negative or positive attitudes towards a proposition *p*, whether *p* or non-*p* shall have the status of a goal or directive on the collective level. Even if the attitudes of individuals towards *p* may be “regulated” by the collective decision “*p*” and eventually change, this is not necessarily the case. In principle, each and every individual is left with the attitude towards *p* they had before. The collective decision for *p* does not require an additional collective or aggregated attitude towards *p* in order for it to function.

The point can be stressed by considering the extreme case of a one-man decision “*p*” issued by a dictator or hierarchical principal of a group. On the model of an aggregation function that relaxes the anonymity condition (i.e. “all individuals are given equal rights in determining the group attitudes”, op. cit. 49), the LP-account accommodates dictatorial one-man decisions as cases of aggregated group beliefs or desires held towards *p*. These cases of a group declaring “*p*” allow that no individual, including the dictator, need to believe or desire that *p*. The obvious absence of an “aggregate attitude” towards *p* in settings like this illustrates the asymmetry between ascribing speech acts and ascribing attitudes to groups. It makes clear that group utterances “*p*”, in order to fulfill their function, need not amount to uttering words “as tokens of one’s attitudes”. Public acts of declaring “*p*” by a representative person or body do all the work needed to implement that *p* be a goal or directive for the collective. A similar point has been made by philosophers of “social acts of the mind”, even with regard to individual instances of the acts that are relevant in group contexts. In their accounts of

promising and other social acts, both Thomas Reid and Adolf Reinach untiringly emphasize the fact that what makes a promise create an obligation and a right is not dependent on the attitude taken towards its content (e.g. the intention to satisfy the content), but on the nature of the act itself and the understanding of this nature by the addressee and any other persons involved (Reid 1969; 2002, Reinach 1913). A promise properly given acquires and keeps full normative status in virtue of it being properly made: the promisor is under the obligation to perform the promised behavior independently of whether his promise is a true or false self-ascription of the intention or desire to do so.

If there is reason to doubt that propositional attitudes are aggregated in decision processes, there is even more reason to doubt that non-propositional valuations are aggregated along the lines of the LP-model. The closest we can come to real aggregation of attitudes in List & Pettit's account is what they call "group deliberation" that "may transform individual attitudes so as to make them more cohesive" (op. cit. 52). Yet group deliberation, they claim, *preceeds* aggregation of attitudes.

Margaret Gilbert's account of plural subjects constituted by way of "jointly committing to being or doing F" faces a similar problem. To be sure, Gilbert's theory does not claim that collective attitudes obtain in virtue of aggregated individual attitudes. Her "plural subject" account is an explicit alternative to explanations of collective attitudes, e.g. collective guilt feelings, in terms of aggregative accounts (Gilbert 2002, 139). The act of joint commitment that constitutes a plural subject is a conative act, "a kind of joint willing" (Gilbert 2006, 225), the normative power of which is "conditional" on the egalitarian relation of mutual reciprocity between its parties. Collective attitudes are taken to be created or generated by this kind of commissive acts. Suppose, for example, that members of a government jointly commit to apologizing for genocide atrocities perpetrated by their compatriots. By the act of jointly committing to apologizing to the victims, the government becomes the plural subject of apologizing. The one act of apology will be borne by one subject, and the apology will count as the apology of the government (or the people represented) and not as the apology of the proxy who performs the linguistic act. This is a very appealing view of what a plural subject is and can achieve. But the self-ascription thesis seems to lurk here too when Gilbert claims that a collective that apologizes or declares being guilty of having done wrong does in fact believe that it did wrong, and does in fact feel guilt for having done wrong, and, what is more, that the collective holds these attitudes independently of its members' beliefs and feelings (Gilbert 2002).

Valuations by members of the government of collective wrongdoing of their compatriots are most probably fine grained and differentiated attitudes towards this fact, in accordance with personal perspectives and personal ethos. The fact that the government decides at a certain point in history to apologize for what has been done might depend to a higher or lesser degree on these valuations, but also (and often much more) on other factors of a more pragmatic and strategical nature. There seems to be no conceptual or practical ground why the collective subject of an apology should have particular attitudes towards the fact for which it apologizes. Even less plausible is the idea that by their jointly

committing to apologizing the government members jointly commit to feeling guilt. It is unlikely that anybody can generate an appropriate feeling by a commitment to doing so. And even granted this possibility, there is no compelling ground to believe that it would enhance in any way an act of national apology.

How does axiological personalism fare with the problem of collective attitudes? How does it account for collective ethos or ethos of groups? The most important part of the answer is that a twin-person view, like the one defended by Scheler, strongly suggests an explanation of collective valuations (and attitudes in general) in terms of aggregating individual attitudes. To that extent, it is closer to the LP-account than to Gilbert's theory of joint commitment. The twin-person view contrasts, however, with the LP-account in that it tends to understand aggregated attitudes as "consensual" properties, i.e. as properties in which actual individual attitudes literally "participate". Contrary to the compromise reached in processes of collective decision-making, consensus is reached through convergence of attitudes that presupposes their being continuously transformed, for example in belief revision (Hartmann et al. 2009, 111). It is along these lines, in terms of participation and consensus, that attitude aggregation must be conceived in the framework of the twin-person view, which claims that a person's "intimate person" is given in her feelings of "*peculiar self-being*", while her "social person" is given in specific experiences of herself as bearer "of some personal membership" relation (Scheler 1973a, 561).¹¹ Membership experiences are possible on the grounds of the essentially participative capacity of "co-feeling". In addition, the mutual relation of intimate and social twin is also claimed to be "experienceable" as such within the person (op. cit. 522).¹²

At first glance, a person's ethos or individual value-essence appears to be identical with the "intimate person" that determines her absolute individuality. But on closer inspection it turns out that ethos cuts across the distinction of intimate and social person. In the axiological perspective, "person" designates what unifies intentional acts and bears a specific set of values (op. cit. 383, 100). Both intentional acts and "values of the person" exhibit the distinction between "social" and "non-social" (op. cit. 519ff, 566). Accordingly, the part of the person that is a unity of social acts and values is the social person, whereas the one that is a unity of non-social acts and values is the intimate person. One's social person

11 The intimate person is incommunicable and non shareable, i.e. absolutely alone, and this "absolute solitude [...] expresses an *indestructible (unaufhebbare)* essential relation of a negative kind among finite persons" (op. cit. 562). The genuine separateness of persons encompasses the aspects of essential *individuality* on the one hand and of absolute *privacy* on the other hand. "Even in our greatest intimacy" with another person, "we know a priori" of the absolute privacy of her intimate person "both that it necessarily exists and that it must remain absolutely inaccessible to any sort of community of experience. The realization that as finite beings we can never see right into one another's hearts [...] is given as an essential feature in all experience of fellow-feeling (not excluding spontaneous love)" (Scheler 1954, 66).

12 Scheler uses alternatively the notions "social person" and "collective person" to designate the non intimate twin of a full person. Since the latter expression is also used to denote personal social units, I suggest using "*social person*" exclusively to denote the twin aspect of being the unified *center of social acts*, and "*collective person*" to denote *social units* having the status of persons.

is the subject-center of one's acts of promising, ordering, respecting or loving, and the bearer of one's values of dignity, honor, or trustworthiness, while one's intimate person is the subject-center of one's acts of judging, perceiving, willing, and the bearer of one's values of charm, courage and laziness.¹³

Apprehension of non-personal values plausibly is a matter of acts, functions and feelings of non-social intentionality, while apprehension of personal values is social when it aims at personal "values of the other" (*Fremdwerte*) and non-social when it aims at personal "values of oneself" (*Eigenwerte*). Thus, the intimate twin of George may ponder over his lack of courage while his social twin appreciates Mary's creativeness. George's individual value-essence or ethos, the pattern of values he is particularly attached to and tends to realize, apparently contains social values as well as personal values not exemplified by him. His ethos, then, is the ethos of the entire individual-*cum*-social person in that it determines George in both his intimate and his social being.

Due to the essence of social acts, i.e. their "intention toward a possible community" and consequent "fulfillment" in a community (op. cit. 519ff), shared performances of social acts constitute the new individual of a real community. Acts such as George's appreciation of Mary's creativeness and Mary's understanding and emotional responding to this appreciation co-constitute the life-community of their marriage. According to Scheler's personalism, actual social units of certain types are themselves persons, called "collective persons", whereas others are not. One of the criteria given for the personhood of collectives is the nature of the core values that a type of social unit exemplifies. "Society", for example, as opposed to community, exemplifies utility and the agreeable. Since both these values are essentially values of non-persons, society cannot be a collective person. Nations and cultures, on the other hand, are types of social units that exemplify spiritual values, i.e. values of the person such as honor, dignity or holiness (op. cit. 519-572). Therefore, nations and cultures are collective persons.

In spite of its bizarreness, Scheler's theory of collective persons underscores that if such entities exist, they must exist as the totality of "various centers of experiencing" co-responsibility and co-feeling (op. cit. 520). These "centers" of experiencing essentially participative attitudes – or "social affections" in the terms of Reid – are the individual member persons of the social unit in question. Collective valuations (and collective attitudes in general) obtain only as aggregates of shared actual attitudes of individuals, who in turn can then be said to participate in the collective ethos constituted

¹³ Scheler's account of the social person is not consistent. On the one hand, the social person is defined in terms of being the author of social acts, on the other hand we read that "the social person first appears as the *bearer* of a peculiar group of *values*" (Scheler 1973a, 566), whereby "values of the person" are not identical with "values of acts" (op. cit. 101). Given that the person "exists solely in the pursuance of his acts" (op. cit. 25), values of acts must, however, be intimately related to values of the person. One such intimate relation is manifest in the fact that the values of the social person "exact" and require specific acts of recognition, esteem, praise, etc.", to the extent that the degree of violation of honor, for example, "is determined by the absence of the social acts" correlative to honor, and not by the "social consequences" that violations of her honor have for the person, nor "by the degree to which one 'feels' one's honor violated" (op. cit. 566).

by their shared attitudes. In fact, this conception of aggregating attitudes seems close to the conception of consensus developed by Keith Lehrer and Carl Wagner. Their theory emphasizes that consensus needs to accommodate not only all individual assessments of the issue at stake, but also all mutual assignments of individual trustworthiness and competence. Accordingly, a crucial element of the consensus theory is to account for the weight of “respect” that the parties aiming at consensus mutually assign to each other (Lehrer 2001, Lehrer & Wagner 1980). The interest of consensus theory to systematically integrate mutual assessments of personal weights or values makes it a promising model of how individual valuations might aggregate into collective ethos.

Should KEVIN recognize collective persons?

The existence of collective persons is not, it may seem, required by assumptions of the axiological personalism KEVIN stands for. If Hartmann, a convinced KEVINist, is right, then collective personalism is entirely built upon the biased heritage of a rationalism which is disposed “wherever there is a gradation of advancement of form towards cosmic extent not only to transfer subconsciously the attributes of the lower of the only given grades to the higher and more comprehensive, but also to magnify them to a proportionately higher degree”. This bias leads the rationalist to make the false assertion that collective units must be “persons of a higher potency” because they have some analogies to individual persons (Hartmann 2007, 341). If Hartmann is right, then KEVIN can dispense with collective persons.

In particular, KEVIN should not recognize LP-“count-as-persons” of a “bloodless, bounded, and crudely robotic” kind who “are not centers of perception or memory or sentience, or even of degrees of belief and desire” (Pettit 2003, 188). In spite of their being “conversable”, these emotionless “pachydermic and inflexible” creatures respond and reason in a painstakingly tortuous fashion. They “have only a limited range of rights” that leaves no room for “the right not to be owned by others” (List & Pettit, 176, 180f). We understand why KEVIN cannot recognize these disconcerting beings as persons.

If KEVIN recognizes collective persons, then it will be in virtue of their being capable of valuation and their exemplification of axiological properties that are essential for persons. Collective axiological properties can obtain as the results of valuations and axiological properties of individuals that aggregate in the way of consensual properties.

Will KEVIN dispense with collective persons? Will KEVIN recognize collective persons?

It’s entirely up to Kevin.

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