

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY AND
PRE-REFLECTIVE SELF-AWARENESS

KOLEKTIVNA ODGOVORNOST
I PREREFLEKSIVNA SAMOSVEST

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Collective Responsibilities of Random Collections Seminar with Hans Bernhard Schmid

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Hans Bernhard Schmid

Holding Random Collections Collectively Responsible – an Introduction¹

Let me start by stating the main claim I would like to discuss today. There are circumstances under which we are *collectively* responsible even if we are not an organized group. The responsibility in question is for failing to act *jointly*. Sometimes it is true of us, *collectively rather than distributively*, that we are responsible for failing to act jointly, even if we are just a random collection, so that there is no sense in which we already are a proper team. This responsibility is collective rather than distributive because the responsibility is *ours* in a way that cannot be reduced to some structure of responsibility that *each of us* has. If we are collectively responsible for failing to act, some or perhaps even all of us will also be personally responsible for not doing what they, individually, should have done. But it is not the case that our responsibility is “nothing but” this distribution of personal responsibility, and it is possible that *we* are collectively responsible even though *you* (one of us) – are not personally blameworthy in any sense.

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So far, my claim – controversial as it is – may not seem entirely original to those of you who are familiar with the current literature on the topic – it has been made by others. My distinctive contribution is, first, in the way I specify the *conditions* of collective responsibilities of random collections, and,

¹ The following text is largely based on a transcript of the introduction to the seminar on collective responsibility of random collections, given at the Institute of Philosophy and Social Theory of the University of Belgrade on October 2, 2017. The revisions aim at preserving the colloquial form of the original presentation as far as possible. For a more thorough presentation of the line of argument, and for the relevant references to the literature, cf. my “Collective Responsibility of Random Collections”, forthcoming in the *Journal of Social Philosophy*.

I am particularly grateful to Rastko Jovanov and Petar Bojanić, and I wish to thank all of the participants for their very valuable contributions.

second, in the way I relate it to collective agency. To put the first point very briefly (and for the special case of retrospective responsibility for failures to act), I argue that random collections are collectively responsible if at the time, they should have *known* what they should be doing. The knowledge in question includes *plural pre-reflective self-awareness*. Only random collections that should know of *themselves, in the right way*, that they should act, can be collectively blamed for failing to act if they fail to act (I am heavily relying on my previous work on plural self-awareness and groundless group self-knowledge here). Secondly, I differ from similar views in the current literature in that I argue that under these conditions, the random collections in question are in fact (non-organized) group agents.

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Before presenting the barebones of some of my arguments for this view (for a fuller account, see my “Collective Responsibilities of Random Collections – Plural Pre-Reflective Self-Knowledge among Strangers”, forthcoming in the *Journal of Social Philosophy*), let me say a word on the relevance of the topic. Why should you care about this issue at all? Perhaps the idea of collective responsibility does not seem appealing to you – why not say that all responsibility is individual, rather than invoking some mysterious “collective” for the role of the blameworthy agent? If this is your worry, my punchline to defend the basic idea of collective responsibility would be something like this: in order to determine the personal responsibility of individuals, it is often important to understand the responsibility of the organizations within which they act. Blaming, in the right way, the officials of the fire department for their individual failures does not contradict but indeed *presupposes* an understanding of how the fire department, as a collective, failed to act. Looked at in this way, the idea of collective responsibility does not look threatening to, but appears as rather supportive of the aim of determining individual responsibility. But now you might ask: Why isn’t it enough to discuss the collective responsibility of organized group agents or corporate agents such as the fire department? Why should we take it to random collections of individuals, too?

Most everybody in the current debate seems to agree that there is such a thing as the responsibility of proper, organized group agents, and that it is an important topic. There is a rapidly growing literature on how exactly group agents need to be organized, how exactly they are, or can be, responsible, and how this entails or constitutes individual responsibility. The responsibility of random collections is less discussed in the current literature, but here are two claims which, if they are true, suggest that it is more important. The first claim: We can understand the kind of responsibility that organized group agents or corporate agents have only once we have understood what it means to *share* responsibility, even in such cases in which we are randomly collected (for those among you who know Christian List’s and

Philip Pettit's seminal book on Group Agency, I suggest to read the concluding chapter 9 as showing that for group agents to exist as organized units, the members need to be plurally pre-reflectively self-aware of what they are doing together in exactly the sense that makes them, collectively, a suitable target for blame if they fail to organize themselves in a consistent way; it is thus in virtue of the collective responsibility of the collection of members rather than in virtue of their organizational structure that group agents can be collectively responsible). A second argument for the relevance of the topic goes far beyond the current debate on group agency and collective responsibility. I'm not sure I mention this in the paper, but there is a way of putting the relevance of the topic which is nothing other than the state of nature in classical political philosophy: there are several individuals, there is something they should be doing which they know they can only do together, and the individuals are not an organized team. The assumption is there's a bunch of individuals, and there's something they ought to do, they ought to be doing together. The bunch of individuals is not yet the society, is not yet the social integrate, it's just a bunch of people, a random collection, and yet there's something they ought to be doing together. If this is correct, if this is indeed a scenario in which the random collection is collectively responsible, I would say that, in a sense, what we are talking about here is the most basic issue in political philosophy: Understanding the responsibility of this random collection is understanding a sort of responsibility that is not just individuals' responsibility, and not just some corporation's either, but rather a kind of responsibility that is somehow shared among many: many people, *one* responsibility.

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The paradigm case – literally the paradigm in recent research on the responsibility of random collections – is from a 1970 paper by Virginia Held: there is a bully abusing a victim in a subway car. There are passengers A, B, and C with the bully and his victim in the car. No fellow passenger could stop the abuse alone, and would put his or her own health in danger if he or she tried. But they could stop it by acting together. No joint action ensues. Whom should we hold responsible here?

The basic question in the literature is this: shall we go distributive, or shall we hold the random collection responsible collectively? There seems to be a dilemma because both routes seem to be mutually exclusive (the collective reading will entail some distribution of individual responsibility, but is not reducible to it, so either there *is* collective responsibility involved, or there is not), and there is something to say in favor of – as well as apparently strong argument against – each of the two ways.

The individualist view is that when a random collection is responsible, the responsibility is really had by most or each of the relevant individuals,

distributively. This is nice because in this situation, there is no group to blame, but just individuals. The problem is: no individual is to be blamed for not intervening, because *ex hypothesi*, no individual is morally obliged to intervene. If no one is to be blamed, it does not seem to make much sense to say that all or most of them are to be blamed. The obvious individualist move (suggested by Held in her paper) is to move to what has come to be called *collectivization duty* in the recent debate. The view is that while the blame for failing to intervene cannot be distributed, the failure for mobilizing each other, and making it the case that they, together, act, can. To hold Held's random collection of A, B, and C responsible is not to blame A, B, and C, severally, for not intervening, but rather, to blame each of them (perhaps to different degrees) for not making it the case that they, together, intervene.

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There are several problems with this view – one which I mention in the text is with Held's aim of reading this as an account of the responsibility of the *random collection*, which raises interesting issues concerning the hypothetical case of A, who does her best to mobilize the others. But the most obvious issue of this account is a different one, and it is that it leaves a *responsibility gap*: it assigns responsibility to people for not making it the case that they, together, act, but it simply cannot account for the real moral issue: it cannot assign responsibility for *their failure to act* (my paper explores the difference between responsibility to make it the case that somebody [perhaps oneself] acts and responsibility for not acting a bit deeper).

This is perhaps the strongest argument for choosing the collectivist view: In order to close the responsibility gap, we need to see the responsibility involved in this case as involving a strong *collective* element. While it remains true that the case involves some distribution of individual responsibility for not making it the case that they act, it is important to see that the responsibility for *not acting* is theirs, collectively. In order to see how exactly they failed, we cannot focus on what each of them did, severally, alone; we have to see them, together, as failing to do what they, together, should have done, and that is how we should blame them: not just distributively, but collectively, too.

And yet, the problem with this account seems obvious. *Who* are we blaming in addressing a random collection collectively? It seems that there is simply *nobody there*. A random collection cannot, it seems, be responsible, because it doesn't even exist as an agent. How can something that's not even an agent be responsible? My understanding of responsibility is that responsibility is conceptually tied to blame (in the core sense of the term). Wherever there is backwards-looking responsibility for failing to act, there's got to be somebody who can be blamed for not having lived up to his or her responsibility. I don't think it makes sense to speak of this sort of responsibility where there is no blame. Blame is of people for their actions or inaction, blame is

an activity and a reactive attitude, and it targets agents with a focus on what they do or fail to do. However, a random collection is not, it seems, an agent. The practice of blaming may make perfect sense concerning a proper group agent: You call up an office and let them know what you think about what they do or fail to do, but a random collection doesn't have a phone number, doesn't have a representative, there's simply nobody there you can blame, or so it seems.

That's the problem with the collective reading, and it seems to leave us with a dilemma: there are two mutually exclusive views, neither of which seems satisfying or even acceptable.

As announced, I will be defending the collective reading, or, more precisely, a sort of collective reading. My account differs from Sara Chant's solution. Chant basically says that in some cases, the reasons for a collective reading are overwhelming, and that we have got to bite the bullet in those cases and simply accept that there are random collections that are collectively responsible and yet not an agent. This leaves us with the problem of conceiving of a sort of responsibility that is not tied to the practice of blame in a meaningful way. I think we need not go down this route, and that the feeling that there is nobody there on whom we could blame collective guilt is simply due to a misconception of plural agency. If we recognize what it really means for a plurality of people to be jointly active, we will see that it is already there in some random collections, even if it has not resulted yet in a suitable organizational structure. What we need to do is understand joint agency more deeply. It will solve the dilemma. That's why I introduce the idea which has been closest to my heart in my thinking on collective intentionality and joint action for a long time, and that I have been defending for more than a decade now to this particular debate: The idea is that in order to understand how people can share intentional attitudes, we have to account for the participants as a plural subject, and the way in which people are plural subjects is in terms of their being plurally pre-reflectively self-aware of themselves as a plural subject. This is the the account that I'm looking forward to presenting to you in more detail tomorrow.²

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For now, let me just give a brief account on how I introduce the idea to the context of the debate on responsibility. My point of departure are Virginia Held's remarks on the epistemic conditions of responsibility. Clearly, in order to blame somebody for an omission of his or hers in the responsibility-targeting way at stake here, it has to be the case that we assume that the agent *should have known* what he or she should have done. It is not enough

2 "The Subject of 'We Intend'"; talk given on Oct. 3, 2017; published version: Schmid, H.B. Phenom Cogn Sci (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-017-9501-7>.

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that he or she *did not know*, because ignorance can itself be of the culpable kind. But where we blame an agent for an omission not because he or she knew what he or she failed to do, but rather because he or she *should* have known, we do so in virtue of something he or she *did* know, and from which he or she culpably failed to *infer* that he or she should do what he or she ended up not doing. Wherever we blame agents for culpable ignorance, we do so in virtue of knowledge of his or her. Now the crucial point in my argument is that this knowledge needs to be of a special kind. It is not enough for an agent to be blameworthy that he or she knows that he or she should be doing what he or she fails to do. He or she needs to know that *of herself, in the right way: he or she needs to self-know it, pre-reflectively*. One way in which I illustrate this is by means of a morally laden transformation of one of the classic scenarios of lack of self-recognition from the literature on self-knowledge. The original case is Ernst Mach entering a bus and observing a shabby schoolmaster entering the bus from the other side. As Mach fails to realize that he is looking at his own mirror image, there is a sense in which Ernst Mach knows that he is shabbily clothed, but fails to know it in the right way; he knows it third-personally and fails to know it first-personally (similar famous vignettes from the literature are John Perry's sugar trail and David Kaplan's pants on fire). Here is how this difference between kinds of knowledge matters for the question of responsibility. Assume that Mach, while entering the bus, observes how the shabby schoolmaster blocks a struggling elderly person's way, and how he is just standing there instead of moving on. In this case, Mach knows that what he is doing is wrong, but this knowledge is not suitably tied to action because it is of the wrong kind; he fails to know that it is *he* who is blocking the elderly person's way. We might think that Mach is still blameworthy because he *should* have realized that he is looking into a mirror and that it is *him*, but as is well known from the literature, there is no amount of third-personal knowledge that constitutes first-personal self-knowledge, and if we require of agents to know *in the right way* what they are and are not doing, it is in virtue of their knowing themselves first-personally that we do so.

The decisive step in my argument is that the same holds true in the plural. For people to be collectively responsible, they need not be organized in any significant way; it suffices that they have, or should have, the right kind of knowledge of what it is they are or are not doing. This is plural pre-reflective self-awareness, and to illustrate how it works, I construe a hybrid vignette, a mix between the modified Mach case and Held's subway scenario. Here it is:

We are a group of passengers in the subway car, and we're looking out of the window. There is another subway train running at the same speed on the neighboring track. The other subway train is unlit, but as the lights of our

own train are mirrored in the other train's windows, we're seeing what's going on in our own train, thinking it's happening in the other train. Assume that what we're seeing is the bully abusing his victim – and we are outraged at the fellow passengers whom we see looking attentively out of the window instead of coming to the victim's aid. In this case, we are fully “aware of the moral nature of the action”, and we strongly condemn what we are doing; but we fail to be aware of the action – or rather, omission – *as ours*: the knowledge, or awareness in question is not of the first-personal kind.

What is missing here is plural self-knowledge: our awareness that *it is us*. I bring this idea in here to account for the way in which a random collection, under some conditions, can be collectively responsible. And the condition is settled by the question of whether or not they were, or should have been, plurally pre-reflectively self-aware of their responsibility as theirs, plurally. So whenever this is the case, it is the collection that is responsible. The collection, I mean the participating individuals together, as a plural subject of their collective obligation to do what they know, in the right way, what they should be doing, it's not an emerging extra agent that's the target of blame here. But it's not a distribution of individuals either, rather, it's the individuals *as one*.

Seminar

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I'm an assistant professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, and my background is quite different from yours. I'm mainly interested in the philosophy of mind and cognition, so I do deal with collective subjectivity but from a different perspective, from the perspective of cognitive science and distributed cognition, and so on. I do have some knowledge about the philosophy of law, thanks to Petar Bojanić actually, because I was his assistant when he was teaching philosophy of law at the University. So I have some background on responsibility and on subjectivity, but not together, and in the context of morality. This should be enough for an introduction. Given my different backgrounds, I'm not sure if I'm going to pose a valuable question, but I was just trying to understand what is at issue here.

As I understand, in this case where there is no group beforehand—there is just a random bunch of people—and there is some kind of incentive to act—to help someone, or something like that—I would say that in this case, first we can identify two kinds of responsibility. One is to constitute a group, so first we should constitute an agent who can then act, and then this agent has a responsibility to act in an appropriate manner. And these two kinds of responsibilities are different. The first one would be a kind of distributive, individual kind of responsibility, and the second one is collective. And they are in a special kind of relation, different than simply being individual and simply collective responsibility, right? It's a two-part responsibility, but I think the main question is the relation between these two kinds of responsibility. It reminds me of a case when something bad happens at your home to your spouse or parent, so you cannot help them by yourself, but you have to call a doctor. But do you have a responsibility to call a doctor, because there is a doctor who has the responsibility to help your spouse or parent? So my responsibility is partly also constituted by the doctor's responsibility—my responsibility is rooted in the other's responsibility to help someone. I cannot be attributed this kind of responsibility because I'm not a doctor. There is something similar in these two cases. There is the means-end kind of relation, my calling a doctor or our constituting a group is means to an end of forming an agent or calling an agent who can act. It's producing or inviting an agent who can act. So this is the first part, which I think I get. The connection is very tricky, I think. First of all, we have to have knowledge about the means and ends, and so on. And then it seems like a case of downward causation, there

is something distant which is not happening which is influencing something beforehand. I'm going to explain a bit more and then my question comes.

When everything goes right, it seems ok, we constituted a group, we acted and we could be praised that we did a good thing and we were responsible for saving a person's life. But, when the first thing fails, it seems that everything fails somehow. We fail to constitute a group, so this is the scenario that you are actually describing. So, the first part failed, and what happened is that an agent was not formed. So this responsibility that partly constituted the first responsibility cannot exist now, because there is no agent, and if there is no agent, there is no responsibility to be added. So, it seems that our responsibility rests on a responsibility of a fictitious or hypothetical entity which doesn't exist now. And it seems that we are now absolved, which doesn't seem right. But this means that we were not to be attributed with responsibility in the first scenario either, where everything was going ok, so I think this might help us see that there is something wrong about this kind of connected responsibilities or dependent responsibilities where one responsibility can actually create a different one which should then... So there is a kind of a loop, they are interdependent, and the loop cannot start in the first place because first we have to have an agent... So this is my question: because we are dealing with a hypothetical agent and hypothetical responsibility which should make us act in the first place, to form a group, it seems that in all these cases—in calling a doctor or actually helping a person—there is no additional responsibility of the individual who called the doctor, the responsibility for saving a life which can be afterwards attributed. So the only responsibility of this person was to call the doctor, or the only responsibility of an agent in this situation is just to form a group and nothing else. And if a group is formed, we can talk about this additional responsibility? But how can we have a responsibility of a group to help, since it is dependent on the future responsibility of an agent which doesn't yet exist? My question then is what is the connection of these different responsibilities, are they dependent, is the second one constitutive of the first one or not, and how are they constituted in the first place?

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Hans Bernhard Schmid

Many thanks indeed for these remarks! My primary focus is on the distinction between the levels you mention. If we have the distinction right, we can then ask the question of their relation, just as you suggest. Let me try to restate the distinction – I'm not entirely sure that it is of "levels" or "layers". The responsibility of the individuals to alert each other to the situation and to see to it that they form a group is one thing, but the responsibility of the group to act is another. I would like to say that, actually, under normal

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circumstances and assuming a sufficient degree of joint attention, the individuals in Held's subway train are a plural subject, so they already have joint agency. This depends a bit on the subway car's design; if it has separate compartments, joint attention might not be achieved. Even if there is joint attention, and thus a plural subject, that agent is still a random collection; it isn't an agent that is organized or has a decision structure, or is anything even close to a group agent in Pettit's and List's sense. Still, these people, in virtue of being plurally pre-reflectively aware of the situation, they share responsibility as a plural subject. If you want to argue for that model, your whole question seems to rest on the assumption that in the first instance, there is the underlying, or somehow metaphysically primary distributive responsibility of the individuals to get their act together, to form a group. And then, only on a second level, there is something like collective responsibility because it presupposes a group, and there was no group. Ultimately, I want to deny that, I want to say, even in this situation they are already in this together as a plural subject of responsibility. Because agents are basically the ability to know what it is you are doing, and that's a special sort of knowledge, that's pre-reflective, groundless belief, has been analyzed in literature, and this also holds in the plural case.

If you distribute the responsibility of a random collection's failure to act, all you can do is blaming individual people (perhaps all of them) for not having formed a group, but you don't blame the group for failing to act. But the primary moral issue is the group's failure to act, not the individual's failure to take individual measures to make it the case that the group acts. There is a difference between the two that needs to be accounted for. I try to elucidate a little bit the difference even in the individual case, it makes a difference whether you blame somebody for not making it the case that he or she acts, or whether you blame somebody for not acting. For a straightforward account of collective responsibility that does not distract from the primary moral issue, you have to account for the feature in virtue of which a random collection can be blameworthy, and I want to argue that it is plural pre-reflective self-awareness.

Aleksandar Fatić

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My query is really about your thoughts about the exact relationship between responsibility and blame. You mention that you think it makes no sense to talk about collective responsibility for a particular action without being able to assign blame for failing to act. As in Virginia Held's case. I'm not so sure about the exact proximity of responsibility and blame. Just to tease you

a little bit on that: look at the legal concept of subjective responsibility in criminal law. I think this is a useful concept because it elucidates some of these controversies concerning the relationship between responsibility and guilt. There is this idea in criminal law that, when I commit a crime, I can be subjectively responsible for that crime, if I could have theoretically chosen not to commit the crime. So I'm theoretically able to decide whether to punch someone on the street or not. So if I decided to punch someone, I'm subjectively responsible for the offence. Now this is not the same as criminal blame, because criminal blame is what is called in criminal law the *mens rea* responsibility, the guilty mind. In order to be guilty in addition to being subjectively responsible, I must have satisfied the two conditions in acting: I must have known that what I was about to do was wrong, which is the cognitive criterion, the McNaughton criterion, and I must have been able to have acted otherwise, the volitional criterion. So if I was under some kind of compulsion, whether it was internal psychological compulsion, or social compulsion in the case of collectives as agents, then my blame is reduced, the ability of the society to attribute blame to me is reduced, even though my subjective responsibility is diminished.

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Now look at the way people behave when they witness someone being victimized in the street. It's been written about a lot. People generally tend to mimic the behaviour of each other. So you see a case of violence in the street, people observe the reactions of other people who do nothing, but at the same time they tend to minimize any signs that they give away that they are observing the others. So they appear to each other as though they are independently making the decision not to interfere and that makes it easier for everyone to say okay, this must be something that doesn't concern me, so I won't interfere. Now, does that reduce blame at all? Do social mechanisms which operate within random collections as agents, are they capable of reducing the blame, like in the criminal law, by creating a sense of compulsion, a sort of compulsion which reduces my individual blame as a participant in a random collection, while at the same time not reducing subjective responsibility as such of such agents for not interfering, because theoretically they could have and should have interfered, because, as you said in the introduction, all those three principles are satisfied: I know what is going on, I know that I should act but I don't act? But there is a compulsion within the group. Do you think this is able to generate some distance between responsibility and blame?

H. B. Schmid

I haven't thought this through, but it's very interesting and we should discuss your suggestion it in more detail. I have no more than a couple of initial hunches to offer here. My first hunch is that what I'm using here is obviously

the fuller concept of responsibility where there is not only what I think you call subjective responsibility, and I think maybe it's like some causal responsibility in terms of counterfactual sensitivity, so it wouldn't have happened had I not or had I interfered, had I not omitted an act which was open to me. I agree with you: not only legal philosophy, but even ordinary language uses the word responsibility in that sense, where it is not sufficient for blame. Many thanks for this clarification. All of us just do not know what it is, right, and it's in virtue of that lack of knowledge, the other component, that we're not morally responsible.

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I want to argue against Virginia Held that not any sort of knowledge is the right one – think of the modified Ernst Mach case, to which I construct a plural parallel in the paper. I argue it's not any kind of knowledge that suffices, but it's got to include self-knowledge - self-knowledge of what it is we are doing or failing to do. Only where this is, or should be, in place, the responsibility we're talking about is of the morally relevant kind. Certainly, I should be clearer concerning the conceptions of responsibility you mention, your suggestion is helpful.

Another word on your suggestion concerning the role of social pressure. I haven't got a clear intuition concerning the case you present, and I'm not sure I got it right: Somebody was being beaten up by a bully, and there are individual bystanders around, but now, in addition, these individuals have this imitation thing going on, and so you, as a participant, you look at the crime being committed, but then the second look is to the next person, and you somehow use mimic, what you perceive that person is doing? Is this the case you describe?

Aleksandar Fatić

The example of domestic violence: for decades, we had a situation where domestic violence was perceived by most as something that we shouldn't intervene in, something that was seen as a conflict which belongs to other people, who had a relationship which we were not a part of, and therefore, had a limited legitimacy in interfering. Then you had a hype-up in the media and in the public and now you had legislation and all kinds of messages in the public sphere which say: interfere by all means and, now, everybody is reporting everyone for real and imaginary cases of domestic violence. This is now the topic of the day, so anybody can now report anyone with eyewitnesses or without witnesses, and it will create a general social pressure for the prosecution, the police and everyone to do something. So depending on what sort of messages we get from society, we will perceive our entitlements to interfere in a particular conflict differently. Where is our blame there?

H. B. Schmid

Interesting, though I'm not fully sure I understand. Looking back into history where people just had different conceptions of the moral obligations placed on them. In hindsight, our judgement is that they were behaving horribly wrong thinking that it was okay. I must admit that I'm often somewhat reluctant to blame them. Of course, it cannot be the case that, unless you accept that you should be acting, you're not responsible, but the further criterion is that you should have known better, so even if you didn't know, you can still be blameworthy if it can be said that you should have known. Take the case of witch hunts. You know, at the time at which Kant was writing his critique of pure reason, and people in Switzerland burnt the last witch. Let's assume that they did so because they believed this is the devil operating on their community. They would have thought that here is something that's so dangerous in their community that really their own lives and lives of their children were in danger by the presence of this evil – not just their lives between birth and death, but their lives in all eternity. Assume that they really believed it, they wouldn't have killed the witch unless they thought that there is evil that justified doing it. They were, of course, totally wrong. But what do we use in blaming them? Is it some good sense, or some moral knowledge that they had or should have had, in their hearts? Or is it rather that at that time – at the end of the eighteenth century – they should have been a bit more enlightened, since a lot of sound knowledge was around? They could have read up about witch hunts a bit. At least the local vicar of the Protestant church (it was in the Protestant area), he should have read a bit of the literature. But the further you go from our own horizon, the more difficult it becomes to me to blame. And I assume that there's got to be this limit, an epistemic limit to responsibility. I'm not sure, though, how conformity and imitation plays into this. Let's assume that people just imitate each other. How should this diminish our sense of their responsibility? Would their excuse be that they could not get their act together because as a matter of principle, they are always doing what other people do? I don't think this makes much sense, even in terms of attenuating circumstances. Why would we accept that, who would say well, okay, so I see now, no extenuating circumstances in the adoption of the maxim "always do what others do". But I'm not sure: am I addressing your question at all?

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Aleksandar Fatić

You are, I'm going to ask another question. We had a case here, I'd like to be very practical because I think your topic is capable of addressing very crafty practical issues. We had a case here, a year or two ago, where a random collection of people, including one man and three or four women of dubious

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morality, driving in a miniature Morris Countryman, after a night out, hits a young man who was pushing his car, which had broken down in the yellow lane on a bridge in down-town Belgrade. The victim died and the perpetrator, the driver, the young man hid the car with which the crime had been committed and escaped to China, and was later extradited here and all the media were full of titles. Title pages were using the phrase “the killer”, “killer Countryman”, “a killer”, “the murderer”. This was a traffic accident, you see, but the prosecutors were under pressure. I spoke to some of the prosecutors at the time, they were under pressure to implement those new directions, they had perceived that they should pursue this guy in the strictest possible way allowed by the law. And some of them would say: look we don’t dare say in public that there is a legal concept which is called the contribution by the victim. This means that being the victim doesn’t mean that you are not guilty for what happened. If I meet Mike Tyson in the street and he walks past me and knocks me down, he commits a crime but this crime is a lesser crime if before he knocks me I say him “look you nigger, you idiot”, and you now I provoked him.

There is a contribution of the victim, this guy was pushing his car without the yellow rope, without being properly marked in the dark. But nobody dared, no prosecutor dared to argue in public that there was a contribution by the victim, and that the blame of this random collection (and all of them were quite dislikeable because they were wealthy, they were reckless). They were generally reckless with their lives, but they were not necessarily reckless that night. So you see, you say it’s not an extenuating circumstance, imagine that you are a prosecutor. We now have laws which are being adopted, and you have them in Austria as well, laws which are the so-called *lex specialis* laws, which basically militate against systemic criminal legislation, and which say, if you assault a member of a minority, you will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law, whereas in the normal, systemic legislation the prosecutor has the principle of opportunity, the principle to decide whether and to what extent to prosecute something. So basically your autonomy is very much diminished as a prosecutor. So you do have extenuating circumstances even though, legally you can still say, ok, I will not go along with the current practice. But this practice has normative features, it is a normative practice, right? And we live with the rule of the media and the public pressure, we live under increasing normative pressure by all kinds of sources of norms which are not necessarily officialized.

H. B. Schmid

I’m not an expert in legal philosophy at all, but I hear that in many countries, Switzerland included, there is a tendency to harsher sentencing for reckless

speeding. People are not judged on the base of having acted according to the maxim “I exceed the speed limit knowing and accepting that I might cause an accident”, but the assumed attitude for which they are sentenced is, “well, if it happens, so be it”. I’m quite certain that later times will look back at our times as a barbaric age at which the loss of lives and shedding of blood on our streets was awful. Historians will look back and observe with astonishment how cool we were with all these deaths on the street, but, yes, I know this is not directly related to the paper, but there are pressures in the legal system and some of which I’m a bit sympathetic towards, like in the traffic case, even though I do think that when there are attenuating circumstances, they have to be taken into account. In other cases, I’m very skeptical, I think that to be way too harsh on some crimes under public pressure, that’s also a topic you raised. Public expectations and the huge influence this has, not only on legislation, but also on court proceedings. And that’s horrifying, but I’m mostly concerned with moral blame here. Thank you very much.

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Časlav Koprivica

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Actually, I don’t see, at least at first glance, ethical problematic in your paper, but still I’m going to restrain myself on a few remarks. Perhaps, then, we are going to find out that there are still some disagreements between you and me. First of all, you notice that in case that a person that is a part of a random collection, tries to make the other people which are a member of that so-called group to do something when being witnesses of a case of abuse, and still in case that, if that particular person fails to make others react, he or she is still responsible. Unfortunately, I agree with you, but then I’m bothered with the fact that in spite of the effort of that person, to make others to do something, he is objectively responsible, although I would say he is not guilty. And so, from the point of view of your line of argumentation, you are right, but from the point of view of a sense of justice, or what is just, it is somehow not ok with me.

The other point, it came out during your answer to Miljana’s intervention, the question is: from which particular moment of time a group of people who are in a subway car, and who witness a case of abuse, from what particular moment do they begin to be a group or at least to be eligible to be considered a group? I would say that when they enter a car, they are just a random bunch of people. But only in case when something happens, and not just anything but the thing, the occurrence that makes them obliged to react, and only from that moment on, if they fail to react, they are responsible. But still, from that moment they are actually eligible to be considered a

group. And then, the third point, you are speaking, somewhere close to the end of your paper, of an effort of, so to say, a person to create a joint attention, which means to make other people who are members of that so-called random collection, to pay their attention to that particular occurrence which is actually going on. But still, it is, when we are speaking, as you do, about a case of brutal violence, it is impossible that somebody sitting or standing in that subway car did not notice that. So whatever he did or thought at the time when the violence started, it is impossible to imagine that he didn't notice that. So I think it is not necessary to make some efforts to get the attention of the others to what's going on, because they are all perfectly aware of that, even if they look away.

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So, now, that means that we have, in that situation, a case of collective self-awareness, including those persons who fail or who look through the window, who pretend they didn't notice anything. Just one more remark concerning my first point: something which is quite unusual for me, or unusual from the point of view of common sense, that means to be responsible without being guilty. Are we talking about a duty to be a hero, which means when you try to persuade the other persons to create a reaction group, and if they fail to do so, the only way, according to your argumentation, to avoid the possibility, is to attack the bunch of abusers, and to risk being beaten by them? So are there any other options to avoid responsibility, excluding the one to attack the attackers and be beaten as the victim?

H. B. Schmid

Many thanks for these very interesting points. I'm not sure I got all of them and please jump in whenever I'm misunderstanding you. So, three main points. The point concerning responsibility without guilt. I think I agree with you. I want to say, that if we didn't get our act together and we let it happen, but you're not to blame because you really tried to get us together. There is a sense in which you're still in it, because you're going to say, from your perspective, that *we* failed, even though you personally did what you could. But it's still true of you that you're part of the collective that didn't do what it should have done. You're still part of it, even though you did individually what you could. I want to keep it as concrete as possible. I think for the court proceedings, what matters is that you should be included in some way in the trial, you should be sitting there somewhere, because you were in the group there, you should be sitting there, but you should get full recognition that you did everything you could, and I (a non-cooperating member) should acknowledge *my guilt to you* for undermining your effort of getting our act together. Because I, as a passive member, I wronged you. So in that sense, I think it is in a very concrete way important for the case that you be included

in it – not the least because you will get the recognition for doing what you could, which was right. You were wronged by all of us other members.

So that's how I see the normative infrastructure of that case, but in order to account for this full infrastructure, you have to acknowledge that this is about *us*, *we* are to blame. Concerning the duty to be a hero – I'm not sure I exactly understand what you mean. Maybe this connects to the third point, where you said that there is something fishy about the scenario. You said that, when this abuse is going on in the subway car, it is inconceivable for people not to notice, right. Everybody is going to notice. I must confess, when you said that, I realized that when I wrote the relevant parts of the paper I had in mind a car which is not an ordinary subway car, but a car with different compartments, more like a train car. In a train car, it is well conceivable that people cannot see each other, or cannot see whether or not others can see what they themselves see. In regular subway cars, it might be inconceivable that somebody wouldn't notice.

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I'm going to think about this suggestion. I guess you'll agree that it is conceivable that situations be of the sort under which it is not automatic that everybody's going to notice the abuse that's going on. Also, I could construct the case where the abuse is not so obvious, something along these lines.

Perhaps this relates to the issue you raise of the duty to be a hero. Depending on the subway car design, any attempt even to alert others might attract the perpetrator's attention to you, thus putting you in danger. My intuition would be to say that people are morally obliged to take some risk, but there cannot be a duty, or moral obligation, to be a hero. The very concept of a duty to be a hero sounds like a contradiction in terms to me. There cannot be a duty to be a hero because the hero is an agent who does supererogatory deeds, meaning deeds that cannot be morally demanded of him. He or she does more than just what he or she has to do. If ought implies can, and if it's clear that you cannot subdue the bully alone, then it is not the case that you ought to try to subdue the bully, even if this would be heroic in a sense. Admittedly, trying is a notoriously difficult word. There is a sense in which any doing implies trying. There is a different sense of trying in which trying is a proper action term. The latter is the sense of trying in which you can try to do even what you know cannot be done. In that case the condition of satisfaction of your intention is to do the trying, and not the doing. And I think that even in this "heroic" sense of trying, there is no moral obligation to try.

Let me try to address your very difficult second question: When exactly does a group become a group. My strategy concerning this type of question – when does the group come into being, is usually a negative one. So it's an

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ex negativo reply. First, I'd like to argue against the view that as soon as we've made a decision, we are a group. The problem is that any such decision cannot be just my individual decision and your individual decision. It's got to be decided together, meaning that in order for us to make that decision, we've already got to be a plural agent. For the case of the singular subject, this issue is well studied in the literature about subjectivity in German Idealism. The way we are self-constituted as singular subjects is not by making a decision, because there's got to be the subject of decision already. The same is true in the plural. Margaret Gilbert has this problem: arguing that a plural subject comes into being by means of a joint commitment is circular because joint commitment is something we are undertaking together – something plurally subjective. Thus it seems that every plural subject presupposes a plural subject of the process that brings it about, we are in an infinite regress. The literature about the pre-reflective level in the self-constitution of singular subjects answers to that type of problem, and we urgently need to take it to the plural, as I suggest in my book on *Wir-Intentionalität*. If we are going to be serious about plural subjects, we've got to learn from that problem. So that's *ex negativo*, I'm still not answering when and how, but I'm saying that, you know, you have the concept of a plural subject, but yours is insufficient, and I can tell you why, and how to make it better. And then, the other move is the turning of the table. Most of you will accept the concept of a pre-reflectively constituted singular subject. But can you answer the question of when and how exactly it came about?

So if you can't answer this question in the singular case, why suggesting that in the plural case, we should not accept subjects unless we know exactly when and how they come into being? I know it's a weak reply, and I can see you're not altogether happy with it, but I do want to argue for a sort of analogy between singular subjectivity and plural subjectivity. Now with the example of a kid, it certainly becomes an agent partly because of you addressing it as an agent. But it cannot be, reactive attitudes cannot be constitutive of agency, it's not that you make an animal a subject by approaching it as one, because you can try it with your cat, it won't work. It's perhaps something like a subject, but it's not a subject in the moral domain. So, I know this is all very defensive and dissatisfying. There's psychological literature which I find interesting, for example in the literature on the development of the capacity for joint attention.

Časlav Koprivica

Excuse me, why is it so hard to imagine that a reaction of some random collection of people could be the point from which they start to recognize themselves as a group?

H. B. Schmid

I would say it's certainly easily imaginable that they come to recognize themselves as a group reflectively. Reflective self-knowledge is different from pre-reflective self-knowledge, and it builds on pre-reflective self-knowledge.

Olga Nikolić

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My question is mainly about plural pre-reflective self-awareness, because you argue in your text that this is actually the condition that needs to be fulfilled in order to attribute responsibility to random collections. So while I was reading this text as well as your other texts about plural pre-reflective self-awareness a number of questions occurred to me. And they are about how this plural self-awareness works. So I understood that you take it to be a basic form of sociality. But my question is, are we always, is it constantly at work, do we always find ourselves somehow plurally pre-reflectively self-aware, and is it at work even when we are alone or only when other people are around? Is it selective, so, does it work in a way to...can I base my judgements and decisions, on which groups to enter into interaction or join, so where do I want to join actions and where do I not, and with whom? Also, what is the content of the plural pre-reflective self-awareness? So is it like some sort of sedimented implicit habitual knowledge of everything we've learned about how people behave, interact, what people should or should not do? This sort of implicit know-how that we have when we interact with other people or join groups. Also how do people perceive us, what kinds of social groups we are eligible to, what kind of social roles are we eligible to, and so on?

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Also, I understood that for you it has to exist in plurality. Every individual partakes in plural pre-reflective self-awareness. But the question is do all individuals have to have the same content? Do we have to think of our group participation and what our group should or should not do in the same manner, do we have to be aware somehow of group goals in the same way in order to have this plural pre-reflective self-awareness? And, for example, if we take your train or subway example, what if one person does not find herself or himself morally responsible? What if one person does not share this idea that we should do something about this? What if one person is scared, just wants to escape, there is no pre-reflective moment that this person actually feels that we should all do something about it, but is just scared? Does this exclude this person from plural pre-reflective self-awareness or not? And, finally, does plural pre-reflective self-awareness involve shared phenomenal consciousness, a kind of 'what is it like for us', experiential sharing of some sort?

H. B. Schmid

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Very good. I cannot address all the issues raised in this very rich comment. Let me focus on a couple of issues. How does plural pre-reflective self-awareness work? I had this basic idea in my habilitation thesis that came out in 2005, where I strictly stuck to the mainstream Heidelberg School way of thinking about pre-reflective self-awareness. And there, the claim is you can never say what it is, all you can say is what it is not. All you can do in elucidating the essence of subjectivity is pointing out mistakes about it. Showing how reflective accounts fail. That's how they end up in an infinite regress or *petitio principii*, that's how you can account for the underlying, for what subjectivity is. It need not be an essence, but what subjectivity is. You can characterize it only negatively. Then I kept getting all these incredulous reactions: but *what is it?* Why don't you tell us? I finally decided, let's forget about the Heidelberg school reservations, let's just try. So I thought that maybe a sort of functionalist approach could be worked out. Not functionalist in terms of input-output relations, but functionalist in terms of identifying what it does. And I realized that's not impossible at all to do for the individual case. We can say quite a bit about what that special knowledge we have of ourselves, and only of ourselves, of nothing else, is.

So the basic thing – probably most of you know the argument that there is a sort of knowledge of oneself that's very different from knowledge about anything else. It's not referential, it's self-identifying etc. Thus I identified four functions. It establishes identity, it self-validates, self-commits, and self-authorizes. This is the work of self-knowledge. I'll show tomorrow this works in the plural case. So I think I can give a fuller answer to your question tomorrow.

Now, the question about deciding which group to belong to. Sometimes we leave groups, and sometimes we form groups, and we are part of many groups, so how does this work? I don't think it is always up to us, individually. Sometimes you don't feel like being part of a group any more because you're really fed up with your partners, but you're still somehow in there. Sometimes it's not just enough to say I don't want to be part of it any more, and conversely, it is certainly not enough for two people wanting to be a plural subject that they really are a plural subject. So it seems that this individual sort of decision to be or not to be part of it is at least not sufficient for you being a part of it. Also, sometimes as in the subway car there's not even question of any decision and you're in it.

So it seems that it's not even necessary to make any decision or have any preference even, for you to be in it. So it seems that these attitudes – wanting to be in, wanting to be out - are neither necessary nor sufficient for there to be

a plural subject. As liberal democrats, we'd like to give individual decision a lot of room in how we arrange the social world. And we do not like certain forms of sociality. The one form we particularly like is the voluntary association. Please speak up if you disagree: we like it when people, of their own individual will, gather together for the pursuit of a shared purpose. Every participant wants to be part of it, and that's somehow how it comes to be. And yet, this easily leads to a sort of ideology about what sociality is, the view that it is all based on individual decision. It's a wonderful way of being together, but let's face it: it's not how our sociality is, especially if you want to advocate it from a normative perspective, we should not be ignorant about it not being the normal case. We know how social ontology and normative perspectives or political agendas are intertwined, and sometimes people think it is best to promote an agenda by claiming this is the only possible way for ontological reasons. I certainly don't want to accuse you of ideological thinking, but I guess since individual decision is neither necessary nor sufficient for participation in plural subjects, I think it's not a fundamental point about the ontology of sociality. But normatively, it's important.

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Olga Nikolić

Can I just clarify my question a bit? What I was thinking about is, sometimes we decide using our reflection, and thinking about it in advance, then we decide to join a group or not. But when we are pre-reflectively plurally self-aware, do we on this pre-reflective level still make a selection or not? Do we just interact with anybody who is around, or can we somehow make some pre-reflective judgements about who to interact with?

H. B. Schmid

Can you give an example of pre-reflective judgement?

Olga Nikolić

For example, I'm walking down the street and I need to ask for directions, and I see two persons, and I immediately turn to one and ask one person for direction, not the other one. Why did I choose the first person?

H. B. Schmid

Yes, we often choose with whom to associate. We shouldn't forget that this is an obvious phenomenon, that we like to be a plural subject with some, and even if you just ask a person for direction, you are doing something with

that person because there is a plural subject of communication, and that's a joint action; it has to have a plural subject for it to be joint. You may initiate it, but it's only in virtue of my taking it up that it becomes communication, and that's something we are doing together. Of course, individual preferences play a big role in the coming about of plural subjects, in the way that we choose whom to approach, we choose whom to associate with.

Another point in your comment: Does every individual participate in a plural subject? I think there is room for a lot of dissidence in plural subjects. And it is often the case that we are doing something even though I'm not engaged in it. I wouldn't say that active participation has to be distributive, so that each and every member is participating for us to be doing something.

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Group goals – I think there is a tendency to overestimate the role of intention in intentionality which has to do with the proximity of the English word intention to intentionality. And if we go back to the phenomenological tradition, there was an equal bias toward more passive forms of intentionality, the paradigm of collective intentionality, or plural subject phenomena in the phenomenological literature, is the *Erlebnis*, experience, it's actually something different, lived experience. Especially if you have an Aristotelian concept of life, *Erlebnis* is a bit better than just intention as a paradigm of sharing, because there is this living together, the Aristotelian idea that the form of our life is a shared form. Currently, I think that we are talking about the current literature, the discussion is sort of preconceived of in Aristotle's work on the political nature of humans. But I might be a bit of an anti-Aristotelian in that I'm open to the possibility of a totally, Aristotle would say it is an *idiotic* human life. An idiot is a person who does not participate in the political, and I'm sympathetic to idiots who don't join in some domains. All of us are idiots, so much of our life is not shared, and I wouldn't say that everything has to be shared, I think sharing can be a terrible hassle, and it's very good that we have private lives. Some authors say, if it's intentionality it's got to be social, and I don't buy that. Once we see how intentional attitudes can be shared, we need not claim that every intentional attitude is somehow social (e.g., along the lines of Habermas who always argued that intentionality is basically just language, and hence public).

I am aware that I addressed only about one fifth of the issues you raised. Let me just, to conclude, address the question of the person who is afraid in the subway car. That person, is he or she part of the plural subject of the intervention? No, but he or she is still part of the group. That person probably thinks we should not because it's too dangerous, so that person judges that the moral nature of the act is such that we should not intervene. Maybe he or she is pathologically phobic. In that case, he or she is off the hook. In the case in which a person is just afraid and does not come to the right

judgement that we should intervene, because she just discounts too much of what's happening to the other person as opposed to what could happen to herself, I think that person is not off the hook, because that person should have, and could have judged differently. Emotions, I take it, are judgments, and there is responsibility for our emotions.

Mark Losoncz

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I would like to make comments relying upon contemporary metaphysics of connections, on the one hand, and upon the theory of complex systems, on the other. This perspective might seem somewhat surprising, but let us remind ourselves that Sara Rachel Chant's paper, which is so important for the debate on collective responsibility, also suggests that these questions, I am quoting her, "promote a particular kind of metaphysics". On the other hand, it is obvious that the questions you analyse are of great importance, not only in the case of highly structured organizations, and other incorporated groups, but also for the debates concerning ethics and complex systems as such. What interests me the most is the mechanism through which people can connect to each other. The moment when, according to the Hollywood stand-off, Mr Good, Mr Bad and Mr Ugly hold a gun to each other, or the moment when, according to Virginia Held's example, there are individuals in a subway car that witness a bully.

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Let me first introduce certain insights from contemporary metaphysics of connection. From a modal point of view, one might define connection as something that is stronger than dependence but is weaker than internal relation. The first distinction is particularly important: if A is connected to B, this connection does not necessarily imply that the existence of A, or one of its essential properties, depends on the existence of B. Still, connection can imply much more than mere *ratio existendi*. The distinction between connection and relation is much more complicated. External relations are external to the nature of the relata, and that is why they are frequently interpreted as mere mental projections. (For instance, when there is an assertion that A is to the left of B.) Internal relations do depend on the nature of the relata, but, in fact, it would be more precise to claim that internal relation can be reduced to the individual essences of the relata, and therefore it would be redundant to conceive them as *sui generis* entities. For instance, there is an assertion according to which A is brighter than B. Connection is different from relation and from dependence as well. There is an extremely rich tradition of the metaphysics of connection, from Leibniz to Gustav Bergman's nexus, from Whitehead's concrescence to Barry Smith's mereotopological

connections. What is common to these concepts is that they point to a certain emergence, certain productivity. For example, the connection between the subject and the predicate results in new meaning. In the case of a non-formal, material connection, where the locomotive is connected to the wagons, a new level of emergence arises.

There are a few important characteristics of connection. It is non-reflexive, A can be connected to B, C and so on, but not to itself. Connection is non-transitive, if A is connected to B, and B is connected to C, it is not necessary that A is also connected to C. And finally connection is weakly anti-symmetric, that is to say, if A is connected to B, it is not necessary that B is also connected to A. It is important to emphasise that connections can result in new entities, that is to say A and B can form together a new C entity. But it is also possible that the connection itself is the only new phenomenon, there are no new entities, but the connection implies something productive which has not existed before. Connections can make mere aggregates, and mereological sums, but they can also form couplings, new holistic entities, in which they depend on each other, but they remain separated. And also, new unities in which they lose their distinct existence. So, this is a kind of typology: aggregates, couplings and new unities in which they lose the distinct existence. It seems to be self-evident that social connections cannot form unities in which they – as connected entities – completely lose their distinct existence. But the distinction between aggregates and couplings is surely crucial.

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Sara Rachel Chant argues that in the case of the Hollywood stand-off, there is collective, non-distributive responsibility without collective agency. I suppose that the existence of collective responsibility assumes at least a minimal level of emergence beyond individuals. We can model the Hollywood stand-off as a connective situation. There is no reflexivity, none of the participants holds the gun to himself, there is no necessary transitivity, the fact that Mr Good holds the gun to Mr Bad and that Mr Bad holds the gun to Mr Ugly does not imply that Mr Good holds the gun to Mr Ugly. Finally, there is weak anti-symmetry, the fact that Mr Good holds the gun to Mr Bad does not necessarily imply that Mr Bad also holds the gun to Mr Good. And such is precisely the case with the Hollywood stand-off. And, as we have seen, it is completely legitimate to speak of truly productive connections, that cannot be reduced to the connected relata without assuming that the entities connected to each other necessarily form a new unity. Perhaps it would also be useful to interpret joint attention as connection, given the fact that attention is weakly anti-symmetric and non-transitive. Joint attention, as a new level of emergence with respect to individual attention is obviously not mere external or internal relatedness, neither is it dependence. It is about being connected, certain togetherness, as a new level that produces couplings beyond

mere aggregates. Of course, it depends on the specific situation whether joint attention can be formed.

And the final remark, there is a very modest tradition of elaborating the ethics of complex systems. These philosophers try to conceptualize a new ethics that takes into consideration the characteristics of complexity. What interests me is whether we can attribute any responsibility to complex systems themselves, for instance to the legal system as a complex system. Complex systems are not based on mere randomness, they are highly determined, they consist of interconnected parts, or, more precisely, they are distributed across a component part, and there is self-similarity, that is to say, there are partly shared similarities across each scale of the systems' levels. It is a commonplace to claim that the systemic whole is more than the sum of its parts, and, on the other hand, there is no individual agent in the system who takes everyday actions by taking into consideration the whole system. To put it differently, the wholeness of the system, the quasi-togetherness of its parts, can be individually thematized only through some kind of external observation. But it is also claimed that the system constantly thematizes the difference between itself and its environment and its own subsistence on a more abstract level. What interests me is whether we can speak of responsibility of complex systems, can we blame them and in which sense?

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H. B. Schmid

This is a very rich and challenging comment. And it contains a clear objection: you are saying that we need not conceive of the Good, Bad, and Ugly together as a subject, rather we should conceive of them as connected, interconnected individuals. I want to argue that no, we need the subject account, there's got to be one subject. It is a subject in virtue of plural pre-reflective self-awareness, and of course this is a form of unity of a mind. Now part of what you are saying is news to me, this metaphysics of connection, and I'm not competent, but I'm very interested. You are saying that connection is stronger than dependence but weaker than a relation? Ok. I haven't thought it through obviously, because I'm not familiar with the connection literature. We need metaphysical stuff here. My hunch is that finally what I'm going to argue is that you want to account for the way people are together when they are plural subjects. I cannot say people are related because it's already favoring one metaphysical view of it. I probably will argue that whatever the conception of that, I cannot avoid the word relation here, but I do not mean it in terms of internal or external, or any specific concept of relation.

Let's define relation as whatever connections, dependencies, and external, internal relations are versions of. You want to argue that we can fully account

for the way individuals are related in that newly defined sense, without conceiving of them as a subject, if we recognize that relations are actually of the form of interconnection. My hunch is that you're going to find forms of interconnection that are obviously not relevant to the case, and forms of interconnection that are relevant to the case, and that you simply cannot distinguish for the particular form of interrelation that's happening between the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. So that you still need to account for the way interrelation in that case is relevant to responsibility. And I'm going to argue then - this is just a plan for a future reply to your comment - I'm going to argue, well, that feature you still need to account for in order to make your metaphysics of interconnections work, that is plural pre-reflective self-awareness. So what I will do, reading your comment, is that I'm going to find a case where every condition you specify for something to be interconnected is fulfilled, but still no collective responsibility. And I challenge you to make the task difficult for me without resorting to one or another version of plural pre-reflective self-awareness.

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Now these are empty words, but this is my hunch. I haven't a clear understanding of your conception of interconnection yet, but I suspect that there are certain instances of interconnections of your sort being the case without there being the relation that makes two subjects partners in joint action. And then I'm going to argue, well, the missing feature you still need to account for is what I offer you. I could then say that while your conception of interconnection is interesting and useful, it isn't really doing the job.

I cannot claim I figured out the metaphysics of the plural subject. I found myself initially attracted, and I haven't followed up on it, to collection - as-identity theory. Because this resounds with what Rousseau says about the ontology of the collective. Rousseau says weird things, and he says things that do not agree with what you say about connection being non-reflexive, because obviously, and as you know, there is a relation in Rousseau's thinking between me as *citoyen* with me as a *bourgeois*. That's the way he aims to preserve the idea of freedom in the transition from individuals to the collective. The weird thing about collection as identity is that in this view, the collection is ontologically the numerical identity of its parts rather than some interconnection thereof. And this resounds with all these accounts in the history of thoughts of many being one in the collective. The way we are related in that general sense in the plural subject is token identity. And that's weird, because we are obviously qualitatively different, so how can we be numerically identical, when I'm almost bald and you have so much hair, and there are all sorts of qualitative difference, how can we be one? What's qualitatively different cannot be numerically identical. But then there are these theories of identity being relative. In this view, we can be identical with regards to X but different

with regards to Y. This might be the way to go, understanding the way members in plural subjects are related to each other, in metaphysical terms.

I'm really just talking a bit metaphysics here, without really having an elaborated idea. I'm very interested in your concept of connection. I've got a strategy to oppose the objection that this makes superfluous the idea of a plural subject. I guess I have more questions to ask you than you probably have to ask me.

Aleksandar Fatić

I have one small question: do you think that systems theory might help with you account?

H. B. Schmid

Oh yes, I forgot that part, the second part of your question. I spent a lot of time reading all that Luhmann stuff. What I found is that ultimately, the system is just a reformulation of the subject. The subject is whatever it is in virtue of itself. That's the idea of the subject, Kantian Self-determination, Fichtean *Selbstsetzung*, or Korsgaardian self-constitution. The subject is not produced by anything other than itself, it's self-made. Obviously, there is this idea of *autopoiesis* in Luhmann, and this account of the difference between itself and others, that's how it is related to itself, by distinguishing itself from others, and that's totally the good old subject. Then the question in virtue of what a unity is: it is a unity in virtue of that very relation. So I'd say, yes, systems theory is relevant, if system is not just what Talcott Parsons thought it to be, only an analytical tool, a selection of entities, a system the analyst decides on, a heuristic tool. This is not how systems theory in Luhmann's sense understands systems, obviously it's not a sense in which you understand the system. You think it's really out there, and it is what it is in virtue of it distinguishing itself from what it is not. Welcome to subject theory.

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Igor Cvejić

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I would not like to talk so much about the mere possibility of collective responsibility, I mostly agree with your general argument. I have a question more about the precondition and location and about more complex situations, I would like to pose a general question about the role of values, the difficulty of sharing values in these situations. The examples that you give are pretty easy examples, which is perfectly fine when we speak about the possibility of moral responsibility. Usually there are complicated situations,

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and I think this is particularly important for collective responsibility because we can easily speak only about what single person evaluate, but if persons share values, we have to add question in which manner do they share them? As far as I understand in your talk, when you mention joint attention, you don't mean the pure cognitivist approach, but also one involving some shared values and joint emotional engagement. Just to give one different example: we are in a train car with five other persons, strangers, who are from different cultural background, and we have some not so clear situation. For example, domestic violence, so we will have five different reactions, that follow from different learned norm procedure and every person see differently the adequate reaction to those situations. Particularly I will now have the need to have some relation to the other persons, their reactions and expressions, to see if I can make such attitude needed for the practical knowledge. Or a more extreme situation, the bully harming an innocent victim is actually a neo-Nazi activist harming an immigrant, but then I realize that five other people sitting with me are neo-Nazi sympathizers. We have some joint focus, looking at the same situation, have the same cognitive input, but this event is totally different from your example. So, I certainly could have thought we should do it, but it is certain that I could not make that same attitude shared among all of us who are sitting in the train car.

So, my brief question is what do you think about the role of shared values in this example, and the second question is about the joint emotional engagement. The third question is probably a little more complicated, does pre-reflexivity involve some primary I-thou relation because, in some way, I need to have an I-thou relation with those persons to see their reaction and make them have the same attitude? My fourth question is from the perspective of two persons who will blame this group as responsible. How can we ascribe collective responsibility to that group, because, again, in this situation about harming innocent victims, it is easy, but if we need to have insight about how these persons share values, or are there shared values, it is very hard to blame some group as collectively responsible?

H. B. Schmid

Thank you very much. So what if there's a Nazi beating up a victim, and you are sitting there, and you realize they are all Nazis. I would say - just a gut feeling - I still would say you've got to try to, you've got to approach the other people, even if you know they are Nazis, and try to appeal to their better senses. There's certainly still something you'd have to do. Now, I wanted to argue in the original case, that you should be in the trial even if you did all you could, you should be sitting together with the others. Would this still be the case in your version? You, the non-Nazi, would have to sit together with

the other Nazis who didn't do anything. And I guess, most of you would say no, you don't have to sit with the Nazis, and you're totally right, but only if it is possible to assume that what was going on was Nazi abuse which somehow implicates, as a guilty party in the act, all of the others. If there is reason to assume that the bully, the Nazi bully is actually acting on behalf of the others, then certainly you wouldn't have to sit in the trial. But if it just so happens that in a society, half of the people are Nazis and they have their badge, there's one Nazi, and it is not necessary to assume that he is acting on behalf of this group, I still would say, yes, well you, the non-Nazi, and the other Nazis failed to prevent this act from happening. Now, what I want to say really depends, all of these stories are always abstractions from real life, whose interpretation highly depends on normal assumptions about what is going on in society, and this also extends to this case.

Sharing values, I don't really have an elaborate understanding of what a value is, other than a formal object of an attitude. In my mind, a lot boils down to intentionality, and so does the concept of value. Value is whatever makes it rational to have an attitude of a certain kind towards the object that is seen as having that value. So, a proposition's being true makes it adequate to believe it, so truth is a value. Whatever is good, makes it rational or even intelligible to desire it or to want it, or to intend it, so the good is a value. Whatever is great makes it rational to admire it, so greatness is a value, and so on. With negative values, e.g., danger - what is dangerous makes it rational to fear it. If that's the concept of value, sharing an intentional state is always sharing a value. If that's not your concept of value, we'll have to discuss.

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Igor Cvejić

Helm's theory of value, of a notion of the import of significance. When you speak about motions in Heideggerian terms as "for-meness" or "for-usness", I think it is more like this than like just an object of belief. So having a significance for me that it is enough to value it.

Aleksandar Fatić

There is the theory of emotions, according to which values are what makes us react emotionally, positively or negatively to certain stimuli, not rationally, emotionally.

H.B. Schmid

Oh yes, I fully agree. What I mean is the idea of the formal object, which was introduced basically by Thomas Aquinas and elaborated on by Anthony

Kenny. More recently, Ronny De Souza presented this view of emotions as having a formal object. But I would extend it a little bit: it's not just emotions that have a formal object but all attitudes. And insofar as they have formal objects, this is the value. The value is whatever makes it appropriate, understandable or rational to have an attitude of the kind of attitude it is. E.g., danger is what makes it rational, appropriate, and intelligible to fear. Take an Aristotelian approach: there isn't a conflict between reason and emotion, but rather it is rational to have emotions in the right circumstance toward the right object in the right amount on the right occasion. And what makes this the case for the fear of a dog is its being dangerous, and if something is evil, it is correct to hate it. If something is true, it's adequate to believe it. I guess if this is the concept of value, then any sharing of an attitude is the sharing of a value. It's the same thing.

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(Aleksandar Fatić clarifies the main point of Igor's question, unclear).

I didn't make any commitment as to whether values are out there objectively, or whether values or formal objects are properties that are just assigned by an attitude. I have no commitment concerning whether the entire set of values is subjective or objective. The thing about appropriateness that I want to say, is just that, insofar as, e.g., greatness is assigned, it would be irrational not to admire. There is a conceptual link between greatness and admiration. And even though it might be that people do not have the value of greatness, this just means they don't assign greatness to anything, they don't admire. But if they assign greatness, they have to admire, because greatness is captured or is seen, is perceived in admiration, and through no other means. So, the emotional domain is different from cognition or practical attitudes in that it seems that about every emotion has its own formal object. And then, there are these two big formal objects for cognition and volition, truth and the good.

Igor Cvejić

My problem with this example is that we could have the same focus with the same cognitive input, but actually different formal objects. The same event that I see as dangerous the Nazi can see as pleasant.

H. Schmid

Absolutely, I agree. Then we target the same material object, to use Aquinas' term, but not the same formal object, and thereby we do not share the same attitude. But if we share the attitude, we share a value. I'm not quite sure whether I want to say the opposite that if we assign the same formal object to the same material object, we thereby share the attitude. I'm not quite sure

because I might see the doughnut on the table as delicious and want it, and you might see it as delicious and want it, but we probably do not want it together, because I want it for myself. So, same values, but it actually brings us into opposition rather than bringing us together. In the domain of the emotional, I very much like the structure that's a bit more complicated than just formal object. In formal objects, there is focus and there is concern. And the concern rationalizes the relation between the formal object and the focus. So, even in fear of the dog, it's dangerousness to me, or dangerousness to you that's rational in this wide sense in terms of concern for my or your safety. The concern - I think this is very much what Heidegger had in mind with *Sorge*, this is a triadic structure, so the target, formal object, focus, and behind it the concern, that binds the package together. And maybe the concern is what we are, I guess that's what Heidegger wants to say, and it is quite in line with Helm's views. Do you agree?

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Igor Cvejić

My problem is, I have these problems with the particular case implications for the question how we could actually blame someone, and how we could ascribe to someone collective responsibility, could we do it in the same way? Six persons are having actually shared values, and shared attitudes, then I can make this same attitude, that we should engage. But in the case we are probably looking at the same event and not having the same formal object or concerns, could we actually speak about collective responsibility? Intuitively, you could in the same way say that a group or person sitting in a train car is to blame because they didn't help.

H. B. Schmid

Something that Held says in her paper, and that I'm just taking from there, is that you have to be aware of the moral nature of the act in order to be responsible. This is obviously insufficient because in many cases we blame people even if they weren't aware of the moral nature of the act, because they *should have* been aware of the moral nature of the act. This is relevant in our Nazi case. These people might ideologically think there is something good going on. Their belief is mistaken, and we hold them responsible even though they didn't know the moral nature of the act because they thought it was something different. Why? Because they should have known. In that case, we are going normative about the epistemic requirements. I guess we would do this in the plural case as well, even though what you think is going on is very different from what the others think is going on, because you were right, and they should have thought differently. And, in a sense,

subjectivity is a normative phenomenon. It doesn't depend on what anybody thinks. Sometimes we say "you should have been aware". And that's enough for assigning responsibility. But it is also true that in many cases there are excusable errors. And in these cases, your not having known is at least an attenuating circumstance. We still assign some blame because you should have known.

Predrag Krstić and Srđan Prodanović

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Thank you for the inspiring lecture. Our remark refers, we would say, to the strongest side of your argument: namely, its formalism. In the paper you convincingly explain that there are collective actions – or their absence – in which accountability can be attributed to random collections, without being distributed to its members, that is, you maintain that the "collecting responsibility is of the collective rather than the distributive sort" and that this type of responsibility therefore implies a certain "plural self-awareness". The latter is not a "collective singular," but rather "something individuals have, not someone else over and above their heads" and "they have it only together, as a group". In this sense we can understand your claim that "even unorganized random collections can be plurally self-aware of what should be done as a collection of own collections of the sort that constitutes responsibility".

However, one might ask what could, actually or potentially, members of these random collections in fact be "morally required to do"; that is, should any provisional set of beliefs – "shared moral outlooks", as you call them – be shared by aforementioned members? There is no need for thought experiment in order to illustrate the issue. Namely, your example – a bully harasses someone in the public transportation – this sounds like a clear and, so to say, self-explanatory type of demand that a moral instance puts before us. But, let's further complicate and problematize this example: this year a passenger hit a fellow traveller on a bus in Istanbul because she was wearing shorts during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. It seemed to him that she was not dressed properly and that she consequently offended the public moral. Following your claims, we do not see a way out of the argument that in this case the passenger acted responsibly in regard to his own understanding of moral responsibility, and that, furthermore, we could even blame other travellers for disobeying a rule prescribed by one type of moral intuition? It seems like this moral reasoning would be at least as right as, on the other side, blaming the attacker, who in fact ended up receiving a substantial sentence, or the co-travellers for failing to defend the attacked women.

Of course, all of this is done from another framework of value. But, that's precisely the point: are those frameworks, or systems, or regimes that decide on what constitutes a moral wrongdoing equal? And are they commensurable at all? In short, how, or perhaps from which vantage point, do we decide on responsibility of a random collection? Of random collection, let's say, if you allow one more example, tourists that have found themselves in a part of the world where it is not only legal but obligatory to stone women who have "misbehaved"? In short, that random collection could or should (?) be responsible for what?

H. B. Schmid

What are the details of the situation you are referring to? How strong was the bully? Let's assume there were other people on the bus. I'm inclined to say that nowadays everybody should know that this is not okay, and that whoever was on the bus constitutes a group that's collectively guilty for not intervening. If the bully was of average size, I would say even just an individual should have intervened. In German this is called *Hilfeleistung*. I don't know the English term, but you are obliged to intervene, if it's not at too great a risk to yourself. To approve of a beating because of the way a person is dressed is clearly unacceptable. As said before, I'm not so sure with regards to older systems or secluded corners of the world.

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Let's try to enter such a person's head, and try to think of something that makes it understandable that that person beats up that woman. Of course, it may just be misogynistic aggression, that person just takes that moral view as an excuse to beat her up, because that person is hateful, and wants to beat someone up anyway, just looking for victims, and takes the ideology as excuse. I think there are good chances that this was the case in your example. In any case, the "secluded corner" excuse does not work in a location such as Istanbul. There's a lot of information there. But if you take a case from a remote village, and incredible beliefs that are around, and there is a serious belief that the way you dress is directly connected to the well-being of the whole community, you really believe that, then maybe the case is different. But, as I said, I'm not an expert in normative ethics, and the basic aim behind the paper is to show that this issue about plural pre-reflective self-awareness has consequences for normative issues. And I'm a bit naïve about the normative issues themselves, I just took Virginia Held's paradigm and tried to show that in order to understand that better, you have to have the concept of plural pre-reflective self-awareness. So I'm operating far beyond my sphere of expertise, if I'm now passing a normative judgement about actual people sitting in Istanbul in a bus. There are normative ethicists, and I'm not one of them.

Petar Bojanić

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I'm going to try to change the perspective and make an analogy. Maybe it's not a question, it's rather a need to put forth a request to you to once again explain this phrase "plural pre-reflective self-awareness". I know your different texts, but in this text, in the context of collective responsibility, as I understood, your main effort was to show us that someone is responsible if there exists some kind of pre-reflective self-awareness. This is the condition, unconditional condition. First of all, when I prepared for our meeting today and tomorrow, I read a little Waldenfels, on *Aufnehmung*, and you remember there is nothing about collective awareness, but in Natalie Depraz, in her book from two years ago, *Attention e Vigilance*, she speaks of conjoined intersubjective attention. And as you know, as phenomenologists we can say this is always an object that implies attention. There is no attention without object, and in your case this object could be a situation. For example, the collective responsibility involved with any random collection of strangers in situations that demand a multilateral action, I am interested in the relation of this plural pre-reflective self-awareness. Yesterday I found in Nida-Rümelin, he is using this *Korporativverantwortung* and *Kooperativeverantwortung*, but you know that for him there is only individual responsibility. *Kolektivverantwortung* is figurative. Plural pre-reflective self-awareness and the relation of this to time or temporality of the existence of a group - I'm interested in responsibility that constitutes a group. That's why I use the analogy. I hope you remember the text of Moritz Schlick from 1930, "Wann ist der Mensch Verantwortlich?" (When is the Man Responsible?), and one of the main conditions is consciousness. Much more importantly, the question when a man is said to be responsible, is that of when he himself *feels* responsible. I think this is a bit of a challenge that there is no responsibility if someone does not have consciousness of responsibility, but only if the individual feels responsible. In that case, it would be good to explain whether there exists some kind of a *cogito* of the group, not just an analogy individual-collective, because that could be an awareness of responsibility.

And the other example is also a complete change of perspective. This summer, one evening in one restaurant in Greece, a young American was beaten to death by some 12 persons in a span of some 20 seconds. They, perpetrators, have all been apprehended. Some of them knew each other, while others joined when the situation, or object in that case, arose. Since there is no more object, there is no group either. When, then, does the responsibility of the group exist? Does the fact that they were all Serbian nationals in that case, satisfy this plural pre-reflective self-awareness? And is that enough? Or is the object, in that case, that American, enough for the constitution of

the group? They will confirm that they acted at the same time, but are they a group or not? And, where can you find this plural pre-reflective self-awareness in that case? Because, they acted. This is a completely different example: they were very active, and we could still not say that they were a group.

H. B. Schmid

The way I imagine this American case is this: clearly they were a group and they knew what they were doing. So then, the knowledge involved, the knowing what it was they were doing, the form of that self-knowledge is plural. The object is the victim on which harm is inflicted by means of their beating up that person together. And the feature in virtue of which this is an intentional joint action is the plural pre-reflective self-knowledge of the agent, and the agent is the individuals together, a plural subject. So they together knew what they were doing, and knew it in the right way, and that's the feature in virtue of which they did it intentionally. So the subject of the act is *them*. Not an extra entity, not an additional subject, but they together. They as one. That would be my description of the situation. Of course, it has nothing to do with nationality, background, just the intention, the feature in virtue of which the act is intentional, that's plural. Let me state the ontological claim. This knowledge is what groups are. This is an ontological claim about subjectivity, that groups are plural pre-reflective self-awareness in the very way in which individual subjects are singular pre-reflective self-awareness. That's how you are a subject, you are a subject in virtue of your being self-aware of your attitudes as yours, under suitable circumstances. I want to argue that there is plural pre-reflective self-awareness, and I would claim there is no awareness without self-awareness. If you are aware of a cup of coffee, there is something inbuilt, and some people say that in deep meditation there is awareness without self-awareness. Maybe experiences of depersonalization are similar, but apart from such phenomena I would say that self-awareness is a feature of any awareness. And if it's plural, it is a group's. Have I understood you and Moritz Schlick correctly, that the claim is that there is no responsibility without feeling responsible? Because that strikes me as a rather untenable claim. I have plenty of examples where there is responsibility without the subject, the perpetrator, feeling responsible.

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Željko Radinković

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Ok, zu Heidegger. Ich möchte diese Gelegenheit nicht so vergehen, um Sie diese Frage zu stellen, die ich auch zu Dan Zahavi gestellt hat. Die betrifft

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dann die Zentralen Thesen und Voraussetzungen Ihrer Intenzionalitätstheorie, auch der Frage der Kollektivenverantwortung aber, vor allem, der Kollektivenintenzionalität. Also, in diesem Zusammenhang möchte ich die Frage nach dem Subjekt, oder eigentlich dem Selbst, vor allem, nach dem Selbst der Intenzionalität und damit auch der Kollektivenverantwortung aus seine Form der Intenzionalität stellen. Meine These ist damit um den Phänomenologischen Gebot zu dem Sachen selbst gerechtzuwerden, schlage ich zusammen mit Heidegger vor, nicht bei der Wahrnehmung oder Anschauung, bei der Gegebenheit, oder wie auch immer verstehende Präsenz, sondern bei der Absenz, um der Sorge anzusetzen. Sorge im Heidegger, stimmen Sie. Sie haben das zwar in einem Aufsatz schön, also die Probleme dieses Heideggerschen Fürsorge Konzepts herausgearbeitet, das gefiel mir sehr. Nur meine Idee ist dass man diese Soziale Dimension der Heideggersher Philosophie, vor allem der Existenzialenontologie, vor seinem Temporalitätskonzept. Also Zeit ist das Konzept (nejasno). Natürlich ist Fürsorge und Mitsein, das sind die Zentrale Punkte, darauf beziehen sich alle, wenn es um die Soziale Dimension oder die Wichtigkeit der Heideggerscher Theorie für diese Soziale Wissenschaft, überhaupt Gesellschaftstheorie geht, also dann bezieht man sich auf die Mitsein, auf die Fürsorge, doch ich meine, Sie sollte das gesamte Konzept betrachten. Das heißt, wenn wir die Frage der Intenzionalität, wenn es um diese Frage geht, dann sollte es auch seine Zukunftskonzept, ich bedachte. Also, ich komme...also, nicht wie bei Husserl, von der Selbstwahrnehmung, Selbstegebenheit, eigentlich der Selbstevidenz, wie auch immer, sondern vor der antizipativen zukunftsorientierte Selbstsorge auszugehen. Die Frage lautet also ob sich so etwas wie Gegebenheit, Präsenz, ursprünglich selbstkonstituieren kann, oder ob es eher dem Zukunftsbezug, also dem Entwurf, der eigentlich Heidegger-gesprochen Seinsentwurf, dass der Primat der Frage der Konstitution zukommt? Also überhaupt ist der Intenzion? Ich wollte ursprünglich vom Levinas sprechen, jetzt haben wir keine Zeit...Aber da ich diese These auch gestellt habe, nur betonen dass es auch hier vom eine Art vom Absenz geht, die konstitutiv ist. Also, beziehungsweise, eine absolute Differenz im Hinblick auf dem Anderen. Also, absolute Transzendenz, voraus sich danach eine Absolute und eine absolute Asymmetrie der Verantwortung ausgibt. Also, die Zentrale Funktion des Wahrnehmungsbegriffs scheint hier auch ein Problem zu sein. ... Also, ist diese Zukunftsbezug ursprünglich konstitutiv? Ich würde das bejahen.

H.B. Schmid

Thank you very much. I guess the basic question is, is there some *Zukunftsbezug* in intentional states, and how does it play out in the collective case. And, as an additional challenge: aren't Dan Zahavi and I too much committed to this metaphysics of presence, and aren't we ignoring the constitutive

role of absence, for whatever is at stake here. I would say that obviously, for intentional attitudes such as desires or intentions, there is some temporality in the very having of the attitude because these are conditions of satisfaction which have to be met in the future, which cannot be seen as already being fulfilled in the present. If you intend to do something, there's got to be the sense that it has not already been done. So in order to intend, you have to live in time in some sense. I'm not sure, though, concerning cognition, because there are these authors, and, as I realize, you are very liberal here concerning unusual positions. So let me quote another unusual position here: some theologians from the Christian tradition have the concept of the angel, and the angel is a subject, but the only attitude it has is the admiration of God. That's all there is. Now, how is this temporal, is there a sense of death here? Obviously not. It's still an attitude, and maybe angels actually exist, I haven't got any reason to assume that it's a priori impossible for angels to exist, as you seem to assume with your account of the temporality of intentional attitudes. But maybe I misunderstood you.

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The issue of time is interesting for the case of plural subjects, and this is a promising new topic of investigation. I sense that Heidegger's analysis of "being-there" is actually a good starting point. This *Sorgestruktur*, all of that's quite rich and relevant in terms of structure. So how is being-there of the plural kind temporal? How does a group project itself in the future and understand itself from the past? An obvious difference between singular and plural being-there concerns death. Some institutions seem to be premised on the assumption that they are not going to die at all. For example, the Catholic church, *ecclesia militans*, is an idea of being, certainly it's going to end at some point, but it then becomes *ecclesia eterna*. So these people seem to think that the way in which they are together is, in a core sense, really forever. No *Vorlaufen in den Tod* here. And, of course you may now criticize them and say, well, this is like the teenage Sartre who believed he was never going to die.

But I have a somewhat different reading of what Heidegger means to say about death. My reading is the following: What's important about death, about your going to die - and that's the only way in which, according to Heidegger, we are authentic together, that's the only thing we should be saying to each other, everything else is inauthentic - the important thing about death in Heidegger is that it is, in his view, the one possibility in which it is undeniable that you are not replaceable. Somebody can die for you, but nobody can die your death. My interpretation of this, what I think makes this somehow intuitively attractive is - and then he says, that's awareness that you are actually dying right now. And that means, whatever it is that you are doing, it is *your* doing. Somebody may take over your social role, or act on your behalf, but nobody can do your doing. The issue is the indexical singularity of your intentions and actions - and that's quite a formal feature - and

you can explicate this without referring to death. If I am right, what Heidegger wants to point out is that if you're transparent concerning what you are, you know reflectively that your actions are yours and that you are irreplaceable in what it is you are doing. And that's it, that's what makes obvious philosophical sense about Heidegger's thinking on death. And that, I think, plays a big role in the plural case, too. Groups have to come to awareness, an awareness that their actions are theirs. Transparency, reflective transparency means good politics and a knowing what it is we are doing. Because we are doing it anyway, but the knowing of it is important because it's the only way by which we can jointly deliberate and change our ways of life. That has to run through reflective transparency. So how are we going to change our ways? That's reflective transparency. First we have to account for what it is we are doing, and that it is *us* who are doing it.