

Carol Rovane

Why do individuals matter?

There is an unresolved and generally unnoticed contradiction in a conception of the person often associated with the Enlightenment. The conception incorporates two commitments that, while they seem to support each other, can serve only to undermine each other. The first is a commitment to the moral importance of the individual human being. The second is a commitment to the moral importance of rationality.

It does seem that these two commitments should stand and fall together. In fact, they may seem barely distinct from one another. When we consider the first and ask what sets individual human beings apart as having a kind of moral importance not shared by other animals (or mere things), the most salient answer seems to be that only human beings are persons. What sets them

apart as persons is their capacity to engage one another in distinctively interpersonal ways, such as conversation, argument, criticism, moral evaluation, and exchanging promises and contracting with one another. Since this obviously requires rational capacities, it does seem that the second commitment, to the moral importance of rationality, follows upon the first. And the converse would seem to hold as well. If rationality is morally important then so is the human being. For human beings are the only things known to possess the rational capacities required for personhood. (I am simply going to set aside the contested cases of God, angels, and rational automata.)

Why, then, are these two commitments incompatible? The source of the difficulty lies in an implicit assumption about the nature of the *individual*. Key Enlightenment thinkers – Kant prominently among them – took for granted that personhood is a unique property of individual human beings. But it isn't so. A number of human beings may together constitute a single 'group person,' and an individual human being may be the site of multiple persons.

Although it may be said that these possibilities have never been realized in fact,

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they have certainly been contemplated in philosophy and literature. For example, the group person bears a resemblance to Rousseau's *moi commun*, while Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are the most famous fictional case of multiple persons. And it is easy to imagine such cases because they are closely related to some real-life phenomena. Whenever human beings engage in joint endeavors, they achieve in degree the kind of unity characteristic of the individual person. And when human beings suffer from certain dissociative disorders, they may manifest multiple centers of such unity.

Still, my claim that there could literally be group and multiple persons will strike many as counterintuitive, if not downright false. Unfortunately, I cannot fully defend it here, or even fully convey its meaning. I shall only say just enough to get across why someone might take it seriously, and then consider some of its ethical implications.¹

Here is one disturbing implication. If group and multiple persons ever did come into existence, they would exist in the place of the human-size persons who would have existed instead. In other words, if joint endeavors ever did give rise to group persons, there would no longer be any individual persons of human size who could separately be held responsible for those endeavors. It also means that if dissociation ever did give rise to multiple persons, there would no

1 For a book-length treatment of the metaphysical issue, see Carol Rovane, *The Bounds of Agency: An Essay in Revisionary Metaphysics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998). For shorter introductions to the central ideas of the book, see Carol Rovane, "From a Rational Point of View," *Philosophical Topics* 30 (1) (Spring 2002), and Carol Rovane, "A Non-naturalist Account of Personal Identity," in *Naturalism in Question*, ed. Mario De Caro and David Macarthur (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

longer be an underlying self of human size for a therapist to treat. To put the point somewhat flamboyantly: if group agents and alter personalities really were persons, then disbanding the one and curing the other would be a species of murder; correlatively, if we human-size persons ever chose to integrate into group persons or fragment into multiple persons, we would be committing a kind of suicide.

One might wonder whether the possibility of group and multiple persons is really very damaging to the Enlightenment conception of the person. Why not simply correct its mistaken metaphysical assumption about individuality and revise it accordingly? This strategy of response would aim to leave the second commitment, to the moral importance of rationality, just as it is, keeping the tie between rationality and personhood in place; and then it would recast the first commitment, to the moral importance of individual human beings, as a commitment to the moral importance of all rational individuals regardless of their size.

However, we shall see that matters are not quite so straightforward. There are ways in which we currently conceive the moral importance of individual human beings – ways that we have inherited more or less directly from the Enlightenment – that do not carry over to the group and multiple cases. This is not because we don't think rationality is morally important. It is rather because our mistaken metaphysics of the individual informs our understanding of its importance. As a result, the difficulty presented by the cases of group and multiple personhood goes beyond the respects in which they seem counterintuitive; the larger difficulty is that they deprive us of deep-seated metaphysical and moral intuitions about the human case as well.

The argument for the possibility of group and multiple persons proceeds from the following premise: something is a person just in case it can be treated as a person, that is, just in case it is a rational being capable of distinctively interpersonal forms of engagement.

This premise might give offense to some. For it deliberately excludes many human beings from the class of persons, in particular, fetuses, infants, and those who are severely insane, senile, or brain-damaged in some other incapacitating way. Yet, in making this exclusion, the premise does not really depart from the Enlightenment conception of the person. It merely emphasizes its second commitment, to the moral importance of rationality – a commitment that we have not really given up, despite our inclination to count all human beings as persons. It is not as though we believe that there would be room for the concept of a person in a world in which nothing had the capacity for interpersonal forms of engagement. That conceptual tie is very much in place. But we also take for granted what the proponents of the Enlightenment conception of the person took for granted, which is a close tie between rationality and personhood on the one hand, and humanity on the other. We share their mistaken metaphysical assumption that individual human beings are the only things that can qualify as persons.

Along with this assumption comes the belief that rationality is the normal state for a human being. That is why we are prepared to extend the status of personhood to all human beings, even those who lack the capacity for interpersonal forms of engagement. It is either because they have the potential to be persons (fetuses and infants), or once were persons (the senile), or ought to have been persons in the normal course of things

(those who are incapacitated in one way or another). This would have been a perfectly sensible attitude to take toward all human beings if the mistaken metaphysical assumption had been correct. Thus, I want to emphasize that it is not my initial premise that excludes this attitude but rather the metaphysics of individuality.

In any case, the really surprising aspect of the premise is not what it excludes from the class of persons. We have always understood that the concept of a person does not fit certain human beings very well, which explains why in the law we have need for categories like legal majority and legal competence. The real surprise is what the premise includes.

At any rate, let's begin by exploring what follows from the premise – what follows once we assume that something is a person just in case it can be treated as a person, in the sense that involves a capacity to engage in such distinctively interpersonal forms of interaction as conversation, argument, negotiation, making promises, etc.

The first thing to note is that all these forms of interaction aim at rational response. This presupposes that persons are, in some minimal way, responsive to the normative requirements of rationality. I won't try to give an exhaustive specification of these normative requirements. I'll make do with a few examples and an observation about their common goal.

The most general normative requirement that rationality imposes on a person is that the person should arrive at and act upon all-things-considered judgments about what would be best for it to do in the light of all of its beliefs, desires, and other attitudes. Such judgments presuppose a variety of rational activities that together comprise a person's delib-

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erations, such as the following: resolving contradictions among one's beliefs, working out the implications of one's beliefs and other attitudes, ranking one's preferences in a transitive ordering, etc. Each of these rational activities is directed at meeting a specific normative requirement of rationality – consistency, closure, and transitivity of preferences, respectively. Of course, deliberation involves many more rational activities, each of which is similarly aimed at meeting some specific normative requirement of rationality. But it doesn't matter for my argument here what they might happen to be. What matters is that all of these rational activities have a common purpose, which is to contribute to the overarching rational goal of arriving at and acting upon all-things-considered judgments.

I'm going to call the state that would be achieved if a person were to succeed in this endeavor, of arriving at and acting upon all-things-considered judgments, the state of *overall rational unity*. And I'm going to suppose that there is one overarching normative requirement of rationality on persons that incorporates all of the other, more specific requirements like consistency, closure, etc., namely, the normative requirement to achieve overall rational unity.

This overarching normative requirement of rationality is important because it *defines* what it is for an *individual* person to be fully or ideally rational. This is evident in the fact that there is no failure of rationality when a group of persons fails to meet this ideal, only when an individual fails to meet it. So, for example, if I have inconsistent beliefs, then I am guilty of rational failure; but my beliefs may be inconsistent with yours without any rational failure on either of our parts. Thus, *an individual person in the sense at issue is something which is subject to a*

normative requirement to achieve overall rational unity within itself.

A person must also be *committed* to satisfying this requirement. Otherwise, it could not be engaged in distinctively interpersonal ways. For, as I've said, such engagement aims at rational response, and so it must appeal, however implicitly, to a person's commitment to being rational.

It is not immediately obvious why these considerations should undermine the assumption that individual persons must always coincide with individual human beings. On the contrary, they seem to encourage it. The rational capacities required for personhood certainly do belong to human nature (at least in the normal case). And we have just seen that the exercise of these capacities is always directed at satisfying a normative requirement of rationality, which defines what it is for an individual person to be rational. The mistaken assumption would seem to follow fairly directly. It would seem that whenever a human being exercises its naturally given rational capacities, it will be functioning precisely as an individual person.

However, this doesn't follow. Although the human rational capacities must always be directed at achieving rational unity *somewhere*, it needn't be achieved within the biological boundaries by which nature marks one human being off from another. Human beings can exercise their rational capacities together so as to achieve rational unity within groups that are larger than a single human being, and they can also exercise their rational capacities in more restricted ways so as to achieve rational unity within parts that are smaller than a single human being. When this happens, it is not individual human beings but, rather, groups and parts of them that can be treated specifically *as persons*.

The full argument for these claims would take much more than the space of a single essay. But here is a sketch of the central lines of the argument.

I'll start with the case of group persons. When human beings engage in group activities, their joint efforts can take on the characteristics of individual rationality. Think, for example, of marital partners who deliberate together about how to manage their homes, families, and other joint concerns. They may in the course of such joint deliberations do as a pair all of the things that individuals characteristically do in order to be rational: pool their information, resolve conflicts between them, rank their preferences together, and, even, arrive at all-things-considered judgments together about what they should together think and do – where the 'all' in question comprises all of their pooled deliberative considerations. The same can also happen in a less thoroughgoing way when colleagues coauthor papers, or when teams of scientists design and run experiments together, or when corporations set up and follow corporate plans.

We tend to assume that such joint endeavors leave human beings intact as individual persons in their own rights. Insofar as that is so, it should be possible to engage those human beings separately in conversation, argument, and other distinctively interpersonal relations. But, sometimes, this is not possible. Sometimes, marital partners won't speak for themselves. Their commitment to deliberating together is so complete and so effective that everything they say and do reflects their joint deliberations and never their separate points of view. The same can happen to coauthors, team members, and bureaucrats. The kind of case I have in mind is not one in which human participants sim-

ply wish to give voice to the larger viewpoint of the groups to which they belong. Instead, I have in mind the case in which the human constituents of the group are not committed to having separate viewpoints of their own. That is, they are not committed to achieving overall rational unity separately within their individual human lives. Yet it is not because they lack rational capacities. It is because those rational capacities are directed in a different way, so as to help fulfill a larger commitment on the part of a whole group to achieve overall rational unity within it.

One might object that this commitment on the part of a group would still leave the individual human beings who constitute it intact as persons in their own rights. In response to this objection, it is admittedly difficult to describe the process by which separate human beings come to constitute a group person without giving the impression that the unity of a group would always have to be actively maintained through *individual* commitments on the part of its human members. And this impression is, precisely, the impression that those human members would necessarily remain individual persons in their own rights, even as they constitute the unity of a group. However, this impression is mistaken.

What is true is that a group person may *initially* be brought into existence through the individual decisions and actions of smaller persons, typically of human size. But if these initial efforts have been successful, then a group person has been brought into existence. And, thereafter, at least some of the intentional episodes that occur within the human organisms involved will be episodes in the life of a group person rather than in the separate lives of human-size persons.

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Here it is important not to confuse a *phenomenological* point of view with a *rational* point of view. The former is necessary for consciousness, and it is possessed by any animal capable of sentience. The latter is necessary for distinctively interpersonal forms of engagement, and it is possessed only by those things that reflectively embrace a commitment to achieving rational unity within themselves.

In the example under discussion, the separate phenomenological points of view of the human members of the marriage do not possess separate rational points of view in this sense. They together constitute a site of rational activity aimed at achieving rational unity within the larger boundaries of the marriage. When this happens, the human members of the marriage can no longer be engaged as individual persons in their own rights. And the fact that they remain intact as individual animals with separate phenomenological points of view does not suffice to show that they also remain individual persons, as the objection alleges.

I turn now to the case of multiple persons coexisting within an individual human animal. The considerations that support the possibility of this case are really generalizations from the group case. In fact, I propose to model *all* cases of rational unity on the unity of a group. My claim is that rational unity doesn't *just happen* as the inevitable product of some natural process, such as the biological development of a human being. Rational unity is something that is *deliberately achieved* for the sake of some *further end*. A group of human beings can do things as a unified person that no human-size person can do on its own. And that may constitute a *reason* why human-size persons might initially decide to

pool their efforts in a joint endeavor. If they implement their decision, they no longer maintain separate rational points of view. So what perpetuates the group person once it has been brought into existence is not separate commitments on the part of its human constituents; it is up to the group itself to maintain its existence by continuing to strive for overall rational unity within it.

When we view the unity of a human-size person along these lines, we must see it as deliberately achieved for the sake of some further end that couldn't be accomplished without it. The appropriate contrast here is with an impulsive human being who doesn't strive for rational unity – who doesn't deliberate at all but simply follows current desires unreflectively and uncritically. Since the capacity to deliberate belongs to human nature, perhaps it is fair to say that such a human being is acting against its nature. But that doesn't harm my point, which is that when human beings do exercise their rational capacities, they are *generating* rational unity through their intentional efforts. And it is part of this same point that these capacities can be directed at the achievement of rational unity within different boundaries. An initially impulsive human being might come to strive for rational unity within each day, week, month, year, or even a whole lifetime. The last goal was celebrated by Plato as part of the just life and by Aristotle as part of the virtuous life.

In a less high-minded way, we now typically pursue the project of living a unified human life for the sake of other, more specific projects, such as lifelong personal relationships (friendships, marriages, families) and, also, careers. But I want to emphasize that these are *projects* – and they are *optional*. It is possible for human beings to strive for much *less*

rational unity than these projects require and still be striving for rational unity. And, sometimes, the result may be relatively independent spheres of rational unity with a significant degree of segregation. Such segregation is evident in degree in the lives of many human beings whom we find it possible to treat for the most part as roughly human-size persons.

We may find, for example, that, when we visit the corporation, our friend 'becomes' a bureaucrat who cannot recognize the demands of friendship at all. This shows that our friend's life actually takes up a bit less than the whole human being we are faced with, the rest of which literally belongs to the life of the corporation. According to this account of personal identity, 'role playing' would not aptly characterize this phenomenon. It would be better characterized as a fragmentation of the human being into relatively independent spheres of rational activity, so as to generate separate rational points of view that can be separately engaged.

Of course, group endeavors do not necessarily result in such fragmentation. In principle, they can completely absorb the human lives that they involve (as in the armed forces and certain very intense marriages). But when a group endeavor does not completely absorb the human lives it involves, there is a consequent split in those lives. I propose to conceive multiple persons along precisely these lines.

The only difference is that the separate rational points of view of multiple persons need not be imposed by involvements in group projects but, rather, by involvements in other sorts of projects that are impossible for a single human being to pursue in a wholehearted and unified way. When a human being's projects are numerous, and when they

have nothing to do with one another, this may make it pointless to strive to achieve overall rational unity within that human life. And it may be a rational response to let go of the commitment to achieve such overall rational unity within that human life and to strive instead for as many pockets of rational unity as are required for the pursuit of those relatively independent projects.

So, just as a group person may dissolve itself for the sake of human-size projects that would otherwise have to be forsaken for the sake of the group's overall unity, a human-size person may dissolve itself for the sake of even smaller projects that would otherwise have to be forsaken for the sake of the human being's overall unity. In such conditions, we will find the emergence of multiple persons within that human being, each of whom can be treated as a person in its own right.

I don't want to suggest that this is typically how persons come into existence, through the breakdown of some larger unity. I think it usually occurs in the reverse direction, when there is something worth doing for the sake of which more unity needs to be achieved. That is certainly how group persons would typically come to be. And I'm suggesting the same holds for human-size persons. That is why multiple persons are also possible.

Thus, it is not human nature, but intentional activity and the undertaking of appropriate projects, that yields the commitment to rational unity characteristic of the individual person, and that sometimes transforms a human being into a person of human size. There is no law of nature that precludes a less ambitious transformation into multiple persons instead. To a certain extent, this happens when human-size persons give over portions of their lives to group en-

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deavors. And, to a certain extent, this happens in all human lives.

In my introductory remarks, I warned that it is not a straightforward matter how proponents of the Enlightenment conception of the person should respond to the possibilities of group and multiple persons. I next want to explore some of the ways in which our thinking about the moral importance of both humanity and rationality are hard to transfer to the group and multiple cases. Because Enlightenment assumptions run deep in our moral intuitions, they tend to promote a certain reserve and even skepticism about group and multiple persons. But I believe the more appropriate response is to turn a critical eye on the intuitions they offend.

Consider the following intuitive way of describing the moral importance of the individual human being. Each human being possesses a kind of intrinsic worth that cannot be compared or measured against anything else; therefore, it merits an *entirely separate moral regard*. This idea of an entirely separate moral regard is embodied in our ordinary conceptions of individual rights. It is also the central theme of Kant's moral philosophy. According to Kant, each individual human being is an *end in itself*; as such, its worth is not only intrinsic, but absolute and unconditional. This means we must never think of the worth of a given human life as instrumental to some greater or higher good – or as determined by its character, its actions, or even its well-being. It is simply good in itself in a sense that precludes all comparative evaluation. And the whole point of Kant's categorical imperative is to specify a kind of respect that is due to each individual human being by virtue of its absolute and unconditional worth.

It seems to me that we can't fully grasp the content of any moral attitude without gaining a sense of what justifies it. And so it is with our attitude concerning the moral importance of the individual human being. If we really want to comprehend what it means to view human beings as having the kind of unconditional worth that merits separate moral regard – as loci of rights and objects of respect – we need to consider what would justify our viewing them in these ways.

One justification derives from a rationalist approach to the foundations of value that is more or less inspired by Kant. The approach starts from a fairly compelling idea. If anything has any value at all, it is only because there are things with points of view from which value can be apprehended. In the last section, I distinguished two kinds of point of view: the phenomenological point of view of consciousness, and the rational point of view of deliberation and action. Animals, who are merely sentient but not rational, have the first kind but not the second. That is, they have phenomenological points of view from which there is something it is like for them to undergo their sensory experiences, but they don't have rational points of view from which to reflect on what they have reason to think and do. Perhaps it is right to say that sentient animals implicitly care how their experiences go, insofar as their experiences can be more or less pleasant. But, all the same, they cannot apprehend any value in their experiences. That would require them to have a critical perspective on their own caring responses. They would have to be able to reflect on whether and why they ought to care in the ways that they do care, where such critical reflection would involve identifying reasons why anyone ought to care in these ways.

This obviously requires the exercise of rational capacities from a rational point of view. And so it follows, on this general approach to the foundations of value, there could be no value at all unless there were rational beings capable of the sort of critical reflection by which value can be apprehended. Given the mistaken metaphysical assumption that human beings are the only rational beings, it follows that human beings are the ultimate precondition of all other values. Because they are the precondition of all other values, their value cannot be measured or compared against those other values. Rather, their worth is absolute and unconditional.

Although I don't think we ought to embrace this Kantian line of thought, I do think that many of our intuitions about the moral importance of individual human beings are implicitly committed to it. This becomes apparent as soon as we consider the ways in which it is challenged by the arguments for group and multiple persons.

Group and multiple persons are not ends in themselves. They exist for the sake of other ends, which their existence makes it possible to pursue. It follows that their existence is not something of absolute or unconditional worth, which cannot be measured against other things. Their worth is bound up with the worth of their projects. And, in consequence, it is entirely appropriate for them to ask whether they ought to exist as the size persons they are, or whether there are other projects that would be more worth pursuing than theirs, for the sake of which they ought to integrate into group persons or fragment into multiple persons.

These forms of self-assessment need not push them into the utilitarians' conception of the moral good, as the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

One notorious difficulty with such an aggregative conception of the moral good is that it may require us to sacrifice some individuals for the greater good of a greater number – thereby contradicting our intuitions about the moral importance of each individual. I'm saying that group and multiple persons may raise and answer questions about the relative merits of their own existence, as opposed to the other possible persons they could help to bring into existence, without being forced into this aggregative way of thinking about the moral good. What they can't do, however, is resist the utilitarian position by attributing to themselves the kind of worth that Kant attributed to individual human beings. For, to repeat, their value is not incomparable, immeasurable, absolute, or unconditional – and they are not ends in themselves.

Thus, multiple and group persons cannot play the foundational role that Kant ascribed to the individual human being. But, if I am right, neither can the individual human being. The only thing that could possibly play that foundational role is a *rational individual*. And the burden of my argument is that all rational individuals are emergent beings who exist for the sake of other ends. As such, they cannot serve as the ultimate precondition for all other value. If this is why individual persons are supposed to have the kind of unconditional worth that merits separate moral regard, then none of them do – not group persons, not multiple persons, and not even persons of human size.

Despite all I have said, it may still seem that human beings must be morally important in some way that I have not registered. Moreover, they must be important qua individuals and not just qua raw material from which persons may emerge.

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This may be so. But if it is so, it is not because human beings are persons in the sense that goes together with the Enlightenment emphasis on rationality. It is rather because they are animals.

There is room to argue that each sentient animal merits a kind of separate moral regard. As I've noted, sentience requires the possession of a phenomenological point of view from which there is something it is like to undergo sensory experiences. And such a point of view is, in some ways, like a world unto itself in which all that matters is how things are there. This suggests a moral reading of Wittgenstein's line in the *Tractatus*, that what the solipsist means is quite correct: when a sentient animal suffers, its whole world is bad; and when we relieve its suffering, we thereby ameliorate a whole world. I don't know if it follows that we are obliged to show separate moral regard to each sentient animal. But we often do so in fact, as shown by our capacity to take moral satisfaction in relieving the suffering of just one, without giving any thought to the plight of the rest (as a utilitarian would think we should).

Undoubtedly some of our moral responses to individual human beings are along these lines. But this is a far cry from displaying the sort of moral respect that Kant thought we owe to human beings. And it is certainly no way to try to save the Enlightenment conception of the person to which he gave such powerful and moving expression. If it saves the first commitment of that conception, to the moral importance of the individual human being, it does so only by letting go entirely of the second, to the moral importance of rationality.

It does seem to me that the Enlightenment conception of the person got this much right: our sense that human beings hold a distinctive moral importance is bound up with our sense that rational-

ity is morally important, and this in turn is bound up with our sense that human beings are persons. However, once we recognize the possibilities of group and multiple persons, we must concede that no persons – not even persons of human size – can have exactly the sort of moral importance human beings would have had if they had been the unique case of personhood.

I cannot resist pointing out that virtually all critics of the Enlightenment have shared the mistaken assumption about individuality that informs the Enlightenment conception of the person. This includes the critics who have come closest to recognizing the possibilities of group and multiple personhood. I have in mind two lines of criticism in particular, both of which take issue with the way in which the Enlightenment portrays the human individual.

One standard complaint about Enlightenment politics and morals is that it considers the individual human being in abstraction from its affiliations with others, as something whose existence and identity is completely separate from others. The complaint is that this overlooks the ways in which a human being's primary identity typically derives from its membership in a particular religious, national, ethnic, economic, or other group. And this has led to much theorizing of 'group identity.' However, it is never suggested in discussions of group identity, as I am suggesting, that the human constituents of a group might fail to be persons in their own rights due to the existence of a group person. The possessors of group identity are always portrayed as individual human beings. They are assumed to be the only real – and, indeed, the only possible – persons. (This comes through very clearly in connection with group rights. When rights are

claimed on behalf of groups, the rights are not conceived as attaching to the group itself, as if the group were a person in its own right. The real claimants to group rights are a group's human constituents.) Thus, the critics who take issue with the Enlightenment emphasis on the separateness of persons nevertheless share the mistaken assumption that persons are always of human size.

Just as Enlightenment thinkers conceived of individual human beings as being separate from one another, they also thought of them as possessing the sort of internal unity mandated by the normative requirements of rationality. Another important line of criticism recommends that human beings forsake this normative ideal of rational unity in favor of more 'multiple' ways of being. This may sound like a call to bring multiple persons into existence. But if it were really that, it would have to be intended as a call to suicide. For if any multiple persons were ever brought into existence, they would take the place of the human-size persons who had formerly existed in their stead. As far as I can see, this is not how the call to multiplicity is generally intended. It is simply a recommendation that human beings pursue less rational forms of life. And this leaves in place the mistaken assumption that the only individuals who could possibly pursue any form of life – rationally unified or not – are persons of human size.

I don't think it is a failure of nerve that has kept critics of the Enlightenment from acknowledging the twin possibilities of group and multiple persons. Rather it is an implicit allegiance to the two commitments that make up the Enlightenment conception of the person, which is still governed, as it has always been, by a bundle of moral intuitions that require the mistaken metaphysics of the individual.