We, They, You
Persons in the Plural

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Introduction

There are states and football teams, faculties and punk bands. And there is a feeling that these entities have something in common, that they belong to one and the same ontological category. And that they differ from, e.g., electrons, tables, grizzly bears, a 10-Euro-bill, the new president, the inauguration of the new president, and the fact that I give a lecture. In this talk, I want to argue that the category that fits to the first group of examples but not to the second is the category of unified plural persons.

To argue thus, I will first discuss several categorial distinctions. I will start with introducing status objects and plural objects, two not so well known ontological categories that are rather new in the discussion. Then I will say something about the more traditional categories of substances and persons. Having done that I will distinguish between different kinds of persons, of which natural persons are only one kind, though the kind to which we ourselves belong. Having come so far, I can then categorise the examples and reach my conclusion.

Status Objects and Non-Status-Objects

The first categorial distinction I want to discuss is the distinction between status objects and non-status objects (i.e. such objects that are no status objects). Status objects are somewhat of an ontological scandal. As John Searle puts it so nicely: 'In a sense there are things that exist only because we believe them to exist.'[1] These things are status objects. Searle's examples are money, property, governments, and marriages. Nothing in the world would count as anything on this list, if no one ever thought it to be such a thing. Thus status objects are belief-dependent things, but they are not normally themselves beliefs. In short, status objects are belief-dependent non-beliefs.

These beliefs on which status objects depend are thoughts about something.[2] I believe, for example, that a certain piece of paper is money, that it is, say, a 10-Euro-note. I believe about certain human beings that they form the German government, about a certain event in a church that it is a wedding, about a certain house that it is my property and not yours. If similar things can be said of all status objects, then all status objects depend not only on beliefs, but also on non-status objects. Status objects, then, are non-status objects plus a certain status, which comes about by certain beliefs. In Searle's analysis, a status arises by a constitutive rule or a system of such rules, which all have

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1 Searle 1995, 1.

2 At least as a rule – possible exceptions of this rule are hinted at in Smith 2003.

the form 'X counts as Y in the context K':[3] so-and-so counts as such-and-such in this-and-this context.

Status objects as such are not described by natural sciences. They are not natural but non-natural things; indeed, they are in a sense social things.[4] But this does not imply that status objects are unacceptable for those who favour a naturalist ontology. This is one of the results Searle argues for in his book *The Construction of Social Reality*. Though we start from those entities that are described by modern physics and evolutionary biology, we can transcend the boundaries of the scientific realm by means of constitutive rules of the counts-as form.

The president, the table and the 10-Euro-note: none of them is a natural entity. Neither physics nor biology knows anything about tables, bank-notes or presidents. Somehow, obviously, there is a difference between tables and bank-notes. Searle puts it thus: In calling something a table we ascribe some causal usage function: the table has to possess certain properties that are causally relevant for a certain use of this thing. On the other hand, when we call something a 10-Euro-note, the physical properties of this thing have not much causal relevance for the functions a 10-Euro-note can fulfil. In general, these functions can as well be fulfilled by five 2-Euro-coins, by a cheque, by swiping a credit card through a card reader, and so on. The physical properties of a table, on the other hand, are relevant for his status as a table. The function of a table cannot be taken over by a lamp, a screw-driver or a mug.

One of Searle's tenets is that social acts are primary in the ontology of the social world.[5] But of course, there are plenty of other kinds of status entities: There are status states of affairs (like the fact that a war is going on), there are status relations (like being the superior of someone), status properties (like being paid well) and, last but not least, status substances (like the new president).

Plural Objects and Single Objects

I will now turn to the distinction between plural objects and single objects. At first glance, the concept of a plural object seems to be quite odd a notion. Isn't an object an individual, one in number by definition? It is, indeed, but this fundamental assumption is not challenged by the concept of a plural object. In fact, a plural object really is *a* plural object, one individual to be referred to by a definite description or a name. What, then, is the plurality involved in plural objects?

The function of a name or definite description is to single out exactly one thing: an individual, a natural kind, a certain kind of stuff, etc. Now, what about such descriptions like 'Whitehead and Russell' or 'Dick, Tom, and Harry', to choose two stock examples? Such phrases I will call plural phrases. Many logicians, among them Frege, would sug-

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[3] Cf. Searle 1995.

[4] Cf. Searle 1995, 26: 'By stipulation I will henceforth use the expression "social fact" to refer to any fact involving collective intentionality.'

[5] Cf. Searle 1995, 36.

gest that one must not treat these phrases isolated from the sentences in which they occur. They understand such sentences as "telescoped" conjunctions.[6] If you have, for example, the statement

(P1) 'Dick, Tom, and Harry had a pint in the pub',

this is only short for

(P2) 'Dick had a pint in the pub and Tom had a pint in the pub and Harry had a pint in the pub'.

This approach works for some examples. It gets a grip on those phrases that have to be understood distributively: the predicate can be applied to every individual named in the plural phrase *salva veritate*.

But this does not work for examples that have to be understood collectively, like

(P3) 'Whitehead and Russell authored the *Principia mathematica*.'

Here, the predicate 'authored the *Principia mathematica*' does only apply to the collective consisting of Whitehead and Russell, not to any of the two alone. Both 'Whitehead authored PM' and 'Russell authored PM' would be imposturous, if 'authored' is meant to mean the same as in (P3). If at all, (P3) could be rephrased as

(P4) 'Whitehead co-authored PM and Russell co-authored PM and nobody else co-authored PM.'

What can be said about single persons here, is that they *co-authored* PM. No single person alone *authored* PM, but a collective of persons did so. Thus we have an example for a plural phrase – 'Whitehead and Russell' – that refers to a collective that has at least one property that neither Whitehead nor Russell share when they are taken for themselves.

While Whitehead and Russell are two men, the collective consisting of Whitehead and Russell is one individual collective. This is, of course, how plural objects can be one and many at the same time: A plural object is one thing that consists of a plurality of other things. And of course, such an individual plural object can be referred to by a definite description or even a proper name. 'The collective that authored PM' is an ex-

[6] For an extensive discussion of the following argument cf. Oliver/Smiley 2001. References for Freges view about plural phrases can be found in note 9, p. 293. It should be noted that Oliver and Smiley themselves dislike the notion of a 'plural object', because in their eyes this term invites 'a confusion between singular reference to a plural object and plural reference' (p. 292). A similar point is made by Hossack 2000, who defends an atomistic ontology, claiming that no complex thing whatsoever really exists.

pression referring to the collective consisting of Whitehead and Russell, and of course we could choose to coin a proper name for the collective consisting of the these two eminent philosophers, say 'Whitesell'. Then we might truly say, 'Whitesell authored PM'.

What seems to be characteristic of plural objects are descriptive, enumerative 'and-names': If a collective C consists of the two things A and B, then the plural phrase 'A and B' is a name for C. Obviously, not all plural objects can be named by such enumerative phrases, only those that consist of a finite number of known and named members. Thus, having such an and-name is not necessary for being a plural object. Neither is it sufficient. For there are some and-names which happen to denote single individuals, like 'Cicero and Tullius' or 'the most zealous advocate of the Roman republic and the most renown Roman orator'. Both and-names are not successful in picking out a plural object; instead they both refer to one single person, and, as it happens, to one and the same single person, Cicero.

Though these two and-names refer to one and the same single person, they have different modal properties. The and-name 'Cicero and Tullius' is composed of two proper names. According to Kripke's account of proper names as rigid designators,[7] proper names refer to the same individual in all possible worlds. As 'Cicero' and 'Tullius' refer to the same man in the actual world, this implies that the and-name 'Cicero and Tullius' refers to one and the same single person in all possible worlds. Things are different with Cicero's other and-name, 'the most zealous advocate of the Roman republic and the most renown Roman orator'. For this and-name is composed of definite descriptions, which are, according to Kripke, non-rigid designators which may refer to different individuals in different possible worlds. In the actual world, the two definite descriptions 'the most zealous advocate of the Roman republic' and 'the most renown Roman orator' pick out the same man, Cicero. But had history chosen to take a different development, these two descriptions might have referred to two distinct persons, say Caesar and Catiline. Thus, an and-name referring to a plural object is necessarily referring to a plural object, if it is composed of rigid designators only; and it is only contingently referring to a plural object, if it is only composed of non-rigid designators.

As I pointed out, having a descriptive and-name is neither sufficient nor necessary for being a plural object. This should not surprise us too much, because we are not looking for linguistic distinctions, but for ontological categories. The distinction we are looking for is a metaphysical, not a linguistic difference. But the question may arise whether there is really a categorial difference between single objects and plural objects, because a lot of single objects seem to be plural objects at the same time. One and the same thing is at the same time a single chair and a plurality of atoms; one and the same group is at the same time a plurality of persons and, say, a single football team; one and the same human being is at the same time one living being and an agglomeration of billions of cells. Doesn't this all indicate that singularity and plurality are just different *aspects* of the same things? I would like to argue that not: there is more to the difference

[7] Cf. Kripke 1980.

between single objects and plural objects than just being different aspects of same things.

The crucial argument for this claim is that the purportedly identical objects do have quite different conditions for diachronic identity. A chair may survive the exchange, loss or gain of atoms. The surface atoms may go astray due to usage, while the chair still remains the same chair. But a mere collection of atoms is classically defined by an enumeration of its members, which is not apt to survive the exchange, loss or gain of even one atom.[8] Similarly in the case of human beings. While an agglomeration of cells does not remain the same agglomeration of the same cells if any cell comes in or drops out, this is something that continuously happens in complex organisms. A human being remains the same human being, while its body cells are parting again and again, with new cells coming into being and old cells passing away. Thus, chairs are not identical with any collections of atoms, and living beings are not the same as agglomerations of cells.

Nevertheless, there are important ontological relations between a chair and its atoms and between a living being and its cells, though it is not easy to say which one. Here are some candidates:

(a) contingent numerical synchronic identity (as opposed to diachronic identity) – a very controversial concept,
(b) spatio-temporal coincidence – a less controversial concept,
(c) ontological dependence, maybe restricted to the first moment of existence (essentiality of origin), and so on.

Let us call any such relation which is appropriate a p-relation. Then in many cases, indeed for all middlesized material objects, the following holds:

(P5) For a single object S there is a plural object P and a p-relation R such that R obtains between S and P.

We have to distinguish proper plural objects from such single objects that are, so to speak, unifications of plural objects. Such a single object I will call 'unified plural object'. Those eleven football players who won the match the other day are a proper plural object, whereas the team of Manchester United that won that match is a unified plural object. To spell out the interrelations between plural objects and the related unified plural objects will be work for the future. Here it must suffice to mention some properties of typical plural objects: (a) Often they are defined enumeratively. (b) They are at times

[8] Cf. Locke, *Essay* II 27: Of Identity and Diversity, § 3 (ed. Nidditch, p. 330): '[…] if two or more Atoms be joined together into the same Mass, […] the Mass, consisting of the same Atoms, must be the same Mass, or the same Body, let the parts be never so differently jumbled. But if one of these Atoms be taken away, or one new one added, it is no longer the same mass or the same Body.'

arbitrarily divided from their environment; they are 'fiat objects'.[9] (c) They cannot survive the exchange of members. (d) Often the same members also form certain single objects, which in many cases can be considered as unified plural objects.

Substances and Non-Substances

The next categorial distinction I want to draw is that between substances and non-substances. This is an old and honourable distinction, dating back at least to the days of Aristotle. I will give a list of properties of substances, which in similar form can indeed also be found in Aristotle:[10]

(S1) Substances are only subjects of predications; they cannot themselves be predicated of other things.
(S2) They are not 'in' other things, but other things (like qualities and quantities) are 'in' them.
(S3) Substances are individuals.
(S4) Substances are entities that have no temporal parts. They are at every moment of their existence present as a whole. They are 'endurers' – as opposed to 'perdurers' like events and processes, which have temporal parts and are therefore at no point present as a whole.[11]
(S5) Those entities that are ontologically basic are substances.

Examples for substances are: Socrates, a lion, the lecture hall, and the president. Non-substances are qualities like red or heavy, quantities like being three meters long or being a dozen, relations like being father of someone, places or times. Now, if substances have the mentioned properties, is it possible for non-substances to have these properties?

(S1*) Non-substances can be subjects of predications, but they can also be predicated of other things. Redness, for example, can be predicated of a lion, and the length of ten meter can be ascribed to the lecture hall.
(S2*) Many non-substances inhere in other things (namely substances), without which they would not exist. The redness, for example, is 'in' the lion, but nothing is 'in' the redness.

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[9] Cf. Smith 2001.

[10] Cf. especially Aristotle's *Categories*, chapters 2 and 5.

[11] For accounts of this difference cf. Lewis 1986, 202 and Lowe 2002, 49-58. While sometimes the enduring/perduring difference is seen as a difference between two alternative theories for the same entities, I think there are in fact two kinds of entities requiring two different theories. Thus I am an 'endurance theorist' for endurers like substances and persons and a 'perdurance theorist' for perdurers like processes and events.

(S3*) Some non-substances are also individuals. Modern philosophers call them 'tropes'.[12]

(S4*) Some non-substances are also endurers; others, like events and processes, are perdurers. (Non-substances that are endurers are traditionally called accidents.)

(S5*) Non-substances are ontologically dependent entities: they presuppose substances.

If we look at these two lists of properties of substances and non-substances, the following criterion for substances suggests itself:

(S6) X is a substance, if and only if
(a) X has no temporal parts (i.e. X is an endurer) and
(b) X cannot be predicated of other things and
(c) X does not inhere in anything.

Most of the properties of substances I listed as (S1) to (S5) feature in this definition, except of (S3) and (S5), individuality and basicality. What about them? We do not need to add individuality as a defining property of substance, because it would be redundant: Individuality is the opposite of universality, and only universals can be predicated. Thus the individuality of substances is implied by (b), their non-predicability. Nor would it be wise to add basicality as a defining property of substances, but for other reasons. For basicality is sufficient for being a substance, but not necessary. Or else no complex thing like a living being, a table or even a hydrogene atom would qualify as a substance, let alone such complex things like states or punk bands discussed in this paper.

It is important to note that my concept of substance is inspired by the concept of primary substance in the *Categories*, not by the stronger notion of the *Metaphysics*.[13] But not only Aristotle, also some contemporary philosophers know of stronger notions of substances. For example, Smith holds that a substance is 'a topologically maximal entity', that 'has its own complete bona fide exterior boundary'.[14] It should be clear that this property is not implied by my characterisation of substances in (S6), for (S6) allows also parts of substances to be substances themselves. Not only a cat, but also a cat's tail is a substance in this sense (for Smith it would only be a potential substance), and not only a state is a substance, but also its citizens, its government and its counties are substances according to (S6). Smith's account is designed for spatially extended material objects, it is too strong for social entities.

[12] Cf. the survey of Macdonald 1998 with further references.

[13] There is a vast amount of literature on this topic; cf. e.g. Hübner 2000.

[14] Smith 2001, 139; cf. Smith 1992.

Persons and Non-Persons

The last ontological concept I want to introduce is the concept of a person. The origin of the ontological concept of a person dates nearly as far back as the concept of substance. It was developed by the church fathers to analyse the internal structure of the Trinity, and one of the most influential authorities to be mentioned here is Boethius. Much of modern discussion of the concept starts from Locke. Here is what Locke says about persons:

> […] we must consider what *Person* stands for; which, I think, is a thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider it self as it self, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and as it seems to me essential to it […].[15]

Locke's approach to the concept of a person starts from its cognitive powers. Persons, as Locke sees them, are rational and conscious beings. Indeed, Locke makes consciousness not only an essential property of persons, but also their crucial principle of individuation.[16] For Locke, it is the stream of consciousness, the ability to remember and to foresee a certain future for oneself, that accounts for a person's diachronic identity. But persons are not only thinking beings. Locke's account in these lines totally leaves out the practical dimension of persons. Persons can act. They are the subjects of actions. They are the bearers of rights and responsibilities. They are the place where we find (or at least would search for) freedom of will and freedom of choice. In non-persons, on the other hand, we would not look out for freedom, but for causality; non-persons are never subjects of actions, but only objects involved in events and processes. Of course, Locke also acknowledges that persons are agents. A person remembers her actions (II 27, § 9), and the person is the 'object of reward and punishment' (II 27, § 18). Locke says that 'person' is 'a Forensick Term, appropriating Actions and their Merit, *and so* belongs only to intelligent Agents, capable of a Law, and Happiness, and Misery.'[17]

Here the 'and so' clearly indicates an implication. And while I agree with the implication's antecedent, the practical dimension of persons, I do not agree with Locke's consequence. In the next section I will argue that there are non-natural persons that have no intelligence nor emotions of happiness or misery of there own, but still are agents to which actions and their merit are appropriated.

Boethius, in his famous definition, characterises the person as 'naturae rationabilis individua substantia'. According to this definition, persons are a special kind of sub-

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15 Locke, *Essay* II 27: Of Identity and Diversity, § 9 (ed. Nidditch, p. 335).

16 Cf. Locke, *Essay* II 27, § 9 (ed. Nidditch, p. 335): '[…] as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past Action or Thought, so far reaches the Identity of that *Person*; it is the same *self* now it was then; and it is by the same *self* with this present one that now reflects on it, that that action was done.'

17 Cf. Locke, *Essay* II 27, § 26 (ed. Nidditch, p. 340), italics mine.

stances.[18] That can be quickly checked by a look at the criteria I proposed in the last section: (a) Persons are endurers. As Locke already says, a person can consider itself as itself at different times. There are special principles governing the diachronic identity of persons. (b) Persons can be subjects of predication, but they cannot be predicated of other things. 'Socrates is wise' is a predication, whereas 'The son of Sophroniscos is Socrates' is no predication, but an identity statement. (c) Persons do not inhere in other things, but are themselves bearers of properties. Thus, any person is a substance. All non-substances, therefore, are non-persons, but, of course, there are plenty of substances, like tables and lions, that are no persons.

Kinds of Persons

The kind of persons Locke had before his eyes when writing his *Essay*, were natural persons. Natural persons are those persons which have their personhood by nature. Human beings are the paradigm of natural persons, and according to widespread assumptions, Martians and Vulcanians – if they exist – are further examples of natural persons. Natural persons have consciousness, are rational, can act and we can attribute responsibility and blame to them. But not all persons are natural persons.

For example, presidents are persons. They are not bare natural persons, like George or Ludger. Physics and biology know nothing about presidents. Presidents are status persons, they are natural persons plus a certain status. This status can be expressed using Searle's counts-as phrases: 'George counts as the president of the United States of America.' The president of the United States is, of course, a juridical person. Certain rights and obligations are connected with having this status. All juridical persons are status persons, but not all status persons are juridical persons.[19]

Of course, at one and the same time only one single natural person can be president. Thus, a president is a single person, it is a single status person. To the collective of Whitehead and Russell, on the other hand, belong two persons. Thus, the plural phrase 'Whitehead and Russell' refers to a plural person. A football team consists of eleven players; it is a plural object with a certain status which unites these eleven players: it is a unified plural status object.

By now we have a twofold distinction of persons. We have natural persons versus status persons, and we have single persons versus plural persons. In combination, we get the following four kinds of persons:

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[18] Cf. Boethius, *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium* III (ed. Elsässer, p. 74).

[19] For a discussion of juridical persons cf. the contributions to a workshop on this topic, documented in Kanzian/Quitterer/Runggaldier (eds.) 2003.

Persons	without status	plus status
single persons	non-status single persons (= natural persons)	status single persons
plural persons	non-status plural persons	status plural persons (= unified plural person)

Persons as Agents

Now collectives and football teams do not have a consciousness on their own. There is no 'super mind floating over individual minds',[20] no team consciousness or collective spirit. Thus what is the most important property of persons from Locke's perspective, i.e. of natural persons, is not a property of plural persons or unified plural persons. Even the president has no consciousness that is distinct from George's consciousness. But then the question arises what reason we have at all to call these entities persons? I think it is the fact that these entities can act, too. That we can ascribe to them responsibility and blame. That they can be plaintiffs or defendants in court.[21]

Unlike Locke, many other philosophers saw the capability to act as the prime token of personhood. So, for example, did Aquinas, for whom persons can rule over their own acts and 'are not only acted upon, like other things, but act by themselves'.[22] In a similar vein, Kant defines a person as 'a subject whose acts are capable of appropriation'.[23]

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[20] Searle 1995, 25.

[21] In a similar vein, Wildfeuer 2000, 5 stresses the practical dimension of natural persons: 'Dem Menschen wird Personsein zugeschrieben, weil er individuelles sittliches Subjekt ('moral agent'), mithin ein Wesen, dem grundsätzlich das Vermögen […] zukommt, sich in Freiheit durch Vernunft zum Handeln zu bestimmen, das daher zu sich selbst […] sowie zu seiner Mit- und Umwelt […] in ein bewusstes Verhältnis treten, Verantwortung und Pflichten übernehmen (Zurechenbarkeit), Zwecke und Interessen verfolgen sowie seiner Zukunft entwurfsoffen zu einem einmaligen, unverwechselbaren Schicksal gestalten kann.' (italics deleted)

[22] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I 29, 1: 'Sed adhuc quodam specialiori et perfectiori modo invenitur particulare et individuum in substantiis rationalibus, quae habent dominium sui actus, et non solum aguntur, sicut alia, sed per se agunt: actiones autem in singularibus sunt. Et ideo etiam inter ceteras substantias quoddam speciale nomen habent singularia rationalis naturae. Et hoc nomen est persona. Et ideo in praedicta definitione personae ponitur substantia individua, inquantum significat singulare in genere substantiae: additur autem rationalis naturae, inquantum significat singulare in rationalibus substantiis.'

[23] Kant, *Metaphysik der Sitten*, AB 22: 'Person ist dasjenige Subjekt, dessen Handlungen einer Zurechnung fähig sind.' Kant continues: 'Die moralische Persönlichkeit ist also nichts anderes, als die Freiheit eines vernünftigen Wesens unter moralischen Gesetzen (die psychologische aber bloß das Vermögen, sich seiner selbst in den verschiedenen Zuständen, der Identität seines Daseins bewußt zu werden), woraus dann folgt, daß eine Person keinen anderen Gesetzen, als denen, die sie (entweder allein, oder wenigstens zugleich mit anderen) sich selbst gibt, unterworfen ist.'

Also Hobbes, who is an older contemporary of Locke, puts much more stress on a person's capability to act, and for this reason personhood is in Hobbes' eyes not restricted to natural persons:

> Person is she, to whom words and actions are attributed, either her own or those by an other; if her own, it is a natural person, if by another, it is a constructed person (*persona fictitia*).[24]

Collective actions, a now much debated topic in philosophy, are nothing else but the actions of groups. States can declare war and can sign peace contracts, a faculty can elect a new dean, a football team can win the championship, and a punk band can play punk. Thus all the examples from the first group prove to be persons. They are no natural persons, of course, and neither is the new president a natural person (although, of course, those who are president are natural persons). They are all non-natural persons: The president is a single status person, the other examples are unified plural status persons.

All examples from the first group consist of a plurality of natural persons. Nobody can play football alone. I don't know whether this also applies to punk, but a punk *band* with only one member seems to be even stranger than punk itself. Maybe a state that consists of one person only is not a contradiction in terms, but normally states consist of a huge number of citizens. To make a long story short: Groups are paradigmatic unified plural objects. They are unified plural objects that consist of persons. And at least some of them do not only consist of persons, but also partake in personhood themselves. Of course, plural persons and unified plural persons can, in turn, consist of other plural persons or unified plural persons. But, obviously, this cannot be so all the way down: In the end, there have to be 'real' natural persons that constitute the plural persons. When we use a personal pronoun in the plural, like 'we', 'they' or 'you', it is normally a plural person or a unified plural person we refer to. The broad variety of our use of these pronouns indicates that there is also a broad variety to construe plural persons, with quite different kinds of membership-relations and identity criteria.

Conclusion

I have discussed a whole bunch of concepts: What is a substance, a person, a plural object, a status object? By way of visualisation, we can summarise the many ontological distinctions I proposed in this paper in the following porphyric tree:

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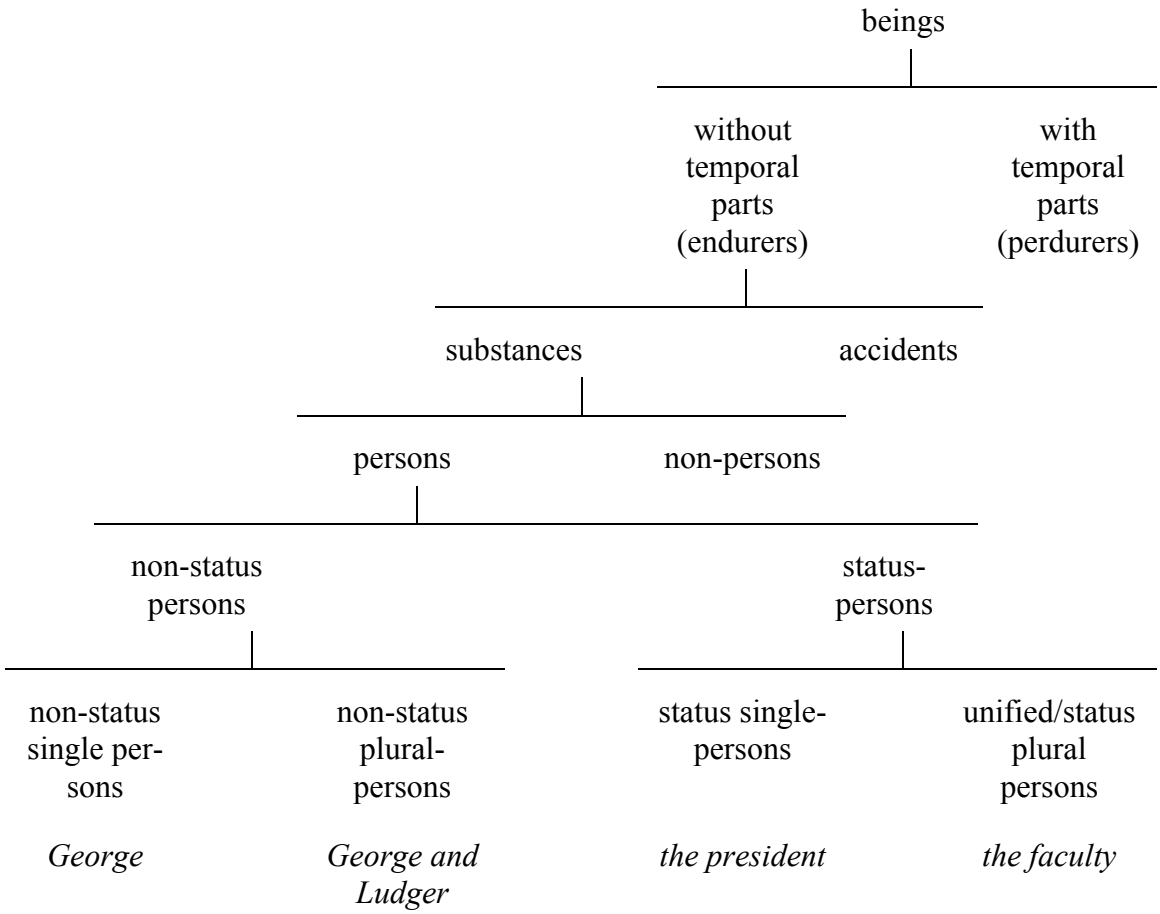
[24] Hobbes, *De homine*, ch. 15; my translation (ed. Molesworth, vol. II, p. 130): '*persona est, cui verba et actiones attribuuntur vel suae vel alienae:* si suae, persona *naturalis* est; si alienae, *fictitia* est.'



I started the discussion with two lists of examples. List 1 comprised states and football teams, faculties and punk bands. List 2 comprised electrons, tables, grizzly bears, 10-Euro-notes, the new president, his inauguration, and the fact that I am giving a lecture. All examples from the list 1 are persons, but not all of the second list. Other than the president himself (who is a person), his inauguration is excluded, because it is an event and not a substance, as well as the fact that I give a lecture, because this is a fact or state of affairs rather than a substance. Electrons, grizzly bears, tables and a 10-Euro-bill are all substances, though of different kinds, but not persons. The president and all the items from the first group are persons, and none of them is a natural person. The president, though, is a mere single status person, while all the items from the first group are unified plural status person. And this was to be proved.[25]

[25] Many thanks to the audience in Bielefeld for inspiring comments and to Johannes Hübner, Michael Kober and Wojtek Zelaniec for their valuable remarks on earlier versions of this paper.

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