Corporate Loss of Innocence for the Sake of Accountability

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Peter A. French has argued that for individual human actors the “loss of innocence is a prerequisite for membership in the responsible moral community” (French 1992a, 29) Putting aside what French means by this claim for the time being, it is anomalous that he never mentions this criterion in his well-known arguments for the claim that corporations are members equal to individual human actors in the moral community (see French 1979, 1982, 1995). The moral community being constituted of entities that can be appropriately praised or blamed for the moral values of their actions. In his arguments concerning responsibility ascriptions, French applies nothing more than functionalist criteria for what it is to be a decision-maker as grounds for his view that corporations are intentional actors. In addition, French asserts that being an intentional actor is all that is necessary for a corporation to join the moral community. In order to begin to address the above anomaly, we first need to illuminate the criterion of the loss of innocence provided by French, as well as how this illumination impinges on French’s view of corporations as responsible actors. Only following such an analysis, may we even begin to advance to considering how the criterion may effect our conception of the membership of the responsible community vis-à-vis individual persons and corporations.

The analysis below will unfold in the following manner. After presenting an outline of French’s familiar view of corporations as moral actors, a more extensive interpretation of French’s criterion of the loss of innocence will be offered. Based on this interpretation, it will be argued that corporations can fulfill one significant element of the loss of innocence. As such, corporations do remain fit subjects of moral evaluation and members of the moral community. In contrast, it will be argued that corporations cannot fulfill another significant element of the criterion that would allow them to be full-blown responsible actors on par with ordinary human individuals. In order to accommodate these results for the purposes of maintaining a coherent picture of responsibility ascription, a simple distinction in understanding membership of the moral community will be proposed. This is a distinction between responsible and accountable actors.

Corporate Moral Actors: An Outline

French has argued for over two decades that corporations are fit moral subjects (i.e., moral agents or actors), because they fulfill the same character-
istics of intentional action displayed by ordinary human beings. According
to French, any entity that has a set of specific characteristics that enable it to
“act for reasons” is an entity capable of intentional action. And, being capable
of acting with intent is necessary for being a proper target of moral praise or
blame; thus, to be a member of the morally responsible community. Because
French’s views are widely known, nothing more than an outline of French’s
argument for his stance need be elucidated here.

French argues, in his most recent work on corporate ethics (French 1995),
that, in order to be a member of the responsible moral community, corpora-
tions need only instantiate some basic characteristics for being intentional
actors. To be an intentional actor, according to French, an entity must have
three functional capacities for planning actions. The three capacities are:

1. Be able to set long and short-term ends.
2. Be able to reason from ends to means (and vice versa).
3. Be able to alter ends and means in response to internal and external
criticism. (See French 1995, 12)

According to French, individual human beings are held to be morally respon-
sible actors or proper targets of moral praise and blame on the basis that they
can act for reasons. And, he argues that the functional abilities to set goals,
choose means to these goals, and adjust behavior in the face of feedback, are
the foundations on which individual persons are able to plan their actions.
As such, persons are morally responsible actors because they can act with a
purpose, with intent, or for reasons. Correspondingly, French argues that cor-
porations can act for reasons, because they also display these capacities. On
this basis, French asserts that corporations are morally responsible actors
as well.

According to French, the structure that allows a corporation to embody
the three functional capacities of planning is its “corporate internal decision
structure” or “CID” (see French 1979, 1982, 1995). The CID is the coupling of
the “organizational flow chart that delineates stations and levels within the
corporation,” procedural rules that govern how decisions are made, and the
corporate policies “that reveal how to recognize decisions that are corporate
information flows through a corporation and reveals the levels of decision-
making authority within a corporate body. The procedural rules and cor-
porate policies express generally how persons in various stations of a
corporation make decisions and the types of decisions that are in accord with
the corporation’s goals and those that are not. These three elements, accord-
ing to French, demonstrate how individuals within a corporation are nodes
within an overall functionalist system of planning, reasoning, and evaluation
that is the corporation as a whole. Thus, any corporate action that has been
the result of being properly processed through its CID is an intentional cor-
porate action, and the action, according to French, need not be reducible to
the intentional actions of any person or set of persons within a corporation.

For example, suppose a corporation produces a specialized product for
the open market. Under French’s account of the CID, the corporation has
designed, manufactured and marketed the product for various corporate reasons (e.g., profit, capturing a market-niche, etc.). And these reasons ultimately constrain the corporation’s structure, policies, etc., that govern the actions and decisions of individual employees. The CID is the arrangements that govern employee behavior such that each individual will contribute to the over-arching goals of the corporation. If employees do their jobs as determined by the CID (whatever their individual reasons or motives for doing so), then their behavior will contribute to the overall intentional actions of the corporation that are programmed to fulfill the corporation’s overall ends. Through the governing structure of the corporate CID, such as in the example just outlined, French concludes that corporations are functionally capable of acting for reasons or with intent quite independently of the reasons or motives of individual employees. It follows that if human actors are members of the responsible moral community since they fulfill the necessary capacities of intentional action, then—according to French—so are those corporations with operative CIDs.

The above outlines French’s rationale for why we ought to treat corporations as equal members of the responsible moral community. It also reveals his use of the functionalist criteria of the CID that has been the brunt of criticism of French’s view of corporations as moral actors (see Danley 1980; Valazquez 1983). Although more detail on French’s account of responsibility ascription will follow in the next section, let us grant that French is correct in asserting that corporations are intentional actors. For, even if he is correct that the CID enables corporations to act with intent, there remain concerns about his views of responsible actors in general and corporations in particular. Such as noted in the introduction, French has argued that beyond being merely intentional actors, human individuals must also “lose their innocence” in order to join the community of responsibility, that is, to be responsible actors that can be proper targets of moral praise and blame. However, he never applies this criterion to his assertions that corporations are moral actors. The next section is devoted to interpreting French’s criterion of the loss of innocence in order to illuminate whether or not corporations can fulfill this further requirement for membership in the moral community.

The Loss of Moral Innocence

In the essay “Losing Innocence for the Sake of Responsibility” (French 1992a, 29–43), French maintains the loss of innocence ostensibly as a necessary condition for any person to be included in the morally responsible community. But, the notion of losing one’s innocence is far from transparent and it is in need of further elucidation.

There are two elements to the loss of innocence in French’s position. One element has the nature of being formal or conceptual. The other element is non-formal, affective or attitudinal, in nature. According to French, each element mutually reinforces and sustains the other in some inchoate way. Although how the formal and non-formal elements mutually support each other is beyond the frame of this paper, illuminating the natures of each element is not.
To illuminate the phenomenon of the loss of innocence and its role as a requisite condition for joining the community of moral responsibility, French renders a sketch of the fall of Adam and Eve. It is in his interpretation of the fall that we can begin to conceptually isolate the formal and non-formal elements of the phenomena of the loss of innocence. Let us begin with the formal element that ties into French’s general account of responsibility ascription.

French argues that in the fall from grace Adam and Eve come to grasp the nature of good and evil (in particular their capacity to do evil). He argues that in grasping the nature of good and evil, it must be that Adam and Eve have acquired a “conceptual enhancement that is somehow associated with the kind of knowledge they gained by eating the fruit” (French ibid., 32). None of this is a terribly curious interpretation of the fall from grace. It is French’s account of the type of conceptual enhancement that is acquired by those deported from Eden that makes his interpretation distinctive. Rather than acquiring some direct knowledge of what is good and what is evil (something which he supposes Adam and Eve already know), the residents of Eden acquire an understanding of the “possibilities” for describing their actions as good or evil (French ibid., 33). French states, “[T]he process of losing innocence is one of learning how to re-describe things” (French ibid., 36). At this point, something must be said about French’s general view of what can make an actor responsible for the moral qualities or effects of her actions. This general view of responsibility ascription illuminates what it is to learn to re-describe a person’s action that is the nucleus of the formal element of the loss of innocence.

French has long maintained that for the effects of an action to be attributable to an individual the action need not have been directly intended by her. All that is necessary is for an actor to be responsible for the impact of an action is that there is at least one true description of the action where the act was intended by him or her (e.g., planned, willed, deliberated over, etc.). A recurrent example that French borrows from Davidson and utilizes to demonstrate this point is that of Hamlet’s killing of Polonius (see Davidson 1980; French 1979, 1982, 1992b, 1995). Hamlet stabs the person behind the arras in his mother’s room. It is intuitive to believe that Hamlet planned to stab King Claudius, but Hamlet actually kills his darling’s father, Polonius. Thus, although Hamlet did not intend to kill Polonius—that was neither his plan nor what he would have willed to happen—the action is still Hamlet’s and he is still responsible for the death of Polonius. Why? It is a true description of Hamlet’s action that “he intended to kill the person behind the arras.” As such, there is at least one true description of the action as an intentional action of Hamlet and, thus, he is responsible for the death of Polonius even if this particular consequence was not his intent. This gloss on French’s account of responsibility ascription opens a window onto how it may be that the loss of innocence is to gain a conceptual enhancement of understanding the range of “possibilities” for re-describing our actions.

To grasp the way in which our actions are subject to a range of possible descriptions is to come to know how very extensive is our capacity to be held responsible and blamed for evil. In seeing that we can be responsible for unintended harms or wrongful violations of others on the basis of otherwise
intended actions is to grasp our full capacity for being capable of evil. This is the heart of the formal element of French’s account of the loss of innocence. This formal element of the loss of innocence helps to explain why it is that French holds that it is a necessary condition for joining the community of responsibility. Without such a cognitive gain a person may not be of a capacity to fully comprehend the moral import of her actions, and she may not engage appropriately in the moral praise or blame of others.

At this juncture, let it be emphasized that what follows is merely a schema of two types of moral actors that capture the general contours of French’s account of the loss of innocence. Although the schema may appear to be rather idealistic, it should be understood as no more than an abstraction of human beings stripped of important empirical idiosyncrasies, for example, individual psychologies and social contexts. It is not the case that this schema of actors is meant to capture realizable ideals; instead, it should be understood as an abstract heuristic device for illuminating the general characteristic of the loss of moral innocence. With this caveat in place, what we need from an interpretation of the loss of moral innocence is a mechanism for distinguishing persons who are morally “innocent” from those who are morally “mature.”

The morally innocent, according to French, are those persons “not having the training to use moral conceptual descriptions with insight” (French 1992a, 36). The morally innocent have not acquired the conceptual ability to re-describe their actions such that they can see themselves as being blameworthy for the unintended wrongs of their otherwise intentional actions. Such persons still hold to an unsophisticated or juvenile idea that they are only culpable for the moral wrongs that they explicitly intended or planned to execute. They are like children who sincerely believe that all unintended effects of their actions are morally excusable on the basis that they “didn’t mean it.” Using J. L. Mackie (1977), French refers to this conception as the “straight rule of responsibility.” In sum, the morally innocent fail to comprehend the ways in which their actions can be re-stated and, as such, understand that they can be held responsible for the unintended effects of actions that are otherwise truly intentional or planned actions. As a consequence, this explains why we do not include children (and others incapable of attaining this conceptual enhancement) as full members of the responsible moral community.

Morally mature individuals have attained the conceptual enhancement of being able to grasp their capacities to do (and be done) evil. For instance, French states of responsibility ascription to persons in another context that, “. . . we are commonly held accountable for actions unintended under the relevant description (though intended under another description)” (French 1992b, 4). Thus, those that can comprehend re-descriptions of their actions, such that they understand that they can be blamed for unintended harm or wrongdoing, are morally mature individuals. And it is morally mature individuals that constitute the membership of the community of responsibility.

The interpretation of the formal element of the loss of innocence is that the morally mature person—one who is allowed to enter the community of
responsibility—understands some measure of the breadth of her ability to do unintended evil. The mature person understands that breadth through coming to grasp the possibilities of re-describing her actions that would make her responsible for any unplanned harms and wrongs of her otherwise intended behaviors. Without acquiring this formal or conceptual enhancement and jettisoning an adherence to the “straight rule of responsibility,” according to French, a person will necessarily remain morally innocent. Leaving the formal element of the loss of innocence for now, let us turn to the more elusive element of French’s account of the loss of innocence.

French alludes to a non-formal, affective or attitudinal change that occurs in an individual that has lost her innocence. As pertains to the loss of innocence, French admits, “The feeling dimension cannot be denied. . . . One feels differently about things because one describes them in a radically different way” (French 1992a, 35). But, what is the nature of this emotional or attitudinal adjustment in the person that has lost her innocence? Here the analysis offered is much more speculative, but it attempts to remain consistent with French’s overall views.

French states of the experience of losing innocence that it, “. . . must be different from the acquisition of what we might call purely objective knowledge . . .” (39). The acquired enhancement of coming to know the full extent of one’s capacity for evil “must be very personal and not passive” (39). It is that each mature person must have reached a personal threshold of “a private experience of evil” (41). In having reached the threshold, according to French, each person will have come to know by acquaintance (rather than description) the “horror” that he or she is capable of being responsible for evil quite independently of his or her plans or intentions (1992a, 40–1). For French, it appears that the experience (whether cataclysmic or incremental) of coming to be acquainted with the capacity to do evil permanently changes a person’s attitudes or about what or how much she cares, in the Frankfurtian sense, about the moral quality of her actions.

When we were ignorant and failed to care much about whether we could do evil, we did so because we believed it was easy to avoid. “If I don’t plan evil, then I won’t be responsible for it.” However, upon coming to be acquainted with our full capacity to do evil upon achieving the conceptual enhancement re-description (and suppose that we generally care to avoid being an agent of evil), we are forced to grapple with and care in a new way about the extent to which we can harm or wrong others. In losing innocence a basic care we have for avoiding the doing of evil—which we once innocently believed to be an easy task—becomes amplified as we become acquainted with the myriad of ways in which we can unintentionally harm or wrong others. Our care is amplified because once we become acquainted with our full capacity to do evil we are motivated to reorganize how we conceive of ourselves as responsible persons, as well as how we act in relation to others in our world. Although French does not argue the following, it may be said that the amplification of our cares is evidenced by whether or not we begin to have, what P. F. Strawson (1974) calls, “self-reactive attitudes” (15). Self-reactive attitudes include such things as guilt, remorse, and regret (or such positive attitudes as pride, self-esteem, etc.). How we care and how
much we care about our actions becomes amplified such that we find it of increased importance to who we are and what we do to engage in closer scrutiny of the moral value of our actions. And this change is witnessed by whether we attitudinally react to our own actions in morally relevant ways. It is the interpretation here that French maintains that a personal acquaintance with evil will propel a re-arrangement of a person’s identification with and attitudes toward the moral values of her actions. In short, she will change what and how she cares about her behaviors.

Consider the following example. Suppose we have the character of Hamlet in such as state that he has yet to lose his innocence. Innocent Hamlet has just run Polonius through with his sword and Ophelia confronts him about how he could do such a thing. Innocent Hamlet would not find her accusation of wrongdoing morally relevant. Innocent Hamlet may feel for his love’s loss but lack a feeling of guilt or remorse, because as a moral innocent he cares about nothing more than the moral value of what he intended or planned to accomplish. It was not his intention to kill Polonius; thus, he experiences no self-reactive attitudes due to his action (even if he feels sympathy with Ophelia). Contrast this to a “Mature Hamlet”—where he has acquired the conceptual enhancement that he is responsible for the moral values of his unplanned actions. Upon commission of the act of mistakenly killing Polonius, Mature Hamlet would feel guilt, remorse, or some negative, self-reactive attitude. This is due to the fact that his cares are such that he cares not only about the moral quality of his planned actions, but the moral quality of his actions and the effect of his actions detached of his explicit intentions. Mature Hamlet would comprehend that he is morally responsible for wrongfully killing his love’s father. Thus, Mature Hamlet has a set of cares that not only differ in content but also in having a higher level of care about the moral scope of his actions. Thus, Mature Hamlet’s affectivity, attitudes or cares are significantly unlike those of his innocent counter-part, because his care for the moral value of his actions has been amplified through his loss of innocence.

At bottom, within the non-formal or attitudinal element of losing innocence the morally mature person has undergone some significant and permanent re-arrangement of her moral attitudes or that about which she ultimately cares. The result being that she will come to more meticulously scrutinize her actions and be at the ready to impose appropriate self-reactive attitudes. And, as French notes, that once a person has lost her innocence, “. . . (she) loses the option of seriously using the illusions of innocent description (of her actions) . . . The shift is irreversible” (36). Thus, for a person who has lost her innocence not caring about the unintended moral value and effects of her actions will, at best, be self-deception and, at worst, an attempt to deceive others.

If we grant French his claim that the loss of innocence is a prerequisite for being a member of the moral community and that there are formal and non-formal elements to the loss of innocence, a question arises as to whether or not corporations can fulfill this further criterion. Given that French has been mute on this question, we will ask whether and to what extent corporations can lose their moral innocence.
Corporate Loss of Innocence

It will be argued, in accord with French’s view, that corporations have the capacity to acquire or internalize into their CIDs the formal element of the loss of innocence. Corporations can and do have decision-making mechanisms that demonstrate that they, at least tacitly, acknowledge that they can be responsible for unplanned wrongs and harms of otherwise planned actions. But, unlike individual persons, the acquisition of the formal element of the loss of innocence by corporations does not necessarily yield a rearrangement of cares such as it can in individual persons and the acquisition is not irreversible. Thus, contrary to French’s expressed view of corporate ethics, there is at least one morally significant difference between corporations and individual persons that impinges on their status as responsible actors and members of the moral community.

Corporations that have functional CIDs are intentional agents insofar as they can and do instantiate the functional capacities of planning and executing actions. Through CID mechanisms corporations can act for reasons. Insofar as corporations are capable of intentional action, they are capable of being innocent or mature from the point of view of the formal requirement of the loss of innocence. In order to see that this is the case, using some machinery from French’s own analysis of corporate action, let us consider two hypothetical corporate actors whose respective CIDs fail and succeed in displaying the formal element of the loss of innocence.

Innocent corporations fail to recognize or acknowledge wrongful actions or harmful effects of their actions that were not explicitly part and parcel of their goals or decisions processed through their CIDs. An innocent corporation would bind itself solely by the “straight rule of responsibility.” Such a corporation likely suffers from, what Kenneth Goodpaster coins and French utilizes, “teleopathy.” Goodpaster writes:

[T]eleopathy can be understood as a habit of character [or policy] that values limited purposes as supremely action-guiding, to the relative exclusion not only of larger ends, but also moral considerations about means, obligations, and duties. It is an unbalanced pursuit of goals or purposes by an individual or group. (French 1995, 128; Goodpaster 1991, 94)

The innocent corporation is myopic in seeking specific self-interested goals, such as profit or efficiency, at the expense of broader goals such as being environmentally friendly, respectful of employees and consumers, being a good community citizen, etc. Such a corporation cannot help but be lulled into adhering and promulgating policies that deny responsibility for wrongful or harmful actions that were not planned as a part of the actions aimed at fulfilling its limited ends. Instead, corporations suffering from teleopathy are very likely to either carte blanche deny unplanned wrongdoing or—if pressured—place responsibility for such wrongs solely on the shoulders of individual employees. Bold denials and scape-goating as corporate responses to wrongdoing are not uncommon. There are ways, however, that corporate
CIDs imply whether or not a corporation is innocent from the point of view of the formal element of the loss of innocence.

A corporation with a CID structure that lacks mechanisms for gathering and processing internal and external criticisms of a wide variety are corporations that have not formally lost their moral innocence. If a corporation has within its CID nothing more than offices of financial risk management or legal council, which aim to protect the limited interests of financial loss and legal liability, then that corporation has failed to acquire the formal loss of innocence. The functions in a CID of setting goals, reasoning about means, and responsively adjusting to criticism, in such a corporation, are circumscribed in a teleopathic way. For a corporation to have such narrowly focused “feedback loops” within its CID is a sign that the corporation has failed to acknowledge the importance of monitoring for a breadth of unintended wrongs or harms of its otherwise intentional actions. This corporation fails to understand how its unintended wrongful actions can be truly re-described as intentional actions of the corporation. Such a corporation has failed to lose its formal innocence.

A formally mature corporation will include in its CID mechanisms for monitoring factors like the treatment of its employees, customers, community, environment, etc. The mechanisms a mature corporation has in place to monitor and adjust its actions based upon internal and external criticism, beyond such teleopathic goals of seeking profit, being efficient, or remaining within the law, can be identified in its CID.

If we observe a corporate organizational flowchart and find that there are officers or committees whose purpose is to monitor such things as customer satisfaction, environmental impacts, employee relations, ethics, etc., then we are viewing elements of feedback loops within the corporate CID that evidence its formal maturity. If the organizational flowchart is adequately supplemented by policies that re-enforce the authority of these officers or committees, then we have a mature corporation from the formal element of the loss of innocence.

For instance, there are corporate policies that require the establishment of mechanisms for the monitoring and communicating of evaluative information throughout channels of its CID, such as customer complaints, environmental or human harm, etc. Corporations with such policies are corporations that cannot legitimately excuse themselves of wrongdoing by reference to the “straight rule of responsibility.” Corporations that have these mechanisms have acquired the conceptual enhancement of recognizing that the unintended wrongs or harmful effects of their actions are their responsibility. These corporations recognize the extent to which they can be blamed for harm or wrongdoing.

The mechanisms and policies that witness a corporation’s formal loss of innocence are commonplace. Policies establishing the protection of employee and consumer rights, as well as protecting the environment and wider human communities, witness a corporation’s rejection of teleopathy. And such a rejection contraindicates its being justified in denying responsibility for unintended wrongs or harms. Mechanisms such as internal whistle-blowing hotlines, customer complaint mechanisms, internal and external review boards,
ethics officers and committees, etc. are each signs of a corporation’s recognition that it can be responsible for the unintended wrongs or harms of its otherwise intentional actions. If these are not such signs, why do corporations have such mechanisms at all? These bodies and mechanisms typically have the functions of foreseeing, responding, as well as communicating actual or potential wrongs of the corporation to the rest of the corporate body, as well as helping to set and adjust corporate policy in order to avoid future wrongs. Note that these bodies and mechanisms often carry out these functions even if the corporation never intends any moral harm. Thus, the presence of such managerial operations and supporting policies are clear signs that a corporation has formally lost its innocence.

While a corporation may recognize that it can be held responsible for unplanned wrongs and harms of its otherwise intentional actions through the establishment of the above and similar functional mechanisms, this does not entail that the corporation cares about unintended wrongs or harms. At least, it does not entail that it cares in the same way that mature persons care, and it does not entail that a corporation has permanently overcome the threat of returning to moral innocence through teleopathy.

It has been argued that corporations are able to be mature from the point of view of the formal element of lost innocence. The more perplexing issue is whether or not corporations can meet the non-formal, affective or attitudinal element of the loss of moral innocence. It will be concluded that they cannot. Although to support this conclusion we must consider various options of how corporations might lose their non-formal innocence in ways that are consistent with French’s view of corporations as actors.

French’s past critics have argued that individual human beings and corporations are appreciably different. John Danley writes: “Individuals within a corporation can intend, lust, have malice aforethought, and so forth, but the corporation cannot” (Danley 1980, 141). Manual Valazquez writes:

> The individuals who make up the organization are autonomous in the sense that each individual can choose not to carry out the direct bodily movements necessary to bring about the corporate act. And this autonomy is due to the fact that the body of each member is under the direct control not of the corporation but of the individual member. (Valazquez 1983, 7)

As a result of such considerations, Danley claims and Valazquez would concur, “[that] to speak of corporations being responsible is simply elliptical for speaking of certain individuals within a corporation being responsible” (Danley ibid.). However, for both Danley and Valazquez, the reason that there is a significant difference over moral responsibility between individuals and corporations is that individuals are capable of intentional actions and corporations are not. Let us continue to grant that French is correct in his assertion that corporations can act for reasons through the functions of their CIDs and, thus, they are intentional actors. Does the fact that corporations are intentional actors entail that there are no morally significant differences between individuals and corporations as responsible actors? Certainly not!
The difference is not one of whether or not corporations are intentional actors; it is whether or not they are actors that can care about the moral value of their actions.

Danley, in the quote above, detects how it is that individual persons differ from corporations. He identifies some attitudinal characteristics of humans (e.g., lust and malice). There are obviously many other attitudes humans can experience, but Danley is correct to notice that humans experience unique affective attitudinal states. And, human attitudes ultimately reflect what it is that individuals most deeply care about or embrace as important in their lives. And, we previously identified self-reactive attitudes as affective states essential to French’s view of the human loss of innocence. Thus, what distinguishes corporations in the moral community is that although they can be formally mature, they cannot be non-formally mature. As will be expanded below, there is nothing that it is like for a corporation to be in a state of a self-reactive attitude; thus, nothing that it is like for a corporation to intrinsically care about the moral value of its actions. In short, humans really can care; corporations cannot.

French’s view, nevertheless, has two resources for arguing that corporations can care about the unintended wrongs or harms of their otherwise intentional actions. The first is that corporations can responsively adjust to unplanned, negative outcomes of their actions through the structural organizations and policies in their formally mature CIDs. So, what difference does it make that corporations lack appropriate moral attitudes? The second is that fully responsible corporations, according to French, must contain, at least some, managers who are what he calls—following the sociologist James Coleman—”affine agents" (French 1995, 135ff). And, such agents will effectively monitor and shape corporate action through bringing to bear their appropriate self-reactive attitudes on corporate decision-making.

As to French’s first resource, consider a scenario. Imagine a corporation, on the occasion of recognizing its own wrongdoing, responsively adjusts its plans, decision-making mechanisms, as well as makes compensation, etc. in order to make amends for the wrong and prevent future occurrences of such behavior. If a corporation does so, then is it not displaying marks of its ability to functionally care about the unintended moral value of its otherwise intentional actions? Thus, although a corporation admittedly lacks the “feeling dimension” of the loss of innocence it may still function or behave as if it cares like a mature individual person.

This line of reasoning suggests how corporations may be able to lose their innocence in a non-formal manner in spite of the fact that they lack the affectivity of human beings. The defense rides upon the assumption that if a corporation engages in functional responsive adjustments analogous to behavioral adjustments in mature persons, then the affective or attitudinal element of caring found in mature persons is a difference that does not make a difference.

French’s second resource for arguing that corporations can care is through the need for and operation of “affine agents” within any formally mature corporation. Affine agents, according to French and following Coleman, are persons within the managerial structure of the corporation that have come to
identify their own interests as those of the corporation. An affine agent is the epitome of, what we commonly call, the “company man.” Affine agents are like parents are to children. Parents identify their children’s interests as their own. In Frankfurtian terminology, parents care or find the interests of their children to be of some high level of importance to the quality of their own lives. Thus, we often find that the well-being of a parent is—in large measure—proportional to the well-being of her children. Analogously, the corporate manager that is an affine agent will care about the interests of her employer in such a way that she measures her own well-being by whether or not the employer’s interests flourish. It follows, if the corporation for which an affine agent works is formally mature, in the ways outlined above, then the affine agent will undergo self-reactive attitudes for any wrongs or harms done by the corporation with whom she identifies. A formally mature corporation acknowledges that it can be held responsible for the unintended wrongs or harms of its otherwise intentional actions, and it is in the corporation’s interest to monitor and avoid unintended harms. And, an affine agent has an affinity with the interests of such a mature corporation. It appears plausible that an affine agent within such a corporation could experience feelings of regret, remorse, guilt, etc. for her employer’s unplanned wrongs or harms. And, it is also plausible that the affine agent’s self-reactive attitudes could play an important role in fashioning corporate responses to such wrongs or harms. If all this is plausible, the presence of affine agents within corporations could account for the “feeling dimension” or non-formal elements of the loss of innocence for corporate actors. As such, it may very well be that affine agents, as a necessary element of mature corporations, provide the attitudinal or affective element to complete the loss of corporate innocence. French even suggests that affine agents may be necessary for any corporation to be successfully motivated to act, when he states:

[T]he corporation cannot instruct all those who act for it because it cannot act unless some of its agents act. So it would seem that managers, at least the senior ones, stand to their corporations in agency relationships that must be closer to Coleman’s affine type than to the ordinary (fiduciary) sort. (1995, 136)

If either the “functionalist account of care” or the “affine agency” approaches capture the non-formal or attitudinal element of the loss of innocence, then there is no worry that corporations can be members equal to individual persons in the community of responsibility. For if either of these approaches are cogent, then corporations not only meet French’s criteria for being intentional actors, but they can also conform to the additional criterion of losing their innocence as it has been elucidated. However, neither of these resources within French’s own view can appropriately capture the attitudinal change or the “feeling dimension” of the loss of innocence for corporations that is on par with this morally relevant attribute of individual persons.

An obvious reason for believing that corporations cannot be caring entities is that they lack affectivity. Lacking affections or cares, it seems that corporations cannot undergo the “feeling dimension” of the loss of innocence.
As stated, this response may seem a bit superficial and smacks of an uncritical anthropocentrism, but let us see that this general response has some merit. Against the functionalist approach to care that may save corporations as being able to acquire the non-formal element of the loss of innocence, let us consider the following:

1. Affectivity is essential to the change of cares or attitudes as it occurs in the loss of innocence.
2. A functionalist account of care lacks the essential affectivity.
3. Therefore, the functionalist account fails to insure that corporations can undergo the attitudinal change of the loss of innocence.

In order to experience the “feeling dimension” of the loss of innocence, an entity must do more than merely behave as if it cares. The functionalist account of care reduces the notion of caring about the moral value of the unintended aspects and consequences of an entity’s actions merely to input–output behavioral functions. Paralleling John Searle’s worries about functionalist accounts of the mind, functionalism fails to be able to account for phenomenal character or the “what it’s likeness” of experience. There are intrinsic affective elements to the loss of innocence for human persons that the functionalist account abandons. And these affective elements are essential to human motivation. Thus, corporations—as functionalist actors—cannot have the appropriate affective states necessary for the non-formal loss of innocence (Searle 1980).

The worry that functionalism cannot capture the phenomenal character of the experience of the loss of innocence is the deepest philosophical difficulty for the possibility of corporations being non-formally mature. The problem is that there is “something it is like” to be an individual person that has undergone the loss of innocence and who attitudinally reacts to the moral value of her own actions. It is to be a being that experiences the phenomenal properties of such things as self-reactive attitudes. To understand corporations as intentional actors through a functionalist approach, we need not project a subjective “what it is like” to plan, react, etc. However, for individual persons there is “something it is like” or an intrinsic phenomenal character to what it is to care about one’s actions and to engage in self-reactive attitudes about which functionalist accounts inadequately address. Thus, a functionalist account of corporate agency still lacks the ability to capture the essential phenomenal properties of care that are an essential element of the non-formal loss of innocence. A particular example of a phenomenal character of care is a non-formally mature actor’s experience of having an ineliminable motivation to self-scrutinize her own actions.

An actor that has lost her innocence, according to the analysis above, comes to care about the moral value of the unintended aspects of her actions. Thus, she comes to watch her actions with greater scrutiny (if she at all cares about not doing evil). In addition, the mature actor will impose negative, self-reactive attitudes at the times she uncovers any unplanned wrong or harm. Both the increased scrutiny and the imposition of self-reactive attitudes are unavoidable for mature human actors. The motivation to inspect and the
impulse to impose self-reactive attitudes, for mature persons, have what Frankfurt calls “volitional necessity” (Frankfurt 1988, 86ff). The fact that a mature individual has a basic care for not doing evil, and she comprehends that she is easily capable of unintended evil motivates her to:

a. Not be too careless in scrutinizing the morality of her actions.
b. To impose the appropriate self-reactive attitudes based on her self-assessment of the morality of her actions.

In no way can a functionalist account of care, that merely looks at input and output relations of behavior, capture the volitional necessities that are intimately connected with the affectivity of caring about the moral value of the unplanned aspects of a mature person’s actions. Thus, there is a significant aspect of the attitudinal change that accompanies the loss of innocence that the functionalist approach to cares fails to capture.

The Affine Agents approach is able to integrate the affectivity of the loss of innocence, because it is through human individuals that a formally mature corporation is said to capture the non-formal element or attitudinal change for losing innocence. The argument against this approach points at two worries:

1. It is the individual affine agents that care about the moral value of the corporation’s actions, not the corporation.
2. And even if the corporation cares as a result of its affine agents, that state of non-formal maturity is not permanent as it is in individual persons, due to its being based on transient individual agents; not the corporation’s CID.

As to the first worry, it is commonsensical that the entity that is a fully mature actor is the affine agent. The agent deeply cares about the corporation’s interests, because that is what the agent has come to find important in her life; it is not the corporation itself that has cares. The individual affine agent has come to find or make important in her life the moral quality of the actions of the corporation in which she is employed. This does not entail that the corporation actually has the attitudinal traits necessary for having cares. When the corporation unintentionally does wrong or harm, it is not the corporation itself that has self-reactive attitudes of guilt, regret, or what not, it will be those employees that identify themselves with the corporation that will—of volitional necessity—adopt such affective responses. Without a shadow of a doubt, having such agents in a corporation’s employ likely benefits the corporation. Having affine agents will promote the corporation’s ability to responsively adjust its behavior and CID such that it makes amends for past wrongs and alters itself to avoid future wrongs. Nevertheless, the corporation’s CID is deficient of any attitudes, let alone, self-reactive attitudes. This leads us to the second worry.

Even if affine agents did comprise the element of a CID that would allow it to function as a caring actor, the corporation still does not lose its innocence in the way that it does in individual persons. Corporations can always regain their innocence. The loss of corporate innocence cannot be permanent. Insofar
as affine agents within a corporation are transient individuals, and even an individual’s affinity with a corporation may come and go, the non-formal loss of innocence for a corporation will be more contingent and necessarily temporary in ways that it is not for individual persons. Once a person loses their innocence (barring accidents that cause significant psychological impact), there is no turning back. For a corporation, the presence of affine agents varies from time to time. Corporation’s agents retire, die, resign, etc. Some affine agents lose their affinity with their employer’s interests. Young executives may start off having a deep affinity with the corporation’s interests, but their personal priorities or what they care about are more than likely to change across the course of their lives. There is no guarantee that a corporation could maintain its non-formal innocence, because if it relies on transient agents and agents’ impermanent affinities with the corporation, then loss of non-formal innocence is far from being a secure state of any corporation. Overall, a corporate dependency on affine agents for maintaining the affective or attitudinal element necessary for being non-formally mature actors makes a corporation vulnerable to slipping back into non-formal innocence (even if it remains formally mature). Thus, unlike individual human persons, the affine agent approach to corporate care cannot assure the non-formal loss of innocence for corporations, because it cannot assure the permanence of the loss. And, frankly, CID structures as functionalist mechanisms and policies cannot build into the functioning of the corporation the permanent affinity, of even one, of their human agents. As was already argued, functions or behaviors are one thing, affectivity is quite another. It is just not the case that even if affine agents have fully mature cares that it follows that the corporation has such cares as well.

In sum, although corporations are fully capable of meeting within their CIDs the formal element of the loss of innocence, they cannot capture the non-formal element of the loss of innocence. As such, the non-formal element of the loss is uniquely human and cannot be corporate. What remains is to shed some light on the ramifications of the above considerations for our understanding corporate membership in the moral community.

**Conclusion**

French’s long-standing position has been that persons and corporations are moral equals in the community of responsibility. This implies that corporations are as appropriate targets of moral praise and blame as individual human beings. And, according to French, corporations are worthy of equal membership because they can be intentional actors through their CIDs. However, French also considers the losing of moral innocence to be a constraint for an actor to be a member of the moral community. In short, only mature actors are members of the moral community. The rub is: if human persons are capable of becoming mature actors in ways that corporations cannot, because of differences in their abilities to lose their innocence, then does it not follow that human beings are the only actors in the moral community? This need not be the case. Instead, what may be called for is some additional nuance to our understanding the types of entities that make up the
community of responsibility. In addition, such an increase to our understanding need not conflict with what French tacitly admits in his work on corporate ethics.\textsuperscript{16}

The responsible moral community may be conceived as being comprised of two types of actors. Thus, there can be two distinct types of actors that may be targets of praise or blame for the moral values of their actions. The moral community may be divided into accountable actors and responsible actors. In fact, this distinction already appears in some popular discussions of corporate ethics (see Karlinger and Bruno 2002; Friends of the Earth 2002), and we may paraphrase that use of that distinction for our purposes.

“Accountability” is for an actor to be held to external oversight, regulation, and mechanisms of punishment aimed to externally motivate responsive adjustment in order to maintain adherence with appropriate moral standards of action.

“Responsibility” is for an actor to be able to self-oversee, self-regulate, and self-motivate responsive adjustments to maintain adherence with appropriate moral standards of action.

In the public discourse on corporate ethics, there is an assumption that corporations can be either accountable or responsible actors. In accord with the views expressed above, corporate actors can only be accountable, but the understanding of accountability offered here differs from that which appears in the public conversation. Following our interpretation of the loss of innocence, corporations are able to engage in self-oversight and self-regulation via their CIDs, but they fail to have the affectivity necessary for self-motivated responsive adjustment. An actor that must be overseen, regulated, and motivated from without would be a morally innocent actor, because she must fail to have either the formal or non-formal elements of the loss of innocence. An accountable actor is formally mature; thus, she has the capacity to plan and recognize responsibility for the effects of her planned actions. For instance, a corporation can engage in overseeing and regulating its actions through its CID; thus, it can be held accountable for wrongs in the ways described in the above analysis. What accountable actors lack, in the face of wrongful behaviors, is the ability to self-motivate responsive adjustments.\textsuperscript{17} Thus, corporations, as accountable actors, must be subjected to some kind of motivational pressure that cannot be made manifest in the functionalist planning mechanism of a CID. Lacking self-reactive attitudes, corporations need the motivational pressure of actions driven by the reactive attitudes of others. Such actions can include threats of financial penalties, consumer boycotts, loss of license to do business, etc. These are examples of external pressures that may indirectly motivate responsive adjustments by threatening the fulfillment of a corporation’s plans. In fact, French himself articulates a model for externally motivating corporations to responsively adjust their decision-making and behavior through what he calls, “Enforced Corporate Responsive Adjustment” (French 1995, 345ff). In French’s view, corporations that have commit-
ted a wrong are to be motivated to responsively adjust their behavior by threats of punishment. He suggests that courts should use their power of sentencing to motivate corporations to satisfactorily correct wrongs and change their behavior to appreciably prevent recurrence of such wrongs. As such, French tacitly admits that corporations are types of actors in need of external motivation to fulfill responsive adjustment; thus, motivating corporate responsive adjustment should never be treated in a laissez-faire fashion.

In line with our earlier discussion of the non-formal element of the loss of innocence, it may also be suggested that some corporate actors may receive motivation through more proximate means. Corporate managers that are affine agents may be in positions to motivate responsive adjustment. But, strictly speaking, the affective motivational attitudes are in the managers being fully mature actors and not a feature of corporations as such. This is due to the fact that corporate CIDs, that make corporations accountable as functional planners of action, necessarily fail to capture the affectivity needed for self-motivated changes in behavior, policies, etc. And it should be emphasized that this type of mediated motivation depends entirely on the accidental fact that a corporate actor has some managers that are morally mature affine agents.

French indirectly admits that affine agents are corporate independent means to corporate motivation when he states: “[T]o achieve legitimate corporate ends, managers, or at least some of them, must identify their interests, in large measure, with the corporation’s interests, their plans with its plans” (French ibid., 137). And he argues that the corporation needs affine agents to motivate action, because the corporation vis-à-vis its CID cannot direct all who act on its behalf (ibid., 136). Thus, French tacitly admits that for corporations to be motivated to act they need the self-motivational capacities of ordinary humans. And, it follows from this that affine agents can constitute a corporate independent means to motivate corporate responsive adjustments for wrongdoing.

What it is that may be said to differentiate responsible actors is clearly implied in what has been sketched of accountable actors. Responsible actors are those who are capable of the same self-oversight and self-regulation as accountable actors, but they also have the capacity (barring accident) to self-motivate their own responsive adjustments for wrongdoing. Responsible actors need not depend on external or mediated motivational pressure for responsive adjustment. The fully mature actor, who has acquired both the formal and non-formal elements of the loss of innocence, is expected to be motivated to correct harms and reduce future risk harms without external or mediated pressure to do so.

Now, there are some possible normative implications of the difference between accountable and responsible actors in the moral community. Although some may desire a rigid hierarchy of value within the moral community, this may not be possible or desirable. If so, consider a moral framework where individual and corporate actors are *prima facie* equal members of the moral community, but where they can be unequally treated depending on the actions being evaluated. For instance, might it be that embracing the
difference between accountable and responsible actors implies that we ought
to give more moral leeway to one type of actor over the other depending on
the kinds of actions and responses that are at issue? How might this view
be developed?

When it comes to responding to accountable actors’ wrongdoings, we
may give them a chance to responsively adjust their behaviors once we have
begun to apply external motivation for them to do so. And if they satisfac-
torily repair the wrongs and make adjustments to prevent recurrences of the
wrongdoing, then we may acquit them of the present wrongdoing. As men-
tioned earlier, French suggests just such an approach to corporate wrongdo-
ing in his defense of his principle of “Enforced Corporate Responsive
Adjustment” (French ibid., 346). In contrast, responsible actors (e.g., fully
mature persons) ought not be granted as much moral leeway, because they
ought to responsively adjust without external pressure to do so. As such,
regarding moral standards governing responsive adjustment, it may be rea-
sonably argued that corporate actors are unequally given more moral latitude
than individual, mature persons. This inequality of treatment favoring cor-
porations over individuals, however, need not be granted with regards to all
interactions.

When it comes to acts of intrusion upon actors to insure moral compli-
ance and satisfactory responsive adjustment, it seems that we may grant
greater moral latitude to mature persons or responsible actors than to corpo-
rations or accountable actors. In brief, responsible actors are \textit{prima facie}
granted more opportunity for autonomous motivation and action, because
they are \textit{prima facie} thought to be capable of full self-motivation. Thus, in con-
trast to corporations, we may concede to responsible persons less intrusion
into their actions, because it is presumed that they are self-sufficient in being
able to satisfactorily responsively adjust their thoughts and behaviors. This
certainly reflects why we value the freedom of conscience for persons in ways
that we may not for corporations. For instance, we tend to frown on manip-
ulative attempts to make persons be civic minded, but tend not to frown on
similar attempts to make businesses be good corporate citizens. As such,
responsible actors may be granted greater moral protection in matters of
liberty than we grant to accountable actors. Note that this grant of greater
protection of liberty for mature individuals has its own moral implications.
A fully mature individual who fails to motivate her responsive adjustments
for her wrongful conduct may reap more severe retribution because of her
failure than would an accountable actor who similarly failed to adjust.

Whether the above outline is helpful, it does suggest that the investiga-
tion into the nature of the loss of moral innocence should prompt us to inten-
sify our investigations into the nature of the actors that constitute our moral
community, as well as how our findings should affect moral evaluations of
their actions. It is tentatively hypothesized here that although there is a
significant difference between corporations and persons as regards their
capacities for the loss of innocence this need not entail a radical departure
from French’s view that they are both members of the moral community.\textsuperscript{20}
Instead, it is proposed that the differences should lead us to consider finer
distinctions in our conceptualization of membership in the moral community,
as well as lead us to consider more fine-grained standards for the praise and blame targeted upon different types of moral actors in different types of situations.

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Notes

1 Some externally criticize the adequacy of French’s functionalist account of intentional agency that grounds his claim that corporations are equal to individual humans in the moral community. I—in a significant sense—will provide a “deconstruction” of French’s view. I pit French’s own ideas against themselves.

2 I believe that my argument here will put some flesh onto John R. Danley (1980) and Manuel Valazquez’s assertions that there is an important difference between human and corporate abilities to be responsible actors. However, unlike Danley and Valazquez, I will not base my argument on the claim that corporations lack the capacity for intentional action.

3 For the basis of French’s account of intentionality as “planning” see Bratman (1987). Also for an excellent extension of the use of Bratman’s model of intentional action to corporate ethics, see Arnold (2001).

4 I admit and recognize that the innocence or maturity, as French states (1992a, 41), is a “scaler” phenomenon. As a result, most actual adult individuals are, at least, not fully mature. In addition, I admit and recognize that persons are situated within social contexts that significantly influence standards of responsibility ascription. For excellent discussions of the contextuality of responsibility see French (1992b) and Walker (2003). However, for the purposes of generating an abstract schematism of the loss of innocence, the contingencies that undoubtedly effect the loss of innocence and responsibility must be saved for another occasion.

5 For more on persons capable and incapable of acquiring the conceptual enhancement, see French’s discussion of the “morally handicapped” versus the “morally challenged” (2001, 194–205).

6 My account of the non-formal element of the loss of innocence as it pertains to moral responsibility has its affinities with those defended by R. Jay Wallace (1994), as well as John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza (1998).

7 Cares, to gloss Frankfurt’s account (1988, 80–94), are those objects that have such importance to us, that is, to which we are devoted, that we identify our own well-being with the fate of those objects. These objects may include caring about our moral innocence or maturity and, as such, whether or not we are agents of evil.

8 Note that this argument presupposes a basic care about the morality of our actions, and it in no way addresses the problem of amorality.

9 There are two possible interpretations of the amplification of our cares about avoiding evil. One interpretation is that the amplification is merely a change of the scope of actions about which we care in avoiding evil. For example, we simply come to care about the moral value of all our actions and their effects that can be re-described vis-a-vis the formal element of the loss of innocence. The result of this interpretation is that the only substantive change in the loss of innocence is the formal element. The other interpretation would be that the amplification of our cares in the loss of innocence is some kind of substantive change in how we react to our actions and their effects. This interpretation would need an argument as to what and why there is a substantive change in our attitudes. French’s essay does not provide much by way of evidence of which of these interpretations is correct. For the sake of investigating, in the greatest breadth, how the loss of innocence may affect us and how it may apply to corporations, I will presume the more radical interpretation that something substantive
changes in our attitudes or cares when we lose our innocence. I thank Margaret Walker for pointing out this ambiguity in the present conceptualization of the loss of innocence.

10 Strawson (1974) discusses attitudinal reactions we have to the good or ill will of others (e.g., resentment, hurt, anger, forgiveness, etc.) which he calls “reactive attitudes.” He also discusses self-directed, reactive attitudes or what he calls “self-reactive attitudes” which include emotions of guilt, remorse, regret, shame, embarrassment, etc. There is much more to be investigated on the role of self-reactive attitudes to moral maturity, but I leave that for another occasion.

11 Larry May (1992) expands the target of meticulous self-scrutiny in mature actors to include their attitudes as well. However, he and I agree that to be motivated to self-scrutinize, at least one’s actions, is an essential element of being a fully responsible actor. He states “It is important for people to view their attitudes with constant vigilance and self-criticism. Sensitive members of a community will subject not only their actions but also their attitudes to such self criticism in order to meet the most basic moral responsibility: to be a fully moral person” (7). See also chapter 3 in May (1992).

12 Cynics would say that these mechanisms are merely in place as part of public relations or “for show.” This is true. However, the presence of even facsimile mechanisms implies that the corporate body admits that it ought to seem to be monitoring its behavior. And such an admission can only imply that the corporation understands that it can be blamed for the unintended effects of its otherwise planned actions.

13 It does not follow from this claim that a corporation with such mechanisms and policies will necessarily avoid wrongdoing, and it does not follow that a corporation with these mechanisms and policies will necessarily take responsibility for its acts of wrongdoing. All that this entails is that a corporation with such mechanisms cannot legitimately or sincerely claim that it can only be responsible for planned wrongs or harms. The establishment of these mechanisms and policies within a corporate CID provides evidence that such a corporation has already abdicated adherence to the “straight rule of responsibility.”

14 Frankfurt (1988, 86–7) argues that for those that care about something, the importance or value placed on that thing will constrain what they are willing to do. It is not that persons who care lack the power or capacity to do certain things contrary to what they care about, they lack the will to do it. Thus, they are under the “volitional necessity” of being unable to do things otherwise.

15 I remind the reader that I am only articulating an abstract rendering of a mature individual. Details would need to be drawn out to render a much more empirically adequate account of mature actors. For example, an actual mature person need not be one who reveals this very clearly to others. It is a realistic possibility to have a mature individual that is vigilantly self-scrutinizing and self-evaluating without being demonstrable about those dispositions. Such a mature individual could be highly self-critical while even hiding and denying such to others.

16 The view I will outline below has its affinities with John Braithwaite’s account of the norms governing how we should respond to individual as well as corporate wrongdoings in the view that he calls “responsive regulation.” See Braithwaite (2002).

17 I note that individual persons may also be only accountable members of the moral community. Any individual that has yet failed to acquire the non-formal element of the loss of moral innocence, but has acquired the formal element, would also be an accountable actor. Here I am thinking of individuals such as psychopaths. Such individuals plan their actions and may even understand the moral value of some of their actions, but they lack appropriate self-reactive, affective responses to have acquired the non-formal element of the loss of innocence.

18 I do not want to be too optimistic about this means to corporate motivation, because one must take into account the power of structural inertia upon maintaining a status quo of behavior within a corporation. I suggest that one failure of Larry May’s existenti- ralist vision of responsibility (1987 & 1992) is a failure to adequately address the power of organizations in maintaining the status quo among the individuals within an organization.
One may try to formulate an account of collective self-reactive attitudes, as does Margaret Gilbert in “Collective Remorse” (2000). In her account she spins remorse into a cognitive belief state as “Would that (we) not had done that!” My tentative response to this type of view is that as a cognitivist interpretation of self-reactive attitudes it either expunges the affective element necessary for such attitudes to be motivational or simply cloaks the individuality of the affectivity that I am emphasizing here. An elaborated response to Gilbert’s proposal on collective reactive attitudes will have to be saved for another investigation, because her “plural subjects” view of collective responsibility is sufficiently distant from the fundamentals of French’s own view that it would need its own treatment. For an excellent discussion of the fundamental differences between Gilbert and French’s views see Tollefsen (2002).

The practical implications of my proposal, I believe, fail to significantly differ from those endorsed by French. However, I think that my proposal may imply a prima facie duties moral foundation that aims at respecting the natures of moral actors, and this foundation differs from French’s non-utilitarian consequentialism (see French 1995, 72–9).

References
