

We often ascribe character traits to persons. For instance, we can say of a person  $x$  that she is generous, optimistic, irascible, melancholic, and so on. Independently of the metaphysical question whether there is such a thing as a common set of properties that form a character trait, we will address the general issue regarding the necessary and sufficient conditions for ascribing a character trait.

First of all, it is clear that the attribution of a character trait has to do with more or less constant dispositions regarding an  $x$ . But which dispositions exactly are at stake? It does not seem plausible to suggest that these concern exclusively dispositions to *act* in a certain way, because a lot of character traits have to do with events that are not within the subject's power (e.g. clumsiness).

Does it amount to say that a character trait is a disposition to act in certain ways and have certain reactions or attitudes (emotions, feelings, memories and so on)? No. Take a sunflower: it has the constant disposition to respond to the movements of the sun, although we are reluctant to ascribe character traits to such an object. Maybe the problem lies in the fact that, as a matter of fact, all sunflowers follow the sun (unless they are dying, etc.). The solution would consist then in a modal nuance: the  $x$  to which we ascribe a character trait could have done\* otherwise. This would make sense of the use of character traits in explanations and maybe justifications of actions.

The question is to know which kind of possibility is involved here. Free will won't do, as it appeared before. Maybe the solution has to do with the fact that the disposition in question is not implied by the kind of objects  $x$  is a member of. But if this is so, character traits are not essentially linked with reasons nor with values and neither with the existence of the mental in general. Therefore, character traits could not essentially function as reasons that would justify actions; they consist at most in partial causes of actions. To ascribe a character trait is just to make sense of the constant cause of events that could have not occurred. If this is right, then the distinction between character traits and personality traits is clear.

Indeed, personality has to do with the relation between a subject and values, and therefore involves the mental, by contrast with character traits. This appears clearly if we consider personality traits as determinate realisations of the capacities which are peculiar to the creatures which standardly have personalities, namely persons. According to us, persons are beings sensitive to values and capable of self-evaluation. Furthermore, the self-evaluation involved has to be at least partly about the person's relation to values. The mildly Frankfurtean intuition behind this account of personhood can be summed up as follows: an  $x$  is a person if she is capable of putting her attachments to certain values into question. Her having second-order evaluative attitudes about her first-order attitudes towards values makes her a person.

What is then a person's personality? We would like to suggest that a person's personality is her sensitivity to values, more precisely her hierarchy of values. This hierarchy is dynamic insofar as a person can evaluate her own sensitivity to values and consider reshaping it. This faculty is also what makes her, as a person, a creature that can be held responsible for her acts\*.

Once we will have argued for these theses, a question will remain: what kind of states constitute the relation to values involved in personality? There are at least two relevant types of connections to values we can consider: the ones with a mind-to-world direction of fit (conative states such as desires) and the ones, we think, with a world-to-mind direction of fit (affective states such as emotions). We will consider 'the Death of Desire argument', an argument in favour of the thesis that the affective states are the ones which constitute the core of personality.