

**COLLECTIVE INTENTIONALITY AND THE KINGDOM OF ENDS**  
SUBMITTED TO COLLECTIVE INTENTIONALITY VI

**ABSTRACT**  
**(365 words)**

Do moral agents as such have a collective or shared intention? Is morality itself a shared cooperative activity? Do we have a duty to form any shared intentions or to participate in shared activity? What is the value of such shared enterprises? In this paper, I explore what may be a surprising convergence of Kantian moral philosophy and contemporary work on collective intentionality in addressing these questions. The aim of the paper is *not* Kantian exegesis, but the illumination of the social presuppositions of morality through an investigation of contemporary theory on shared intentionality. I argue that the Kantian idea of the kingdom of ends functions as a regulative Idea that depends upon seeing agents as engaged in a shared plan or agreement to coordinate or mesh their actions and maxims.

Despite his insistence on individual autonomy, Kant urges that morality is a social enterprise (Sherman 1997; Kant 1793). Of course, morality centrally concerns duties to others, but it is social in a much stronger sense: The end of morality is a social good. As Sullivan observes, for Kant the goal is “not merely an aggregate of the moral achievements of individuals,” but a communal endeavor (Sullivan 1994, p.86; Sullivan 1989). Moreover, the categorical imperative in the Formula of the Kingdom of Ends pictures the moral agent as if she were legislating in concert with other moral agents (Caygill 1995; Kant 1785a; Kant 1785b, p.234; Korsgaard 1996). The Formula of the Kingdom of Ends requires that the agent’s maxims be universal in the sense that they can be “systematically united” with the maxims of others (Kant 1785a, p.234; O’neill 1989, p. 127). Several features of Kant’s notion of the kingdom of ends resemble features of contemporary accounts of shared or

collective intentionality (Bratman 1999; French and Wettstein 2006). Bratman's view of shared cooperative activity and shared intentionality emphasizes an individualistic explanation of these phenomena while proposing something more than mere reciprocity; agents who share intentions must have "meshing subplans." I suggest that the prospect of meshing plans and subplans depends upon rational and moral constraints. Thus, I show that the theory of shared intentions both illuminates and is illuminated by Kantian moral philosophy.

### **Selected Bibliography**

**Michael Bratman**, *Faces of Intention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

**Howard Caygill**, *A Kant Dictionary*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.

**Peter French and Howard Wettstein, eds.**, *Shared Intentions and Collective Responsibility*, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, vol. XXX, 2006.

**Larry May and Raimo Tuomela, eds.**, *Special Issue on Collective Responsibility*, *Journal of Social Philosophy* (Carol Gould, general editor), vol. XXXVIII, no. 3, Fall 2007.

**Immanuel Kant**, *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. Translated and edited by Allen Wood and George Di Giovanni. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 [1793].

--*Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. [1785a] Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

--*Lectures on Ethics* [1785b]. Edited by Peter Heath and J.B. Schneewind. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

**Christine Korsgaard**, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

**Onora O'Neill**, *Constructions of Reason: Explorations of Kant's Practical Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

**Nancy Sherman**, *Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on Virtue*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

**Roger J. Sullivan**, *An Introduction to Kant's Ethics*. Cambridge University Press, 1994.

--*Immanuel Kant's Moral Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.