MORALITY AND THE LOGICAL SUBJECT OF INTENTIONS

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This paper interprets Kant's theory of right on analogy with his theory of truth. The familiar distinction is presented between the mental act and its object: e.g. between the act of believing and the belief; the perceiving and the thing perceived; the act of willing and the action willed. The act of mind is always private; different people, however, can perceive and believe the same or contradictory things. The notion of truth depends (for Kant) on the intersubjectivity or universalizability of the mental object. It might seem that the act intended as well as the act of intending must be private, however, because I can will only my own actions; but Kant suggests that I may will not as myself but as one of a community: the logical subject of the intending may not be I but We. Kant had in mind the community of rational beings; Bradley and Green relativize the community to national groups.
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In a commentary on Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Robert Paul Wolff concedes that a very common criticism of that book is right: the categorical imperative, since it expresses merely a formal condition for morality, does not lead by itself to substantive moral conclusions. What is needed, Wolff thinks, yet what Kant does not quite provide, is an explicit reference to a social contract. "The only way to draw substantive moral conclusions" from an argument of the Kantian form, so Wolff believes, "is to show that the purely formal constraints of collective, unanimous, contractual agreement, when added to the constraint of bare consistency, suffice to rule out all but one set of substantive principles."¹ Wolff explains: "Kant seems not to have understood this problem well enough to attempt such a demonstration. John Rawls, if I understand him correctly, has offered such an argument in his work *A Theory of Justice*...I consider his formulation of the problem a kind of confirmation of the interpretation of the *Groundwork* I am setting forth here."² Wolff understands Rawls as Rawls wishes to be understood: he also views his work as a completion of Kant's argument. His theory of justice, Rawls says, is "a natural, procedural rendering of Kant's conception of the kingdom of ends, and the notion of autonomy and the categorical imperative."³ The key notion here is that of autonomy: "a person is acting autonomously," Rawls writes, when the principles of his action are chosen by him as the most adequate possible expression of his nature as a free and equal rational being."⁴ According to Rawls, people express themselves as free and equal rational beings when they discount the circumstances which distinguish them one from another in society; they will act autonomously, therefore, in what Rawls describes as the "original position," in which each is ignorant of the situation he will assume in the world. The principles each person chooses behind this "veil of ignorance" may be attributed to all, since these principles arise from a common human nature.


2. Wolff, p. 177


4. Rawls, page 252
This is roughly the basis of Rawls' belief—and Wolff's too—that the contract made in the original position provides "a procedural interpretation of Kant's conception of autonomy and the categorical imperative."\(^5\)

Some critics have questioned whether Kant's mantle fits well on Rawls' shoulders. Andrew Levine, for example, has pointed out that in the original position as Rawls describes it, people act as people not as rational beings; they act not only from reason but also from desire; in fact, if rationality plays a part, it is primarily an instrumental rationality.\(^6\) Those who are placed behind the veil of ignorance are maximizers; they are essentially Hobbesian creatures; they do not express primarily the notion of rationality we find in Kant. As Levine concludes: "To procedurally reconstruct universality, or, equivalently, autonomy in this Kantian sense, we should require a veil of ignorance that, so to speak, strips us down a good deal further than does Rawls."\(^7\)

Rawls is aware of the problem but like Wolff, he believes that his interpretation of Kant is the best that can be done. After all, if agents are stripped down to their practical reason, they appear completely unmotivated: what would they have at stake? And so Rawls writes: "It is a mistake, I believe, to emphasize the place of generality and universality in Kant's ethics. That moral principles are general and universal is hardly new with him; and as we have seen these conditions do not in any case take us very far. It is impossible to construct a moral theory on so slender a basis, and therefore to limit the discussion of Kant's doctrine to these notions is to reduce it to triviality."\(^8\)

The present paper purports to explain how a substantive ethical theory can be constructed on the "slender" basis Kant provides. The suggestion here, moreover, is that a moral theory constructed on this basis comes close to one that might provide a non-ultilitarian justification for certain public policies. People have wondered how we justify judicial and administrative decisions, for example, which serve no special interest and benefit no constituency but seem to be faithful to certain

5. Rawls, page 256


7. Levine, page 51

8. Rawls, page 251
shared ideals. Kant's belief that we act morally when we act from principles which have the form of universal and necessary laws, when understood, helps to explain the notion of shared ideals. In that sense, it may add a little to our understanding of the complicated relationship between morality and law.

We shall begin with Kant's distinction between hypothetical and categorical imperatives. Kant writes: "All imperatives command either hypothetically or categorically. The former present the practical necessity of a possible action as a means of achieving something else which one desires...the categorical imperative would be one which presented an action as itself objectively necessary without regard to any other end." Roughly speaking, an imperative, e.g. "Do A", is hypothetical just in case it follows as the conclusion of a syllogism with these premises:

1. A statement which ascribes a desire or an interest to an agent, e.g., "I desire that B."

2. A statement which describes a causal connection between the action which is commanded (A) and the thing which is desired (B); e.g., "A is the means of B."

Kant argues that any rational being who truly desires or wills something, A, and also knows that A causally requires B, must also desire or will B. This is true, he writes, because "If I know the proposed result can be obtained only by such an action, then it is an analytical proposition that, if I fully will the effect, I must also will the action necessary to produce it." We often make it a criterion of rationality, in fact, that a rational being use the means appropriate to his ends. The hypothetical imperative "Do A" is valid relative to some desire and to some causal condition. In that relative sense of "validity" it holds validly for all rational beings.

It is useful here, by way of example, to return to Rawls and the principles adopted by the people in the original position. We can imagine someone, say, Jake, behind the veil


12. Grundlegung, Ak. 417; Foundations, page 40
of ignorance saying to himself:

I desire a happy life with a reasonable share of certain primary goods. The arrangements which maximize my chances at such a life, as far as I know, are those which comply with Rawls' principles of justice. As a rational being, therefore, I must either give up my desire or accept these principles. But as a human being I cannot give up my desire. Hence I assent to these principles; to do so is an imperative which validly holds for me.

Quite clearly, Jake has run through a hypothetical practical syllogism. As Kant writes "the imperative which refers to the choice of means to one's own happiness...is still only hypothetical; the action is not absolutely commanded but commanded only as a means to another end." 13

To deepen our understanding, we may now consider Jake's possible reply that since he is ignorant of the position he will occupy in society his motives are no different from those of all other human beings. In fact, as Rawls suggests, Jake is choosing disinterestedly in the sense that he is assenting to the means not of accomplishing his desires only but equally much the desires of all other people who stand with him in the original position. Kant's view, however, is that no desire, no matter how universal, can provide the motive for a moral choice. He writes:

But suppose that finite rational beings were unanimous in the kind of objects their feelings of pleasure and pain had, and even in the means of obtaining the former and preventing the latter. Even then they could not set up the principle of self-love as a practical law, for the unanimity itself would be merely contingent. The determining ground would still be only subjectively valid and empirical, and it would not have the necessity which is conceived in every law, an objective necessity arising from a priori grounds, unless we hold the necessity to be not at all practical but only physical, maintaining that our action is as inevitably forced upon us by our inclination as yawning is by seeing others yawn. It would be better to maintain that there are no practical laws but merely counsels for the service of our desires than to elevate merely subjective principles to the rank of practical laws...no matter how empirically universal. 14


Kant admits that

This remark may appear at first blush to be mere hair-splitting: actually, it defines the most important distinction which can be considered in practical investigations.\(^{15}\)

The distinction here lies between the subjective and the objective validity of intentions. This distinction is more easily understood if we think for a moment not of intentions but of beliefs. Beliefs, like intentions, are always subjective states of persons; insofar as a person has a belief or an intention Kant would say that it has a subjective validity for him. It is possible to assign an objective validity, however to beliefs and, as Kant thinks, to intentions as well. Beliefs, as we have said, can be described as subjective states of believers, but beliefs can also be described in terms of what is believed. This is just the distinction between belief qua mental act and belief qua what is believed, i.e. mental content. Three people who believe that the earth is flat, for example, have different beliefs, in the sense that beliefs are mental acts, but they have the same belief in the sense of that which is believed. If this is not obvious in the case of belief, think about perceptions; acts of perception differ even when what is perceived is the same. This common or intersubjectively shared content makes it possible that beliefs and perceptions can be verified; ways of criticism or inquiry can be devised to check whether they are true or false. The view here is that the moral rightness of intentions, in Kant's philosophy, is to be understood in analogy with this notion of truth.

We have now distinguished the act of believing (willing, perceiving) from the content, i.e., from what is believed (willed, perceived), insofar as it is believed (willed, perceived). We have also said that two people can have the same belief or perception not in the sense of act but the sense of content. They can, in other words, believe or perceive the same thing. We have said, finally, that the ability of people to share the same belief-content is a necessary condition for belief to be intersubjectively verifiable or objectively true, and likewise perceptions. Now let us raise the question whether different people can have the same intentions. Obviously we can make an analogous distinction between 1) acts of intending (we may call these intendings) and between 2) states of affairs insofar as they are intended (we shall call these the contents of intentions or, more simply, intentions). It is obvious that no two people can have the same intending; as acts of mind, these are as private as beliefs. But can different people have the same intention; that is, can they will as they believe or perceive the same things? This is a philosopher's question; but Kant is a philosopher and on questions such as this he turns his argument.

Let us consider three people, Tom, Jake, and Charley, each of whom wills his own happiness. Suppose each says:

Tom: I intend that I be happy.
Jake: I intend that I be happy.
Charley: I intend that I be happy.

Notice that these three intentions are subjective both qua act and qua content. Since the "I" in each case refers to different egos what is intended as well as the act of intending differs in each case.

Now suppose this is what we hear:

Tom: I intend that Charley be happy.
Jake: I intend that Charley be happy.
Charley: I intend that I be happy.

It might seem at first glance that in this case, Tom, Jake, and Charley are intending the same thing. But this is not really true. When Jake says that he intends that Charley be happy, his statement does not express an intention to perform a particular action but rather a general policy toward performing actions of a certain kind, viz those that will tend to make Charley happy. In short, when we analyze the three statements we find each person to be committing himself to something like this:

I intend to do what I can that will promote Charley's happiness.

Notice that Tom, Jake, and Charley have the same general goal in mind but the actions they will or intend are quite different. Tom intends to do whatever he can do, e.g. to give Charley one hundred dollars. Jake wills a quite different act, perhaps one in which he, Jake, gives Charley one hundred dollars. Needless to say, Charley may intend to do something else in order to make himself happy. This analysis suggests that since each person must intend his own action and cannot intend the action of someone else, each person's intention is irreducibly egocentric not only in form, i.e. as an act or operation of the mind, but also in content, i.e. in the matter of what is intended. Let's run through this once again. It is fair to say that while I can desire or wish or hope that you will do something I cannot intend that you do it in the sense that I intend or will my own actions. At most I can will that I do certain actions which will have the effect that you will do the thing I want you to do. If this is the case, then Tom, Jake, and Charley may all have the same basic policy about their own intentions -- i.e. each to do what he can to insure Charley's happiness. But what each intends to do cannot be precisely the same.
The important logical feature of intentions which we have hit upon can be made precise in the context of the following question. Consider the case in which Jake says:

I intend that Charley be happy.

while Tom says:

I intend that Charley not be happy.

Do these two statements contradict each other in the way that Tom's statement,

The earth is flat

contradicts Charley's statement,

The earth is round?

The answer is negative. Notice that Jake expresses a disposition toward actions of a certain kind, i.e. those that promote Charley's happiness. The actions he intends, however, are his own actions. Similarly, Tom's statement of intention concerns his actions, which may conflict in practice with those Jake initiates. Tom and Jake may come to blows. But there is nothing logically impossible in the fact that they have intentions which conflict with one another in this practical sense.

We are now led to the conclusion that intentions cannot be logically incompatible with each other in the sense that beliefs can. Look back over the steps that bring us to this conclusion. We have observed that beliefs and intentions can be regarded as acts of mind, in which respect that are private, egocentric, and subjective, or they may be taken in the sense of the event, action, or state of affairs which is believed or intended insofar as it is the content of any act of believing or intending. We have also noted that beliefs, in the sense not of the act of believing but in the sense of what is believed, need not be merely subjective. Two people who believe that the earth is round have precisely the same belief. Their belief, to use Kantian language, has not only a subjective validity in the sense that it is either true or false. Everything we have said about belief is also true of perception; we can say that perceptions are subjective insofar as they are acts of mind and yet intersubjective insofar as we refer to the object or state of affairs which is perceived. We usually say that perceptions are veridical or illusory than true or false. What about intentions? It is obvious that as acts of mind intentions are just as subjective or private as are acts of believing or acts of perceiving. But what about content, i.e., the action which is intended? Can two people have the same intention in the sense of intending the same action? We have said, for the time being, that since each person can intend only his own actions, two people cannot share the same intention.
as they can share a perception or a belief. As we signaled this fact by saying that statements of intention of two different people are never logically inconsistent. Unlike perceptions and beliefs, intentions seem to always refer to the person who holds them, viz to his action, and not to an intersubjective state or event. If this is the case, intentions may or may not be held, they may or may not be fulfilled, but there seems to be no meaningful sense in which they can be true or false. There is something residually egocentric not only about the state of intending but also about what is intended. Thus it appears that intentions display an asymmetry with perceptions and beliefs. It appears, that is to say, that intentions cannot be shared: they have a subjective validity but do not have an intersubjective or an objective validity as well.

Those who study the way Kant approaches epistemological issues may well imagine that not only was he aware of this apparent asymmetry between belief and intention but also that the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals represents an attempt to show that this asymmetry is more apparent than real. The terms "subjective validity" are Kant's, and while they are used principally in the Critique of Judgment, they reflect the epistemological distinction for which Kant sought metaphysical foundations. Without attempting an historical justification, we can offer the view that Kant's attempt to show that Reason can be practical, involves the question whether objects of the will can be intersubjective as are objects of the understanding. If Reason can be practical, that is to say, two people can have the same or can have logically contradictory intentions; in other words they should be able to will as they can believe the same or logically contradictory things. Were this the case, we might say that not only are intentions held but that they are also right or wrong, where the notion of rightness and wrongness to be explained on analogy with truth.

If our suggestion is accurate, then it would seem that Kant would have to show how that which is willed, insofar as it is willed, can be other than egocentric: how Charley, in other words, can will not simply his own action but also the action of all. When Charley sees something, his act of seeing takes as its object, and in that sense refers to, something which is at least ostensibly intersubjective. If he believes his perception to be veridical, he believes that any perceiving rational being under the same conditions would see the same thing. Thus Charley perceives not simply as Charley, but as a perceiving rational being. Much the same thing can be said of beliefs. If intentions, contrary to the drift of our argument so far, are symmetrical with perceptions and beliefs, then Charley's intention, like his perception and his belief, should take as its object and in that sense refer to not merely his own action but the action any rational being would intend in his circumstances. But the drift of our argument has been that Charley's intention has an egocentric object, that is, his own action and not a universal action or the action any rational being would intend in the same circumstances. But now suppose that Charley resolves not simply to follow
his own profit and inclination when deciding on what to do but instead to intend only those actions which at the same time he would require of any rational being who acts as a rational being in those or similar circumstances. In other words, Charley might resolve to make his intentions symmetrical with his beliefs and perceptions by willing not merely his own action but an action which simultaneously he imputes to any rational agent similarly located. Charley would will an action, then, not merely as Charley but as a rational being.

The real problem seems to be to determine how Charley can make good on his resolve. He can say: "I simply am not going to act on my own hook any more; I'm going to act just as I would expect any rational being to act in these circumstances. My action will follow directly from my circumstances in the same way as my perceptions and beliefs follow from my circumstances, at least when I am being rational, because there won't be any interference from my feelings or from what I want or desire." He might say very forcefully: "I am going to act only on principles that I can ascribe at the same time to all rational beings; these principles will entail my action in a given situation just as the laws of nature prescribe the distance at which a ball will bounce in a given situation." Charley can say all this, however, without having the foggiest notion about what laws hold for the actions of rational beings or how these laws are to apply in various circumstances. The troublesome thing is that Charley learns something about the intersubjective objects of perception by perceiving them; he can use his experience to confirm his hypotheses concerning physical laws and to determine which of his beliefs are true and which are false. The theoretical reason, that is to say, has a content, which Kant calls intuition, which gives it some way of testing its beliefs and perceptions. But how does Charley know whether the act he intends is the right one -- the one that follows from universal practical laws in the given circumstance? A lot of answers have been attempted to this question. The logical consistency of an action, for example, has been thought to provide a key to its rationality. But none of these answers has been very helpful. At most, we are led to principles the universal acceptance of which would promote the general welfare, a result which should please the rule utilitarian, but it frankly as unKantian as you can get. The upshot seems to be that while Charley knows something about the form of a morally right action he does not yet know how to use this knowledge to determine which specific actions are right. If he and all rational beings had a moral sentiment or something like that we might get somewhere. Kant, however, would not go with us. The apparent fact that the practical reason has no content -- that there is no practical intuition -- is what exasperates many of Kant's commentators, including Wolff and Rawls. It is the reason Rawls argues that we cannot build a moral theory on the slender basis Kant provides.
The Kantian reply to this familiar line of criticism suggests that the form of a moral intention is its content. This reply, needless to say, is a real puzzler. Our contention, however, is that this answer makes sense and that properly understood it provides Charley a way to determine whether the principle upon which he chooses to act as a rational being is appropriate to such an action in the given circumstances. The key to the matter lies in understanding properly the notion of the form of a moral intention. The form of such an intention, as we are often told, is its universalizability. But what does that mean? So far, we have seen that an ordinary run-of-the-mill intention looks like this:

Charley: I intend that I be happy.

This statement is not universal; its logical subject is a first person singular. Might we say then, that an intention is universalized only if its logical subject is a first person plural? Why not? We have said that when Charley pretends to act morally he acts not on his own hook but as one of a community of rational beings. In this case he might say:

Charley: It's not just that I want to be happy; the fact is that we rational beings intend that good old Charley be happy, and I am willing my happiness not for my own sake but as one of us.

The suggestion that a universalized intention is an intention with a first person plural logical subject has a certain attraction because it leads immediately to sense in which intentions can contradict each other and are in that way symmetrical with perceptions and beliefs. Thus imagine our actors to speak as follows:

Tom: We intend that Charley be miserable.

Charley: No; we intend Charley to be happy.

It is fair to say that Tom's intention is now logically inconsistent with Charley's just as his belief that the earth is round contradicts Charley's belief that the earth is flat. This fact is reflected in the structure of the intentions. If the logical subject of the intention is "we", then what I intend, i.e., the content of the intention, is "our" act in an irreducible sense. It is an action which I may perform, but if I do, I am not acting in propria persona but as one of us.16 It is not my action but our action which carry out; it is the same action any of us would perform (so I suppose) and for that reason I do it; I do not do it out of any particular interest of my own.

16. A similar formulation may be found in Wilfred Sellars, "Objectivity, Intersubjectivity and the Moral Point of View" in Science and Metaphysics, 1968
Now that we have come this far, we may observe that if Charley could universalize (if that is the word) his intention to some group about which more is known than is known about the group of all rational beings, then he would have some grounds on which to defend the claim that his action, and the principle or maxim on which it is based, are right. For example, if Charley plays pool for the Green Lantern Bar and Grill and intends not to drink before playing a competitive game, he might suppose that his action and the principle upon which it rests are right in the sense that he would expect the same of every member of his team, acting qua member. Let us suppose that other members of Charley's team have an incompatible intention; they determine to get loaded before playing because, say, the team has a reputation to defend that it never plays sober. Notice that these teammates express their intention, as Charley does, not as individuals, in which case there would not be a contradiction, but in terms of the principle which each obeys from duty, which is to say, because he considers it to be binding on him as a member of the group. In order to resolve this contradiction, Charley may sit down with his fellows, one hopes not over a few beers, in order to determine what their collective policy should be -- whether they prefer as a team to win games or to maintain their otherwise immaculate reputation. As long as each puts his commitment to membership in the group or over his own interests he will agree to consider the outcome of this process binding on him: it is in this kind of commitment that communities are formed. The values which are associated with membership in communities e.g. teams, marriages, nations, etc. may of a kind superior to those available to an individual acting on his own; this superiority, whatever it is, may ultimately explain the motivation for acting from duty. Be that as it may, we suppose that Charley and his fellows can attempt to reach a consensus through a participatory process, in which each member introduces whatever arguments he thinks might be relevant to motivate the group on the particular question. What counts is 1) that each participant is determined to reach a consensus which is to say, a policy which each accepts as binding him insofar as he acts as a member of the community, and 2) that each respects all others as equally entitled to legislate this common purpose. The suggestion here is that the respect for another as a legislator equal to oneself approximates Kant's requirement that we treat others not as means only but also as ends-in-themselves.

The suggestion now seems to be that if an agent regards himself as a member of a community and participates in a decision making procedure in which each member takes his place as an equal legislator in reaching a consensus, whatever principles of action are agreed upon bind that agent as a matter of duty; they are his insofar as he is one of us. In other words, for any situation in which the agent finds himself, he acts from duty, and therefore morally, only if he acts according to the maxim which he can at the same time require of any member.
of his group. Charley's decision to act not for himself but as a member of the pool team, however, still does not seem to be a full-fledged moral decision. The problem may be that we have so far relativised moral action to communities which gives the result that an action obligatory for a member of one group may be the reverse of the action to which a member of some other community would be bound by duty in the same circumstances. There is no question that Kant considered moral judgments not to be relative but to be defined on a single group, viz, the community of all rational beings. This brings us once again to an impasse. We know something about the processes by which pool teams may reach a consensus on policy; one can study bar-room behavior, at any rate, and find out. The pool team, however, is not the same as the sociology of the Kingdom of Ends. The fact is that the Kingdom of Ends does not appear to have a sociology, which is a point Wolff makes by comparing moral agents to mathematicians; each one reaches the same decision independently and then announces it as the will of all.17 Schopenhauer, incidently, makes something of the same point in The Basis of Morality. If the community of rational beings has no culture, no processes of communication, no nuances of negotiation, no system of collective choice, and, in a word, no history, one wonders how anyone could determine the action to which he is committed as a rational being. And so it appears we are back where we started. We have the form of moral judgment but we are not yet able to establish its content.

It is important to observe that there are at least two strategies which we can adopt at this point. The first may be to follow Rawls in trying to determine the rules upon which rational self interested beings would agree simply on the basis of rational self interest. To show the attraction of this strategy we need only consider a simple case. Suppose the circumstances are such that mother has baked a pie and her two children, acting as rational self interested beings, must reach a consensus on how to divide it between them. Given that neither will allow the other to have the larger share, they will have to agree on a fairly equal division, e.g. you cut and I'll choose. Other game situations, zero-sum and non-zero sum, suggest other principles of division or action to which rational self-interested beings will give their assent. These principles in general provide nearly equal distribution, maximize the total available, or maximize the minimum share, or something of the sort. The point here is that rational self-interested beings in situations of collective choice will reach solutions, with the sense of equilibria, which appear to be fair or equitable. This suggests that there is conceptual connection between rational self-interest and justice or fairness. This conceptual relation may tempt us to construe rational beings as rationally self-interested in order to provide content to the formal requirements of collective choice.

A second strategy takes seriously the notion that an action which is morally right follows strictly from the circumstances in which it occurs, much as if it were a natural event. The proposal put forward here is that the circumstances of an action include the communities to which an agent belongs. In legislating the collective purpose of the larger and smaller communities to which he belongs — that is, by acting not in his own behalf but as one of us — the agent fills in the conditions necessary for deriving from particular circumstances a dutiful act. It is obvious that he may discover in some cases that he cannot serve two communities at once; in other words, he will not be able to act as and therefore to be a member of both; in that event he must make a choice. There are some situations, the most famous is Sartre's example of the French underground agent torn between his duty to a political movement and his duty to his family, in which no decision seems clearly right. In most cases however, a sense of personal morality or, perhaps, a good will, comes into play. A basic sense of humanity, altruism, or sympathy for the welfare of others must inform moral choice, and if it is not sufficient to direct a single course in a complex situation, it conditions the commitment an individual makes to the communities through which he seeks his realization as both a social and a moral being. F. H. Bradley has said as much in the following way: "Personal morality and political and social institutions cannot exist apart, and (in general) the better the one the better the other. The community is moral because it realizes personal morality; personal morality is moral because and insofar it realizes the moral whole." 18

This second strategy may require that an agent who is moral legislate the common intention not only through his actions but also in the less theoretical sense that he participate in the political processes of collective choice. Societies which are not open to this sort of participation fail to allow citizens to be respected or to respect each other as legislators of the common will; in that sense moral activity is so severely restricted that the agent can hardly realize himself as a moral being. In an open society, an individual attains a kind of self realization by sharing his own ideal of the community with other members through available political, economic, cultural, and other social processes. It is the oldest thought in the world that in the community the individual is realized. The individual is realized, however, not in the sense that his interests are fulfilled, for this strategy has nothing particular to do with interest; nor is there any guarantee that the individual will receive a minimum of share of material goods. On the contrary, by committing himself to a community, the

18. F. H. Bradley, "My Station and Its Duties" in A. I. Melden, Ethical Theories, 1955, page 409
individual attains values and satisfactions of a kind which are not divisible but are shared and which belong to him not as an individual but as part of a larger social unity at a particular historical moment. If an individual demands certain rights or defends other principles as a matter of public policy, then he may have these shared values or satisfactions, rather than a private interest, in mind. He may, for example, defend a national forest from commercialization or seek racial equality not for his own sake directly but for the sake of the character of the community, its culture, its history, and the commitment of the individual toward its improvement are sufficient to give content to the formal requirements of duty. If this strategy relativizes morality to communities, which is unKantian, so be it. We may still think of the largest community, that which includes all rational beings, as the ideal case, relative to which intentions are objectively valid in the full sense. Be this as it may, we must consider individuals as committed either to their own interests or to communities in order to give content to moral choice.

Although the second strategy proposed here may not be entirely consistent with Kant, it has obvious affinities with the views expressed by some of his followers. The concept of the community will, for example, and its connection with morality, are explored by T. H. Green in The Principles of Political Obligation and serve his thesis that a common will and not force is the basis of the state. There is nothing in our strategy, moreover, which is substantially different from the approach Bradley takes in "My Station and Its Duties." The commitment of an individual to others in his community as sharing with him a single will does not offer, as we have allowed, a model of distributive justice, since every agent must see himself as achieving not his own advantage relative to others but as sharing in a common good. The motivation for moral action, in this sense, can hardly be self interest, although deep personal values are involved. It is of a sort which Josiah Royce called Loyalty and which Christian theologians have called Love.19

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