

pregnancy in India exploits women and harms children born out of such a commercial and potentially exploitative practice and that it should be abolished. It is interesting to note that since the publication of this book, Thailand has suspended international adoption, after an Australian couple had abandoned their child with Down syndrome and left him with the Thai surrogate mother. In the last chapter, Jennifer Parks evaluates aged parenting, and specifically older mothers who become pregnant after the menopause. She describes existing arguments against allowing older mothers to have children and states that a more in-depth exploration of the obligations of parents to potential offspring is needed to gain clarity.

This volume raises and covers many interesting questions on the role of parenting and on how to weigh questions regarding the interests of prospective parents and the wellbeing of children. It clearly challenges the notion of normativity and demonstrates that much conceptual work is still needed in order to come to satisfying conclusions. The fact that many of the contributors refer to their own experiences or use real-life accounts makes this volume both accessible to a wider audience and in my opinion more valuable. A must read for bioethicists considering the ethics of reproduction and for anyone interested in the philosophical and ethical issues surrounding parenting.

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Michael E. BRATMAN. *Shared Agency: A Planning Theory of Acting Together*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. 219 pp.

In this book, Michael Bratman offers a detailed and comprehensive presentation of his view on shared agency: the ‘planning theory of modest sociality’. The book integrates ideas and themes from a number of essays on shared activity and related topics Bratman published after the appearance of his influential *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), which deals with individual agency. The guiding thought – in those essays as well as in *Shared Agency* – is that modest sociality can be conservatively understood on the basis of the well-perceived planning theory of individual agency developed in his 1987 book.

Bratman’s exposition of the ‘building blocks’ of his view (chapters 2-3), of their integration into an overall theory (chapter 4), of the merits of that theory over (non-conservative) rivals (chapters 5-6), of its application to the phenomenon of shared deliberation (chapter 7), as well as his characterization of what exactly his project is (and is not) about (chapter 1), is lucid and detailed, making for a very readable book (although it tends to be slightly repetitive, and its sophistication at times yields somewhat long-winded formulations). As a result, I would say that Bratman has succeeded in his aim “[...] to lay out [the] planning model of our sociality in sufficient detail and with sufficient clarity so that we can assess its merits” (ix). Since Bratman attaches more importance to “the overall contours of this theory” than to “the totality of

details [...] develop[ed] along the way” (ix), I will mostly attend to the former in this review.

As said, Bratman’s target is ‘modest sociality’: cases of small-scale, stable groups of adult human beings acting together, where there are no asymmetric authority relations between the participants (7-8). In particular, his concern is with the action-theoretic aspects of our sociality, not with moral or otherwise evaluative aspects thereof. His typical examples include singing a duet and painting a house together. Bratman’s ‘basic thesis’ (85-87) defends the ‘continuity thesis’ (8), which states, in a nutshell, that “modest sociality is interconnected planning agency” (87). The bulk of the book consists of a detailed exploration of what makes up this ‘interconnectedness’. The project is “reductive” (114, 155): Bratman intends to show that his plan-theoretic understanding of individual agency provides all the conceptual, metaphysical and normative materials one needs in order to construct the respective ingredients of modest sociality.

The bigger action-theoretic picture in which Bratman locates this project is shaped by a ‘guiding idea’ he borrows from Grice (25, note 66): the methodology of ‘creature construction’, which is “[...] to understand more complex forms of agency by building stepwise from simpler forms” (25). Thus, there is a basic notion of simple belief-desire agency, which roughly coincides with the influential causal theory of action famously defended by Davidson (“Action, Reasons and Causes,” *Journal of Philosophy* LX/23: 685-700, 1963). From here we get to individual planning agency by adding planning states (intentions). This is a conceptually and normatively non-conservative addition that is, however, metaphysically conservative: although it involves roles and norms that go beyond what mere belief-desire agency involves, it can still be located in the natural causal order along the familiar lines of Davidson’s causal theory of action (although Bratman is, as always, careful not to overstate his case here; see, for example, 46; 48). Bratman’s reasons for endorsing planning states as a substantive addition to belief-desire agency are (at least) threefold: they play an important role in temporally extended agency, in self-governance, and in our present topic – modest sociality. Bratman expresses his faith in the usefulness of this addition in his slogan “the fecundity of planning structures” (for example, 4; 11; 151).

Bratman conceives of his approach to modest sociality as one that lies in the ‘middle territory’ between two alternative positions (5-7). On the one hand, we have a (roughly) game-theoretic approach to sociality, which (he claims) is too individualistic in spirit, since it comes down to individual action given *expectations* concerning the behaviour of others, and thus fails to capture true sociality, which involves *intentions* concerning the behaviour of others (see below). On the other hand, we have non-conservative approaches, such as that of Margaret Gilbert (discussed by Bratman in detail in chapter 5), which impose on sociality features (irreducible ‘joint commitments’, in Gilbert’s case) that at best characterize only a proper subset of cases of sociality. Bratman’s ‘middle way’ is individualistic (*per* the continuity thesis), but seeks nevertheless to arrive at a notion of modest sociality that constitutes a genuine addition to individual agency (and hence makes for a genuine step in his methodology of creature construction). Note, by the way, that there are innovative game-theorists who incorporate

non-conservative additions along the lines of Searle’s ‘we-intentions’ into their game-theoretic understanding of shared action (see, for example, Michael Bacharach. *Beyond Individual Choice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). An odd ‘middle way’, if its extremes can be coherently combined.

Given Bratman’s limitation to small-scale, modest cases of shared agency, one wonders why he insists so strongly on the continuity thesis. After all, if, in the end, non-conservative resources turn out to be required for more involved cases of shared agency, there is little reason to exclude these resources from our account of modest sociality. Bratman in fact makes a similar argument when considering the possibility of mere belief-desire-based forms of shared agency. Given that we humans can form planning states, he says, we may as well use them to understand sociality (26; 151). Moreover, given that no *comprehensive* account of our sociality is being proposed, his appeal to parsimony in defence of the continuity thesis (105-106) has little force – parsimony, we should remember, only comes in ‘in the endgame’. I suspect, however, that in the background there is either a more robust continuity thesis at play, which Bratman (laudably) downscales only because he feels that the said more robust thesis cannot be substantiated yet (one could read 119-120 this way), or else that there is an assumption at play as to a fundamental difference between modest and more involved cases of sociality, a new ‘step’ in creature construction, which Bratman (laudably) does not include in his theory for similar reasons.

In any event, let us focus now on the contours of Bratman’s construction. The first (and by now familiar) step is to move from “we intend to *J*” via “we intend that we *J*” to “each of us intends that we *J*” (by reading the “we” in subject position distributively; see 41). Having thus arrived at a collection of in-principle unproblematic *individual* intentions in place of the initial *shared* intention, the next task is to construe the contents of these intentions in a non-circular way. Most importantly, the joint activity *J* in question must, in basic cases, be neutral with regard to its ‘joint-ness’ (just as an account of individual agency must assume, in a basic case of individual intentionality “I intend to *A*”, that *A* is neutral with regard to its intentionality – see 45). Of course, we normally do not talk or think in terms of such neutral activity-types (both in the joint and in the individual case). Bratman takes this to be the result of a “conceptual ratcheting” (47) that enables agents with the basic capacity for shared (or intentional) action to develop conceptions of activities that are no longer neutral (such as promising, or praying) – and this may then end up being the standard situation.

But let us continue. Given this non-circular initial understanding of the contents of intentions of the form “I intend that we *J*”, further ingredients need to be added in order to narrow down the range of cases that involve such intentions to only those that we take to be cases of modest sociality. Most centrally, the intentions of each must *interlock*, i.e. appropriately specify the partners’ corresponding intentions (to exclude, for example, a ‘mafia case’ [49], where we both intend that we go to NYC by knocking the other out and putting him/her in the trunk of our car). Given the plan-theoretic understanding of intentions, it follows that each participant is disposed to develop relevant sub-plans that ‘mesh’ with the others’.

We now have the first element of the ‘compressed’ version of Bratman’s construction (103; 152) on the table. Here is a version thereof that is even more compressed:

- A. *Intention condition*: We each intend that we *J*, and that we *J* by way of each of our intentions and by way of ‘relevant mutual responsiveness’ (see E below).
- B. *Belief condition*: We each believe that if our intentions in A persist, they will lead to our *J*-ing by way of ‘relevant mutual responsiveness’ (see E below), and we believe that there is persistence interdependence between the intentions in A.
- C. *Interdependence condition*: There is persistence interdependence between the intentions in A.
- D. *Common knowledge condition*: It is common knowledge that A-D.

These conditions suffice for shared *intention*. Resulting activity is *modest sociality* when:

- E. *Mutual responsiveness condition*: Our shared intention to *J* leads to our *J*-ing by way of public mutual responsiveness in sub-intention and action that tracks the end of the joint activity by way of the relevant intentions of each.

Bratman shows in some detail how the relevant roles and norms of individual planning agency (including “coordinating, structuring, organizing, guiding, and settling roles” [27], and “norms of consistency, agglomeration, means-end coherence, and stability” [15]), applied to situations thereof satisfying A-E, give rise to distinctive roles and norms of modest sociality (including roles of “social coordination and organization in relevant thought and action”, and “norms of social agglomeration and consistency, social coherence, and social stability” [27]). Thereby, he aims to show that his *conceptually* conservative construction in terms of conditions A-E suffices for an equally conservative account of *norms* of social rationality.

I should make two remarks about this construction. First, as Bratman stresses several times, his proposal is meant to provide only *sufficient* conditions for modest sociality, not necessary ones – since it might be that “shared intention is multiply realizable” (36). At times, this restriction creates tensions, for instance when he includes elements that would be too strong when considered as necessary conditions (for example, 77). Secondly, the common knowledge condition D implies, together with C, that the parties involved *know* that their intentions are interdependent. This makes the *belief* with the same content, cited in B, redundant.

Each of the five elements A-E invites interesting questions, many of which Bratman treats in detail, and often resolves quite convincingly. Let me mention five of the more central ones (in my view), which I will not go into here. (i) The intentions cited in A (famously) violate the ‘own-action condition’, which some find unacceptable; (ii) Whether it makes sense to separate belief in the effectiveness of one’s intention (as in B) from that intention itself is questionable; (iii) Likewise, the reflexivity involved in the intentions in A – in effect, it says that I intend that we *J* in part by way of *my own intention* – is problematic (I return to this briefly below); (iv) The interdependence in C makes

it difficult to see how such interdependent intentions could be formed in the first place; (v) How exactly we should understand the ‘common knowledge’ in D is a matter of considerable dispute. In the remainder of this review, however, I will focus on a different objection to Bratman’s proposal (due to Christine Korsgaard) that he briefly discusses on 100-101. This objection strikes me as most central to the very viability of his project of accounting for modest sociality in individualistic terms (as opposed to objections to one or another of his ‘building blocks’), and Bratman’s response strikes me as inadequate.

Here is the objection. If I intend that we *J* by way of each of our intentions that we *J*, “I may seem to be seeing your intention and your agency as, at bottom, a means to what I intend – namely, our joint activity” (100). Let me first rephrase Korsgaard’s point somewhat, without relying too much on the notion of ‘means’. For this reformulation and the ensuing discussion, I take my cue from Sebastian Rödl’s recent paper “Intentional Transaction” (*Philosophical Explorations* 17/3: 304-316, 2014). The intention in question is *my individual* intention, and the resulting action is *my individual* action. As with any intentional action, it is *one* action (and not a concatenation of separate actions, say) because *it* is intended: the intention, one could say, is the principle of unity of the action. To illustrate: if I (intentionally) paint walls A and B in the morning, and C and D in the afternoon, these two actions may be sub-actions of my intentionally painting the entire house, but they can also be separate actions (I might not even know that A-D are walls of the same house) – my having or lacking an intention to paint the entire house makes the relevant difference. Thus, if I do something intentionally, whatever elements figure in that action form part of my ‘sub-plan(s)’ aimed at completing that action. Whether these elements are sub-actions, repeated attempts, contributions by tools I use, or contributions by other things or processes that happen to be in my environment (such as the wind in the event of starting a camp fire, or an intentional agent lifting the other half of the piano), they are all unified into one ‘temporally extended’ individual action by my intention. One could use the term ‘means’ to cover anything that figures as such an element in an intentional action. And in that sense, it is indeed true that, in a case satisfying Bratman’s conditions, the other’s intended contribution is a means towards my end – the joint activity. If you and I have such Bratmanian intentions, and execute these successfully, there are thus two separate individual actions unified by two separate individual intentions, each treating the other’s contribution as a means (in the specified sense).

Now consider Bratman’s reply to Korsgaard. It is that, by parity of reasoning, I would then also treat *myself* as a means, since my intention involves *each* of our intentions that we *J* – it is a *reflexive* intention, as I already noted. And, since that seems to be a case of ‘treating as a means’ that is innocuous, we should conclude that the sense in which I am treating *the other* as a means is an innocuous one too (101).

However, there is no parity of reasoning here. *My* intention ensures the unity of my action, *yours* does not. That makes for a relevant difference. “Treating as a means’, as circumscribed above, applies to *elements* of a given action, the unity of which is provided by the associated intention. The elements make sense in the context of

the overarching intention. In particular, your intention (and ensuing action) occupies a certain place in the context of my overarching intention that we *J*. My own intention occupies no such place in that context; it does not make a distinct contribution that makes sense in its light. Rather, it *is* that context. (One can see why there is room for doubts about the very idea of reflexive intentions – see (iii) above.)

The upshot is, then, that Bratman's construction does not yield single joint activities, but always yields multiple individual activities. In his own words: it yields "interconnected planning agency". Bratmanian shared agency is thus more like doing two accidentally related actions (first painting walls A and B, then C and D) than like doing one unified action (painting the house *by* first painting A and B, then C and D). And this is not in line with the examples he uses – such as painting the house together. In such cases, it is clear that our respective contributions (my painting walls A and B, your painting walls C and D) do indeed relate as means (in the specified sense) to *one* overarching intentional action (our painting the house). And that, in turn, presupposes that there is *one* intention unifying our respective contributions, and not two.

If this line of reasoning is on the right track, reductive projects like Bratman's are doomed from the very start. Yet I do think that Bratman is right, in a sense, in insisting on the 'continuity thesis', and, moreover, that he points us in the right direction insofar as what we need to account for 'modest sociality' is the same as what we need to account for 'temporally extended agency': a proper account of intention. My reasons for endorsing the continuity thesis, however, are different. Intentions are intentions, whether they are *mine* or *ours* – there is no need to posit "a new and non-reducible attitude of we-intention" *à la* Searle (154). Here, I would argue that an intention is essentially a *first-personal* attitude – an attitude such that the person (or persons) who has (have) it is/are identical with the person (or persons) who figure/s as its subject. Thus understood, intentions simply admit of both singular and plural instances. The central question is, therefore, how we should understand the first person, and in particular the first person plural. Unfortunately, Bratman does not reflect on these questions at all. Where he discusses what "we" refers to in a case of shared agency "we are *J*-ing" (i.e. in chapter 6), he takes it to refer to a 'group agent' (though not to a 'group subject'), thereby ignoring both that 'we' is the *first person plural* pronoun and that 'we' is the first person *plural* pronoun (and one wonders what is left of the first person plural pronoun if both of these aspects are neglected). I would very much like to learn what Bratman thinks about these questions.

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Sara Rachel CHANT, Frank HINDRIKS, Gerhard PREYER (eds.). *From Individual to Collective Intentionality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. 240 pp.

The title *From Individual to Collective Intentionality* can be understood in different ways. It could mean that a path is shown that leads from individual to collective intentionality.