Interests, Universal and Particular: Bentham's Utilitarian Theory of Value

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The basic concept of Bentham's moral and political philosophy was public utility. He linked it directly with the concept of the universal interest, which comprises a distinctive partnership of the interests of all members of the community. The ultimate end of government and aim of all of morality is 'the advancement of the universal interest'. This essay articulates the structure of Bentham's notion of universal interest and locates it in his theory of value.

In the whole moral sphere . . . there is nothing more glorious nor of wider range than the solidarity of mankind, that species of alliance and partnership of interests [*societas et communicatio utilitatum*] and that actual affection which exists between man and man . . . [which] is termed Justice.

Cicero, *De Finibus,* V. 65

In all determinations of morality, this circumstance of public utility is ever principally in view; and wherever disputes arise, either in philosophy or common life, concerning the bounds of duty, the question cannot, by any means, be decided with greater certainty, than by ascertaining, on any side, the true interests of mankind.

Hume, *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals,* 2.17

It was from Hume that Bentham learned that 'the foundations of all *virtue* are laid in *utility*' (FG 440). Perhaps it was the above passage from Hume's *Enquiry* that made the scales fall from Bentham's eyes. Surely some such passage did the trick, for the basic concept of Bentham's moral and political philosophy was not simply utility, but rather public utility. He insisted, even more single-mindedly than his imagined mentor, that it is public utility – 'the cause of the people' (ibid.) – in which all moral judgements are ultimately grounded. Moreover, following Hume's lead, he linked this concept directly with the concept of interests. For these classically trained philosophers, the link between utility and interest was manifest in the Latin root *utilitas* – as we can see in the passage from *De Finibus*. Of course, it was Hume, not Bentham, who drew inspiration from Cicero and readily coupled justice with utility (and *utilitates*). Yet Bentham heartily embraced the singular 'species of alliance and partnership of interests'

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that attracted Cicero's praise and he placed it at the core of his utilitarian theory of value.

Or so, at least, I shall argue in this essay. Of course, for Bentham, pleasure is our 'sovereign master' and the anchor of all practical judgements (IPML 11), but this sovereign rarely appears in public and is seldom recognized when it does. It is known primarily by its effects, wearing the mantle of the universal interest, which comprises in Bentham's mature public philosophy a distinctive partnership of the interests of all members of the community. The ultimate end of government, Bentham insists, is 'the advancement of the universal interest' (B iii. 452); indeed, this is the aim of all of morality: 'To the art and science of *morals* belongs the indication of the sorts of acts, by which, in the various situations of life, the universal interest is served or disserved' (LW 142, original emphasis). In this essay, I undertake to articulate the structure of Bentham's notion of universal interest and discover its place in his theory of value. I continue here a project of rethinking the philosophical core of Bentham's utilitarianism begun in an essay on the place of equality in his theory of value.[1] There I argued that Bentham's lifelong concern with the distribution of happiness – its 'extent' as he called it – did not issue from his commitment to a principle of equality distinct from his principle of utility, but rather from his understanding of the moral concern that lies at the heart of his theory of value. The most fundamental morally significant fact, in Bentham's view, was that it is individuals who suffer and flourish, and his many formulations of the principle of utility represent attempts to give clear and effective expression to his commitment to individual happiness. This commitment is most aptly expressed, I shall argue, in the concept of the universal interest which took shape in his work late in his long career.[2]

I. HAPPINESS, EQUALITY AND THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPOSITION

'[P]ublic welfare', Bentham wrote in *Chrestomathia*, is 'the great and universal end' to which all action and institutions (indeed, to which 'all art, all science, all language') ought to be directed (Chr 120). The fundamental principle of Bentham's theory of political morality, the

[1] Gerald J. Postema, 'Bentham's Equality-Sensitive Utilitarianism', *Utilitas* 10 (1998), pp. 144–58. See also F. Rosen, 'Individual Sacrifice and the Greatest Happiness: Bentham on Utility and Rights', *Utilitas* 10 (1998), pp. 129–43.

[2] The basic themes are evident throughout his writings, but they come strongly to the foreground in the 1820s. My project here is to offer a reconstruction of Bentham's theory of value and its philosophical motivations. There is an important story to tell about how this theory developed over the course of his career, but I will not attempt to tell that story here.

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principle of utility, consists of four components. The first, *communal consequentialism*, set the unquestioned horizon of Bentham's thinking about morality and politics. Morality is, at bottom, the business of promoting the overall good of the community. This is the lesson Bentham took from Hume. All virtue is founded on utility, he learned. He understood utility, at a first approximation, in terms of social welfare. Thus, according to this second component, *social welfarism*, the good of the community is to be understood in terms of its welfare or well-being. But, third, for Bentham the fundamental moral concern is the well-being or welfare of individuals. *Individual welfarism* insists that all other concerns, when viewed from the perspective of morality, must be rooted in the welfare of individuals. The fourth component, *compositionalism*, unites the two parts of his welfarist understanding of communal consequentialism: the welfare of the community is strictly a composite of the welfare of its individual members.

The key to understanding Bentham's fundamental utilitarian principle lies in understanding the *principle of composition* – the nature of the function that composes the welfare of the community, public utility, out of the welfare of its individual members. On the received view of classical utilitarianism, evident, for example, in Rawls's familiar treatment of it in his *Theory of Justice*,[3] the welfare of a community is the net sum of the welfare of its individual members measured in hedonic units of positive and negative valence – pleasure and pain – viewed impartially and so given strictly equal weight. Promotion of social welfare, on this received view, requires that actions be chosen and institutions be constructed so as to maximize this net sum of aggregated pleasures and pains. On this view, the principle of composition is thought to require the simple summation of the pleasures and pains of all those affected by actions, policies or laws. The principle of choice, given this composition of the social welfare, is maximization: the principle of utility instructs us to choose that alternative which promises to produce the largest net sum of pleasure. This, I maintain, was not Bentham's view. It is fundamentally at odds with the theory of value at the centre of his utilitarianism. Bentham's principle of composition reflects his understanding of moral value. It is not entirely clear whether Bentham was committed to maximization as the canonical principle of choice regarding public utility,[4] but even if

[3] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), pp. 19–30, 160–8.

[4] Rosen ('Individual Sacrifice') argues that he was not committed to maximization at all. This may put the emphasis in the wrong place. Bentham often uses the term 'maximization' as the operative term in his principle of choice of social states, thereby requiring that we choose that state of affairs that promises to produce the greatest good for the community as a whole. The crucial question, however, is not whether he thought in terms of maximization, but rather, how he thought the good or welfare of the community

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he was committed to it, it should become clear as we proceed that his very different principle of composition of social welfare gives a rather different meaning to the idea of maximization than is familiar to students of utilitarianism in this century and most of the last one. A brief summary of Bentham's understanding of moral value will put us in search of his alternative principle of composition.

In his *Rationale of Judicial Evidence*, Bentham wrote, 'every individual in the country tells for one; no individual for more than one' (B vii. 334). Mill, Bentham's godson, and the editor of *the Rationale*, memorialized the slogan in chapter 5 of *Utilitarianism*. It is 'involved in the very meaning' of utility, Mill argued, and it 'might be written under the principle of utility as an explanatory commentary'.[5] One way to understand Mill's point is to take 'each to tell for one' to mean *each unit of pleasure* (or pain) is to tell for one – that is, pleasure and pain *alone* are to count in the utilitarian calculus. This entails an egalitarian principle, an anti-discrimination principle, which prohibits any weighting of the pleasures or pains according to features of those who experience them. Prince or pauper, male or female, gay or straight, philosopher, philanthropist or philanderer – no such status affects the weight to be given to their pleasures and pains in the utilitarian calculus. The principle of utility is no respecter of persons. Since pleasure alone is its concern, it matters not whether the units of pleasure are experienced by one person or many. This understanding of 'each tells for one' fits the received interpretation of classical utilitarianism and rests on a conception of happiness that regards its moral significance as entirely independent of its connection to the individuals experiencing it. I call this the *abstract happiness conception*.

I believe that this is not the way Bentham understood the moral significance of happiness. Rather, on his *individualist conception,* the fact that happiness is the happiness *of someone* is of fundamental moral importance. Happiness is not a moral good considered apart from the

is to be composed out of the welfare of its members. I do think, however, that Bentham did not take very seriously the so-called 'felicific calculus'. As Lord Robbins, once put it, most of the talk of the felicific calculus as a precise apparatus of measurement and computation 'is all shop window' (L. Robbins, *The Theory of Economic Policy,* 2nd edn. (London, 1978), p. 181, quoted in T. Warke, 'Multi-dimensional Utility and the Index Number Problem: Jeremy Bentham, J. S. Mill, and Qualitative Hedonism', *Utilitas* 12 (2000), p. 184n.). While Bentham often spoke of the 'calculus' of utility, he usually did not have a mathematical model in mind, but rather a process of careful and deliberate assessment of the reasons. 'The instrument employed by the principle of utility is calculation. What is calculation? Answer: reasons applied to the subject in the manner best adapted to the subject' (TSA 43, see generally, TSA 30–6, 42–4; but see also LW 250–1).

[5] J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ed. J. M. Robson, *Collected Works* (vol. x) Toronto: (1969), p. 257.

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people who experience it. Happiness is morally relevant just because people experience it and integrate the experiences meaningfully into their lives. The fundamental moral fact for the individualist utilitarian is the suffering of concrete individual people. It is people who suffer and flourish, people who take delight in or are distressed by the events of their lives. If these experiences are abstracted from the meaning they have within the lives of individual human beings they lose utterly their moral significance.[6] '[O]ne man's happiness,' Bentham wrote, 'will never be another man's happiness: a gain to one man is no gain to another: you might as well pretend to add 20 apples to 20 pears'.[7] Each person's happiness remains distinct, not just epistemically, but morally. In an otherwise puzzling argument, Bentham signals his commitment to this individualist conception. 'If it be proper to sacrifice the fortune of one individual, in order to augment the fortune of the others,' he argues, 'it would be still better to sacrifice a second, a third,' and so on to any greater number,

> without it being possible to assign any limits; for, whatever may be the number of those you have sacrificed, you always have the same reason for adding one more. In a word, the interest of the first is sacred, or the interest of no one can be so. (B i. 321)

On this conception of value, 'each is to tell for one' requires that 'with exceptions to as *small* an extent as possible, [the] interests [of] *all* [are] to be *advanced*' (B iii. 452, original emphasis). Late in his career, he wrote that the only proper end of government is the greatest happiness of all members of the community, 'an equal quantity of happiness for every one of them' – in so far as possible. Where this proves impossible, and the happiness of some must be sacrificed for the happiness of others, government must seek the greatest happiness of the greatest number of them.[8] Bentham here makes clear that his basic principle,

[6] Is this inconsistent with Bentham's famous argument for extending moral consideration to animals: '[T]he question is not, Can they *reason*? nor, Can they *talk*? but, Can they *suffer*?' (IPML 283n.)? I do not think so. He argues that sentient beings must be given moral consideration, not that the moral significance of their suffering is the same as that of human beings. Note also that it is capacity for suffering, not merely capacity for pain, that qualifies such beings for moral consideration. 'Suffering' is a wider term incorporating more than merely pain and it locates the experience, whether painful or not, in the context of the lives of the creatures in question and the ways in which those lives can go well or badly. When speaking of non-human animals it may be a stretch to talk in terms of 'integrating the experience meaningfully into their lives', but it does make sense to talk about the role of that pain in the going-well or going-badly of their lives as they experience them. That, it would seem, is enough to retain the focus of moral consideration for Bentham's purposes even in the case of non-human animals.

[7] John Dinwiddy quotes Bentham's manuscript at UC xiv. 3, W. Twining, *Bentham: Selected Writings of John Dinwiddy* (Stanford: 2004), p. 49.

[8] In a pamphlet of 1831 entitled *Parliamentary Candidates Proposed Declaration of Principles*, Bentham wrote that the only right and proper end of government is 'the

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which defines the target of utilitarian aspiration, is committed to the greatest equal happiness, not to maximizing total net (abstract) happiness. Only when this goal cannot be achieved and some sacrifice is inevitable does a fallback principle come into play. However, this principle does not require that happiness considered in the abstract be maximized, but that the greatest and widest possible distribution of happiness be achieved.[9]

Thus, it appears that Bentham did not accept the view, often attributed to him, that the good or welfare of an individual could be entirely subordinated to the welfare of the community as a whole. However, he clearly recognized that the utilitarian principle applied in a world in which conflicts of interest are pervasive and where sacrifices of the happiness of some for the happiness of others are unavoidable and not always unreasonable. There is an evident tension in these views and Bentham struggled with it over much of his long career. Yet, he seemed to think that, for the domain of politics and public policy at least, this tension could be substantially relieved even if not entirely eliminated. The key to his solution, and to a principle of composition consistent with his individualist conception of happiness, lies in his understanding of the notion of the universal interest.

II. UNIVERSAL INTEREST

In the last two decades of his life, the concept of interest became a central organizing notion of Bentham's political sociology and theory of political morality. Ultimately, perhaps, pleasure and pain remained for him the two sovereign masters of our lives – dictating what we will do and what we ought to do – but interest was their first minister and true operational manager.[10] According to Bentham, the word 'interest' has no superior genus and so cannot be defined in the traditional way, *per*

greatest happiness of the members of the community in question: the greatest happiness – of all of them, without exception, in so far as possible: the greatest happiness of the greatest number of them, on every occasion on which the nature of the case renders the provision of an equal quantity of happiness for everyone of them impossible, by its being a matter of necessity, to make sacrifice of a portion of the happiness of a few, to the greater happiness of the rest'. Quoted by Dinwiddy, Twining, *Selected Writings of Dinwiddy*, p. 31.

[9] He was not always consistent in his commitment to this theme. In *Legislator of the World* he wrote, 'But on every occasion, without detriment to the greatest happiness of the greatest number, a burthen may in any shape be imposed upon any individual or individuals in any number for the benefit of an individual or individuals in any number, so that this condition be fulfilled: viz. that the sum of the benefits conferred be greater in value than the sum of the burthens imposed' (LW 206).

[10] For a discussion of Bentham's reasons for replacing the notions of pleasure and pain with that of interests in his articulation of the principle of utility see Gerald J. Postema, 'Bentham's Utilitarianism', *A Guide to Mill's Utilitarianism*, ed. H. West (Oxford, 2006).

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genus et differentiam (IPML 12n.). Thus, he argued, we must analyse it as a fiction, in the same manner as 'obligation', 'law', 'rights' and the like. All these fictions are necessary to our thought and practice. They are harmless, or at least not seriously misleading, just in so far as they can be tethered ultimately to real entities. 'Interest' is rooted ultimately in the psychic entities, pleasure and pain (TSA 5–7, 74–79, 98–100). This way of thinking about the relationship between interests and pleasure/pain allowed Bentham to articulate his principle of utility in the language of the universal interest, while contenting himself that, if necessary, he could cash any specific discussion of utility into ultimate (but practically unwieldy and epistemically problematic) hedonic terms. For all practical purposes on this analysis, the language of interests can be taken as fundamental.

It was, indeed, for specific practical purposes that Bentham devised his principle of utility. His aim from the outset was to articulate a public philosophy, addressed primarily to legislators, constitution makers and engineers of social reform who could be enlisted in the enterprise of designing and constructing social, economic and political institutions. Even his *Deontology*, while ostensibly addressed to matters of private, interpersonal morality, approached morality in the spirit of a utilitarian engineer, focusing largely on ways to get people to do the right thing. For this purpose the language of interests is especially well suited. Robert Goodin recently observed,

> People's pleasures are varied, their preferences idiosyncratic. People's basic interests, in contrast, are (at least at some suitable level of generality) pretty standard across all individuals (at least all individuals in any given society at any given moment). Policy makers are of necessity making choices that must affect a wide range of people at one and the same time. They might well be overwhelmed by the diversity of pleasures and preferences . . . . Their task is rendered far more manageable by the relative commonality of people's basic welfare interests.[11]

This captures Bentham's outlook precisely (B i. 304–5). The language of interests enabled him to articulate a subtle theory of (individual and group) motivation which structured his analysis of the fundamental problems of constitutional design; it also provided the structure for a more carefully nuanced articulation of the fundamental aim of all government and the principle of utility which made that aim imperative. This tendency of Bentham's to use a core concept for both normative and analytical-positive purposes led him to obscure the important, if sometimes subtle, differences in the concept in its different modes of deployment. I am interested here in Bentham's

[11] R. Goodin, *Utilitarianism as a Public Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 14.

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normative theory. I seek to understand Bentham's theory of value and the principle of composition on which his principle of utility relies. The notion of the universal interest will be the focus of the inquiry, but it will be necessary to keep in mind Bentham's tendency to use this concept for both purposes.

The principle of utility, Bentham repeatedly tells us, requires that we seek 'the greatest happiness', and that in turn requires that we take seriously the 'extent' or distribution of happiness among all members of the community – as he puts it often: 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'. It is common for Bentham to capture this aim with the concept of the universal interest (or sometimes the public interest). In a typical passage, he writes, 'Take for the description of the *ultimate end* [of government the] *advancement of the universal interest*' (B iii. 452, original emphasis). He often used interchangeably the phrases 'universal interest' and 'greatest happiness' or 'greatest happiness of the greatest number' (FG 514–15; LW 140n., 142; SM 69, 252–3).

Bentham established the connection between utility (and happiness) and 'the interest of the community' already in the opening paragraphs of his *Introduction to the Principles*. There he tells us that the interest of the community is the composite (he says 'sum') of the interests of the individuals that compose it (IPML 12). The question, of course, is what is the nature of this composition? In 1820, he characterized the relationship between interests and happiness (and pleasure) as follows: An individual's interest 'is either the interest of the moment, or the interest of the sum of life'. The former is accounted for in terms of the individual's immediate pleasures; the latter 'is what is most commonly meant by the phrase his interest' (Col 239–40). Not only is it summed over the individual's whole life, but it also embraces all that the individual may take an interest in, including the well-being (and ill) of others (TSA 99; FP 68n.). An individual's interest (in the singular, i.e. comprehensively considered) is that his happiness and interests (plural), summed over his whole life, 'be as great as possible' (Col 31; IPML 12). The interest of the community, in turn, is just 'the interest of all the individuals taken together', that is, 'that the happiness of all those same individuals taken together be as great as possible' (Col 31). The thought expressed here seems to be that, as the interest of an individual is to maximize the net sum of the satisfaction of all her interests (of all that she takes an interest in) over her lifetime, so the interest of the community – the universal interest – should be conceived as the maximization of the net sum of the satisfaction of the interests of individuals so conceived. This suggests the simple aggregative or summative notion of utility that is standardly associated with classical utilitarianism. And, indeed, Bentham often characterizes the universal interest as the aggregate of individual interests. He

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writes in his *Constitutional Code* that the universal interest is 'the good of the community taken in the aggregate' (CC 43), and in his essay 'Identification of Interests', he writes that 'the universal interest is nothing else but the aggregate of all individual interests' (FP 133; FP 192).

But we must proceed with some care at this point. For, by 'aggregate', Bentham typically means only a collection, not a sum which carries with it the idea of a common measure. Moreover, when Bentham spoke of 'the interest of all the individuals taken together' he had just been speaking of interests that are in fact common to them (Col 31); and when he identified the universal interest with the aggregate of all individual interests, he focused on those that survive 'the additions of the changes effected by birth and immigration and the subtractions made by death and emigration' (FP 133). These are only a subset of the interests of the persons in question, not the sum total of their individual interests. Also, clearly in the background, shaping his understanding of the 'aggregate of individual interests' is his assumption of equality (FP 133; FP 96, 97). No individual's interest may be excluded from the universal interest.

> As a faggot is comprised of sticks, so is the public of individuals: that one individual is as large a part of the public as another: and the happiness of the one as much a portion of the happiness of the public as the happiness of the other. (UC 100.179)

In light of what we have already learned about the role of the notion of equality in Bentham's theory and its impact on his understanding of value, it would appear the universal interest should be understood not, strictly speaking, as the net sum of individual interests, but rather as the composite of the interests of individuals. Thus, we do not yet have a clear view of Bentham's principle of composition; all we know is that the universal interest is connected with that which is common to a group of individuals and respects in some way their equal status.

The universal interest, as Bentham understands it, cannot be the net sum of all individual interests because it is both composed of individual interests and opposed to them – it is composed of certain of the interests of the individuals of the community as a whole, and opposed to others. In fact, the concept of the universal interest is given shape by its contrast with its opposing term 'particular interests'. The universal interest is not opposed to individual self-interest, but rather to the particular interests of individuals. Bentham delimits the universal interest by analysing the composition of an individual's overall interest. 'In every political community,' he writes,

> every member has a share in the aggregate interest composed of that of all the members of the community taken together – in a word in the universal

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interest. [But also] every member has a particular interest in which the rest of the members have no share. (FP 192; also B ix. 127)

He elaborates this analysis in his *Book of Fallacies*, using the terms 'public' and 'private' to mark the key distinction.[12]

The mind of every public man is subject at all times to the operation of two distinct interests – a public and a private one. His public interest is that which is constituted of the share he has in the happiness and well-being of the whole community, or of the major part of it: his private interest is constituted of, or by, the share he has in the well-being of some portion of the community less than the major part; of which private interest, the smallest possible portion is that which is composed of his own individual – his own personal – interest. (B ii. 475)

Within the set of all the interests of a given individual, Bentham distinguishes a number of subsets, each with a well-defined centre of gravity in the life of the individual. These centres of gravity are determined by the groups or communities to which the individual belongs, and the interests he shares with other members. With respect to any group, it is possible to distinguish its members' 'aggregate interests', those interests they share with other members of the group, from their 'several particular and distinct interests' which can diverge from and conflict with the aggregate interests (SM 56). It is possible to distinguish for any given individual 'his public interest' from his 'particular interests'. 'His public interest' is his share in the common interest of the community as a whole – that is, of the most comprehensive community presently in view (Col 290). *The* public interest – or universal interest – is just that set of interests held in common by all members of the community in the realization of which each member has a distinct and positive share. The universal interest in a community excludes the 'particular interests' of its members. These are the interests which individual members do not hold in common with all members of the community at large, but which are held in common with members of a sub-community of it, or are entirely 'personal', and which in every case are defined without regard, and possibly in strict opposition, to the common interests of the community at large. They are interests 'in which the rest of the members have no share' (FP 192). Bentham decomposes further an individual's particular interests into his 'personal interests' and his 'private interests'. The

[12] The terminology is interchangeable. The same point is in his *Constitutional Code*, using the contrast between 'universal' and 'particular' interests: 'Be the community what it may, to every member of it belongs two opposite and continually conflicting interests: 1. His share in the universal interest ... which is common to himself and every other member of the community: 2. That interest which is particular and peculiar to himself, with or without some comparatively small number of associates' (B ix. 127).

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latter can be shared jointly with others in a subgroup of the community at large; indeed, in so far as an individual may belong to several such subgroups, he may have distinct centres of 'private interest' as well. With respect to any one of them, it is likely that a part of a person's 'particular' interest will overlap with like interests of other members of the group, and a part may stand in opposition to them as well.[13]

Thus, we can identify three defining features of Bentham's notion of the universal interest: (1) it excludes all particular interests; (2) it includes interests of members of the community taken together, where these are understood as interests common to all members of that community; and (3) each member has a share in this universal interest, which is in turn 'constituted of' the aggregate shares of each. To clarify further Bentham's notion, let us take a closer look at each of these features.

III. UNIVERSAL VS. PARTICULAR

First, by definition, the universal interest does not encompass the particular interests of members of the community at large, and correspondingly particular interests are those interests of members of that community that are not shared by all (or by the greatest number) in the community. Thus, in a first approximation[14] we can say that, for any individual, the universal interest is composed of those interests she has along with all (or almost all) other members of the community – their convergent interests – or at least those which they could (under relatively relaxed conditions) come to share in this way. Her particular interests, in contrast, are those interests that converge with some minority subgroup of the community (private interests) or are entirely idiosyncratic (personal interests). Because particular interests are not universally shared, pursuit of them in some circumstances can conflict with more widely shared interests.

Hence, particular interests (whether private or personal) can motivate 'the sinister sacrifice' (FG 514; FP 212f.), that is, the sacrifice of the morally imperative universal interest to special interests of the few. 'By sinister interest understand every particular interest by which, it being opposite to the interest of, that is detrimental to the greatest happiness of, the greatest number, a man is prompted to sacrifice to it that all-comprehensive interest' (FP 151). Thus, while components of the universal interest are also constituents of each member's overall interest, it is possible that some of one's particular interests will loom larger in one's overall scheme of interests than one's share in the

[13] See Bentham's letter to Diego Colón, 6 December 1820 (Cor 223–4).
[14] This will be elaborated and qualified below in sect. VI.

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universal interest. If this leads one to pursue one's particular interests rather than support the universal interest, and circumstances are such that pursuit of one's particular interests works against the universal interest, then these particular interests are also sinister. However, we should note that, for Bentham, these interests are not particular because they are sinister, but rather they are (likely to be) sinister precisely because they are particular (CC 105), and because the payoff to individuals of serving their particular interests is likely, especially in the short run, to appear greatly to outpace the benefit they can expect from realization of the universal interest (FP 276).

Thus, for the most part (and it is in Bentham's view a very large part), the universal interest and rival particular interests stand in a relationship of 'implacable hostility' (OAM 43; SM 252–3). Of course, when there is no particular interest to challenge it, one's 'fractional share' of the universal interest will be sufficient to motivate action (FP 276). And, Bentham admits, there are times when

> the value of his share in the universal interest may in the breast of each man outweigh the value of any particular and sinister interest by which he may be solicited to seek to gratify it at the expence of the universal interest. (SM 241; also Col 51–2)

But, he adds, these times are rare and fleeting (B ix. 127; SM 241) – as 'frequently exemplified as insanity' (B ix. 61). Despite the fact that the universal interest is the 'exclusively rightly directed' end (CC 105), Bentham counsels us not to expect willing and spontaneous sacrifice of personal or particular interest to the universal interest (B ix. 61).

What is somewhat more likely is that the implacable hostility between the universal and particular interests can be diminished to some degree, not by changing the weight or 'value' an individual assigns to his respective interests, but by reducing the occasions for their coming into conflict. This may simply be the result of the happy, if temporary, coincidence of some particular interests with the demands of universal interest (FP 151; Col 50). Sometimes, also, an individual's personal interest, when added to his share in the universal interest, can appear to him greater than some other, sinister particular interest and thus move him to prevent the sinister sacrifice (Col 40–1). Moreover, Bentham seemed to think that many desires will simply atrophy in the absence of any hope of satisfaction. Thus, an individual deprived of the means of securing his sinister interests is likely to abandon them, or at least such interests will be drained of their saliency for him (FP 135, 213). Shrewd political actors (with the universal interest in view) will exploit such happy circumstances when they arise (FP 56; Col 51–2). Legislators and constitution-makers, guided by Bentham's utilitarian blueprint, will engineer such a junction of private or personal interest

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with duty directed to the universal interest. A strictly natural harmony of (particular) interest and (utilitarian) duty is not inconceivable or even without example, in Bentham's view, but it is exceedingly rare. Most of his work on legal, economic and social institutions was devoted to the artificial identification of duty and interest (FG 513–15; FP 13–17, 125–47; B ii. 475).

This inevitable conflict between the universal interest and particular interests of all sorts tells us something important about Bentham's principle of utility. Consider again Bentham's claim that spontaneous, willing sacrifice of personal interests to the universal interest is rare. With wry wit he writes,

> It is the interest of the highwayman that all passengers, of the housebreaker that all householders, be as rich as possible, and that they be as secure as possible against all depredation but that which he practices for his own benefit: but this community of interest does not prevent the highwayman, does not prevent the housebreaker, from being what he is .... [For his] share in the universal interest is never of sufficient value in his eyes to prevent him from making the sacrifice which he is constantly making of it to his own peculiar interest. (Col 290)

The echo of Rousseau here is striking, if unintended. Rousseau wrote in the Geneva Manuscript of his *Social Contract*:

> Each person, detaching his interest from the common interest, sees perfectly well that he cannot completely separate himself from it; but his share of the public misfortune seems like nothing to him compared to the exclusive good that he claims he is getting.[15]

If the principle of utility is to be understood in terms of the universal interest and if this is how the universal interest is to be understood – that is, if this is the conception of social welfare at the core of the principle – then the principle instructs us to promote some interests of members and not to promote others. This is exactly what Bentham says in his *First Principles*, where he writes,

> In this way, in the instance of each individual such part of the whole mass of his happiness as is not adverse to the happiness of any other individual will be, in so far as depends upon the agency of the government, secured to him: the correspondent part of his interest will be provided for: the correspondent part of his desires, of his wishes, will receive its gratification: while all such portions of happiness as he could not be made to enjoy without depriving others of happiness to greater amount will not be given to him: the correspondent part of his interest will be left unpromoted: the correspondent part of his desires, of his wishes, left ungratified. (FP 135–6)

[15] J.-J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Geneva Manuscript*, trans. J. R. Masters, ed. R. D. Masters (New York, 1978), p. 109.

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Thus, Bentham's principle of utility looks very different from that attributed to the classical utilitarians by Rawls. When it is applied to matters of public (especially political) morality, it is not simply a version of individual utility-maximizing applied to the interests of the community as a whole regarded as a kind of super-person. This principle focuses on only some of the interests of individuals, and leaves other interests, desires and wishes unprovided for.

IV. UNIVERSAL INTEREST: INCLUSIVE OR OPPOSITIONAL

Before we proceed to consider the other key features of Bentham's notion of the universal interest, we need to pause for a moment to acknowledge the confusion that a certain inconstancy of Bentham's language may generate. To capture the key idea mentioned in the previous paragraph, Bentham sometimes relied on the phrase 'the universal interest' and sometimes on the phrase 'the general happiness' or 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'. What is more, Bentham often equated 'the universal interest' with the aggregate interest of the greatest number in the community, rather than with the interest of all. His strong tendency to portray the universal interest and particular interests as yoked in relations of 'implacable hostility' combined with the dominant theme of his late constitutional and institutional writings – the bitter battle between 'the ruling few' and 'the subject many' – may explain this imprecision (FP 69). Let us briefly take a closer look.

When he deploys the notion of the universal interest, Bentham frequently identifies it with those interests or concerns that are common to all members of the community in view, those in which each and every member of the community has a share (CC 43; FP 76, 192). I will call this the *inclusive* use of the term. However, he is just as likely to associate 'the universal interest' with the interests common to the greatest number, or the subject many (the 'democratical class'), in the community, clearly implying opposition to the interests of 'the smaller number', the ruling (or 'aristocratical') class (FP 68–9, 193, 205; FG 514–15). I will call this the *oppositional* use of the term. Bentham was clearly aware of this duality,[16] admitting that 'the phrase universal

[16] In a curious passage in *First Principles Preparatory to Constitutional Code*, he writes: 'be the community what it may, the aggregate interest of all the members of it [the community as a whole] is never so opposite to the interest of the smaller number [the few] as the aggregate interest of the smaller number may be and generally is to the aggregate interest of the greater number [the majority or subject many]' (FP 76).

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interest may be employed as corresponding indifferently to the interest of the greatest number as to the interest of all' (FP 234). This, of course, will not do, since they have very different implications. Used in the oppositional sense, there is a whole class of members of the community whose interests are systematically excluded from the universal interest (although in some cases, their particular interests may temporarily coincide with the universal), while the distinctive point of the inclusive use is to stress that *every* member has a stake in the universal interest. The interests of members of this class may be excluded just to the extent that they are particular. In his constitutional writings on Spain and Spanish America, he acknowledges that it is appropriate to think of the interests common exclusively to the subject many, or majority, as particular interests opposed to the particular interests of the few, and he distinguishes both from the universal interest. Interests 'common to those of the most numerous class' are broader but no less particular (Col 31). Later in the same work he tries a different tack: allowing 'universal interest' still to be linked to the aggregate interests of the greater number, he invents a new term, 'the all-comprehensive interest' (and later yet: 'the great universal interest'), to refer to that which is composed of the interests of all, including members of both the subject many and the ruling few (Col 286, 335).

I am inclined to think that nothing of substance rests on Bentham's shifting usage. It is due, rather, to the fact that he wanted the term 'universal interest' to do work in both his positive political-sociological theory and his normative political theory. His willingness to identify universal interest with the interest of the greatest number comes mainly in those passages in which he attempts to analyse political forces in terms of an embryonic class theory. The aristocratical class (including not only politicians and landed aristocracy, but also clergy and the legal elite), which he thinks is oligarchic and well-structured, is portrayed as largely idle and predatory, while the substantial productive work in society is done by the democratical class which is vastly larger and largely powerless (FP 68–76). After the turn of the nineteenth century, he was increasingly inclined to argue that the latter is better able to exercise political power – at least 'constitutive power', establishing and overseeing government institutions – and thereby can more reliably serve the universal interest. It is not surprising that in this context, he was inclined to slip (perhaps not entirely unintentionally) from the inclusive to the oppositional uses of the term, and back again. I see no good reason to place the oppositional use of the term at the centre of his theory of value. When it was important for him to articulate precisely the fundamental aim at the core of his utilitarian public philosophy, he relied exclusively on the inclusive use of the term.

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V. SACRIFICE AND THE SHARE OF EACH IN THE UNIVERSAL INTEREST

Consider now the third defining feature of the universal interest. In his critique of Spanish colonialism, Bentham writes,

> In every political community … every man has not only an interest which is peculiar to himself, but an interest which is common to him with every other member, and which constitutes his share in the universal interest. (Col 290)

Moreover, he insisted that typically one's recognition of this commonality produces a sense of solidarity: 'by this community of interest is produced a community of sympathy' (FP 71; B ii. 476). So, in Bentham's view, it is possible for us to identify to some degree with the interest of the community. We might say, following Rousseau, that when each person detaches his interest from the common interest, their respective shares in that common interest begin to lose in comparison with their private or particular interests.[17] Bentham admitted that social sentiment, especially this kind of social sentiment, rooted in a sense of common interest, can motivate self-sacrificing actions, but he thought it was more likely to happen among the young than among those more advanced in age.

> The less advanced the age, the greater the probability of an adequately strong propensity to an occasional sacrifice of a man's personal interest to the universal interest: the stronger in a word the force of sympathetic affection operating on the national and other enlarged scales: the more advanced, the more constant the preponderance of personal, domestic and other comparatively narrow interests over the universal interest. (SM 219 n. 4; also FP 103–4)

With age we do not get any wiser, Bentham seems to think, we just wise up. Youthful idealism and the absence of weighty responsibilities of career and family, perhaps, might explain this difference, but Bentham never pursues the question. It is important, however, not to confuse this kind of sacrifice with a more exacting sort that Bentham also acknowledges, namely, sacrifice motivated by purely extra-regarding interests, what we might call pure altruism. In exceptional circumstances, especially in times of extraordinary danger, Bentham observes, some people may be moved to extraordinary efforts of self-sacrifice, yielding all 'the instruments of felicity' and even life itself (SM 185, B ix. 127). But he sharply distinguishes this 'all-comprehensive' or heroic sacrifice from the sacrifices we are all regularly called upon to make 'at the expence of [our] own particular interest to the universal' (SM 185).

[17] Rousseau, *Social Contract*, p. 109.

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This, too, tells us something important about Bentham's notion of the universal interest, and thereby about the focus of his fundamental utilitarian principle. Bentham's principle of utility, as we have seen, readily countenances sacrifices of individual interests – namely, personal and private interests – but it does not call for or justify imposing more heroic sacrifice. Focused on securing those interests of the community in which each member has a share – and, in some sense, an equal share – it countenances sacrifices only when the individual called upon to sacrifice also receives a significant benefit. Bentham's thought here is not as precise as we might like, but what is clear is that although the principle of utility may countenance and call for sacrifice of (some of) an individual's interests, it never sanctions sacrifice of individuals. This point is brought home dramatically, albeit problematically, in two different discussions of the idea that individual interests must give way to the public interest.

The first such discussion appears in a passage we noticed before from his *Principles of the Civil Code.* Bentham professes not to understand the thought that the interest of an individual must be sacrificed to the public interest. (In his *Constitutional Code* he calls such talk 'the language of sentimentalism' (CC 451).) 'What could this mean?', he asks, repeating his frequently uttered challenge: 'Is not one individual as much a part of the public as any other?' (see also B iii. 459; B iv. 540; B ix. 107; UC 100.179). After all, what is properly called the public interest 'represents only the mass of the interests of individuals'. These individual interests must all be taken into account, instead of considering a part as the whole, and the rest as nothing. The interests of individuals are 'sacred'; they are 'the only real interests'. 'Take care of individuals; never injure them, or suffer them to be injured, and you will have done enough for the public [interest]' (B i. 321). This passage commits Bentham to the individualist conception of utility, as opposed to the abstract happiness conception, which I mentioned earlier. However we work out the details of this position – and there are many details to work out – we will need to honour Bentham's deep commitment to the well-being of each individual member of the community. It is that commitment which his notion of the universal interest is meant to articulate.

This commitment is further underlined by his discussion of the problem of the inevitable sacrifice of the interests of some for the good of the community at large in *Official Aptitude Maximized*. Here he suggests that even when private interests are sacrificed to the public interest, efforts should be made to compensate those losses 'out of [the public's] profit from the arrangement', beyond what is equivalent to their losses (OAM 387). This passage is remarkable for three reasons. First, Bentham here calls for actual, not merely

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hypothetical, compensation (as the familiar Kaldor–Hicks formula counsels). Second, it calls for compensation of losses to private interests, not merely losses to members of the public who do not share equally in the promotion of public interest. This goes beyond what concern for the universal interest requires. He goes even further by suggesting that the compensation exceed the strict equivalent of the losses incurred. I think we should not rest very much on the details of this suggestion, for I do not know of other places in Bentham's work where this generous scheme is endorsed let alone elaborated. We can confidently conclude, however, that it would be a mistake to attribute to Bentham a view of the welfare of the community that simply submerges the interests and well-being of individuals into an undifferentiated sum of interests of the whole. However we understand it, the universal interest must be seen as an articulated, individually differentiated composite of core interests of individual members of the community.

VI. INTERESTS IN COMMON WITH EVERY OTHER MEMBER

The universal interest, according to Bentham, is 'that interest [of a person] common to himself and every other member of the community' (B ix. 127). How are we to understand this key part of Bentham's notion of universal interest? At this point, Rousseau offers a useful foil. He wrote,

> If the general society did exist somewhere . . . [t]he public good or ill would not be merely the sum of private goods and ills as in a simple aggregation, but would lie in the liaison uniting them. It would be greater than this sum, and public felicity, far from being based on the happiness of private individuals, would itself be the source of this happiness.[18]

Bentham would agree with Rousseau that the universal interest is not merely the simple aggregation of private goods and ills, but rather lies in a 'liaison uniting them'. Yet, he could never accept that this 'liaison' consists in some 'public felicity' existing over and above the interests of individuals. He resolutely rejected Rousseau's thesis that 'general society . . . [is] a moral being with qualities separate and distinct from those of the particular beings constituting it'.[19] More specifically, whatever Bentham means by 'interests common to himself and every other member of the community', he did not mean to include what we might call communal goods – that is, goods which members of a community regard as theirs collectively – as they would say, 'not

[18] Ibid., pp. 159–60.
[19] Ibid.

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mine or yours, or mine and yours, but ours'.[20] Bentham did believe, as we have seen, that there is some connection between a community of interest and a community of sympathy (FP 71; B ii. 476), but he thought this kind of solidarity was the product of identification of the common interests, not its precondition.

On the other hand, the 'liaison' Bentham has in mind is not merely a matter of the simple congruence of interests, each member focusing attention on goods or states of affairs of the same kind, for these may be in sharp opposition. You and I may both pursue wealth or fame, but our interests in wealth or fame are not even minimally common. (I seek wealth or fame for me, you seek them for you. In one respect, the objects of our pursuits are the same, but in a more important respect they are opposed.) Moreover, Bentham recognized that the kind of common interests he had in mind can often be realized only through co-operation and collective action. He seemed keenly aware of what we now call collective action problems. Particular interests are relatively easy to achieve, he argued, because '[t]he individuals who compose the particular interest always are, or at least may be ... a compact, harmonizing body', while 'the individuals making the universal interest are on every such occasion an unorganized, uncombined body' (Col 373). A group in pursuit of particular and hence sinister interests is 'a chain of iron', but the community at large is often nothing more than 'a rope of sand' (ibid.). The source of the problem of mobilizing action on behalf of the universal interest lies in the fact that the expected payoff from realization of the universal interest (the share of each in that realization) is outweighed by the cost to each of efforts to achieve it. 'Of the partakers in the universal interest, the proportion of interest centred in one individual is too small to afford sufficient inducement to apply his exertions to the support of his trifling share in the common interest' (Col 373). Bentham's point, I think, is not that it never pays to participate in efforts aimed at achieving some element of the universal interest, but that co-ordinated efforts of large numbers of members are needed but cannot reasonably be expected to happen spontaneously.

It appears that the 'common interests' Bentham has in mind resemble what we now call public goods.[21] They are, in fact, convergent interests, interests of all members of the community in certain conditions, or states of affairs, the achievement of which benefits each of them. If they had the power, Bentham admits, individuals would pursue their own personal interests without regard to the interests of others, and

[20] Gerald J. Postema, 'Collective Evils, Harms, and the Law', *Ethics* 97 (1987), p. 425.
[21] M. James, 'Public Interest and Majority Rule in Bentham's Democratic Theory', *Political Theory* 9 (1981), pp. 51–4.

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willingly sacrifice those interests to their own. Since this is not possible for most of them, they must enlist the aid of others to achieve their interests, and this forces them to focus their attention on only a certain range of their interests. Thus, Bentham writes,

> In so far as his aim is, to sacrifice all interests to his own, – the interests of others, to that which is peculiar to himself, no man finds any effective number of hands disposed to join with his: in so far as his aim is, to serve such of his interests alone, as are theirs as well as his, he finds all hands disposed to join with his. (B ix. 63; also FP 135)

He expands on this in *Securities against Misrule*:

> The way in which, by expression and effect given to the several individual wills, contribution is made to the universal happiness is this. If the result depended upon himself each individual would give expression and effect to such will as in his judgement would in the highest degree be conducive to his own greatest happiness, whatsoever became of the happiness of others, and consequently on most if not all occasions at the expence of the happiness of all others . . . . But, in so far as the effect of it is by others seen or thought to be detrimental to their own happiness, the will of each individual finds an opponent and bar in the will of every other, and in the will of all together a bar absolutely insuperable. On the other hand, in so far as the effect of each one's will is by every other individual seen or thought to be conducive to his own greatest happiness, the will of each one finds a support and coadjutor in the will of every other: in a word each separate and sinister interest finds a bar, and that an insuperable one, in every other separate and sinister interest: but each man's share in the universal interest finds an ally and coadjutor in every other man's share in the universal interest. (SM 265–6)

Thus, the common interests in a community can be represented as the product of a kind of virtual negotiation. Each party, under the constraint of equal lack of power to achieve his or her own private interests, is forced to seek the co-operation of others, and thereby, they are forced to find those interests they do or can come to share. These are interests in the achievement of which all benefit, because they involve the kind of goods which, if provided to some, will thereby be provided for all. For example,

> In his endeavours to secure himself against depredation and oppression, each man finds all others in general disposed to become co-operators and supporters: for against depredation and oppression at his own expence, no one of them can find any means of security but such as can not but afford the like security to other individuals in general. (FP 213)

Security – public defence against a common enemy and protection of property against common predators – is the most frequent of Bentham's examples of common interests (B ii. 477; Col 290). 'It is the interest of every member of the community to possess in the compleatest

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degree security against evil from all these several sources: against misdeeds by individuals at large and against misdeeds of [government] functionaries' (FP 153). We might also include public health, economic prosperity, infrastructure and services like roads, bridges, and the like. They all share the characteristics of public goods. They require co-operative, collective action to provide them. They are such that, generally speaking, if they are provided for some they will be provided for all. Thus, each has a share in the realization of components of the universal interest.

Of course, these are the kinds of goods concerning which one would do even better if one did not have to pay the price of one's own contribution to their provision. Recall Bentham's wry description of the highwayman and housebreaker. Each has an interest in the abundance and security of everyone, including themselves, but this does not prevent them from being highwaymen and thieves: the 'share [for each] in the universal interest is never of sufficient value in his eyes to prevent him from making the sacrifice which he is constantly making of it to his own peculiar interest' (Col 290). Note, the contrast here is not between the cost to the thief of his contribution to security (refraining from housebreaking) and the cost to him of no security, but rather the cost of his contribution and the loss he is likely to realize if he does not contribute (assuming most others will). This is a clear case of a free-rider's calculation.

With this in mind we can dispel what might look like a problem for Bentham's reliance on the notion of universal interest to articulate his principle of utility. According to his view, it is conceivable that for each member of the community it is the case that their private or personal interests add up to more than their share of the universal interest. It would seem then that promoting the universal interest in some cases will not be in the best overall interest of any of them. This might at first sound paradoxical, but it makes sense if we look more closely at Bentham's idea. Consider such a case. It is true for every member of the community that there is some alternative to the pursuit of the universal interest that would better serve her overall interest, one that she would prefer, looking to her interests alone. But, by hypothesis, there is no single alternative that improves the lot of all, for if there were, presumably, that would better serve the universal interest. But that is just to say, as Bentham has stressed all along, that serving particular interests is not the sort of enterprise that one can get all the others in the community to join. It is precisely because particular interests may point in very different directions, that the universal interest is normative for the community taken together; any alternative will serve only some insufficiently extended sub-group, at the expense of others.

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Are there any interests of individuals on which all members of the community might converge? It is conceivable that there are very few. But Bentham's public philosophy is not interested in what is conceivable. It is focused on what is likely, given basic features of human nature and the technologies available in society at large to meet the needs of its members. Like Mill, Bentham thought that human beings are sufficiently similar, when it comes to matters of public philosophy, that there will be a substantial core of converging interests, sufficient to constitute a robust universal interest. 'The feelings of men are sufficiently regular to become the object of a science or an art' (B i. 304). He was sensitive to the vast range of what human beings might take an interest in, but he also was convinced that these idiosyncrasies operate on the margins of social experience. At the core – that is, amongst most members of the community, and at the centre of what is important to them – are a largely predictable range of needs, goods and interests on which they converge.

Bentham gathers these goods together primarily under four closely related heads. These 'common interests', he writes, 'correspond to the immediately subordinate right and proper ends of government, maximization of subsistence, abundance, security, and equality' (B ix. 63).

> The universal interest requires that, in regard to subsistence, abundance, security, and equality, the aggregate mass in the community in question, be maximized: and that in particular the shares, which are the result of the three first, be as near to equality as consistently with security in all other shapes they can be. (B ix. 127; also FP 153)

These four ends are the focus of Bentham's utilitarian theory of the foundations of civil law (B i. 311–26; B ix. 11–22). These immediate ends, and the goods they subsume, are not regarded as means to maximizing the sum of happiness regarded in the abstract, but rather as constituents of the universal interest. They are 'immediately subordinate', in the sense that they are first in line as constituents, because they are fundamental to all other potential constituents. They are not the most important interests of individual members of the community in the sense that they form the centre of most people's meaningful and happy lives, but rather in the sense that without them any happy and fulfilled lives would not be possible. They are the universal goods each member needs whatever her (other) interests are. The fundamental aim of government is not to maximize the aggregate happiness in the community, nor the equal happiness of all, but rather to maximize those common resources that are necessary for all members of the community to pursue their own interests, so long as doing so does not conflict with the equal chance of others to do so as

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well, promoting 'the interest of each in those points in which it is not opposed by any other interests' (FP 135).

VII. CONCLUSION

The universal interest limits the pursuit of personal interest. Social institutions designed to serve the universal interest are likely to call for the sacrifice of personal interests. But, Bentham makes clear, the universal interest also makes pursuit of such personal interests possible and it always includes each in the benefits of realization of the universal interest. In both respects Bentham's view entails that while the (personal or private) interests of individual members may be sacrificed, individuals are not. Each is accorded a substantial share in the interest of all.

Thus, the universal interest understood in this way provides the compositional principle presupposed by Bentham's principle of utility, the principle that defines how the welfare of the community is composed out of the welfare of its members. 'The more perfect the enjoyment of [goods secured by the four immediately subordinate ends of government], the greater the sum of social happiness' (B i. 302). Social happiness is a particular composite of the welfare of individuals, namely, where the interests of all members of the community focus on the public goods and common interests organized under the heads of security, subsistence, abundance, and equality. This principle is not added to his principle of utility, but is a direct expression of his understanding of the value – individual human well-being or happiness – that he took as the core of his utilitarian theory. Pleasures and pains, abstracted from individuals who experience them, make no moral claim. So the fact alone that some interests are not given weight at the moral level is not itself an objection to this construal of the compositional principle. It is an objection only if this way of treating individual interests does not respect the fundamental moral value of the well-being of each individual as lived from the inside.

The argument for understanding the compositional principle in terms of the universal interest rests on the claim that the way to respect this fundamental value, understood as equal for every person, is to focus moral attention primarily on those interests broadly compatible with the interests of others in the community, and especially those interests all share or can come to share. When choices must be made among alternatives which may benefit some more or differently than others, everyone must be included in the benefits. No one may be completely excluded – not only may they not be excluded from formal consideration in the calculation leading to decisions on the alternatives,

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but they also may not be excluded from reaping the actual benefits. No one may be sacrificed entirely for the good of any other person or group of persons, even the whole community. Everyone must be able to recognize that, while losers in certain respects, they are gainers in others. The foundations of morality, in Bentham's utilitarian vision, lies in public utility, in that 'alliance and partnership of interests' that Cicero liked to call 'justice'. Bentham called it 'the universal interest'.[22]

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