

# Morality, Masculinity and the Market

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## Interests and Duties

Two conceptions of morality dominate contemporary discussion: utilitarianism, which specifies the content of morality in terms of the maximisation of total happiness or want satisfaction, and Kantianism, which defines morality in terms of formal principles of consistency. One purpose of this paper is to locate these conceptions in a larger discursive context: that provided by a conception of the market as the primary mechanism for the distribution of social goods. The claim that there are conceptual linkages between utilitarianism and a concept of the market is not, perhaps, very controversial. After all, there are well known historical associations between utilitarianism and both classical and neo-classical accounts of market behaviour. Despite these affinities, I will argue that it is not utilitarianism, but a form of Kantianism which supplies a morality adequate to the market, though a Kantianism which is informed by much the same conceptions of individuality and relations between individuals as utilitarianism and which retains most of the substantial moral content of utilitarianism. Indeed, from the perspective provided by the market, the common ground between utilitarianism and Kantianism appears much more significant than their differences.

The concept of the market defines an important aspect of a 'public' sphere of social existence: as such, it is contrasted with a 'private' realm of domesticity and personal relations. This contrast plays an important role in the construction of gender. The public realm of the market, with its associated conceptions of individuality, purposive action and rationality, is a male domain; the 'nether world' (Hegel) of the family, with its associated principles of relationship, care, and emotion, is one in which female identity is constructed and contained. These two realms exist in a relationship of mutual presupposition and exclusion; and the nature of each is determined by what it excludes <1>. Thus, to the extent that utilitarian and Kantian moralities are conceptually linked to the public - and male - domain of market behaviour, they too are characterised by the exclusion of the personal and emotional - and female - from their domain.

The various figures which are constructed in this paper - of utilitarianism and Kantianism, of the market, of masculinity, and so on - are discursive ones. What I wish to argue is that these figures exist within the same conceptual terrain, and that we will not understand any of them very well unless we locate them in relation to each other. Of course, the conceptual structures displayed are historically specific ones, and have real (extra-discursive) causes and effects. But it is not my intention to explore these. At most, I will occasionally assume that the various figures constructed play an important role, not just in moral philosophy and our ordinary moral consciousness, but also in defining for us certain aspects of our own identification and the social world we inhabit. But the extent to which this assumption is justified must be left to the judgement of the reader.

## The Market

We may construct a concept of a simple market economy out of three elements:

(1) The individual (whom I will assume, for reasons which will emerge shortly, to be male). This individual must be supposed to have a variety of wants which are largely self-directed (i.e. the conditions for their satisfaction do not make essential reference to the wants of other individuals). The objects required to satisfy wants are 'goods'.

(2) The social division of labour. The various processes by which goods are produced are distributed amongst distinct individuals or groups of individuals. Since individual wants are various, individuals exist in a situation of interdependence, in the sense that any given individual is dependent for the satisfaction of his wants on the productive activity of others.

(3) Private ownership. The goods produced, and presumably the means of producing them, exist as private property. Hence they are not available directly to satisfy the wants of those who do not own them. This tension - between interdependence and private ownership - is resolved through exchange: individuals exchange goods which they own but do not want for goods they want but do not own. Thus, goods become commodities. We may also suppose that money exists as a medium of exchange, where money is a good which both measures the exchange value of other commodities and is exchangeable with them.

In a market situation constructed in this way each individual will strive to further his interests, i.e. maximise the satisfaction of his wants. In order to do so he must participate in exchange relations. But in order to do this, he must possess, and presumably have produced, goods that other individuals want. Thus, self-interest must become socially productive. Again, each individual will strive to further his interests by exchanging his own goods for as much as possible and by purchasing the goods of others for as little as possible. However, so long as coercion is not brought to bear, each must accept a price determined by market forces, that is, by the ratio of the supply of similar goods to the effective demand for them. Those who are fortunate or skilful will benefit, and those who are unfortunate or stupid will suffer. However, as fluctuations in supply and demand are reflected in the price of commodities, those individuals who are able to relocate their productive activity will use this information to move away from areas of over production to those where demand exceeds supply. Hence, there will be a tendency towards an equilibrium of supply and demand. At this happy point, those wants which find expression in the market, that is, the wants of those engaged in socially productive activity, will be satisfied by the market. Further, since it is not possible for individuals to determine the selling price of their goods, the best way to maximise the satisfaction of their wants through market activity is to improve their productive efficiency. Thus, the market will tend towards maximising the quantity of goods produced by given amounts of human productive activity.

These results may be called 'invisible hand' theorems (after Adam Smith) where the point of this phrase is to pick out the fact that under certain social conditions, results are achieved which may be desirable but which are not brought about by actions which are designed to bring them about. Rather, they are achieved by indirection: individuals pursue their own essentially self-directed goals; but, as a consequence of their activity, the wants of many others are satisfied. There is, in other words, a hiatus between the intentional content of individual activity and its overall social significance <2>.

If the commodities exchanged include the capacity to perform productive work ('labour power'), i.e., the scope of the commodity market is extended so as to include a labour market, then the concept of a simple market economy becomes that of a capitalist or 'possessive' market <3>. While this transition affects the detail, it does not affect the substance of the invisible hand theories outlined above. The wages of labour will also be determined by market forces; some will benefit and some will suffer as a consequence; but so long as there is free movement in the market place, those involved will be able to move from one kind of production to another, and the tendency will be for labour to be employed in those areas where there is a demand. If the commodity labour power were produced in the same way as other commodities, then there would also be a tendency for there to be an equilibrium between the supply of labour and the demand for it. However, there are, as we shall see in a moment, good reasons not to make this assumption.

Neither of the concepts of a market economy that I have outlined corresponds in any simple way to any past or present social reality. In every society there are positions, e.g. of status, which carry with them entitlement to social goods independently of the market; there are also goods, such as prestige, honour, attractiveness, which only roughly correlate with those goods distributed through market activity. Still there is no doubt that the market has been a pervasive feature of modern social life, and it has been the construction of a concept of a market which has seemed to many social theorists from the eighteenth century on to provide the key to the understanding of much that is characteristic of, and specific to, the advanced societies.

There is, however, one dimension in which the concept of the market is not just incomplete with respect to, but also parasitic on, another aspect of social existence. The social relations constituted by the market presuppose a sphere of social life in which the individuals who participate in the market are themselves produced and reproduced. For a market society just as I have described it would not reproduce itself. To do so it would require that purely self-interested individuals enter into relationships with each other in order to produce, nurture and care for other self-interested individuals just like themselves. To make sense of the apparent sacrifices of self-interest involved here we would at the very least have to assume the existence of goods of a quite different kind to those involved in ordinary market transactions. To comprehend the social processes necessary here, we also need to suppose that there are human relationships - certainly those between parent and child, probably those between parents - which are conceptually distinct from the contractual and voluntary engagements for mutual benefit typical of the market <4>. In other words the motivations and relationships required here are qualitatively quite different to those characteristic of market behaviour. So it is necessary to assume the existence of a sphere of social life other than that of the market and constituted by quite different kinds of relationships. This is the realm of personal life, and will consist principally of the family, though it may also contain other intimate relationships.

The relationship between the two spheres is a complex one. Clearly, at least some individuals participate in both. It is plausible - and realistic - to assume that those who participate in market relationships are paradigmatically male heads of households (thus, the male personal pronoun is appropriate to refer to them) who represent their families in that sphere. Thus, the self who participates in the

market does so both as an individual and also as a representative of the household unit. This male individual will also represent the wider public world of order, rationality and work (of which more in the following section) within the family. In which case, it will be the woman (mother, wife) who embodies in her existence the principles of family life and the practices of nurturance, love and support that it requires. Thus, the duality between public and private also infects the private sphere itself. Indeed, that this must be so is clear from the perspective of reproduction. For if the private and domestic realm is to reproduce not just the physical individuals but also the structure of individuality required by public life, then it must contain within itself an embodiment of that public individuality. In this way, the private realm supplies the principles of its own transcendence.

### The Individual

It is now time to develop the structure of individuality required by the market. So far, the market individual has been minimally characterised: as male, and with a variety of largely self-directed wants. Now, for such an individual to participate satisfactorily in market relations, he must be capable of moving from one kind of productive activity to another. Thus, he must conceive of himself as having an identity which is quite distinct from any specific kind of production that he is involved in. He is not, for example, defined by his occupancy of a given social role, except the highly abstract one of worker, and, perhaps that of husband/father/head of household which pertains to his private responsibilities. The relationship between an individual and any particular kind of productive activity is a contingent one. This contingency is even more marked in the possessive market model, where the individual is an owner of his capacity to work, and this particular item of property must be alienated regularly in market transactions <5>. Thus, the market requires a conception of individuality which is abstracted from specific kinds of productive activity, though the capacity to perform productive work must be assumed to be part of the individual essence <6>.

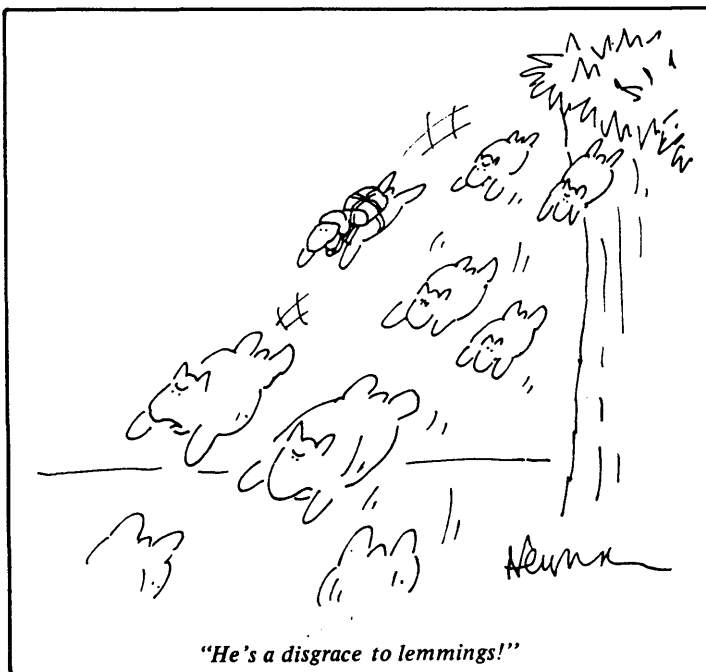
In a similar way, the goals of individual activity take on an abstract and non-specific character. Each individual undertakes a given activity of production, not to achieve ends which are intrinsic to it ('internal goods', in MacIntyre's phrase <7>), but as a means to an end which is equally achievable in other ways, and is thus external to any particular kind of activity. Indeed, the market itself is a complex mechanism which provides an indefinite variety of means for individuals to pursue essentially the same goal. It is a matter of some nicety to specify what that goal is. It must be conceived of as being sufficiently non-specific to be produced equally by a wide variety of activities and at the same time having sufficient substance to move individuals to action on its behalf. In certain narrowly defined contexts, it is possible to identify this goal simply as the acquisition of money - which is quantifiable, additive and universally desired. But this merely postpones the problem. In the last resort, it is its exchangeability with other commodities that makes money desirable, and we still need to know in general terms what it is that makes the possession and consumption of commodities desirable.

This problem was resolved by earlier utilitarians by positing pleasure or happiness as the ultimate object of all desire, and pain as the ultimate object of all aversion, where these were conceived as measurable psychological states distinct from the activities which produced them. The pleasure/pain continuum was, on this account, the analogue of the possession of money; and, indeed, according to Bentham, precisely correlated with it <8>. Later utilitarians have sought to avoid the empirical implausibility of this account in various ways: perhaps by the thesis that each individual has, as a kind of meta-desire, the desire

maximally to satisfy all his other desires, or by a formal characterisation of the nature of preference behaviour. The point of these manoeuvres is to provide an absolutely general way of specifying what it is to want something without being committed to the idea that there is one substantive thing (psychological state or whatever) which is always wanted. The precise solution of this problem is of no great importance here. Often I will adopt the jargon of speaking of individuals seeking to maximise their 'utilities', without pretending to have a precise account of what this means. The major point to bear in mind is that however we characterise the final goal of individual behaviour, it must take on a highly abstract and non-specific character, and thus correspond to the equally abstract character of the goal seeking individual.

Mediating between these two abstractions are the various determinate activities which individuals undertake to achieve this goal: the production and exchange of commodities. In general terms, these are characterisable as 'work', where that word is used to specify activities which are conceived of as having only instrumental value, i.e. where the only purpose in undertaking them is that they are necessary to achieve the required goal <9>. This context determines a highly specific form of rationality which is identified with seeking and finding more efficient means of achieving given ends. On this account, the rational agent is one who minimises the work required for the goals pursued.

I have mentioned that the desires of these individuals are largely self-directed. The point of this condition is to preclude certain kinds of altruistic behaviour which, if pervasive in the market, would interfere with the operation of the invisible hand. Thus, if participants in market transactions were moved by the circumstances of those with whom they were bargaining, they would not enforce the competitive price; if employers were moved by the plight of their unproductive employees, they would not introduce more efficient methods of production; if entrepreneurs were more sensitive to the feelings and aspirations of their debtors, they would not enforce bankruptcies; and so on <10>. Of course, if actuality corresponds to concept, in the long run it is non-altruistic behaviour which produces the most beneficial result, but that run can be very long and the suffering of many specific individuals remains uncompensated as far as they are concerned. Widespread sensitivity to the plight of individual others would react to this, and the long-run tendencies remain unactualised. Hence, the proviso of pervasive self-interest.



This proviso is not arbitrary, but meshes with the concept of individuality constructed so far. According to this concept, the identity both of the individual and of his goals is given independently of the activity he undertakes to achieve those goals. But it is not just the activity of production and exchange which must be conceived instrumentally; so too must the other individuals with whom the individual enters into relationship. These can only be conceptualised as a means to the already conceived end of utility maximisation. Thus, the self-directedness which is required for optimal market behaviour emerges as part of the very structure of purposive activity. Within these structures, it is impossible to conceive of activity which is genuinely other-directed, i.e. which takes the well-being of another as the goal of one's activity.

Of course, this only applies within the public sphere: the structure of personal life is quite different. Indeed, the male self who occurs in the market already, *qua* head of household, represents the women and children comprised by it. Family relations and those between friends and lovers presuppose different principles from those involved in the market; however, to the extent that they do, they will require different conceptions of individuality and of the relations between individuals. Thus, for example, the relationships that hold between market individuals are both impersonal and universalistic. That is to say, individuals occur in these relationships only through the medium of the property (including property in labour-power) they own; and the extent of possible relationships is limited only by the extent of the market. A morality which is appropriate to these relationships will be equally impersonal and universalistic: it will concern relations between unknown others, and it will specify rights and duties which hold between owners of property and makers of contracts. On the other hand, the relationships involved in family life are essentially particularistic: they involve a differential evaluation of those tied by bonds of kin; and the commitment and responsibilities which it engenders do not hold generally. The particularity here is not necessarily that of specifiable characteristics; it is picked out through the personal possessive pronoun; thus the commitments are to 'my child', 'my wife' or whoever. Paradoxically, the impersonal and universal sphere is also that of rampant egoism; the sphere of family life, thus egocentrically demarcated, is one in which egoism is - in principle - transcended.

This does not mean that the private and the personal has a better claim to moral centrality than the public and the impersonal. They are indeed both sides of the same coin, with the nature of each defined by what it excludes. The public sphere of production and exchange excludes the emotional, insofar as this is transformed by the operation of reason into ordered and calculable self-interest. The private sphere of domestic life excludes reason, except insofar as this is represented by the males who also figure in market relations; femininity is constructed in terms of emotion divorced from rationality. Since production and work are defined in terms of public activity, these are excluded from the private sphere, which becomes the sphere of consumption. Universality is excluded, so the domestic becomes a sphere of limitation. It is within this framework that masculinity and femininity come to be constructed as different, opposed, but essentially parasitic on each other. So too, morality will come to have a dual character: one appropriate to the public and male domain; another to the private and female sphere <11>. The claims of these moralities are different, and may even be opposed; but they too are dependent upon each other.

I will return to the relationship between the spheres of social existence and their attendant moralities later. For the moment, however, I will concentrate on the morality appropriate to the realm of public life.

#### Moralities and Societies

The concept of morality is not, except perhaps in the most

schematic sense, a universal, but needs to be constructed for every form of social life. This is not just a matter of the content of morality but also of its form. Thus, according to a certain (highly idealised) account of the ancient Greek polis, this form of political life defines a situation in which there is no systematic dissonance between the conditions necessary for the flourishing of the (adult, male, citizen) individual and the well-being of the community as a whole. Indeed, individual flourishing is in part definable by the contribution made to social well-being, because the identity of the individual is constituted as such by participation in the life necessary to sustain the polis. In this situation, an appropriate morality - indeed, if we are to believe Aristotle, the appropriate morality - is one concerned primarily with excellence of character. In a market society, on the other hand, the identity of the individual is given independently of any social relationship wider than the sphere of his private domain. Others with whom he comes in contact in the market exist either as means or as impediments to the furtherance of his own ends, not as fellow citizens united by joint participation in a common project. The interest of each individual is conceptually quite distinct from those of others and though the various invisible hand theorems locate a systematic relationship between the conditions for the satisfaction of one individual's wants and the satisfaction of the wants of others, nevertheless there is a significant discontinuity between the motivational context of individual behaviour and its overall social significance.

The link between individual self-interest and the interests of others is only maintained if certain limits are placed on the expression of self-interest. Thus, for example, the market requires the institution of private property, so that individuals may use or exchange goods which they have acquired in appropriate ways, e.g. by production or exchange. However, a purely self-interested individual will as soon steal as produce or exchange; indeed, will do so sooner if this is a more efficient way of maximising his utilities. Again, exchange relations presuppose a framework of contract, so that obligations incurred are honoured when the time is appropriate. However, self-interested individuals will break contracts just as soon as it is in their interests to do so. But unless individuals have some assurance that property will be respected and contracts kept, they will have no motivation to involve themselves in production and exchange. So without some constraints on the operation of self-interest, the market would soon collapse into brutal chaos.

The problem is in part resolved by the existence of a body of law which defines the institutions of property and contract and provides sanctions for infringements. However, this does not address what is at the crux of the matter. Law itself stands in need of legislation, i.e. of an answer to the question 'Why should one obey the law?' Further, the stability of a legal system requires that there be a widespread belief in its legitimacy, i.e. the belief that what is proscribed by law ought to be proscribed. Thus, the existence and functioning of law presupposes that there is an extra-legal justification for it. It is the task of morality to provide such a justification.

Nevertheless, though the role of morality requires that it be distinct from law, it will bear a close conceptual resemblance to it. Morality will, like law, be concerned to regulate relationships between individuals whose only bond is mutual self-interest; it will, like law, not be concerned primarily with motivation or character, as these are already defined by the market and thus must be taken as given; like law, the major concern of morality will be to specify the limits on individual behaviour necessary to make social life possible; and finally, morality and law will both confront the individual as something other, as a restraint on the exercise of his natural inclinations. Which is to say that morality, like law, will take the form of duty which is distinct from, and opposed to, the material world of self-interest.

The content of morality - the range of duties which it specifies - is not difficult to describe, at least in general

terms. Morality will consist of just those restrictions which are necessary for the market to operate: property, contract, and so on. Unsurprisingly perhaps, most modern moral philosophers have simply taken that content for granted, and turned their attention to what they conceived to be a more difficult and important task: of locating this content within a coherent and rationally based morality <12>.



#### Utilitarianism and the Market

The most familiar and obvious morality for a market society is utilitarianism. After all, the glory of the market is the extent to which it claims to maximise production in just those directions in which human wants exist and to minimise the effort involved. If the satisfaction of wants can be equated with happiness, and effort with pain, and the ratio of happiness to pain with utility, then utility seems to be just what the market provides, and utilitarianism just what it needs.

There are many conceptual linkages between this account of the market and utilitarianism in its modern (i.e. post-Bentham) versions. First, there is the conception of happiness or utility as something distinct from the various activities which give rise to it. As we have seen, this concept of a final goal is implicit in the account of individual motivation presupposed by the market. It is equally involved in any systematic presentation of utilitarianism: various happinesses must be conceived as commensurable and even quantifiable items, and thus distinct from the range of qualitatively distinct activities which individuals participate in. Further, both utilitarianism and market theory display the same notion of rationality: ends are given, and all that reason can do is to minimise the costs involved in achieving those ends. And finally, the utilitarian calculus makes no essential reference to such contingencies and particularities as friendship and love. To be sure, these have their instrumental value or disvalue as sources of pleasure or pain, but then so too do other forms of consumption. And utilitarianism strictly enjoins us to count all subjects of happiness and pain as equal; and not to give any particular consideration to those near and dear to us. Utilitarianism as a morality is as impersonal as the market in its distribution of rewards and punishments.

Nowadays, psychological hedonism is - correctly - assumed to be logically distinct from utilitarianism as a moral theory. However, if the self-interest characteristic of market behaviour is conceived to be the way in which pleasure maximising behaviour is translated into the currency of commodities and exchange, then psychological hedonism is causally linked with the goal of ethical hedonism. Further, from the assumption that generalised utility is the source of moral obligations, and the thesis of pervasive self-interest, it is an easy matter to deduce just those limitations on individual behaviour which are necessary for the

market to survive. Thus, the union between utilitarian morality and market theory seems an appropriate and happy one.

There is, however, a crucial problem. A utilitarian morality may specify just the limitations required by the market; however, for these to exist as duties or as obligations, they must have some purchase on the motives of those subject to them. If the general happiness is the ground of obligation, it must provide or imply a reason for those subject to the obligation to act in the ways prescribed. I use the notion of a 'reason' here very broadly. It is intended to capture the idea that when one knows what one ought to do one has ipso facto some motivation (not necessarily a sufficient one) so to act. To inform an individual that he ought to do something is, in this broad sense, to provide him with a reason for so acting. Thus the account provided by utilitarianism of what is morally obligatory must be such as to explain, or to link with an explanation of, its purchase on the motives of those subject to it. Clearly this generates problems for utilitarianism. The content of a utilitarian morality is the general happiness; but the psychological basis of market behaviour is concern for oneself. Is there a place there for this other concern which now seems necessary?

There are two ways in which a place might be made. The first is to postulate, as part of the psychological equipment of those subject to utilitarian morality, a sentiment of generalised benevolence: the capacity to desire the happiness of others and to feel an aversion to their suffering <13>. Given that such a sentiment exists, perhaps in a latent form, then the function of moral discourse will be to activate it. There are, however, a number of insuperable difficulties facing this move. Empirically, experiences of benevolence, fellow-feeling and the like are familiar enough, but these are of their nature directed towards particular and usually specifiable others. This is reflected in the account of the market constructed here, in that the operation of these sentiments is channelled into the private sphere where they may take as their objects those with whom individuals share their personal life. But the obligations necessary to regulate market behaviour concern unknown others, or those for whom one has no personal feeling. These obligations come into play in just those areas where benevolence is lacking. Further, the conceptualisation of the market from which the invisible hand theorems derive is one which precludes benevolence. This is not to say that it requires active animosity; on the contrary, it operates on the basis of a rational concern for one's own well-being and a disinterest in the well-being of others. Indeed, as argued above, the structure of purposive behaviour which is implicit in the conceptualisation of the market only has a place for the interests of others insofar as these are rationally assessed as means to maximise the independently conceived utility of the individual.

The second way in which an attempt may be made to secure a motivational basis for a utilitarian morality is through the structure of rational self-interest. After all, it is in the interests of individuals that the structure of private property and contract on which the market depends is maintained in existence. For this to be the case, it is necessary that individuals by and large restrict the operation of self-interest in various ways (e.g. to respect the property of others and to keep contracts even where there is a good chance of profiting by not doing so). Thus the obligations derivable from the principle of generalised utility turn out to be in the rational self-interest of those subject to them, and the apparent conflict between duty and obligation turns out to be the conflict between long and short term interests <14>.

However, the concept of rationality derived from the market is not strong enough to sustain this position <15>. On any given occasion when self-interest prompts a breach of obligation, a self-interested individual will reason as follows:

While I depend on this institution (property, contract) and its existence depends on people generally

respecting it, it is highly unlikely that my not doing so will make a significant difference. It may be the case that if everyone reasons as I do, then the institution on which they and I depend will break down, and this will be a pity. But again, the fact that I reason this way is of negligible relevance to how other people reason. Hence, I will breach the obligation.

But everyone will reason in this way: then the institutions on which the market depends will collapse.

One response to the free-rider's reasoning <16> is to propose a system of coercion which is so efficient, with sanctions which are so terrible, that it will never be rational to reason in this way because the probability and the extent of punishment will always outweigh the probability and extent of gain. However, this merely postpones the problem. The morality in question must also apply to those who must enforce the law and punish breaches of it. But it is easy enough to generate free-rider problems for them: cases where their own rational long term self-interest conflicts with the obligations they must respect if market society is to endure. And this problem cannot, on pain of regress, be solved in the same way.

I conclude, therefore, that despite - or even because of - its conceptual linkages with market theory, utilitarianism does not provide an adequate morality for a market society. Utilitarianism combines a theory of motivation and of rationality with the claim that generalised utility is the ground of obligation. The accounts of motivation and rationality are both derivable from a theory of market behaviour; and, given that theory, there is some reason to suppose that utility is maximised. However, if one adheres to the theory of motivation, the account of rationality is not strong enough to yield the motivational restrictions necessary to sustain market society.

#### Kantianism and the Market

The nub of the free-rider's reasoning is that he both wants to make use of an institution and yet he also makes himself an exception to the principles embodied in that institution. That he reasons in this way is precisely what is required by the form of rationality - reason as instrumental - with which he is equipped. The role of reason in this sense is to seek out the most efficient means of attaining given ends. It places behaviour in a causal milieu, and works out the consequences of alternative courses of action. That action which maximises the ratio of happiness to pain for the agent must be selected. The free-rider estimates - correctly - that the consequences of any of his actions on the institutions on which he depends are near enough to nil; hence, he can - and does - ignore them. But if everyone so reasons and so acts, and they will do so if they are equipped with the same notion of rationality, then the institutions on which they depend must collapse.

This line of reasoning does, however, offend against some notion of rationality, even if it is not that so far discussed. To make oneself an exception to a principle to which one is otherwise committed involves a certain kind of inconsistency. In certain cases, there may be principled grounds on the basis of which an exception can be made. But this is not the case for the free-rider. His only ground is that it is in his interests to make himself an exception to the principle, and it is incompatible with the adherence to any principle that it may be breached whenever self-interest prompts a breach. Further, it is just the potential use of this ground for exemption from the principle which engenders a multiplicity of exceptions, and leads to the collapse of the institution which embodies that principle.

Let us assume then that a requirement of consistency can be imported into the operative concept of reason. This has some independent motivation: it is, after all, a principle of reason which is often employed in the realm of discourse and argument. In the present context, it supple-

ments the concept of instrumental reason by providing a constraint on the way in which goals may be pursued; it provides that, if an agent makes use of an institution, e.g. that of property or contract, then, if all things are equal, he must not make himself an exception to the principle embodied in that institution. Nor does the 'ceteris paribus' clause provide an automatic exemption. The ground appealed to must be such as, when it is allowed to others, to be compatible with the continued existence of the institution. Further, it must be such that a self-interested agent be prepared to allow it to all other self-interested agents. He cannot, in other words, make himself an exception just because he is himself.

There is an important corollary to this line of reasoning. The place of other agents in the calculations of instrumental reason is purely as means (or impediments) to independently conceived ends. However, a principle of consistency applies as much to agents as to actions. If one's self-conception is as a property owner, a maker of contracts, and, in general, as an individual free to participate in a wide range of productive activities, this self-characterisation must also form part of one's conception of others. It is not just one's principles of behaviour which must be available to others, but also those principles which constitute self-identity. Thus, other individuals must figure in one's reasoning and one's behaviour, not just as means, but as agents (property owners, contract makers, radically free individuals) in their own right.

Rationality as consistency conceives of the activity and even the identity of self-interested individuals in the market place as related, not just causally, but also conceptually via principles of which they are all instances. It commits the agent to acting on the basis of principle and thus to taking into account not just the effects of what he does, but the principles which his behaviour instantiates. This may also involve a calculation of effects, but not so much the actual effects of behaviour as the hypothetical effects of the adoption of a certain principle by all agents in relevantly similar positions. If such effects are incompatible with the existence of the institution on which the agent depends, then the action is precluded.

It is often argued against moralities which rest on an appeal to formal principles of universality and consistency that they lack determinate content. This complaint may be justified if the principles are conceived of as supplying the entire content of morality. However, in the way in which such a morality is presented here (and, perhaps, for the more plausible versions which have been argued for in the literature), it takes as its field a pre-existing conceptual content: the concept of property, contract and the dominance of self-interested motivation may be taken as given. The role of the formal principle is not to provide an alternative content to morality; but rather to restrict the operation of those principles of behaviour which already exist. Self-interest is so much overridden, as constrained, and - what is more - constrained in just the ways necessary to preserve the market structures within which it operates and flourishes.

The constraints imposed by this concept of rationality will be experienced as the demands of duty as opposed to the natural thrust of inclination. But as one condition: the principles of reason must be supposed to have a motivational presence in the individual. If this were not the case, reference to such principles could not constitute reasons for the individual to act in the required way, nor could they have any influence on those subject to them. Hence, the individual subject to this morality must be supposed to be equipped with a form of rationality other than that of purely instrumental reason <18>.

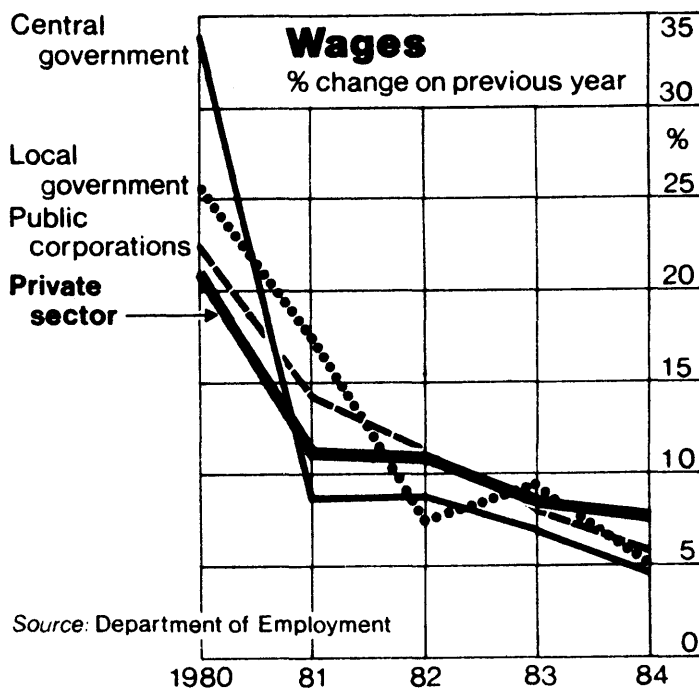
The relationship between a morality of this kind - which I will, without further argument, characterise as Kantian - and utilitarianism is a complex one. Clearly, they provide quite different and incompatible accounts of the basis of morality and the nature of moral obligation. Still, at another level there are similarities and complementarities. Adherence to the formal principles of a Kantian morality will preserve the market structure, allow for the

operation of the invisible hand and thus maximise the utilities of those involved. Thus, these formal principles do serve a utilitarian goal, even though they are not justified by an appeal to that goal. Again, the motivations which Kantianism assumes to move individuals to action, apart from considerations of duty, are just those of maximising one's own utility which form the motivational basis of utilitarianism. From the perspective of a market society, Kantianism plays the role of a necessary complement to utilitarianism, rather than something essentially opposed to it. Utilitarianism corresponds to the psychology and the morality which operates within the market; Kantianism is needed to define the structures within which the market operates. However, for these complementarities to exist, utilitarian considerations must be subordinated to Kantian ones.

### Home from Market

The market presupposes a qualitatively separate sphere of social existence within which the individuals who participate in the market are themselves produced and reproduced. As I have mentioned, these two realms may be defined in terms of a number of converging contrasts: between public and private; between reason (now in an extended sense) and emotion; between work and consumption; between self-interest and altruism; between universality and particularity; and finally - constructed out of such contrasts - the distinction between male and female.

These contrasts form the basis for two distinct conceptions of morality. Male individuality, at least in its public representation, is constructed as an abstraction from particular activities. It is free in the sense that no particular kind of market activity is essential to it. That morality must take the form of duty is a necessary counterweight to such radically free individuality. The content of duty is provided by the reason of these individuals, a reason which requires that those abstract individuals subject to it recognise the equally abstract individuality of those with whom they have market transactions but not personal relations. This entails a requirement of equality, perhaps of justice. Even utilitarianism which, as is well known, has problems with the concept of justice, does recognise the basic moral equality of all those subject to pleasure and pain. Kantianism, here, as always, more insightful into the requirements of market society, demands equal and mutual recognition of radically free but rational individuals.





Within the private sphere, matters are very different. If, on this conception of public life, male individuality involves the radical freedom not to be tied to specific roles, the complementary conception of female moral identity is constructed out of the woman's role in reproduction and in terms of the associated responsibilities of nurture and care. If male individuality seeks ends which essentially pertain to self (and, perhaps, to those represented by self), women must take the interests of others as sufficient basis for action. But not, of course, all others: only those within the same private sphere (husband, child). Even the structure of motivation is different. What moves men to action are emotions which have been transformed by the requirements of reason into channels of efficiency and consistency; feminine emotions, devoid of reason, are everywhere infected by excess and particularity. Hence, the lack of proper regard for what is due to impersonal and unknown others; the lack of a sense of justice, which has - notoriously - been supposed to be characteristic of women <19>. This lack, if such it is, should not be confused with a lack of morality as such. Women figure in a different arena of moral discourse to the one in which the public conception of justice is constructed <20>. The two arenas are not independent; indeed, each requires the other. But the two conceptions of morality exist in a state of tension, making incompatible demands and relating in different ways to the motivations of those subject to them. Hence, their essential complementarity is only ensured where the private sphere is properly subordinated to the public conceptions of reason, order and justice which are, in principle, embodied in the male head of household.

There are a number of further ways in which the two moralities may be contrasted. For example, the morality of the market place manifests itself in the form of duty and, as such, imposes itself on the unmoral inclinations of those subject to it. Transgression of duty is an ever present and conceptually available possibility. The individual is aware that the path mapped out by self-interest passes through the boundary defined by morality. To cross that boundary may involve punishment or guilt, but that is all. The self of the transgressor remains intact. The corresponding conception of female identity is, on the other hand, defined much more tightly in terms of existing within certain relationships and performing certain associated activities. Withdrawal from these relationships or failure to carry out these activities is, of course, always possible, but such failures will take a different form, and have different consequences, from a transgression of public morality. Failure must involve, not just punishment and guilt, but a real threat to individual identity. To conceive of such failures in systematic terms is to envisage, not a mere infringement of the moral law, but a loss of self. In this sense, the morality of the private realm is part of the identity of those subject to it in a way that the morality of the public world is not. The realm of the private also infects male identity. If, qua market individual, male identity is that of abstract individual, it is also constituted in relation to the domestic world as head of household/husband/father/breadwinner, and failure to perform the tasks associated with these roles may well threaten male self-identity.

This not not the place to explore these and other contrasts between public and private morality and the concep-

tions of male and female moral identity constructed out of these. For present purposes it is sufficient to note that each, by excluding the other, relies on an impoverished conception of human life and relationships; and that since each presupposes the other, neither can claim a self-sufficient moral status on its own. But how the tensions between them are to be resolved is another matter.

### Beyond Market Morality

To return to the main theme: in general terms, what I have been concerned to show is that the two most influential modern accounts of morality occupy the same conceptual terrain as a certain account of market behaviour. To locate utilitarianism and Kantianism within this larger discursive context may do something to explain, if not the strength, at least the persistence of these two accounts of morality. If anything lies at the centre of modern thought about social life it is the concept of the competitive market constructed by the great tradition of political economy in the eighteenth century. But to locate utilitarianism and Kantianism in this context should also expose the limitations of these two moral traditions. Despite its theoretical and ideological significance, it is dubious whether this concept of a market has ever been an adequate model of the economies of advanced societies. It ignores or downplays the significance of class and power, of corporation and monopoly, and of the relationships between state and the economy. But more important than the question of its empirical adequacy is the need to develop a moral perspective on the basis of which the representations of human nature, human relations and human goals supplied by this model can be evaluated. If the argument of this paper is correct, these representations also form part of the implicit content of Kantian and utilitarian moralities; which lack, therefore, the requisite independence to provide a critical perspective on them.

I have already said something of a different limitation to utilitarian and Kantian moralities. To the extent that they provide moralities appropriate to the market, they presuppose a distinct sphere of social life in which the individuals who participate in the market are produced and reproduced. Insofar as they provide moralities appropriate to a certain conception of public life and the conception of male identity constructed in terms of it, they are inappropriate to the associated conception of private life and the conception of female identity constructed out of it.

To do better than utilitarian and Kantian moralities it is necessary to discover or construct a morality which is informed by quite different conceptions of social existence. We must be able to envisage a form of life in which the competitive market is not the dominant mode of distribution and where there is no systematic hiatus between the intentional content of individual behaviour and its overall social significance. Further, we must be able to conceive of a society in which the divisions between two spheres of social life (public and private) and between two kinds of human existence (male and female) are overcome. And these are not small matters <21>.



## Footnotes

- 1 Cp. Genevieve Lloyd, 'Public Reason and Private Passion', *Politics* 18 (1983), pp. 27-37, especially p. 28: '... what has happened has not been a simple exclusion of women, but a constitution of femininity through that exclusion.... Femininity has been constructed, through exclusion, as a necessary "complement" to maleness.' See also Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason* (London, Methuen, 1984), esp. Chapter 7.
- 2 See Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. R.H. Campbell and A.S. Skinner (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1976), Vol. I, Book IV, Ch. ii, p. 456. The theorem about private interests and public benefits is stated particularly clearly in Book I, Ch. ii, pp. 26-27, without, however, the phrase 'invisible hand' being used. The modern versions of this theorem show that the equilibrium state of a competitive market is Pareto optimal. See, e.g., the account in D.M. Winch, *Analytical Welfare Economics* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1971), Ch. 5.
- 3 The term 'possessive' is due to C.B. Macpherson. See the two models of market society provided in *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (London, Oxford University Press, 1962; reprinted 1972), pp. 51-61. See also Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (1944; reprinted Boston, Beacon Press, 1957), especially Chs 4-5.
- 4 On this theme, see Carole Pateman, 'Women and Consent', *Political Theory* 8 (1980), pp. 149-168.
- 5 A point emphasised by Macpherson in his account of 'possessive individualism'. See *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, p. 3 and *passim*.
- 6 Cp. Marx: 'Indifference towards specific labours corresponds to a form of society in which individuals can with ease transfer from one labour to another, and when the specific kind is a matter of chance for them, hence indifference.' *Grundrisse*, translated by Martin Nicolaus (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1973), Introduction, p. 104.
- 7 See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London, Duckworth, 1981), pp. 175-176.
- 8 See Jeremy Bentham, *Principles of the Civil Code*, Ch. 6, a selection from which appears in C.B. Macpherson (ed.), *Property* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1978), pp. 46-49.
- 9 Cp. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1958) on the distinction between labour and work.
- 10 See the discussion in Christopher McMahon, 'Morality and the Invisible Hand', *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 10 (1981), pp. 247-277, especially pp. 252-53, 262-63.
- 11 Thus the well known 'double standard'. For a recent discussion, see Frigga Haug, 'Morals Also Have Two Genders', *New Left Review* 143 (January-February 1984), pp. 51-67.
- 12 Cp. Nietzsche: '(Philosophers) wanted to furnish the rational ground of morality - and every philosopher hitherto has believed he has furnished this rational ground; morality itself, however, was taken as "given".' *Beyond Good and Evil*, translated by R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1976), Part Five, #186, p. 90.
- 13 See, for example, J.J.C. Smart, 'An Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics', in J.J.C. Smart and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and Against* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1973; reprinted 1983), p. 7. This seems also to have been Hume's position in his later writings; see, for example, 'An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals', Section IX, in *Hume's Enquiries*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 268-84.
- 14 Hume was at least tempted towards some such position as this in his earlier writings; see, e.g., *A Treatise of Human Nature*, see, e.g., Book III, Part II, Section (ii), ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 492: 'For whether the passion of self-interest be esteemed vicious or virtuous, 'tis all a case; since itself alone restrains it.' See also the discussion in Genevieve Lloyd: 'Public Reason and Private Passion', pp. 29-30, in *The Man of Reason*, pp. 54-56. However, he had certainly rejected this view by the time of the *Enquiry*, see Section V, Part II, pp. 218-19; and also the discussion of the 'free-rider' (Not using that term) in Section IX, Part II, pp. 282-283.
- 15 The standard modern treatment of the free-rider is Mancur Olson: *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge Mass., Harvard University Press, 1965; reprinted 1977), especially Ch. 2.
- 16 This response was that of Hobbes, whose 'fool' is the 17th-century ancestor of the free-rider; see *Leviathan*, ed. Michael Oakeshott (Oxford, Blackwell, n.d.), Part I, Ch. 15, pp. 94-96.
- 17 In this section, I make use of some arguments presented in Ross Poole, 'Reason, Self-Interest and "Commercial Society": the Social Content of Kantian Morality', *Critical Philosophy* 1 (1984), pp. 24-46.
- 18 In Rawls' 'original position' agents reason about the structure of society behind a 'veil of ignorance', i.e. they do not know what position they will occupy in society. This device provides a way in which the use of instrumental reason will yield much the same result as the application of a more universalistic concept of reason in an epistemically less exiguous context. Still, this does not resolve the motivational problem, and Rawls must suppose that the rational individuals subject to the rules of justice are also equipped with a 'sense of justice'. See John Rawls: *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1971), especially Chs. I, II, VIII.
- 19 A number of theorists of morality have remarked on the failure of women to achieve the moral standards of civilised society, e.g. Rousseau, Hegel, Freud. For discussion, see Carole Pateman, 'The Disorder of Women': Women, Love and the Sense of Justice', *Ethics* 91 (1980), pp. 20-34; Genevieve Lloyd: 'Public Reason and Private Passion', 'Rousseau on Reason, Nature and Women', *Metaphilosophy* 14 (1983), pp. 308-326 and *The Man of Reason*, especially Ch. V.
- 20 For a fascinating account of the differences in moral awareness between men and women, see Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1982).
- 21 Thanks to Tony Skillen and Genevieve Lloyd for comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

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