What Are John Stuart Mill’s Views Concerning Justice?

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Chapter 3:

1. What are John Stuart Mill’s views concerning justice?

Mill views justice from the perspective of moral behavior, where he termed the actions that violate the rights of an individual as the ones that constitute injustice. According to Mill, the rights of an individual constitute something of a general utility, and that society has a duty to defend an individual in its possession. But what exactly is justice based on Mill’s assumptions? Mill defined justice based on human well-being. That is, he viewed justice as a set of moral rules that protects individuals from being hurt by other individuals. These moral rules incorporate an individual’s freedom, which, according to Mill, is more important than all the other maxims.

2. Explain Nozick’s entitlement theory.

Nozick cites that every individual is autonomous and answerable and ought to be left to fashion their own life free from the interference of others, provided that the actions are compatible with the rights of others. Nozick also held that individuals are entitled to their holdings, including goods, property, and money, given that they have acquired them fairly. Nozick based his theory on three principles. The first one permits an individual to hold if it was acquired in line with the principle of justice in acquisition. The second principle permits an individual to hold if it was acquired in line with the principle of justice in transfer from another person. The third one cites that an individual can only acquire holding in accordance with the 1st and 2nd principles.

3. Define John Rawls’ veil of ignorance.

Rawl imagines that people in their original position are ignorant and that they do not know their social position status since they are ignorant. These individuals do not even know how their situation or position will be once the veil of ignorance is lifted. Rawl’s assumptions aim to force people into their original position, affecting impartial and objective abilities to come to an agreement. This is because the conditions are somehow fair and equal and constitute a good claim to be regarded as the principles of justice.

Chapter 4:

1. How would you describe the difference between capitalism and socialism?

The factors that distinguish capitalism and socialism revolve around ownership and the manner of operation. Capitalism is a form of an economic system in which private firms form the main means of production and distribution. Additionally, this system of the economy operates on the basis of market exchange and making profits. Socialism, on the other hand, is an economic system in which, unlike capitalism, the main means of production and distribution is in public hands. Socialism operates under a centralized planned economy instead of a market system for the distribution of income and allocation of resources. In capitalism, economic decisions are made by private firms, while in a socialist system, the government makes crucial decisions.

2. What are the main criticisms of capitalism?

The main criticisms of capitalism are based on theoretical and operational arguments that have not convinced everyone that capitalism is a morally justifiable system. The theoretical criticisms have criticized capitalism's basic assumptions, fundamental values, and inherent economic tendencies. The operational arguments, on the other hand, criticize capitalism's so-called deficiencies in actual practice, especially on the failure of capitalism to live up to its own economic ideals. The operational criticism focuses on the actual deficiencies brought about by capitalism, while the theoretical criticisms argue based on assumptions relating to the values and economic tendencies of capitalism.

3. Give an explanation as to why manufacturing has declined in the United States.

However, from the 1960s to date, manufacturing in the U.S. has declined by more than 50 percent. Several explanations describe why manufacturing has declined in the U.S. for the past half a century. One major factor that has contributed the most to this decline is the availability of cheap products from foreign competitors. The local U.S. manufacturers have seen their competitive advantage outclassed by their foreign counterparts. The rise of the service industry has also contributed to the decline of manufacturing in the U.S. This best explains why, for instance, Walmart employs more individuals than the Big Three automakers do. Again, the number of people working in government supersedes those who work in manufacturing.

Chapter 5:

1. How would you debate the idea that corporations can make moral decisions?

From a legal perspective, corporations have been granted equal rights just as moral agents. In 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that corporations possess a basic First Amendment right to take part in the political process without being prevented by the government from spending money to back their favorite candidates. Therefore, corporations, just as individuals, ought to be held morally responsible for their actions. Although corporations lack conscience, they can make decisions or implement policies that, according to the outcome, can be applauded or blamed, and for that matter, corporations can make moral decisions.

2. Who is a corporation's top obligation?

Advocates of the narrow view mention stockholders as the owners of a corporation, thus holding the corporation's top obligation. However, this assumption of the Advocates of the narrow view only fits in small firms but seems nonsensible for the modern corporate reality. In the modern corporate reality, a small number of investors would unswervingly pump money into a corporation. Instead, a majority of them repurchase the shares that were previously issued, with a high probability of them selling these shares again. In modern corporate reality, the management has the actual control of a corporation in modern corporate reality over the stockholders. A majority of observers in today's business world acknowledge management as it handpicks the board of directors, hence controlling the body that is supposed to monitor it.

3. Why is it misguided to think that corporations could address non-business matters?

The narrow view cites two main reasons why corporations can not be trusted when it comes to addressing non-business matters, such as promoting the welfare of society. These lack expertise, and they impose their materialistic values on society. According to the narrow view, corporations only live with the expertise of making economic decisions, making it difficult for them to make social and moral decisions as they cannot balance between public goods and making profits. Corporations also impose their materialistic values on all of society because they feel that if they pursue non-business goals, they might be equivalent to a church and would be making profits. (Macleod, C., 2020) (Mill, J. S., 1859) (Mill, J. S., 1863)

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