John Stuart Mill Essay, Research Paper

John Stuart Mill 1806-1873

John had a teleological view of ethics. He is also known as the 1st advocate for women. Lived during the time of the Industrial Revolution. Born to a rich man, he was the youngest, Mr. Mill retired after having John and deticated his life to making John a genius. Mr. Mill home educated John all his life in hopes to create a genius. Not once in Johns life at home was he able to leave the compound of his fathers home. John had to educate his older brothers and sisters. At the age of 14 Johns standard or intellect was very high. At 14 he was given the summer off and went to Paris with his cousins. By the age of 15 Mr. Mill was inviting leading scholars in mathematics, literature, science?and want John to prove to them that he knew more in that subject than they did. The amazing thing is that he know more about those subject than the scholars. At 21 he was a genius but had a breakdown. He was sent to a rest home where no drugs where administered. It was merely a place for him to rest and relax. He was a very left brained person with all the factual knowledge he had and this place allowed him to explore the right side?.poems, literature?Mr. Mills disowned John because he want a genius and geniuses don?t go crazy. When John gets out he is perfectly fine, still and genius and sane at the same time.

When John gets out he gets a job with the East India Company. With all the knowledge John had he never taught. He worked all his life and did philosophy for fun on the side. John was never mad at his father for what he did to him, instead he was mad at his mother for allowing Mr. Mill mistreat John. Strangely enough John becomes the first advocate for women. By 23 or 24 John meets a woman by the name of Harriet Taylor. She is known as the wild woman of Europe and also a radical. Harriet was married to a rich man whom she had total control over. Harriet was known to frequent the men?s clubs alone where she would drink and smoke. When she meets John she falls in love and for about 20 years they would see each other while she was still married. When her husband died they were together but she died soon after. Many believe she is the influence to his woman?s advocacy.

John was a great writer and wrote 3 books. The first, On Liberty, was an absolute defense for liberty. He cared greatly about independence and wrote about it brilliantly. The second, The Subject of Women, is known as a man wrote the best book written about women. One extreme point about this book was that he thought if women are going to have children they need to stay at home until the children are able to care for themselves. Mills basic opinion was to have the women go out and do something, get a job. Not many women accepted this from John, many were not ready to hear such things. John said all this time we have spent is wasted because we have not acknowledged have of the human race for so long. That is half of the creativity we have missed out on. Many say Harriet wrote the book, she didn?t, but she definitely had an influence. Back then women had no rights and were not able to own land. If a woman?s husband died and she was left with his money, she would have a year to remarry or her money will be given to the state and she would be left with nothing. Things like this are what John tried to change. The third book, Utilitarianism, is his opinion on ethics.

John Mill got opinion of utilitarianism from his godfather Jeremy Bentham. Jeremy was an investor and was good in accounting and mathematics. He was not a religious man and believed that all people do in their lives is seek pleasure. You seek for what you want and don?t do what you don?t want to do. This is called Hedonism, where you believe the basis for ethics is purely pleasure, you do what you want. He wrote a book about utilitarianism and basically said people want to maximize their pleasure and minimize their pain. Which is saying majority rules whatever the people want is good, that?s ethical. Most ethical issues are social and Jeremy wanted to deal with the finest amount of pleasure one could receive and he called it a utility and wanted the people to vote on these issues. The problem was that he wanted everyone to vote on everything. That?s impossible and most of the time the people would not even knows what they are voting for. This was called Act Utilitarianism where you act and vote on everything. This is where John gets the idea of Jeremy and modifies it to improve what he is trying to say. Because of this dramatic change in this idea and how strong it is today many business are now utilitarianism. When John works with it, it is now called Rule Utilitarianism. This is not where you vote on everything. John was a fairly religious man but did not base his views of ethics on religion because he was aware of the many different religions in the world. He still keeps Jeremy?s point that we want to maximize our pleasure and minimize out pain. John believed that if there was a rule that everyone would follow it would max our pleasure. A rule so effective that every time you use it, it would work. It was called the Golden Rule, that said ?treat fellow man as yourself?. This is a religious quote and John is aware of that but thought it was perfect and wanted people to know that if they were not religious they should still follow it because it would work. Many Christians were already following this but if everybody did it the world would be a better place and nothing will go wrong.

An example says: You get a phone call and it?s the hospital saying your child has been in an accident and is about to die in moments and is calling for you. You jump in the car and on the way you see an overturned bus with kids inside and the bus has caught on fire, bus driver dead. Do you stop to render aide and save the lives of 20 children or keep going and see your child that you know is going to die anyway. John Mill say to stop and help the children because majority rules and saving the children?s lives is majority and your child?s life if minority. There is clearly a lot more pleasure in the grateful families than just in yours. Another example says: A patient is brought in and is brain dead from an accident. The doctors notice he has a donor card and realize that he has about 10 organs that they could use right then and there to save 10 other lives. Do they kill the guy and take his organs or do they keep his body alive while he is a vegetable. Mill says go for it and kill him because the majority rules.

The ethics of western civilization are the ones of John Mill. We have a Democracy where, in a way, we do what we want, majority rules. We also have a free enterprise where you are free to participate in the economy. John never had business in mind but his philosophy had a great impact on it. More modern and westernize, utilitarianism was renamed to Pragmatism by a person named Dewey. The term pragmatic meant to be practical and of utilitarianism in a different way. ?Truth is what works?, something is right if it gives you the results you want. Economically, if you change pleasure to profit and pain to loss it works perfectly. All businesses want to make a much profit with as little loss as possible to succeed. This has become the ethics of many large businesses today, using both utilitarianism and pragmatism. In certain way it works ethically and economically. Dewey says, ?growth itself is the only moral end?, and this is a successful life in the industry trying to make money and increase profit. This is also saying there is no boundary, and that could be very dangerous.

327