

UTILITÀ E BENESSERE SOCIALE – JOHN STUART MILL TRA I CLASSICI E I NEOCLASSICI
Michele Grillo, 5 aprile 2017

Kaushik Basu, *Oltre la mano invisibile*, Laterza 2013, pag.16:

Dopo la *Ricchezza delle Nazioni*, la teoria della mano invisibile rimase una semplice ipotesi per quasi due secoli. Ci volle il possente armamentario dell'economia matematica e le ricerche di Arrow, Debreu, Mackenzie e altri per dimostrare in maniera formalizzata, solo a Novecento inoltrato, il Primo Teorema dell'Economia del benessere: *stanti certe condizioni*, tutti gli individui, perseguendo il proprio interesse, conducono la società a un equilibrio competitivo ottimale.”

PER CAPIRE QUALI SONO QUESTE CONDIZIONI È ESSENZIALE TORNARE A JOHN STUART MILL

John Stuart Mill, *Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy*, 1838:

“The *first principles* of Mr. Bentham's philosophy are these:

- that *happiness*, meaning by that term pleasure and exemption from pain, *is the only thing desirable in itself*;
- that *all other things* are desirable solely as *means* to that end.

John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 1863, chapter II:

- The *utilitarian standard is not the agent's* own greatest happiness, *but* the greatest amount of *happiness altogether*...
- The creed which accepts as the *foundation of morals, Utility*, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that *actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness*, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.

John Stuart Mill, *Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy*, 1838:

... that the *morality of actions depends on the consequences* which they tend to produce, is the *doctrine of rational persons of all schools* ...

...that the *good or evil of those consequences is measured solely by pleasure or pain*, is all of the doctrine of the *school of utility*, which is peculiar to it.

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, 1859, Chapter I:

“The subject of this essay is ... *civil, or social liberty*: the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual”.

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, 1859, Chapter V, *Applications*:

The **two maxims** which together form the entire doctrine of this Essay ... are...that:

- the *individual is not accountable to society* for his actions, in so far as these concern *the interests of no person but himself*
- *for such actions as are prejudicial to the interests of others, the individual is accountable*, and may be subjected either to social or to legal punishment

[*La teoria dei mercati perfettamente concorrenziali mostra le condizioni alle quali le relazioni economiche possono essere ricondotte a un “mondo” alla Mill*]. MA:

- **TRADE IS A SOCIAL ACT**. Whoever undertakes to sell ... goods to the public, does what affects the interest of other persons...; accordingly, it was *once held to be the duty of governments, to fix prices, and regulate* the ... manufacture. But ... *the cheapness and the good quality* of commodities are *most effectually provided for by leaving the producers and sellers perfectly free*, under the sole check of *equal freedom to the buyers*. This is **the so-called doctrine of Free Trade**, which rests on *grounds different from*, though equally solid with, the principle of *individual liberty* asserted in this Essay

Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Saggio sui limiti dell'attività dello Stato* (in epigrafe a *On Liberty*):

“The grand, leading principle, towards which every argument ... unfolded in these pages directly converges, is the *absolute and essential importance of human development in its richest diversity*”