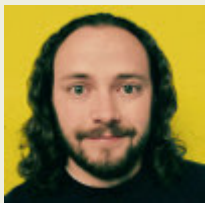


Justice under Voluntaryism



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People care about justice. Even criminals care about justice when they find themselves the victim. When people feel that they’ve been wronged, they desire to be made right, which can take the form of revenge, or getting even, or making their wrongdoer pay. What does justice look like under voluntaryism? Let’s have a look.

What is Justice?

What justice is depends on one’s theory of justice. In general, justice is just or fair behavior, meaning, behavior compatible with respect to the established rights and privileges of people. Justice is easily qualified as we look at various systems of rights and privileges and what not. When a person behaves incompatibly with respect to the established rights and privileges of those who are affected, his behavior is viewed as *unjustified*. The affected then feel wronged, and their universe goes off-kilter. They demand that their wrongdoer be put to justice, to undo the wrong that was committed. If the wrong is severe enough, they may not settle for anything less than their wrongdoer’s blood, the ultimately act of justice, or so it may be believed.

Voluntaryism

Voluntaryism is the philosophy centered on the voluntary principle, that all human relations should happen voluntarily, by mutual consent, or not at all. How does justice play into voluntaryism? Wrongdoers often don’t consent to the justice being sought by those they’ve wronged, so it would seem that justice is incompatible with voluntaryism. Or is it? The voluntary principle is like any other principle, useful for some things, but maybe not for others. Maybe if the wrong is severe enough, and the wrongdoer a continuing threat to the peace and safety of society, the voluntary principle gives way to the principles of life and security. But maybe not.

Here are at least two ways that justice as defined above is compatible with voluntaryism. When people are committed to the voluntary principle, everything they do in relation to

each other is preceded by a willful act of consent. Over time, norms and convention develop that everyone has naturally agreed to along the way. If these norms and conventions are violated, the violator, or wrongdoer using the above terminology, is fully aware and has already consented to the justice that will be sought from him, itself in accordance with the norms and conventions of his society. Such justice seems perfectly compatible with voluntaryism.

The second way of reconciling justice with voluntaryism is through contract. Contracts, either implicit or explicit, are used for many different kinds of relations. Business dealings of all sorts - from commerce to housing to insurance - are handled via explicit contract. Implicit contracts develop out of the norms and conventions of society. When a contract is made, due consideration is given to the justice that will be sought if the contract is broken. Each party gives consent to the acts of justice, as I call them, as stipulated in the contract.

Final Thoughts

I don't think that justice is incompatible with voluntaryism, quite the contrary, I think it's one of voluntaryism's best features. Justice as explored above seems quite fair, far more fair than state justice. But what of the foreigner, the newcomer to a given society? I imagine that said society's norms and conventions contain parts on dealing with foreign wrongdoers, perhaps, I would both hope and predict, on the basis of forgiveness for first time offenses. That seems reasonable, and I would think that people raised in a free society aren't anything if not reasonable.

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