



GET WHAT YOU CAN WHILE THE GETTING'S GOOD - THAT'S WHAT I SAY! MIGHT MAKES RIGHT! THE WINNERS WRITE THE HISTORY BOOKS!



Ethics

From Moral Intuition
To Moral Theory

Intuitions
Principles
Theories

From Intuition to Theory

Pre-Verbal

Moral Intuition: a pre-reflective response of “just seeing” that something is good or bad.

Verbal

Moral Judgment: verbal expressions of the moral intuition.

Moral Principle: an abstract rule that collects together various moral judgments.

Moral Theory: what explains/justifies (or generates) moral principles.

From Intuition to Theory

Pre-Verbal

Moral Intuition:



Verbal

Moral Judgment:



Moral Principle:

Moral Theory:

From Intuition to Theory

Pre-Verbal

Moral Intuition:



Verbal: Dogfighting is horrible!

Moral Judgment:



Moral Principle:

Moral Theory:

From Intuition to Theory

Pre-Verbal

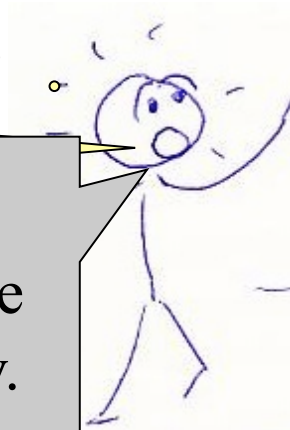
Moral Intuition:



Verbs: Do

Moral Ju

It's wrong to harm animals, just for the sake of making some money.



Moral Principle:

Moral Theory:

From Intuition to Theory

Pre-Verbal

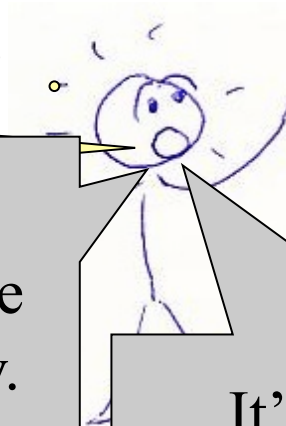
Moral Intuition:



Verbal Do

Moral Judgment

It's wrong to harm animals, just for the sake of making some money.



It's wrong to breed animals to fight, since they might hurt children.

Moral Principle:

Moral Theory:

From Intuition to Theory

Pre-Verbal

Moral Intuition:



Verbal: Dogfighting is horrible!

Moral Judgment:

It's wrong to harm animals, just for the sake of making some money.

Moral Principle:

It's wrong to breed animals to fight, since they might hurt children.

Moral Theory: **Utilitarianism:** An action is wrong if it causes more harm than good (i.e., fails to maximize the good).



Moral Intuitions

What are our **moral intuitions?**
Where do they come from?

Moral Intuitions

**Let's begin with a few
thought-experiments
for testing our moral intuitions...**



Moral Intuition #1



The Sick Heart: Imagine a pair of newborn twins, Hal and Sal, identical in every way except that Sal has a congenitally deformed heart, and will soon die without a heart transplant. Hal is the only source of a suitable heart for transplantation.

Assuming the transplantation is risk free, should we do it to save Sal's life?



Moral Intuition #2



Bad Kidneys: Imagine a pair of newborn twins, Hal and Sal, identical in every way except that Sal's two kidneys are defective, and he will soon die without a kidney transplant. Hal is the only suitable donor.

Assuming the transplantation is risk free, should we use one of Hal's kidneys to save Sal's life?



Moral Intuition #3



The Snake Bite: Imagine two strangers, Hal and Sal, teaming up for a day's hike in the mountains. Far from civilization, Sal is bitten by a poisonous snake, and only Hal has packed any antiserum, of which he has five doses. They cost \$20 each, and Sal has no money.

Should Hal give Sal one of his doses?

Moral Intuition #4

The Noisy Child in Nazi Germany: A group of six Jews are hiding in a secret room, with SS soldiers searching the house. An infant in the group begins to fuss, posing a threat to the group's safety. What should be done?

Should someone stifle the child, possibly killing it, in order to save the group?

Moral Intuition #5

The Baby in the Lake (two scenarios):

- (1) Minding his own business, John watches the neighbor's toddler fall off their pier into the lake, does nothing, and the child drowns.
- (2) John sees the neighbor's toddler in the yard next door. He grabs up the child and heaves him into the lake, where he drowns.

Which scenario is worse, and why?

Moral Intuition #6

The Bully and the Rapist

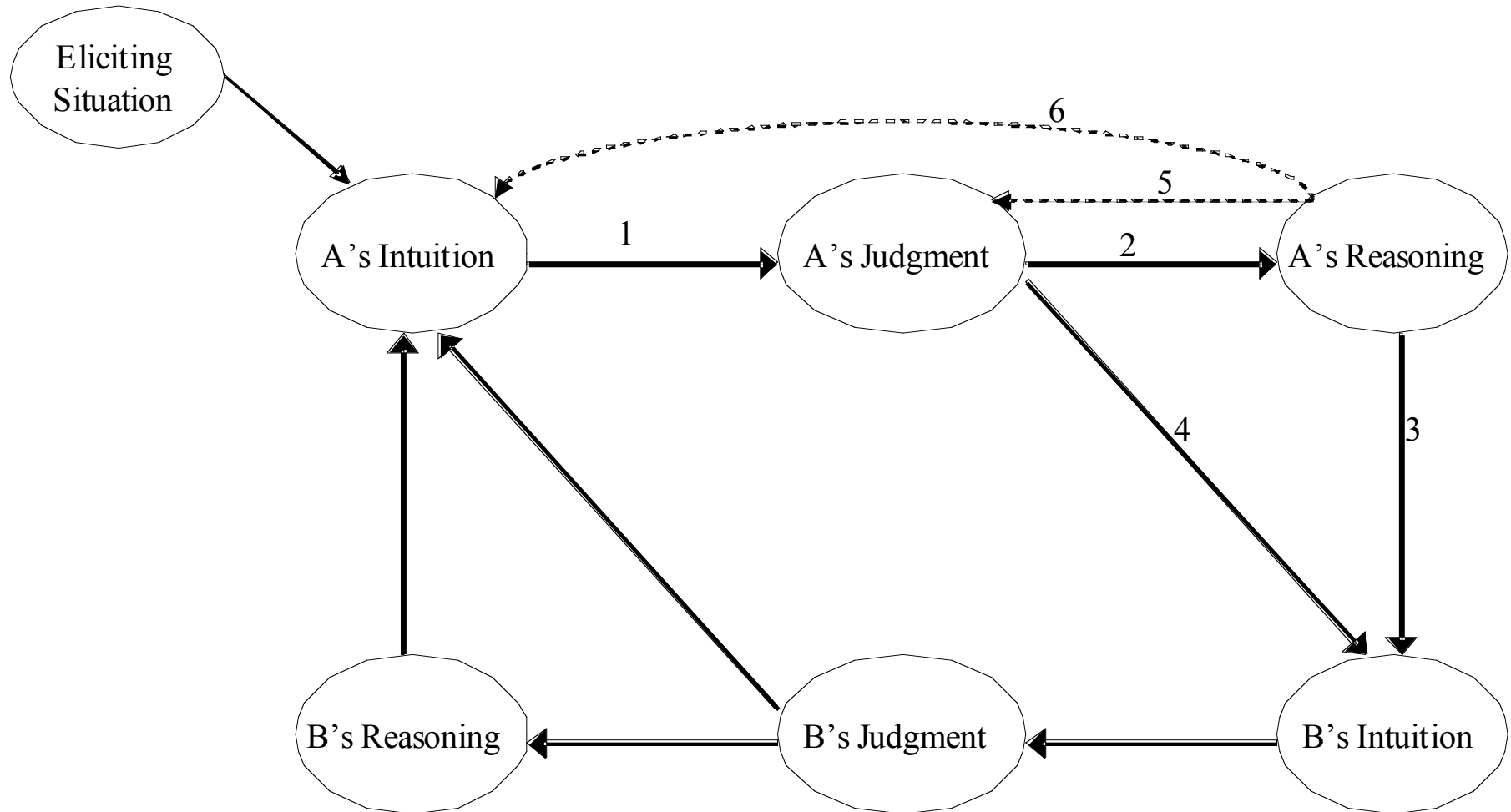
- (1) Otto and Donny are two sixth grade boys. Otto chases Donny home from school one day. Before Donny can reach the safety of home, Otto catches him, throws him down into the weeds of a vacant lot, and twists his arm until Donny cries 'Uncle.' Otto spits in Donny's face and runs off.
- (2) Tom and Mary are both adults. Tom waits for Mary outside the place where she works. As Mary leaves to walk home, Tom chases after her and eventually catches her, throwing her down in the weeds of a vacant lot where he rapes her. He then spits in her face and runs off.

Which scenario is worse, and why?

Moral Principles

Moral Theories

Haidt's Social Intuitionist Model



Moral Disagreement

We might disagree about...

- (1) The facts
- (2) The moral principles
- (3) How the principles are ranked

An Example: Borrowing a Car (1/4)

Ed borrows his roommate's car without asking ...

1. You must not take what is not yours.
2. You must respect the private property of others.

An Example: Borrowing a Car (2/4)

Ed borrows his roommate's car without asking ...

1. You must not take what is not yours.
2. You must respect the private property of others.

... to take a neighbor to the hospital.

3. You must help others when you can.

An Example: Borrowing a Car (3/4)

Ed borrows his roommate's car without asking ...

1. You must not take what is not yours.
2. You must respect the private property of others.

... ~~to take a neighbor to the hospital.~~

3. You must help others when you can.

... to take a neighbor to the mall to buy a pair of socks.

4. When harming one to help another, the benefit must outweigh the harm.

An Example: Borrowing a Car (4/4)

Ed borrows his roommate's car without asking ...

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... ~~to take a neighbor to the hospital.~~

3. You must help others when you can.

... to take a neighbor to the mall to buy a pair of socks.

4. When harming one to help another, the benefit must outweigh the harm.

Ed takes his roommate's money to buy food for the hungry.

5. The right to life overrides the right to private property.

The Variety of Moral Theories

Three Dimensions of the Moral Universe

We speak of the moral worth or value of ...

(1) **A Person's Character** (as virtuous or vicious)

[> Aristotle's virtue ethic]

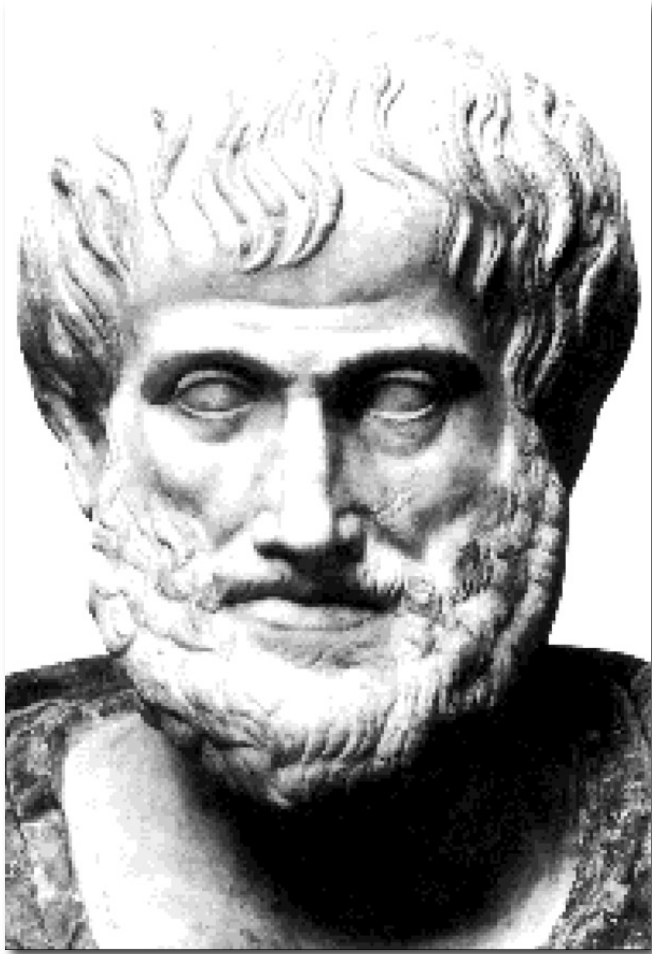
(2) **The Way the World Is** (as good or bad)

[> Mill's utilitarian ethic]

(3) **An Action** (as right or wrong)

[> Kant's deontological ethic]

Aristotle, *Virtue Ethics*



(384-322 BCE)

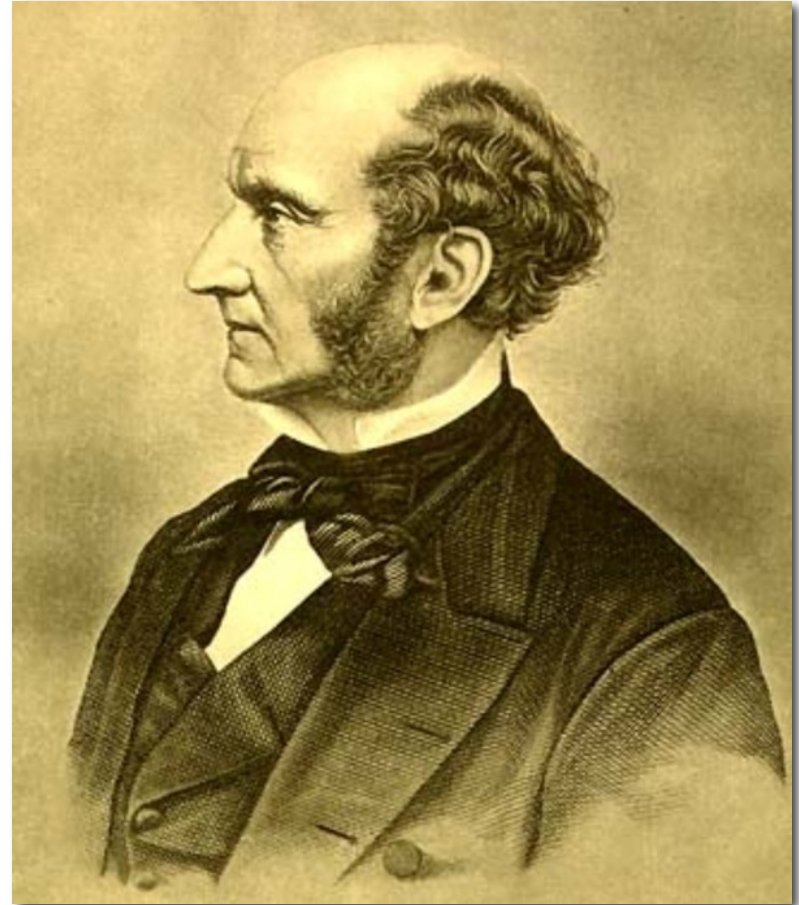
“Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim.”

[*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book One, Ch. 1]

John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*

“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. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure.”

[*Utilitarianism*, Ch. 2 (1863)]



(1806-1873)

Immanuel Kant, *Deontology*

“Nothing in the world —
indeed nothing even
beyond the world — can
possibly be conceived
which could be called
good without
qualification except a
good will.”

[*Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785)]



(1724-1804)

Motives, Actions, Consequences

