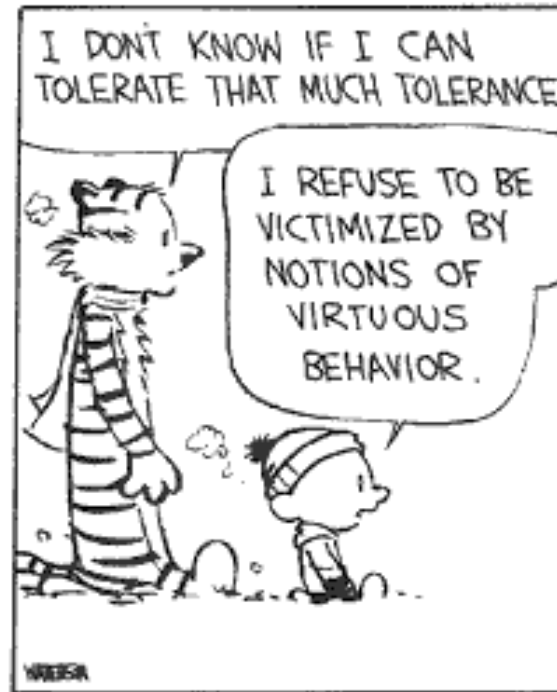


BUT AS WE ALL KNOW, VALUES ARE RELATIVE. EVERY SYSTEM OF BELIEF IS EQUALLY VALID AND WE NEED TO TOLERATE DIVERSITY. VIRTUE ISN'T "BETTER" THAN VICE. IT'S JUST DIFFERENT.



Introduction to Ethics

Ethics is Practical!



Francis Bacon (1561-1626)
Advancement of Learning, xx.8.

“But men must know, that in this theatre of man’s life, it is reserved only for God and angels to be lookers on.”

Descriptive vs Normative

Descriptive: how things are (facts)

There are more chairs than people in the room.

Guns are the leading cause of death for people under 26 in the USA.

Seven is the square root of 49.

Normative: how things ought to be (value)

There should (ought to) be more chairs than people in the room.

There should be tighter restrictions on gun ownership in the USA.

You should spend more time studying your math homework.

Descriptive Science vs Normative Science

Anthropology vs Ethics

Psychology vs Logic

Evaluating Actions based on Feelings

- **Morally Required**

Failure to do them merits blame, while doing them does not merit praise.

- **Morally Prohibited**

Doing them merits blame, while failure to do them does not merit praise.

- **Supererogatory**

Doing them merits praise, but failure to do them does not merit blame.

- **Morally Irrelevant**

Neither required, prohibited, nor supererogatory, and so doing them (or failure to do them) merits neither praise nor blame.

The Variety of Moral Theories

Morality and Ethics

Morality: The body of beliefs that concern how we ought to conduct our lives and, in particular, our beliefs about right and wrong actions, good and bad states of affairs, and virtuous and vicious characters.

Ethics: The study of morality (= moral science).

As **moral** beings, we “take a stand” on something — for instance, whether an action is right or wrong.

As **ethical** beings, we consider that stand and the stand of others, and attempt to discover the truth of the matter; we try to reconcile the various moral claims as best we can.

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]

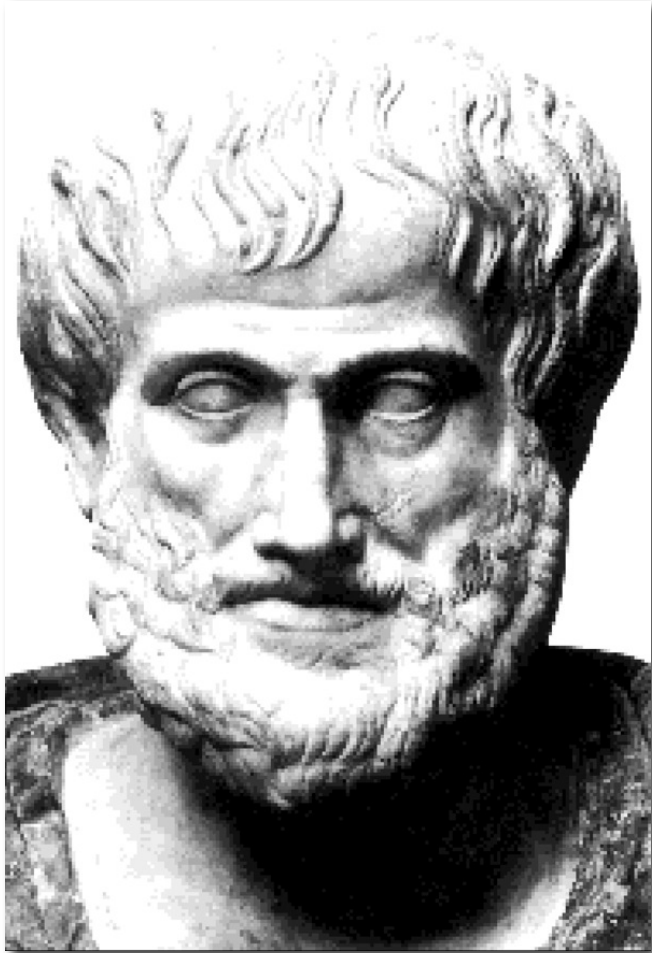
(2) **The Way the World Is** (as good or bad)

[> Mill's utilitarian ethic]

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

[> Kant's deontological ethic]

Aristotle, *Virtue Ethics*



(384-322 BCE)

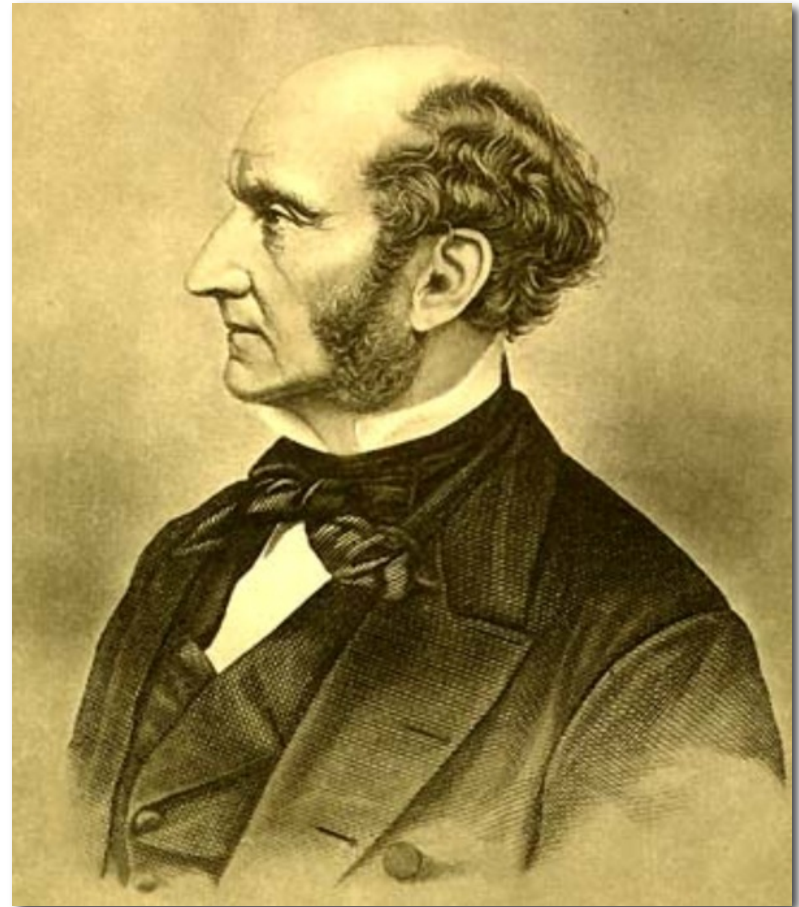
“Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim.”

[*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, *Deontologism*

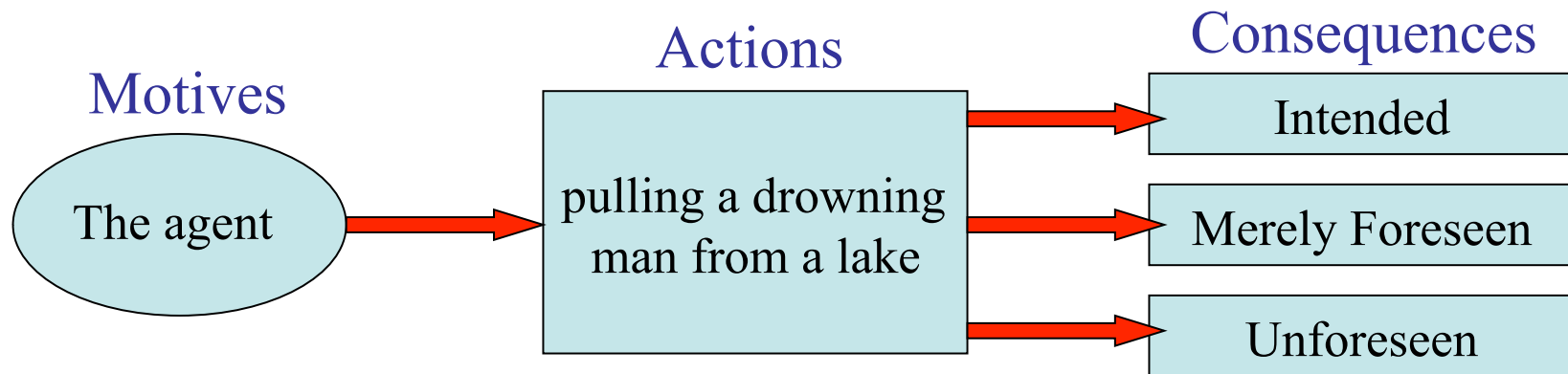
“Nothing in the world —
indeed nothing even
beyond the world — can
possibly be conceived
which could be called
good without
qualification except a
good will.”

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



(1724-1804)

What is morally relevant?



Intuitions
Principles
Theories

From Intuition to Theory

Pre-Verbal

Moral Intuition: a pre-reflective response of “just seeing” that something is good or bad. (Your intuition might be misguided, of course, but this is where we have to begin)

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:



Verbal Do
Moral Judgment: 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:



Verbs: 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).



Some Bioethical Principles

Consequentialist

Beneficence: Help others.

Nonmaleficence: Do not harm others.

Utility: Bring about the greatest good and the least harm with the available resources.

Double Effect: (includes four conditions re: foreseeable consequences)

Non-Consequentialist

Autonomy: Act so as to respect the capacity of individuals to choose their own vision of the good life.

Justice: Be fair; give each his due; treat similar people similarly.

Veracity: Be honest; do not lie.

Fidelity: Make the patient's interests your primary concern.

Respect for Persons: Persons are to be treated as autonomous agents and those with limited autonomy deserve special protections.

Small Groups

Hippocrates

Kwaku Archer
Maranda Birmingham
Kara Breuckman
Katherine Blystone
Hailey Cassel
Lucas Fontanez

Vesalius

Sydney Miller
Alexis Pivovarnik
Ally Schumacher
Shayee Sneed
Chase Southerland
Ann Stahl

Avicenna

Lalita Ford
Lauren Gandhi
Tabatha Lanning
Riley McCafferty
Kasia Melham
Mercedes Miller

Semmelweis

Samantha Starcher
Johnny Thang
Karina Vazquez
Joshua Vecchi
Isabella Zoog

Small Group Roles

Facilitators: start and stop the discussion, keep things on track.

Monitors: make sure everyone participates and all ideas are heard and considered.

Recorders: keep minutes; write down your group answer.

Everyone: listen closely to each other and ask questions when something isn't clear to you.

Moral Disagreement

Kinds of Moral Disagreement

We might disagree about...

(1) **The facts**

(e.g., burning witches)

(2) **The moral principles**

(e.g., premarital sex, religious proscriptions against blood transfusions)

(3) **How the principles are ranked**

(e.g., stealing bread for the poor)

Moral Disagreement #1

Both Harry (a 70 year old pensioner), and Betty (a 30 year old seamstress with a young child living at home) are in need of a kidney that recently became available. Both are good tissue matches for this kidney, and both are otherwise in good health.

Harry has been on the transplant list for two years, while Betty has been on the list just one month. Who should receive the kidney?

What kind of moral disagreement might this be?

Moral Disagreement #2

Buster, an otherwise healthy 23 year old, is brain-dead after a motorcycle accident. His grieving family wishes to donate his organs — but only to white people, since the family are all “Proud Klansmen” and “White Patriots” who oppose the “mixing of blood.”

The hospital team is opposed to any allocation of organs based on social-preference. What should they do? What kind of moral disagreement might this be?

Moral Disagreement #3

Stanley is opposed to abortion after 20 weeks, because that's when he thinks the fetus acquires the ability to feel pain, and the ability to feel pain is what is most relevant to Stanley on this issue. Mike agrees with the relevance of pain, but believes abortions are permissible until at least viability.

Viability = c.24 weeks, when 50-70% can survive outside the womb. What kind of moral disagreement might this be?

More Disagreements ...

1. sati/suttee
2. female genital mutilation and male
circumcision
3. littering
4. human slavery