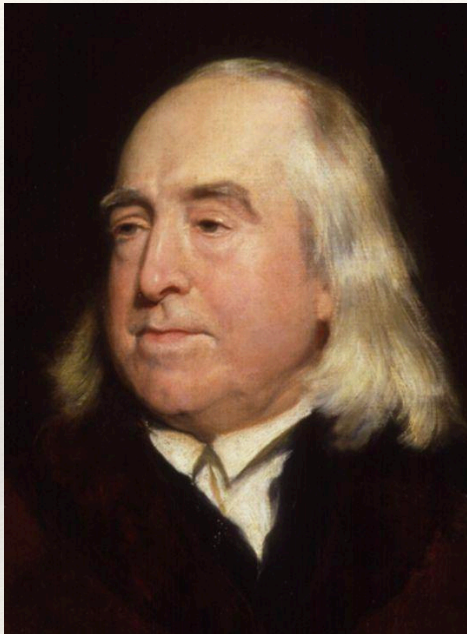
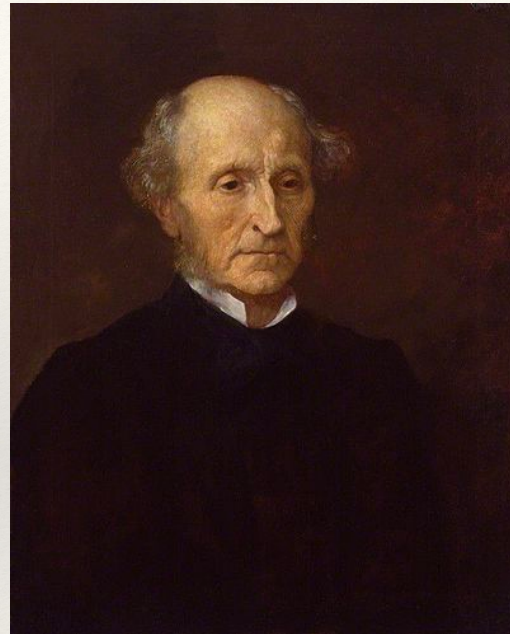

Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism

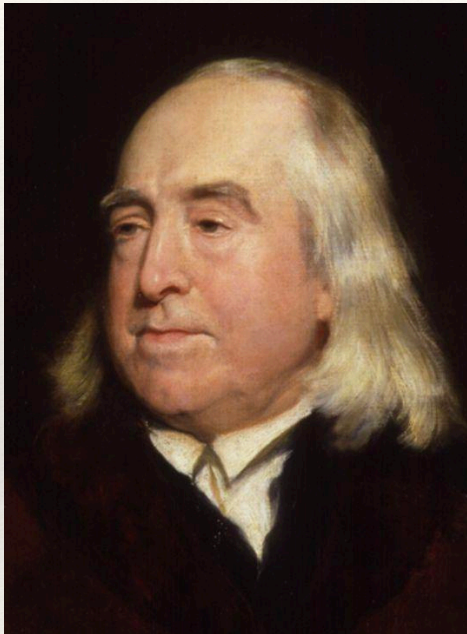


Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832)



John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)

Bentham's utilitarianism

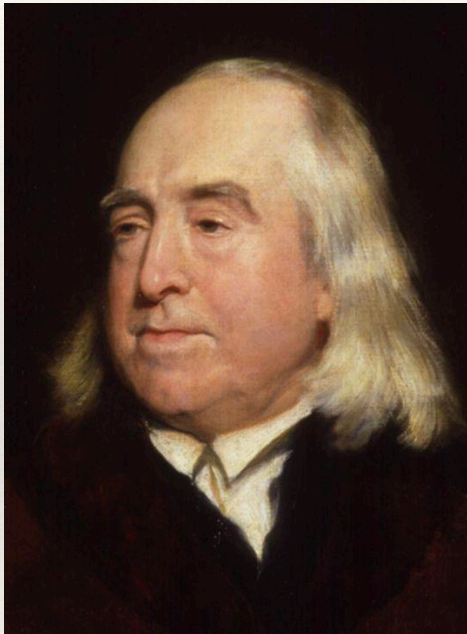


Pleasure is the only intrinsic good

Pain is the only intrinsic bad

Actions, therefore must be judged instrumentally

Bentham's utilitarianism



*Nature has placed mankind
under the governance of two
sovereign masters, **pain** and
pleasure.*

Utilitarianism

Intrinsic values

Valuable for its own sake

Instrumental values

What are its effects

Utilitarianism

Intrinsic values

Valuable for its own sake

Pain

Pleasure

Instrumental values

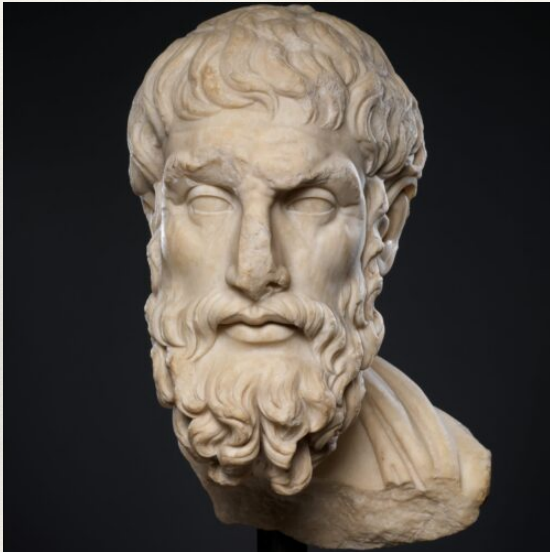
What are its effects

Money

Bentham's utilitarianism

5. Sum up all the values of all the *pleasures* on the one side, and those of all the pains on the other. The balance, if it be on the side of pleasure, will give the *good* tendency of the act upon the whole, with respect to the interests of that *individual* person; if on the side of pain, the *bad* tendency of it upon the whole.

Epicurean hedonism



Epicurus (341 - 270 BCE)

Epicurus was concerned with how a person achieves *ataraxia* (tranquility) and *aponia* (absence of pain) for themselves.

Bentham's utilitarianism

6. Take an account of the *number* of persons whose interests appear to be concerned; and repeat the above process with respect to each. *Sum*

Bentham's utilitarianism

Definition:

The doctrine that an action is right insofar as it promotes happiness, and that the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers should be the guiding principle of conduct

Bentham's utilitarianism vs Epicurus hedonism

Epicurean hedonism treats individual pleasure as the end to be pursued, using social relations (friendship, justice) only instrumentally toward that end.

Bentham's utilitarianism treats the aggregate pleasure of all affected parties as the end, weighing everyone's happiness impartially rather than privileging the agent's own.

Jeremy Bentham



Utilitarianism and Social Justice?

“Imagine that you are creating a fabric of human destiny with the object of making men happy in the end, giving them peace and rest at last, but that it was essential and inevitable to torture to death only one tiny creature — that baby beating its breast with its fist, for instance — and to found that edifice on its unavenged tears, would you consent to be the architect on those conditions? Tell me, and tell the truth.”

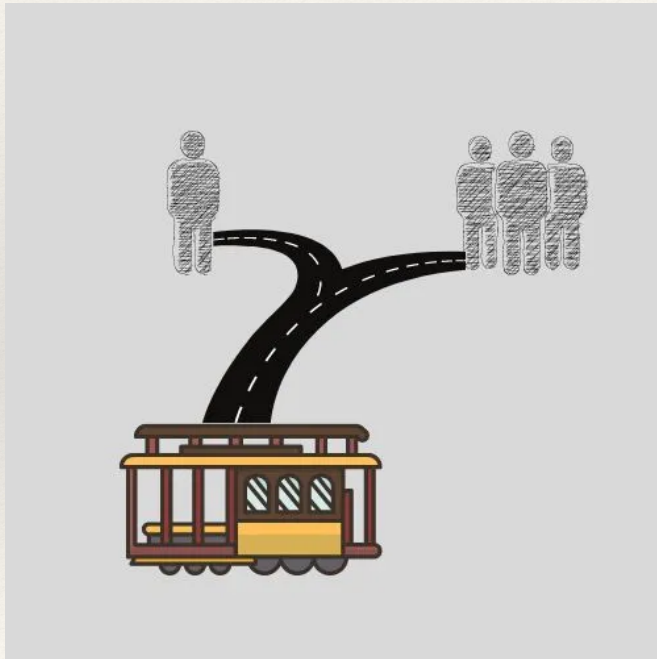
“No, I wouldn’t consent,” said Alyosha softly

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov (1879)

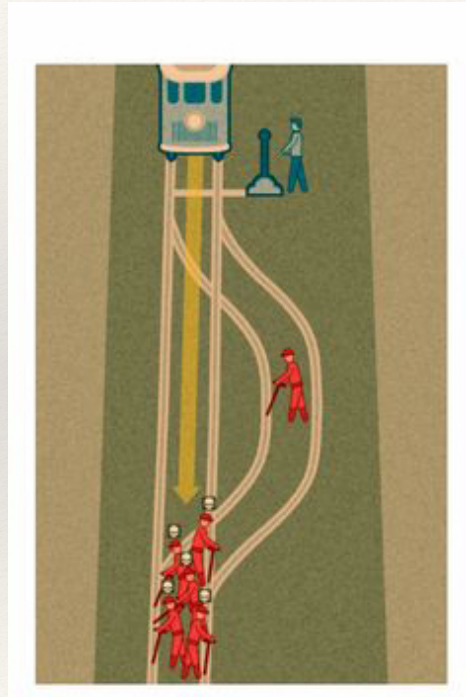
Can Empathy Influence Judgement?

The Trolley Problem

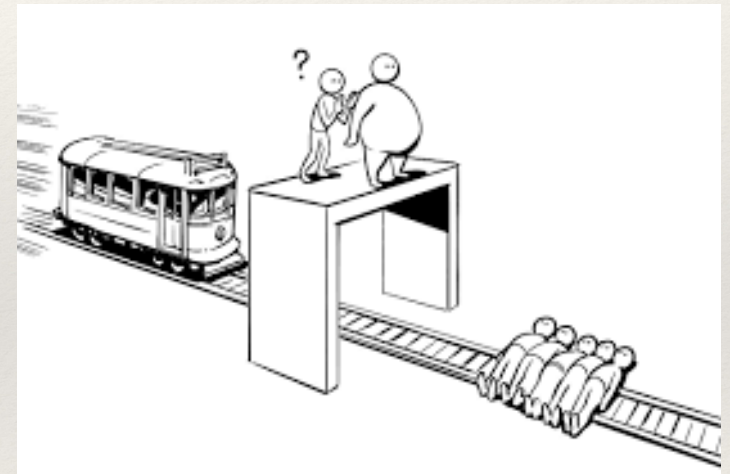
Switch



Loop



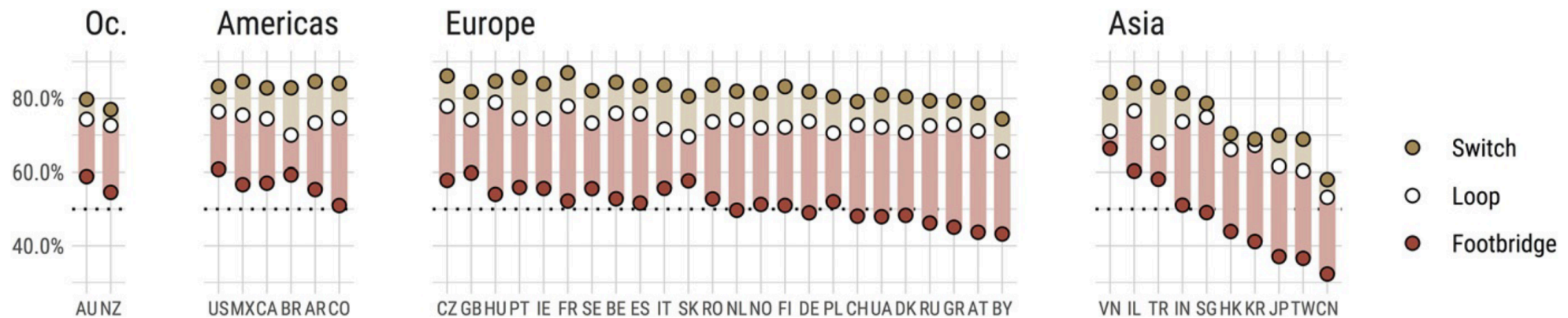
Footbridge



Can Empathy Influence Judgement?

The Trolley Problem

Willingness to sacrifice:



<https://www.pnas.org/doi/epdf/10.1073/pnas.1911517117>

GIVING A VALUE TO PAIN

How much would you have to be paid to ... (Thorndike, 1930s)

Have a front teeth pulled out	
Have the little toe of one foot cut off	
Eat a live earthworm six inches long	
Choke a cat to death with your bare hands	
Live the rest of your life on a farm in Kansas	

GIVING A VALUE TO PAIN

How much would you have to be paid to ... (Thorndike, 1930s)

Have a front teeth pulled out	\$4,500
Have the little toe of one foot cut off	\$57,000
Eat a live earthworm six inches long	\$100,000
Choke a cat to death with your bare hands	\$10,000
Live the rest of your life on a farm in Kansas	\$300,000

What defines pleasure?

“Prejudice apart, the game of push-pin is of equal value with the arts and sciences of music and poetry.”

Jeremy Bentham

What defines pleasure?

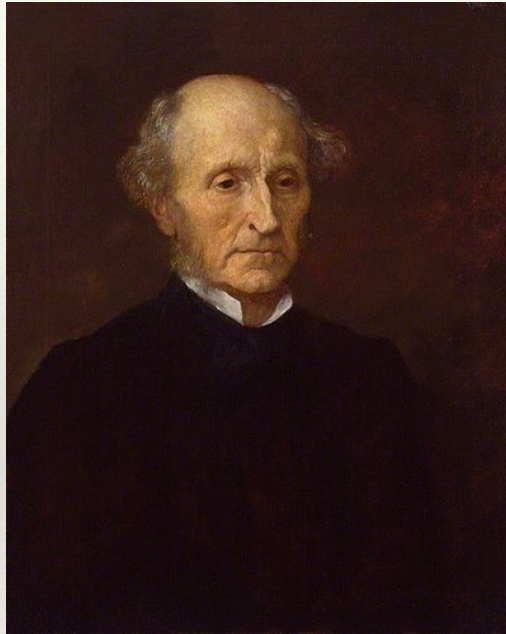
- ❖ **Intensity** - How strong is the pleasure?
- ❖ **Duration** - How long does it last?
- ❖ **Certainty** - How likely is it to occur?
- ❖ **Propinquity (or Nearness)** - How soon will it occur?
- ❖ **Fecundity** - How likely is it to produce more pleasures?
- ❖ **Purity** - How free is it from pain or negative consequences?
- ❖ **Extent** - How many people are affected?

Utilitarianism

Objections:

- Fails to respect individual rights
- The values of pain and pleasure

Mill's Adjustments to Utilitarianism



John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)

Mill's Adjustments to Utilitarianism

Mill argues that we must consider the quality of the happiness, not merely the quantity.

Mill divided pleasures into two main groups:

- **Higher Pleasures:** Intellectual, artistic, and moral activities, such as reading or watching a Shakespeare play. These provide a superior quality of happiness.
- **Lower Pleasures:** Basic physical needs and simple comforts, such as eating pizza or drinking beer. These provide a lower quality of happiness.

Mill's Adjustments to Utilitarianism

If I am asked, what I mean by difference of quality in pleasures, or what makes one pleasure more valuable than another, merely as a pleasure, except its being greater in amount, there is but one possible answer. Of two pleasures, if there be one which all or almost all who have experience of both give a decided preference, irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it, that is the more desirable pleasure.

John Stuart Mill (Utilitarianism)

Mill's Adjustments to Utilitarianism

It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.

John Stuart Mill (Utilitarianism)

Mill's Adjustments to Utilitarianism

There should be perfect freedom, legal and social, to do the action and stand the consequences.

It would be a great misunderstanding of this doctrine to suppose that it is one of selfish indifference, which pretends that human beings have no business with each other's conduct in life, and that they should not concern themselves about the well-doing or well-being of one another, unless their own interest is involved.

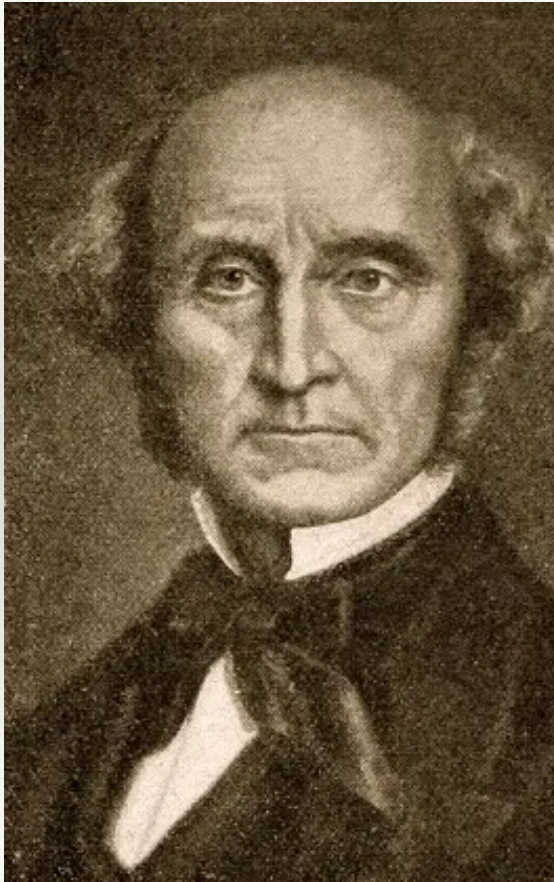
John Stuart Mill (Utilitarianism)

Mill's Adjustments to Utilitarianism

“Justice is a name for certain moral requirements, which, regarded collectively, stand higher in the scale of social utility and are therefore of more paramount obligation than any others.”

John Stuart Mill (Utilitarianism)

Mill's Adjustments to Utilitarianism



"A person may cause evil to others not only by his actions but by his inaction, and in either case he is justly accountable to them for the injury."

John Stuart Mill

Act and Rule Utilitarianism

Act Utilitarianism: judges each act by whether it has the best consequences

Rule Utilitarianism: judges each act by whether it falls under a moral rule that would, if it were generally adopted, have the best consequences

Brad Hooker (ideal code, real world, 2000)

Cost-Benefit Analysis

- **Costs:** Anything that might cost money if you choose this option. For example, if you want to buy a car, the cost would include gas, insurance, maintenance and repairs.
- **Benefits:** Anything that might benefit you if you choose this option. For buying a car, the benefits could include convenient transportation to work or school and saving time.

IMPACT OF SMOKING ON PUBLIC FINANCES

Philip Morris / Czech Republic (1991)

COSTS		BENEFITS	
Fire related costs	49 Million CSZ	Customs duty	354 Million CSZ
Lost income tax due to higher mortality	1367 Million CSZ	Corporate taxes	747 Million CSZ
Days out of work	1667 Million CSZ	Personal taxes (VAT,...)	19169 Million CSZ
ETS costs	1142 Million CSZ	Health care costs savings due to higher mortality	968 Million CSZ
Health care costs (first hand smoking)	11422 Million CSZ	Pension and social expenses costs savings	196 Million CSZ
		Savings on housing for elderly	28 Million CSZ
TOTAL	15647 Million CSZ	TOTAL	21463 Million CSZ

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NET BENEFIT: 5815 Million CSZ