

Although we often think that moral questions have clear right and wrong answers, this is often not the case. Jeremy Stangroom's book *Would You Eat Your Cat?* explores many such cases in which the answer to a moral dilemma is simply not so simple. The book lays out a series of moral questions, then uses a morality barometer to measure what your intuitions say about your moral values.

One such example from the book asks if it is better to be a sexist or a misanthrope (16-17). This dilemma compares two people: Harold and Lou. Harold is a misanthrope, an equal opportunity hater of all people and gets along with nobody. Lou gets along well with a certain group of people, but he is a misogynist, believing firmly in the superiority of men over women and believing women should not do manly things like take jobs or play golf. The author asks if Harold is the better person or if Lou is the better person. My intuition said immediately that Harold is the better person. Even though Harold hates everybody and does not get along with anyone, his hatred is consistent. On the other hand, Lou's misogyny is best categorized as an arbitrary, discriminatory hatred, compared to Harold's consistent, non-discriminatory hatred.

Saying Harold is the better person is at odds with one major moral theory – utilitarianism (74-77). When viewed from a utilitarian standpoint, Lou would be seen as the better person as his actions cause harm to fewer people. My intuition on the case says that I value concepts such as equality and fairness, regardless of the consequences of any individual action and with no regard for the greater good, while a utilitarian would value consequences and the greater good.

Another such case asks if it is ever permissible to punish innocent people (39). In this case, I immediately said a firm and resounding “no” to this question. Of course it's never okay to convict an innocent person; it would be better to let a guilty person escape justice than to make an innocent suffer for a crime they did not commit. That being said, the case talks about a thief

who has fled to another country, escaping justice. An investigator knows this person is guilty, but cannot prosecute them as they have fled. In order to stop ongoing vigilante attacks, the investigator frames an innocent person with past convictions for similar offenses so as to bring someone to justice.

Once again, my intuition – one which needed no context to justify, no less – is at odds with utilitarianism (102-104). While it is not controversial to say it is wrong to punish innocent people, seeing as a presumption of innocence forms the foundation for our legal system, a utilitarian would argue that, in this context, throwing just one innocent person under the bus would prevent greater harm from coming to more people through persisting vigilante attacks. Thus, my intuition shows values much unlike utilitarian values, where I would say that the morality of actions cannot be determined solely from consequences, while a utilitarian would consider the total consequences in moral judgments.

One more case from the book concerns the legality of pornography (60-61). In this case, we have a male conservative and a female liberal debating whether or not pornography should be legal. The conservative argues that porn has destroyed people's marriages and lives, and that he believes sex is not something to be enjoyed outside of the context of a marriage. On the other hand, the liberal does not believe the state should curtail freedoms except to prevent harm to others, bolstering this argument by saying she has found no evidence that pornography causes direct harm. Intuitively, I immediately sided with the liberal's argument, with the reasoning that what an individual does in their sex lives has no effect on the life of Billy Bob in Saskatchewan, thus not warranting government intervention.

Comparing my intuition to moral theories is a little complicated, as there is little agreement on the issue even amongst people normally on the same side of other issues (132-

134). Major opposition to pornography comes from feminists, arguing that porn subjugates women by promoting male dominance, never mind the existence of porn of the gay and lesbian varieties. However, there is not even agreement amongst feminists, with some feminists pointing out that women can also be empowered by porn and further arguing that they should not be taking the side of evangelical Christians on this issue. Seeing as my intuition found no reason for government intervention on this issue, my intuition states that I would not be inclined to buy into the argument that porn is harmful, nor the argument that porn subordinates women, which evangelicals and some feminists would adopt. In addition, my judgment states that I would view a state intervention as unjustified even if pornography does cause harm.

With everything my intuitions say about my moral values, my moral reasoning has shown to be incredibly consistent. My responses to being asked if a sexist or a misanthrope is the better person and being asked if it is ever okay to punish an innocent person display a consistent opposition to utilitarianism, consistently saying that consequences should not be the sole consideration in moral judgments and consistently believing in the fair treatment of all people. Furthermore, responding that pornography should not be banned also confirms a consistency in believing that consequences should not be the sole consideration, seeing as my judgment would be to avoid restricting pornography, ignoring the possibility of broken marriages, thus valuing individual rights over consequences. Finally, the responses to the questions of punishing innocents and banning pornography display a consistent belief in individual rights, as both the framed innocent and porn viewer were individuals simply minding their own businesses, therefore meaning the government framing the innocent and restricting pornography access would be a violation of individual rights.

