LECTURE 1 NOTES – THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MORALITY

Personality Vs Social Psychology

Personality Psychology: understand the self and social world with an emphasis on how *stable individual differences* influence behaviour, thought and feeling.	Social Psychology: understand the self and the social world with an emphasis on how *the situation* shapes behaviour, thought and feeling.
Is it the person characteristic that is causing the behaviour shown?	Is it the product of the environment and situation that is causing the behaviour shown?
Cross-situational stability	Situational contingency
e.g. are certain people (due to their character) more prone to conflict that others?	e.g. are certain situation factors (such as war) likely to lead a person to conflict?
However, both are based of empirical research and data using quantitative statistical technique. Both disciplines intertwine with each other.	

Psychological vs. philosophical approach to morality

Philosophical: is more about the linguistic analysis of what the word 'morality' means in language. Is more of a conceptual analysis.	Psychology: aims to uncover the underlying mechanism behind the formation of moral judgement and behaviour. Searches for empirical regularities or facts about moral judgement.
Normative/prescriptive	Decriptive
Tells us how morality *ought* to be	Tells us how morality *is.*
Value	Fact
Code of conduct or set of rules pertaining to "right"/"good"/"wrong"/"bad", held by an individual or group	Response-dependent: what counts as moral is that set of phenomenon to which people have 'moral' responses.

TURIEL et al (1987) The Moral/Conventional Distinction Task

Presented children with a list of rule violations. All these things violate expectations or a norm including:

- One child hits another
- One child pushes another off a swing
- A child wears a dress to school
- A child talks out of turn in class

He then asked a series of questions:

1. Is it wrong?
2. Is it punishable?
3. Is it authority dependent? (e.g. what id a teacher in a school said that X was ok. Would it still be wrong?)
4. General is scope (temporally and geographically – is it only wrong because of where and when it occurred? E.g. what if it has happened 100 years ago in another country)
5. How is the wrongness explained? (rights violation, harm, justice)

Results: Some of the violations elicited a specific response from the participant:

The signature moral response (SMR) occurs when the scenario is:

- o   Serious, wrong, bad
- o   Punishable
- o   Authority independent
- o   General in scope (universal – wrong no matter where or when in occurs)
- o   Appeals to harm ← justified their response of wrongness with physical harm violations as a reason

The signature conventional response (SCR): occurs when the scenario is:

- o   Less serious, less wrong, less bad
- o   Less punishable
- o   Authority dependent
- o   Local in scope: social convention rather than something universally wrong
- o   No appeals to harm ←

Note: If the violation causes harm or impedes on justice and human rights then SMR occurs. The key to determining the response is whether the <u>stimulus</u> is harmful or endangers welfare.

➔   What if the violation is not harmful but is still judged as being morally wrong? Can we further extend on Turiel's theory?

Haidt, Koller and Dias (1993) extended on the work of Turiel and found that certain non-harm violations evoke the signature moral response. For example- cleaning the toilet with the national flag, eating the family dog after it has been hit by a car or having sex with a dead chicken. All norm violations involve no harm yet some people judge these transgressions as authority independent and general in scope.

Unlike Turiel, Haidt et al. shows that you can produce SMR without the presence of clear harm or injustice.

➔   What if a harm occurs but it does not evoke the signature moral response?

<u>HARM CAN BE AUTHORITY DEPENDENT</u>

Kelley, Stich, Haley, Eng, and Fessler (2007) showed that when violations are considered to be authority dependent and local in scope, even when the behaviour causes harm can be deemed morally right and not evoke the signature moral response.

This is further in conflict with Turiels original theory proving that it is more than the mere presence of harm and injustice the evoke a judgement of wrongness.

For example:

Screen 1:
For many years, the military training of elite American commandos included a simulated interrogation by enemy forces in which the trainees were threatened and physically abused. Most people in the military believe that these simulated interrogations were helpful in preparing trainees for situations they might face later in their military careers. Though no one was ever killed or permanently disabled by the physical abuse they received during these simulated interrogations, the trainees often ended up with bruises or injuries that lasted for a week or more.

Recently, the Pentagon issued orders prohibiting physical abuse in military training. Sergeant Anderson is a soldier who trains elite American commandos. He knows about the orders prohibiting physical abuse and his immediate superiors have ordered him not to do it. Nonetheless, he regularly threatens and physically abuses trainees during the simulated interrogations that he conducts.

Screen 2:
Now suppose that the Pentagon had never issued orders prohibiting physical abuse in military training, and that Sergeant Anderson's superiors had told him that the use of physical abuse was acceptable in simulated interrogations.

➔ Now if Turiel's original theory was correct then there should be no difference between the two conditions because the presence of harm is equally judged as wrong and independent of authority.
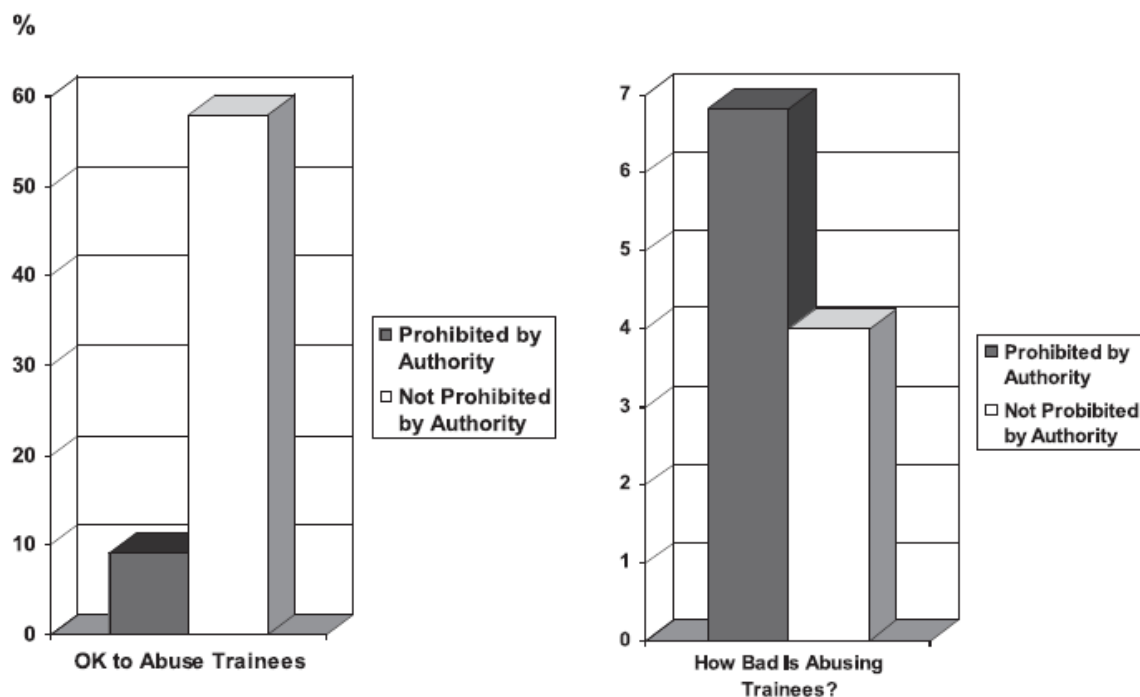
From the results it can be seen that the act of abusing trainees was considered less morally wrong when the authority did not prohibit the behaviour whereas when the behaviour was prohibited by the authorities then it was judged as being more morally wrong. Therefore a SMR was not evoked even though harm occurred because it was considered to be authority dependent.
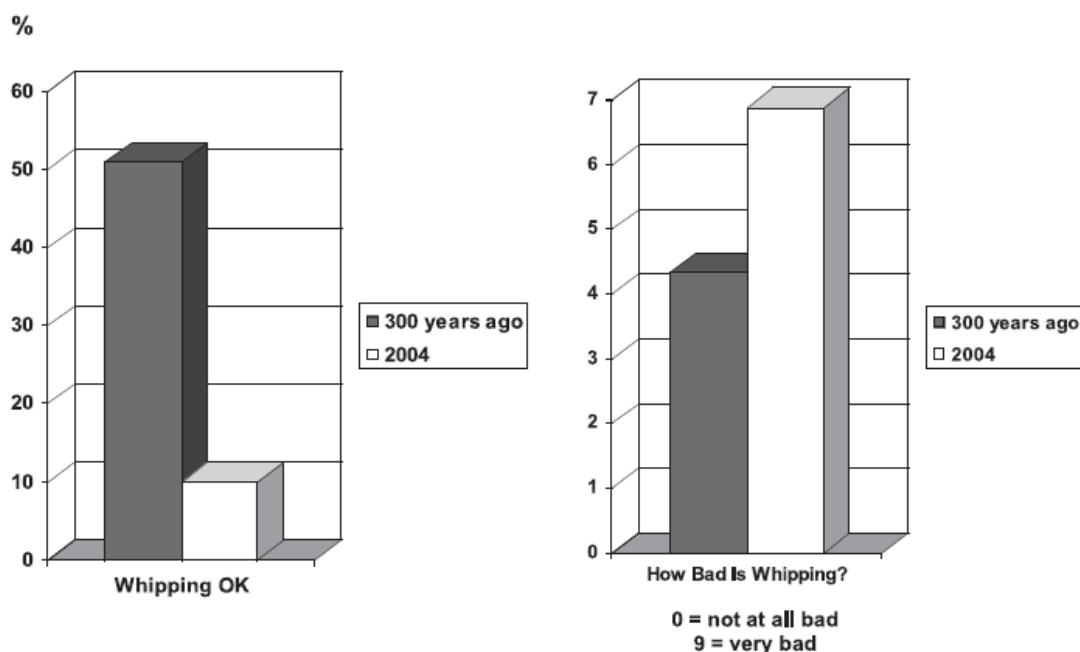
HARM CAN BE LOCAL IN SCOPE

Screen 1:

Three hundred years ago, whipping was a common practice in most navies and on cargo ships. There were no laws against it, and almost everyone thought that whipping was an appropriate way to discipline sailors who disobeyed orders or were drunk on duty.

Mr. Williams was an officer on a cargo ship 300 years ago. One night, while at sea, he found a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been on watch. After the sailor sobered up, Williams punished the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip.

Screen 2:

Mr. Adams is an officer on a large modern American cargo ship in 2004. One night, while at sea, he finds a sailor drunk at a time when the sailor should have been monitoring the radar screen. After the sailor sobers up, Adams punishes the sailor by giving him 5 lashes with a whip.

→ Turiel states that is does not matter when the violation occur, because all forms of harm are universal in scope therefore there will be no difference in perceived wrongness between the two groups

The results show that when the events occurred 300 years ago the same act of harm is deemed morally right whereas if it occurred more recently in history then it is morally wrong and evoke the SMR therefore harm can be local in scope.

Turiel	Harm (injustice) =	SMR
	No harm (justice) =	~~SMR~~
Haidt	Harm (injustice) =	SMR
	Non-harm (universal and authority independent) =	SMR

| Kelley / Stich | Harm (injustice) Temporal and Authority dependent = | ~~SMR~~ |

How to make sense of this variability?

Schweder et al (1997) = was the first attempt to describe this variability through experiments with Indian individuals and found that cultures specialise in a subset of human moral potential. Moral "goods" generally cluster into three complexes, which cultures embrace to varying degrees:

1. Ethics of *autonomy* (harm/ rights)
2. Ethics of the *community* (hierarchy)
3. Ethics of *divinity* (purity)

1. [The ethics of *Autonomy*] Individual freedom/rights violations. In these cases an action is wrong because it directly hurts another person, or infringes upon his/her rights or freedoms as an individual. To decide if an action is wrong, you think about things like harm, rights, justice, freedom, fairness, individualism, and the importance of individual choice and liberty.

2. [The ethics of *Community*] Community/hierarchy violations. In these cases an action is wrong because a person fails to carry out his or her duties within a community, or to the social hierarchy within the community. To decide if an action is wrong, you think about things like duty, role-obligation, respect for authority, loyalty, group honor, interdependence, and the preservation of the community.

3. [The ethics of *Divinity*] Divinity/purity violations. In these cases a person disrespects the sacredness of God, or causes impurity or degradation to himself/herself, or to others. To decide if an action is wrong, you think about things like sin, the natural order of things, sanctity, and the protection of the soul or the world from degradation and spiritual defilement.

A child is born prepared to develop moral intuitions in all three ethics, but her local cultural environment generally stresses only one or two of the ethics. Those that are not stressed are generally weakened and those that are highlighted are strengthened through exposure.

MORAL FOUNDATIONS THEORY (haidt)

Extended upon Shweder and came up with five ethical domains:

1. harm/ care – representing concerns about violence and the suffering of others, including compassion and care
2. fairness/ reciprocity – representing the norms of reciprocal relations, equality, rights and justice
3. authority/ respect – representing moral obligations related to hierarchical relations, such as obedience, duty, respect for superiors, and protections of subordinates
4. ingroup/ loyalty – covering moral obligations related to group membership, such as loyalty, betrayal, and expectations of preferential treatment for ingroup members relative to outgroup members
5. purity/ sanctity – representing the moral ideal of living in an elevated, noble, and less carnal way, based on intuitions about divinity, feelings of moral disgust, and purity of body, mind and soul
➔ however, there is even more variability as different cultures stress different ethical principles over others

W.E.I.R.D – Western. Educated. Industrialized. Rich. Democratic.

- These cultures tend to highlight or focus on the principles of harm/care and fairness/reciprocity over the remaining 3 equally.

NON-WEIRD cultures however moralise all five domains equally.

➔ Research has also proven that not only can we see between culture difference but within-culture differences such that those with higher SES tend to moralise community ethics and purity ethics over authority (Shweder 3 domains)
➔ Also found in politics:
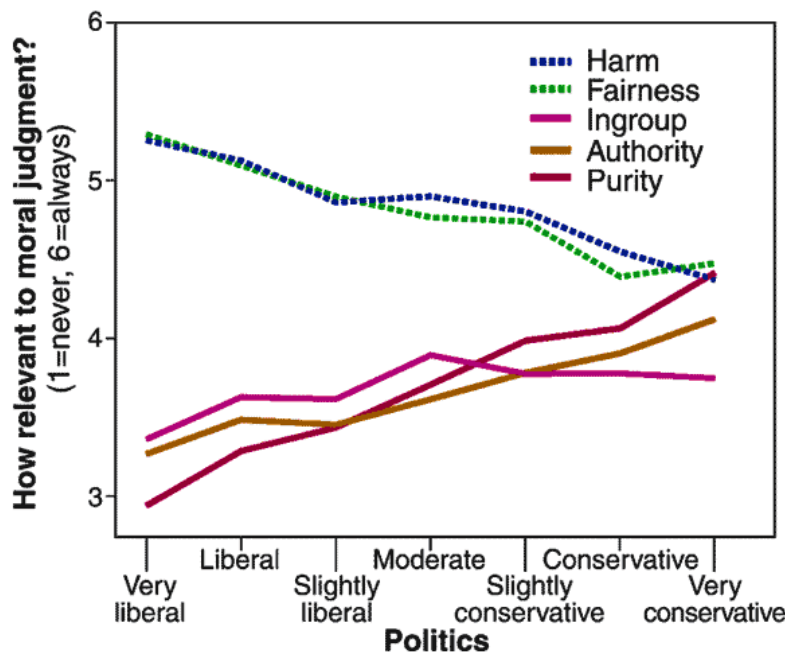
WHAT ACCOUNTS FOR JUDGEMENTS OF RIGHT AND WRONG?

What is inside this moral black box? Is it reason or is it emotions?
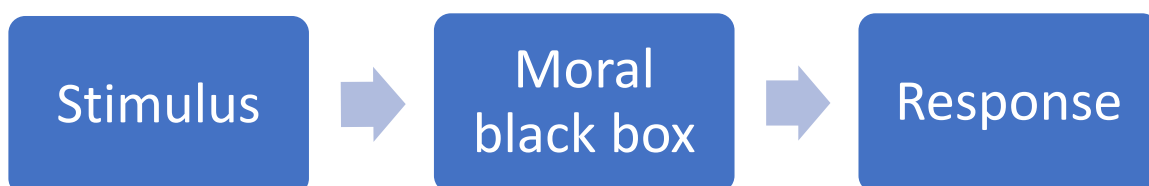
Moral judgement: evaluations (good vs bad) of the actions or character of a person that are made with respect to a set of virtues held to be obligatory by a culture or subculture.

Moral reasoning: is a conscious mental activity that consists of transforming given information about people in order to reach moral judgement. To say that moral reasoning is a conscious process means that the process is intentional, effortful, and controllable and that the reasoner is aware that it is going on.

- Learned by forming and testing hypotheses. Is a kind of inference made in several steps? Is performed consciously.

Moral intuition: a sudden appearance in consciousness of a moral judgement, including an affective valence (good-bad, like-dislike), without any conscious awareness of having gone through steps of searching, weighing evidence, or inferring a conclusion.

- Is dependent on emotion
- The thinker arrives at an answer, which may be right or wrong, with little if any awareness of the process by which it is reached
- Intuition occurs quickly, effortlessly, and automatically
- <u>GENERAL FEATURES OF THE TWO SYSTEM</u>

THE INTUITIVE SYSTEM	THE REASONING SYSTEM
Fast and effortless	Slow and effortful
Process is unintentional and runs automatically	Process is intentional and controllable
Process is inaccessible; only results enter awareness	Process in consciously accessible and viewable
Does not demand attentional resources	Demands attentional resources, which are limited
Parallel distributed processing	Serial processing
Pattern matching, thought is metaphorical, holistic	Symbol manipulation; thought is truth preserving, analytical
Common to all mammals	Unique to humans over age 2 and perhaps some language-trained apes
Context dependent	Context independent
Platform dependent (depends on the brain and the body that houses it)	Platform independent (the process can be transported to any rule following organism or machine)

1960-19?? <u>Kohlberg and the cognitive revolution</u>

The Heinz Dilemma

- In Europe, a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to make.
  The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said: "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So Heinz got desperate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug-for his wife. Should the husband have done that?

Developed a method of testing moral judgement formation by interviewing people by forcing them to solve certain moral dilemmas

- He found six-levels of progression of increasing sophistication in how people handle such dilemmas:
    1. Obedience/ punishment
    2. Individualism/ exchange
    3. Roles
    4. Social order
    5. Individual rights

      6. Universal principles
- He determined that affects are involved in the process of forming moral judgements however reasoning males the decision ultimately
- Emphasis on consciously accessible rules that were applied at the time of judgement
  - ○ Stimulus → reasoning → judgment
- This is a **rationalist model** where moral judgement results from a moral reasoning and reflection; emotions play no role in this process. A person becomes the judge of the action determining if condemnation should occur through rational evidence gathering.
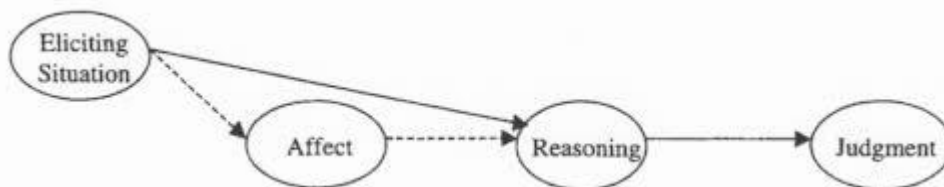
➔ However, reasoning can be argued away as the feature of the "black box". For example, what happens when a person is faced with a dilemma that they are sure to be wrong but cannot find a reason for coming to that judgement – they become *moral dumbfounded.*
  - ○ reasoning processes are not accessible (so are they even employed?)
  - ○ if anything, people fumbled around for reasons in order to justify or rationalise their intuitions
➔ reasoning is often motivated
➔ moral actions covaries with moral emotion more than with moral reasoning

Social intuitionist model (Haidt 2001)

- makes reason after fact to explain revulsion in a scenario, one becomes a lawyer trying to build a case rather than a judge searching for the truth
  - ○ wrong even if no good reason is found
  - ○ influenced by emotions
  - ○ "I don't know, I can't explain it, I just know it's wrong"
- Moral judgement is a function of affect-laden intuitions. Reasoning is post-hoc rationalization.
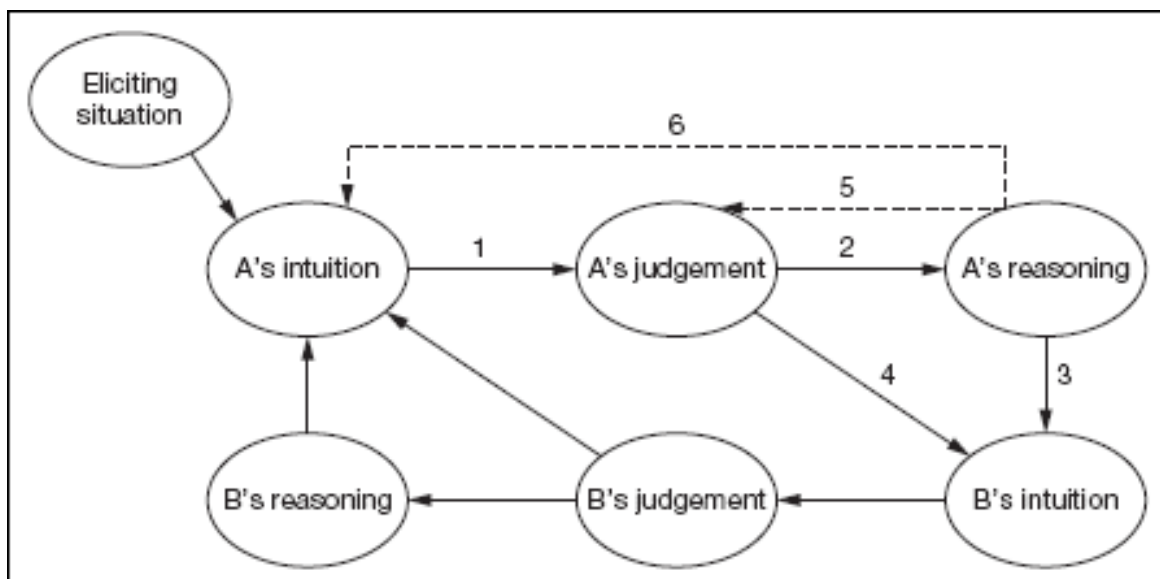
(1)   The intuitive judgment link
(2)   The post hoc reasoning link
(3)   The reasoning persuasion link
(4)   The social persuasion link
(5)   The reasoning judgement link
(6)   The private reflection link

REVISION QUESTIONS

1.   Define the terms Social Psychology and Personality Psychology?
2.   What is meant by cross-situational stability and situational contingency in regards to social and personality psychology?
3.   Name the key similarities and differences between social and personality psychology.
4.   What are the key differences between a philosophical and psychological approach to morality?
5.   Explain the method and general findings of Turiel et al (1987) and the moral/conventional task.
6.   What causes the signature moral response? What kinds of violations cause the signature conventional response? Give examples?
7.   What is the major shortcoming of Turiels SMR and SCR theory?
8.   How did Haidt, Koller & Dias (1993) experiment challenge Turiels Moral/Conventional distinction?
9.   What are the two main results that have been found in later research that are in conflict and challenge Turiel original moral/conventional theory of morality? Give an example for both violations?
10. What are the key main differences between Turiel, Haidt and Kelley on the relationship between stimuli and the SMR?
11. How do we make sense of this variability between the above mentioned theorists?
12. What three ethics categories did Shweder use to account for above variability?
13. What is the Moral Foundations Theory?
14. What two domains out of Haidt 5 ethical domains do WEIRD culture favour? Compare this to non-WEIRD cultures.
15. What are custom complexes?
16. What is the definition for moral judgement, moral reasoning and moral intuition?
17. What is the Heinz Dilemma?
18. What are the 6 level of progression of increasing sophistication in how people handles such dilemmas as the Heinz Dilemma described by Kolberg?
19. What is morally dumbfounded and what implications does this event have on our understanding of what lays within the "moral black box"?
20. What is the rationalist model of moral judgement?
21. What is the somatic marker hypothesis?
22. What is the social intuitionist model of moral judgement?
23. What emphasis does the social intuitionist model place of moral reasoning?
24. What are the general features of the intuitive and reasoning system? How are they similar or dissimilar?
25. What are the 6 links in the social intuitionists model? Explain briefly each link.

26. Which two link of the social intuitionist model does the rationalist model focus on?
27. What is involved in the Wheatley and Haidt 2005 experiment and what were there findings?
28. What was Schnall et al. 2008 experiment and what were the key finidings?
29. What was done in the Laham, Alter and Goodwin (2009) study and what were the key findings? (FROM READINGS)
30. What are the key differences between a deontological response and a utilitarian response? Use the example of the Trolley Problem.
31. What is the dual processing model?
32. Which system in the dual processing model is more powerful when the two produce conflicting judgments?
33. What are four reasons to doubt the causal importance of reason and rationalist models?