| Student Name: | Chan Jeffrey | Project Mentor: | Carl Hilderbrand |
| Major: | Philosophy | Department: | Medical Ethics and Humanities Unit |

Kantian Intuitionism and Social Intuitionist Model: An Investigation in Explaning Moral Judgement
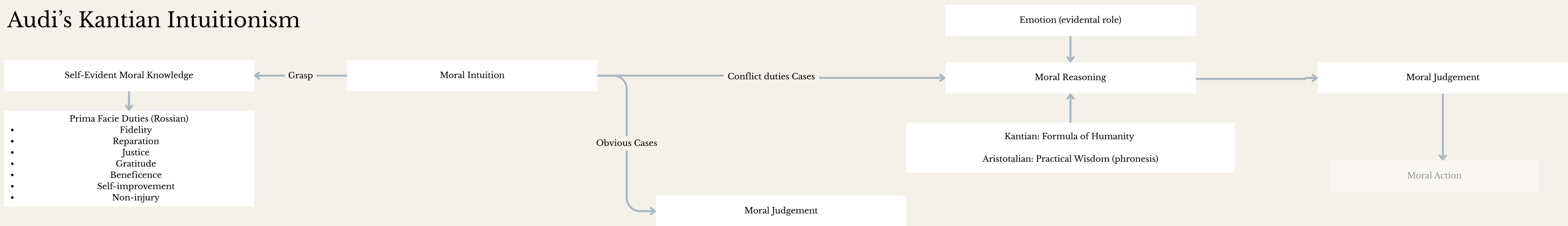
Introduction

In investigating moral judgment and moral principles, Robert Audi's Kantian intuitionism builds on the rational intuitionist tradition, integrating W.D. Ross's moral intuitionism with Kant's categorical imperative to resolve conflicts between prima facie duties (e.g., fidelity vs. non-maleficence). This framework assumes individuals can arrive at moral judgments through reasoned reflection, harmonizing intuitions with universal ethical principles. However, Jonathan Haidt's Social Intuitionist Model (SIM) challenges this rationalist assumption. Grounded in empirical studies of moral psychology, SIM posits that moral judgments are driven by intuitive, emotion-laden processes, with reasoning serving primarily as post-hoc rationalization. Haidt's famous dictum-"intuitions come first, strategic reasoning second"-creates a fundamental tension between philosophical rationalism and psychological empiricism in explaining how moral judgments are formed. This poster analyzes this tension, evaluating Haidt's critique of reasoning's causal role in moral judgment and defending Audi's rational intuitionism against empirical challenges.
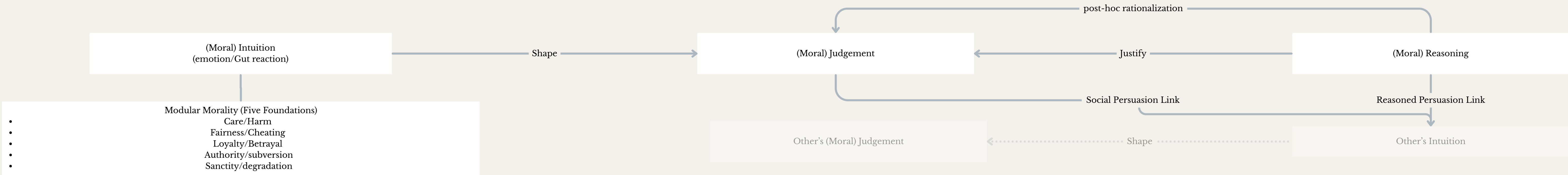
Methodology

Critical Evaluation
• The poster synthesizes findings to highlight points of tension and possible reconciliation, ultimately defending the philosophical coherence and explanatory power of rational intuitionism in light of empirical challenges by moral psychology.

Audi's Kantian Intuitionism

Haidt's Social Intuitionist Model

Analysis

Challenges	SIM Challenges Kantina Intuitionism	Response on behalf of Audi	Possible Responses by Haidt
Challenge the Role of Moral Reasoing	In characterizing moral reasoning as post-hoc rationalization, Jonathan Haidt proposes two key hypotheses: 1. Moral Judgment Hypothesis: Moral judgments, like aesthetic judgments, are made quickly, effortlessly, and intuitively (Haidt, 2001, p.817). 2. Moral Reasoning Hypothesis: Moral reasoning is a conscious, effortful, and controllable process that occurs after judgments are formed (Haidt & Bjorklund, 2008, p.189). Haidt tested these hypotheses through moral dumbfounding experiments, where participants condemned actions like consensual sibling incest or harmless cannibalism but could not articulate rational justifications (Björklund et al., 2000). Key findings include: • Persistence of Judgment: Participants maintained their moral stance even after experimenters systematically refuted their initial reasons (e.g., "No harm occurred"). • Affective Primacy: Emotional reactions (e.g., disgust) preceded and dominated reasoning attempts. • Cognitive Dissonance: Subjects exhibited nonverbal cues (e.g., laughter, facial touching) and admissions like "I can't explain it, but I know it's wrong". These results suggest moral judgments are products of automatic intuitions, not deliberative reasoning. This directly challenges Audi's Kantian intuitionism, which posits that moral judgments are justified through reflective equilibrium, a process of harmonizing intuitions with reasoned ethical principles.	Audi's Repsonses Kantian intuitionism distinguishes between prima facie duties and final duties (Audi, 2004, p. 85). Haidt's experiments focus on cases where participlant cannot articulate reason for their judgments, but this does not negate the existence of underlying prinicples • Example: In the incest scenario, participants may intuitively recognize a prima facie duty against violating purity or respect for familial bonds (Rossian principles). Their inability to justify this intuition does not mean it lacks a rational foundation, rather, it reflects a failure to engage in reflective equilibrium such as the process of harmonizing intuitions with principles. • Audi's Defense: Moral dumbfounding reveals a lack of deliberative skill, not a lack of principled grounding and reasoning. Participants may grasp the wrongness of incest through Ross's duty of non-injury (avoiding harm to social structures), even if they cannot articulate these principles.	Haidt's Possible Rebuttal Following Audi's response, moral dumbfounding reflects participants' lack of deliberative skill in articulating principled reasoning, not the absence of rational foundations. If participants' inability to articulate reasons stems from a lack of deliberative skill, this inadvertently supports SIM's core hypothesis: moral judgments originate in intuition, not reasoning. Even without refined deliberative abilities, participants confidently make moral judgments (e.g., condemning incest), demonstrating that intuition suffices for moral evaluation.
Challenge the Source of Forming Moral Judgement	Haidt's Social Intuitionist Model (SIM) posits that the source of moral judgment arises from intuitive, emotion-driven processes shaped by social and cultural influences, not individual reasoning which is a claim that challenges the notion of the universality of prima facie duties (Haidt, 2001, p. 825). To justify this social interactionist view, Haidt invokes the social persuasion link in SIM, arguing that group members unconsciously adopt moral stances to maintain cohesion (Haidt & Bjorklund, 2008, p.189). For instance, in the incest scenario, this link explains participants' revulsion as reflecting internalized cultural taboos rather than principled reasoning. Second, Haidt's social interaction hypothesis is further supported by the phenomenon of cultural relativism, which demonstrates that moral norms vary across societies (e.g., Western individualism vs. Eastern collectivism). This variability directly challenges Audi's claim that prima facie duties are universally self-evident.	Audi's Repsonses Even if Haidt illustrates cases of moral diversity across cultures, this does not undermine the meta-ethical objectivity of prima facie duties. Audi would respond by distinguishing between objective principles (prima facie duties) and the construction of moral norms. For example, the duty of self-improvement manifests differently across societies: Western cultures prioritize individual growth, while collectivist societies emphasize communal harmony. While this may seem to challenge the universality of such duties, Audi might argues that prima facie duties represent idealized norms rather than directly dictating specific norms (Audi, 2004, p. 133). Since Kantian intuitionism is not a dogmatic framework, grasping a duty is an individualized process contingent on contextual factors. When faced with a particular case, an agent combines the grasped duty with moral reasoning to evaluate the situation, ultimately justifying a judgment that informs corresponding moral action (ibid, p. 85-86). Social norms emerge from the collective application of these actions. Therefore, societal differences, such as environmental or cultural contexts, explain why certain duties are prioritized differently. Variations in reasoning processes (e.g., Western individualism vs. Eastern collectivism) account for divergent moral norms, but they do not negate the objective validity of prima facie duties.	Haidt's Possible Repsonese If Audi's framework allows for contextual flexibility in interpreting prima facie duties, Haidt would raise a critical question: How does Audi justify the universality of these duties? (Quick answer by Audi: self-evident(Audi, 2004, p. 40-42) Haidt's investigation into moral judgment is grounded in psychological processes and empirical studies, whereas Audi's justification for prima facie duties relies on philosophical reasoning rather than empirical data. • There is no direct conflict between the claim that prima facie duties exist and Haidt's moral foundation theory, as both posit foundational elements grounding morality. The key difference lies in their methodological approaches: ○ Audi: Defends prima facie duties as universal, self-evident principles through rationalist philosophy (e.g., reflective equilibrium). ○ Haidt: Identifies moral foundations as culturally variable intuitions shaped by evolution and social learning through empirical studies. • The tension arises not from the existence of moral foundations/moral principle but from their epistemic status, whether they are discovered through reason (Audi) or observed as psychological/social phenomena (Haidt).

Conclusion

The tension between Robert Audi's Kantian Intuitionism and Jonathan Haidt's Social Intuitionist Model (SIM) illuminates a fundamental divide in understanding moral judgment: Is morality grounded in universal rational principles or socially conditioned intuitions? While Haidt's SIM compellingly describes the psychological mechanisms of moral judgment, Audi's Kantian Intuitionism retains normative strength through meta-ethical objectivity and the ideal of reflective equilibrium. Audi acknowledges that lay agents may lack deliberative skill (as seen in moral dumbfounding experiments) but argues that moral progress requires refining intuitions through reasoned reflection. Such refinement opens a hybrid possibility: Haidt's concept of "educated intuitions" could align with Rossian duties through moral education, bridging intuitive responses with principled reasoning. This interdisciplinary dialogue-integrating philosophy and psychology might further clarify the nature of moral judgment, advancing a holistic understanding that respects both its intuitive roots and rational aspirations.

Reference

Audi, R. (2004). The Good in the Right: A Theory of Intuition and Intrinsic Value. Princeton University Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7s578

Björklund, F., Haidt, J., & Murphy, S. (2000). Moral dumbfounding: when intuition finds no reason. (Lund psychological reports; Vol. Vol 1 no 2). Department of Psychology, Lund University.

Haidt, J. (2001) The Emotional Dog and its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgement, Psychological Review, 108, pp. 814–34.

Haidt, J. and Bjorklund, F. (2008) Social Intuitionists Answer Six Questions About Moral Psychology, in W. Sinnott-Armstrong (ed.) Moral Psychology, Vol. 2: The Cognitive Science of Morality: Intuition and Diversity (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press), pp. 181–219.