In *Moral Tribes*, Joshua Greene invites us to consider two "moral problems". The first is the well-known Tragedy of the Commons, according to which individuals for selfish reasons may fail to cooperate with others, even if this leaves all of them worse off. This is the problem of "selfishness versus concern for others" (p. 14). The second is the Tragedy of Commonsense Morality, which is Greene's name for the problem of groups fighting "not because they are fundamentally selfish but because they have incompatible visions of what a moral society should be", with each group or "moral tribe" having "its own version of moral common sense" (p. 4). This is the problem of "our interests and values versus theirs" (p. 14). In his book, Greene tries to find a solution to the second of these problems, drawing primarily upon research in psychology, but also from philosophy. He argues we can solve the Tragedy of Commonsense Morality by adopting a "*metamorality*, a higher-level moral system that adjudicates among competing tribal moralities" (p. 147). He then defends utilitarianism as a suitable metamorality; and, it seems, more specifically what is known as "hedonistic" utilitarianism, which would be the view that we should maximize the total amount of happiness. Greene also wants to rename this theory as "deep pragmatism" (pp. 289-346).

The book is divided into five parts. In the introduction and first part, Greene says that features of human nature such as loyalty, vengefulness, gratitude and friendship evolved to "promote cooperation among otherwise selfish individuals" (p. 62) and thereby let us deal with the Tragedy of the Commons. At the same time this "moral machinery" made the

Tragedy of Commonsense Morality worse, since it "recreates the fundamental moral problem at a higher level, at the level of groups" (p. 102). Loyalty to one's own group, for example, makes conflicts between groups more destructive.

In the second part, Greene explores the psychology behind our responses to so called trolley cases (pp. 105-131) and describes the human brain as a "dual-mode camera with both *automatic settings* and a *manual mode*" (p. 133). The automatic settings are fast emotional responses that "allow us to make decisions *efficiently*" and that draw upon "the precompiled lessons of past genetic, cultural, and individual experience" (p. 148). In contrast, the manual mode is slow and controlled, "a general capacity for conscious, explicit, practical reasoning" (p. 148). It is a set of automatic settings, the "moral emotions that motivate and stabilize cooperation within limited groups" (p. 172), which we evolved to deal with the Tragedy of the Commons. Moreover, since, as was noted above, our automatic settings helps us solve the Tragedy of the Commons, but creates the Tragedy of Commonsense Morality, Greene claims the solution to the latter problem is to "shift into manual mode" (p. 172), a kind of thinking which he argues is connected to utilitarian thinking.

In part three, Greene argues we can adopt utilitarianism as a metamorality to solve the Tragedy of Commonsense Morality, where this presumably means that we turn to utilitarianism to decide conflicts between competing moral systems. Utilitarianism is a suitable metamorality because happiness gives us a "*common currency* for weighing competing values" (p. 291). Happiness is a common currency in this sense since "[w]e all want to be happy. None of us wants to suffer. And our concern for happiness and suffering lies behind nearly everything else that we value" (p. 291).

The rest of the book wraps up Greene's defense of utilitarianism as a metamorality. In part four, for example, he deals with some objections to utilitarianism; while in part five he argues (among other things) against rights-based views, saying they are

problematic since "[w]hatever you and your fellow tribespeople feel, you can always posit the existence of a right that corresponds to your feelings" (p. 302). Thus, "[i]f you're Iran, you can talk about your 'nuclear rights,' and if you're Israel you can talk about your 'right to self-defense' (p. 302).

Greene's book covers a wide range of issues. In what follows, I focus only on two of his claims. Consider first his suggestion that we adopt a metamorality for solving the Tragedy of Commonsense Morality. It is not clear why Greene thinks we should avoid this problem in the first place. If utilitarianism is the true moral theory, then we should perhaps avoid it to produce more happiness. But Greene declares himself "agnostic" about the existence of moral truth, saying that it is "the wrong question on which to focus" and that "[w]hat matters is what we do with the morass [of competing moral values]" (p. 374). According to Greene, "[o]nce we've resigned ourselves to working with the morass the question of moral truth loses its practical importance" (p. 188). But if it is not true that the Tragedy of Commonsense Morality is morally bad, then why prevent it? This question is never satisfactorily answered by Greene, who says little about the issue, with most of what he does say being confined to the footnotes. (pp. 370-371, 373-374).

More worryingly, as Greene does not look for the true moral theory, it is not clear what criteria he wants a theory to satisfy. It would seem as if Greene searches for a theory which:

> (a) can be adopted as a metamorality to "[adjudicate] among competing tribal moralities" (p. 147) and "resolve disagreements among groups with different moral ideals" (p. 26), thereby solving the Tragedy of Commonsense Morality;

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(b) "works" for us in the sense of us being "generally satisfied with it" (p. 178, 371);

(c) organizes our moral intuitions once we "jettison all of our biased intuitions" such as those gut reactions which "simply reflect the biological imperative to spread our genes" (p. 328).

But it is difficult to know whether Greene searches for a theory which satisfies only one of criteria (a), (b) or (c), or some conjunction of two or more of them. This makes it hard to evaluate some of the book's arguments. For example, Greene defends utilitarianism against some objections by saying that we have evolved as part of our automatic settings an aversion to violence: or, more specifically, to those harms which are actively and intentionally caused by directly impacting another with the force of one's muscles, such as pushing a person with your hands or some tool (pp. 211-253). This negatively influences "our attitudes toward capital punishment, torture, and war" and may cause us to reject violent actions even if they "serve the greater good" (p. 253). But what consequences this has for utilitarianism depends on which of (a)-(c) it must satisfy. When considering (c) it helps utilitarianism that some of our anti-utilitarian intuitions can be put down to evolved "gut reactions". But when considering (a) and (b) it seems to count against utilitarianism. For if we all share an automatic aversion to violence, then any theory which prescribes violence in a wide range of cases will be less acceptable to people; and thereby less likely to be adopted as a solution to the Tragedy of Commonsense Morality and to be one which we are generally satisfied with.

A second issue concerns Greene's criticism of rights-based views. According to Greene, the members of each moral tribe can simply make up their own rights, which presumably would make it difficult for rights-based theories to satisfy (a). But utilitarianism has a similar problem since we often disagree about the total amount of happiness produced

by our acts. It is not too far-fetched to think that the leaders of Iran believe that developing nuclear power maximizes happiness, and that those of Israel believe that stopping the Iranians from developing such a capacity maximizes happiness. Clearly, utilitarianism is no better off than rights-based views in preventing this conflict. Moreover, we should expect such disagreement to arise frequently, for example because of what Greene calls "self-serving bias", the problem that "[w]hen the facts are at all ambiguous, people favor the version of the facts that best suits their interests" (p. 90).

Greene recognizes and tries to respond to this difficulty (pp. 304-305). But he neglects to mention a powerful argument in favor of rights-based theories: that you cannot as easily change what acts they recommend merely by changing your views about the relevant empirical facts. Perhaps this means that, to solve the Tragedy of Commonsense Morality, we must accept a common system of rights. But this need not be more difficult than adopting uniform empirical beliefs about the total consequences of our acts.

As indicated above, I had appreciated a more detailed discussion of some of Greene's philosophical claims. On the other hand, he brings together a wide range of research in psychology and philosophy in an inspiring way, and he does so writing in a pleasant and accessible style well-suited to a broader audience. I hope his work leads to more collaboration between psychology and philosophy in the future.

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