Ethics Done Right

Practical Reasoning as a Foundation for Moral Theory

*Ethics Done Right* examines how practical reasoning can be put into the service of ethical and moral theory. Elijah Millgram shows that the key to thinking about ethics is to understand more generally how to make decisions. The papers in this volume support a methodological approach and trace the connections between two kinds of theory in utilitarianism, in Kantian ethics, in virtue ethics, in Hume’s moral philosophy, and in moral particularism. Unlike other studies of ethics, *Ethics Done Right* does not advocate a particular moral theory. Rather, it offers a tool that enables one to decide for oneself.

Elijah Millgram is E. E. Ericksen Professor of Philosophy at the University of Utah. He is the author of *Practical Induction* and the editor of *Varieties of Practical Reasoning*. He has written on moral philosophy, coherence theory, and late British Empiricism. He has been a Fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences and of the National Endowment for the Humanities.
Ethics Done Right

Practical Reasoning as a Foundation for Moral Theory

ELIJAH MILLGRAM

University of Utah
For (and against) John Rawls
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgments</th>
<th>page ix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Introduction: The Method of Practical Reasoning  1

1 What’s the Use of Utility?  33

2 Mill’s Proof of the Principle of Utility  56

3 Does the Categorical Imperative Give Rise to a Contradiction in the Will?  89

4 Reasonably Virtuous  133

5 Murdoch, Practical Reasoning, and Particularism  168

6 Was Hume a Humean?  198

7 Hume on “Is” and “Ought”  218

8 Hume, Political Noncognitivism, and the *History of England*  247

9 Incommensurability and Practical Reasoning  273

10 Commensurability in Perspective  295

11 Varieties of Practical Reasoning and Varieties of Moral Theory  312

References  327

Index  339
Acknowledgments


“Mill’s Proof of the Principle of Utility” appeared in Ethics 110 (2), January 2000: 282–310. © 2000 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved.


Acknowledgments


I am grateful for fellowship support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences; financial support was provided through the Center by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.
Ethics Done Right

_Practical Reasoning as a Foundation for Moral Theory_