

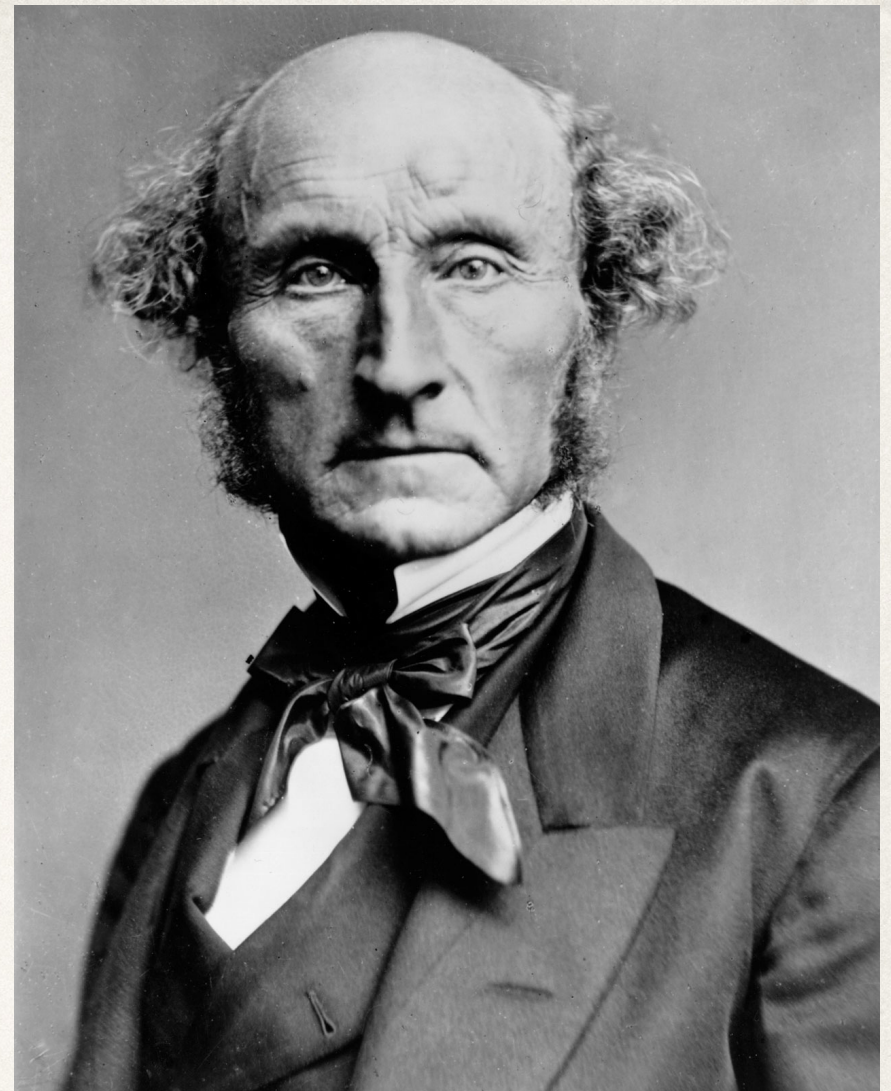
# *More on Deductive versus Inductive Arguments*

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John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)

## *Mill's Argument for Capital Punishment*



# What We Have Learned About Critical Reasoning So Far

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- ❖ An argument consists of **premises** and a **conclusion**
- ❖ Premises can be of *different types* (assumptions, facts, intermediate conclusions, etc.)
- ❖ Good arguments are **formally valid** and have **true premises**
- ❖ Not all true premises can be supported by compelling evidence. (Sometimes we might have to content ourselves with *plausible* premises or premises that have *not yet been refuted*)
- ❖ Validity can be **inductive** or **deductive**



# What Makes an Argument Good?

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## ❖ Reality Check:

the *premises* are *true*

## ❖ Formal Validity:

the conclusion *follows from* the premises



# What does it Mean for a Conclusion to Follow From the Premises?

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- ❖ Whenever the premises are true, the conclusion is **always** and **invariably** true. This means that the argument is **deductive**.
- ❖ Whenever the premises are true, the conclusion is **most likely** or **most probably** true. This means that the argument is **inductive**.



# A Misunderstanding to Avoid

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*Whether* a **conclusion** follows from the **premises**—deductively or inductively—has **nothing** to do with the *whether* the **premises** are true, false, plausible etc.

A conclusion can follow—deductively or inductively—from false as well as true or plausible premises.

For example, from the obviously false premise that the moon is made of cheddar cheese, it follows—deductively—that the moon is made of something that can be eaten.



# Let's See Some Examples

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# Inductive or Deductive?

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**Premise:** The Moon is either Green or Black.

**Premise:** The Moon is not Black.

**Conclusion:** The Moon is Green.

*Deductive.* The conclusion always follows from the premises. There is no possible situation in which the premises are true and the conclusion is false.



# Inductive or Deductive?

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**Premise:** Abolishing the death penalty did not increase crime rates in Europe.

**Conclusion:** Abolishing the death penalty will not increase crime rates in the United States.

*Inductive.* The conclusion follows because of a generalization from the past in Europe to the future in the United States. It is possible to imagine a situation in which the premise is true and the conclusion is false.



# Inductive or Deductive?

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**Premise:** People in Texas are not deterred by the death penalty.

**Conclusion:** It is highly probable that people in California will not be deterred by the death penalty either.

*Inductive.* The conclusion follows because of a generalization from Texas to California. It is possible to imagine a situation in which the premise is true and the conclusion is false.



# Inductive or Deductive?

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**Premise:** People in Texas are not deterred by the death penalty.

**Premise:** *If* people in Texas are not deterred by the death penalty, *then* it is highly probable that people in California will not be deterred by the death penalty.

**Conclusion:** It is highly probable that people in California will not be deterred by the death penalty.

*Deductive.* The conclusion always follows from the premises. There is no possible situation in which the premises are true and the conclusion is false.



# Inductive or Deductive?

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**Premise:** The witness says she saw the defendant around the crime scene at 3:30 PM on Wednesday February 14, 2013.

**Conclusion:** The defendant was around the crime scene at 3:30 PM on Wednesday February 14, 2013.

*Inductive.* The conclusion follows only as a matter of probability. The witness might not be telling the truth.



# Inductive or Deductive?

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**Premise:** The DNA test shows that the defendant matches with the blood found at the crime scene.

**Conclusion:** The blood at the crime scene belongs to the defendant.

*Inductive.* The conclusion follows only as a matter of probability. The DNA test might be wrong.



# We Now Turn to Mill's Argument in Favor of the Death Penalty

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# Mill's Core Claims: (I) the Death Penalty Causes Less Suffering and (II) It is Effective at Preventing Crime

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*Society is asked, then, to denude itself of an instrument of punishment [=the death penalty] which, in the grave cases to which alone it is suitable, **effects its purpose** [=preventing crime] at a **less cost of human suffering than any other**; which, while it inspires more terror, is less cruel in actual fact than any punishment that we should think of substituting for it.*



# (I) The Death Penalty Causes Less Suffering (Than Life Imprisonment)

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*What comparison can there really be, in point of severity, between*

*consigning a man to the short pang of a rapid death, and*

*immuring him in a living tomb, there to linger out what may be a long life in the hardest and most monotonous toil, without any of its alleviations or rewards — debarred from all pleasant sights and sounds, and cut off from all earthly hope, except a slight mitigation of bodily restraint, or a small improvement of diet?*



# A Peculiarity of the Death Penalty: It Appears More Cruel Than It Is

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*it is .... one of the strongest recommendations a punishment can have, that it should seem more rigorous than it is; for its practical power depends far less on what it is than on what it seems. There is not, I should think, any human infliction which makes an impression on the imagination so entirely out of proportion to its real severity as the punishment of death.*



## (II) The Death Penalty is Effective in Preventing Crime

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*the efficacy of a punishment which acts principally through the imagination, is chiefly to be measured by the **impression it makes on those who are still innocent**: by the horror with which it surrounds the first promptings of guilt; the restraining influence it exercises over the beginning of the thought which, if indulged, would become a temptation; the check which it exerts over the gradual declension towards the state — never suddenly attained — in which crime no longer revolts, and punishment no longer terrifies. (Hear, hear.)*

*As for what is called the failure of death punishment, who is able to judge of that? We partly know who those are whom it has not deterred; but who is there who knows whom it has deterred, or how many human beings it has saved who would have lived to be murderers if that awful association had not been thrown round the idea of murder from their earliest infancy?*



# Doesn't Life Has a Sacred Value?

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*Much has been said of the sanctity of human life, and the absurdity of supposing that we can teach respect for life by ourselves destroying it. But I am surprised at the employment of this argument, for it is one which might be brought against any punishment whatever. **It is not human life only, not human life as such, that ought to be sacred to us, but human feelings.** The human capacity of suffering is what we should cause to be respected, not the mere capacity of existing.*