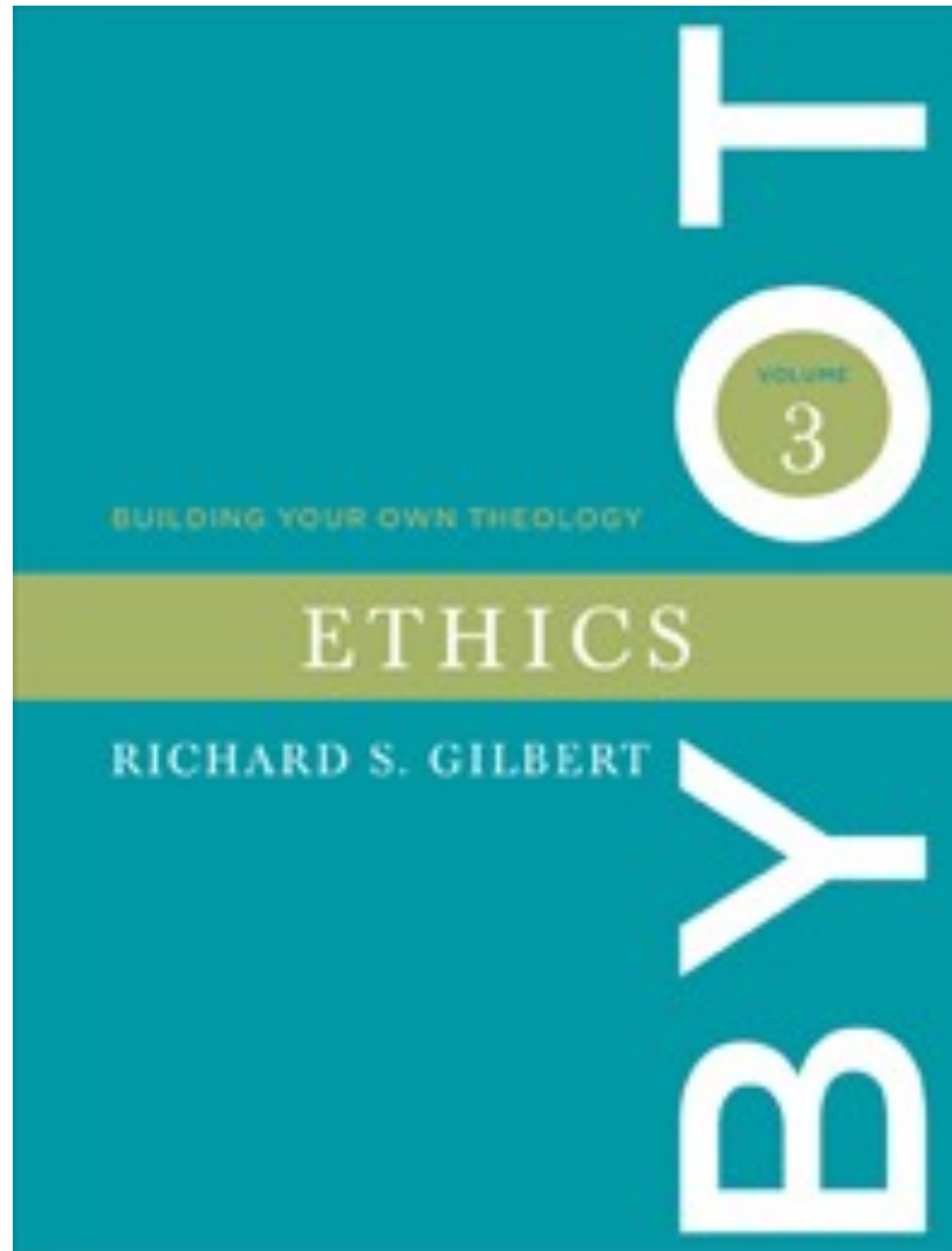


Building Your Own Ethics

- Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (February 21 - March 28), 6 sessions
- **Attendance**
- **Slides:** frederickuu.org/fcc



Covenant

- Use **“I” statements**: *speak from your own experience.*
- **Ask permission before sharing** other participants’ stories outside the group.
- **Step-up, step-back**: be conscious of the level of participation that you bring to the conversation. Allow everyone a chance to speak before you speak again.
- You always have **permission to “pass.”**



Introductions

- **Name**
- First ethical **teaching** you received (parents/guardians/anyone/institution)
- Ethical **question** that disturbs you
- Ethical **principle** by which you try to live
- Why you signed up for this **course**



Three Steps

Define the situation

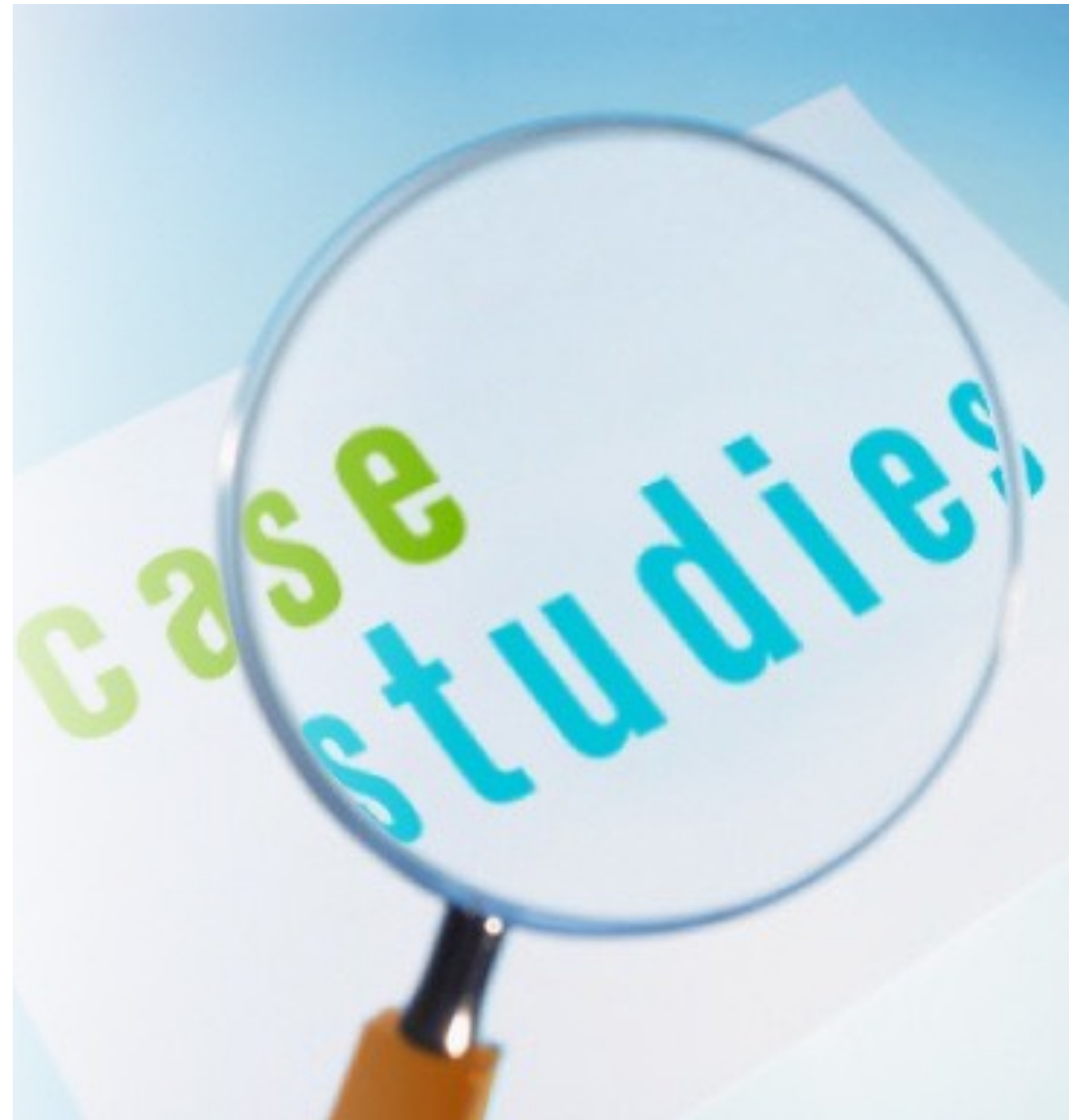
- *What's happening?*
- *Cast of characters?*
- *Chronology?*

Analyze the case

- *Basic issues and values?*

Alternatives available

- *Motives behind each?*
- *Consequences?*



“BYOE” Journal

Are you **consistent** in your ethical framework/approach as case studies change?

- *Why or why not?*
- *Is consistency a virtue or vice?*

Is there a pattern/logic/reason/emotion **underneath** your reactions/decisions?

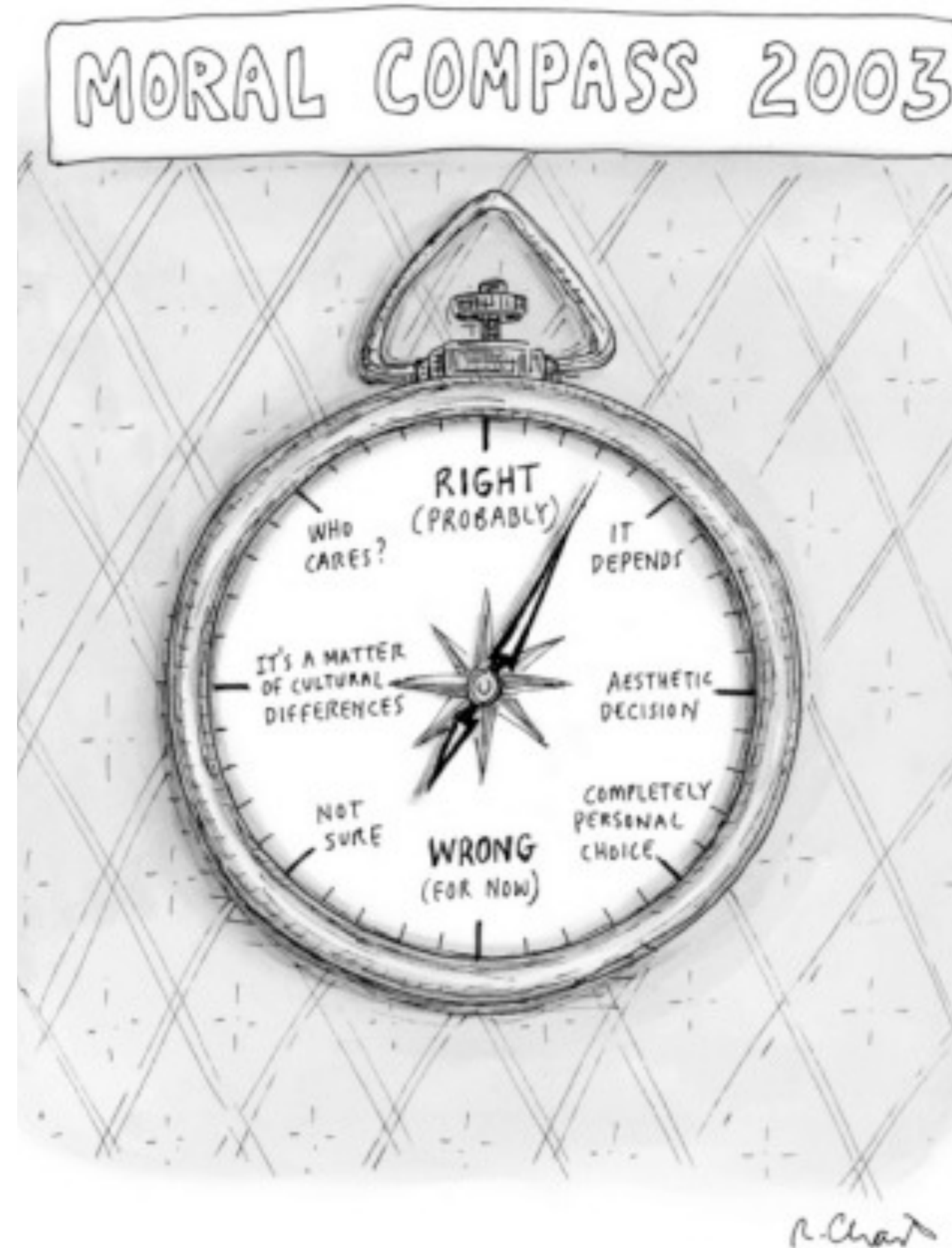
Do you find yourself **changing** from your initial “gut” reaction through the discussion process.

- *Why or why not?*



Credo: Ethics

- Carl's Touchstones: Pluralism / Pragmatism / Progressivism
- **No Perfect Past** To Which We Can Return (*stories of exemplary lives and communities can nevertheless inspire us*)
- **No Perfect Future** (*choose love and hope anyway*)
- **No Single, Perfect Way** (*look for touchstones such as tradition, reason, and experience*)



Orthodoxy vs. Orthopraxy

- Religious progressives and religious conservatives hold different views about what being a religious person means.
- Nearly 8-in-10 (79%) religious progressives say being a religious person is mostly about **doing the right thing** (“**deeds**”), compared to 16% who say it is about holding the right beliefs.
- By contrast, a majority (54%) of religious conservatives say being a religious person is primarily about having the **right beliefs** (“**creeds**”), while less than 4-in-10 (38%) say it is mostly about doing the right thing.

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/tonyjones/2013/07/20/the-theological-left-is-rising/>



Humanism

“I spell my God with two o’s and my devil without a ‘d’”

—Cyrus Bartol, *Radical Problems* (1872)

[Unitarian minister & member of the Transcendental Club]

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

Finding purpose, compassion, and community

good
without

Good

What a Billion Nonreligious
People *Do* Believe

Greg M. Epstein

HUMANIST CHAPLAIN AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

“A timely manifesto for a misunderstood and maligned school of thought.”

—Kirkus Reviews

Liberal Turn in Theology

(Latin *liber*, “free”)

- *from* authority in hierarchy/community/tradition
- *to* reason/experience with 18th-c. Enlightenment.
- Friedrich Schleiermacher (“father of Liberal Theology”), *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* in 1799



7 DEADLY SOCIAL SINS

POLITICS *WITHOUT* PRINCIPLE

WEALTH *WITHOUT* WORK

COMMERCE *WITHOUT* MORALITY

PLEASURE *WITHOUT* CONSCIENCE

EDUCATION *WITHOUT* CHARACTER

SCIENCE *WITHOUT* HUMANITY

WORSHIP *WITHOUT* SACRIFICE

- Gandhi

ANARCHY,
STATE,
AND
UTOPIA



Robert Nozick

ORIGINAL EDITION

JOHN RAWLS



A THEORY OF
JUSTICE

Conveyer Belts

Egocentric —> Ethnocentric —>

Geocentric —> **Cosmo-centric**



Hubble Deep Field

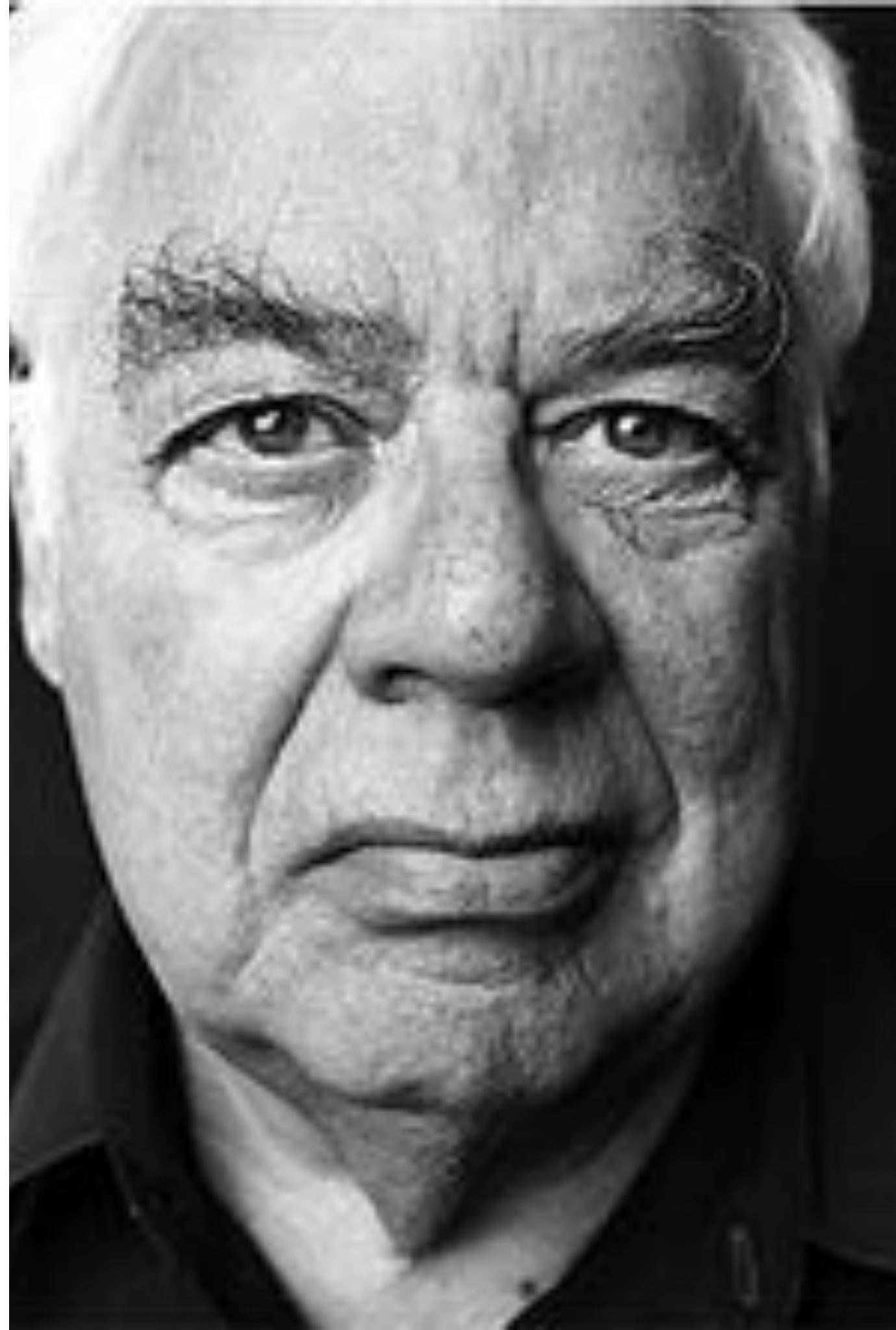
Richard Rorty

“To say that **we are clever animals** is

not to say something philosophical and pessimistic but something **political** and **hopeful** – namely,

if we can work together, we can make ourselves into **whatever we are clever and courageous enough to imagine ourselves becoming.**

This is to set aside Kant’s question ‘What is man?’ and to substitute the question ‘**What sort of world can we prepare for our great grandchildren?**’”



Richard Rorty

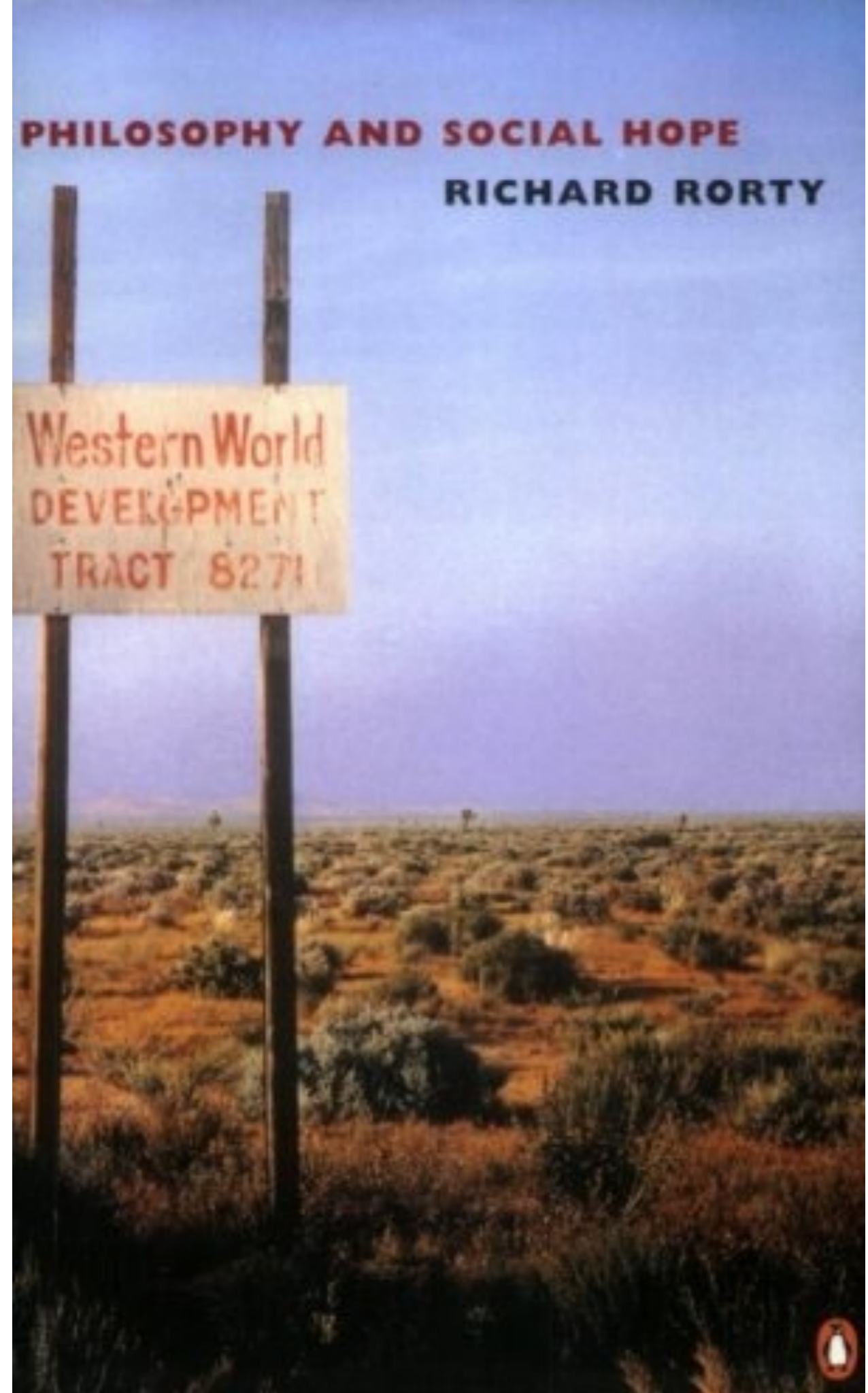
“As it turned out, **willingness to endure suffering for the sake of future reward**

was **transferable**

*from individual rewards to **social ones,***

*from one’s hopes for paradise to **one’s hopes for one’s grandchildren.**”*

—Contingency, Irony, Solidarity





E A R T H R I S E

Suddenly, from behind the rim of the moon, in long, slow-motion moments of immense majesty, there emerges a sparkling blue and white jewel, a light, delicate sky-blue sphere laced with slowly swirling veils of white, rising gradually like a small pearl in a thick sea of black mystery. It takes more than a moment to fully realize this is Earth . . . home.

- Astronaut Edgar Mitchell, Apollo 14

You develop an instant global consciousness,
a people orientation, an intense
dissatisfaction with the state of the world,
and a compulsion to do something about it.

From out there on the moon,
international politics look so petty.

You want to grab a politician by the scruff of the neck
and drag him a quarter of a million miles out and say,
'Look at that, you son of a bitch'.

-Astronaut,
Edgar D. Mitchell



“Political borders and nation-states — *much like religions* — are imaginary lines drawn on maps to mark the temporary results of the ongoing debates, compromises, and violences of human history. No such borders, and no such religions, can be seen from space. It’s all one blue planet floating in the seeming infinity of space-time.”

Earthrise

How Man First Saw
the Earth

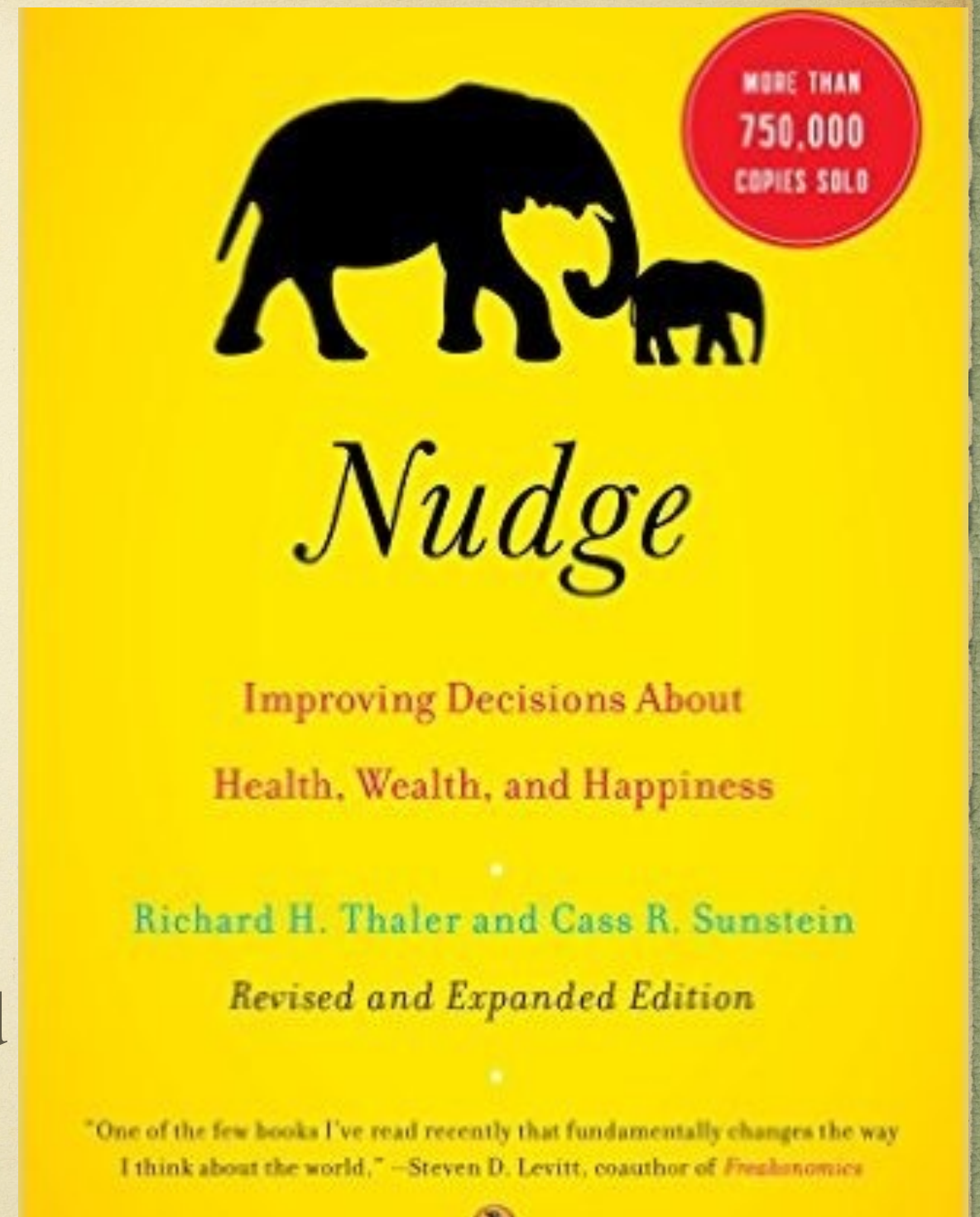


Robert Poole

2010, Yale UP

Nudge is about choices—how we make them and how we can make better ones.

Drawing on decades of research in the fields of behavioral science and economics, authors Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein offer a new perspective on preventing the countless mistakes we make—ill-advised personal investments, consumption of unhealthy foods, neglect of our natural resources—and show us how sensible “choice architecture” can successfully nudge people toward the best decisions.



Moral Compass

- **Authority** (*universal/situational, single/plural*)
- **Motivation** (*“greatest treason...right deed for the wrong reason”?*)
- **Responsibility** (*self + other*)
- **Situation** (*circumstances*)
- **Intention** (*doesn't always equal impact*)
- **Relationships** (*“men/rights”, “women/relationships”*)
- **Values** (*social norms, conscience, tradition*) [Rorty: “no non-circular reasons”]
- **Character** (*habits*)



“BYOE” Journal

- Are you **consistent** in your ethical framework/ approach as case studies change? (*Why or why not?*)
- Is there a pattern/logic/reason/emotion **underneath** your reactions/decisions?
- Do you find yourself **changing** from your initial “gut” reaction through the discussion process. (*Why or why not?*)
- Reflect on your own ethical decisions that show the **pitfalls** of trying to do good. (Intent does not equal impact. Law of unintended consequences.)
- **Define** the situation (*What’s happening? Cast of characters? Chronology?*)
- **Analyze** the case (*Basic issues and values?*)
- **Alternatives** available (*Motives behind each? Consequences?*)

