

Haidt uses the parallel of the elephant and its rider to describe our intuitions and reasoning. The elephant is vastly larger than the rider, and is the one who jumps to conclusions. The rider is left to figure out how to explain the conclusion that was found. Haidt looked at a study done by Damasio where he studied people who could not use emotion. Damasio found that these people, who were entirely rational without the accompaniment of emotion, could not function properly in a social environment. The implicit association test, developed by Greenwald, Banaji, and Nosek, has subjects answer questions about associating positive words with strange faces. The results usually show racism, gender bias, and even bias towards appearance as responses from people who would never claim to be discriminatory. This effect is sometimes called institutional racism. This is when people claim to not be racist, but when asked for a gut intuition, studies find they are, though maybe just slightly. This is the elephant making the judgment before the rider gets to speak. The rider does not have the opportunity to decide that someone is good despite physical characteristics before the elephant makes a decision. Ancient philosophers like Aristotle and Plato have put reason first in their models of consciousness. Haidt's claim is radical because it takes the emphasis away from what makes us human, according to Aristotle, and gives it to our evolutionary emotion.