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Combining Theories of Action and Moral Philosophy

Theories of Action:

This is a theory that differentiates between what we colloquially say an actor did and what we metaphysically say they did

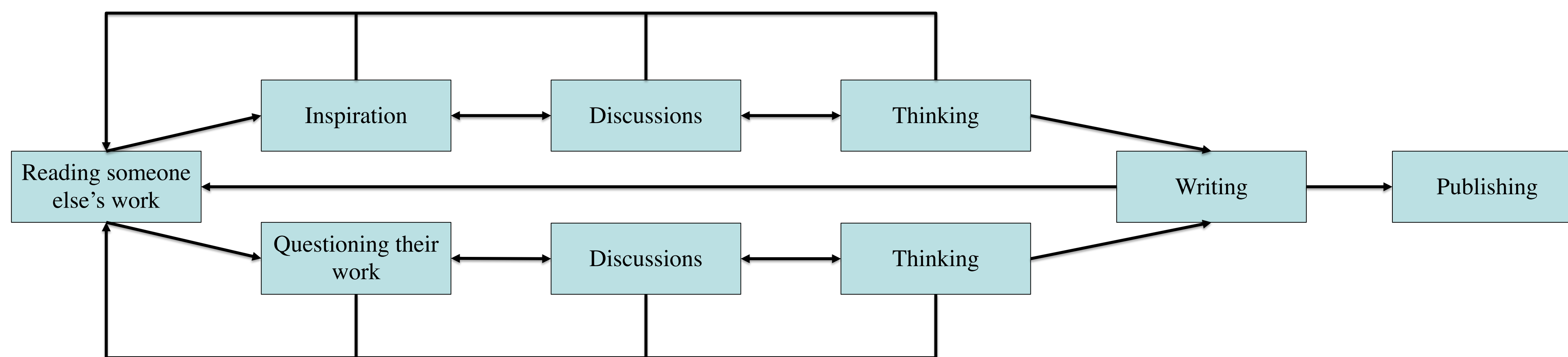
How do we differentiate the two?

Donald Davidson [differentiates between acts and actions]

- Must have a pro attitude
 - Some form of desire towards a certain outcome
- This pro-attitude does not change the act, but it does change the action

Aristotle [differentiates between intentional and unintentional action]

- Must have deliberation
- Must not be mistaken about the deliberation



Moral Philosophies:

This is theory that differentiates between what actions are 'good' and 'bad'

John Stuart Mill [a consequentialist]

- We should maximize "utility" in the world, and this is all that matters
- Our intentions (pro-attitudes and deliberation) have no moral weight

Kant [a non- consequentialist]

- Every action should be based on *the categorical imperative*
- Our intentions is all that matters

Combining the Two:

The whole point is to bring these two ideas together into one system so that we can use it. There are two ways to go about this and they are as follows.

Descriptivist

These are accounts that describe how the system works.

Dr. Yuval Noah Harari

- We should just roll with what we all decide to roll with
- The most important part of a system is that it's stable

Prescriptivist

These are accounts that prescribe a system based on the ideal conditions. What we have built till this point are the ideal conditions.

Case Study

Was the pro-attitude directed towards X?	Was there deliberation?	Was deliberation done correctly?	Was X done successfully?	Did X affect anyone besides the actor?	Should they receive Moral Credit?
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Yes	No	N/A	Yes	Yes	?
Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	?
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
No	No	N/A	No	N/A	No