

Objection to premise 1

Hobbes is wrong, we aren't really that bad—cruel, hateful, ignorant

Response: he doesn't say that we are cruel, ignorant, or hateful, we are selfish, suspicious, and power hungry—these things drive the conflict

Another objection

Maybe we are not so suspicious and insecure

Response: yes we are!

- We are currently protected by the most powerful and wealthy state in history
- The law and order industry runs to billions and crime rates are very low
- Highest incarceration in the world
- We lock our doors when we leave the house
- We have guns to "protect ourselves"

Objections to premise 2

We also have natural sympathetic feeling toward other people

Response: no we don't! Psychological egoism

- We always act selfishly
- Deep down, we're all selfish and we can't help it
- We have learnt response to others, but in nature we are hella selfish—pleasure of helping

Rationales for psychological egoism

- a. Even apparent altruism can be reinterpreted to reveal self-interested motivation—selfish construction that we do not place on ourselves because we are not good judges of our own actions and it is in our self-interest to appear altruistic
- b. Every person does that action from among her alternatives that she most wants to do
- c. Acting in an apparently altruistic way still benefits the person that does it—pleasurable satisfaction

Charity:

Motivated by the desire to demonstrate one's superiority

Pity:

Motivated by the imaginative identification with the sufferer

Evidence: we pity the good more when they suffer

Everyone sees themselves as good and so identifies with the good

- a. If you acted on a certain desire, it must have trumped your other desires or you would have done something else
- b. We get pleasure from helping

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### Rejection for psychological egoism

1. General worry

- Be suspicious of any theory that reduced all human motivation to a single kind of motive  
Sexual drives, fear, will to power
- o Isn't it obvious that just have a variety of motives?

### **Objections to rationale 1(a)**

Rationale 1(a): Even apparent acts of altruism can be reinterpreted to reveal a self-interested motivation

*Logically flawed:*

- Shows only that we can construe actions as selfish, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they actually are
- With ingenuity, it is possible to put an altruistic construction on all actions

*Makes PE self-sealing*

- A theory that is compatible with all possible evidence
- Self-sealing theories cannot have any informational content because they don't rule anything out  
Ex. It is either raining or it is not raining  
Ex. Marxism? Freudianism?  
Ex. Non-self-sealing: Einstein's General Theory

### **Objections to Rationale 1(b)**

Rationale 1(b): everyone always does that action she most wants to do; everyone always acts on her strongest desires

*Not true*

- We do that action with the highest expected value, which depends on beliefs as well as desires. If you strongly desire something but you think that there is a low probability of achieving it, you aim for second-best.
  - You don't just back the horse with the biggest pay off
  - You may long to be win "The Voice" but don't give up you day job

*Even if true, doesn't support 1*

- Distinguish the intensity of a desire from its content
- Content: could be self- or other-directed
- Intensity: how weak or strong
- A desire is selfish if its content is self-directed. That is dependent of how intense it is.  
Content: what it represents; intensity: its weight/size  
a selfish picture depicts the agent getting something
- Acting on ones strongest desire—the biggest picture—doesn't mean acting selfishly

### **Objection to rationale 1(c)**

Rationale 1(c): Acting apparently altruistically brings the agent pleasure or satisfaction

*Not true*

- Sometimes it is a pain in the neck!

*Even if true, doesn't support 1*

- Even if you know that you will get pleasure, as a result of doing a action, it doesn't follow that that is why you are doing it
- Actions have many consequences. Perhaps your pleasure is simply a side-effect, not the main goal

### **A possible 4<sup>th</sup> Rationale: evolution?**

- To act against one's self-interest is to harm oneself for the benefit of others

### **Another Objection to premise 2: morality**

- Even if hobbes is right, that is not the whole story
- People also have moral sense