Egoism

on ethics and seflishness

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The Ring of Gyges

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- If you had such power, would you be able to resist the temptation to act on your selfish desires?

- Are people inherently selfish and only kept in check by fear of getting caught?

The philosophy of selfishness

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These are related but different ways of pointing out the limitations of ethics, as either *unrealistic* or *counter-productive.*

Psychological Egoism

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- Presents itself as a realistic alternative to sentimental idealism about human beings.

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- Let's consider the arguments...

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- But perhaps there is a subtle shift of meaning here: does it follow that all motives are *for my sake alone* just because they are *my motives*?

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- PE has *unlimited evidence* to back it up, since *any* action that seems altruistic can be dismissed as the result of hidden selfish motives, so it's a great theory, right?

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- The problem here is a logical problem: this argument is INVALID.

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- This argument is INVALID, and shows our explanation to be a bad explanation.

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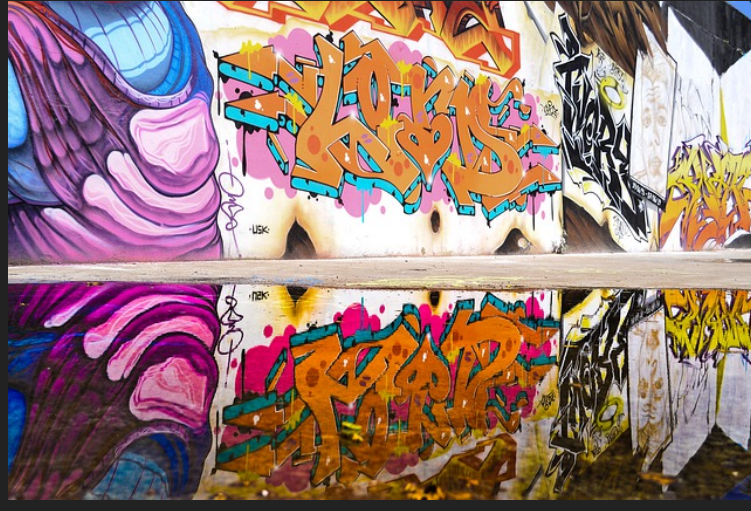
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- The problem with Psychological Egoism is that it is *non-falsifiable*.

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- The problem with Psychological Egoism is that it is *non-falsifiable*.

- No matter what examples of unselfish activity we give to a backer of this theory they always have a response, so there is no possible test that the theory can fail.
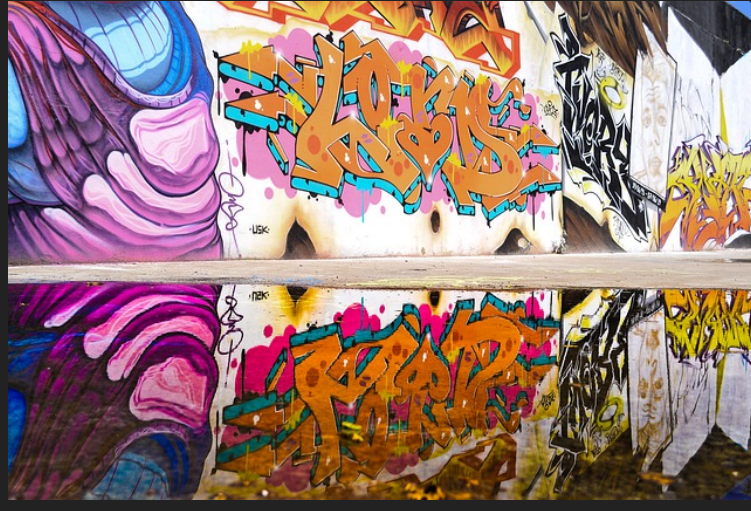
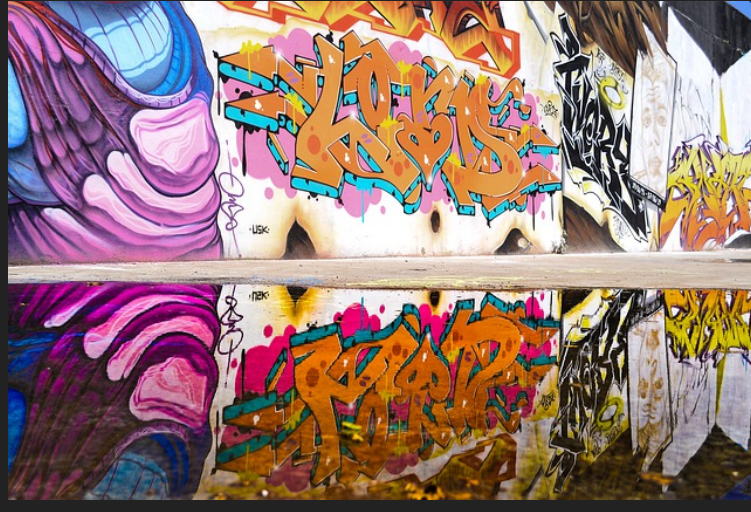# *Ethical Egoism*

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- Often used in political and economic arguments about capitalism and socialism.

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