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Assessment: the Demon's Game

The Devil's Game

Paradox Grade: 4

What I find interesting about this paradox is that it shows that there can be a discontinuity between the rationality of a group and the rationality of its members.

More precisely:

Collective Tragedy

There are situations in which a group will predictably end up in a situation that is suboptimal for every member of the group, even though every member of the group behaves rationally.

What should we do about Collective Tragedy?

My own view is that there is nothing to be done. We need to learn how to live with it.

In some ways, Collective Tragedy reminds me of a famous theorem due to Stanford economist Kenneth Arrow. Arrow's Impossibility Theorem states that, given certain assumptions, there is no way of using the preferences of individual members of a group to determine the "collective preferences" of the group.

Both Collective Tragedy and Arrow's Theorem illustrate the fact that one can face discontinuities when one tries to derive the properties of a collective from the properties of its individual members.

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 Some thoughts on the meaning of 'Collective Tragedy'
I think we need to pay more attention to meaning of a 'group' and what its members expect. As a...

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