

24.02: Moral Problems and the Good Life  
Prof. Sally Haslanger  
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### Second Argument Analysis Exercise

Write 2-3 pages (600-900 words) providing an analysis of the following argument. In doing so,

- Number the premises and the conclusion. Articulate each premise and the conclusion in no more than one sentence. Feel free to use a different wording in your statement of the premises and conclusion than is provided by the text. You may not need to use every sentence in the passage in reconstructing the argument, and you may need to supply premises that are not explicitly stated in the text given.
- Indicate for each premise whether it is an assumption, or whether it is supposed to follow from earlier premises. (This should appear in parentheses after the premise.)
- After stating the argument, briefly explain it in your own words, and then comment on its cogency: Are its premises plausible? Are the inferences sound? (If not, why not?)

Rachels characterizes psychological egoism as the view that “all men are selfish in everything that they do.” (*Morality Matters*, p. 29). One argument in favor of this claim is that because all actions produce a “sense of self-satisfaction” which is pleasurable, the point of the action is really selfish not altruistic. (*Morality Matters*, p. 30). Analyze Rachels’ response in the following passage:

If we have a positive attitude toward the attainment of some goal, then we may derive satisfaction from attaining that goal. But the object of our attitude is *the attainment of that goal*; and we must want to attain the goal *before* we can find any satisfaction in it. We do not, in other words, desire some sort of “pleasurable consciousness” and then try to figure out how to achieve it; rather, we desire all sorts of different things – money, a new fishing boat, to be a better chess-player, to get a promotion in our work, etc. – and because we desire these things, we derive pleasure from attaining them. And so, if someone desires the welfare and happiness of another person, he will derive satisfaction from that; but this does not mean that this satisfaction is the object of his desire, or that he is in any way selfish on account of it. (*Morality Matters*, p. 31)

**DUE DATE:** In your discussion section Friday, Oct. 20. Give your completed exercise to your teaching assistant. Late papers will be penalized.