

INSTRUMENTAL AND RATIONAL EGOISM

Morality is about doing your best to be loving, just and compassionate. If you are made to fall short there is still a benefit in trying to be these things. If you cannot avoid selfishness then you get as near to what a loving and fair and compassionate person should look like. This is rational egoism - its just another word for ethical egoism.

The instrumental theory of egoism holds that egoism is not about being moral but about being practical.

The one who agrees with it may say that there is no morality as such and that being loving and fair and compassionate describe only preferences. Or that altruism is the truth and we should be secret egoists anyway for it works better for us. Such people may pretend to be altruists and pass for them.

So we are talking about rational egoism and instrumental egoism.

The two theories conflict for ethical egoism says you cannot be commanded to sacrifice your life to save others while the latter says if you feel like doing it then do it. I solve it by saying instrumental is not egoism but egotism. Its evil to turn justice into a word for how you feel about how people should be treated. Instrumental egoism that tells you to kill yourself if you don't prefer to look after yourself is not egoism at all. It tells you the feeling matters not you.

Another term for instrumental egoism is scientific egoism. It is based on the notion that a moral theory that is based on you going after what you prefer the most is not a moral theory. But egoism is a moral theory even if our nature will not let us be properly loving and just and compassionate as we said a second ago.