

SELF-LOVE AND SELF-RESPECT

Richmond Campbell's stated aim in *Self-Love and Self-Respect: A Philosophical Study of Egoism* (Ottawa: Canadian Library of Philosophy, 1979) is to argue that "egoism is ultimately indefensible, in all its forms" (p. 5). His argument proceeds in two stages, the first considering impersonal, or universal, ethical egoism; the second, personal, or, as he calls it, "amoral" egoism. While each version is said to have its own peculiar flaw, they are all claimed to be self-defeating since none can be consistently practiced in such a way as to attain the ends that the theory prescribes.

The author considers two forms of universal ethical egoism: eudaemonic (or hedonic) egoism, which holds happiness to be the only thing of intrinsic worth, and pluralistic egoism, which can either hold that, in addition to happiness, other things are also intrinsically valuable, or make no claim at all about what, if anything, is intrinsically valuable. Eudaemonic egoism is self-defeating, Campbell alleges, because happiness cannot be attained if it is pursued for its own sake; this is the "paradox of happiness," and it is claimed to refute this version of egoism.

The pluralistic form of universal egoism, on the other hand, escapes the paradox of happiness, but falls prey to another difficulty, "the farmer's dilemma." Here a teleological standard of value is applied to a set of imagined conditions pertaining to two farmers, with the outcome that their acting singly and independently will produce a joint result that is worse, in their own eyes, than another result that they could have produced but did not: "their singlemindedness in pursuing their own preferences has prevented them from producing a possible outcome that they both agree is superior" (p. 67). The farmers' actions violate the Principle of Coherent Integration, which Campbell advances as a general requirement of rationality. Pluralistic egoism, conceived as a teleological system, is thus claimed to be irrational.

Amoral egoism, finally, because it makes no general claim about what all ought to do, but rather applies to one and only one individual, does not violate the Principle of Coherent Integration; it is, however, subject to a difficulty of its own. This is that, although amoral egoism requires self-love on the part of the agent, nevertheless, the agent's adoption of amoral egoism as a principle of action makes effective self-love impossible. Amoral egoism is self-defeating, therefore, because the very thing required for its realization is undercut and made impossible by its practice.

Campbell's argument suffers from a number of very serious defects. We begin with his conceptions of universal egoism and their respective refutations. As we have seen, he rejects eudaemonic ethical egoism on the ground that it implies that happiness is the only goal worth pursuing for its own sake, whereas the "paradox of happiness" shows that pursuit of such a goal is self-defeating. Here it must be observed, first, that while

eudaemonic egoism arguably must prescribe agents to seek their own happiness, it need not make the further claim that happiness is intrinsically valuable, nor that it is the *only* thing that is intrinsically valuable, nor that it ought to be pursued as if it were. Thus, whatever may be the merits of Campbell's treatment of happiness when pursued as the sole intrinsic value, none of it will have any relevance to a eudaemonic egoism that lacks that additional condition. Campbell's failure to take account of this is important, not merely because other possible, indeed plausible, forms of eudaemonic egoism escape his notice, but because the type of egoism that he singles out for criticism is not represented in any of the recent literature on the subject.¹ Here he is flogging dead horses.

Second, his treatment of the paradox of happiness is inconclusive. Paradoxes of hedonism are familiar figures in philosophy, going back at least to Butler,² and have equally familiar resolutions. Sidgwick's may be taken as representative:

though it [the Fundamental Paradox of Egoistic Hedonism] presents itself as a paradox, there does not seem to be any difficulty in its practical realization, when once the danger indicated is clearly seen. For it is an experience only too common among men, in whatever pursuit they may be engaged, that they let the original object and goal of their efforts pass out of view, and come to regard the means to this end as ends in themselves . . . there seems to be no reason why it should be difficult to do [this] to the extent that Rational Egoism prescribes: and, in fact, it seems to be continually done by ordinary persons in the case of amusements and pastimes of all kinds.³

Now, while Campbell brings forward just such a possible resolution as an objection to his own treatment of the paradox, he gives no sufficient answer to it. He says: "I can see no tidy way to formulate the difficulty which I think is inherent in this suggestion" (p. 49), and: "To spell out the nature of this difficulty in full . . . would take us far beyond the scope of the present chapter" (p. 50). But, in view of the importance which Campbell attaches to this paradox, his failure adequately to reply to a possible resolution of it must be seen as a significant lacuna in his argument.

We proceed to pluralistic egoism, the view that "a person ought, from a moral standpoint, always to do whatever will *benefit* him the most" (p. 63, emphasis in original). Because it does not claim anything to be intrinsically valuable, it eludes the paradox of happiness only to encounter the farmer's dilemma. Here we are asked to imagine two farmers each having to choose separately and independently of the other whether to plant wheat or flowers. A number of conditions are added, including (a) that while both of them love flowers, they appreciate them only from a distance, so that neither can enjoy his own flowers, and (b) that each farmer is willing to plant flowers and thus starve himself just so that the other can appreciate those flowers from a distance. So solicitous are they of each other that each

plants flowers for the other's sake, with the result that they both starve, this notwithstanding that each prefers that they both eat (which they could do had they both planted wheat) than that, as now, they both go hungry. This result is supposed to "show that teleology is not rational" (p. 69).

Now the first question that comes to mind with respect to this is, of course: Why may not the parties choose, from the beginning, the "possible outcome that they both agree is superior"? Campbell's answer is that such a choice is prevented by his requirement that "*the only values that are to form the basis of an agent's decision are the values of the outcomes of the actions open to him*" (p. 66, emphasis in original). This stipulation prevents the parties from mutually agreeing to plant wheat (perhaps enforcing their agreement by depositing "earnest money" with a third party) because then they would be making their decisions not by reference to what they could each individually do, which is what the italicized stipulation requires, but by reference to the outcome which they could achieve jointly. But if it is this stipulation that prevents the parties from taking precisely that course of action that would produce "a possible outcome that they both agree is superior," then their failure to do so can hardly be charged to teleology. Further, the stipulation, which Campbell insists is a part of the act-teleology that he imposes on the farmers, is surely not a part of rule-teleological systems (for example, Hospers's "rule-egoism"), which easily escape the dilemma.⁴ Further still, Campbell seems unaware that, in addition to the teleological version he criticizes, universal egoism can be, and has been, formulated (i) deontologically,⁵ (ii) as a "mixed teleological-deontological" doctrine,⁶ and (iii) in a way that is ambiguous between the two.⁷ His failure to consider these, as well as other more promising alternatives than those he finds difficulty with, is fatal to his project of overturning egoism "in all its forms."

One might wonder in any case what the relevance of the farmer's dilemma is to egoism *per se*, since, as Campbell points out, the farmers "cannot be called egoists in any ordinary sense of the word" (p. 75); to the contrary, "it is hard to imagine more altruistic individuals. Each is prepared to go hungry in order to provide aesthetic enjoyment for the other" (p. 92). In point of fact, therefore, the most that Campbell could claim to show is that egoism, along with any other system embodying act-teleologism plus the restrictive stipulation he attaches, is subject to a farmer's dilemma. But far from showing that there is anything inherently wrong with egoism, this shows only that there is a limitation, or at least a certain consequence, of such an act-teleological doctrine.

Campbell claims that what is bad about the farmer's dilemma is that it violates what he asserts is a general requirement of rationality, the Principle of Coherent Integration. This principle, which requires a sort of harmony among different individuals, obviously "calls for justification."⁸ Campbell attempts to provide it by deriving the principle from two more basic principles, those of Practical Reason and Moral Consistency. However, each of

these must in its turn be justified. The proposed justification of the Principle of Moral Consistency (MC) is characterized as follows: "My strategy will be to answer three possible objections; when these objections are cleared away, the plausibility of MC should be evident" (p. 76). It scarcely needs to be pointed out, however, that such a procedure does not amount to a justification. Quite aside from whether there may be other and more serious objections than those that he undertakes to answer, any rationally warranted principle must have positive evidence of some kind behind it. Campbell provides none. Thus, not only does Campbell not show the Principle of Coherent Integration to be a general requirement of rationality; he fails to establish that it is true.

The author's discussion of individual, or amoral, egoism takes up almost two-thirds of his book. Given that individual egoism has no presentday supporters, this emphasis is a matter for some surprise.⁹ Surprising also is his argument here, for the entire discussion is of types of love, their nature and conditions. The general thesis is that amoral egoism is self-defeating because, although self-love is logically a part of amoral egoism, effective self-love is nevertheless impossible to the egoist because it requires his acknowledgement that the satisfaction of others' interests is as worthy as his own, which is an admission that the egoist cannot make. In the author's words: "Because the egoist must regard his own true desires as more worthy of gratification than those of any other person, he is therefore incapable of desiring what he must desire as an egoist: he cannot, in any fundamental way, desire to benefit himself *for his own sake*" (p. 300, emphasis in original).

This is open to several objections, of which we shall mention three. First, amoral egoism does not in fact require self-love on the part of the agent. A policy of acting in one's interests requires a motive, surely, but there are more motives to action than love. Self-interested conduct does not, in particular, presuppose or require the Pickwickian type of self-love that Campbell elaborates at great length, following theories of Erich Fromm. Second, although it is required by his argument (e.g., at pp. 275-76, 299, 300), the amoral egoist need not have any view about the relative worth of others' satisfactions as against his own. He may, of course, *prefer* that his own interests be satisfied, at least if the occasion arises in which his interests conflict with those of others. But such a preference need not be based upon, nor need it give rise to, any view of the relative *worth* of their satisfactions as opposed to his own. Third, there is the logical blunder that underlies Campbell's claim that the amoral egoist has self-love. He defines a self-loving person as one who "*regards his self-identifying desires [read: true desires] as worthy of gratification just because they are his true desires*" (p. 236, emphasis in original). The amoral egoist is then said to have self-love on the ground that he so regards his desires: "It is clear that, as an Amoral Egoist, E [the Egoist] has unconditional self-love, in the sense explained at the end of the last chapter. For E does regard his real desires as being wor-

thy of gratification just because they are his" (p. 274). The argument is fallacious: a self-lover may do x, but it does not follow that one who does x is a self-lover (fish swim, but some swimmers are not fish). Suffice it to say that Campbell's treatment of amoral egoism is significantly marred by confusion, questionable claims, and *non sequitur*.

It is needless, I think, to pursue additional defects of Campbell's book, for we have adequate reason already to judge it to be confused, poorly argued, incomplete in its treatment of its subject, and neglectful of relevant important scholarship.¹⁰ Far from showing that egoism is indefensible in all its forms, the author does not make a convincing case against any one of them.

EDWARD REGIS, JR.

Howard University

1. Two recent survey articles of egoism make no mention of the type of egoism Campbell criticizes. See Tibor R. Machan, "Recent Work in Ethical Egoism," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16 (1979); and Edward Regis, Jr., "What Is Ethical Egoism?" *Ethics* 91 (1980).

2. Joseph Butler, *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel*, Sermon XI: "Upon the Love of Our Neighbor."

3. Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, 7th ed. (Chicago, 1907), pp. 136-37; cf. *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill*, chap. 5: "I never indeed wavered in the conviction that happiness is the test of all rules of conduct, and the end of life. But I now thought that this end was only to be attained by not making it the direct end. Those only are happy (I thought) who have their minds fixed on some object other than their own happiness; on the happiness of others, on the improvement of mankind, even on some art or pursuit, followed not as a means, but as itself an ideal end."

4. John Hospers, "Rule-Egoism," *Personalist* 54 (1973).

5. Ramon M. Lemos, "Egoism and Non-Egoism in Ethics," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 9 (1971).

6. Eric Mack, "Egoism and Rights," *Personalist* 54 (1973).

7. C. D. Broad, "Certain Features in Moore's Ethical Doctrines," in *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, ed. Paul Schilpp (Chicago, 1942), pp. 44-45.

8. P. 73; "The formal Principle of Coherent Integration demands, in effect, that we integrate our aims with those of others, even when such integration requires us to compromise in our efforts to achieve our own goals for ourselves or humanity" (p. 104).

9. J. A. Brunton, who seemed to endorse individual egoism in 1956 ("Egoism and Morality," *Philosophical Quarterly* 6 (1956), gave it in 1975 "an indecent burial" ("The Devil Is Not a Fool, or Egoism Re-visited," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 12 (1975).

10. In addition to the works already mentioned, we note particularly Jesse Kalin, "Two Kinds of Moral Reasoning: Ethical Egoism as a Moral Theory," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 5 (1975), which is relevant to Campbell's argument at several points, and Kalin's "Lies, Secrets, and Love: The Inadequacy of Contemporary Moral Philosophy," *Journal of Value Inquiry* 10 (1976), which has particular bearing on Campbell's treatment of love.