**Egoism**

1. Everyone primarily looks out for him/herself: acts in self-interest.
2. Self-sacrifice is done willingly.
3. Everyone gets personal satisfaction from their self-sacrifice.
4. SO, everyone is selfish.

What does “selfish” mean in the conclusion?
If it has moral significance, then the conclusion does not follow, because the premises are only descriptive claims.
If “selfish” is used only descriptively in the conclusion, then the argument is only giving us a rule of usage of the word “selfish”.

Problems with saying that EVERYONE is selfish:
The word “selfish” loses all sense of contrast. If the word “red” were used in a similar way, “Everything is red”, then “red” would no longer help us to distinguish red things from non-red things.

Which definition is most useful?
Selfish: acting in self-interest.
Selfish: acting in self-interest *at the expense of others*.
Apply both definitions to the Lincoln example (34.1.2)

**Psychological Egoism**
Is it true that everyone acts in self-interest?
How would we verify this? (43.2.2)

Is it true that we always do x in order to get satisfaction, or is satisfaction a by-product of certain actions and motivations?

Think of cases where you do x for
(a) the pleasure, joy, fun, satisfaction, happiness;
(b) some other reason, but one of the consequences is pleasure, joy, fun, satisfaction, happiness.
Which one gives generally results in the greatest pleasure, fun, etc.?

**JUSTIFICATION of ethical egoism from psychological egoism.**
Everyone should (moral, practical, legal?) act in his/her self-interest.
Does psychological egoism imply ethical egoism?
Everyone acts in self-interest, SO everyone should act in self-interest.
Form of the reasoning: Everyone does X, SO everyone should do X.
CE by analogy:

**JUSTIFICATION of ethical egoism from economic theory.**
Economies based on self-interest prosper better [for whom??] than economies not based on self-interest.
So, we should always act in self-interest.
JUSTIFICATION from Social Benefits
If I don’t act in a self-interest *that is not at the expense of others*, then I will not be able to help others. So, I ought (always) to act in a self-interest that is NOT at the expense of others.

If there is the greatest general prosperity, then the beneficial consequences do provide some support.

CONSISTENCY?
Can everyone apply the principle “Everyone should act in self-interest”? Not possible in the real world.
If this objection is to work, what is assumed?
(a) An ethical principle must be universally applicable.
(b) All/most moral rules have “exceptions”, but if there are more cases of breaking a rule than cases of obeying it, then the rule no longer serves the purpose of guiding us.
Contrast to “Everyone should act in a self-interest that is NOT at the expense of others”.

“Moral” Education THOUGHT EXPERIMENT (36.2.5)
(a) I do what is morally right because it is in my self-interest to act morally.
(b) I do what is morally right because that is the right thing to do. (one sees beyond self-interest, beyond one’s personal point of view)
In which case am I morally educated?
(a) rests on a prudential education. One might avoid the proper moral action when it’s not in one’s self-interest to act morally.
(b) rests on morality.
Problem? What makes it right?

Why be moral in cases that it’s not in my self-interest?
Avoid chaos, constant conflict (appeal to consequences).
Avoid consequences of getting caught.
Being moral is ennobling (greater dignity, integrity, self-respect) (consequences)

THOMAS HOBBES “Self Love”
What is Hobbes doing at 39.2 to 40.2.2? Presented his definitions of key words to describe humans.
Where on p. 40 does it become morally significant? His definition of “good”, ”evil”.
1. Felicity (happiness) is the continual satisfaction of desires.
2. Humans desire felicity.
3. [Power is a necessary condition for felicity.]
4. So, there is a continual desire for power after power.
5. All men are basically equal in physical strength. (40.2.5)
6. All men are basically equal in intellectual strength. (40.2.5-6) because “every man is contented with his share” (41.1.1).
7. So, all men are equally hopeful in attaining felicity. (41.1.2)
8. So, when they desire the same thing, they become enemies. (41.1.2)
9. So, (from 5,6,8) man cannot take advantage of others.
10. Men will feel secure only if there is a greater power that can endanger him (41.1.3).
11. Men feel grief when there is no power able to overawe them. (41.2.2)
Due to the nature of men, there are three causes of quarrels:
Competition for the things that contribute to their felicity.
Insecurity.
Search for glory/reputation.
Without a power to keep in all in awe, they will be continually at war with one another.

Fear is necessary to control human greed. (42.2.1).
So societies began out of fear.

In the state of nature, (a) to have all, and do all, is lawful for all;
(b) profit is the measure of right.
[Might makes right.]
Consequence: threat from others; fear, insecurity.

**Ayn Rand Virtues of Selfishness**
Is Rand criticizing a misrepresentation of altruism?
Who presents such a view of altruism? She does not give any sources.

44.1.4 What questions should you raise here?
What is her basis for her claims about the “popular” usage of “selfishness”?
Will she show that it’s a devastating intellectual “package deal”?
Will she show that this popular usage has cause such terrible problems for mankind?

44.2.1 What is her source for saying that the word “selfishness” conjures up murderous brutes…?
Is she exaggerating?

44.2.2 Does quoting only a part of a dictionary definition solve the conceptual issue?

44.2.3 True, but what’s the relevance?
What does she really accomplish with this paragraph?

44.2.4-5 Is Rand criticizing a misrepresentation of altruism? (straw man argument)
Who presented such view of altruism? She does not give any source.

44.2.6 Exaggerating?
Addresses only the intentions of the person. She overlooks consequences, rights/obligations/duties.

44.2.7 Jumps hastily to conclusion. Are there alternative causes or factors?

44.2.8 She gives an example.
If someone were to advance the views criticized in the preceding paragraphs, would this be a good example to expose some of the ethical problems? It does seem to represent the absurdity of the views criticized. However, the example is simply a continuation of the misrepresentation.

45.1.2 Rand correctly identifies consequences arising from the (misrepresented) view:
45.2.1 Rand correctly discusses the examples presented in 44.2.8.

45.2.2 This view of altruism implies total self-sacrifice, and thus excludes self-respect, self-support,

If I seek justice in order to redress a harm done to me or to obtain what I deserve, I act in self-interest.
Any act of self-interest is immoral.
So the seeking of justice to redress harms done or to obtain what is due to me is immoral.
So, this view excludes justice.
Hence, this view excludes justice.

44.2.3 Social consequence of this [misrepresented] view:
cynicism for having to pursue what is absurd;
guilt for not pursuing it as much as one believes one should.

Rand wants us to be selfish, but what does she mean when she uses the word?

[[In order to live I must act in self-interest.
Any act in self-interest is immoral.
So, in order to live, one must act immorally.]]