

Candidate 7 evidence

Philosophy National 5 Resource Sheet			
Candidate Name		Scottish Candidate Number	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In essay, I will answer. 2 philosophers on human nature I will be... explain views, S/D, S&W <p>Why it matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aside from human nature, affects our lives If you go about, selfless, staying on p.o.v Yet, deluding, true Harsh consequence, get hurt (relationships, life to live) Answering means, easier, gaging understanding, behaviours + intentions <p>Rousseau:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Altruistic definition His state of nature example (peace w/ no gov.) "amour de soi". few desires Ex. Unselfish (giving up seat, donating blood, returning) Prove humans can be altruistic <p>Hobbes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Egoism (better) / psychological egoism (motivated) definition Empiricist, his experience - distrust. If altruism true, this wouldn't happen. His state of nature "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" bc living in fear, preserve own life NOT OTHERS Through examination, egotistical by nature <p>S&D:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definition differences Both use state of nature, contrast greatly Short/peace life, certainty <p>S&W:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pro for one, con for other S 4 Ru. Historic examples (ego false, Jesus) Hbs response: don't know enough, intentions S 4 Hbs. Uses empiricism, we can identify, <p>Conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based off, are selfish Hobbes, experiences, identify S.o.n, realistic / peaceful Can be altruistic but by (summary + conclusion) 			

Are humans naturally selfish?

In this essay I will be answering the question: are humans naturally selfish? Two philosophers who spoke in great detail on human nature were Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Thomas Hobbes. I will be explaining their views, looking at the similarities and differences of these views as well as the strengths and weaknesses in order to answer this question.

Now, why does this matter? Aside from the answer being an insight into human nature - this affects our lives. For example, if you go about your life thinking that everyone is selfless, you'll leave school, make friendships, relationships still staying on this one point of view that everyone acts selflessly. Yet, as a result, you are simply deluding yourself that this is true. The harsh consequence of this is that you will get hurt. Relationships will become more difficult for you and overall it will be a difficult life to live. So, answering this question means that not only can you make life easier for yourself but you can also gain a deeper understanding of human behaviours and intentions.

The first philosopher I will look at who talks about human nature is Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He believes that all humans are selfless and therefore, he believes in altruism. Altruism says that humans act in the best interest of others and not themselves. To prove this to be true, Rousseau uses an example called 'the state of nature' which envisions a time before humans were under any government or had rulers. His interpretation of this idea was that humans would act peacefully under no government, using the words "amour de soi" meaning love of self, saying that humans would live purely to eat, sleep and reproduce. Rousseau also said that ~~the~~ humans would have few desires resorting to violence, so there would be no war. As well as his argument,

we can use examples of unselfish acts that can demonstrate the idea that humans are naturally selfless. Whether it be returning a lost item to its owner, giving up your seat for an elderly person on the bus or even donating blood, we can recognise that in our everyday lives as humans do act in the best interest of others naturally out of instinct. So, ~~this~~ all of this does show that humans can naturally be selfless.

The second philosopher I will look at who spoke on human nature was Thomas Hobbes. He believed that all humans were naturally selfish, and so he believed we were egotistical. Egoism is when a human thinks they are better than the others around them. But it was not only that, Hobbes believed ~~in~~ in psychological egoism, which says that humans are motivated to act in the best interest of themselves. As Hobbes is an empiricist, he uses his experience to prove his argument to be true. In his observations, he sees how humans distrust each other - they protect their valuables and lock their doors. He says that if humans were altruistic, this would not be the case. Interestingly enough, Hobbes also uses 'the state of nature' example in his argument and his interpretation of this idea is that it would be "solitary, ~~poor~~ poor, nasty, brutish and short." What he means by this is that humans, under no government, would live in fear only trying to preserve their own life and not the lives of others. So, through his examination he believes that humans are psychologically egotistical by nature.

Now that ~~we~~ ^I have looked at both of the arguments, it's important as part of my analysis to look at the ^{similarities} ~~arguments~~ and ^{differences} ~~arguments~~ of these arguments. The first, and likely most obvious one, are that the beliefs held by the philosophers are very different. Rousseau's belief, altruism, says that humans act in the best interest of others whereas Hobbes' belief, psychological egoism, says that humans are naturally motivated to act in the best interest of themselves. The

biggest similarity between these arguments is that they both use the example of 'the state of nature' which pictures what human life would be like under no government. And yet, both philosophers view this idea differently. Rousseau believed that humans would live long and peaceful lives looking out for one another whereas Hobbes believed that humans would live short lives only looking out for themselves. The great contrast of these views ~~on~~ clearly demonstrates how certain these philosophers believe their view ~~is~~ true and that a simple idea can be seen so differently because of it.

The second part of my analysis of these arguments is to look at the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments. But do note, what may be a strength for one argument is also a weakness for the other in this case. A strength of Rousseau's argument is that we can see many examples throughout history that prove egoism to be false. For example, Jesus sacrificing himself to save his people. However, Hobbes would actually respond to this by saying that we don't know enough about people's intentions to say that egoism may be false. A strength of Hobbes' argument is that as he is an empiricist, using empiricism to back up his argument works very strongly to the point that we can even identify with what he says in his observations to show that egoism is true.

So, based off of everything that this essay has discussed, my conclusion is that humans are naturally selfish. Hobbes' argument of using his experiences that demonstrate psychological egoism with which many of us, even I can identify with is very clever and it greatly supports his argument. Now, in terms of the views on 'the state of nature' - I personally feel that Hobbes' 'version' of what human life under no government seemed far more realistic compared to Rousseau's peaceful non-violent world. However, I am not suggesting that humans cannot be altruistic, I believe that humans can be altruistic but by explaining

and Thomas Hobbes
the views held by philosophers Jean-Jacques Rousseau, looking at
the similarities and differences as well as the strengths and
weaknesses ~~between~~ of these views - I believe that naturally, human
are selfish.