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Singer's Solution to World Poverty Analysis

In the article "Singer's Solution to World Poverty", Peter Singer argues that world hunger can be ended rather easily if everyone responded to their moral callings. He insists that the intrinsic selfishness of humans, along with their "follow-the-crowd-ethics", prevents society from eliminating problems such as child starvation. Singer uses theoretical situations that he then analogizes into real-world scenarios in order to further and support his thesis. Singer's thesis is correct in theory, however it falls short in practicality and is very naive.

Singer starts his argument by using the story of a man named Bob. Bob sacrifices an innocent child's life in order to save his Bugatti, which represents his own materialistic luxury. He analogizes that humans who subconsciously, or consciously, let children die are just as bad, if not worse, than Bob. The author argues that every dollar spent not on a necessity is morally wrong, since every possible donation one can make can be the difference between life and death for these children. Singer also draws attention to the selfish thinking of humans, who tend to rely on excuses such as "how do I know what's actually happening to my money" and "there are millions of other people who can help out, so is my contribution really necessary". By doing so, he is attempting to appeal to the reader's ethos (though he does draw upon statistics researched by experts in order to support his ethological arguments) and blur the usually distinct moral lines. Blurring these lines allows him to lump together the Bobs who consciously let an innocent child die

and the rest of society who has an unconscious understanding that their lack of donating to the problem also allows for innocent children to die. Singer utilizes this emotional warfare to draw empathy from his readers, and at one point suggested that if the reader reads his article and still does not donate, then they are the evil problem he is addressing. Most compellingly, Singer compares those who stand idly to the Germans who allowed Nazis to commit their heinous acts during World War Two, which is an intrinsic evil that is highly regarded as one of humanity's lowest moments.

Though Singer's solution is admirable in theory, it fails practically in almost every aspect, and he himself acknowledges this at multiple points within the passage. One question he raises is "how much sacrifice is enough", and he uses more extreme and altered scenarios in order to answer this question. Something he does not consider is will one be willing to sacrifice not only their wellbeing, but the wellbeing of their entire family for the sake of one child? If Bob's spouse or child was inside the car, should Bob still save the life of the child because it is morally right? Should Bob sacrifice the wellbeing of others for this child? Singer also incorrectly assumes that every person has an internal moral compass. Should someone with no identifiable moral compass still give up their resources because it is "morally right"? At that point, said person would practically just be throwing away his luxuries because his lack of moral compass is not there for him to feel empathy for this starving child. Economically, Singer's solution also falls short. He proposes that everyone should keep \$30,000 dollars for necessities and then donate the rest. This is under the assumption that the average American household brings in \$50,000 in income yearly. So, what happens to those who make less than that? They can still pay proportionally to their

income, but doing that would put them under the \$30,000 in necessities threshold. Also it is unfair for those who must donate more because they simply earn more money, with the keyword being earned. Why must they give away what they worked hard for? Surely if they pay proportionally to their wealth, they still donate more than the average household. Why must they do more than everyone else and tax themselves? These solutions Singer prompts promote unfair equity instead of morally-powered contributions. Why should the poor donate the same amount and make themselves poorer and the rich donate their collective wealth and do more simply because they can?

In conclusion, Singer's solution to world poverty is a flacid one. It is very naive of him to think humans have any moral obligations at all, and that moral obligation is what his entire solution hinges upon. His argument also is based upon the fact that all humans share the same morals. Is it right to assume that slave-owners and abolitionists had the same morals? It's an answer with an obvious answer. Morals cannot be lawfully forced since it is intrinsically an opinionated dilemma. Does the next person have a better set of morals than me because they could afford to donate while all I can do is send my thoughts and prayers every night?