

PD 25 meaning? by Woolf (2004)

Post by “wbernys” of May 11, 2026 at 9:35 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Help me understand why it seems attractive to talk about "psychological hedonism" rather than just "hedonism."

Is it because "psychological hedonism" implies you can't help it so you are defending hedonism on the grounds that "you can't help it"?

Mostly, though I would rephrase it, a main problem I see with a lack of psychological hedonism is that without it, you get groundless ideas that you can "rise above pleasure", as if pleasure, because it's natural and for animals means it's something to rise above, and be "greater than your base nature", this is why just saying pleasure is the goal of nature isn't sufficient in my view since people can just vainly respond that they "rise above nature" to which an effective counter is "No you don't, you're just delusional"

This is similar to how Cicero argued against hedonism. This is also why Nietzsche called Epicurus a decadent, since he thought we had to rise above pleasure, despite occasional praise.

Psychological hedonism helps to dispel this vanity, there is no rising above pleasure or pain, there are only correct and incorrect views on how to achieve it. So it helps to both "knock down our opponents who say they are mighty and rise above pleasure, generally removes stigma around hedonism, and offers a therapy that we all pursue the same goal, so let's find out how to achieve it.