

PD 25 meaning? by Woolf (2004)

Post by "Cassius" of May 11, 2026 at 10:08 AM

[Quote from wbernys](#)

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.

Ok yes then this is just where we have a disagreement as to the best and most accurate way of describing what Epicurus is doing.

It's the same problem I have with this sentence from Britannica:

psychological hedonism, in philosophical [psychology](#), the view that all human action is ultimately motivated by desires for [pleasure](#) and the avoidance of [pain](#). It has been espoused by a variety of distinguished thinkers, including [Epicurus](#), [Jeremy Bentham](#), and [John Stuart Mill](#), and important discussions of it can also be found in works by [Plato](#), [Aristotle](#), [Joseph Butler](#), [G.E. Moore](#), and [Henry Sidgwick](#).

In my view, nothing was added of value to the world or to the human race by those two sentences, ESPECIALLY as to the result them being to imply that Epicurus held the same views as Bentham or Mill, or even similar views to Plato, Aristotle, Butler, Moore, or Sidgwick.

Our friend Elli here I think makes a similar point when she refuses to discuss Epicurean philosophy as "Epicureanism." Grouping things together overbroadly creates major problems in the understanding of ordinary people. No doubt specialists in psychology and psychiatry may find such groupings helpful, in the same way that the term "American" can apply to someone who lives in Portland Oregon or San Francisco CA or New York NY or Mobile Alabama. They all live in the same continent, but to suggest for very long that we can generalize much about their psychology from that fact would be to make a major mistake.

This conversation really solidifies why I find it unhelpful to talk not only about "psychological hedonism" but to "hedonism" in general. There are so many ways of looking at these issues that to imply that there are other commonalities beyond the term "pleasure" being centrally involved is to create more confusion than clarity.

So probably as this conversation dies down we'll all go back to our separate observations as to when and where it is appropriate to talk about "hedonism" or "psychological hedonism," and this will be a "to each his own" issue of applying whatever terminology works best for a particular situation. And I can see the merits in that approach, even if I have to grit my teeth when the term comes up and think to myself "that person*** is trying to *apologize* for pleasure." 😊😊

*** Not a reference to Webernys or anyone here!