


# Hedonism's Schools of Thought

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# What is Hedonism?

- Hedonism says that the only things humans truly seek are pleasure and comfort.
- Hedonism is embodied by indulgence, and is often represented through concepts like gluttony or lust.

How is it different from egoism?

- Egoism says that people should pursue things that are beneficial or personally desirable. It prioritizes self-interest in all forms.
- Hedonism prioritizes pleasure over anything else.

An egoist might work hard to make money, and spend that money frugally.

A hedonist would avoid hard work whenever possible, and spend their money lavishly.



# The Cyrenaics

- **Core Beliefs:**
  - Pleasure is universally recognized by all humans as desirable
  - Pain is regarded as a natural evil in reverse



The cyrenaics look to obtain the goal of obtaining as much pleasure as possible whilst minimizing the amount of pain for a good life. Pain and pleasure are different from other values that thus make it “natural” e.g. unmarried pregnancies (from book) and burn are painful. So what cyrenaics mean furthermore about this good and evil is that they often accompany each other and thus cannot have one without the other. When wanting to partake the pleasure of eating, there is also the suffering of being hungry, but that intensifies the pleasure for eating. There are problems with cyrenaics views though such as people who partake in smoking, or eating a lot and thus deal with diseases in the lungs and obesity. So does the pleasure actually outweigh the pain in this instance?

# The Epicureans

- **Core Beliefs**

- Pleasure is the only natural good
- True happiness comes from gentle and refined pleasure that brings no pain.
- Not all pleasures are equal



Epicureanism focuses on pleasures that don't come with consequences. Instead of constant indulgence of what you want, Epicureans seek a balance amount of enjoyment – good wine in moderation, light meals, art that soothes rather than overwhelms. Ironically, the lifestyle requires more effort and restraint than most. These desires are different from person to person but also the guidelines of healthy regulation. While Epicureanism avoids the chaos of unchecked desire, critics argue that it sacrifices life's thrill in exchange for safety and mundaneness. It begs the question, is a life of quiet and self-contained pleasure enough for the average person in a ever-evolving world of infinitely nuanced lifestyles?

# The Cyrenaics Vs. The Epicureans

- Cyrenaics
  - Maximize pleasure
    - Physical comforts (eating, drinking, etc.)
  - Minimize pain
  - Characterized by indulgence
  - Pleasure and pain conflate, however
  - Excessive pleasure often implies eventual pain
- Epicureans
  - Similar ideas, but pleasures are different
    - “Gentle”, more mild pleasures
    - Enjoy but with significant restraint
  - Lack of indulgence
    - “Unnatural” constraints to pleasure
    - Results in more pleasure, less pain
  - Deviates from popular notion of hedonism
    - Again, from restraints



# Hedonism's Rebuttals



- At the end of the day, however, Hedonism has a main flaw: What *is* pleasure?
  - It cannot be fully quantified, nor fully qualified. Physical things such as sex and food provide pleasurable *sensations*, just like emotional satisfaction with a person feeling happy after a good day's work.
  - Therefore, this pursuit of pleasure is not actually completely defined, and can be quite misconstrued
  - Example::
    - A pig's life who just ate slop all day and lazed around, and Socrates being dissatisfied with his knowledge

Questions  
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