

Hedonism



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

There is no doubt that pleasure is good. Whether the pleasure is emotional or physical; whether we get this pleasure through taste, touch, sight, scent, or hearing ; it makes no difference. Pleasure is always enjoyable. In fact the words pleasure and good are often times interchangeable. After seeing a movie I liked, I may tell someone that the film was pleasurable or that it was good. Both descriptions have a positive connotation. But while pleasure is undoubtedly good, it is not the highest good and certainly not the only good, as the Hedonist would say.

First, we must look at examples throughout the world which will prove that pleasure is not the highest good. One example would be a sadistic child molester who gets pleasure out of raping young children. According to the Hedonist this sickening act would be good because the molester is getting pleasure out of it. Of course they would argue that this is not the pleasure they speak of because it will turn out to be bad for the molester in the long run. He will be sent to jail and be ostracized from society, causing him much more pain than pleasure.

Therefore this would not be an example of Hedonistic pleasure. But the Hedonist is making a very dangerous assumption: the molester will always get caught and always be punished. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Many people get away with their crimes everyday without feeling the wrath of justice. So if a molester gets pleasure out of little children, is it good? If a Hedonist were to answer yes, then it does not seem like a sound philosophical viewpoint. For another example, we can turn to the Holocaust.

Over six million Jews and countless others were killed at the hands of the Nazis. While many of the Nazis were disgusted by the killings (Oscar

Schindler was one) an even greater amount got pleasure out of it. They thought that they were doing the world a good by ridding it of the inferior human elements. It was this idea that led to millions of brutal deaths. Yet very few Nazis were ever prosecuted. Many fled to other countries and continued their lives without ever taking responsibility for the heinous crimes they committed.

In fact, many still felt inwardly proud of the duty they had done for the Aryan race. So according to the Hedonist the Nazis were doing nothing wrong as long as they were getting pleasure. Once again this is a hard concept to accept as true. A Hedonist will say to look closely at our society and lives and we will see that we live according to pleasure. Everyone wants to be happy and happiness is directly correlated with pleasure. But, in fact, our society is not run on the basis that pleasure is the highest good.

If it were, our whole justice system would fail. In court, a murderer's defense would be I got pleasure out of the killings. As a Hedonist, the judge would then have to set the criminal free. Our constitution is founded on the idea that every person has the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, but not pleasure. Our founding fathers knew that if our society was based solely on pleasure then people would be doing whatever they wanted to do whenever they wanted to do it. A Hedonistic society would be chaotic and anarchic; it simply would not work.