

Hedonism, Asceticism and the Hermetic Answer

The modern world more or less gives you the philosophical choice of either *hedonism* or *asceticism*. You never really hear it in those terms, but that's how it is.

Hedonism living for pleasure. Your default lifestyle is eating whatever, watching Netflix and playing video games irrespective of how late it is. You watch porn, masturbate, have sex as much as you can and any consequences of any of this are just facts of life which you view as either out of your control or worth the suffering. You might not use drugs because you are worried of the hedonistic damage it can cause, but you're at least "chill" with people who do. At a basic level, modern society is hedonistic because it more or less openly holds as highest moral value what can stimulate people the most. You know this is the case because anyone who *condemns* hedonistic behavior will immediately be judged as "judgemental."

Asceticism is supposed to be the "smart" alternative. Asceticism is rejecting pleasure, normal life and anything else enjoyable in the world as morally inferior to some higher non-physical ideal. Buddhism, which rejects the physical world, has become a popular meme philosophy in the West and is highly acetic. Vegans are acetic: they abandon basic life for their own principles and intense vegans will eventually start talking about "transcending" and "vibrations" and non-sense. Look at the anti-global warming movements and they fall perfectly, almost neurotically into this category. Asceticism come in many forms nowadays, but it is always a reaction to the indulgences of hedonism.

The Poetic Worldview

The Poetic Worldview is the solution. Don't worry, it has nothing to do with poetry.

The Greek word that *poetry/poetic* comes from actually is just a generate word for *make, create, produce*. The word "poetry" originally just meant something like "creative output."

This view is tied into early Platonism and monotheism. The physical universe is a creation or manifestation or "the One" or "the Source" or really *God*. God is the ultimate creator, and an individual is **good** insofar as *he reflects this creative tendency of God*. We see it expounded in the Hermetic Corpus:

“The other name of God is Father, again because He is the that-which-maketh-all. The part of father is to make.”

To Asclepius (17), from the Hermetic Corpus



Hermes Trismegistus,
author of the Hermetic Corpus

In the Poetic Worldview, **the highest moral goal is creation**. That can be:

- affecting the world,

- improving what is around you,
- having children,
- making money not to spend it on pleasures, but to make something new and great with it,
- writing or making something useful or edifying for others,
- clearing up misconceptions that get in other people's way in accomplishing these things.

From the Poetic worldview, hedonism is evil because it is expending otherwise creative energy into nothing of consequence. Racking up video-game achievements that no one will ever know or care of but you, watching pornography, pursuing fleeting relationships, impulsively wasting time browsing the internet and fiddling with social media.

This passive and impulsive pleasure-seeking reduces someone's ability to live as intended, instead, they are prisoners to their lusts and conveniences:

“But whatsoever human souls have not the Mind as pilot, they share in the same fate as souls of lives irrational. For [Mind] becomes co-worker with them, giving full play to the desires towards which [such souls] are borne,—[desires] that from the rush of lust strain after the irrational; [so that such human souls,] just like irrational animals, cease not irrationally to rage and lust, nor ever are they satiate of ills. For passions and irrational desires are ills exceeding great; and over these God hath set up the Mind to play the part of judge and executioner.” *About the Common Mind* (4), from the *Hermetic Corpus*

Hedonism is additionally harmful because *it isn't even hedonistic*. It's clumsy and self-destructive. Spend your life from ages 16-23 playing videogames, masturbating and smoking weed and you have destroyed your capacity to enjoy life, sex and have normal interactions with normal people. Your capacity for enjoyment ends and you fall into asceticism as a cope.

Asceticism is just as evil because it seeing this issue with the hedonistic lifestyle and tosses up its hands in surrender. It internalizes the lie that wasteful and sinful living is somehow obviously funner—when they see they aren't actually having fun, they throw the whole world away.

Most ascetics are liars anyway. They pretend to reject pleasure and worldly things, but they often just seek it in perverted or unconventional ways. There are men who call themselves MGTOW (Men going their own way) who "swear off" women. In reality, most of them are just desperate porn-addicted men who just can't get the girl they want.

Contrary to all of this, having a Poetic view proposes that the more moral and also most enjoyable life is one where one is constantly creating something new out of what he is given. In Hermetic thinking (and, well, Christian thinking) man must hold God as the idea to emulate. Since God's principle feat is creation from nothing, our goal is to celebrate that creation by making something new and productive from the raw materials we have.

Asceticism views the material world *as a mistake or illusion* which leads people to reject life itself. The Poetic view is that the physical world is a **reflection its spiritual state**, and what you do in the physical world reflects your spiritual stature.

The Poetic view is *somewhat* similar to Nietzsche's *Will to Power*, which was an attempt to unite both human and material sciences under the idea that the ideal is maximizing one's output on the external world. Will to Power is a little more morally ambivalent though; it can include destruction, while Poeticism merely values creative power.

Distractions are literally evil.

This is why *I highly condemn wasteful activities like videogames and pornography and social media.* They are principally habits that divert your natural energies into something absolutely sterile. **Many people ask me “What can I do to be more productive?”** and I have to say that the most important thing is to **remove inert distractions and habits.**

Due to bureaucratic workplaces and bureaucratic education, there are many modern people who *just don't know what it means to be productive.* Most of their lives might be someone trying to fill their day with busywork. Since the normal enjoyable ritual of creative output is unknown to them, this causes a kind of aimlessness and the feelings of inferiority that comes with that.

But in truth, you live at **an ideal period** in that you can have a highly impactful and ergo *poetic* effect on the world using internet technology and the higher material standard of living. The only trick is to sidestep the distractions of hedonism that turns you into a passive consumer and the apathy of asceticism.

 [Luke's Homepage](#)

 [Donate](#)