

Imagery On The Interplay Between "Pursue Pleasure" and 'Avoid Pain"

Post by "Cassius" of March 28, 2023 at 9:09 AM

Due to a recent message of a statement by David Sedley as to "The primary goal should be the absence of pain" I am wondering if we can come up with some imagery that would help crystallize this issue. Since for me as a boomer all things resolve to scenes from Star Trek the Original Series, one of the first images that comes to mind is the constant tension between Captain Kirk demanding "more power" from the engines while Engineer Scott would say "it's going to blow" unless you let off.

That example would lead me to compare Kirk's demand for "power" (pleasure) to Scot's warning of impending disaster (pain). BOTH are required for proper operation of the starship, but I would contend that never in a million years would a deep-thinking person reverse the roles and place Scott in charge of the operation of the starship, except in extreme circumstances. The original nature and goal of the starship entails using the engines and the power that is available to them to further the mission, which inherently involves danger and difficulties, which the ship is constructed and improved to overcome to the best of its ability.

I am sure that others (@Nate ?) have better ideas for illustrating this, but it seems to me that there can never be too many ways of arguing and showing that the undisturbed pursuit of pleasure is ultimately why we seek to avoid pain, not the other way around.

And yet one of the primary living authorities on Epicurus can read all the texts available and still conclude that in the end and as his ultimate conclusion, Epicurus held "the primary goal should be the absence of pain."

Here's one clip illustrating how we subordinate risk and danger and sometimes choose pain in the pursuit of pleasure/avoidance of worst pain, but i want one where Scot says that the engines are going to blow:

<https://youtu.be/sFGmhvx1elk>

[MorePower!](#)

[scotty08.mp3](#)

[scotty12.mp3](#)

<https://www.barbneal.com/wp-content/uploads/scotty08.mp3>

<https://www.barbneal.com/wp-content/uploads/scotty12.mp3>

Post by “Kalosyni” of March 28, 2023 at 9:33 AM

That is an interesting analogy, and if it was a choice between certain death and less likely death but still a highly risky maneuver, then you gotta choose.

But this doesn't show how we take into account that the ability to maximize pleasure requires us to stay alive. There is no pleasure when you are dead. And that means that Epicureans are not going to be daredevils like Evel Knievel. So the sensory pleasure of flying through the air and the "vain" desire to be able to say you successfully jumped a wide ravine will be set aside, and we would choose to pursue wiser pleasures.

Post by “Cassius” of March 28, 2023 at 10:02 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

And that means that Epicureans are not going to be daredevils like Evel Knievel. So the sensory pleasure of flying through the air and the "vain" desire to be able to say you successfully jumped a wide ravine will be set aside, and we would choose to pursue wiser pleasures.

I think the example of Evel Knievel is a good one but the conclusion that "Epicureans are not going to be daredevils like Evel Knievel is much too broad. We'd have to drill down into Evel Knievel and see if he had a death wish, or whether he rationally thought that he could make his jumps and succeed, because if he did, then he calculated that the pleasure he gained from the experience was worth the risk, and in my view that is **exactly** the correct calculus under the Epicurean scheme.

We also have the example of our departed friend whose picture we feature on the front page of the forum, who died in an ultralight crash. No doubt he thought that the pleasure he gained from ultralight flying was worth the risk, and so that would similarly be a choice very

compatible with Epicureanism.

It's in fact the "I'll never take any risk that might bring pain" attitude that I think is so damaging and in fact UN-Epicurean.



More on the story of Amrinder Singh:
epicureanfriends.com/thread/709/

Post by “Cassius” of March 28, 2023 at 10:12 AM

I did not realize that [Evel Knievel](#) survived all his jumps and lived to die of diabetes and pulmonary fibrosis at age 69. So he apparently was prudently planning his jumps and thought it to be worthwhile and did not have a death wish at all.

Now I wouldn't hold him up as a paragon of philosophy because his statements apparently tend toward a view that people will interpret as Stoic:

Core values (+4)

Evel Knievel took great pride in his core values. Throughout his career and later life he would repeatedly talk about the importance of “keeping his word.”^[1] He stated that although he knew he may not successfully make a jump or even survive the canyon jump, he followed through with each stunt because he gave his word that he would. Before the canyon jump, Knievel stated, “If someone says to you, ‘That guy should have never jumped the canyon. You know if he did, that he’d lose his life and that he was crazy.’ Do me a favor. Tell him that you saw me here and regardless of what I say, that you know me, and that I kept my word.”^[2]

In *Land of the Giants*, Knievel discussed the crash of a 1970 Pepsi-Cola sponsored jump in Yelm, Washington. Knievel knew the jump was very questionable, but stated, “I went ahead and did it anyway. When you give your word to somebody that you’re going to do something, you’ve gotta do it.” In the 1971 book, George Hamilton (as Knievel) emphasizes in the opening monologue that a man does not go back on his word.

But just as many people observe, including I think Emily Austin in her articles on Stoicism, someone who thinks that “keeping your word” is a prime value is virtually indistinguishable in reality from “I get great pleasure from knowing that I keep my word.”

So I could see Evel Knievel as entirely Epicurean.

Especially since he apparently started framing things in terms of Christianity only at the end of his life:

Christian conversion (+1)

On April 1, 2007, Knievel appeared on Robert H. Schuller's television program *Hour of Power* and announced that he “believed in Jesus Christ” for the first time.^[3] At his request, he was baptized at a televised congregation at the *Crystal Cathedral* by Schuller. Knievel's televised testimony triggered mass baptisms at the *Crystal Cathedral*.^[4]

Not all of us are going to rank the pleasures of risk and danger as highly as Knievel did, but since there is no absolute standard of how you *should* rank your pleasures, I would say Epicurus would have no issue with Knievel's choices, at least on an abstract level.

Post by “Kalosyni” of March 28, 2023 at 10:45 AM

Quote from Cassius

Not all of us are going to rank the pleasures of risk and danger as highly as Knievel did, but since there is no absolute standard of how you *should* rank your pleasures, I would say Epicurus would have no issue with Knievel's choices, at least on an abstract level.

I can't agree with you here, because:

PD16: "Chance steals only a bit into the life of a wise person: for throughout the complete span of his life the greatest and most important matters have been, are, and will be directed by the power of reason."

I feel certain that Epicurus would not approve of Knievel's choices and actions, because he was clearly leaving it up to chance, when he said he knew that several of his jumps were questionable but he went ahead and did it anyway. And he had a hard time getting insurance. He was badly injured with broken bones countless times (and I would guess he probably was addicted to pain medication, though didn't read the full [Wikipedia article](#)). He was definitely into it for the fame and the money.

Post by "Cassius" of March 28, 2023 at 12:06 PM

Yep we will have to disagree on that. I would say that Epicurus as a philosopher gives us the analysis and the formula but not a mandate for the application. It's all a matter of what happens to us if we choose one course versus another, and there is no magic formula by which we can say that one person's view of pleasure is absolutely preferable over another person's view of pleasure. We're all entitled to our own choices, and we reap the rewards or pay the price accordingly.

Edit: The real issue to me would revolve around the details of Evel Knievel which takes us into the issue of how hard it is (and how without standing we are) to judge the decisions of other people. We can put ourselves in their position mentally, and we can talk about general rules of how to analyze things, but to me it is a bright line that I think we should hesitate to cross to pass sweeping judgments since we are not in the shoes of the people involved. If it were easy, or if there were any "absolute" standard, by which we could do that, then we'd have another situation, but I don't think life works like that, and I suspect that is why Epicurus himself did not generally (or ever?) make sweeping statements about precise things to do and not to do.

We can conceptually say "Follow Pleasure" and "Avoid Pain" but it seems to me that the precise steps to attain that are going to be contextual, and I don't see how it can be any other way in a universe structured without central authority or absolute moral rules.

Post by "Don" of March 28, 2023 at 2:03 PM

Epicurus was not above evaluating other's choices and offering what one ought not do. He explicitly said "Therefore, whenever we say repeatedly that 'pleasure is the τέλος,' we do not say the pleasure of those who are prodigal like those who are ignorant, those who don't agree with us, or those who believe wrongly; but we mean that which neither pains the body nor troubles the mind. *For it is not an endless string of drinking parties and festivals, and not taking advantage of slaves and women, nor does an extravagant table of fish and other things bring forth a sweet life* but self-controlled reasoning and examining the cause of every choice and rejection and driving out the greatest number of opinions that take hold of the mind and bring confusion and trouble."

The whole idea of Epicurean teachers using frank speech to correct the actions of students and to guide them in a better direction is well documented.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

there is no magic formula by which we can say that one persons view of pleasure is absolutely preferable over another person's view of pleasure. We're all entitled to our own choices, and we reap the rewards or pay the price accordingly.

While there's no "magic formula" and each person is responsible for the consequences of their choices, that doesn't imply there aren't better courses of actions or more preferable choices to make.

Epicurus could say each person chooses their own pleasure, but he was not above saying that this or that choice would not end well and guiding someone to make a "better" choice.

Post by “Cassius” of March 28, 2023 at 2:18 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

Epicurus could say each person chooses their own pleasure, but he was not above saying that this or that choice would not end well and guiding someone to make a "better" choice.

I agree with that - it's kind of like the comments Emily Austin makes about the differences in being a philosopher vs a "life coach." Life coaches better have a philosophy or they won't be making much sense with their advice. But even the best life coaches are dependent on what their students really want to do. "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make them

drink." No matter how much we think that the choice for the other person is "better," it's ultimately up to them what they choose to do.

And it's also interesting to think that this relates to the other issue that Epicurus was so strong on - determinism. There would be nothing so dispiriting and discouraging than to give in to the idea that we *don't* have the choice about what to do with our lives.

But even as we debate this practical angle, the ultimate philosophical point remains and I think we all agree on it -- that in the end life is a balance between pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain, but while we sometimes choose pain in order to pursue pleasure, we never set "avoiding pain" as the primary overriding purpose of life.

So that's the reason that this thread is important: as a philosophic matter the starting point is the overall focus of life, and what gives it whatever enjoyment and meaning it has, is "pleasure" and not "avoiding pain."

Post by "Don" of March 28, 2023 at 3:06 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

No matter how much we think that the choice for the other person is "better," it's ultimately up to them what they choose to do.

Definitely. But that doesn't preclude the teacher from saying, "Told ya. Now, let's review what happened and how to avoid those consequences in the future."

Post by "Don" of March 28, 2023 at 4:03 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

we never set "avoiding pain" as the primary overriding purpose of life.

For the record, I agree.

Post by “Kalosyni” of March 28, 2023 at 4:53 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

But even as we debate this practical angle, the ultimate philosophical point remains and I think we all agree on it -- that in the end life is a balance between pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain, but while we sometimes choose pain in order to pursue pleasure, we never set "avoiding pain" as the primary overriding purpose of life.

Yes, I agree with this. And it is all much more complex than this - and in certain situations we really do need to be sensitive to the balance of pain and pleasure that we feel inside our bodies.

I was pondering today, that there is a strange paradox in the pursuit of pleasure -- it is as if nature gives us a reward to reinforce certain behaviors.

For example: When we are hungry there is pain present from the hunger. The stomach growls and there is a slight feeling of stomach acid in the empty stomach prompting us to eat to relieve the discomfort. As we eat, there is enjoyment of the taste and smell of the food to reinforce the behavior of eating. When we get full, there is the sensation of fullness which signals that it is time to stop eating, and depending on the level of fullness can cause varying levels of discomfort. Of course we can eat at times when we are no longer hungry and enjoy the variation of the experience of taste and smell. But eating more than necessary can lead to a sluggish feeling (not to mention weight gain). When food becomes a source of emotional comfort, we are also potentially eating too many calories (and we may be taking the easy way out of a situation instead of doing the harder work of finding ways to get emotional support or activities which relieve the pain of boredom).

If we know how (or learn) to stop eating when we are at the right level of fullness, then that in itself can bring a kind of pleasure, since we will have relieved the hunger and also have good energy (and not feel sluggish).

So what I am saying is that there is a complex mix of pleasure and pain - removing pain and adding pleasure. And there may be other areas in life that have this interplay.

Post by “Cassius” of March 28, 2023 at 5:17 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

For the record, I agree.

And that's a huge point. For the record also, I would like to think that David Sedley agrees too, but I am sorry that he and a significant number of other commentators seem to think that Epicurus would not and may statements implying or stating otherwise.

That's probably a litmus test by which I would personally evaluate whether I wanted someone as my life coach. If the advisor ultimately sees life as worth living due to the pleasure we can gain from it, then all the details about how to proceed are reconcilable. If they ultimately equivocate (or even state explicitly that escape from pain is their number one goal), then I would at least say that they aren't a very good teacher of Epicurus.

Post by “Joshua” of March 28, 2023 at 6:13 PM

I mainly see it as a question of emphasis--with the caveat being that what we emphasize in life colors our perception of what life amounts to while we live it.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=n60s9levLsM>

Post by “Eikadistes” of March 28, 2023 at 7:57 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I am sure that others (@Nate ?) have better ideas for illustrating this, but it seems to me that there can never be too many ways of arguing and showing that the undisturbed pursuit of pleasure is ultimately why we seek to avoid pain, not the other way around.

I like anything to do with Star Trek. 👍

Post by “Cassius” of March 28, 2023 at 8:58 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

what we emphasize in life colors our perception of what life amounts to while we live it.

That's a good one Joshua, and reminds me of the 'glass half full or half empty' analogy, but I can't think of a good dramatization of that one.

Post by “Don” of March 28, 2023 at 11:40 PM

[Joshua](#) 's video and [Cassius](#) 's "glass full/empty" metaphor are spot on. This is something I can never wrap my brain around. Why insist it's either/or?? By definition, if one side of the seesaw goes down, the other side goes up. By pursuing pleasure, we are, by definition, avoiding pain. As we reduce pain, we increase pleasure. "The feelings - pleasure and pain - are two." It's all a matter of focus or perspective, and sometimes one focus is helpful. Other times, the other focus is helpful.

Post by “Cassius” of March 29, 2023 at 6:28 AM

Good point. Sometimes I think what is going on is clearly manipulation from the outside, and that has to be seen through to get past it and defeat it.

But other times we do it to ourselves based on "mood" or "frame of mind" or "attitude" or something like that.

And concern about attitude reminds me of this point:

EPICURUS AND HIS PHILOSOPHY

Throughout this book certain devices of procedure will be employed which were worked out and practiced by Epicurus himself. One of these has been exemplified in the preceding paragraphs. He laid special stress upon the importance of the diathesis or the **attitude** to be chosen at the beginning. For instance, in the very first of his forty Authorized Doctrines the disciple is informed that the gods are not to be feared, because “the incorruptible being is immune to feelings of anger or gratitude.” If only the disciple could maintain this attitude, it was felt that he would be rightly disposed to receive all subsequent instruction about the nature of the gods. On this same principle the hope is here entertained that, if the reader habituates himself from the outset to think of Epicurus as both the most revered and the most reviled of all ancient philosophers, he will be rightly prepared to judge with impartiality the course of his life and the true structure of his doctrine.

And in regard to habit, this Vatican Saying:

VS46. Let us utterly drive from us our bad habits, as if they were evil men who have long done us great harm.

Post by “Kalosyni” of March 29, 2023 at 10:13 AM

As I was thinking further, I found some articles which you can read in this post:

Post

[Hedonic Motivation - Seeking pleasure/reward and avoiding pain/punishment](#)

This [Wikipedia article: Hedonic Motivation](#) is interesting:

[...]

And a [Frontiers article: Truth, control, and value motivations: the “what,” “how,” and “why” of approach and avoidance](#) (which I have not yet finished reading but wanted to include):

[...]



Kalosyni

March 29, 2023 at 9:46 AM

And thinking further that we as Epicureans are choosing to put a greater emphasis on seeking rewards and pleasure rather than on fearing punishment or pain. So while it is natural to be motivated by both pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain, it can actually be a sign of poor mental health if one is only focused on avoiding pain.

Quote

The latest research from the [Bo Li Lab](#) suggests that an imbalance between the push-pull of GABAergic and glutamatergic VP neurons skews "positive vs. negative motivation and may explain behaviors associated with [psychiatric](#) disorders like [depression](#) or [anxiety](#)."

People suffering from major depressive disorder (MDD) are often unmotivated to seek out things that once gave them pleasure. Those of us who are prone to generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) often go to extreme lengths to avoid situations that seem threatening.

[Source](#)

Perhaps one day there will be something called "pleasure therapy".

Hoping that all of what we are posting in this thread may give some food for thought and inspiration for @Nate to create more fun memes, as he always comes up with such imaginative ones. 😊

Post by “Pacatus” of March 29, 2023 at 1:50 PM

I just want to add that nagging anxiety over “choosing correctly” is itself a detraction from hedone and ataraxia (and I tend to react negatively that way - with a kind of emotional clutch - every time I hear the phrase “hedonic (or Epicurean) calculus” or the like; that’s just me

personally, from my own personal history – and I never enjoyed math ☹️). But the answer to that cannot be some cookie-cutter rote set of rules – as it becomes for some religionists, for example. (And I think Cassius emphasizes that point). I am also reminded here of Kalosyni’s felicitous phrase: “tools, not rules.”

I am also reminded of a slogan popular in 12-Step rooms: “Easy does it.” Depending on how you inflect that, it can be taken to mean “take it easy” – or “easy [really] does do it,” as opposed to stress-based “sturm und drang.” And some people really seem committed (even addicted) to that kind of stress, and constantly worrying over whether they (or someone else) will “get it wrong.”

Pleasure and pain are experiential: therapy (philosophy) can help guide us out of our ruts – but we make the choices however we make them. And we live with the experiential results (some of which may not have been well-anticipated). And, hopefully, we keep learning as we go. And, for me, ataraxia involves adopting an underlying serenity about all that – even in the face of uncertainty.

And so, when I feel that reactive emotional clutch, I tell myself: “Easy does it.” ☹️ And, for me, that is part of (the attraction of) the Epicurean way – as opposed to say, the Stoics.

Post by “Godfrey” of March 30, 2023 at 12:36 AM

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

(and I tend to react negatively that way – with a kind of emotional clutch – every time I hear the phrase “hedonic (or Epicurean) calculus” or the like; that’s just me personally,

Amen to that! It's not just you, [Pacatus](#) .

Post by “Cassius” of March 30, 2023 at 7:06 AM

I am sympathetic too that neither word is one I like to use - Hedonism is too foreign-sounding to me, and "calculus" is especially a problem - it rings of just the kind of logic or mathematics that Epicurus warned against. It also implies a Benthamite-sounding view that pleasure and pain are easily measured and quantified and can be evaluated by logical units.

I know not everyone agrees, but to me "Hedonic calculus" is a label that rings of just the same kind of stoic-perspective reinterpretation of Epicurus that can be such a misleading problem. I use it sometimes in certain settings but I don't think it is the best way to approach non specialists.

Post by "Don" of March 30, 2023 at 8:05 AM

"Hedonic calculus" does seem to be essentially an outdated, Benthamite Utilitarianism term, originally associated with literally counting up the dolors and hedons... which is in reality impossible, from my perspective. There is no absolute quantification of pleasure points or pain values. Choice and rejection is an art, not a science.

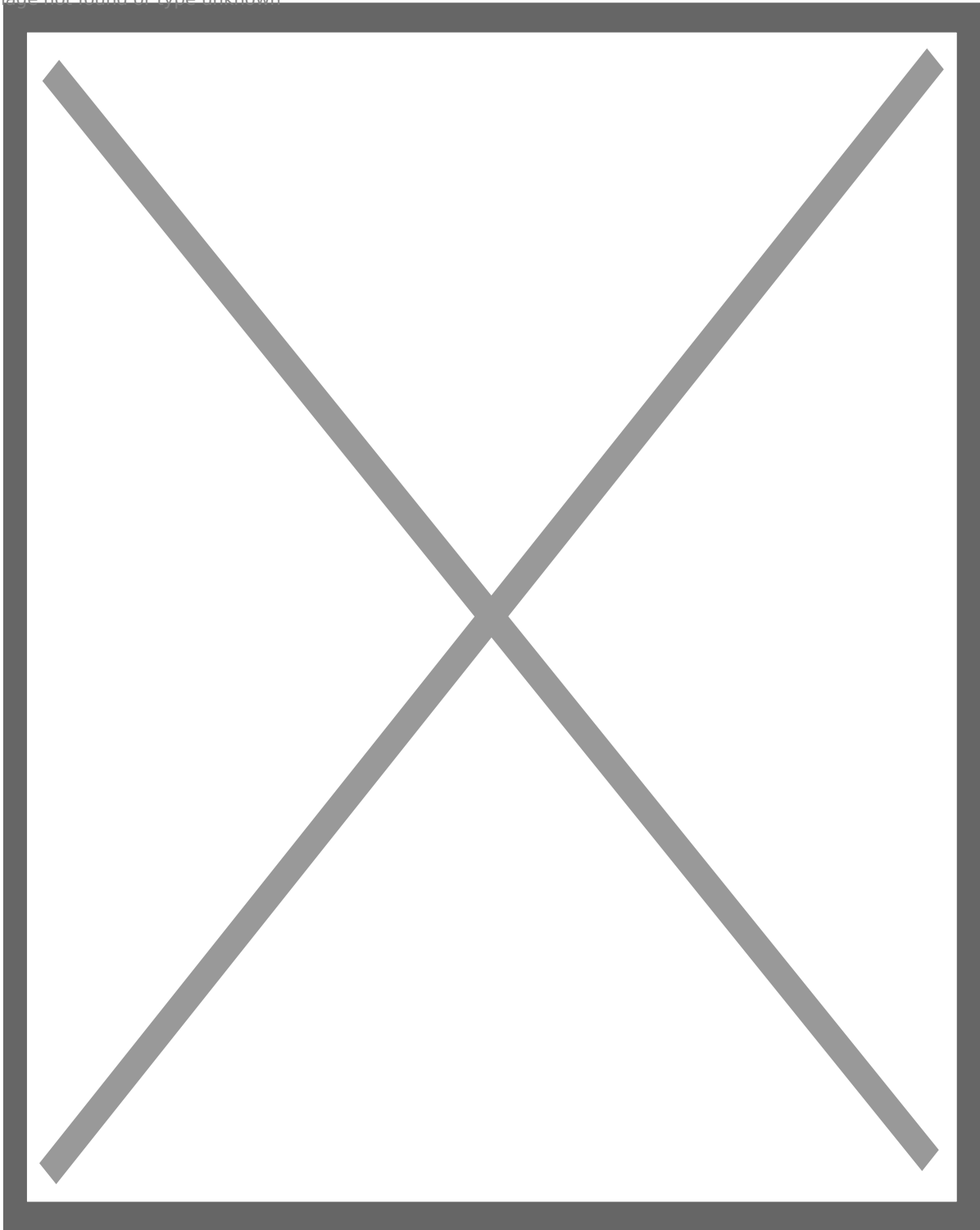
Maybe it *would* be better to retire that phrase. "Calculus" implies some kind of single answer to the calculation.

"Choice and rejection" is not a math problem. It's a personal decision, albeit one that can -- should -- be informed by study and/or talking with a friend, guide, or other trusted person.

[Felicific calculus - Wikipedia](#)

Here's an interesting *Humanist* article from 2015 by Hiram Crespo that quotes Cassius, Onfray, and others:

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[Whose Pleasure? Whose Pain? Applying the Hedonic Calculus to Public Policy - TheHumanist.com](#)

“We must, therefore, pursue the things that make for happiness, seeing that when happiness is present, we have everything; but when it is absent, we do...”

Post by “Eikadistes” of March 30, 2023 at 9:01 AM

συμμέτρησις is the word I prefer to use in the place of "*hedonic calculus*."

Post by “Cassius” of March 30, 2023 at 9:06 AM

[Quote from Nate](#)

Symmetresis" is the word I prefer to use in the place of "hedonic calculus."

That post cries out for explanation, Nate! 😊

Post by “Kalosyni” of March 30, 2023 at 10:21 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

There is no absolute quantification of pleasure points or pain values. Choice and rejection is an art, not a science.

Maybe it *would* be better to retire that phrase. "Calculus" implies some kind of single answer to the calculation.

"Choice and rejection" is not a math problem. It's a personal decision

I like the phrase "choices and avoidances"...and even if it is a long phrase, it is very clear what is being talked about.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from Nate](#)

Symmetresis" is the word I prefer to use in the place of "hedonic calculus."

That post cries out for explanation, Nate! 😊

I Googled that word, and see it on several site's index listings, but when I click on those pages cannot find a direct translation or reference as to where that word originates, so I am very curious @Nate 😊

Post by “Eikadistes” of March 30, 2023 at 10:45 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from Nate](#)

Symmetresis" is the word I prefer to use in the place of "hedonic calculus."

That post cries out for explanation, Nate! 😊

ΣΥΜΜΕΤΡΗΣΙΣ - συμμετρήσις - symmétrēsis - Epicurus uses the word as συμμετρήσει (*symmetrēsei*) when describing “measuring things side by side and looking at both the advantages and disadvantages” (*Ep. Men.*)

In Epicurus’ *Epistle To Herodotus*, he uses several inflections of the word to refer to the process of arriving at correct judgments about sensation: σύμμετρον (47, 50), σύμμετροι (54), συμμετρότερον; and then several more times in his *Epistle To Pythocles*: (91), συμμετρίας (107), συμμετρώς (110), συμμετρώς (111), συμμετρήσει (130).

Post by “Don” of March 30, 2023 at 11:13 AM

Great call, Nate!! I don't know how that passed me by!

[130] So, all pleasure, through its nature, belongs to us as a good; however, not all are elected; and just as all pains are entirely evil by their nature, so not all are always to be shunned. It is proper when judging these things to consider what is advantageous and what is not advantageous for you; in other words, what the consequences will be. We consult the consequences of our actions; because, on the one hand, pleasure over time can lead to pain; and on the other hand, pain can lead to pleasure.

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, Σ ζ, , συμμ<ε>ικτέον , συμμέτρ-ησις](#)

Post by “Cassius” of March 30, 2023 at 1:10 PM

So what are the literal definitions of that word. I can't imagine Don will be satisfied unless we have three or four synonymous usages!

Ok I see the dictionary version....

Seems I remember something similar in the Torquatus discussion about analogies and extensions perhaps.

Post by “Cassius” of March 30, 2023 at 1:18 PM

I believe I was thinking about these words from Diogenes Laertius, which had me thinking in terms of an emphasis on judging things by comparison with other things that are none, in contrast perhaps to judging things against abstract definitions:

Quote

For all thoughts have their origin in sensations by means of coincidence and analogy and similarity and combination, reasoning too contributing something. And the visions of the insane and those in dreams are true, for they cause movement, and that which does not exist cannot cause movement.

Post by “Godfrey” of March 30, 2023 at 1:24 PM

"Measuring" brings to mind the "measuring stick" (Canon). Is that more than coincidence? Is there a relation in the Greek, or is it just a quirk of the English?

It does seem to me that the faculties of the Canon are quite useful in judgments of the type being discussed.

Post by "Kalosyni" of March 30, 2023 at 1:54 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

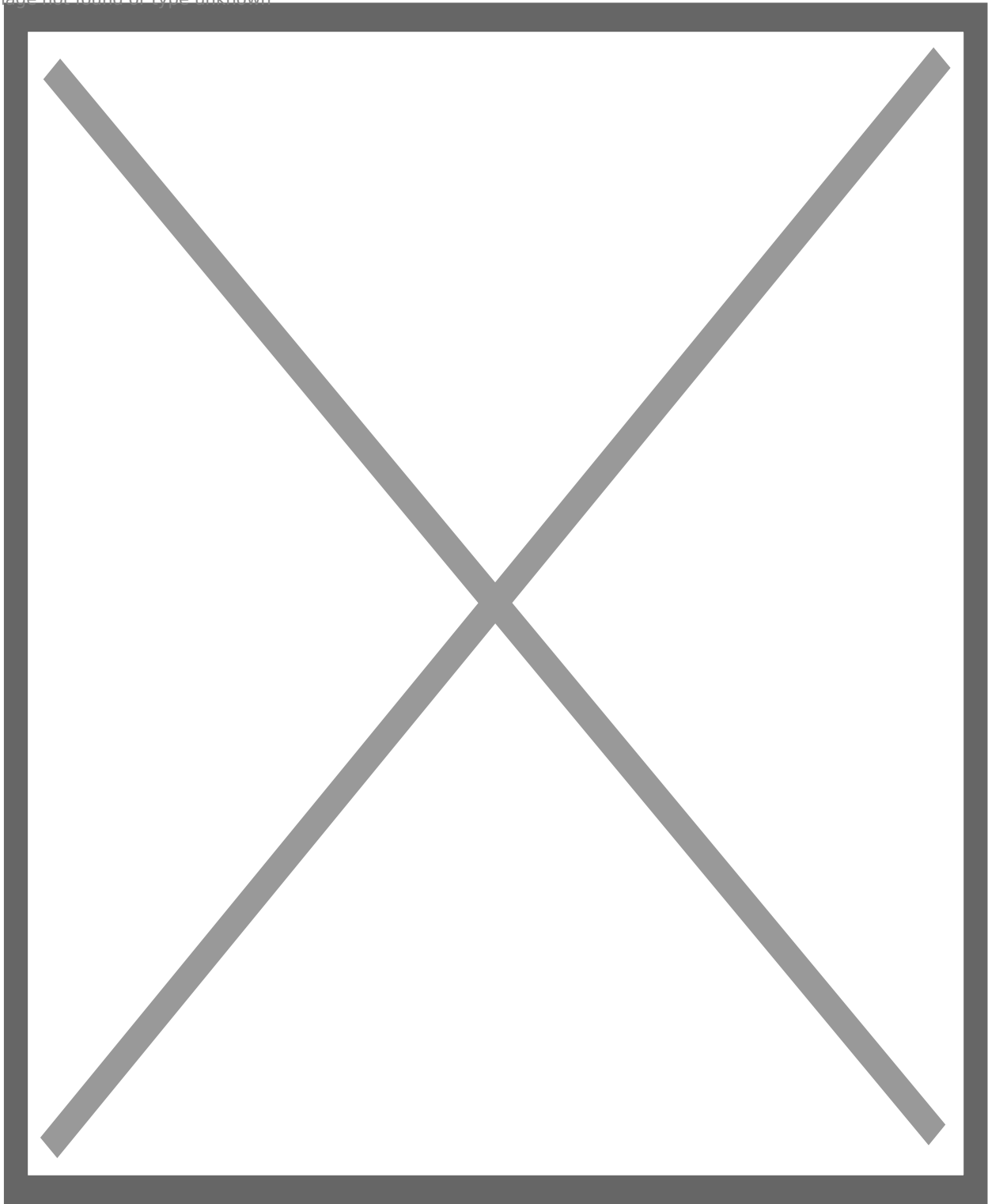
"Measuring" brings to mind the "measuring stick" (Canon). Is that more than coincidence? Is there a relation in the Greek, or is it just a quirk of the English?

It does seem to me that the faculties of the Canon are quite useful in judgments of the type being discussed.

On thinking further, back in ancient Greece divination was common (and I need to do more research to find out more about how common it was). So having a method of making good choices and avoidances would have been of utmost importance in order to counter any urges for using superstitious divination.

Post by "Don" of March 30, 2023 at 5:36 PM

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[Greek divination - Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org)
en.wikipedia.org

Post by “Don” of March 30, 2023 at 8:22 PM

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

"Measuring" brings to mind the "measuring stick" (Canon). Is that more than coincidence? Is there a relation in the Greek, or is it just a quirk of the English?

I can see where you're coming from; but, unfortunately, it's just a quirk of English. The canon is κανών kanōn. Symmetrēsis does have connections to English meter.

Post by “Don” of March 31, 2023 at 10:10 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

So what are the literal definitions of that word. I can't imagine Don will be satisfied unless we have three or four synonymous usages!

Ok I see the dictionary version....

Seems I remember something similar in the Torquatus discussion about analogies and extensions perhaps.

There's also the verb:

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, Σ ζ, , συμμ<ε>ικτέον , συμμετρ-έω](#)

Consider the συμ- sym- similar to the sym- in sympathy "together with (feeling "pathy"))"

-metreō "measure"

So... Measuring one thing together with another, weighing against each other, judging two things together, etc.