

A Hypothetical To Assist Self-Awareness And Understanding - "Which Shall It Be?"



[Please click HERE to go right to the spot for the hypothetical.](#)

The following is a hypothetical that should assist us in thinking about several important issues, including the nature of pleasure, its relationship to "absence of pain," and our comfort level with describing pleasure as "absence of pain." The question is set up by a short two minute movie clip - the final scene of the 1936 British HG Wells movie "Things to Come." What happens previously in the movie is not important to the hypothetical. By the end of the movie, the script has systematically eliminated almost every issue of social conflict imaginable. Both characters in the clip are from the same society, same economic and social background, have no religious position, and have very little at issue between them except the question raised in this sequence. In siding with one over the other there are no political, social, economic, or religious implications to your choice.

One character in the clip is named John Cabal - he is the taller, darkheaded man on the left who speaks first. The other character is Pippa Passworthy - he is on the right and speaks second.

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/336-a-hypothetical-to-assist-self-awareness-and-understanding-which-shall-it-be/?postID=757#post757>

Both Cabal and Passworthy are leaders of their society, set somewhere far in the future. Both have just watched their children - Passworthy's son and Cabal's daughter - launched in a risky space shot toward the moon, from which they may very possibly die in the effort, and not return.

Both of the children enthusiastically wanted to go, but among the fathers there is disagreement. One argues that what has happened is good; the other argues that what has happened is bad. After watching the clip, please select which of the four responses most closely mirrors your thoughts. **There are no wrong answers.** Let's presume several important things: (1) Both Cabal and Passworthy are extreme and dramatized examples of their relative positions. Epicurus would endorse neither character in full - both would fall short of what Epicurus would recommend. (2) The four poll options are worded also so as to eliminate extremes as to the meaning of "absence of pain." Given adequate explanation, each option is fully defensible under Epicurean philosophy.

The hypothetical question ("Which Shall It Be?) is to be answered by choosing only one selection. Which of these four options most closely reflects your own viewpoint about pleasure, absence of pain, and which character you more closely identify with from this clip?

If possible, please explain your answer in the comments afterwards. Say what you selected, and why. But please select only one answer: