

Odyssey's example of a drug for mental pains

Post by “Pacatus” of March 29, 2023 at 5:01 PM

[PD10](#). If the things that produce the pleasures of profligates could dispel the fears of the mind about the phenomena of the sky, and death, and its pains, and also teach the limits of desires (and of pains), we should never have cause to blame them: for they would be filling themselves full, with pleasures from every source, and never have pain of body or mind, which is the evil of life.

~ ~ ~

[Onenski](#)

I think a lot hinges on that “If”. But I don’t think it is that simple – dipping my imaginative toe into water where I really don’t want to: if my dear wife died, I cannot imagine taking such a drug to assuage my grief – if it also caused me to forget our years together.

~ ~ ~

Let me share a personal (real) story – since that is, in the end, all I really have to offer:

I was on a business trip, as a passenger in a small plane that was trying to land in strong cross-wind gusts. The pilots had left the curtain between the cabin and cockpit open, so I could see clearly (as well as feel) how the plane was violently tossed about on each failed attempt at approach.

I was truly convinced that I was going to die (not the first time). I remember thinking: “What do I want in my mind at the end?” And I conjured up the image of my dear wife’s face, and just held it there – ignoring everything else. I was not aware when the plane did, eventually, land and taxi to the terminal. I had lost myself, as it were, in that reverie – and had to be shaken out of it to disembark.

~ ~ ~

I wonder if that experience is not akin to Epicurus in his final, painful, days. Assuaging the physical pain (as I did my fear) by remembering in his imagination pleasures with dear friends?

So, yeah – I fell into your thought experiment anyway. ☐ After all, the (at least implied) premise is “what we choose?” – not “what would we have chosen?” if we knew some other unspecified stuff. And how our Epicureanism might inform that. Not? In my case, it would lead me to make the same choice ... (I hope.)