

Odyssey's example of a drug for mental pains

Post by "Onenski" of March 30, 2023 at 12:53 PM

The details of the *Odyssey* are these: Helen's drug was put in the wine of Telemachus and Menelaus, because they were crying a lot. They didn't notice that they were drinking it. The duration of the effect was of one day. After they drank the wine, they went to sleep.

The text says that they "forget every evil" or "every ill",. Since Telemachus can't forget that his father is lost (because he wouldn't know why he's in the palace of Menelaus), the drug probably just stopped the mental pain, he remembers the same.

The passages continues saying that even the death of their parents, or any relative, wouldn't make them cry for one day.

Adapting to epicurean causes of suffering, if I take the drug, it's possible that I still have worries about death, gods, security from other men, etc., but I won't feel any suffering. I could even have more pleasures: be with friends, have a banquet, study nature, dance or whatever. In this case, I guess the only problem can be prudence, because some fears are useful, and the drug doesn't permit to feel them.

Anyway, I don't want to present the thought experiment in a tricky way and make the discussion more and more hypothetical. I just thought that it's another example of the common objection to epicureanism.