

The garden as life.

Post by “Adrian” of February 17, 2023 at 3:48 PM

The garden is a place of healing, health and friendship. There are many images of the Epicurean garden, and perhaps my favourite is that by JMW Turner. I imagine that other than simply sitting and conversing in the garden that the lovers of wisdom would have looked after the soil and tended the plants. Presumably the range of plants would be similar to those seen in a Greek garden today.

The garden is a place of healing as the Victorians knew full well. The Victorians had gardens built as an essential part of both general and mental/psychiatric hospitals. There is healing in contact with nature which we have forgotten or neglected, and this is shown by even a cursory look at the contemporary hospital which has become a factory for healthcare. My local psychiatric hospital in a species of Orwellian newspeak is called ‘Greenparks House’ – it is not green and has no park.

The Victorians built parks in the towns and created school playing fields. Many of these have now been built over and lost. They also constructed allotments in the towns for the use of the countryfolk who had moved there. My wife and I have an allotment and we feel very Epicurean working in the sunlight, tending our fruits and vegetables, and talking with our allotment neighbours. And so much of the sterility of our modern culture can be seen as being related to our alienation from the natural world.

The best place to read and think is when surrounded by vegetables and birdsong.