

Thoughts and Concerns in Chapter 2

Post by "Cassius" of April 13, 2020 at 1:09 PM

This is what I recall as to "sound mind in sound body" --

From such materialistic reasoning arose the famous Epicurean doctrine of the dualistic good, health of body and health of mind. Even if no longer citable in so many words from the extant remains, it is abundantly assumed; it was absorbed anonymously into the stream of Western culture and survives in thought and literature down to our day. In Rome, where Epicurean teaching under Augustus was forced into anonymity, this ideal was publicized by the poet Horace, though verbally concealed with such painstaking felicity in a mosaic of diction that recognition escapes the commentators:

frui paratis et valido mihi,
Latoë, dones, at precor integra
cum mente.¹⁰

An expanded rendering is best: "I have made preparations for my old age. Grant me, child of Leto, health to enjoy them, and I beseech you, also with soundness of mind." The same dualism presents itself again in the famous satire of the incomparable Petronius: *bonam mentem bonamque valetudinem sibi optarant*,¹¹ "they wished one another health of mind and health of body." It also furnished a memorable finale for the famous satire of **Juvenal**: *mens sana in corpore sano*.

I now realize that part of what we may be observing here is that DeWitt wrote the early chapters, as he says, following the model of Epicurus himself, starting with a synopsis of the whole, at a higher level of outline, while reserving the details of his analysis for later chapters. So the quoted part takes place much later in the book, under Chapter TWELVE - "The New Hedonism" - rather than in the highest-level outline, chapter one.

Rather than being a defect this is intentional and I think beneficial. The Epicurean model was to make sure that the final conclusions were not buried under mounds of academic verbiage. You play fair with the reader by telling him very early where you are going. Then if the reader wants to stick around for the evidence that supports the detail, then he can do so, but the primary outline of Epicurean philosophy is not buried under tons of words that only the hard-core academic is going to dig out. That's the way life is - we only get a short time to engage with any one person before they tend to move along to something else, so you need to tell them as quickly as possible what is important about the detail, if they choose to pursue it.

So that's the most general answer to this comment:

[Quote from Eugenios](#)

DeWitt's penchant for making assertions with no context or citations or context.

- yes that's the "multi-level outline" model as suggested by Epicurus himself in the letter to Herodotus.