

Are anticipations internalized rules about the way the world works?

Post by "Cassius" of May 2, 2020 at 6:07 PM

Pompadour first let me ask if you have read what DeWitt has to say about anticipations in his Chapter 8. If you have not, send me a message and I can point you to where you can find it.

As you know this is an area of controversy where we don't have nearly as much information as we would like, and we have to glean what we can from the sources and from our own knowledge and attempt to reconstruct.

You are aware of what we might call the standard approach, that anticipations are essentially "concepts" as against the DeWitt approach, where anticipations are more "intuitive"?

Also there is a relatively recent article from Voula Tsouna that discusses differences in her thoughts vs those of David Sedley, which you might want to read at some point. I think we posted it here but I will look for the link after I finish this post.

So you will first want to deal with deciding for yourself what part of anticipations pre-dates "experience" and what part (if any) only follows exposure to something, as which is the Diogenes Laertius with which DeWitt disagrees.

As for me I side with DeWitt, and believe that the greater part of what I prefer to refer to as the "faculty of anticipations" is a faculty, like sight or hearing, that processes information, and that pre-exists the receipt of any information from the senses, just as the eyes exist at birth before anything is seen. And thus I believe the answer is found in analogizing the faculty of anticipations to the faculty of sight, which works in pre-designed (by Nature) ways before ever being exposed to the first "thing" that is "seen."

And I believe viewing anticipations this way, as a natural faculty, is the only way they could ever have been considered by Epicurus to be a part of the "canon of truth." Otherwise, the RESULTS of the faculty anticipations, which might be things like the "rules" to which you refer, would better be viewed as end-results of the faculty, like opinions or concepts are the end-results of thinking, and if we were to consider THOSE to be "standards of truth" then we would have essentially a "feedback loop" where we would be creating our own standards, rather than following the lead of nature as we do with the sensations and with the feelings of pain and pleasure. If you see where I am going with that, I am following DeWitt in holding that the standards of truth are the measuring stick, and never the things that are measured.

That's a start to an answer. Please comment and we'll continue and others can chime in! And thanks for joining the forum!

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/1542-are-anticipations-internalized-rules-about-the-way-the-world-works/?postID=7557#post7557>