

Tracing Down A Passage On Diathesis / Attitude

Post by "Cassius" of August 4, 2018 at 9:14 AM

On page 186 of his text, DeWitt cites this interesting quote from Diogenes of Oinoanda: "The secret of happiness is in the diathesis, of which we are sole arbiters." The quote is cited as fragment 57 from the inscription, but apparently a different numbering system is being used by Martin Ferguson Smith [here](#), nor do I find the numbering to be the same in Chilton's "Diogenes of Oenoanda - The Fragments." Both of these works post-date DeWitt, so he must have been working from another source. Does anyone know a good cite for this or know the equivalent in [Smith's translation](#)?

The writing of Epicurus on the topic has perished, but to discern his approach is not difficult. The objective of life is happiness and to attain this the individual must at all times retain control of experience. This control means liberty of choice and the choice is double, first the choice of attitude and then the choice in the particular instance. The former is the more important. As the faithful Diogenes of Oenoanda expressed it, "The secret of happiness is in the diathesis, of which we are sole arbiters."⁴³

⁴³ Frag. 57.1-3.

Post by "Cassius" of August 4, 2018 at 9:48 AM

A follow-on observation about working with (1) the choice of attitude and also (2) the choice in the particular instance:

The first step in this process is to choose the diathesis, which consists in believing that of the desires "some are natural and necessary, some are natural but not necessary and others are neither natural nor necessary." The second step is to make the choice in respect of the particular desire, Vatican Saying 71: "What will be the result for me if the object of this desire is fulfilled and what if it is not fulfilled?" This is the calculus of advantage in operation. It is plain pragmatism, the control of experience for the sake of happiness.

(page 193 of the text)

Post by "Hiram" of August 9, 2018 at 12:08 PM

I've written on this [in my Diogenes' blogs](#), and I've gone back to it and cited it often. [It relates to PD 20](#). Here's the relevant portion:

Quote

Consistent with what's been said before, in Fragment 112 Diogenes states that the "sum of happiness is our disposition, of which we are masters", by which he argues against choosing a career in military service—which produces dangers to our lives and health—or public speaking—which produces nervousness and insecurity. The idea is that we can more easily be self-sufficient in our pleasure if we retain our ability to control our mental disposition.