

Is There A Relationship Between "Anticipations" and "Instinct"?

Post by "Cassius" of April 24, 2021 at 11:46 AM

One way in which I disagree with DeWitt's comments in this area, or at least think they are too harsh, is in his comments that Lucretius does not seem to have known about or understood anticipations. If you take DeWitt's on viewpoint as to Velleius talking about "etchings" and therefore potentially instinct, I think there are probably numerous sections of Lucretius which contain relevant material, including this below from Book 3 (Bailey).

I know he's talking about heat and air here, but ultimately he's referring to the atomic makeup of the body and mind, and surely a faculty of anticipations would function through the elemental particles just as any other faculty is based there. This passage seems to me to be something easily compatible with a viewpoint that the animals discussed are born with particular "natures."

At the same time, his final statement is I think consistent with my argument earlier that the Velleius position doesn't rule out that the Laertius conceptual reasoning also occurs. Lucretius is clearly pointing out that humans are born with natures of a certain type, but that conceptual reasoning has a great deal of influence on us as we grow and learn, even to the point of dispelling many of the undesirable traits that might be born in our nature.

... will paste that here first:)
It is the same with human beings. Although education may give certain people equal refinement, it cannot obliterate the original traces of each individual's natural disposition. We must not suppose that faults of character can be extirpated, and that it is possible to stop one person from being excessively prone to sudden fits of rage, another from succumbing a little too readily to fear, and a third from accepting certain situations more meekly than one should. And in many other respects people must

Presumably you can train a beaver not to build dams, but no amount of training was present at birth that led to their disposition to build them in the first place.

Quote

Bailey Book 3, approx line 300: Now, as I long to give account in what way these parts are mingled one with another, and in what manner bound together so that they can act, against my will the poverty of my country's tongue holds me back; yet, despite that, I will touch the theme, as best I can in brief. For the first-beginnings course to and fro among themselves with the motions of first-beginnings, so that no single one can be

put apart, nor can its powers be set in play divided from others by empty space, but they are, as it were, the many forces of a single body. Even as in the flesh of any living creature anywhere there is smell and a certain heat and savour, and yet of all these is made up the bulk of a single body. Thus heat and air and the hidden power of wind mingled create one nature together with that nimble force, which sends among them from itself the beginning of motion, whence the motion that brings sensation first arises throughout the flesh. For right deep within this nature lies hid far below, nor is there anything further beneath than this in our bodies, and it is moreover the very soul of the whole soul. Even as in our limbs and our whole body the force of the mind and the power of the soul is secretly immingled, because it is formed of small and rare bodies. So, you see, this force without a name, made of tiny bodies, lies concealed, and is moreover, as it were, the very soul of the whole soul and holds sway in the whole body. In like manner it must needs be that wind and air and heat act mingled together throughout the limbs, and one is more above or below the rest, yet so that one single thing is seen to be composed of all; lest heat and wind apart, and apart from them the power of air, should put an end to sensation, and by their separation break it up. Moreover the mind possesses that heat, which it dons when it boils with rage, and the fire flashes more keenly from the eyes. Much cold breath too it has, which goes along with fear, and starts a shuddering in the limbs and stirs the whole frame. And it has too that condition of air lulled to rest, which comes to pass when the breast is calm and the face unruffled. But those creatures have more of heat, whose fiery heart and passionate mind easily boils up in anger. Foremost in this class is the fierce force of lions, who often as they groan break their hearts with roaring, and cannot contain in their breast the billows of their wrath. But the cold heart of deer is more full of wind, and more quickly it rouses the chilly breath in its flesh, which makes a shuddering motion start in the limbs. But the nature of oxen draws its life rather from calm air, nor ever is the smoking torch of anger set to it to rouse it overmuch, drenching it with the shadow of murky mist, nor is it pierced and frozen by the chill shafts of fear: it has its place midway between the two, the deer and the raging lions. So is it with the race of men. ***However much training gives some of them an equal culture, yet it leaves those first traces of the nature of the mind of each.*** Nor must we think that such maladies can be plucked out by the roots, but that one man will more swiftly fall into bitter anger, another be a little sooner assailed by fear, while a third will take some things more gently than is right. And in many other things it must needs be that the diverse natures of men differ, and the habits that follow thereon; but I cannot now set forth the secret causes of these, nor discover names for all the shapes of the first atoms, whence arises this variety in things. ***One thing herein I see that I can affirm, that so small are the traces of these natures left, which reason could not dispel for us, that nothing hinders us from living a life worthy of the gods.***