

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

**Post by "Cassius" of April 26, 2021 at 8:27 AM**

Perhaps also this is a reason that I think DeWitt chose the term "[intuition](#)" almost as much as he did "instinct" -- I think "intuit-" is probably a broader or at least more applicable word, and less likely to get us sidetracked onto other issues not really related to the current discussion. I see the wikipedia article talks about Plato in ancient philosophy, which ought to be a concern, yet also may provide another clue as to what Epicurus was "bouncing off of" in articulating his own views.

Since DeWitt had a lot more background than we do and thought about this issue long before we did, let me do a word search in EAHP to see how often he mentioned each word:

Number of occurrences of "instinct-" in EAHP - seven

Number of occurrences of "intuit-" - in EAHP - six

I think another thing to keep in mind is that if we're talking "canonical faculties" here - and that's what we should be looking at - then we are talking about ways in which WE perceive reality that are somehow personal to us, not a matter of how others judge us from the outside.

I think we're all agreed that there is no way that we are talking about particular "concepts" or "ideas" being inborn, and we are also (or should be) talking about some kind of perceptual faculty like seeing or hearing which is available to process data, but which doesn't have any data in it at birth.

The "dam" example is probably a good test case because at least to me it seems tempting to consider a "dam" to be a concept or idea, which would not seem compatible with the theory. Maybe that's where the "rushing water" cited above would be helpful, in that if the components like water and trees are present but other key components are not, it's the relational ability that is the real key. A beaver which built a dam in a lake which had no flowing water would probably be evidence of a truly preprogrammed mind (like a computer programmed to do some activity regardless of circumstances ) but the ability to see that a key component is missing may indicate that the faculty which the beaver is endowed is part of an "active" faculty that is able to react to unforeseeable circumstances.

At any rate, all we really have to work with in explaining the philosophy is the examples in the texts that are specifically cited -- "gods" and "justice" and maybe one or more less certain references (time?). In most all other cases, I would think we can talk about the core issues of a faculty while leave the extended applications to other people down the line. Beavers may help

us as a possible example, but all we really know that Epicurus mentioned was justice and gods.

And that's the real issue I have always asserting itself in my mind; our job (at least the job I have chosen for myself) ought to be to articulate and restate the basics in an understandable form so that people in the future do not have to start virtually from scratch (or worse, as we do in the "absence of pain" attitude) in studying Epicurean philosophy. We don't have to get too far in the weeds in order to do that, and if we DO get too close to those weeds they will probably in every case prove to be a major distraction to plowing ahead with the primary goal.