

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

Post by "Cassius" of May 2, 2021 at 8:30 AM

On this topic Godfrey called to my mind an article (chapter of a book) by David Sedley that is probably relevant here - "Epicurus' Theological Innatism," of which an early paragraph is:

Epicurus' theological innatism 31

Consider first section 6: 'we possess implanted, or rather innate (*vel positum innatum*), cognitions of them'. The self-correction makes little sense unless we understand the description of the knowledge as 'innate' to be substituted because in Cicero's view it is the more correct of the two. It would be untrue so Cicero's clearly signalled intentions to suggest that the substituted word *innatum* is itself being used loosely here, even though in other contexts it may well be.⁶ Knowledge of the gods then really is, on Cicero's understanding of his material, inborn rather than implanted in us subsequent to birth. Whether his understanding is correct is a separate question, and it is the main purpose of my paper to argue that it is.

If confirmation were needed that 'innate' is what the text both says and means, it is available from the slightly earlier *De finibus*, where, according to Cicero, the ancients

... saw that... we also possess a certain implanted, or rather innate, desire for knowledge (*institum quendam vel positum innatum cupiditatem scientiae*), and have been born (*natusque esse*) for human society and for the fellowship and commensality of mankind.⁷

The innateness of our desire for knowledge, emphasized here by the speaker's self-correction, 'implanted, or rather innate', emphatically parallels our explicitly inborn (*natusque esse*) inclination towards social living.⁸ There should therefore be little doubt that by introducing the expression 'implanted, or rather innate' Cicero means precisely to draw attention to cases where literal innateness is intended.⁹

A link for this is [here](#)