

How would Epicurus view "differences from the start of life that are out of our control?"

Post by "Cassius" of December 9, 2022 at 3:22 PM

The mind contains as well the element of heat, which it displays when it seethes with anger and fire flashes fiercely from the eyes. It also 291 contains an abundance of that chill breath, the attendant of fear, which provokes shuddering in the limbs and makes the frame tremble. It contains too that still, calm air, which is in evidence when the breast is tranquil and the countenance unclouded. But heat is the element that predominates in those creatures whose hearts are fierce and whose irascible minds readily seethe with anger. First and foremost in this class are lions, so strong and ferocious: often they growl and roar until they burst their bellies, since they are unable to repress their tempestuous rage. On the other hand, the chill minds of deer contain more wind and are quicker 300 to send icy currents of air blowing through the flesh, thus inducing a trembling motion in the limbs. Again, the predominant element in the vital principle of cows is placid air: these beasts are never unduly inflamed and impassioned by the smoky torch of anger or blinded by its murky shadow; nor are they pierced and paralyzed by icy shafts of fear: they stand midway between deer and savage lions.

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 310 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 differ in character and consequently in behavior. But for the moment I cannot explain the secret causes of this variety or find names for all the atomic conformations that give rise to it. What I see that I can affirm in 320 this connection is that the surviving traces of our natural dispositions, which philosophy is unable to erase, are so very faint that there is nothing to prevent us from living a life worthy of the gods.²⁵

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