

Pleasure and Reality

Post by "Cassius" of April 8, 2019 at 3:33 PM

[Quote from Elayne](#)

With all the sense-altering plants in the world, that would be a constant danger if humans (and other animals) had to use reasoning every time to decide about them.

I know that my dogs (and even more cats) have no trouble deciding whether to eat something or not. Sometimes they may get it wrong, but whatever they are checking it is not syllogisms.

[Quote from Elayne](#)

With all the sense-altering plants in the world, that would be a constant danger if humans (and other animals) had to use reasoning every time to decide about them.

Ok now in talking about anticipations, we've always had disputes due to the absence of texts. You have the (1) Diogenes Laertius implication that anticipations come only after experience and processing of thoughts, and you have (2) the DeWitt / Velleius (On the Nature of the Gods) view that anticipations are given to us by nature and function PRIOR to experience, as if in analogy to a computer operating system that functions in a particular way even before application programs are added to it. For the reasons DeWitt states, and especially because I think that anticipations/feelings/senses all must function on their own and prior to "thinking," in order to be part of the canon of truth, I side with option two, which probably fits closer with the path where you are going. To repeat my standard position, of course conceptual reasoning does exist too - when we see cows, we form concepts of cows - definitely. But DeWitt argues I think, and I agree, that the two are separate processes, one of which is "innate" prior to experience and the other is the result of conceptual processing after experience.

And to expand that out more generally, yes it is true that we have to take the senses, anticipations, and feelings of pain and pleasure as 'given' and as a part of animal nature, but that doesn't mean that they are mystical. They operate according to set principles and properties, it seems, and those are born with us, not the result of the embryo or baby having experiences. Yes they can be trained and tuned over time, after dealing with experiences, but they could never have operated in the first place if they had not been born with their innate raw abilities.

And I agree with you that some kind of "disposition to embrace reality" is probably an anticipation. I think DeWitt says it somewhere in sort of this way - that anticipations are a faculty that allow us to organize (maybe perceive is a better word) complex relationships, just as eyes enable us to "perceive" sight, ears to perceive sound etc. And just as eyes and ears

have preset methods of functioning, you would expect feelings (pain and pleasure) and anticipations to also have predisposed methods of functioning.

If I am totally off track to what you are talking about don't hesitate to reel me back in. You know the science far better than i do, about all I can offer is potential ways to organize it given my reading of Epicurus.