

The Definitive "Are Beavers Born With The Innate Disposition To Build Dams, Or Do They Learn It From Older Beavers?" Thread

Post by "Bryan" of July 7, 2024 at 10:23 AM

It almost seems that the idea of instinct was wrapped into the idea of determinism, which loomed so large that Epicurus feels he needs to assert that we are not all instinct -- but have something in ourselves that can generally transcend instinct.

Epicurus, Peri Phýseōs, Book 25, P.Herc. 1056 col. 21 (fr. B 43): [Sedley] From the very outset we always have seeds: some directing us towards these, some towards those, some towards these and those actions and thoughts and characters, in greater and smaller numbers.

Epicurus, Peri Phýseōs, Book 25, P.Herc. 1056 col. 22 (fr. B 44): [Sedley] by which we never cease to be affected, the fact that we rebuke, oppose and reform each other as if the responsibility lay also in ourselves, and not just in our congenital make-up and in the accidental necessity of that which surrounds and penetrates us.

Epicurus, Peri Phýseōs, Book 25, P.Herc. 1191 fr. 115/116: [Sedley] If someone won't explain this, and has no auxiliary element or impulse in us which he might dissuade from those actions which we perform, calling the responsibility for them 'our own agency' - but is giving the name of foolish necessity to all the things which we claim to do calling the responsibility for them 'our own agency' - he will merely be changing a name. He will not be modifying any of our actions in the way in which, in some cases, the man who sees what sort of actions are necessitated regularly dissuades those who desire to do something in the face of compulsion. And the mind will be inquisitive to learn what sort of action it should then consider that one to be which we perform in some way because of us ourselves but without desiring to.