

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

Post by "Cassius" of June 27, 2025 at 6:55 AM

My first comment would be that this synthesis is a complete adoption of the Diogenes Laertius position, which does not reflect the implications of what Cicero/Velleius says about it as being innate. It is difficult or impossible to reconcile it with what Epicurus says about prolepsis of the gods - Do we have a preconception of gods because each individual personally sees gods so many times?

My statement there doesn't mean that I have concluded that it is entirely wrong, just incomplete, especially if you take a very superficial reading of "Epicurus was an empiricist, meaning that he believed that all knowledge ultimately derives from the senses." At the very least, does instinctive behavior ultimately derive from the senses? I would say no to that and I think Epicurus would too, for which I would cite Lucretius' reference to the natures of various types of animals.

Quote

*** **Meaning:** Prolepsis translates to "preconception," "anticipation," or "pre-notion." It refers to a basic, general concept or idea that has been formed in our minds through repeated sensory experiences.**

*** **Formation through Experience:** Epicurus was an empiricist, meaning he believed that all knowledge ultimately derives from the senses. Prolepseis are formed when repeated sensory inputs of a certain kind leave a lasting impression or "trace" in the mind. For example, by repeatedly encountering dogs, we form a prolepsis of "dog" - a general idea of what a dog is.**