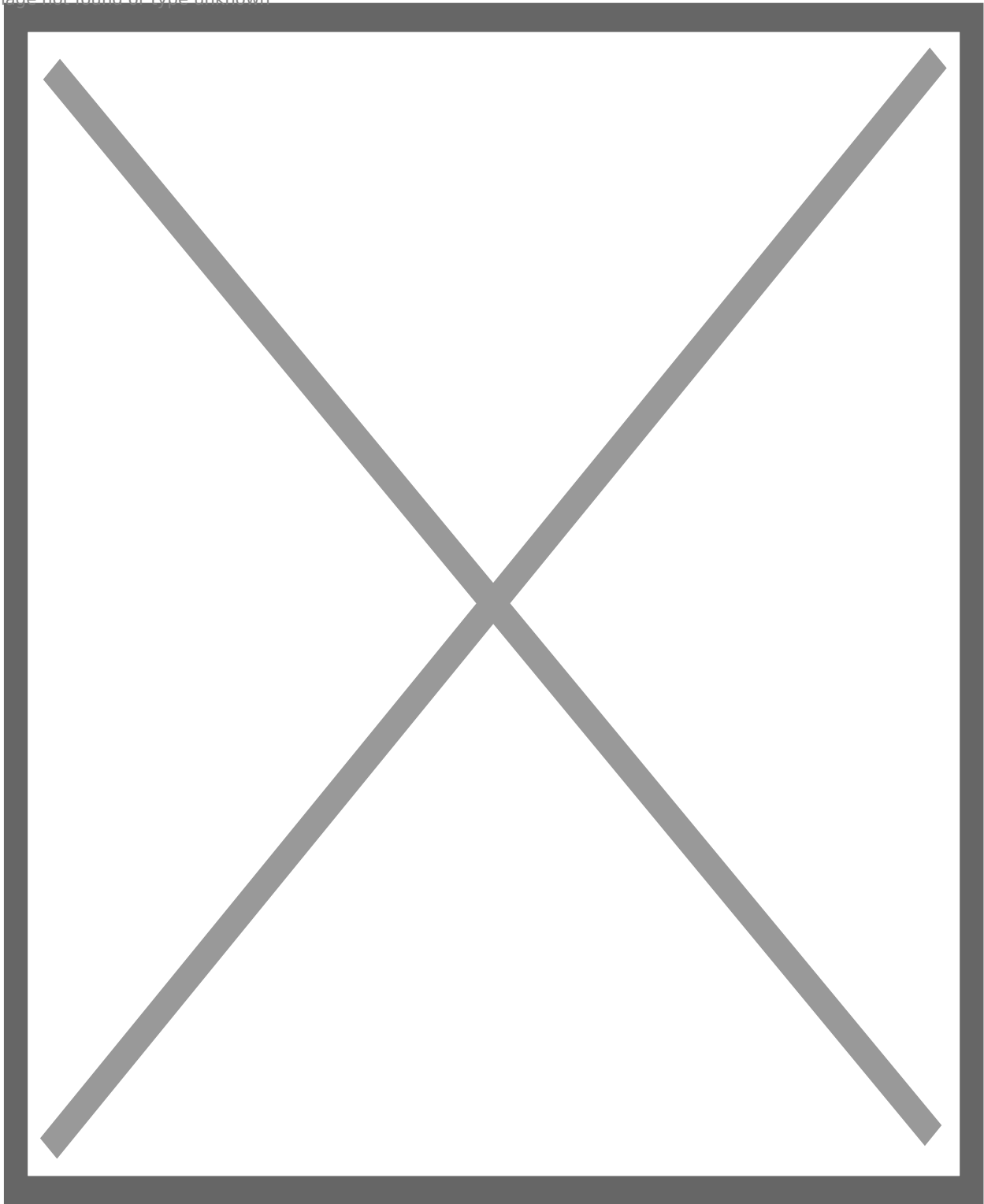


Dr. Frans de Waal, Primatologist

Post by “Joshua” of March 1, 2023 at 9:16 PM

Fernando brought up the work of Dr. Frans de Waal in the discussions on primates and the prolepsis of justice, which I wanted to start a thread about since we didn't get into it on the call.

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[Moral behavior in animals](#)

What happens when two monkeys are paid unequally? Fairness, reciprocity, empathy, cooperation -- caring about the well-being of others seems like a very human...

www.ted.com

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=meiU6TxysCg>

We've been talking about this recently and I haven't been properly crediting the source, so thank you Fernando!

Post by “Joshua” of March 1, 2023 at 9:35 PM

Having now watched both of these videos, I have to say they're far better than any of my summaries might suggest!

Post by “Don” of March 1, 2023 at 10:31 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

Having now watched both of these videos, I have to say they're far better than any of my summaries might suggest!

Having watched the videos, what are your thoughts on this research and the prolepsis of justice?

Post by “Joshua” of March 1, 2023 at 11:05 PM

One part of our conversation was particularly insightful on that point. Charles (to summarize) said that Epicurus' definition of justice as non-absolute and existing in mutual advantage by social convention was well above and beyond the operation of the anticipations. Steve replied that there was a considerable amount of cultural overlay, but that the prolepsis of justice might be operating underneath all that at a far more basic level. Steve's response seemed to me good, and the only way to reconcile the prolepsis of justice with what Epicurus says in the [Principal Doctrines](#): as for example in this one;

32. Those animals which are incapable of making covenants with one another, to the end that they may neither inflict nor suffer harm, are without either justice or injustice. And those tribes which either could not or would not form mutual covenants to the same end are in like case.

To speak of chimpanzees and capuchins as forming covenants to protect their idea of fairness is bordering on the absurd, but the operation of fairness and compassion do seem to be present at some level. So I would, like Steve, try to draw a distinction between the mutual rational justice of the [principal doctrines](#) and the canonic pre-rational anticipation of justice, which might be present also in lower orders of animals.

What do we think of this as a start?

The attributes of agreements of justice:

- Rational
- Cultural
- Social
- Leading to stated or implied contractual behavior
 - With the expectation of reciprocity, without which the compact breaks down; more like a treaty between sovereign nations

The attributes of the anticipation of justice:

- Pre-rational
- Evolutionary
- Individual
- Leading to voluntary behavior
 - With no expectation of reciprocity: More like giving a gift; maybe you'll get one in return someday

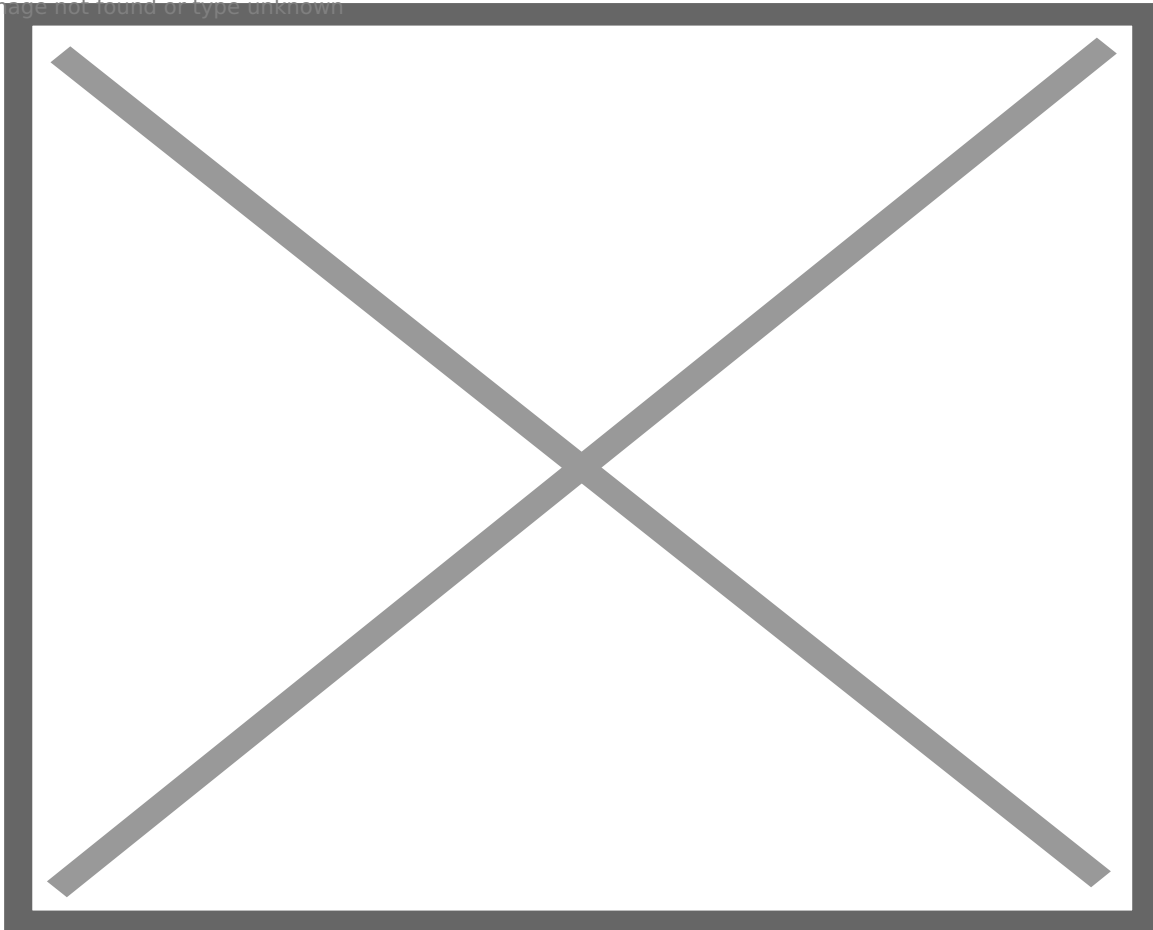
Post by “Joshua” of March 1, 2023 at 11:09 PM

It also occurs to me to say that part of that conversation included a question from Cassius as to whether any anticipation of justice is separable from the feelings of pleasure and pain. We do refer to the "prick of the conscience", after all.

Post by “Don” of March 1, 2023 at 11:23 PM

Here are some human child studies. Curious what you think of this in light of the DeWaal studies:

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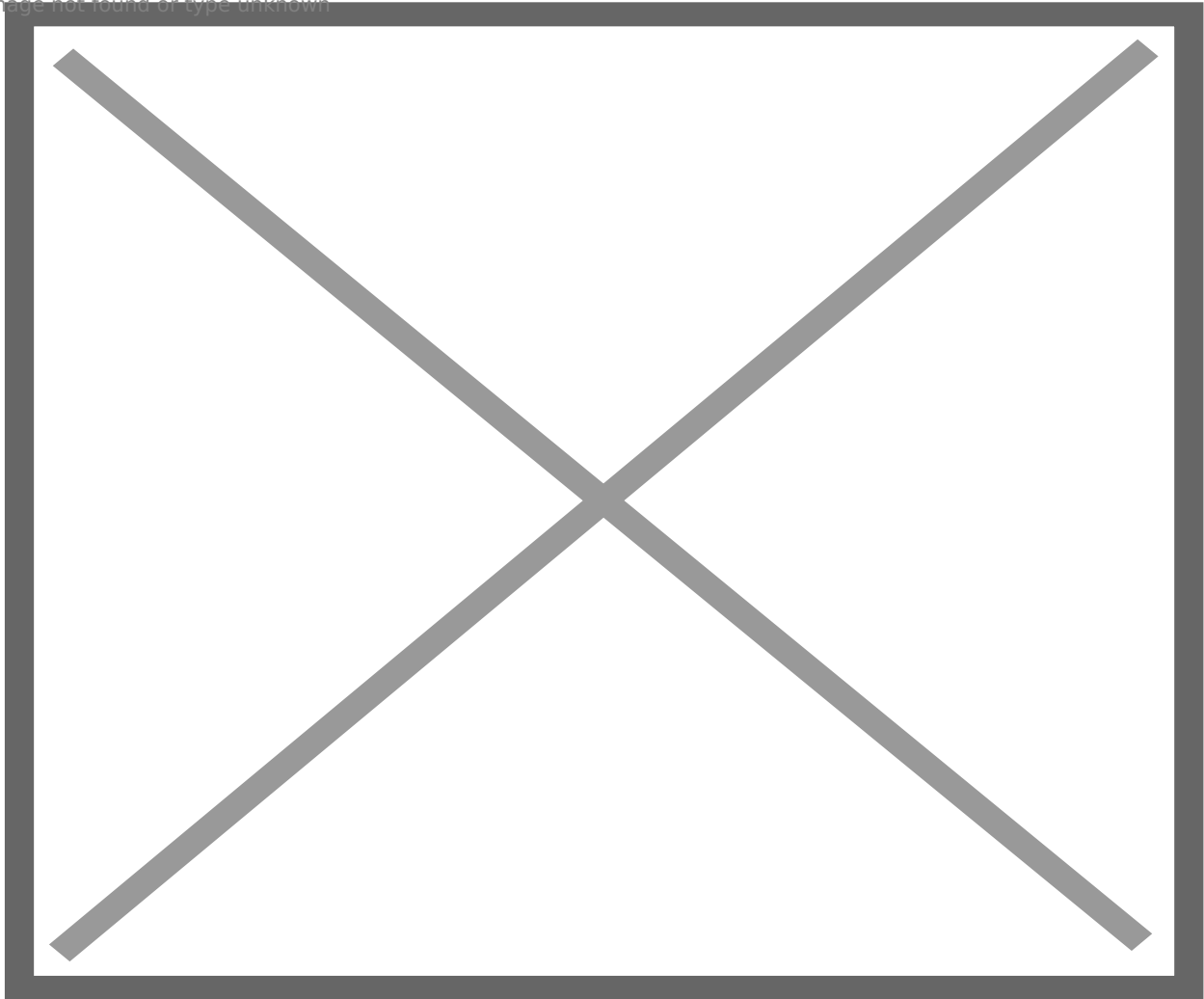


[Do Kids Have a Fundamental Sense of Fairness?](#)

Experiments show that this quality often emerges by the age of 12 months
blogs.scientificamerican.com

https://youtu.be/HBW5vdhr_PA

Image not found or type unknown



[Psychology Professor Peter Blake Looks at How Children Develop Ideas of Fairness, and How These Ideas Differ Across Cultures and Societies | The Brink | Boston University](#)

Boston University is a leading private research institution with two primary campuses in the heart of Boston and programs around the world.

www.bu.edu

I'm trying to find more videos, but that's a start.

Post by “Cassius” of March 2, 2023 at 2:06 AM

Might as well throw in a comment:

My current view is close to the way Joshua describes Steve's position:

That an "anticipation" of justice is closer to a snapshot in which the observer is noticing only that two or more individuals are acting in relationship so as to effect each other in some way that we are not evaluating (at that anticipatory level) but which our minds automatically pull forward out of the background as a significant relationship.

At this level the mind isn't evaluating it as pleasing or displeasing or just or unjust, but simply as a significant relationship.

I would say that it is the rational mind which decides to call the relationship "just" or "unjust" and that that decision takes into account the faculty of pleasure and pain which heavily influences which of the two we decide to label it (with the label / choice of words applied by the rational mind).

So I would say that the function of anticipations in relationship to justice (or to divinity or to any other abstract idea) would be that it picks out of the background of otherwise apparently chaotic data some relationship that we otherwise would not recognize as significant at all.

And therefore I would say that higher animals are born with somewhat the same ability as humans to detect relationships and feel pleasure and pain about them, with the main difference that their minds do not process the relationships into words.

So I would say that 32 implies that higher animals do have the ability to form agreements among themselves that we would call just and unjust while lower animals (or like men, those that simply choose not to) do not fall with a label of just or unjust.

That would make "justice" a category of relationships in which anticipations give us a power of recognition while "just" and "unjust" are evaluations of particular situations made in the mind after input from pleasure/pain. Same would go with "divinity" as a category of relationships while "blessed" and "incorruptible" are evaluations.

The category would be the pattern which anticipations allows us to recognize while the stage of having evaluated its desirability or nondesirability would mean that the mind has weighed in and factored in pleasure and pain.

If "justice" is a virtue - as I think it is - then I think we have to consider that like any other virtue sometimes we might choose to be "unjust" in order to arrive at greater pleasure or less pain later. And if we did so we would probably consider our action to be just.

So the final labelling of just and unjust seems to me necessarily something that involves rational processing rather than something at the automatic level. But that the entire question presents itself to us as an issue only because we have a faculty of observing anticipations within the category of "justice."

That makes anticipations a faculty of categorization or pattern recognition as we have been describing, without which we would not even be discussing a particular "issue" in the first place.

Post by “Cassius” of March 2, 2023 at 2:12 AM

And it is interesting to me too that both Diogenes of Oinoanda and Diogenes Laertius have a passage that says something to the effect that "no one would ever seek what he cannot find."

I see that as a hint that anticipations are what put us "on the hunt" for something in the first place.

Diogenes of Oinoanda Fragment 5 -

"For, when they assert that things are inapprehensible, what else are they saying than that there is no need for us to pursue natural science? After all, who will choose to seek what he can never find?"

Diogenes Laertius:

"By preconception they mean a sort of apprehension or a right opinion or notion, or universal idea stored in the mind; that is, a recollection of an external object often presented, e.g. Such and such a thing is a man: for no sooner is the word “man” uttered than we think of his shape by an act of preconception, in which the senses take the lead. Thus, the object primarily denoted by every term is then plain and clear. And we should never have started an investigation, unless we had known what it was that we were in search of."

And we could probably fit also within this observation the assertion by Lucretius that the gods could not have created the universe because they would have had no pattern for something that had not previously existed i.e., previously existed at least as an anticipation in their minds.

Post by “Cassius” of March 2, 2023 at 2:29 AM

You know I think I can precisely point out my problem with Diogenes Laertius down almost to a single word -

Diogenes Laertius:

"By preconception they mean a sort of apprehension or a right opinion or notion, or universal idea stored in the mind; that is, a recollection of an external object often presented, e.g. Such and such a thing is a man: for no sooner is the word “man” uttered than we think of his shape by an act of preconception, in which the senses take the lead. Thus, the object primarily

denoted by every term is then plain and clear. And we should never have started an investigation, unless we had known what it was that we were in search of."

All he would have had to do would be to change one word - from "recollection" (which evokes a specific ideal form like Plato, or something that the individual has himself seen in his own living experience) to "recognition," which could evoke reference only to a "pattern." Because I can see the etchings of a "pattern" as something that can be transmitted by DNA across generations, just like beavers can transmit dam-building or others can transmit nest-building. Those are things that an individual can feel disposed to perform himself for the first time, even when he has never before seen an instance in his own personal experience.

I think beavers and dam-building are at least as good for an example of the physiological process than monkeys and celery. Both work and involve anticipations, but dam building strikes me as something where pleasure and pain are more remote and thus the pattern transmission across generations (to recognize dam building as a significant behavior) stands out more starkly on its own.

A critic may argue that what the monkeys are picking up with celery and grapes can be explained in terms of immediate pleasure and pain, but it is hard for me to see how beavers can see immediate pleasure or pain in looking ahead to the distant results of cutting down trees and damming creeks when the reward is far away. Something has to be born in them (at birth) that has originated gradually over many prior generations, but which will unfold over time in each new generation into a recognition of a pattern of dam-building.

A beaver does not "recall" its first dam, but it "recognizes" that dam-building can be done and it is a good pattern for it to follow.

Post by “Cassius” of March 2, 2023 at 3:03 AM

That would make "dams as to beavers" as parallel to "universes as to gods".

Beavers can build dams only because they were born with anticipations as to dam-building - meaning that over eons of time through trial and error prior iterations of "beavers" built prior dams.

In the case of gods, if the universe had not always existed, no earlier gods could ever have existed to form earlier universes. The universe necessarily precedes both gods and beavers.

The fact that beavers make dams now, and that humans can (or may in the future) shape something like new worlds from existing ones, can never establish that there was a "first" dam

or first world that was created from nothing. There had to be a universe first, and then nature "experimenting" over time, to get us to where we are now and to where wherever we may get in the future.

Only by asserting without evidence an omnipotent and eternal god, which is against all human experience and observation and therefore anticipation, do you get past that problem. And that assertion is totally illegitimate - a false opinion made false by its lack of evidence to support it.

Post by “Don” of March 2, 2023 at 6:48 AM

I remembered we had a previous thread about beavers, so I thought I'd link to it:

Post

[RE: Is There A Relationship Between "Anticipations" and "Instinct"?](#)

To go back to your original question:

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

I don't think so. Instinct has to do with behavior. The Anticipations have to do with perception.

To use your favorite castorine example, beavers build dams over flowing water it appears as a result of stimuli compelling that behavior. There appears to be some sort of necessity involved. There is a visible measurable behavioral result.

From my perspective, Anticipations (I'm going to say similar...



Don

April 24, 2021 at 9:57 AM

This link starts with my post questioning the beaver angle. I'm assessing whether I still agree with myself or not, but thought this could help inform the current thread in any case.

Post by “Cassius” of March 2, 2023 at 8:23 AM

I don't know if I agree with myself from one day to the next, much less two years ago. This time we are probably bringing our best efforts to the task so I am hopeful we will make some progress, especially when we compare to Dr. Glidden's analysis.

Post by “Don” of March 2, 2023 at 9:00 AM

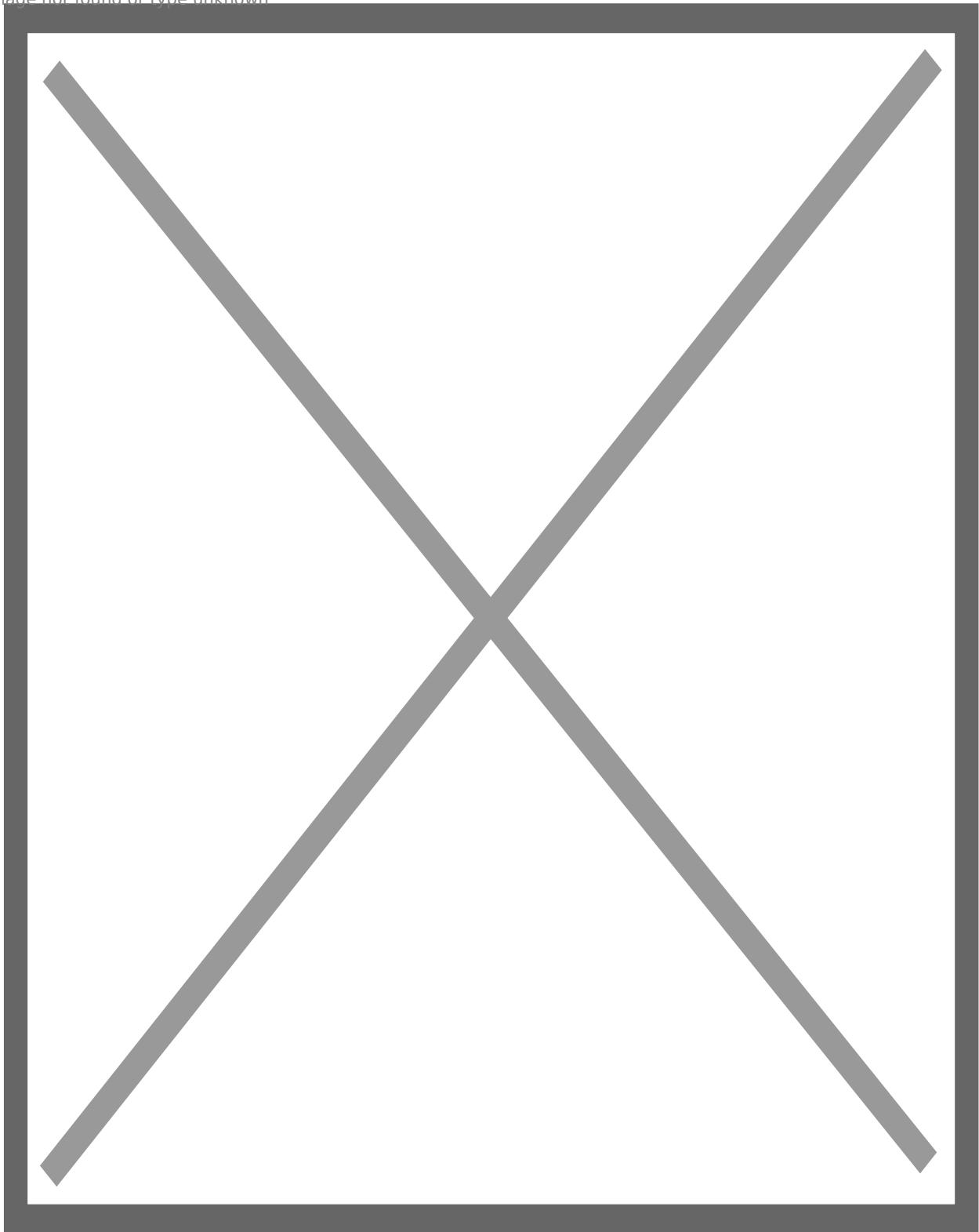
LOL! That was two years ago! I didn't even look at the date.

PS. That said, I think I still have qualms about seeing "instinctual behavior" as evidence of a prolepsis. I'll have to give it more thought, but that's my leaning right now.

Post by “Don” of March 2, 2023 at 11:53 AM

It appears it isn't the reward of future results for beavers. It's the sound of running water that elicits dam building:

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[The Sound of Running Water Puts Beavers in the Mood to Build](#)

This one weird trick can help you exploit a beaver's natural instincts.

www.mentalfloss.com

Post by “Cassius” of March 2, 2023 at 4:05 PM

Yep the sound of running water does it for them, but it does nothing for me when I hear it! 😊

Post by “Joshua” of March 2, 2023 at 5:44 PM

Quote

I think I still have qualms about seeing "instinctual behavior" as evidence of a prolepsis.

I mean I'm basically throwing out the prolepsis of the gods without hesitation, I think it's fair play to reconsider a lot of it.

Post by “Pacatus” of March 4, 2023 at 8:27 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I don't know if I agree with myself from one day to the next, much less two years ago.

This I view as a virtue! 😄