

How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain by Lisa Feldman Barrett

Post by "Cassius" of April 16, 2021 at 3:07 PM

Also on the topic of "take-aways" I think it's useful to review these couple of paragraphs from DeWitt. As I read it, it's possible that he is right or possible he is wrong about the way he is interpreting the functioning of the anticipations. However I think in his diagnosis of what Epicurus was trying to do, he is almost certainly correct.

If we (Epicurus) want to defeat both rationalism and skepticism, we have to be able to articulate a totally natural (non-abstract-logic-based) process which allows us to have confidence in the conclusions we reach based on our observations. This process cannot rely on abstract logic, or else abstract logic takes over like the proverbial camel with nose under the tent, so it has to be ejected entirely except as a supplemental factor. Likewise we can't let observation alone rule the day, without drawing any conclusions, but that would effectively amount to skepticism and establish the rule that we can never have confidence in anything.

So to some extent this is an issue that is probably like the free agency and the swerve. As with the swerve, we may not be able to describe the mechanism of consciousness with certainty, nor should we really think that we need to (since such a task would be as impossible as asking to view the entire universe in order to see if it has an end). All we really need to do is to articulate in broad terms that there are mechanisms by which we can have confidence in living happily if we eject both skepticism and rationalism in favor of reliance on the faculties that Nature gave us.

