

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

Post by "Don" of April 23, 2021 at 11:49 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

"Plato wrote that the human psyche consists of three parts: rational thoughts, passions (which today we call emotions), and appetites like the drive for hunger and sex. Rational thought was in charge, controlling the passions and appetites, an arrangement that Plato described as a charioteer wrangling two winged horses."

This quote from the paper I referenced got me to think that it may be tempting to see the three Platonic parts of the psyche as comparable somehow to the three legs of the Epicurean Canon somehow. However, that temptation or any permutation of it should be resisted at all costs. That - or the idea of the triune brain analogy - sets up a false hierarchy.

I think we've discussed elsewhere that the "parts" of the Canon work in concert, each influencing the other. That's, personally, what I find so elegant about seeing Epicurean parallels in Dr. Barrett's work and that of her colleagues. *Sensations influence affect which influences concepts which influence how sensations are processed which...* And translated into Epicurean terms: *sensations influence the two pathē (pleasure and pain) which influence prolepses which influence how sensations are processed...* It's not a 1:1 correspondence but I think it has promise and it aligns with the most current brain research.

Where does this leave us in the instinct question? I don't know if you can separate "nature vs nurture." One influences the other. They're inextricably linked. It's even been found that the environment has an effect on the expression of some genes. Cues in the environment can activate certain genes and these can be inherited by offspring. That's, as I understand, a recent finding. See, for example, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41437-018-0113-y>