

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

Post by "Cassius" of April 16, 2021 at 1:58 AM

One of the issues here is that we can dig deeply into the details of LFB's analysis, conclude that what she is saying does (or does not) make sense, and yet that conclusion may not necessarily move us one iota closer to having addressed the Velleius / PRE-conception material. If in fact DeWitt is right to allege that Velleius points to something that is going on before all experience of the thing under consideration, then all the analysis in the world about the processing of experiences will never address or illuminate the "innate process" analysis.

Animals through instinct do things regularly that they have never observed themselves or observed their parents do, even though there is much that they do that is indeed influenced by their parents and their own experience. BOTH phenomena can be going on without one ruling out the other, meaning that there are two separate phenomena.

The position of DeWitt/Velleius in no way rules out the process of learning from experiences, so from the Velleius perspective there are two separate phenomena. But the position of Bailey and others is to refuse to acknowledge even the possible existence of their being two separate phenomena, so they collapse all the issues into one single phenomena.

Regardless of whether DeWitt/Velleius are correct from a physiological / brain function point of view, it makes sense to me to suspect that from a philosophical point of view Epicurus would not want "concepts formed through experience" anywhere near his "canon of truth." Otherwise Epicurus built a feedback loop of "opinion" right into the "canon" which he was apparently erecting for the purpose of avoiding the influence of opinion. You would never be able to say that your canon was your unbiased measuring stick, because your measuring stick incorporated your opinion. Or at least that reasoning is what I think impels someone of DeWitt's persuasion to his conclusion.