

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

Post by "Don" of April 16, 2021 at 12:02 PM

First, let me say that I have nothing to add to [Godfrey](#) 's excellent summary other than to encourage people to read LFB's book and explore her research.

Here's my take on the prolepses relation to LFB:

The Canon has the following:

-Sensations

-Pain/Pleasure

-Prolepses

My understanding is that this order is meaningful and now even more so in light of LFB's research (and, I should include, from others):

- the sensations include all of our sensory input

- This input then impacts our "feeling" of pain or pleasure, or as LFB states, pleasure/displeasure.

-and our minds use this to compare our past experience to our current situation. These are our predictions based on our "prolepses."

I'm still not entirely convinced that Cicero is a reliable narrator.

The "inborn" vs "early experience" paradigm of the prolepses is an important one and I'll not resolve it here. But it seems to me that there is probably a faculty we're born with but individual prolepses have to come from experience in utero, early in life, or even later. To say we're born with prolepses seems to me to fall into the realm of Plato. Epicurus vociferously argued against his philosophy.

My take was that LFB's "concepts" come very close to describing Epicurus's prolepses.

I think her pleasure/displeasure axis is maybe a better description of "feelings" since Epicurus's ἄλγος can be translated as "pain" but encompasses "pain (of either mind or body), sorrow, trouble, grief, distress, woe" That's the word he usually uses that's translated "pain."

So, there are my initial thoughts for this thread. Look forward to continuing this conversation!