

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

Post by "Cassius" of April 16, 2021 at 1:45 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

- 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.

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This is a point that I think deserves discussion over time. Have you seen a commentator assert that the "order is meaningful," or do you have other reasons for making that deduction? I believe if I recall correctly that DeWitt asserts that they basically go hand in hand, rather than sequentially. I see why it would be tempting to order them in the way that you have, as that would coincide with an order of processing if "prolepses" are equated with "concepts," but again that is probably the ultimate question.

At this point in my thinking I would interpret this aspect differently, and suggest that the three legs of the canon are not in fact the steps by which concepts are formed, but are the "checks" against which concepts are judged for accuracy. Probably as an example I would suggest that "concepts" can be made up out of whole cloth, with no input whatsoever from the legs of the canon, such as "let $A=B$ " then "let $B=D$ " therefore " $A+B = A+D$ " or whatever you'd want to construct from pure words. Those would be (I think) conceptual constructs formed separately and apart from experience of any kind.

So in fact i would think that considering prolepses to be the equivalent of concepts and considering them to be the result of sensations and feelings, rather than a separate category of experience, would produce a dramatically different result than considering prolepses to be an experience or measurer of its own.

[Quote from Don](#)

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

In regard to that, I would say that is where it is essential to distinguish the faculty from the perceptions it generates.

We are born with eyes, yet not with visions of trees. The mechanism of eyesight, however, is innate.

Presumably if prolepses are an equal leg of the canon, rather than concepts formed after experience, then the "faculty of prolepses" would be innate.