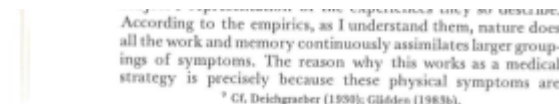


Dr. David Glidden's "Epicurean Prolepsis"

Post by "Cassius" of March 4, 2023 at 6:49 AM

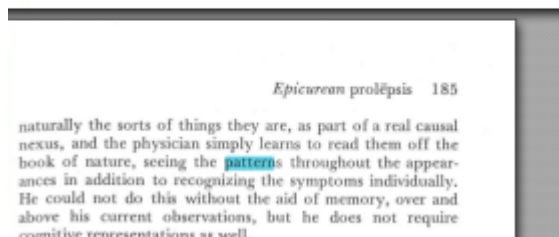
Two more general thoughts:

1 - There is some discussion of "pattern recognition" in the article, but not really as much as I expected based on reading the shorter paper. It seems to me that this one is more focused on the material aspect of the phenomena, not on pursuing details on pattern recognition. But there are definitely some examples:



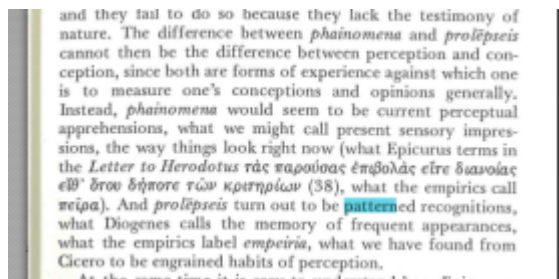
According to the empirics, as I understand them, nature does all the work and memory continuously assimilates larger groupings of symptoms. The reason why this works as a medical strategy is precisely because these physical symptoms are

⁹ Cf. Deichgraber (1939); Glidden (1983b).



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naturally the sorts of things they are, as part of a real causal nexus, and the physician simply learns to read them off the book of nature, seeing the **patterns** throughout the appearances in addition to recognizing the symptoms individually. He could not do this without the aid of memory, over and above his current observations, but he does not require cognitive representations as well.



and they fail to do so because they lack the testimony of nature. The difference between *phainomena* and *prolepsis* cannot then be the difference between perception and conception, since both are forms of experience against which one is to measure one's conceptions and opinions generally. Instead, *phainomena* would seem to be current perceptual apprehensions, what we might call present sensory impressions, the way things look right now (what Epicurus terms in the *Letter to Herodotus* τὰς παρούσας ἐπιβολὰς εἶνε δianoίας εἶθ' ὅταν δῆποτε τῶν κρητῆριῶν (38), what the empirics call πείρα). And *prolepsis* turn out to be **patterned** recognitions, what Diogenes calls the memory of frequent appearances, what the empirics label *empeiria*, what we have found from Cicero to be engrained habits of perception.

2. As to the question: "Patterns ***in what*** are being recognized?" Is Dr. Glidden saying that the patterns under discussion are in the images received directly by the mind (the "sixth sense" to which he refers) or are the patterns under discussion being recognized in each of the distinct sensations (sights, sounds, etc) and feelings (pleasure and pain) that we also experience? I gather he means "patterns in all or any of these" but I can see someone thinking that he is talking only or primarily about images received directly by the mind.

Having now read both papers, Dr. Glidden's "[Abstract](#)," written after both papers, becomes much easier to understand:

Quote

Abstract

The paper I presented at the SAGP session was NOT the same as my much longer paper that was subsequently published in *Oxford Studies*, where I had by then established a fuller philosophical accounting of Epicurean prolepsis as akin to non-conceptual pattern recognition, a purely perceptual facility used by humans and other animals alike. (In this way, my dog recognizes other dogs and distinguishes them from other animals, just as we recognize kinds of things in nature and kinds of situations in our socializing, before we conceptualize and define what we are already habituated to recognizing.) So, the paper I gave to SAGP was more of a prolegomenon to that full accounting in *Oxford Studies*.

The SAGP paper was more narrowly conceived as a cautious analysis of textual evidence, where I sought to separate the Stoic use of prolepsis as a conceptualized sortal device from the original Epicurean invention of prolepsis as an extended form of aisthesis that recognized patterns presented to our senses over time, much like Aristotle's commonly sensed perceptual recognitions. I argued that Stoicized sources had been read back into Epicurus by later critics, thereby infecting Epicurean views with the Stoic conceptualized understanding of prolepsis, an understanding that would have proven fatal to the sort of mechanical, physiological empiricism Epicurus so clearly espoused. I argued that Epicurean prolepsis was a synthesizing, somewhat mechanical effort by *dianoia* to detect natural kinds and common situational characteristics and respond to them, after the fashion of other animals and prior to the invention of language and conceptualizing or definitions. So, *prolepseis*, *aistheseis*, and the *pathe* of pleasure and pain provided the non-conceptual evidentiary basis for Epicurean empiricism, prior to the interpretation of such data—very un-Kantian.