

# Sunday June 22 - Topic: Prolepsis

Post by "Don" of June 21, 2025 at 7:48 AM

I am still drawn to the idea that prolepsis is the subconscious faculty of "pattern recognition" or the mental faculty of discerning significant patterns within the cacophony of sensation. Over time, similar patterns are recognized and fine tuned. Sensations flood our minds constantly. Prolepsis allows us to make sense of sensations, then once patterns are identified within the sensations, we can begin to assign concepts to those patterns cognitively/consciously.

For example, let's use an infant. Her visual senses pick up sensory stimulation. Prolepsis allows her to identify a pattern. She has no language to attach a word to the pattern, but she can pull a recurring pattern from the sensations of lights, shapes, colors, shadows flooding her visual field. The pattern comes and goes. Leaves and returns. Pleasurable feelings accompany this pattern. Later, she will be reinforced to accompany this visual pattern with the sound "mama." The sensations come first, prolepsis comes next, rational assignment of concepts follows after that.

That's where my head is at right now; however, I'm still not wed to a dogmatic acceptance of Epicurean categories and concepts of how the mind works. Epicurus was brilliant in some of his ideas with very little empirical evidence available to him. But his ideas are 2,000+ years old. That's one reason I like to read about modern cognitive science, and I still think the most intriguing research is the work of Dr. Lisa Feldman Barrett and others about the minds using prediction as a means of dealing with the world. That prediction to me smells a lot like prolepsis, too.

[Theory of constructed emotion - Wikipedia](#)

[Predictive coding - Wikipedia](#)

I think that [Cassius](#) doesn't necessarily like endorsing one scientific view too much or trying to shoehorn Epicurean philosophy into a modern theory, and I agree somewhat. For me, modern science - investigations into nature - is a way to update Epicurus' spirit if not the letter of his physics.