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In this engaging, even lyrical, book, Jan Lauwereyns examines the neural underpinnings of decision-making, using "bias" as his core concept rather than the more common but noncommittal terms "selection" and "attention." Lauwereyns offers an integrative, interdisciplinary account of the structure and function of bias, which he defines as a basic brain mechanism that attaches different weights to different information sources, prioritizing some cognitive representations at the expense of others.

Lauwereyns introduces the concepts of bias and sensitivity based on notions from Bayesian probability, which he translates into easily recognizable neural signatures, introduced by concrete examples from the experimental literature. He examines, among other topics, positive and negative motivations for giving priority to different sensory inputs, and looks for the neural underpinnings of racism, sexism, and other forms of "familiarity bias."

Lauwereyns_a poet and essayist as well as a scientist_connects findings and ideas in neuroscience to analogous concepts in such diverse fields as post-Lacanian psychoanalysis, literary theory, philosophy of mind, evolutionary psychology, and experimental economics. With The Anatomy of Bias, he gives readers that rarity in today's world of proliferating and ever more narrowly focused technical research papers: a work of sustained, rational thinking, elegantly expressed.

About the Author

Jan Lauwereyns is a Professor in the Graduate School of Systems Life Sciences at Kyushu University in Japan and Adjunct Research Associate in the School of Psychology at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. He has published articles in journals including Nature, Journal of Neuroscience, and Trends in Cognitive Science as well as poetry, fiction, and essays.

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