

Issues In The Meaning And Definition of Logic

Post by "Cassius" of August 26, 2021 at 10:08 AM

[Mathitis Kipouros](#) that reminds me that your native language is not English and your country of residence is not the USA, correct? If not, that's likely an advantage to you rather than a disadvantage, but it's still a relevant consideration to be sure we communicate clearly.

For example, in this thread, Martin's "No." I find to be distinctly German and it is good to know that he is German so that his directness is interpreted correctly. 😊

It's very possible that differences in background also help explain some of our differences in perspective:

[Quote from camotero](#)

But we need not satanize concepts and abstractions, we need to agree that concepts are good

That's an example there. At this point in my study of Epicurus I prefer to try to be really specific and avoid a sweeping statement like "concepts are good" any more than I would say "concepts or bad" or "abstractions" are bad. It's probably more accurate to say "concepts can be useful" without the value judgment implied in being "good," especially without a specific statement of what concepts are being discussed.

So to say "concepts are good" comes pretty close to what I perceive Plato and the stoics to have been doing in essentially "worshipping" formal logic. (I think I'll use "formal logic" as the term for a while.)

[Quote from camotero](#)

Perhaps we're conflating the inaccuracies of language with the inaccuracies of reason.

Perhaps so, but in this way of stating the issue, my own perspective is that "reason" and "logic" are purely inventions of the human mind and it is important to stress that they are in no way divine or superior to human affairs. I think people understand that about "language" but they tend to think that "reason" is something that exists independent of humanity, floating in the air, as if the request to "be reasonable" actually means something useful and specific in common everyday life (it most of the time does not, in my view, because the "devil is in the details").

[Quote from camotero](#)

doesn't disregard reason at all, but rather reinforces it's importance.

Same point as above. Hammers are extremely important in carpentry, but in the "great scheme of things" they have a distinctly subordinate place, and if we are evaluating philosophy and comparing Epicurus to the others, then the important thing to know about "reason" may well be that the other philosophers are absolutely wrong about how important it is (depending again on definition).

[Quote from camotero](#)

I feel a bit more confident that the term "critical thinking" could be the modern meaning of "true reason".

I am personally reluctant to endorse the term "critical" even more than I would endorse the term "skeptical." Yes both have good aspects, but it seems to me in common usage both terms have developed a negative connotation that is probably well deserved when they are taken to their logical conclusions. The truth of the reason of Epicurus, I would say, is not based on it being a "critique" or "skeptical" of anything, but of it being a realistic assessment of the nature of the universe and our capabilities and limits of understanding it.

There are always going to be issues in life that you aren't going to have the evidence you would like to have to be certain of what is the "truth" of the matter. In those situations, you must have a readily-accessible method for analyzing the positive assertions you are comfortable making plus the limits of those assertions. Thus the importance of the "waiting" doctrine, and the multiple possibilities viewpoint, and the nature and role of the canonical faculties, etc. None of that is adequately expressed in terms of "being logical" or "being reasonable." I don't think there is any term even close to adequate other than "being Epicurean."