

"On Methods of Inference": Notes For Review And Discussion (Including David Sedley Article: "On Signs")

Post by "Cassius" of August 26, 2021 at 6:52 PM

Yes I recall DeLacey talks a lot about inconceivability and this makes sense to me as an "empirical" rather than logical test:

since it cannot help relying on inductive premisses.

I begin with a brief look at those sign-inferences which they consider to depend solely on the similarity method. An example is 'Since Epicurus is a man, Metrodorus is a man' (14.2–27; cf. 12.14–31). The similarity between the two subjects is so strong that it becomes 'inconceivable' that an essential predicate of one should fail to belong to the other. This kind of inconceivability may lack strict logical force, but it is regarded as an entirely cogent criterion of inference,⁴⁶ and the best available (12.32–6; 33.1–9). Sometimes it establishes direct resemblances; to take a mathematical example, it is inconceivable that while the square of four in our world has an area equal to its perimeter its counterparts in other worlds should not (15.28–16.1). Sometimes the inference is analogical: it is inconceivable that while all phenomenal bodies have weight atoms should not (37.12–24).⁴⁷

In fact it also may hark back to our discussions elsewhere on the "feeling" of certainty.