

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

Post by "Cassius" of August 26, 2021 at 8:23 PM

Yes this is really the whole ball of wax. The Platonist /Stoics are playing "word games." They are asserting that by means of incantations -- If this, then that - and similar syllogistic reasoning they can deduce "universals" that they attach a truly mystical significance too, and the Epicureans were fighting all the way against that. Our wishes and our words do not create reality -- reality is reality, and we simply do the best we can to describe it in words. There are no "forms" or "ideas" or "concepts" floating in the air waiting for us to discover them.

definitional properties like man's mortality (35.4-29).

This looks like a head-on confrontation between empiricism and rationalism. The Epicureans must have felt that in claiming that science could work purely by deduction from necessary truths the Stoics were failing to attach sufficient weight to the inductive element in the human learning process to which their epistemology paid lip service (*SVF* II 83; Cicero, *Ac.* II 21, 30). And one can see the point of their refusal to bow to Stoic pressure by reformulating the mortality argument into a deductively valid one: either way it rested primarily on the inductive similarity method, and nothing was gained by adopting a formulation which disguised this fact.