

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

Post by "Joshua" of March 16, 2022 at 3:37 AM

My own suspicion is that the confusion here comes in because logic is rather 'slippery'. It is a very powerful tool of cognition. It is absolutely critical to the field of computer science:

Quote

A computer is a digital electronic machine that can be programmed to carry out sequences of arithmetic or logical operations (computation) automatically.

We know that it works. But that is a separate question to the one we're really asking: ***Is logic a source of direct knowledge?***

That's the question that it is difficult to get a hold on. Logic is amazingly flimsy stuff when it doesn't rest on something solid--which is to say, something *known*. When Thomas Aquinas set out to prove the existence of a god, he could not rest his proof on the evidence of his senses; his senses furnished no evidence of god. So he employed instead the twin vacuous pillars of faith and logic; his Five Ways to prove the existence of god do not stand up to even slight scrutiny, as some honest Christians will admit. He started with nothing, and logic took him nowhere fast.

Epicurus was neither strictly an empiricist, nor anything like a rationalist; but he was far closer to the former than to the latter, which is part of the reason he rejected geometry. This chart does a fair job, I think:

Between Rationalism and Empiricism	
Empiricism	Rationalism
➤ Knowledge is based on experience and experimentation.	➤ Knowledge is based on the use of reason or logic.
➤ Experimental science is the paradigm of knowledge.	➤ Mathematics is the paradigm of knowledge.
➤ Experience and experiment rarely, if ever, produce certainty.	➤ Genuine knowledge is certain.
➤ Some empiricists believe that mathematics can be certain.	➤ Relation to experience. Experience does not reduce certainty thus, is at best second-class knowledge.