

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

Post by "Cassius" of March 16, 2022 at 6:02 AM

## [Quote from Godfrey](#)

. Or are you saying that logic belongs in the canon? I've understood logic, or reasoning, as a process that we use to evaluate our sensations, anticipations and feelings. Is logic/reasoning then "mental focusings"

I think Joshua's answer is the right track with the word "slippery."

What I am concluding is that the word "logic" is like the word "reason" in the way we use them colloquially.

From a technical point of view (I know Martin uses the term this way) "logic" has a very precise meaning, but both terms can be used colloquially to refer generally to a "manner of thinking," and I think this is where the confusion is arising.

Used colloquially there does seem indeed to be a "Stoic logic" as opposed to an Epicurean view of logic, and so the words "logic" and "reason" are not precise enough for our needs.

To me the key issue seems to be that to be considered persuasive any form of reasoning must be tied to premises that can be verified perceptually through the three canonical faculties. It seems to me that logical or reasoning constructions that are internally valid, but not tied to perceptual data, are being held by Epicurus to be in a category of their own and especially dangerous to practical living. Epicurus seems to be warning us to specifically identify this activity as uniquely threatening to sound principles of living. However it looks to me like we today are so conditioned against this by the arbitrariness and wishful thinking of religion, combined with a radical skepticism in which, because science is moving so fast that we have come to accept the appearance that everything we understand today will be necessarily understood differently tomorrow. Therefore we have come to think that radical skepticism has forever won the philosophical battle, and that the worst sin is to ever consider anything to be certain.

So I think the challenge is that of avoiding the Frances Wright "I don't care" position and instead articulating in understandable form the areas that can and do change (practical or applied science, for lack of better term) vs a set of metaphysical assumptions that do not change (the universe as whole is eternal; death is the end of our unique consciousness; there

are no "absolute" standards of the way to live / virtue; nature gives us only pleasure and pain as ultimate guides; maybe a few more).

These are not ethical positions but in fact "natural science" positions that have to be viewed as entitles to a special place in our thinking, a special place that gives them a status in which we regard them as inherently unchallengeable by non-perception-based theorizing and speculation.

That's the best way I can articulate this at present.