

# Episode 242 - Cicero's OTNOTG 17 - Is Truth A Matter Of Logic?

Post by "Cassius" of August 18, 2024 at 6:56 PM

Today we kept on topic with the existing thread title, and most of the episode is devoted to discussing the concept of "truth" (which is probably very closely related to the concept of "real").

Here's a section of Diogenes' Laertius' biography that we quoted during the episode:

Quote

[32] Nor is there anything which can refute the sensations. For a similar sensation cannot refute a similar because it is equivalent in validity, nor a dissimilar a dissimilar, for the objects of which they are the criteria are not the same; nor again can reason, for all reason is dependent upon sensations; nor can one sensation refute another, for we attend to them all alike. Again, the fact of apperception confirms the truth of the sensations. And seeing and hearing are as much facts as feeling pain. From this it follows that as regards the imperceptible we must draw inferences from phenomena. For all thoughts have their origin in sensations by means of coincidence and analogy and similarity and combination, reasoning too contributing something. And the visions of the insane and those in dreams are true, for they cause movement, and that which does not exist cannot cause movement.

I have underlined that last sentence because now that the episode is "in the can" I realize that we did not point this out on the air, but when you read that last sentence it is pretty hard not to come to the conclusion that Epicurus was defining "to exist" as "having the capacity to cause movement." That's a very interesting perspective on how to define what "exists" or "what is real" that probably deserves some independent discussion. We often talk about how Epicurus is focusing on whether it is revealed to us by our natural faculties as the definition of something being "real," but it probably should always have been obvious, that given that the faculties themselves are made up of atoms, that the implication of the way Epicurus is going allows us to refine the definition of what is real all the way down to the question "does it have the capacity to cause movement."

This would seem to shift the focus of the question of "what is real" away from a more abstract "Does it exist outside your physical body?" as the test of what we should regard as "real," to a

more practical question of something like "does it cause your physical body (which would include your mind) to "move" or "feel impact?"