

Episode 244 - Cicero's OTNOTG 19 - Zeno's Paradoxes - Profundity Or Gaslighting?

Post by "Cassius" of August 31, 2024 at 8:29 PM

One more comment on Zeno for tonight; Most of the youtube videos seem fixated on explaining the math, and "solving the math problem," as if "saving mathematics" is what is important about the exercise.

To me, that totally misses the point. The point is that Zeno was using math to make normal people doubt the validity of their senses, to try to persuade them to think that "everything is one" and that "void cannot exist" and the motion and change are impossible.

These would be very damaging to human happiness if accepted. And even more damaging to happiness is that they persuade people to think that philosophy is impractical and in fact nonsensical. The truth is, as in Seneca's quote, that people *do* need philosophy, and they need the kind of philosophy that Epicurus was offering, but people who are made jaded and cynical by being told that "Zeno's paradox" is profound philosophy are going to check out before they finish their first philosophy class. And it's my view that people need to realize that that kind of "turn off" reaction is exactly what was expected and hoped for by Zeno (and his variants after him). They want people to give up looking for a true philosophy that they can understand, and default to give THEM the sole claim to philosophy and wisdom and the right to define what is moral what is desirable in life.

That's why it's important to deal with Zeno's paradoxes and to give them the treatment they deserve. It's a shame they don't seem to be listed specifically in the list given by Diogenes Laertius. I wonder if we should not consider the Eleatics to be under the umbrella of the "Logicians" in this passage. "Destroyers" also makes sense to me as a good term - at least as a start! Or maybe they were related more to Antidorus and deserve the title "Maniac." The two adjectives *together* seem to me most appropriate.

Quote

"Heraclitus he called 'The Muddler,' Democritus [he called] Lerocritus ('judge of nonsense'), Antidorus he called Sannidorus ('Maniac'), the Cynics [he called] 'Enemies of Hellas,' the Logicians [he called] 'The destroyers,' and Pyrrho [he called] 'The uneducated fool.'"