

# Issues In The Meaning And Definition of Logic

Post by “Mathitis Kipouros” of August 25, 2021 at 11:56 PM

Some quotes that I have found so far that may be clarifying as to what was it that Epicurus rejected:

Page 24:

Quote from DeWitt

Equally fallacious was the allegation that the canon had been set up as a substitute of logic. [...] The function of ancient logic was to score points, and make opponents wince, but no adversaries were needed for the use of the Canon.

So, rhetoric? Which may have been considered logic, but it's not. Am I wrong?

Page 122 (talking about Plato):

Quote from DeWitt

Thus, in his system, reason became the only contact between man and reality [...]

Epicurus denied the existence of Platonic ideas [...] Thus, to his thinking, man stood face to face with physical reality and his sensations constituted the sole contact with his reality. [...]

Thus Nature [...] becomes a norm, while the Platonic Reason is eliminated, along with the Platonic Ideas.

So here his equating reason to Platonic reason/ideas.

So he is not talking at all about reason, as in what we understand as logic. Also, from page 123:

Quote from DeWitt

The position of Epicurus becomes seemingly paradoxical because there is no instrumentality by which reason can be dethroned except by reason itself. Consideration of this paradox may be postponed until it has been shown how the Platonic concept of reason may be rendered absurd. **\*\*The conclusions will be absolutely logical if the premises are accepted.\*\***

So it seems to me that there was a desire to render reason useless in general for the sake of particularly rendering absurd and useless, at least, the two associations to reason/logic that are

quoted above. Throwing the baby with the bath water?

The last line quoted above is a testament to how reason is not to be disregarded, isn't it? Perhaps this is the type of true reason that we won't be able to get by without?

If this reason isn't logic, or formal logic, could we agree that it could be "critical thinking"?

Also, and by the way, the preeminence of sensation over reason is established only mechanically, on page 129:

Quote from DeWitt

Let it be assumed that a human being has been deprived of all his five senses. This is tantamount to death, and the subject has ceased to be a rational creature. [...] Laertius ascribes to Epicurus the idea "that the sensations lead the way". In the present context, this notion seems to have apposite application: The possession of sensation seems to be construed as antecedent to rational activity.

Also, it's been stated over and over again that while that sensations can and are always true (in that they bring a pure impression) they can be, as DeWitt puts it, valueless as a criterion (the round/square tower example). And how are we going to discern this if not by reason?

I must add also, that I found also this example, when he is explaining the difference between logic and the canon (page 24):

Quote from DeWitt

The researcher works on the basis of an hypothesis, which he puts to the test of experiment, that is, of the senses [...]

This reinforces one of the doubts I expressed some posts above. Isn't the hypothesis's logic/reason? Without the hypothesis, what is there to try and prove? Yes, the senses perceive the reality, but to understand it, we need reason/logic, don't we? Otherwise we are perceiving reality, alright, but if we don't process it with reason, we're no different than other animals.

I know no one here advocates for the nullification of the importance of reason, but I think there may be a strong disregard of logic/reason that perhaps is not too helpful either, and as an example I'd like to bring something that was commented in that same episode (of the Lucretius podcast I mentioned above), after I finished listening to it: "How do we know something is true? I can *feel* when something is true". I don't think this is true, but I'm open to be corrected. I'm pretty sure the person who said this didn't mean it and said it rhetorically or lightly as no one objected it. But as I said, I don't think you can feel truth. You may have true feelings. But the truth about something has to be established (and agreed upon to be able to move forward) logically, albeit after the senses gave us content to reason about, and after we've tested out reasoning with those same senses.

These are honest questions, I really don't want to stir things up just for kicks.

And also, I recognize I have a long way to read in order to be able to say I've studied enough, so I appreciate and recognize the patience and tolerance shown by the most advanced around here. I post what I post humbly (even if sometimes this doesn't show), keeping this in mind, and perhaps out of my depth, because it's fun ☺ and I have felt encouraged to do so. I think that is one of the most valuable characteristics of this forum.