

# Issues In The Meaning And Definition of Logic

Post by "Cassius" of August 26, 2021 at 1:25 AM

All of what I see you raise are good questions so while I appreciate your last statement I firmly think the discussion we're having is very valuable. I do think, however, in general, that we are suffering from the difficulty of really having a bright line definition of many of these words (logic, reason, dialectic, dialectical logic, etc). And much of the reason for that is they these words are commonly used in very similar ways, so each discussion about each word almost requires a clarification each time it is used.

[Quote from camotero](#)

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

Rhetoric is another word that in my view isn't so clear in common usage.

[Quote from camotero](#)

So he is not talking at all about reason, as in what we understand as logic

Just citing that to reinforce the issue that "reason" seems to have a number of connotations that may or may not make it similar in usage as logic depending on context.

[Quote from camotero](#)

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?

Of all the comments this is probably the most important to articulate better. We confirm that the tower is in fact square by walking toward it, viewing it from different angles, touching it, etc. It is never reason \*alone\* which does the confirming, it is the reliability of subsequent multiple sensations. There's a really good cite from Epicurus directly on that point (that the reliability of our conclusions / opinions comes from the repeatability of the sensation) that if my mind were quicker I'd like to post, but can't. If someone else can I hope they will add this to the thread.

Now someone may want to argue, "Well, comparing multiple sensations to see which is reliably repeated IS a form of "reason" or even "logic!" If someone goes down that path then they've really got to disentangle what they mean by reason and logic, because such a wide definition

essentially converts every example of looking for consistency into reason and logic and that clearly is not Epicurus' target.

[Quote from camotero](#)

Otherwise we are perceiving reality, alright, but if we don't process it with reason, we're no different than other animals.

Ok now on that point it is my position (and I think Epicurus') that there IS no essential difference between humans and other animals. And that precise argument is stated very clearly by Cicero who complains that Epicurus reduces us to the state of animals by not worshipping reason/logic as he (Cicero) does. Can't easily remember the cite there but I think it's in Academic Questions.

[Quote from camotero](#)

: "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.

This is very valuable for you to call this into question. Are you talking about something Elayne said? I don't suppose you have a time cite do you? I remember being uneasy with certain formulations of some of that discussion and it might be that it would be good to make some notes on that episode to clarify. I am remembering that it was Elayne who said something like that and (if I recall) I considered it a reasonable formulation of the "feeling of certainty" that we do in fact get when we are legitimately convinced that our conclusion is correct. And in a way (depending on the words that were used) it is correct to argue that certainty / confidence in Epicurean terms comes from our ability to confirm our opinions through the data we observe through the senses and all the canonical faculties.

It is also possible that what you're referring to was in discussion of "abstractions" and I also think there may have been some statements made at times that may have been more critical of abstractions than would be warranted. But there is an important point there too about the limitations of abstractions, so it would be necessary to pull out the precise statements and consider them carefully.

Anytime you (or anyone) feels like certain statements in the podcast might warrant clarification or revision please make note of it (preferably in the discussion for that episode) and try to record the time it appears and we'll go back and address those. It would be very valuable for everyone to do that.