

Issues In The Meaning And Definition of Logic

Post by "Cassius" of August 27, 2021 at 3:30 PM

LOL. And that's why I made those remarks about "Don will come in and explain all of this to us!" --- we can count on Don to go right to the heart of the issue! 😊

So that I can add something more than this joke to this thread, let me poke another bear I've poked often in the past. When I was much younger I used to study the works of Ayn Rand, and from that experience I came away with it burned into me that "Here is someone (Rand) who really does in fact worship "reason."

I recall reading that she wanted the word "RATIONAL" on her headstone, even though I don't think she eventually did that.

And of course no one reading Rand can escape her worship of Aristotle as a virtual god of reason.

Then in subsequent years added to that I became familiar with the Stoics and observed that they were doing almost exactly the same thing as Rand in putting "reason" at the center of their analysis.

So this is where I see more of that "context" I've discussed recently with camotero. Some people are brought up steeped in religion, and so they are always interested in how Epicurus jibes with the religions viewpoint. I pretty much check that box personally. And then some get exposed to the Rand-like approach where they are taught to hold reason as essentially the standard of all things -- reason being the essence of what Rand would refer to as "man *qua* man." And I think if we set our minds to it we could come up with literal gobs of examples of philosophers all across the ages in that same boat, singing hymns of praise to "reason."

So in balancing how Epicurus could say both [PD16](#) praising reason, while still in the rest of his philosophy putting reason in a firm secondary role to his "canon of truth," I think we need to take into account that it's very possible that Epicurus was as fed up with the worship of "reason" as I can get myself today when I let myself think about it too long. 😊

Therefore we aren't talking about Epicurus opposing reason in the form of "common sense" or simple "consistency" or those ordinary senses. All of those I think he fully endorsed. We're talking about Epicurus pointing out the "limits of reason" specifically including those who try to use formal /syllogistic / symbolic logic to convince us to overturn the more day-to-day conclusions that we reach through the ordinary use of our ordinary faculties.

That's why I think Jefferson was exactly right in this quote below (once you take out the deistic tone that Jefferson was probably using to protect himself). I think Epicurus was essentially in

tune with the last part I am highlighting from the letter Peter Carr, August 10, 1787.

It's hard for me to read this sentence: "This sense is submitted, indeed, in some degree, to the guidance of reason; but it is a small stock which is required for this: even a less one than what we call common sense"

..... without thinking of Diogenes Laertius' " For all thoughts have their origin in sensations by means of coincidence and analogy and similarity and combination, reasoning too contributing something."

I realize this applies probably only to ethics, and we're talking more than that, but I do think it's instructive, so here's the full paragraph:

Quote

He who made us would have been a pitiful bungler, if he had made the rules of our moral conduct a matter of science. For one man of science, there are thousands who are not. What would have become of them? Man was destined for society. His morality, therefore, was to be formed to this object. He was endowed with a sense of right and wrong, merely relative to this. This sense is as much a part of his Nature, as the sense of hearing, seeing, feeling; it is the true foundation of morality, and not the [beautiful], truth, &c., as fanciful writers have imagined. The moral sense, or conscience, is as much a part of man as his leg or arm. It is given to all human beings in a stronger or weaker degree, as force of members is given them in a greater or less degree. It may be strengthened by exercise, as may any particular limb of the body. This sense is submitted, indeed, in some degree, to the guidance of reason; but it is a small stock which is required for this: even a less one than what we call common sense. State a moral case to a ploughman and a professor. The former will decide it as well, & often better than the latter, because he has not been led astray by artificial rules.