

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

Post by “Cassius” of August 21, 2024 at 7:10 AM

This week's episode is now posted, and by coincidence it ends up addressing almost the exact topic which ended up being the major topic of our 20th Zoom last night. Many of us - including Kalosyni in the podcast as to "truth," Tau Phi in discussion last night as to whether to consider this a matter of "re-definition," and Cicero in On Ends as to Epicurus "doing violence to words" - question how best to get a grasp on Epicurus' deviation from convention in the way he describes many important concepts.

Hopefully this episode will prompt further discussion on how to describe what Epicurus is doing. Should what he is doing be considered "redefinition?" Should it be considered "clarification?" What about "clarifying definition," or "redefining clarification?"

Regardless of what words are used to describe it, there is deviation from convention, and it will be useful to think about the best way to describe what is going on and how to convey that to other people.

It's in this context that we have DeWitt's statement that has been cited in many of our recent podcasts. DeWitt calls it "extension of the name" and refers to "application" and "denomination" without using "re-definition":

Quote from “Epicurus And His Philosophy” page 240 - Norman DeWitt (emphasis added)

“The extension of the name of pleasure to this normal state of being was the major innovation of the new hedonism. It was in the negative form, freedom from pain of body and distress of mind, that it drew the most persistent and vigorous condemnation from adversaries. The contention was that the application of the name of pleasure to this state was unjustified on the ground that two different things were thereby being denominated by one name. Cicero made a great to-do over this argument, but it is really superficial and captious. The fact that the name of pleasure was not customarily applied to the normal or static state did not alter the fact that the name ought to be applied to it; nor that reason justified the application; nor that human beings would be the happier for so reasoning and believing.