

# Episode 243 Cicero's OTNOTG 18 - From "All Sensations Are True" to Reasoning By Similarity And Analogy

Post by "Cassius" of August 27, 2024 at 3:43 PM

Here is the part of Dr. Sedley's commentary that appears right after the quote that is included under "Part 1" in the post above. Explaining or giving examples of the the last underlined sentence below (especially as to "relative predicates") would be particularly helpful.

Quote

The opponents can be seen to draw heavily on Platonic dialectical materials in order to launch their attack on the reality of values, in particular in their contrast between the universally agreed determinate nature exhibited by minerals and the cultural relativity of values. As one might expect of the New Academy, this sceptical argument borrows its materials freely from the text of Plato (Phaedrus, 263a, cf. also Euthyphro, 7b-d, Theaetetus, 172b). More remarkable is how Polystratus, in his reply, appears himself to draw inspiration from Plato - a strategy with all the more ad hominem force when directed against Plato's own self-declared successors. Plato had indeed never intended by this contrast between minerals and values to impugn the reality of the latter, any more than he had meant to infer from the relativity of large(r) and small(er) to their unreality. On the contrary, at Sophist 255c he had presented an exhaustive division of beings (ὄντα) into absolute and relative, a bicategorical scheme which became formal Academic doctrine under his second successor Xenocrates (F15 Isnardi Parente 2 ). Much the same stance as Plato's own is developed by Polystratus as a rebuttal of the contemporary Academy. He resourcefully points out that the mere existence of an ontological difference between the two categories does not entail that one or other of them will fall short of reality. Anyone who thinks otherwise, he ingeniously adds, could as easily argue that, since such relative predicates as beneficial and harmful manifestly are part of the structure of reality, it must be the non-relative items such as minerals that are unreal!