

Syllogistic Reasoning and Canonical Reasoning

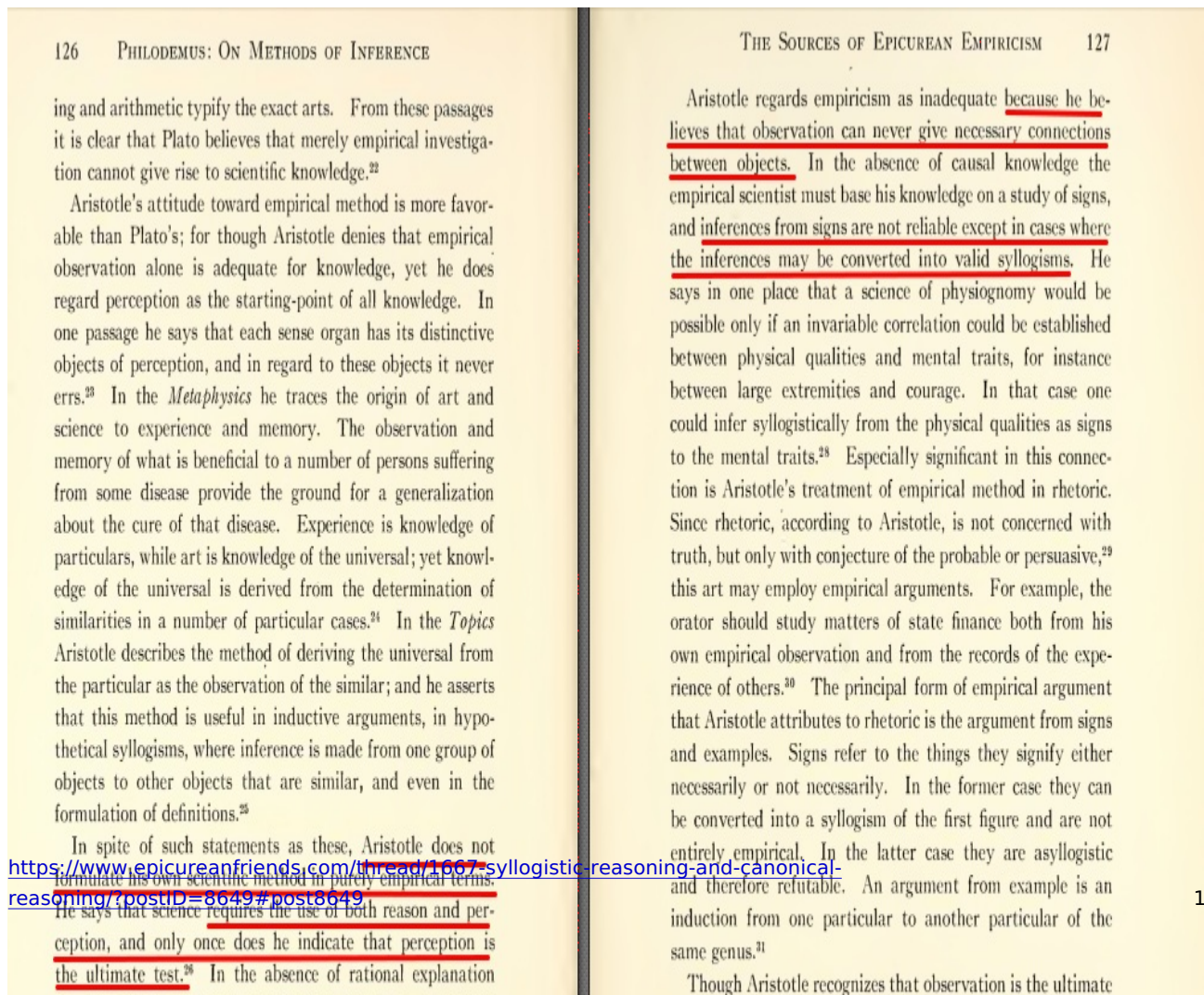
Post by "Cassius" of August 17, 2020 at 12:22 PM

This is a thread to discuss the interrelationships between "syllogistic reasoning" and "canonical reasoning."

At this point the main suggestion I have for textual material is:

1. - DeWitt's Epicurus and His Philosophy
 1. Chapter 7 - The Canon, Reason, and Nature
 2. Chapter 8 - Sensations, Anticipations, and Feelings
2. DeWitt's "[Epicurus on Immediate Presentations](#)"
3. 2 - [DeLacy's Appendix to Philodemus' On Methods of Inference](#):
 1. [Sources of Epicurean Empiricism](#)
 2. [Development of Epicurean Logic and Methodology](#)
 3. [Logical Controversies of Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics](#)

This page from the DeLacy material has always stuck in my memory as setting forth the issues most clearly:



To conclude, the Epicureans knew and used the extensive empirical theory that was available to them in ancient times, and even after the death of Epicurus they kept abreast of the empirical development of arts and sciences. They took the stand that a rigorous empirical method will establish “necessary” truths, and that in their own philosophy they possessed such a method. The following chapter will trace the formulation and applications of empiricism within the Epicurean school, and the final chapter will discuss the Epicurean defense of empirical method against the attacks of the Stoics.

Remember that this is Delacy's opinion about Epicurus, but here is a significant part of it!

immediate experience of objects that are known to the members of the group. Words refer primarily to objects that are apparent;⁴ their cognitive meaning, which is purely extensional, can be determined by specific empirical reference to the objects of experience. It follows for Epicurus that language, like truth, is on the level of perception rather than opinion, and that any use of words to refer to non-empirical entities, such as the universals of the rationalists, should be rejected as

² For further discussion of Epicurean epistemology, see C. Bailey, *Greek Atomists and Epicurus*, 236–274, and Philippson, *De Philodemi Libro*, 10–31. Bailey's discussion must be used with caution.

³ Cf. P. De Lacy, "The Epicurean Analysis of Language," *Am. Journ. Philol.* LX (1939), 85–92.

⁴ Diog. Laer. x.33.

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lacking cognitive meaning.⁵ Epicurus condemns also the rhetorical use of language, since by emphasis on the form of expression it obscures the cognitive meaning of words, and draws the attention away from the truth of what is being said.⁶ He ridicules those who believe that they have said something when they have applied to some unknown object a metaphor from another object equally unknown.⁷ He holds that the only correct language for a philosopher is the language that has been gradually built up by society as a practical means of communication about the objects of experience; and if this language requires alteration because it is inexact or inadequate it should never be altered except in strict accordance with empirical facts.