

General Identification of the Argument in "On Methods of Inference"

Post by "Cassius" of October 28, 2020 at 10:16 PM

As to this paragraph, it is necessary to elaborate on what is meant by "contraposition." I need to look that up again and come back with an elaborate definition, but I think it is safe to generalize and say that "contraposition" refers to a method of reasoning using a logical syllogism, or in even simpler terms, "an argument based on logic," i think the meaning of this paragraph is that the Epicureans held that arguments based on at least a certain type of logic are "valid only in so far as they are supported by analogy." It's tempting to rewrite that as "arguments based on a certain type of logic are based valid only in so far as they are supported by direct evidence," but it seems likely to me that "reasoning by analogy" is actually a

Philodemus next gives the Stoic argument that contraposition is the only method of inference that is formally valid (II.25–IV.37). The Epicureans contend in opposition that arguments by contraposition are valid only in so far as they are supported by analogy. All formal principles are empirically derived (XVI.4–XVII.28).

In answer to the question "When is it proper to reason by analogy and when is it not?" we have

The Stoics ask on what grounds some similarities are accepted and used in empirical inferences, while others are rejected (v.8–36). The Epicureans reply that inference must be made only between objects that are closely related and as similar as possible (XVIII.17–XIX.4).