

The dangers of dialectical logic

Post by “Eoghan Gardiner” of November 19, 2023 at 2:41 PM

"Logic, on which your school lays such stress, he held to be of no effect either as a guide to conduct or as an aid to thought. Natural Philosophy he deemed all-important."

I am wondering what exactly do we mean by logic, does the above text from Cicero refer to things such as syllogisms e.g.

1. Socrates is a man
2. All men die
3. Socrates will die therefore

One criticism I have is that it solves nothing, there are famous arguments for Gods existence in catholic tradition but they really have no power of demonstration or convincing.

Post by “Pacatus” of November 19, 2023 at 2:51 PM

[Quote from Eoghan Gardiner](#)

I am wondering what exactly do we mean by logic,

Just thinking ...

The above is a valid deductive inference (syllogism) because the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises. But it only becomes true if, in fact, there was a man named Socrates.

I'm not sure how much the ancients knew of inductive logic?

Post by “Eoghan Gardiner” of November 19, 2023 at 2:55 PM

I don't think so I can't recall any from plato anyway

Post by “Lowri834” of November 19, 2023 at 8:56 PM

I looked at this recently when I was poking at the Forum Navigation Map. I started with the wikipedia definition of Dialectic - "[dialogue](#) between people holding different [points of view](#) about a subject but wishing to arrive at the [truth](#) through [reasoned argumentation](#)." It also notes ""dialectic" owes much of its prestige to its role in the philosophies of [Socrates](#) and [Plato](#)". So it's not surprising that Epicurus rejects a major tool of philosophers he disagreed with. Also as I work through Cicero's On Ends through the podcast it's easy to see how this method can be abused since it allows the author to argue both sides, control what information is included and what's not and present false information. Dialectic logic is not like the forms of logic/reason I learned in school - proofs, induction etc. or that I think we use in daily life such as pros and cons or analogy or cause and effect. What I can recall of Epicurus' view is several references to being wise and the end of the Letter to Pythocles, "give yourself up to the study of....and also of the criteria of truth and of the feelings, and of the purpose for which we reason out these things."

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Post by “sanantoniogarden” of January 24, 2024 at 8:09 PM

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrH6dOA41Hs>

In the comments section of this video from the Society, a person attempts to disprove Epicurus' teachings on death using logic. I thought it might interest some in this thread.

Post by “Cassius” of January 24, 2024 at 9:45 PM

Wow that is quite an exchange in the comments. It's going to take some time to digest and get back to you but thanks for posting that!

Post by “Joshua” of January 24, 2024 at 11:49 PM

I think he misses the subtleties of Epicurus' language:

From the letter to Pythocles; "The size of the sun is *to us* what it appears to be, and in reality it is either greater or less or the same size."

"Death is nothing *to us*; for what has disintegrated is without perception, and what is without perception is nothing to us."

It is not principally a question of harm, but of experience. And just like with the size of the sun, a different perspective yields a different perception. The death of a child is a horror to his mother, because the mother still exists as a subject whose experience is modified by predicates. The child? No subject; therefore no predicate.

Post by "Bryan" of January 25, 2024 at 1:49 AM

This argument has been building. Stephen Rosenbaum, who got the opportunity to write THE article about death in the recent oxford book, gives a long list of "modern philosophers" who argue that Epicurus did not understand that "value for a person does not depend on sentience or existence" or "facts thus might be good or bad even for those who are dead and no longer exist" I feel these statements are too absurd to need a counterargument..... but the absurdists are:

Kaufman's "Death and Deprivation" article,

Feinberg's "Moral Limits of the Criminal Law" article,

Feldman's "Confrontations,"

Rosenbaum's "The Harm of Killing,"

Silverstein's "The Evil of Death"

ALL just on footnotes of pgs. 124-125 on the oxford general article on this topic !

Anybody can look and see if I am correct or not.

They are trying to take our ladder away

Post by “DavidN” of January 26, 2024 at 6:22 PM

Ya I already commented on the absurdity of his logic on the facebook page, I refuse to cede time to those who cannot properly form a rational thought without eating there own tail.

Post by “Don” of January 26, 2024 at 6:52 PM

[Quote from Bryan](#)

"value for a person does not depend on sentience or existence" or "facts thus might be good or bad even for those who are dead and no longer exist" I feel these statements are too absurd to need a counterargument..

WTF?! "does not depend on sentience or existence."??? So, by that we can talk about the "value for" fictional, non-existent characters in books or mythology?? Absurd is one word I'd use for that position!

Post by “Bryan” of January 26, 2024 at 7:09 PM

Yes, and it's not some random article - but this is THE section on death in the Oxford handbook.

"Recent debate among philosophers began with the realization that whether death is bad for people depends on 'assumptions about good and evil.' ...Only if one gives up Epicurus's principle that good and bad require sentience and adopts an alternative could one rightly think that death is bad for people. The alternative principle is that something may have value for someone, even if it has and can have no effects on the person in question" (pg 125)

"If death can have value in these ways, can be bad or good in relation to continued life, then it might appear that Epicurus was mistaken in believing that because the dead lack sentience death can have no value for people... People with this abstract idea of value attach good and bad for people to facts, which they regard as positive or negative... This abstract conception of value is a tool in the range of judgments people make, and has its place in making important judgments." (pg 129)

Post by “DavidN” of January 26, 2024 at 7:55 PM

The concept of value devoid of subject is just a play at universalism. Fun fact I failed my ethics class because I refused to admit that there is any truth to universalism, there's too many paradoxes and real world examples to which universalism simply fails, and I tore apart every argument my professor made for an entire semester, had I discovered Epicurus at the time I would have had even more powerful arguments to throw back at him. Morality can't exist without a subject because it is wholly a human artifact, and can only be applied properly to humanity. You can't apply human morality to lions and gazelle, even dolphins which are arguably the next closest to sentience engage in rape, but can you apply human morality to what is still a wild animal. So the subject not only matters but is essential to the moral argument.

Post by “Don” of January 26, 2024 at 8:16 PM

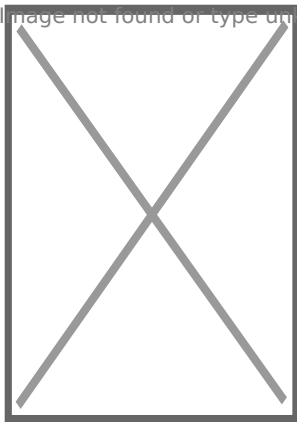
[Quote from DavidN](#)

universalism

Mea culpa. I apologize for my ignorance. Could you define "universalism" here?

Post by “DavidN” of January 26, 2024 at 8:25 PM

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[Moral Universalism](#)

Moral universalism refers to the idea of a (absolute) moral truth and a single pattern (a.k.a. universal rule) of action acknowledged as good or right by all...

link.springer.com

This looks like the best definition as I've seen it being applied.

Post by “Don” of January 26, 2024 at 8:55 PM

Ah!!! Like a Universally-applicable morality. Thanks for the clarification.

I couldn't get Universalism in the Christian theology sense out of my head.

Post by “DavidN” of January 26, 2024 at 9:11 PM

It often comes from the contemporary religions crowd, the whole thou shalt thing.

Post by “Eikadistes” of January 26, 2024 at 9:49 PM



Post by “sanantoniogarden” of January 26, 2024 at 10:06 PM

[Quote from DavidN](#)

Ya I already commented on the absurdity of his logic on the facebook page, I refuse to cede time to those who cannot properly form a rational thought without eating there own tail.

I know it's difficult to converse with people like this. But I couldn't just walk by and let the gentleman say those things without some sort of retort. If not for his benefit, then for the benefit of new viewers who would see those comments and perhaps be somehow persuaded by them. I felt like I should try and "strike a blow for Epicurus".

Post by “DavidN” of January 26, 2024 at 10:34 PM

“You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din.”