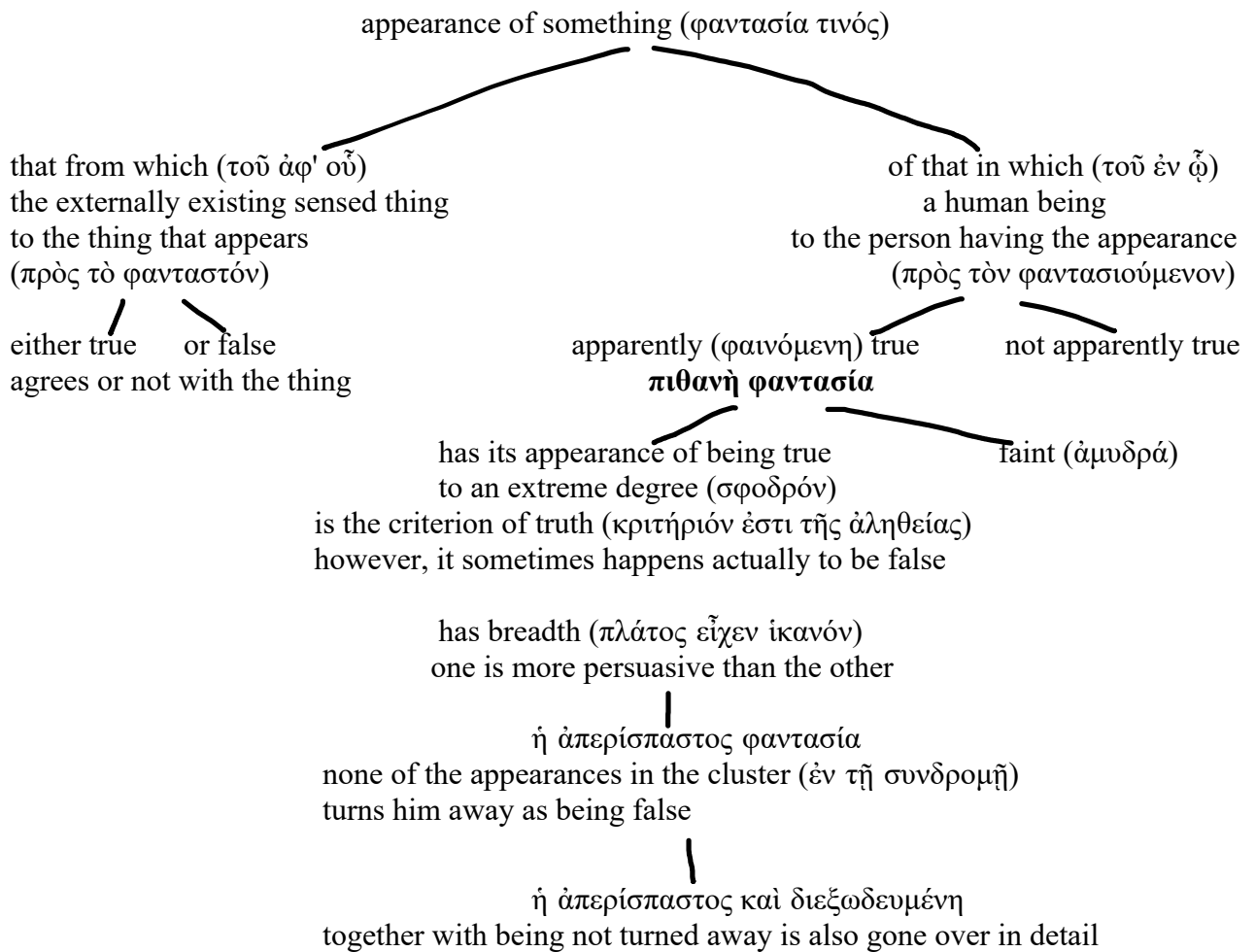


TEXTS. 2.

**Carneades – persuasive appearance / convincing impression**



**T1. M VII (Against the Logicians I)**

(159) **Carneades** positioned himself on the criterion not only against the Stoics but also against everyone before him. In fact his first argument, which is directed against all of them together, is one according to which he establishes that nothing is without qualification a criterion of truth – not reason, not sense perception, not appearance, not anything else that there is; for all of these as a group deceive us. [...]

(166) These are the arguments for the unreality of the criterion that Carneades went through, deploying them against the other philosophers (ἀντιπαρεξάγων τοῖς ἄλλοις φιλοσόφοις). But since he too requires (ἀπαιτούμενος) some criterion for the conduct of life and for the achievement of happiness, he is in effect compelled (δυνάμει ἐπαναγκάζεται) for his own part to take a stand on this, helping himself to the persuasive appearance and the one that is persuasive as well as not turned away and gone over in detail (τὴν τε πιθανὴν φαντασίαν καὶ τὴν πιθανὴν ἅμα καὶ ἀπερίσπαστον καὶ διεξωδευμένην). (167) It should be pointed out briefly what the difference between these is. The appearance (ἡ φαντασία), then, is an appearance of something (τινός) – that is, of that from which (τοῦ ἀφ' οὗ) it occurs and of that in which (τοῦ ἐν ᾧ) it occurs: that from

which (τοῦ ἀφ' οὗ) it occurs – namely, the externally existing sensed thing – and that in which it occurs – namely, a human being. (168) Being like this, it would have two states, one in relation to the thing that appears (πρὸς τὸ φανταστόν), the second in relation to the person having the appearance (πρὸς τὸν φαντασιούμενον). As regards its state in relation to the thing that appears, it is either true or false, true when it agrees with the thing that appears, false when it disagrees. (169) As regards its state in relation to the person having the appearance, one of them is apparently true (φαινομένη ἀληθής) and the other not apparently true. Of these, the apparently true one is called by the Academics “reflection” and “persuasiveness” and “persuasive appearance” (πιθανὴ φαντασία), while the not apparently true one is named “non-reflection” and “not persuasive” and “unpersuasive appearance”; for neither what immediately appears false, nor what is true but does not appear so, is of a nature to persuade us. (170) And of these appearances the one that is manifestly false and not apparently true is subject to objections and is not a criterion. [. . .] (171) Of the apparently true kind, one is faint (ἀμυδρά), as in the case of those who, because of the smallness of the thing being observed or because of the sizeable distance or even because of the weakness of their eyesight, grasp something in a mixed-up way and not distinctly. The other, in addition to appearing true, also has its appearance of being true to an extreme degree (ἔτι καὶ σφοδρὸν ἔχουσα τὸ φαίνεσθαι αὐτὴν ἀληθῆ). (172) Of these, again, the faint and weak appearance could not be a criterion; for because of its not exhibiting clearly either itself or the thing that produced it, it is not of a nature to persuade us or to draw us to assent. (173) But the one that is apparently true and makes itself sufficiently apparent is the criterion of truth (κριτήριόν ἐστι τῆς ἀληθείας) according to Carneades. And being the criterion, it has a sizeable breadth (πλάτος εἶχεν ἰκανόν), and since it is extended, one has an appearance that is more persuasive and more striking in form than another. (174) The persuasive, for the present purpose, is spoken of in three ways: in one way, applying to what both is true and is apparently true; in another way, to what is false but is apparently true; and in the third way, to what is <apparently> true, <which is> common to both. Hence the criterion is the apparently true appearance, which the Academics call persuasive. (175) However, it sometimes happens actually to be false (ἐμπίπτει δὲ ἔσθ' ὅτε καὶ ψευδής), so that it is necessary actually to use the appearance that is at times common to the true and the false. Yet one should not, because of the rare occurrence of this (διὰ τὴν σπάνιον ταύτης παρέμπτωσιν) (I mean the one that merely imitates the truth), distrust the one that for the most part (ὡς <ἐπὶ> τὸ πολὺ) tells the truth. For both our judgments and our actions are, as a matter of fact, regulated (κανονίζεσθαι συμβέβηκεν) by what applies for the most part. The first and general criterion, then, according to Carneades, is like this. (176) But since an appearance is never monadic – rather, one hangs on another, like a chain – there will be added as a second criterion the appearance that is persuasive as well as not turned away. For example, someone who catches an appearance of a human being necessarily also grasps an appearance of features that attach to him and of external features: (177) features that attach to him, such as color, size, shape, movement, talk, clothing, footwear, and external features, such as atmosphere, light, day, sky, earth, friends, and all the rest. Whenever none of these appearances distracts us by appearing false, but all of them in unison appear true, our trust is greater. (178) For we trust that this is Socrates from the fact that he has all his usual features too: color, size, shape, opinion, ragged cloak, and his being in a place where there is no one indistinguishable from him.

(179) And just as some doctors detect the genuine fever patient not from one symptom, such as an excessive pulse or a severe high temperature, but from a cluster, such as a high temperature as well as pulse and soreness to the touch and flushing and thirst and similar things, so too the Academic makes his judgment as to the truth by a cluster of appearances, and given that none of the appearances in the cluster (ἐν τῇ συνδρομῇ) turns him away as being false, he says that what strikes him is true. (180) And that the one that is not turned away is a cluster < . . > of producing trust is obvious from Menelaus. For when he left on the ship the phantom Helen, which he brought from Troy under the impression that it was Helen, and set foot on the island of Pharos, he saw the true Helen. But while he caught a true appearance from her, nevertheless he did not trust such an appearance on account of its being turned away by another one, the one in virtue of which he knew he had left Helen on the ship. (181) So the appearance that is not turned away (ἡ ἀπερίσπαστος φαντασία) is like this; and it too seems to have breadth in view of the fact that one appearance is found to be not turned away to a greater degree than another. Even more trustworthy than the appearance that is not turned away, and most perfect, is the one that produces judgment, which together with being not turned away is also gone over in detail (διεξωδευμένη). (182) What is the distinctive mark of this one should next be pointed out. In the case of the one that is not turned away, the requirement is simply that none of the appearances in the cluster should turn us away as being false, but that all of them should be true and apparently so and not unpersuasive. But in the case of the cluster associated with the one that is explored all round, we carefully scrutinize (δοκιμάζομεν) each of the appearances in the cluster – which is the kind of thing that happens in assemblies, too, when the people examine each of those who are in line to be office-holders or judges, to see if he is worthy of being entrusted with the office or the judgeship. (183) For example, at the place of judgment there are: the one judging, the thing being judged, and that through which the judgment occurs, distance and interval, place, time, manner, disposition, and activity. We distinguish precisely what each of these things is like: the one judging, whether its eyesight is not dulled (for if it is, it will be useless for judging); the thing being judged, whether it is not too small; that through which the judgment occurs, whether the atmosphere is not murky; the distance, whether it is not too great; the interval, whether it is not confused; the place, whether it is not immense; the time, whether it is not quick; the disposition, whether it is not observed to be crazy; the activity, whether it is not inadmissible. (184) For all of these things one by one become the criterion: the persuasive appearance, and the one that is persuasive as well as not turned away, and besides these the one that is persuasive as well as not turned away and gone over in detail. For this reason, just as in ordinary life, when we are investigating a small matter we question one witness, when it is a greater matter, several witnesses, and when it is an even more essential matter we examine each of the witnesses on the basis of the mutual agreement among the others, so, Carneades and his circle say, on random matters we use just the persuasive appearance as criterion, on more important matters we use the one that is not turned away, and on matters that contribute to happiness the one that is explored all round. (185) Besides, they say that just as they employ a different appearance in the case of different matters, so too they do not follow the same one in different situations. For they say that they attend to the persuasive one alone in cases where the situation does not give us an opportunity for exact consideration of the matter. (186) For example, someone is being pursued by

enemies and, coming to a ditch, he catches an appearance as of his enemies lying in wait for him right there. Then being gripped by this appearance as persuasive, he turns away and flees the ditch, following the persuasiveness surrounding the appearance, before giving exact attention to whether there is in fact an ambush by his enemies at this place or not. (187) But they follow the one that is persuasive and explored all round in cases where time is available for employing one's judgment, on the matter that confronts one, with care and by going over it in detail. For example, someone observing a coil of rope in an unlit room immediately jumps over it, supposing it to be in fact a snake. But after this he turns round and examines what is true, and finding it motionless he already has in his thinking an inclination towards its not being a snake. (188) Still, figuring that snakes are sometimes motionless when they go stiff from winter cold, he pokes the coil with a stick, and then, after thus exploring from all angles the appearance that strikes him, he assents to its being false that the body made apparent to him is a snake. And again, as I said before, when we see something clearly we assent to the fact that this is true when we have previously found, by going over the matter in detail, that we have our senses in good order, that we are looking while awake and not in our sleep, and that there is a combination of clear atmosphere, moderate distance, and immobility of the thing striking us, (189) so that because of these things the appearance is trustworthy, since we have had sufficient time for going over in detail the things observed at its location. The same reasoning also applies to the one that is not turned away; for they accept it when there is nothing that has been capable of dragging it down, as was said earlier in the case of Menelaus.

**T2.** Cicero, *Academica* II 32

[Lucullus is speaking against the Academics].

As a matter of fact, I can't really determine what their intention or idea is. When we press Academics with a point like 'If your conclusions were true, everything would be unclear', sometimes they reply: What's that to us? Is that our fault? Blame nature for concealing truth 'in the abyss', as Democritus says. But some of them are more sophisticated and demur at our charge that on their view everything is unclear. They try to show that something's being 'unclear' is quite different from its being 'inapprehensible', and they distinguish these two terms. So let's deal with the second group, the ones who make this distinction. (We can forget about the ones who claim that everything is as unclear as whether the number of stars is even or odd. They're hopeless cases.) Their idea is—and I noticed that you were particularly moved by this—that there are 'persuasive' (*probabile*) or, as it were, 'truth-like' (*veri simile*) impressions, and this is what they use as their guiding rule both for conducting their lives and in investigation and argument.

**T3.** *M VII (Against the Logicians I)* 435

Against the people who accept persuasive appearances the argument is brief. For it is one of these two: these criteria are supposed by them to be useful either for the conduct of life or for the discovery of the truth in the things that there are.