

Illustrations and Analogies For Explaining the "Two And Only Two Feelings" Argument

Post by "Don" of May 22, 2026 at 4:21 AM

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it relatively devalues the Letter to Menoecus.

If that's the case, as much as I respect Sedley, we're going to have some problems, pardner.

Okay, I need to hunker down and ready this...

Okay, read the paper, and, alright, it's fine. But I didn't see it as overly revelatory. Epicurus posits a dyad to explain physics: bodies and space; he posits a dyad to explain the foundation of ethics: pleasure and pain. That seems to be the crux of the argument. To which my response is: Yes, and...? I can appreciate the elegant parallelism, but I'm not wowed by the observation.

I also didn't get the sense that he "devalues" the Menoecus, but rather sees the two texts as doing two different things. Cicero is presenting a more complete exposition to the general reader. Epicurus was writing a summary to an Epicurean student, albeit with an eye to general application to a wider Epicurean audience. Sedley is clearly aware of the caution that needs to be taken when reading Cicero, too. But it's the text we have to work with. I still think Cicero is a jerk, but I agree with Sedley (and Cassius and...et al) that Cicero provided an invaluable service to future Epicureans by preserving what he did... And I take pleasure in the fact that this would wrangle him.