

# Epicurean Physics and Canonics at Three Levels of Reality

**Post by "Cassius" of December 3, 2025 at 2:57 PM**

Excellent points.

These issues of recognizing more than one level of reality are discussed in similar manner in Sedley's "Epicurus' Refutation of Determinism."

it seems to be difficult for some people (Plato et al) to think about there being a "higher-level" perspective and for others (Democritus) to think about there being an "atomic-level" perspective without ending up denying that our "middle-level" perspective also exists and is just as real as the other two. In fact it's not "just as real" but for us it's actually more real because it is the level at which our senses function, and as you say the only way we can be sure of anything about the lower or higher levels is by the way we see impacts in our own level.

So that's why it's so important not to let the sensations be disparaged as untrustworthy. As soon as you stop demanding evidence at our own level of sensation then you've set the stage for all the otherworldiness both of religion and of "weird science" which goes with hope or speculation alone and without grounding in evidence that we can confirm.

I personally equate this too with Epicurus' statement about "outlining" in the letter to Herodotus. We have to keep the various levels of truth in our awareness at all times and be able to go back and forth between them without missing a beat.

And yes we'll go back over this in detail in the Sunday Zooms on Lucretius and then when we get back to Lucretius after the current review of the bigger-picture issues Cicero has summarized for us .

That's where I see us at currently. Most all of us need additional grounding in both the details and in the bigger picture. Cicero can show us where Epicurus stacks up (revolts) against the majority consensus. At the same time Lucretius shows us how Epicurus reasoned to his conclusions.

Cicero (On Ends / Tusculan Disputations / Academic Questions) gives us the big picture questions which everyone was asking and to which Epicurus was reacting, but Cicero doesn't give us the backup details of how Epicurus reached his conclusions. Lucretius gives us the backup details that explain how Epicurus reached his conclusions, but Lucretius often doesn't give us the big picture questions which everyone in 50 BC understood.

We need both in order to understand the full picture and what it means for us today.