

# Inferential Foundations of Epicurean Ethics - Article By David Sedley

Post by “Cassius” of January 25, 2026 at 4:54 AM

## [Quote from Bryan](#)

Both are correct, and it may be more helpful to highlight the similarities in the interpretations.

As I read the article that is probably the main takeaway.

Sedley is saying that Epicurus' first focus is on establishing that in physics everything divides into bodies and void, while in ethics the duality is pleasure and pain.

In Physics It is both correct to say that (1) at the highest level of analysis everything is composed of matter and void and (2) the things we see around us differ vastly in all sorts of details in the way they affect us.

Seeing that everything from a physical perspective resolves into either matter or void is essential to understanding that there is no third supernatural nature. But as essential as that is as a starting point, you then have to figure out how the atoms and void combine in different ways to form different things if you're going to work with physics successfully to see that everything happens naturally.

Seeing that everything from an ethical perspective resolves into either pleasure or pain is essential to understanding that there is no third middle or neutral state and no good and evil outside of pleasure and pain. But as essential as that is as a starting point, you then have to figure out how the pleasures and pains work together in different ways to produce different results if you're going to work with ethics successfully to live happily.