

# Is There A "Paradox of Hedonism"?

Post by "Cassius" of April 6, 2026 at 7:14 AM

[Quote from LAMAR 44](#)

something that can't just be thought of as the sum of its parts but something greater? Like the mind being created by the brain but being above it in a way where you can't reduce the mind to each neuron in the brain?

This is a subject that we have not explored deeply here at the forum, with Sedley's "Epicurean Anti-Reductionism" only recently being first discussed. References to "both levels (atomic and our world level) being real has been discussed as a result of Sedley's "Epicurus' Refutation of Determinism" article mentioned for several years, but even that has not really explored in depth.

I think the answer to your question is probably what you wrote that I have quoted above. For example water is something that most of us probably consider very much more than "the sum of its parts" (atoms of hydrogen and oxygen) . But it would be essential to keep in mind the emphatic limitation that consideration of the emergent quality never crosses over into a "supernatural" quality that implies the existence of an otherworldly intelligence.

This is a great question and no doubt discussion of it will be scattered throughout the forum in the future. Pleasure as discussed in this thread is absolutely one part of the question, as is determinism. For now the original and probably wider discussions are probably focused in these threads:

Thread

[\*\*Connecting Thought With Atoms - Emergence, Downward Causation \(From The Macroscopic To The Atomic\), and Epicurus\*\*](#)

In [today's Zoom](#) and also podcast this issue was discussed as a result of [David Sedley's article "Epicurean Anti-Reductionism."](#) The basic concept as I understand it it likely this:

Epicurus would have understood just as we do today that it is not intuitive how atoms, which have no properties other than shape, size, and weight, can no matter how they combine have the ability to think and assume all the other complex phenomena that we see around us. In even simpler terms, how can atoms which do not...



Cassius

March 29, 2026 at 3:22 PM

Thread

## [Article - David Sedley - 1988 - "Epicurean Anti-Reductionism"](#)

We've referenced many times on the forum the comments about this topic made by David Sedley in his "Epicurus' Refutation of Determinism."

I don't think we previously cited - or that I knew of - an article Dr. Sedley had written directly on point:

Epicurean Anti-Reductionism - 1988 - J. Barnes, M. Mignucci (eds.), Matter and Metaphysics (Naples 1988), 295-327

Full article available here:

[https://www.academia.edu/3051123/Epicurean\\_anti\\_reductionism](https://www.academia.edu/3051123/Epicurean_anti_reductionism)

## **Summary of Main Arguments and Highlights**

### **1. Core**



Cassius

March 26, 2026 at 9:13 AM

Thread

### [Sedley: "Epicurus' Refutation of Determinism"](#)

This is the thread for discussion of the Sedley article on Epicurus' Refutation of Determinism. This is BY FAR the best treatment of this subject I have ever read, and I highly recommend it to everyone who participates in this forum.

David Sedley is an outstanding scholar who is generally very sympathetic to Epicurus, and this article brings together the familiar passages from Lucretius with Sedley's interpretations of Herculaneum fragments from Epicurus' "On Nature." The result is a persuasive...



Cassius

June 3, 2020 at 8:43 AM