

Why Is Physics Important? To Refute Arguments such as these:

Post by "Cassius" of July 31, 2019 at 7:24 PM

Outstanding example, Joshua, thank you!!! And you are channeling DeWitt - who makes almost exactly this same point in his book:

"But this involves a logical sleight-of-hand; it employs an argument by analogy, **but argument by analogy only works if things really ARE analogous.**"

This principle, moreover, was assumed to hold good also for the virtues. For example, it was believed that if pleasure should be added to justice or temperance, the value of these goods would be enhanced by the addition, and the same would hold true if any good be added to another; any good would be more desirable when combined with another than when isolated. Aristotle also quotes Plato as denying on this ground that pleasure could be the good "because the good is not made more desirable by the addition of something to it."⁸⁸

In this line of reasoning Epicurus, always on the alert to be exact, would have detected two fallacies. In the first place, he would have

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denied it correct to put temperance and geometry in the same class and to apply the same reasoning to both. It would not follow from the fact that the study of geometry might or might not be accompanied by pleasure that the practice of temperance might or might not be accompanied by pleasure. The logical procedure here called into question is **reasoning by analogy, a tricky kind and valid only among true similars**. Geometry and temperance are not true similars. The error will be more unmistakable if modern examples be employed and the study of trigonometry, geology, and chemistry be placed in the same class as the practice of diligence, veracity, and sobriety. While it is not on record that such a criticism was made, it is of a kind in which Epicurus was extraordinarily sharp.