

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

Post by "Cassius" of May 21, 2026 at 8:44 AM

Last comment for now - the application of the atoms/void binary to pleasure/pain is what David Sedley discusses in his "Inferential Foundations of Epicurean Ethics"

2 The physics-ethics analogy

Thanks to the survival of Epicurus' *Letter to Herodotus*, and to Lucretius' expansion and supplementation of its arguments, it is possible to discern a clear argumentative structure in Epicurean physics, especially in its first, foundational moves.¹ My thesis will be that the foundations of Epicurean ethics had a closely analogous structure.

8 Epilogue

By now I have traced the parallelism of ethical and physical methodology through four distinct stages: (1) a primitive dyadic sketching-in of the territory; (2) conceptual amplification and defence of the sketch; (3) formal proof of its exhaustiveness; (4) elimination of further claimants to inclusion. Thereafter the parallelism can be followed, if at all, only in rather looser terms. In physics, body will now be refined into atomic chunks, followed *inter alia* by a detailed discussion of their range of shapes and sizes, and of their behaviour in compounds. In ethics, the next step will be the loosely analogous one of classifying individual pleasures and pains into the bodily and the mental, and examining their respective contributions as components in a good life.

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["The Inferential Foundations of Epicurean Ethics" - Article By David Sedley](#)

David Sedley compares Epicurus' arguments in favor of atomism in physics with his arguments in favor of pleasure as the focus of ethics.



Cassius

January 23, 2026 at 11:29 AM