

# Eliminative Materialism

**Post by “Bryan” of January 4, 2025 at 11:23 AM**

I have been in the habit of saying that Epikouros is not a "full" reductionist, or not a "capital R" reductionist. The idea is good, but it may be more precise to say that Epikouros *is* a reductionist (he explains the operation and the existence of everything we sense by appealing to the most basic components), but he is *not* an eliminativist (he does not deny the reality of sensed experience or emergent properties).

Tim O'Keefe, in his article "*The Reductionist and Compatibilist Argument of Epicurus' On Nature, Book 25,*" argues that Epikouros' explanation of autonomous mental activity in Book 25 is not antagonistic to full reductionism. From my perspective, O'Keefe's argument is based mostly in differentiating reductionism from eliminativism. I used to think he was splitting hairs, but it may be a helpful point when we read about the relationship between the movement of atoms and one's control over mental movements.

O'Keefe makes it simple when he says: "To explain something is not necessarily to explain it away."

[https://www.jstor.org/stable/4182694?read-now=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/4182694?read-now=1#page_scan_tab_contents)