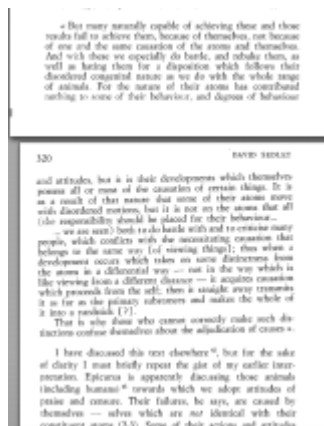


# "And With These We Especially Do Battle, And Rebuke Them, As Well As Hating Them For A Disposition Which Follows Their Disordered Congenital Nature...."

Post by "Cassius" of March 26, 2026 at 11:03 AM

The following is a quotation translated by David Sedley from Epicurus' On Nature 34.21-2. It comes from Sedley's discussion of "Downward Causation" in how the mind itself can influence the atoms. There are numerous implications that can be drawn from it but to my observation it's not a well-known quote so I therefore give this its own thread. The clip comes from Sedley's "Epicurean Anti-Reductionism" page 319.



I have discussed this text elsewhere<sup>42</sup>, but for the sake of clarity I must briefly repeat the gist of my earlier interpretation. Epicurus is apparently discussing those animals (including humans)<sup>43</sup> towards which we adopt attitudes of praise and censure. Their failures, he says, are caused by themselves — selves which are *not* identical with their constituent atoms (2-3). Some of their actions and attitudes are not caused by their atomic nature but by certain acquired states, or “developments” (ἀπογεγεννημένα, a key term in the entire book; 6-9). These special acquired states are the source of their behavioural autonomy (15-18), and immediately exert an influence on their atoms<sup>44</sup> (18-19).