

# **Sedley: "Epicurus' Refutation of Determinism"**

**Post by "Cassius" of June 3, 2020 at 9:41 AM**

[Note: This is such an important topic that I am going to try to preserve some of the most helpful comments here in this thread, even if they are posted elsewhere like this one. ]

Charles: Good to know that Sedley is identifying which brand of determinism that Epicurus is so strongly against, though it wouldn't be too far to include pleasure and desire within that sphere of "atomic billiard balls", in which case it would then serve as a good rebuttal to our pons asinorum problem that's so common with the 18th Century French Epicureans.

Cassius: Charles there is a lot in this article, and I personally have a hard time sorting through all the different "brands of determinism" that are out there. To me, perhaps the key aspect of this article is to observe how Epicurus avoids the "reductionism" that some take as a necessary application or implication of atomism. While everything is ultimately composed of atoms and void, that is not the same as saying that the emergent properties that arise from atoms and void [such as we ourselves] are themselves equivalent in every respect to their constituent atoms. The article contains a lot of details about this perspective which are well worth reading, because this issue applies on so many levels, probably not only skepticism, as referenced in the graphic I include, but to all types of "nihilism."