

Can Determinism Be Reconciled With Epicureanism? (Admin Edit - No, But Let's Talk About Why Not)

Post by "Onenski" of September 28, 2022 at 12:24 PM

I'm sorry if I made things more confusing by introducing the distinction determinism/fatalism. I just wanted to make some justice to Democritus' position. Specially because there are contemporary people who defend something similar, that "free will" (that's the term they use) is an illusion.

[Quote from waterholic](#)

This is why Epicurus introduced the "swerve" - a randomness in the system that is unpredictable.

With the modern vantage point "the swerve" combined with the idea of the void are remarkable achievements of pure deductive reasoning. Although quantum mechanics does not exactly work as imagined by Epicurus, the introduction of chance/randomness is essential for understanding how the world works.

I totally agree with you, @Nate. However by introducing the swerve in the nature of the world Epicurus (or Lucretius) introduced a form of indeterminism. (The supercomputer that you mentioned could not predict a future state of the world.)

So we arrive to what in philosophy is called the problem of luck: if the world is indeterministic (in the macro level), then we must be lucky if our actions have the outcomes we want they have. A subtle deviation may cause a very great deviation (like in chaos theory that you mentioned).

In other words, if some random (even subtle) things happen, we have less control than we think we have.

(I'm sorry if, again, I make thing more confusing. I just think this can contribute to our understanding of Epicurus' position in order to make it more plausible.)