

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

Post by "Cassius" of September 28, 2022 at 4:19 PM

Onenski I should have thought of this earlier but one of my favorite articles in all my Epicurean reading bears on what you are talking about.

It's "Chance and Natural Law In Epicureanism" by A A Long.

Look for it here: [Long: "Chance and Natural Law In Epicureanism"](#)

The bottom line (one among many) is that Long suggests that while the swerve is potentially operational at all times, it only "breaks through" to cause observable action in our world in the realm of higher living things who actually exhibit free will.

There's a reference in the letter to Herodotus how Epicurus held that indeed "most things" at least in the physical world are largely deterministic, but Long argues that we can have our cake and eat it too if we observe how Epicurus observed that the swerve was only very slight, meaning that only in rare cases (in the great scheme of things) is it observable in action, which still allows "natural law" to govern most things in our observable world.

I think you will find the article on point and I would very much like to hear what you think about it.