

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

Post by "DavidN" of February 22, 2024 at 5:47 PM

First off I'd like to point out that most people who point to quantum physics do not actually apply it properly, and secondly that ALOT of it is not hard science but theoretical. So the author is basing assumption on assumptions. Mathematicians (Theoretical Physicists) in-particular love a deterministic universe because it makes maths easier when they don't have to account for any variations, it's the reason for short cuts like the blackbody.

As to whether or not determinism is Epicurean, it is not. I'm just gonna end this now, with a single statement. So long as we accept that the swerve exists, determinism does not. In fact this is the very purpose of the swerve to free us from the tyranny of determinists.

You can look at modern determinism, ethically, from 2 points of view, neither of which I like, nor should be advocated by any rational person.

First the Victimhood argument. That people are not responsible for their actions because of - insert any irrational emotion based argument here- and since it's all predetermined by said factor we should let them get away with whatever terrible behavior they are engaged in because they have no choice. When the opposite should be true for any rational being. If we know that factor x in our life may push us toward an undesirable outcome, we should adjust our-self accordingly to avoid said outcome. IE If you are predisposed to addictive behavior you should avoid alcohol, drugs, gambling, etc. Not doing so is a choice, no one puts a drink in your hand, unless someone actually did then you need to get better friends.

Secondly the Facist argument. The idea that behavioral genetics can identify undesirable elements and since we are just biological machines that cannot deviate from our programming those people should be treated as guilty and removed from society before they have a chance to cause harm.

Determinism is inherently nihilistic, in that your happiness is not in your control but predetermined, which is contrary to **literally** everything that Epicurus taught.