

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

Post by "Onenski" of February 23, 2024 at 1:33 AM

Thanks for your answer, [Cassius](#).

[Quote from Cassius](#)

So why do you not consider your position to be hard determinism? (I see you called it "hard incompatibilism.")

"Hard incompatibilism" is Derk Pereboom's position and it means that whether the world is deterministic or indeterministic, we don't have free will. Another possible term is "Skeptic of free will".

[Quote from Cassius](#)

It seems to me that Epicurus thought that "reality" is what we perceive (or experience might be a better word). And as I think has already been mentioned by several people in several ways, we perceive that we have the ability to make choices.

Well, reality is more than what we perceive, because, as you usually recall, Epicurus thought that we can infer the existence of things that we can't perceive.

That, I hope, also means that we can be wrong in our experiences. Think about Müller-Lyer illusions: we can't stop "perceiving" two equal lines with opposing arrows as if they were different in magnitude. The same happens with other illusions, like that of the Sun going around the Earth because we see it rising every morning. Or the size of the Sun or the Moon. Indeed, we can infer the real nature of the world and see that we were wrong with those illusions.

Psychological facts can also be explained and criticized in that way. Beliefs are the product of a complex net of personal experience, culture, and a lot of other factors. Belief in free will can be an illusion too (we don't know it, but we can't assume it isn't just because).

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Of course the meaning of "appropriately" is going to be entirely contextual, but I would not consider it helpful to my own or to other people's lives to consider myself or them to be unable to make choices.

The idea of Free Will Skepticism is not that people don't make choices. The idea is that those choices are not independent of prior causes (in fact, that they are constrained totally, even if

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we don't see it). People will keep making choices, the difference will be how independent they think they are.