

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

Post by "Onenski" of February 23, 2024 at 6:09 PM

Hi, [DavidN](#). Thanks for taking the time to comment.

## [Quote from DavidN](#)

The fact that Causes exist does not necessitate determinism, this is a False Dichotomy fallacy. A cause could lead to multiple outcomes and in reverse any given event can have multiple causes, as Epicurus already theorizes. In reality A does not necessitate B.

I gave the characterisation of determinist. They believe that the common assumption that "every event in the universe is caused by prior events" is true and the belief in free will is false. Determinism is false if there is at least one event that wasn't caused by any prior event: an uncaused cause. The majority of philosophers prefer to admit that although determinism can be true, free will it's compatible with it.

Metaphysical determinism is independent of epistemological determinism (the idea that we can predict deterministically any o some events). Epistemological determinism is, effectively falsified thanks to chaos theory. Sapolsky agrees with it.

## [Quote from DavidN](#)

The reason determinism requires proof rather than the other way around, atleast on this thread, is because the question at hand is not whether or not the universe is deterministic but is epicureanism deterministic or even compatible with determinism.

Conceded.

## Quote

As for Sapolsky's **science**, his **version** of quantum mechanics requires that we eliminate singularities, alter the currently accepted notion of the big bang and accept new theories in there place, of quantum gravity, and of multiple quantum universes that removes variables rather than adding variables. In all of this I find his math to be at the very least overly convenient if not simplistic. Like Planck's Blackbody, instead of dealing with the variables he simply finds ways to eliminate them. Which is what I had suspected in my previous comment before even diving into his work.

Did you read the chapter of the book or you're speculating about the implications of his determinism? He doesn't talk about any of those things.

#### [Quote from DavidN](#)

Back to the matter at hand, Epicurus. I don't believe hard determinism can be reconciled with Epicureanism, but to be fair let's say it can. You would need to tackle the swerve, because as long as the swerve exists a cause or set of causes can lead to a number of effects or none at all, thus determinism cannot exist. Without the swerve you effectively render Epicurean physics Democritean. You would then have to go through all the material and reconcile every instance where choice is required, because the concept of choice would require a non-deterministic universe. In deterministic terms choice simply becomes effect. Effectively rendering the philosophy pointless, IMHO.

In strict sense, you're right. I used a flexible notion of reconciliation. My opinion is that the swerve has only one function in Epicurean theory: sustaining free will. But it's not clear if it can be defended independently of the reason of the fact that we feel we are free. In the case of the atoms, we have the inferences by analogy. How does it arrive at the swerve and which phenomena help to explain besides our feeling?

I think the scientific spirit, the hedonism and the materialism can be reconciled with Free Will Skepticism.

#### [Quote from DavidN](#)

Two fallacies here, one Persuasive definition, choice is improperly used or defined here. If a choice is completely constrained, as you're trying to prove, it's not a choice it becomes effect following cause.

The notion of agency, as I said up, is consistent with determinism. An agent can choose intentionally in a deterministic scenario without contradiction. If choice requires necessarily free will (leeway freedom), then you're right and, probably, I'm not using the language competently.

I'd agree with the fact that choices are events following causes, why not? Human beings are natural beings like other animals and other living beings.

I take the opportunity to ask you something. In your point of view, who has free will and where is its origin? Do non-human animals, or other beings, have free will? Can they be morally responsible?

I didn't understand the last paragraph, I'm sorry.