

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

Post by "Onenski" of February 24, 2024 at 9:31 PM

Hi, [Godfrey](#), thanks for commenting.

[Quote from Godfrey](#)

Onenski I'd like to "swerve" away from theory and metaphysics for a moment and ask: Can, and how can, one find eudaimonia in their life if they believes in hard determinism?

As Bryan notes, determinism is counter to lived experience. This implies that in order to live pleasantly with a deterministic philosophy one must negate one's perceptions, which seems to me to be problematic.

The possible practical problems that one may find in a metaphysical or physical conclusion are not reasons to deny that conclusion. The story says, for example, that certain pythagorean was killed when he revealed that the square root of 2 was irrational. The, seemingly, practical inconveniences were not a reason to deny that. Pythagoreans believed that it was very bad for their lives that there were irrational numbers.

Some philosophers (like Saul Smilansky), however, have concluded that effectively free will skepticism leads to immoral behavior or meaningless lives. In their opinion, we should maintain free will illusion.

For others (Strawson) , even if we recognize that we're not free, we can't resist having certain reactive attitudes. For them, we can't feel resentment when someone hurts us, or gratitude when someone benefits us.

Other philosophers (Derk Pereboom, Greg Caruso) think that free will skepticism imply a modification of several of our practices, but they're optimistic that these changes can enhance our lives and make them more just.

Finally, how do an epicurean find eudaimonia?: recognizing his place in the universe, studying nature, moderating desires, looking for pleasures, avoiding pain/suffering, feeling satisfied, enjoying time with friends. Is that contradictory with free will skepticism? If you think so, you can help me in developing my understanding both of free will skepticism and of epicureanism by pointing out those contradictions. 😊

I insist that I'm not an expert, I don't think I have the last word. I recognize I may be wrong. But I know as well that having a divergent opinion can improve discussion.

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