

On Deism, and Getting it Wrong

Post by "Joshua" of August 15, 2019 at 7:57 PM

I often see allusions to deism in relation to the Epicurean perspective on the gods. The connection is superficially obvious, which I suppose is why it's often made--Deists believe in God, but one that is removed from human affairs. Epicureans accepted the existence of a higher order of conscious intelligence, but considered them/it to be removed from human affairs.

But there's really a critical mistake here; the *chief feature* of the deistic god is that it is always, *always* the first cause in their cosmology. The Aristotelian Prime Mover. Deism specifically developed in order to hand-wave two problems in the observable universe; first, that there is something when there might have been nothing. Second, that the order of nature is never anything other than ordered and natural. So deism invokes the providential watchmaker; a supreme and generative intelligence that designed a stable cosmos, and then left it ticking on the bench while he stepped out for a smoke.

Deism simply *isn't* deism without an act of creation. And that's why Epicureans were not and cannot be Deists. See, Epicurus solved the two problems of *existence* and *order* more elegantly; he proposed that the cosmos was made of atoms and void, and that atoms and void are uncreated and co-eternal--from everlasting to everlasting.

The Epicurean conception of the gods is thus unique in all human thought. Most of the gods dreamt by the human mind were non-creating but constantly meddling. Some few of the gods which men have proposed were creating *and* meddling (an exceptionally bothersome lot). The prime mover of the Deists creates but does not meddle.

Only the [Epicurean gods](#) were non-creating and non-meddling.

-Joshua