

Episode Thirty-Four - The Atoms Do Not Possess A Faculty of Sensation

Post by "Cassius" of September 1, 2020 at 1:48 PM

Tim -- I presume you're talking about the nature of the gods -- check out the opening of chapter 13 - the true piety.

As to the monkeys and Shakespeare, I don't mean to dismiss that question. I am inclined to think that the answer is "no" as I indicated but it would be good to articulate more clearly why not (or why he would) agree that "random" events (which is pretty much the meaning of monkeys on a typewriter) could or could not produce Shakespeare.

It immediately comes to mind that of course we generally think that natural events that are to a point "random" produce life, and life eventually produced humans, and humans eventually produced Shakespeare, and he eventually produced his body of work.

But I don't think that's really the fair way of analyzing the question. The question starts with a typewriter, and a monkey, so that kind of sets some parameters. Would ANY amount of time be sufficient for a monkey sitting in front of a typewriter to produce the work of Shakespeare? No doubt we could talk about the analogy from many different angles but the heart of the question seems to me to be some defined force of randomness eventually producing a highly organized result which would seem counterintuitive given the starting point.

Any care to argue that such a result is "inevitable" given enough time? There may well be better ways to articulate the question but the I think there are useful lessons to be drawn from analyzing it and considering both the limits of the hypothetical results and how we reach the idea that there are in fact limits (if we do).