

Episode 258 - There Is No Necessity To Live Under the Control of Necessity - Part 2 (Conclusion)

Post by “Cassius” of November 18, 2024 at 2:07 PM

Welcome to Episode 258 of Lucretius Today. This is a podcast dedicated to the poet Lucretius, who wrote "On The Nature of Things," the most complete presentation of Epicurean philosophy left to us from the ancient world.

Each week we walk you through the Epicurean texts, and we discuss how Epicurean philosophy can apply to you today. If you find the Epicurean worldview attractive, we invite you to join us in the study of Epicurus at EpicureanFriends.com, where we discuss this and all of our podcast episodes.

This week, now that we have completed Book 1 of Cicero's "On the Nature of The Gods," we are going to move to a discussion of some of the most important doctrines of Epicurus as listed on the front page of our website.

This week will be the continuation and conclusion of our discussion on the Epicurean rejection of determinism.

[Lucretius Today Episode 257 - Fate, Necessity, Determinism](#)

Lucretius Today Episode 258 is now available:

["There Is No Necessity To Live Under the Control of Necessity - Part 2 - Conclusion"](#)

<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/63244872>

Post by “Cassius” of December 6, 2024 at 3:46 PM

In last week's part 1 of the discussion of necessity (to be posted on 12/6) we devoted most of the discussion to the cultural background of the question and why it remains significant.

We also addressed what is generally thought of as Epicurus' first response to determinism, involving the swerve as discussed in Lucretius Book 2.

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4148-episode-258-there-is-no-necessity-to-live-under-the-control-of-necessity-part-2/>

This week we will turn to additional - and arguably more important - issues that Epicurus raised against determinism.

Our material for the episode will consist largely in David Sedley's article "[Epicurus' Rejection of Determinism](#)" combined with Norman DeWitt's Chapter on "The New Hedonism."

There's a limit as to how many rabbits we can chase in regard to other pro-determinist arguments, but if anyone has something specific that we should consider addressing in this episode, please let us know in this thread.

Post by "Cassius" of December 8, 2024 at 4:36 PM

We had a very good recording session for this episode, and editing is going well.

Before I forget I want to mention an important supplement to Dr Sedley's article which provided much of the focus of the episode. In addition to that article, i strongly recommend A.A. Long's "Chance and Natural Law In Epicureanism" which extends Dr. Sedley's reasoning as to the impact of the swerve.

The basic point is that not only does Dr. Sedley's argument that the swerve is not Epicurus' primary argument for "agency" make sense, but that it is important not to exaggerate the expected impact of any swerve that does exist. In Dr. Long's view, the swerve rarely "breaks through" into the universe that is observable at our level, and that in fact in Epicurus' mind the primary extent to which it does "break through" is in the agency available to intelligent animals. As Dr. Long points out, Epicurus could never have intended the swerve to be an ever-present force creating random events at all times and places, at that would have exploded the original reason for atomism in the first place -- that it explains the regularity - the "laws of nature" that we do in fact see in the mechanical operation going on around us.

This doesn't make into this episode but someone exploring the issues further would want to incorporate Dr. Long's article.

Post by "Cassius" of December 9, 2024 at 5:12 PM

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