

On Free Will And Its Mockers

Post by "Cassius" of June 14, 2019 at 4:56 PM



Hiram cannot even post this link without the determinists rushing to mock it. I personally choose not to make the free will argument the major focus of my time devoted to philosophy, but if the issues worries you, you could probably do a lot worse than to choose to follow Hiram's link and check out that article. And just ignore the people who say you were destined to do that from the dawn of the universe..... because (1) the universe had no dawn, and (2) you weren't.

For anyone really "into" this free will argument, I would appreciate any examples or links to positions on this issue that are particularly clear and succinct. As for me I will stay with this one:

"Who, then, is superior in your judgment to such a man? He holds a holy belief concerning the gods, and is altogether free from the fear of death. He has diligently considered the end fixed by nature, and understands how easily the limit of good things can be reached and attained, and how either the duration or the intensity of evils is but slight. Fate, which some introduce as sovereign over all things, he scorns, affirming rather that some things happen of necessity, others by chance, others through our own agency. For he sees that necessity destroys responsibility and that chance is inconstant; whereas our own actions are autonomous, and it is to them that praise and blame naturally attach. It were better, indeed, to accept the legends of the gods than to bow beneath that yoke of destiny which the natural philosophers have imposed. The one holds out some faint hope that we may escape if we honor the gods, while the necessity of the naturalists is deaf to all entreaties. Nor does he hold chance to be a god, as the world in general does, for in the acts of a god there is no disorder; nor to be a cause, though an uncertain one, for he believes that no good or evil is dispensed by chance to men so as to make life blessed, though it supplies the starting-point of great good and great evil. He believes that the misfortune of the wise is better than the prosperity of the fool. It is better, in short, that what is well judged in action should not owe its successful issue to the aid of chance."

Post by "Joshua" of June 14, 2019 at 8:00 PM

Quote

As for the "solitary confinement of the mind," my theory is that solipsism, like other absurdities of the professional philosopher, is a product of too much time wasted in library stacks between the covers of a book, in smoke-filled coffeehouses (bad for brains) and conversation-clogged seminars. To refute the solipsist or the metaphysical idealist all that you have to do is take him out and throw a rock at his head: if he ducks he's a liar. His logic may be airtight but his argument, far from revealing the delusions of living experience, only exposes the limitations of logic.

-Edward Abbey

This is more or less my reaction to the free will argument. You'd only have to add one more sentence; "If he blames you for the rock, he's a liar; he must have known that it was a necessity the whole time."

Post by "Cassius" of June 14, 2019 at 9:19 PM

Good one I have never seen before! Thank you!

Post by "Martin" of June 17, 2019 at 1:47 AM

This is my position regarding the linked to articlele, of which the main point is that uncertainty of emergent properties or their relations assure non-determinism even if elementary particles are deterministic :

In the past, theoretical chemistry dealt predominantly with emergent properties and was thereby clearly separated from physics.

More and more of these emergent properties can be completely derived from first principles of physics by ab initio calculations. Thereby, hard determinism in the first principles translates into hard determinism of the derived emergent properties. Stochastics comes into play merely as a side effect of efficient expression of relationships between emergent properties at their higher level. Therefore, hard determinism would survive the stochastics in those relationships.

There appears to be no principal boundary which would make it impossible to extend this approach to higher level emergent properties. Therefore, it appears feasible to uphold

determinism to higher level emergent properties, too, as long as the hard-line determinist makes the bold assumption that there is still hidden physics which upholds determinism.

The Epicurean position corresponds to non-deterministic interpretations of quantum mechanics. Emergent properties and their relationships inherit this non-determinism from the first principles. The scale of the additional stochastic nature of these relationships may hide the atomic swerve but it really comes only on top of that atomic swerve and does not refute determinism without the atomic swerve.