

DETERMINISM (THE DENIAL OF FREE WILL) AND REASON - DO THEY CONFLICT?

Each one of your actions is the result of a complicated process even more than you realise. But the action is as much down to cause and effect as a snowflake falling.

People say you cannot love others if you think they are machines without free will. Determinism is the doctrine that we only imagine we have real control over what we choose and there is no real choice. But who says you need free will to not be a machine? What if we have the faculty but only imagine we use it for our bodies trap it and make us think we really make choices when we actually do not?

Who says that if we are machines we are machines in the same way as the radio? Even if you deny that people are machines, in practice you treat their bodies as them and bodies are certainly machines. The brain is a machine. Damage it and it may not work any more. The machine approach is the dominant one.

It is commonly presumed that determinism, and we know determinism is true, denies the validity of reason. If we were produced without the agency of an all-truthful God and are programmed by chance it seems that our reason might be unreliable. It seems it might not have been programmed or set right. But no matter what we do we are still assuming that our reason is right anyway. We know by experience that reason works. For instance, reason says that if I step into a hole I will fall and experience verifies this so I don't need circles and assumptions.

A deeper thought is that if determinism is true then instead of reasoning we just react. There is no real thinking. We are conditioned and we react to that. Determinism says we have no real volition. And now there is a new problem, if we had the power to be free we would not be able to be anyway if we didn't have the power to think without being conditioned.

If you assume that reason is right for a God of total truth exists and made us and it and that God exists for reason says so then you are using circular reasoning. It is akin to saying that the Devil is God because I feel he is and that my feeling is right for the Devil is God. You could prove anything with that kind of thinking. Its called circular reasoning. Circular reasoning denies the authority of reason. You are still assuming with circular reasoning that reason is set correctly. So you might as well assume it without bringing God into it. The argument of the religionists is making reason depend on the assumption that there is a God. If you say God exists therefore reason is true it gets interesting. You are just assuming that reason is true because you are assuming God. You are saying that God exists without reason which is irrational. It would be more reasonable to simply assume that reason is right without bringing a God into it for the God hypothesis is only a guess itself anyway.

It is said that if we were programmed by our past we would make no progress. But in fact the programming might have planted the power to do better than before in us which lies latent until then. A computer that always performs at the same level of efficiency can contain an element waiting to work that makes it improve. The computer is not free so progress does not refute the denial of free will.

Also if God exists then reason is probably delusion for he made deception and tolerates it and says he cannot abide temptation and has hypocritically made our bodies to tempt us to sin.

God is said to be so free that he can make things from nothing. Free will would be creating an action out of nothing. Can God give us the power to create? True free will would be the power to create choices out of nothing. But to choose before a choice is made is impossible. To choose to create your choice out of nothing means you have already made your choice.

If determinism is a denial of reason, it is an endorsement compared to the notion that our choices are self-created out of nothing which is what the popular notion of free will entails. The popular notion of free will is made up to look like free will but in fact contradicts itself. It is not really a doctrine of free will at all.

The other thing is that if we pretend free will would not require that you be able to make choices and actions out of nothing, it would be the case that any form not involving the power to create would be inferior. It would not be worth celebrating.

You are prewired to believe in determinism if determinism is true. So those who deny determinism must be prewired as well. Another point is that if you pretend that free will and determinism can fit together and indeed complement each other, compatiblism, then you can be prewired to believe in it. None of this has any relevance to the debate. The fact is you can be deterministically caused to think you are not a personality type robot.

We know we reason. Free will or not, we know that. No argument against determinism can change what we know.

