

The Dominance of Luck in Shaping Human Discoveries: A Philosophical Exploration in the 19th Century

Introduction: During the 19th century, a captivating theme seized the attention of philosophers - the paramount influence of luck, or serendipity, in molding human discoveries. This essay unfolds how philosophers of this era embraced the notion that luck, more than any other factor, was the driving force behind the unfolding narrative of human understanding.

Serendipity in Everyday Language: Before we embark on the philosophical journey, let us grasp serendipity a bit more. It is like finding something good without actively seeking it - stumbling upon a hidden treasure when least expected. Now, let us explore how this concept became a guiding principle in the philosophical landscape of the 19th century.

Chance Encounters in Science: Scientists such as Louis Pasteur, Alexander Fleming, and Dmitri Mendeleev became protagonists in serendipitous tales that reshaped the course of science. Pasteur discovered vaccination while studying diseases in chickens, Fleming found penicillin through unexpected mold observations, and Mendeleev arranged the periodic table during a dream. Philosophers such as Arthur Schopenhauer and William James championed the idea that these unplanned events were not mere coincidences but integral to the fabric of scientific progress.

The Art of Discovery: In the realm of arts, luck played a decisive role. Chemist August Kekulé dreamt of a snake biting its tail, leading him to unravel the structure of benzene. Writers such as Edgar Allan Poe, Mary Shelley, and Friedrich Nietzsche stumbled upon unique ideas that birthed literary masterpieces. Philosophers, including John Stuart Mill and Søren Kierkegaard, argued that luck, more than careful planning, was the true muse of artistic genius.

Philosophical Reflections on Luck: 19th-century philosophers, such as John Stuart Mill, Søren Kierkegaard, Arthur Schopenhauer, and William James, delved deep into reflections on the supremacy of luck in human life. They questioned whether chance encounters were not just random events but orchestrated moments that led individuals to their destinies. This philosophical exploration posited that serendipity was not a mere companion on the journey of discovery but its very essence.

Serendipity in Everyday Living: Beyond science and philosophy, everyday life offered a multitude of examples where luck held sway. Chance meetings turning into lifelong friendships, stumbling upon a book that profoundly influences one's outlook – these occurrences became testaments to the omnipotence of luck. Philosophers contemplated how these seemingly random moments in our daily lives might be the guiding hand directing us towards unexpected and valuable discoveries.

Conclusion: In concluding our exploration into the philosophy of serendipity in the 19th century, it becomes evident that luck wasn't just a contributing factor; it was the chief architect in shaping human discoveries. Philosophers of this era, far from treating luck as

a secondary force, saw it as the predominant influence guiding humanity toward unforeseen and valuable insights. It's a reminder that, even in the carefully planned world of ideas, the unexpected moments of serendipity might be the true orchestrators of the mysterious and fortuitous nature of discovery.