

# A Few Brief Comments on Determinism as a Fundamental Philosophy of Existence

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I'm writing this because I was recently asked about the often-implicitly-accepted pure materialism philosophy common to scientists. In considering this, I have recorded a few thoughts, perhaps in hopes of writing something more complete and formal at some point.

- I think it's relevant to draw a distinction between what I'll call materialistic consequentialism (MC) and determinism. Determinism (properly causal determinism, CD) holds that all events are necessarily determined by past events and conditions, such that, with complete knowledge of causal relations and past events / conditions, all future events and 'decisions' are determined (and determinable). What I'm calling materialistic consequentialism is a branch of determinism which depends solely on the presumption of direct physical interactions and causality. It infers that, since we know that human behavior is understandable and interpretable as a consequence of chemical processes in the brain (which are determined by physics), then all things (including human behavior and 'decisions') are determinate on the basis of pure material (physics) causality. Determinism generally can accept what I will cause 'abstract' causes or causal relations, while materialistic determinism insists every causal relation is physical. Determinism, then, can acknowledge the abstract and non-material in its assessment of causality.
- Determinism (and MC) are intellectually solipsistic. While MC necessarily acknowledges the outside world, especially the physical world, both ideas, in my assessment, have a problem with the abstract. If all is material, as in MC, then what is knowledge other than a matrix of causal forces that map inputs to outputs? Even if abstract phenomena exist (CD *and* MC), the knowledge is determinate. Intellection requires choice to evaluate perceptions and impressions. External reality (including the abstract) allows for the evaluation of impressions and synthesis of perceptions. I think most philosophies require the judgement of impressions (e.g. in stoicism), and this implies free will and, importantly, non-determinism.
- I think CD and MC are logically self-defeating and both deny epistemology. Regarding the philosophy of logic, if these ideas are accepted, it must also be accepted that they could not but be accepted, and that any that deny them could do nothing but deny them. Intellectually, then, the only 'motivation' for espousing them is that it is what occurs to one to do (or that one is compelled to). Epistemology is obviously problematic, as knowledge is not evaluable, that any held perceptions are necessarily held and are not necessarily reflective of reality, but also that they cannot be improved by evaluation of perceptions or learning.
- Any claim to the non-existence of free will is logically self-defeating (not to mention pedagogically and dialectically). This is essentially an extension of the above focusing on free will. If you accept determinism, the idea of attaining knowledge or understanding is at best meaningless: you could and can not believe or know anything other than what you

do, nor can anyone else. The very idea of attaining knowledge is denied by determinism, you can only attain a memory of causal forces.

- As a weak later aside, scientific arguments toward MC are deeply extrapolative, and therefore on weak scientific footing. Science has nothing to say about that which we can't measure or test.