

Is Philosophy Deterministic?

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1 The Problem

Is anyone ever really convinced by reading or learning philosophy? There is obviously a very broad spectrum of philosophies with different assertions, theories, ideas, and conclusions, many of them contradictory. Do we really choose what is correct, logical, plausible? Or do we just learn what agrees most with our preconceptions and understandings of the world? Are we convinced of new ideas and conclusions, or do we just gain refinements and new insights from someone who has developed their ideas (similar to ours) more deeply, consistently, and thoroughly? If the latter, what does that say about the state of logic itself, especially in something as unknowable or subjective as philosophy? Is then philosophy more of a pragmatic heuristic for ordering priorities, assessing situations and decisions, and ordering one's life?

If one chooses philosophies that are already in alignment with their preconceptions, predilections, preferences, or what seems reasonable *a priori*, to what degree is any philosophy a genuine expression of truth?