

The link between time, totality, and determinism

The problem of fatalism was around long before relativity, but gained affirmation in many peoples minds from Relativity. Relativistic theories confront us with a vision of the universe from a temporally transcendent standpoint, i.e., one that treats time as an internal parameter in the universe composed of events.

The problem of determinism also had some early precedents, but received a precise expression with the provision of the Newtonian deterministic equations of motion.

On the face of it, these seem like different problems: one has to do with time, the other with laws. And it seems that one can be a fatalist without being a determinist, and one can worry about determinism without being moved by the fatalist arguments.

I will point out a connection between these two problems by linking determinism to totality and totality to transcendence. And I will look at what that connection can teach us about the nature of both problems.