

# Can Determinism Be Reconciled With Epicureanism? (Admin Edit - No, But Let's Talk About Why Not)

Post by "Cassius" of February 22, 2024 at 4:16 PM

## [Quote from Pacatus](#)

Because of the confusions among various understandings of "free will" (which Dennett addresses) I prefer the term "constrained choice" or "constrained agency" - that is, although facing causal/situational constraints (including endogenous ones, such as native intelligence or ability), nevertheless we have positive agency. That seems to be a version of "compatibilism."

I can understand that the corruptions of religious thinking have caused this area of discussion to require lots of hedging.

However from my admittedly "man on the street" Epicurean perspective, I get a strong feeling that the advocates of the position that Epicurus was embracing have gone far too much on the defensive. The pendulum of the discussion on this has swung far too much in the direction of accommodating the hard determinists, with the result that they monopolize the discussion and the common-sense support that ordinary people need is lacking.

It seems to me that Epicurus was "in-your-face" on this issue (as he was on others), and that he was trying to drive the point home with his "it would be better to believe in the myths of the religions" than to follow the path of the hard determinists. When it is better to believe a lie than to believe an error, the error must be pretty damaging!

I am glad that Don brought this up because it is a reminder that the determinists have held the initiative on this subject for far too long. Dennett seems to be the main one fighting this issues, and it deserves books from more people with a non-religious but Epicurean "in your face" strong reaction to it.