

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

Post by “Pacatus” of February 23, 2024 at 4:13 PM

I will go to dinner tonight (our weekly dinner out) with the (possibly erroneous) assumption that I will make a choice of what to eat – constrained, surely, by the menu, my wallet, my personal tastes and preferences of the moment, etc. – but, nevertheless what seems like a choice, considering all such factors. Whether those factors are rooted in determinism or indeterminism. If that is an illusion, it is a deeply embedded one (and very pervasive across centuries and different cultures of humanity – some survival function?). I will still **act as if** I am actually doing some intentional hedonic choice and avoidance decision-making.

Nor does it matter if I am a compatibilist in the sense described by Dennett. That makes more sense to me in terms of my day-to-day engagement with circumstantial reality – but if it's incorrect, it's incorrect.

I want to add that I do not think of “justice” in any metaphysical sense. If someone wants to torture children (to take a deliberately harsh example), I will act to prevent that – without considering their motivations, or even the practical Epicurean social compact to “neither harm nor be harmed” (it does not matter that the child, or her parents, may not be signatory to that compact). In that sense, whilst I affirm the Epicurean idea of social justice, I am – at bottom – more of a moral non-cognitivist (let's say that Epicurean philosophy here might provide some cognitive “fencing” around that).

Since I obviously have been interested in this discussion, thank you [Onenski](#) for bringing it to us.