

Analysis of Video By Sabine Hossenfelder ("You Don't Have Free Will But Don't Worry")

Post by "Joshua" of August 2, 2021 at 8:41 PM

I used to follow Sam Harris with some regularity since he occupies the intersection of the so-called 'New Atheism' and Buddhism, and I had at that time a foot in both camps. Denying Free Will was a regular subject in his mental universe, and I also have friends who are of that opinion. I never really fell in line with it.

For one thing, the denial of Free Will is useless to me in trying to figure out *how to live*. Indeed, it appears to reduce the question to something like nihilism.

My course has been to accept Free Will based on the observation of lived experience (like Chomsky), but to assume at the same time a diminished capacity for it in other people. This is a purely consequentialist and an entirely fanciful assumption; if I assume that others in some degree lack Free Will, it opens the door to compassion and forgiveness rather than anger, and hatred. It allows me to refrain from attributing motive to others for choices I see as wrong, which is always risky, and it prevents me (to a degree) from putting myself above others.

Every decision we *do* make is subject to a kind of 'force-diagram', where culture, habit, education, knowledge, experience, peer pressure, preference, risk, and reward all cooperate to indicate a *likely* response—but it is not, in my view, a *necessary* response.

Quote

VS9. Necessity is an evil, but [there is no necessity to live under the control of necessity](#).