

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

Post by "Pacatus" of February 22, 2024 at 3:36 PM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

Sam Harris' book "Free Will" published in 2012

VS09. Necessity is an evil, but [there is no necessity to live under the control of necessity](#).

VS40. He who asserts that everything happens by necessity can hardly find fault with one who denies that everything happens by necessity; by his own theory this very argument is voiced by necessity.

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The full pdf of **Daniel Dennett's** (to my mind, quite cogent and devastating) **refutation of Harris** can be downloaded here: <https://www.rifp.it/ojs/index.php/.../rifp.2017.0018>. Interestingly, Dennett mentions Lucretius' "swerve."

Here is an interesting case where Dennett challenges Harris' claim to have no control over his desires:

Harris: "And there is no way I can influence my desires - for what tools of influence would I use? Other desires?"

Dennett: "Yes, for starters."

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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."