



# Free Will and Divine Action

Venue of the conference: Schloß Fürstenried, Forst-Kasten-Allee 103, 81475 Fürstenried.  
Breakfast is at 8 a.m. On 20 August there is no dinner provided.

We thank the John Templeton Foundation for the generous support.

## Wednesday, 21 August 2019

8:45–9:00: Opening of the conference by Daniel von Wachter

9:00–10:15:

Timothy O'Connor (Indiana University): 'How Do We Know That We Are Free?'

Respondent: Khaldoun Sweis (Olive Harvey College)

*Abstract: We human beings are naturally disposed to believe of ourselves and others that we are free: that what we do is often and to a considerable extent 'up to us' via the exercise of a power of choice to do or to refrain from doing one or more alternatives of which we are aware. In what follows, I will probe the source and epistemic justification of our 'freedom belief' and propose an account that does not lean heavily on our first-personal experience of choice and action. I will then consider possible replies available to incompatibilists to the contention made by some compatibilists that the 'privileged' epistemic status of freedom belief (which my account endorses) supports a minimalist, and therefore compatibilist view of the nature of freedom itself.*

10:45–12:00:

Daniel von Wachter (IAP): 'Agents Can Initiate Causal Processes'

Respondent: Daniel Wehinger (University of Innsbruck)

*Abstract: Starting from some features of the phenomenology of action, this talk will spell out how agents can initiate causal processes. Some theories of agent causation take it to be sufficient for free will that the action has no sufficient preceding cause. But we only have the control over our actions that we seem to have if we can bring about events that have no preceding cause. This does not require the existence of probabilistic processes.*

12:00–14:00: Lunch break

14:00–15:15:

Barbara Drossel (Univ. Darmstadt): 'How the Laws of Physics Leave Room for God's Action'  
Respondent: Ralf Bergmann (University of Bremen)

*Abstract: My talk will argue that the laws of physics leave a lot of room for God's normal, non-miraculous action in the world, such as answering prayers and guiding persons and circumstances. During none of these actions, a law of physics is suspended or violated. The laws of physics are simply not sufficient to determine the course of the world. This is because they are neither complete, nor exact, nor fully deterministic. On the contrary, they are idealizations with a limited range of applicability, and the systems described by them are causally open for top-down influences from higher hierarchical levels within physics (for instance from the classical to the quantum world) and from without physics (for instance from the biological or psychological level), and even from the non-material realm (for instance ideas, goals, rules, and values). This means that even though the laws of physics enable everything, they do not determine everything. At the end of the talk, I will also address the*

question how central christian miracles, such as the resurrection of Christ, relate to this framework.

15:45–16:45:

Alin Cucu (IAP): ‘Does Energy Conservation Preclude Dualistic Agent Causality?’

*Abstract: One way to construe agent causality is to view the agent as an immaterial substance endowed with libertarian freedom which acts on the body (or, more specifically, on the brain). Mere philosophical challenges notwithstanding, some scientific objections have been levelled against this view, among which the most prominent is the one from energy conservation. In this paper, I aim to show (1) that the principle of energy conservation (PEC) cannot be used as an a priori argument against dualistic agent causality; (2) that, rather, PEC constitutes a problem for physicalism because its non-violation requires a complete physical explanation of the pertinent brain events, and finding such an explanation seems doubtful in the light of our current knowledge; and (3) what would have to be the case in order for an objection from energy conservation against dualistic agent causality to be successful.*

18:00: Dinner at Restaurant ‘[Einkehr zur Schwaige](#)’, Forst-Kasten-Allee 114, 81475 München. Choose what you want from the menus that are designed for us. For speakers and respondents, the project pays the food and the water. Please pay other drinks yourself.

## Thursday, 22 August 2019

9:00–10:15:

Richard Swinburne (Oxford) ‘Phenomenological Evidence of Libertarian Free Will’.

Respondent: Ludwig Neidhart (University of Augsburg)

*Abstract: There is psychological evidence that it seems to most people that when they make choices to perform intentional actions of certain kinds, no causes totally determine how they will choose. By the principle of credulity that things are probably as they seem to be in the absence of counter-evidence, that makes it probable that humans have libertarian free will -in the absence of any contrary evidence from neuroscience. Objectors claim that it is evident that many different causes of which we are ignorant influence our choices. But in our choices of intentional actions, causes influence us only by affecting the strengths of our different desires, and we are able to judge by introspection the strengths of different desires and to recognise that we can sometimes act contrary to our strongest desire. Van Inwagen's "rollback argument" against libertarian free will fails, because it unjustifiably assumes that the chance of each indeterministic choice has a particular numerical value. But indeterminism does not entail fixed numerical chances; and the desires which influence our choices, being conscious events, do not have particular numerical degrees of strength.*

10:45–12:00:

Peter Jedlička (University of Gießen): Neurodeterminism and Free Will

Respondent: Gonzalo Alonso (University of Navarra)

*Abstract: Belief in neurodeterminism is one of the reasons for denial of free will in current neurophilosophy. In my talk, I will be arguing that neurodeterministic view of the brain as a complex machine is challenged by novel findings in neurobiology and in the rising field of quantum biology. First, I will define neurodeterminism and then briefly describe the consequence argument of Christoph Jäger for the incompatibility of moral responsibility and determinism. Next, I will argue that the existence of probabilistic processes in the human brain is necessary for freedom of will and moral responsibility. In this context, I will discuss the hypotheses and available evidence for such probabilistic mechanisms including the quantum brain hypothesis. After describing two major arguments against the quantum brain hypothesis I will provide two counter-arguments supporting the view that quantum events may play a nontrivial role in the nervous system. I will argue that the brain is a non-linear complex system, in which nanoscopic quantum fluctuations may be amplified and thereby influence its activity.*

12:00–14:00 Lunch break

14:00–15:15:

Dietmar von der Pfordten (Univ. Göttingen): ‘Freedom as Partial, Inherent Non-Necessity’  
Respondent: Dominikus Kraschl (Chur, CH)

*Abstract: Freedom seems to be linked first and foremost to modalities. However, how? My main thesis will be that freedom should be best understood as non-necessity. Non-necessity can be not only possibility but also reality. Additional qualifications are: relative, partial, inherent and higher mental non-necessity. I will explain all these additional qualifications. In a second part I will draw conclusions for that element of our mental process, which we call “willing”. In a third part I will ask if Gods actions are free and what the consequences for his creation are.*

15:45–17:00:

Uwe Meixner (University of Augsburg): ‘Miracles With and Without Free Will – Free Will Without and With Miracles’

Respondent: Christian Weidemann (University of Münster)

*Abstract: This paper argues for a particular concept of miracle and for a particular concept of free will, contrasting them with other such concepts. On the basis of the favored concepts, it argues (1) that, rationally, it is an open question whether there are miracles, and (2) that it is not unreasonable to suppose that there is free will. Finally, the paper explores the logical relationship between the favored concept of free will and the favored concept of miracle. It is seen that a hyperbolic concept of free will is needed if it is to be logically possible that the result of an actuation of free will is a miracle. However, also in keeping with the favored, non-hyperbolic concept of free will, some actual events, though far from miracles, may plausibly be regarded as results of divine free action.*

17:30–18:45:

Josef Seifert: ‘Do Divine Attributes and Actions Render Possible and Foster Human Free Will or Destroy it?’

Respondent: Philipp Schwind (University of Zürich)

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## Friday, 23 August 2019

9:00–10:15:

Timothy McGrew (Western Michigan University): ‘The Formal Epistemology of Testimony: Beyond Hume and Earman’

Respondent: Paul Näger (University of Münster)

*Abstract: Recent work on the epistemology of testimony concerning miracles has focused on the cogency of the Babbage/Holder/Earman critique of Hume's famous argument in his essay "Of Miracles." Working within a Bayesian framework, this paper extends that discussion in three directions: it argues that the standard Humean reason for assigning a low prior probability to a miracle is untenable, it points out an unresolved issue with Arif Ahmed's criticism of the Babbage/Holder/Earman argument, and it places the question of testimonial evidence in a wider context of richer evidential considerations.*

10:45–12:00:

Christoph Halbig (University of Zürich): ‘Reasons and God's Discretion’

Respondent: Christoph Mocker (IAP)

12:00–14:00 Lunch break

14:00–15:15:

Lydia Jaeger (Nogent-sur-Marne): ‘Human freedom between scientific determinism and liberty of creation’

Respondent: Harald Jung (Heidelberg Institute)

*Abstract: Free-will confronts us with a paradox: On the one hand, we experience ourselves of being able (on some occasions) to decide for ourselves which course of action to take. On the other hand, the scientific vision of humans sees them as determined by a set of scientifically describable factors. The present paper examines first the Kantian strategy, and other NOMA-type approaches, to overcome this paradox and finds them wanting. It then argues for radical non-reductionism: each particular science captures a certain dimension, but does not provide a complete description of reality. Even taken together, the natural sciences do not exhaustively describe reality, and therefore cannot exclude free will. According to Steven Horst’s cognitive pluralism, scientific laws describe partial causal contributions. Therefore, however successful any scientific model may be, it cannot preclude the possibility that there are other causal factors at work. Finally, creation is shown to offer a framework which is both coherent and successful in allowing human liberty to find its place in a world described by science. In particular, creation provides key presuppositions underlying the scientific method, while at the same time recognising the multidimensionality of reality and significant human freedom.*

15:45–17:00:

Thomas Pink (King’s College London): ‘Reason – human and divine: the Jesuits on motivation’

Respondent: Michael Bauwens (

*Abstract: It is often supposed that to be rational is to be susceptible being moved by reason. But what does being moved by reason involve? Francisco Suarez and other Jesuits of the early seventeenth century argued that human rationality, as rationality in created form, involved subjection to various kinds of normative power - the power of truth or goodness to move us, the power of goodness being understood in terms of Aristotelian final causation. Normative power was vital to Jesuit ethical and political theory, and was fundamental to their theory of nature and grace - and it met with the sceptical opposition of Thomas Hobbes, who initiated a modern project of understanding ethical and political theory without a metaphysics of directive reason. The paper examines these Jesuit theories of reason and the consequences of their rejection for later philosophy.*

17:30–18:45:

Johannes Grössl (University of Würzburg): ‘Timeless Reaction – How an Eternal God Reacts to Free Decisions of His Creatures’

Respondent: Pujarini Das (Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur)

*Abstract: A timeless God is incapable of interacting with creation – this charge is often stated by proponents of divine temporality. I will demonstrate how eternalism and libertarianism can be made consistent with the view that God interacts with his creatures, for example by answering prayers. To account for divine reaction without postulating temporality in God, I propose to include all divine reactions to any possible event in history as divine contingency plans in the timeless creational decision. Accordingly, the most foundational natural laws should be described as mapping relations of successive world states with possible built-in irregularities.*

18:45: Closing of the conference: Daniel von Wachter

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