

Review of: "Free will and the paradox of predictability"

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I enjoyed reading this paper. I am not sure how original it is but the cited works (up to 2023) suggest that it makes a point that is still needed. The conclusion looks correct. The paper may be longer than strictly needed to make the point but judging by the diversity of blind alleys in the previous literature a fulsome explication may be no bad thing!

A point that the author does not mention but is relevant in a wider context is that we are pretty sure that the physical world is not deterministic. Biological systems like brains and lymphocytes capitalise on this so the 'paradox' is not only non-existent, as the author says, but irrelevant. The arguments are complex, but we know that for many initial physical conditions there are multiple possible outcomes, perhaps most neatly shown by formation of racemic chiral mixtures from non-chiral precursors. More generally, mixed aqueous solutions (life) often have many possible chemical outcomes. Although it might seem that at the infinitesimal level all outcomes could be determined by femtosecond time relations at nanometre scale Leibniz gave good reasons why we should conclude that at root there must be 'wobble-room' and quantum electrodynamics now provides a clear account of it. The mistake has been to invoke randomness in 'wave function collapse'. The interesting indeterminacy is in relative probabilities of multiple outcomes in terms of e.g. new electron orbitals in a given context of states of the coupled fields.

The author's 'toy' examples of the contradiction involved in the so-called paradox of predictability are well chosen and clear. It is remarkable if the philosophy community really have missed this. The basic point, as I read it, is that having the power to adequately predict some future outcome of a deterministic chain of events *entails* knowing what information has been passed in that chain *and all the events* leading to the response pattern of a 'frustrator'. To ask for a prediction, *in good faith*, that will be confounded is a simple contradiction. The predictor can only predict that the frustrator will frustrate *an incorrect prediction not given in good faith*. Otherwise you are asking the predictor to predict something they would not predict.