

# Review of: "How to Amend Christian List's Theory on Free Will to Answer the Challenge from Indeterminism"

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

Dear Ville, since there are no editors, I address my words to you personally. On the psychological level, you have distinguished the domain of *options* (which is psychologically indeterministic) from the (deterministic) domain of rational *choices*. This is an interesting thought-provoking contribution to the free will debate. But I don't need to point out the meaningfulness of your article, you understand it best yourself. My aim is rather to render you a service with my friendly criticism.

You believe "that the challenge from indeterminism [...] shows that the whole idea of free will involving indeterminism [...] is misguided." Your text implies that the only conceivable version of libertarianism is what is called "leeway libertarianism", which conditions freedom of choice on the ability to choose otherwise. You seem to be ignorant of so-called "source libertarianism", which does not impose that condition. A libertarian of this type does not reject physicalist determinism because of its elimination of alternative possibilities. Even if perhaps some source libertarian concedes that free volition can be determined by rational reasons, he will still insist that its freedom is incompatible with determinism. This is not because determinism excludes alternative possibilities, but because, under the assumption of determinism, the agent is not the true but only the apparent "source" of the choice he makes. (The choice was already determined before his birth.)

Further, you seem unfamiliar with the fact that the distinction between the deterministic physical level and the indeterministic psychological level did not originally come from List. It is worked with, for example, by John Searle (chapter 6 of his book *Mind, Brain and Science* – 1984) or Susan Wolf (*Freedom within Reason* – 1990). I would like to point out that one would expect the author of an expert article to be more acquainted with the state of the debate.

You attach determinism (too confidently and without a deeper reasoning) to reasons-responsiveness. Please note that, e.g., from an Aristotelian point of view such a link is very doubtful. Reason is by its nature an aspectual faculty; it sees different aspects of things. When we are deciding between A and non-A, our reason in the A option views different aspects, both attractive and repulsive ones, and in the non-A option as well. Reason thus causes not the determinacy, but rather the indeterminacy of our decision-making (C. Metaph. 9.5). Another reason why Aristotle rejected Platonic intellectual determinism is *akrasia*. However – despite today's well-developed discussion of *akrasia* – you blithely repeat Plato's dubious postulate (Cf. Protag. 358b–e) when you say: "if you have determined that A is the better option all things considered, you do not want to choose B and be in a worse position than if you had chosen A."

As for your criticism of List, I don't understand the distinction between endorsement and choosing (decision). Why think

that the two are not the same?

If you are convinced that my objections are incorrect, I would welcome your responses at [david.peroutka.oed@seznam.cz](mailto:david.peroutka.oed@seznam.cz)

In sympathy,

David, a monk