

Three Arguments from Science **for** Free Will

1. As of this writing, I'm puzzled by something (though perhaps others are not). If subjective experience is irrelevant to evolutionary survival, then it's not clear why a cohesive physical body that operates and survives in a particular environment should be correlated to a cohesive subjective experience when that body operates. It is perfectly possible that a human brain be correlated to an incohesive and, for all intents and purposes, *random*, subjective experience, as the body would still fulfill the evolutionary requirements for survival and promulgation. Turning this around, 'what it's like' to be a human should make no more sense than 'what it's like' to be a physical system chosen *at random*.

Is that an argument for the causal efficaciousness of subjective experiences over-and-above their physical correlates? I don't know.

2. Maybe the immediacy of consciousness has something to do with it. That is, consciousness seems to happen in, and only in, the *present* (of McTaggart's A-series: future/present/past). And it could be this is one place causality surpasses mere mechanical causation, which is plausibly based on the B-series (of McTaggart's B-series: earlier-times to later-times). There is a generalization to quantum mechanics: state-vector collapse happens in and only in the present of a (fragmentalist presentist) reference system (Merriam); probabilistic or collapse behavior could be an opening for where metal causation comes into play (Chalmers) [1]; at collapse the (physical) conservation of Energy is violated (Carroll et al.) [2]. In fact, because of the violation of the conservation of energy at collapse, something odd *has to be* going on with time, as they are related by Noether's theorem (though Carroll did not draw out this conclusion).

3. With respect to non-locality in quantum mechanics, Alice's choice of experimental arrangement of her own free will 'over here' can affect the (statistics of the) outcome of Bob's experiment 'over there'. Free will will mean at least that the state is not a function of states that are only in her past (and future?) light-cone. *Funny how philosophers of consciousness generally assume the 'causal closure' of the physical, while philosophers of quantum mechanics generally assume free will, in the above sense, to chose the orientation of an experimental apparatus for a given experiment (given no super-determinism).*

Free will in the above sense is usually taken to be a prerequisite for doing science, since if we didn't have it we couldn't independently vary the relevant variables to extrapolate to laws of physics.

Meanwhile, super-determinism says that all correlations were given at the Big Bang. But if there were true we would see greater-than-quantum correlations all over the place (both metaphorically and literally). Thus, super-determinism has already been falsified.

4. What would this mean? Maybe consciousness is such that it tries to increase its capacity (at collapses), regardless of what its physical semi-correlates are doing. Thus, at collapse, the 'next' state is not determined only (if at all) by the physical laws governing the previous states, but by the consciousness of the system, which is to be somewhat independent of the physical states/processes, including functions instantiated by the brain. This should mean at least that we can vary one without changing the other in some cases, or at least (or only?) that part of consciousness that has to do with intentionality.

References

[1] Chalmers, I haven't been able to track down the precise location where Chalmers says this, but it's somewhere.

[2] Carroll, Lodman, Energy Non-Conservation in Quantum Mechanics,
<https://arxiv.org/abs/2101.11052>