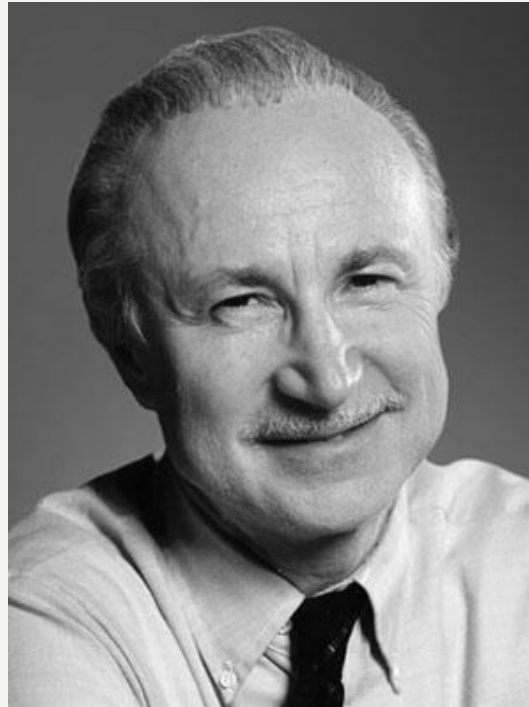


Dr. Jörg Noller
Marco Hausmann M.A.

Determinismus und Freiheit

BA-Seminar
Freitags, 12-14 Uhr c.t.
Raum M109





Robert Kane

Robert Kane: *Free Will: New Directions for an Ancient Problem*. In: Ders. (Hrsg.): *Free Will*. Malden, MA 2003, S. 222-246.



Fragen:

- Welche Bedeutung spielt für Kane der Indeterminismus? (230)
- Was versteht Kane unter "self-forming choices"? (231)
- Inwiefern kann Kane zwischen „undetermined“ und „uncaused“ unterscheiden? Was ist ein „causal ideterminism“? (239)
- Wie verhält sich Kanes Theorie zur gegenwärtigen Physik? (238)



„In short, "undetermined" need not always mean "uncaused"; and reasons, like other kinds of causes, may incline without necessitating. Kane argues that a coherent view of libertarian free will can be developed along these lines, one that does a better job of reconciling free will with modern views of human beings in the natural and social sciences than alternative theories do. Kane also argues for a different approach to the compatibility question as well as to the intelligibility question. He thinks that / the usual attempts to show the incompatibility of free will and determinism, such as the consequence argument, fall short because they neglect another significant feature of free will besides alternative possibilities (AP), the idea that agents who have free will must be ultimately responsible (UR) for their actions.“ (222f.)



„(1) Is it [free will] compatible (or incompatible) with determinism? (2) Why do we want it? (3) Can we make sense of a free will that is incompatible with determinism? (4) Can such a free will be reconciled with modern images of human beings in the natural and social sciences?“ (223)



„to be ultimately responsible for an action, an agent must be responsible for anything that is a sufficient reason (condition, cause or motive) for the action's occurring.² If, for example, a choice issues from, and can be sufficiently explained by, an agent's character and motives (together with background conditions), then to be *ultimately* responsible for the choice, the agent must be at least in part responsible by virtue of choices or actions voluntarily performed in the past for having the character and motives he or she now has. Compare Aristotle's claim that if a man is responsible for wicked acts that flow from his character, he must at some time in the past have been responsible for forming the wicked character from which these acts flow.“ (224)



„Defenders of an incompatibilist or libertarian free will have a dismal record of answering these familiar charges. Realizing that free will cannot merely be indeterminism or chance, they have appealed to various obscure or mysterious forms of agency or causation to make up the difference. Immanuel Kant said we can't explain free will in scientific and / psychological terms, even though we require it for belief in morality.⁴ To account for it we have to appeal to the agency of what he called a "noumenal self" outside space and time that could not be studied in scientific terms. Many other respectable philosophers continue to believe that only some sort of appeal to mind/body dualism can make sense of free will. Science might tell us there was indeterminacy or a place for causal gaps in the brain, but a nonmaterial self, or what Nobel physiologist John Eccles calls a "transempirical power center," would have to fill the causal gaps left by physical causes by intervening in the natural order.⁵ The most popular appeal among philosophers today is to a special kind of *agent- or immanent causation* that cannot be explained in terms of the ordinary modes of causation in terms of events familiar to the sciences. ⁶ Free and responsible actions are not determined by prior events, but neither do they occur merely by chance. They are caused by agents in a way that transcends and cannot be explained in terms of ordinary modes of causation by events involving the agents.“ (226f.)



„I call these familiar libertarian strategies for making sense of free will "extra factor" strategies. The idea behind them is that, since indeterminism leaves it open which way an agent will choose or act, some "extra" kind of causation or agency must be postulated over and above the natural flow of events to account for the agent's going one way or another. Early in my encounters with free will debates, I became disenchanted with all such extra factor strategies. I agree with other libertarian critics, such as Peter van Inwagen and Carl Ginet, that extra factor strategies - including agent-causal theories - do not solve the problems about indeterminism they are suppose to solve and they create further mysteries of their own.⁷ If we are going to make progress on the intelligibility and existence questions about incompatibilist free will, I think we have to strike out in new directions, avoiding appeals to extra factor strategies altogether, including special forms of agent-causation. To do this means rethinking issues about indeterminism and responsibility from the ground up, a task to which I now turn.“ (227)



„The uncertainty and inner tension we feel at such soul-searching moments of self-formation is thus reflected in the indeterminacy of our neural processes themselves. What is experienced internally as uncertainty then corresponds physically to the opening of a window of opportunity that temporarily screens off complete determination by influences of the past.“ (228)



„When we do decide under such conditions of uncertainty, the outcome is not determined because of the preceding indeterminacy - and yet it can be willed (and hence rational and voluntary) either way owing to the fact that in such self-formation, the agents' prior wills are divided by conflicting motives.“ (228)



„the indeterminate efforts we are making become determinate choices, we *make* one set of competing reasons or motives prevail over the others then and there *by deciding*.“ (228)

„Just as indeterminism need not undermine rationality and voluntariness, so indeterminism in and of itself need not undermine control and responsibility.“ (228)



„the will is divided between conflicting motives“ (229)

„the indeterministic noise which is providing an / obstacle to her overcoming temptation is not coming from an external source, but is coming from her own will, since she also deeply desires to do the opposite.“ (229f.)



„Imagine that two crossing (recurrent) neural networks are involved, each influencing the other, and representing her conflicting motivations. (These are complex networks of interconnected neurons in the brain circulating impulses in feedback loops that are generally involved in higher-level cognitive processing.)⁸ The input of one of these neural networks consists in the woman's reasons for acting morally and stopping to help the victim; the input of the other, her ambitious motives for going on to her meeting. The two networks are connected so that the indeterministic noise which is an obstacle to her making one of the choices is coming from her desire to make the other, and vice versa - the indeterminism thus arising from a tension-creating conflict in the will, as we said. In these circumstances, when either of the pathways "wins" (i.e., reaches an activation threshold, which amounts to choice), it will be like your solving the mathematical problem by overcoming the background noise produced by the other. And just as when you solved the mathematical problem by overcoming the distracting noise, one can say you did it and are responsible for it, so one can say this as well, I argue, in the present case, *whichever one is chosen*. The pathway through which the woman succeeds in reaching a choice threshold will have overcome the obstacle in the form of indeterministic noise generated by the other.” (230)



„Note that, under such conditions, the choices either way will not be "inadvertent," "accidental," "capricious," or "merely random" (as critics of indeterminism say), because they will be *willed* by the agents either way when they are made, and done for *reasons* either way – reasons that the agents then and there *endorse*. But these are the conditions usually required to say something is done "on purpose," rather than accidentally, capriciously or merely by chance. Moreover, these conditions taken together, I argue, rule out each of the reasons we have for saying that agents act, but do not have *control* over their actions (compulsion, coercion, constraint, inadvertence, accident, control by others, etc.)." (230)



„It is as if an agent faced with such a choice is *trying* or making an effort to solve *two* cognitive problems at once, or to complete two competing (deliberative) tasks at once - in our example, to make a moral choice and to make a conflicting self-interested choice (corresponding to the two competing neural networks involved). Each task is being thwarted by the indeterminism coming from the other, so it might fail. But if it succeeds, then the agents can be held responsible because, as in the case of solving the mathematical problem, they will have succeeded in doing what they were knowingly and willingly trying to do. Recall the assassin and the husband. Owing to indeterminacies in their neural pathways, the assassin might miss his target or the husband fail to break the table. But if they *succeed*, despite the probability of failure, they are responsible, because they will have succeeded in doing what they were trying to do.” (231)



„And so it is, I suggest, with self-forming choices, except that in the case of self-forming choices, *whichever way the agents choose* they will have succeeded in doing what they were trying to do because they were simultaneously trying to make both choices, and one is going to succeed. Their failure to do one thing is not a *mere* failure, but a voluntary succeeding in doing the other. Does it make sense to talk about the agent's trying to do two competing things at once in this way, or to solve two cognitive problems at once? Well, we now know that the brain is a parallel processor; it can simultaneously process different kinds of information relevant to tasks such as perception or recognition through different neural pathways. Such a capacity, I believe, is essential to the exercise of free will. In cases of self-formation (SFAs), agents are simultaneously trying to resolve plural and competing cognitive tasks. They are, as we say, of two minds. Yet they are not two separate persons. „ (230)



„They are not dissociated from either task. The business woman who wants to go back to help the victim is the same ambitious woman who wants to go to her meeting and make a sale. She is torn inside by different visions of who she is and what she wants to be, as we all are from time to time. But this is the kind of complexity needed for genuine self-formation / and free will. And when she succeeds in doing one of the things she is trying to do, she will endorse that as *her* resolution of the conflict in her will, voluntarily and intentionally, not by accident or mistake.“ (231f.)



„one cannot separate the indeterminism and the effort of will, so that *first* the effort occurs *followed* by chance or luck (or vice versa). One must think of the effort and the indeterminism as fused; the effort *is* indeterminate and the indeterminism is a property of the effort, not something separate that occurs after or before the effort. The fact that the effort has this property of being indeterminate does not make it any less the woman's *effort*. The complex recurrent neural network that realizes the effort in the brain is circulating impulses in feedback loops and there is some indeterminacy in these circulating impulses. But the whole process is her effort of will and it persists right up to the moment when the choice is made. There is no point at which the effort stops / and chance "takes over." She chooses as a result of the effort, even though she might have failed. Similarly, the husband breaks the table as a result of his effort, even though he might have failed because of the indeterminacy. (That is why his excuse, "chance broke the table, not me", is so lame.)“
(232f.)



„But these conditions are satisfied in the businesswoman's case as well, *either way* she chooses. If she succeeds in choosing to return to help the victim (or in choosing to go on to her meeting) (1) she will have "succeeded *despite the probability or chance of failure*," (2) she will have succeeded in doing what she was *trying and wanting* to do all along (she wanted both outcomes very much, but for different reasons, and was trying to make those reasons prevail in both cases), and (3) when / she succeeded (in choosing to return to help) her reaction was not "oh dear, that was a mistake, an accident - something that happened to me, not something I did." Rather she *endorsed* the outcome as something she was trying and wanting to do all along; she recognized it as her resolution of the conflict in her will. And if she had chosen to go on to her meeting she would have endorsed that outcome, recognizing it as her resolution of the conflict in her will." (233)



„Self-forming choices are undetermined, but not uncaused. They are caused by the agent's efforts.“ (234)



„What makes the woman's choice her own on the above account is that it results from her efforts and deliberation which in turn are causally influenced by her reasons and her intentions (for example, her intention to resolve indecision in one way or another). And what makes these efforts, deliberation, reasons, and intentions *hers* is that they are embedded in a larger motivational system realized in her brain in terms of which she defines herself as a practical reasoner and actor. A choice is the agent's when it is produced intentionally by / efforts, deliberation, and reasons that are part of this self-defining motivational system and when, in addition, the agent *endorses* the new intention for purpose created by the choice into that motivational system as a further purpose to guide *future* practical reasoning and action.“ (234f.)



„the indeterminism that is admittedly diminishing her control over one thing she is trying to do (the moral act of helping the victim) *is coming from her own will* - from her desire and effort to do the opposite (go to her business meeting). And the indeterminism that is diminishing her control over the other thing she is trying to do (act selfishly and go to her meeting) is coming from her desire and effort to do the opposite (to be a moral person and act on moral reasons). So, in each case, the indeterminism *is* functioning as a hindrance or obstacle to her realizing one of her purposes - a hindrance or obstacle in the form of resistance within her will which has to be overcome by effort.“ (235)



„by *being* a hindrance to the realization of some of our purposes, indeterminism paradoxically opens up the / genuine possibility of pursuing other purposes - of choosing or doing *otherwise* in accordance with, rather than against, our wills (voluntarily) and reasons (rationally). To be genuinely self-forming agents (creators of ourselves) – to have free will – there must at times in life be obstacles and hindrances in our wills of this sort that we must overcome.“
(235f.)



„every undetermined self-forming free choice is the initiation of what I have elsewhere called a "value experiment" whose justification lies in the future and is not fully explained by past reasons. In making such a choice we say, in effect, "Let's try this. It is not required by my past, but it is consistent with my past and is one branching pathway my life can now meaningfully take. Whether it is the right choice, only time will tell. Meanwhile, I am willing to take responsibility for it one way or the other.“ (236)



„the term "arbitrary" comes from the Latin *arbitrium*, which means "judgment" - as in *liberum arbitrium voluntatis*, "free judgment of the will" (the medieval philosophers' designation for free will).“
(236)



„free choices and actions can be caused by efforts, deliberations, beliefs, desires, intentions, and other reasons or motives of agents. But this is causation by events or states of affairs involving agents. It is not the special causation of agent-causal theories that cannot be spelled out in terms of events or states of affairs involving agents, either physical or psychological.^{1 3} Moreover, causation by efforts, beliefs, desires, intentions, and the like is something that even compatibilists appeal to in their accounts of free actions and choices; and it is hard to see how they could give accounts of free agency without doing so. The case is otherwise with such things as noumenal selves, transempirical power centers, or nonevent causation, which are invoked specifically *to salvage libertarian intuitions* about free will and are not needed by nonlibertarians.“
(237)



„My account of free will postulates no additional ontological entities or relations that nonlibertarian accounts of free agency do not also need. It does postulate efforts, deliberations, desires, intentions, and the like, and causation of actions by these.“ (237)



„My suggestion about how indeterminism might enter the picture, if it were available in the physical world, was that conflicts in the wills of agents associated with self-forming choices would "stir up chaos" in the brain, sensitizing it to quantum indeterminacies at the neuronal level, which would then be magnified to effect neural networks as a whole. The brain would thus be stirred up by such conflict for the task of creative problem solving.“ (238)



„the kind of libertarian theory I defend, which is often called *causal indeterminism*.” (239)

„Not only does the businesswoman facing an SFA have a plurality of real alternatives from which to choose, she has the *capacity* to make either choice by making an effort to do so. The conflicting motives in her will and the consequent divisions within her motivational system make it possible for her to choose either way for reasons, voluntarily and intentionally. And this is clearly a *causal* capacity since it is the capacity to *cause* or *produce* either choice outcome (nondeterministically, of course) as a result of her effort against resistance in her will.” (240)



Vielen Dank für die Aufmerksamkeit!