# JF21 – NC – Determinism

#### Permissibility negates:

#### [1] Semantics – Ought is defined as expressing obligation[[1]](#footnote-1) which means absent a proactive obligation you vote neg since there’s a trichotomy between prohibition, obligation, and permissibility and proving one disproves the other two. Semantics outweighs – A. it’s key to predictability since we prep based on the wording of the res B. It’s constitutive to the rules of debate since the judge is obligated to vote on the resolutional text.

#### [2] Safety – It’s ethically safer to presume the squo since we know what the squo is but we can’t know whether the aff will be good or not if ethics are incoherent.

#### [3] Logic – Propositions require positive justification before being accepted, otherwise one would be forced to accept the validity of logically contradictory propositions regarding subjects one knows nothing about, i.e if one knew nothing about P one would have to presume that both the “P” and “~P” are true.

#### Determinism is true and negates: A. The aff says that States ought to ban lethal autonomous weapons, but the action of not providing one is predetermined making statements that prescribe one incoherent. B. Determinism denies the existence of free will which makes willing a moral obligation impossible. Norwitz quotes Inwagen who doesn’t agree with the terminal conclusion of the NC.

[Michael Norwitz, “Free Will and Determinism,” Philosophy Now, 1991.] SHS ZS

Inwagen presents three premises in his main argument: that **free will is** in fact **incompatible with determinism**, that **moral responsibility is incompatible with** **determinism**, and that (since we have moral responsibility) determinism is false. Hence, he concludes, we have free will. The argument for the first premise runs as follows [p.56]: “**If determinism is true**, then **our acts are the consequences of the laws of nature** and events in the remote past. But **it is not up to us what went on before we were born**, and neither is it up to us what the laws of nature are. **Therefore the consequences of these things** (including our present acts) **are not up to us**.” The argument for the second premise [p. 181]: “**If** (i) **no one is morally responsible for having failed to perform any act**, **and** (ii) **no one is morally responsible for any event**, **and** (iii) **no one is morally responsible for any state of affairs, then there is no such thing as moral responsibility**.” For the third premise van Inwagen does not present a concise summary of his line of argument. He takes it as being self-evident that we have moral responsibility, as we do, after all, continue to hold people morally responsible for their actions.

#### That negates irrespective of permissibility since if there isn’t free will, there cannot be autonomy, so an “autonomous” weapon is incoherent and we cannot ban a nonexistent concept.

#### [1] Causality: The first law of thermodynamics holds that nothing can be created or destroyed[[2]](#footnote-2), thus everything must have a cause if something cannot come from nothing. This means that either A. Free will, which definitionally causes itself, is illogical as it does not have one or B. Our free will is caused by something which is a contradiction and proves determinism true.

#### [2] Cognition – the best neuroscientific, psychological, and medical evidence show free will doesn’t exist. Lavazza

[Andrea Lavazza, Neuroethics, Centro Universitario Internazionale, Arezzo, Italy, Free Will and Neuroscience: From Explaining Freedom Away to New Ways of Operationalizing and Measuring It, 2016, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4887467/> ///AHS PB BRACKETED FOR CLARITY] SHS ZS

All these **experiments** seem to **indicate** that **free will is an illusion.** Yet, these relevant experiments can be interpreted in many ways. A possible view is that, in some way, **determinism can be observed directly within ourselves.** This interpretation might lead to the conclusion that **free will is just an illusion**. In fact, if one considers as a condition of free will the fact that it should be causa sui (i.e., it should be able to consciously start new causal chains), such a condition is incompatible with determinism as it is usually defined. For it, in fact, **all events are linked by casual relations in the form of natural laws**, **which started long before we were born** and which we cannot escape. However, **determinism has generally been regarded as a metaphysical claim**, not refutable by empirical findings. One could properly talk of automatism in the brain, not of determinism, based on the evidence available. (In any case, endorsing indeterminism might lead to consider our behavior as the causal product of choices that every time produce different results, as if we rolled a dice. This doesn’t seem to make us any freer than if determinism were overturned; cf. Levy, 2011). Most importantly, **another feature of freedom seems to be a pure illusion**, namely the role **of consciousness**. **The experiments considered** thus far heavily question **the claim that consciousness** actually **causes voluntary behavior**. **Neural activation starts the decisional process culminating in the movement, while consciousness “comes after”,** when “**things are done**”. **Therefore**, [and] **consciousness cannot trigger our voluntary decisions.** But the role of consciousness in voluntary choices is part of the definition of free will (but the very definition of consciousness is a matter of debate, cf. Chalmers, 1996). Empirical research in psychology also shows that **our mind works and makes choices without our conscious control**. As proposed by psychologist Wegner (2002, 2003, 2004) and Aarts et al. (2004), **we are “built” to have the impression to consciously control our actions or to have the power to freely choose, even though all that is only a cognitive illusion**. Many priming experiments show **that people act “mechanically**” (even when their behavior might appear suited to the environment and even refined). **Automatic cognitive processes**, of which we aren’t always aware, **originate our decisions**, and they were only discovered thanks to the most advanced scientific research. **Ultimately, consciousness**, which should exercise control and assess the reasons for a choice, **is thus allegedly causally ineffective**: a mere epiphenomenon, to use the terminology of the philosophy of mind. This is what has been called Zombie Challenge, “based on an amazing wealth of findings in recent cognitive science that demonstrate the surprising ways in which **our everyday behavior is controlled by automatic processes that unfold in the complete absence of consciousness**” (Vierkant et al., 2013).

#### [3] Molecular Physics – our existence can be modeled by the molecules which comprise our bodies, which are all regulated by the laws of physics. Coyne

[Jerry Coyne, [Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolution at The [University of Chicago](http://content.usatoday.com/topics/topic/Organizations/Schools/University%2Bof%2BChicago)], “Why You Don’t Really Have Free Will,” USAToday, January 1st, 2012. SM] SHS ZS

The first is simple: **we are biological creatures**, **collections of molecules that must obey the laws of physics**. All the success of science rests on the regularity of **those laws**, which **determine the behavior of every molecule** **in the universe. Those molecules**, of course, **also make up your brain** — **the organ that does the "choosing."** And **the neurons and molecules in your brain are the product of both your genes and your environment,** an environment including the other people we deal with. **Memories**, for example, **are nothing more than structural and chemical changes in your brain cells**. **Everything that you** think, say, or **do**, **must come down to molecules and physics**. True "**free will," then, would require us to somehow step outside of our brain's structure and modify how it works**. Science hasn't shown any way we can do this because "we" are simply constructs of our brain. W**e can't impose a nebulous "will" on the inputs to our brain** that can affect its output of decisions and actions, any more than a programmed computer can somehow reach inside itself and change its program.

#### [4] Double bind: Even if they deny determinism, that doesn’t prove free will exists – the universe would then be modeled by probabilistic randomness which still wouldn’t be sufficient for events to be free choices. McGinn.

[Colin McGinn. British philosopher. He has held teaching posts and professorships at University College London, the University of Oxford, Rutgers University and the University of Miami, Problems in Philosophy: The Limits of Inquiry. London: Wiley, 1993. P. 80,. BRACKETED FOR CLARITY] SHS ZS

The argument is exceedingly familiar, and runs as follows. **Either determinism is true or it is not**. **If it is true**, then all **our chosen actions** **are** uniquely **necessitated by prior states of the world**., just like every other event. But then it cannot be the case that we could have acted otherwise, since this would require a possibility determinism rules out. Once the initial conditions are set and the laws fixed, causality excludes genuine freedom. On the other hand, **if indeterminism is true**, **then**, **though things could have happened otherwise, it is not the case that we could have chosen otherwise, since a merely random event is no kind of free choice**. **That some events** occur causelessly, or **are** not **subject to** law, or only to **probabilistic law, is not sufficient for those events to be free choices.** Thus **one horn of the dilemma represents choices as predetermined happenings** in a predictable causal sequence, while **the other construes them as inexplicable lurches to which the universe is randomly prone.** **Neither** alternative **supplies what the notion of free will** requires,, and no other alternative suggests itself. **Therefore freedom is not possible in any kind of possible world.** The concept contains the seeds of its own destruction.

# 2NR

## Overview

#### The thesis of the NC is that future events are already predetermined, which means willing an active moral obligation is incoherent. If the future is unchangeable, agents cannot have moral obligations to take certain actions because they will have no choice but to take that action in the future. This is NOT contingent on winning the permissibility debate – we just need to prove that since determinism is true, it’s incoherent to will somebody to commit any moral action to begin with.

#### The NC provides a rigorous scientific explanation proving determinism is true. Don’t buy their 1AR blips that attempt to disprove decades of quantum mechanics and advanced science – determinism is literally scientifically proven.

1. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ought> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.grc.nasa.gov/www/k-12/airplane/thermo1.html [↑](#footnote-ref-2)