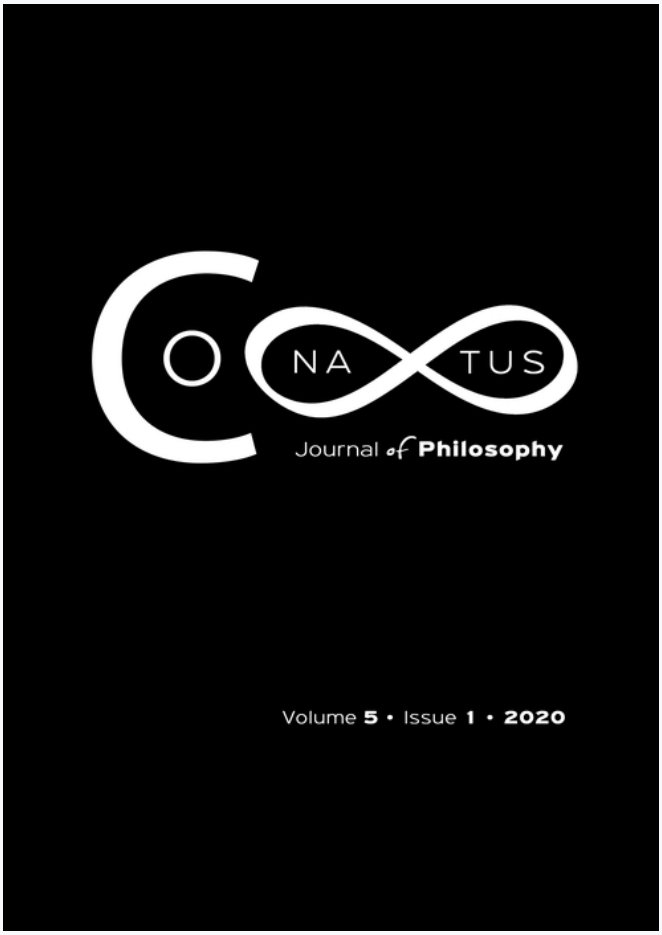
ePublishing

ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΤΕΚΜΗΡΙΩΣΗΣ
EKT
NATIONAL DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

Conatus - Journal of Philosophy

Vol 5, No 1 (2020)

Conatus - Journal of Philosophy



What Makes Free Will Free: The Impossibility of Predicting Genuine Creativity

Nikos Erinakis

doi: 10.12681/cjp.23180

Copyright © 2020, Nikos Erinakis

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0.

To cite this article:

Erinakis, N. (2020). What Makes Free Will Free: The Impossibility of Predicting Genuine Creativity. *Conatus - Journal of Philosophy*, *5*(1), 55–69. https://doi.org/10.12681/cjp.23180

https://epublishing.ekt.gr | **e-Publisher:** EKT | **Downloaded at:** 28/04/2024 07:45:32

N. Erinakis · *Conatus* 5, no. 1 (2020): 55-69
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.12681/cjp.23180

What Makes Free Will Free: The Impossibility of Predicting Genuine Creativity

Nikos Erinakis
Hellenic Open University, Greece
E-mail address: erinakis.nikos@ac.eap.gr
ORCID ID: http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7188-2993

Abstract

In this paper I argue that Mill's 'Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity' regarding the human will and action cannot apply on all cases, and that the human mind has potentially the capacity to create freely a will or action that, no matter what kind of knowledge we possess, cannot be predicted. More precisely, I argue against Mill's attempt of conjunction between the freedom of the will and the 'Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity' while I attempt a comparison with the relevant Kantian approach. I then claim that a will cannot be free and be predicted at the same time, as both the elements of freedom and unpredictability of the will are founded on the very process of its formulation as an outcome of genuine creativity. I, thus, attempt to propose a more substantially free view of free will and action than the ones presented by the prominent conceptions.

Key-words: *free will; free action; creativity; predictability; compatibilism; philosophical necessity; substantial freedom; John Stuart Mill; Immanuel Kant*

In this paper I explore the deeper relation between the elements of freedom and unpredictability of the human will and action, claiming that for the former to exist, the latter should exist too. Firstly, I deal with the doctrine of 'Philosophical Necessity' as discussed by John Stuart Mill in the case of human will and action and I attempt to prove that certain objections can be raised on whether this doctrine can be applied on all human volitions and actions. Secondly, I suggest that there is a specific kind of human will and action that the doctrine cannot be applied to and I provide a number of relevant examples. I then argue for a view, which aspires to present a more substantially free conception of free will and action than the ones presented by the prominent conceptions, due to the fact that it cannot, by any means, be predicted, since its formulation is an outcome of a process of genuine creativity.

To begin with, I shall concentrate my attention on Mill's chapter "Of Liberty and Necessity" in his work *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive* (1843).[1] From the first lines of the chapter, Mill presents the question that he wants to explore and states the two opposing opinions. The question focuses on whether the law of causality applies as strictly to human actions as to other phenomena; that is to say natural phenomena. There are two opinions regarding the possible answer to this question. On the one hand, there is the positive opinion, which is formed by the Necessitarians and suggests that human volition and action are necessary and irrevocable. On the other hand, there is the negative one, which implies that human volition and action is not determined by any causes, but rather it is self-determined. Mill does not hesitate to take a clear position by adopting the affirmative position, that is to say the 'Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity,'[2] of which the main exponent was Joseph Priestley.[3] As a matter of fact, he presents clearly what the 'Doctrine of Necessity' suggests in the case of human volitions and actions[4] and in which way he interprets it. In his own words:

> Correctly conceived, the doctrine called Philosophical Necessity is simply this: that, given the motives which are present to an individual's mind, and given likewise the character and disposition of the individual, the manner in which he will act might be

---

[1] John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive*, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, ed. J. M. Robson (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1974) [hereinafter Mill, *System of Logic*].

[2] Mill, as well as Herbert Spencer, was greatly influenced by the form of determinism expressed by the view of 'Philosophical Necessity.' The main advocator of 'Philosophical Necessity' was Joseph Priestley; see Joseph Priestley, *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated; Being an Appendix to the Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit. To Which is Added an Answer to the Letters on Materialism, and on Hartley's Theory of the Mind* (London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1777). African Spir believed that after Priestley's work, it was pointless to discuss the issue of free will further; see African Spir, *Denken und Wirklichkeit. Versuch einer Erneuerung der kritischen Philosophie* (Leipzig: J. G. Findel, 1873), 162.

[3] For more information on Priestley's 'Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity' see Clarke Garrett, "Joseph Priestley, the Millennium, and the French Revolution," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34, no. 1 (1973): 51-66; also Isaac Kramnick, "Eighteenth-Century Science and Radical Social Theory: The Case of Joseph Priestley's Scientific Liberalism," *Journal of British Studies* 25, no. 1 (1986): 1-30; Robert E. Schofield, *The Enlightened Joseph Priestley: A Study of His Life and Work from 1773 to 1804* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).

[4] Arthur Schopenhauer wrote that "[...] no writer has presented the necessity of acts of will so thoroughly and convincingly as Priestley [...] If anyone is not convinced by this supremely clearly and accessibly written book, his understanding must really be paralysed by prejudices," and that the work contributed to Kant who considered "the complete necessity of acts of will as a settled matter to which no further doubt could pertain." Arthur Schopenhauer, *On the Freedom of the Will* (Trondheim: Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences, 1839), respectively 77, 81.

> unerringly inferred; that if we knew the person thoroughly, and knew all the inducements which are acting upon him, we could foretell his conduct with as much certainty as we can predict any physical event. This proposition I take to be a mere interpretation of universal experience, a statement in words of what every one is internally convinced of.[5]

Although, this seems to be a very well structured and fortified statement, as it seems to be referring to all possible factors that can be influencing human volition, we cannot ignore the fact that it seems very general and vague and thus a number of objections can be raised against it. Mill concentrates on three critical internal factors of the agent: the motives, the character and the disposition, and he summarizes all the external factors to one: all the inducements that can possibly act upon the agent. He implies that if potentially we knew all these factors, they would be enough to predict exactly the volition or the action of the agent. In fact, this statement seems vague since Mill does not make clear what other exact elements he considers to be included in the motives, character and disposition of the agent. [6]

The first question that can be directly raised is how can we actually attain this kind of knowledge. Mill defends his position by making clear that he does not support that we can actually possess this knowledge but rather he supports that if we could possibly have it, we could definitely produce such predictions successfully. That is, given the knowledge of the relevant preconditions and laws, it is necessary that a person acts in a certain way, and a fully informed observer could predict precisely this person's will and action. In other words, ceteris paribus, what a fully informed observer predicts about the person's will and action, cannot but necessarily happen.

Even then, however, if we are to accept this hypothesis, another, even more critical, question can be raised: Is this knowledge adequate? Are these factors enough to predict human volition and action? Even if we had the ability to approach this kind of knowledge, that is to say to know all

---

[5] Mill, *System of Logic*, 836.

[6] In regard to motives, which play such a crucial role on the determination of will in Mill consider Norman Wilde's argument referring to Kant's notion of *Good Will*: "Motives, so far as they are internal, a supposed free will or autonomous self, cannot be subjected to observation and experiment, and hence must be ignored in considering the principles of moral judgment. The name of Kant, on the other hand, has always been connected with a system the exact opposite of the one just described. The celebrated opening of the Grundlegung has always been accepted as the keynote of his moral theory. 'Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a Good Will.' Here we have the direct contrary of the utilitarian position that the will has no value save in relation to the effects produced by it." Norman Wilde, "Kant's Relation to Utilitarianism," *The Philosophical Review* 3, no. 3 (1894): 292.

these factors, would it be enough for us to predict exactly what a person would will and how she would act?

In fact, in this paper I argue that if we were to know the motives, the character, the disposition and all the possible inducements that can act upon a person, we might be able to predict all kinds of her volitions and actions, except one, which we can definitely never predict: the will and/or act that nobody ever before has imagined, thought, formulated and/or done. This said, although Mill's definition seems complete, he does not take into account the element of *genuine creativity*. By the element of and/or capacity for genuine creativity I refer to the *creative process* of a will or action of a person that occurs for the first time, in the sense that it is, even in the slightest degree, *historically* and *psychologically novel, unique* and *original*.

Mill implies that the aforementioned factors, i.e. the motives, the character, the disposition and all the possible inducements, are enough to predict all kind of volitions and actions of a person. Mill's aspiration to provide a solution to the problem of compatibility between determinism and free will is based on what he refers to as a misleading association to the notion of *necessity*. Here we need to clarify the difference between the idea that actions occur necessarily and the idea that actions are predetermined and agents have no influence on them. Given this distinction, the doctrine of necessity, which for Mill is compatible with determinism,[7] is differentiated from the doctrine of fatalism,[8] which is not compatible with determinism. However, even by taking into account these remarks, the crucial question remains: How can one predict a will or an action that has never occurred before? How can you predict something that you cannot even imagine? Thus, Mill's aforementioned factors seem to be inadequate, that is to say they are neither sufficient nor necessary for predicting human will and action, because they cannot predict the spontaneous outcomes of genuinely creative processes when they occur for the first time both in one's personal and in collective history. Nevertheless, after the first time that such a volition or action takes place, it is added in the map of possible options of choices and the doctrine of Philosophical Necessity may possibly apply upon it too.

---

[7] Notice that Mill's solution to the Problem of Necessity (i.e. the problem of determinism and freedom of the will), is one of the first compatibilist conceptions of free will. For more on this, see Elijah Millgram, "John Stuart Mill, Determinism, and the Problem of Induction," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 87, no. 2 (2009): 183-199; George Boolos, "On Second-Order Logic," *The Journal of Philosophy* 72, no. 16 (1975): 509-527; Janice Carlisle, *John Stuart Mill and the Writing of Character* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1991).

[8] For more information on Fatalism, see Alfred Jules Ayer, "Fatalism," in *The Concept of a Person and Other Essays* (London: McMillan, 1963), 235-268; also Richard Taylor, "Fatalism," *The Philosophical Review* 71, no. 1 (1962): 56-66.

Perhaps we could understand better this claim if we considered an example from art. Let us imagine the first painter who ever drew truly abstractly, e.g. one of the pioneers of abstract expressionism. Making the hypothesis that people of her/his time knew completely everything about her/his life, motives and disposition and all the inducements acting upon her/him, they could have predicted what kind of paintings she/he would have intended to draw and in which way, but they could never have predicted that she/he would drew abstractly, outside of any already known forms and techniques. Let us here underline the fact that this kind of genuine creativity can be noticed not only in individual persons but also in collective movements etc.

It might also be useful to think of the case of Medea.[9] Let us assume, in a rather simplified way, that firstly, Medea's context was a historically existing one, and secondly, that no mother before Medea had ever reached the state of killing her children in order to revenge her husband. One could predict that when a wife feels cheated, she might want to take revenge and this revenge might be extreme, but before Medea no person could assume that a wife could possibly murder her children for revenge. In other words, I believe that there are many cases of different kinds of human volitions and actions (from aesthetically pleasing to morally repulsive), which even if we possess the knowledge of all relevant factors, both internal and external, which influence them, we are not able to predict them (e.g. something that happens for the first time in the known history of humankind and is, in such a way or degree, unique that no other person could have acknowledgingly ever imagined it).

Moreover, one cannot but wonder if Mill took also into account cases of volitions and actions of mentally disordered persons. In cases of severe mental disorders nobody can predict what the person will or is able to do, even if we possessed all the knowledge that Mill suggests that is needed to do so. More precisely, the motives, the character and the disposition of a person together with all the inducements that can act upon her are not enough in order to predict the volition or an act of a seriously disordered mind. To begin with, a disordered mind does not work through a coherent causal system that we may be able to identify, like it has been mainly suggested for the human mind in general (although there are a number of lines of thought that argue against this supposition). But even if we supported that a disordered mind does work based on coherent causal laws too, we should accept that it does so based on much less obvious causal systems than other minds do. The key point here is that a disordered mind may have the ability to operate through novel ways of thinking and acting, and, while seeming irrational to other minds, to have the capacity for an alternative form of genuine creativity. Therefore, despite the

[9] Medea was the wife of Jason and mother of Mermeros and Pheres. When Jason betrayed her (he left her for Glauce, Creon's daughter), she killed her children in order to revenge him.

amount of knowledge that one may possess for mentally disordered persons, one remains unable to predict the outcomes of at least a certain number of them that retain, at least, an alternative capacity for genuine creativity.

Nevertheless, a Necessitarian could argue that by expanding these factors or deepen our knowledge on them, we could be able at some point to predict all cases of both mentally healthy and mentally disordered minds. But then we are once again faced with the paradox stated above. How can you make a prediction[10] about something that you do not know yet that exists, i.e. it is not a part of any known conceptual space[11] (such as the case of a genuine creative volition or act formulated through a creative process of an either mentally healthy or a mentally disordered person)? How can you predict something that you have never acknowledged, experienced or noticed before and never had a clue about it? If you cannot even imagine something, then certainly you cannot predict it. Could any infectious disease specialist ever predict or speak of a potentially pandemic virus that has never occured before? Could she recognize it or even conceive its existence?

Therefore, in the case of either a healthy mind or a disordered mind that can give birth to volitions and actions based on factors which other human minds cannot even imagine, nothing can be predicted. However, let us keep in mind that such volitions and acts cannot be predicted solely for the first time that they occur. Their key element is the combination of originality, uniqueness and singularity of their nature. They manage to operate in a way that no mind has ever acknowledgingly operated before. They create a novel way of willing and a novel way of acting. Even if neuroscience, through its astonishingly promising paths, manages to read the human brain in its whole and understand in total the ways in which it operates, there will always exist a potentiality of a human being with a certain – biological or not – brain 'distortion,' that will lead to the formation of a volition or an action that could not by any means be predicted. This kind of distortion is one of the cases that confound the element of prediction as Mill and the Necessitarians conceive it, i.e. a conception in which free will is not substantially free, since which capacity or attitude can be truly free when it can be predicted based on the very factors that formulated it. Spontaneity is a substantial element of freedom, and one that requires some form of creativity. Genuine creativity,

---

[10] For a thorough argumentation on the subject of *predictability* and its relation to *determinism*, see Daniel J. O'Connor, "Determinism and Predictability," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 7, no. 28 (1957): 310-315; Peter Herbst, "Freedom and Prediction," *Mind* 66, no. 261 (1957): 1-27; Haskell Fain, "Prediction and Constraint," *Mind* 67, no. 267 (1958): 366-378.

[11] For further clarification on the concept of the *conceptual space*, see Margaret Boden, *The Creative Mind: Myths and Mechanisms* (London: Routledge, 2004); also *Dimensions of Creativity*, ed. Margert Boden (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).

thus, especially because its outcomes cannot be predicted, is the key element for both the existence and unpredictability of freedom of the will.

When Mill argues that, "We are exactly as capable of making our own character, *if we will*, as others are of making it for us,"[12] Mill clearly believes that if we desire to change ourselves then we have the ability to do so, i.e. experience shows that we can affect our habits and attitudes and that this desire resides in our selves.[13] Leaving aside for now, how deeply problematic may be to speak of an existing self[14] as a robust, coherent entity,[15] the aforementioned view of Mill operates as the substance of his doctrine of free will:

> [...] that what is really inspiring and ennobling in the doctrine of free will, is the conviction that we have real power over the formation of our own character; that our will, by influencing some of our circumstances, can modify our future habits or capabilities of willing. All this was entirely consistent with the doctrine of circumstances, or rather, was that doctrine itself, properly understood.[16]

For Mill, therefore, we are free in the sense that we can become those who we want to be, although any fully informed bystander not only could know *what we would desire to become*, but also, more importantly, *what*

---

[12] John Stuart Mill, *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, ed. John M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963-1991), vol. 8, 841 [hereinafter Mill, *Collected Works*].

[13] Ibid.

[14] For more thoughts on Mill's idea of the self, see Wendy Donner, *The Liberal Self. John Stuart Mill's Moral and Political Philosophy* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1991); Fred R. Berger, *Happiness, Justice, and Freedom: The Moral and Political Philosophy of John Stuart Mill* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984); John Skorupski, *Why Read Mill Today?* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006); James O. Urmson, "The Interpretation of the Moral Philosophy of J. S. Mill," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 3, no. 10 (1953): 33-39; Samuel Clark, "Love, Poetry, and the Good Life: Mill's *Autobiography* and Perfectionist Ethics," *Inquiry* 53, no. 6 (2010): 565-578.

[15] According to another line of thought, not without several problems itself too, which has been espoused, from different directions, by empiricists, neuroscientists, feminists and post-modern thinkers, the self is constantly changing and incoherent and, in general, can be considered an illusion. For more, see Daniel C. Dennett, "The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity," in *Self and Consciousness: Multiple Perspectives*, eds. F. Kessel, P. Cole, and D. Johnson, 103-115 (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1992); Daniel C. Dennett, Maxwell Bennett, Peter Hacker, and John Searle, *Neuroscience and Philosophy: Brain, Mind, and Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Marilyn A. Friedman, "Autonomy and the Split-Level Self," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 24, no. 1 (1986): 19-35; Bruce Hood, *The Self Illusion: Why There Is no 'You' Inside Your Head* (London: Constable, 2012); Diana T. Meyers (ed.), *Feminists Rethink the Self* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997).

[16] Mill, *Collected Works*, 1, 177.

we are going to become. He claims that: "I dispute therefore altogether that we are conscious of being able to act in opposition to the strongest present desire or aversion."[17] Hence, since one cannot counteract one's much *effective desire*, one cannot but be necessarily determined by it, and thus the outcome of this determination can be fully and accurately predicted. In a comparison with Kant's thought,[18] Norman Wilde claims that:

> If the desire for happiness were to be admitted as the principle for the determination of the will, no necessary law could be formulated; since pleasurable consciousness is the result of experience, from no examination of which could any necessary law be derived. In other words, the principle would be Heteronomy instead of Autonomy, which alone gives a basis for distinctly moral judgment. To allow a material principle such as pleasure to determine the will would be to place the Ego under natural laws in which no freedom is possible – and if no freedom, then for Kant, no morality is possible, since "the ratio essendi of the moral law is freedom," i.e., self legislation.[19]

Consequently, Mill asserts that the fact that others can predict the volition or an action of an agent does not mean that the agent does not have free will;

---

[17] Mill, *Collected Works*, 9, 453.

[18] However, it is important to keep in mind here that, in general, Mill looks into morality as a social practice and not as autonomous self-determination by reason, like Kant. For further argumentation on this, see Rocer Hancock, "Ethics and History in Kant and Mill," *Ethics* 68 (1957): 56-60; Roderick Ninian Smart, "Negative Utilitarianism," *Mind* 67, no. 268 (1958): 542-543; John Jamieson Carswell Smart, and Bernard Williams, *An Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics* (Cambridge*:* Cambridge, 1973); Jan Narveson, *Morality and Utility* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967).

[19] Norman Wilde, "Kant's Relation to Utilitarianism," *The Philosophical Review* 3, no. 3 (1894): 289-304, 292-293. In addition, of interesting relevance is Dennis A. Rohatyn's claim that: "In view of these doctrinal affiliations, it is surprising to find Mill attacking Kant's conception of free will and moral autonomy elsewhere (see [5], Ch. 26, esp. 298-299). Here Mill suggests that the Kantian conception is at odds with Mill's own ideas on the formation of character, or 'Ethology,' a topic which Mill adumbrated at various times, and discussed embryonically in his System of Logic (Bk. VI, Ch. v, para. 4). Mill's own resolution of the free-will question in the face of his idealized social science of man is itself muddled, hinging as it does on a vexed distinction between external (physical) and internal (agent's own volition) causality. But this confusion surfaces in Kant's third antinomy, as well, where it is made to accord with the idea of the will legislating maxims for itself (see [4], A444/B472, and also [3], 421). So even Mill's criticisms of Kant turn out to be based on theories with which Kant would agree, or toward which the latter was moving." Dennis A. Rohatyn, "Mill, Kant, and Negative Utility," *Philosophia* 5 (1975): 517.

contrariwise the agent remains free to will whatever she prefers.[20] What I am trying to highlight here is that, in my opinion, the notion of *genuine creativity* to which I am referring, is a capacity of the human mind that *operates before*, and in a deeper level than, the *formulation of one's desires*. The very source of the elements of freedom and unpredictability of the will resides in the *capacity for creative processes*, which in turn can create creative desires, and not in plain desires of the person as it has been suggested.

Besides this, however, if other people can possibly predict, and thus know, in which ways one is going to act, then potentially one is able to know it too (either by being provided with this knowledge by others, or by using the same factors that the others used to make the prediction). Hence, if you know exactly how you are going to act – even if you can act in whichever way you want – you are not free, but constrained by the factors that are supposed to form your will. In addition to this, you also lose the freedom of changing your mind at the last moment. Thus, we are faced with a paradox here. Whilst Mill supports the existence of free will, he supports also the doctrine of the Philosophical Necessity on human actions, which based on the above arguments restricts the free will of the agent. However, those who desire to object this view may argue that even a last moment change of mind can be predicted if we know all the previously mentioned factors. But is it not restrictive to accept the fact that individuals are capable of thinking and acting only in the ways and on the options, which these specific factors can give birth to (even if these ways and options are abundant) and, thus, to exclude the possibility of not only *creating a genuine will or action* but also *creating a genuine way and/or option of willing and acting* to begin with?

Furthermore, if for a moment we assume that the agent may know all the factors that influence her will or action, then she can possibly change her will, after the prediction is formulated, in a way that cannot be predicted. If we take this idea one step further, we can support that not only an agent can alter her will, but also she can alter the factors that influence her volition and her actions. For instance, if an individual knows the factors that are used in order for her actions to be predicted according to Mill, then she can possibly alter them in way which resides out of the possible predictions map. In other words, she can barricade her will from the factors that influence it and base her actions on innovative factors. This might have as a result the cancelation of the validity of the possible predictions.

Aristotle wrote, "Nor is there any definite cause for an accident, but only chance (τυχόν), namely an indefinite (ἀ όριστον, aoriston) cause."[21]

---

[20] Mill, *Collected Works*, 9, 548.

[21] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*: *Book V,* trans. Hugh Tredennick, and G. Cyril Armstrong (Cambridge,

Following from this, we may conceive the volitions or actions which occur for the first time as nor outcomes of causal laws neither of chance, but rather as an outcome of an *aoriston* (indefinite/indetermined) cause, which immediately after they occur become *orismenoi* (definite/determined).[22] Given this, I do not intend to suggest that the element of chance or luck is the reason why not all human actions can be predicted. The outcomes of genuine creativity should not, by any means, be understood as occurring from an element of chance or luck alone. Besides, we may here consider the concept of *moral luck*[23] as proposed by Bernard Williams[24] and further developed by Thomas Nagel[25] in their renowned pair of articles, based on Kant's idea of the Good Will in the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*,[26] claiming that our everyday judgments and practices commit us to the existence of it. However, a number of thinkers in the free will debate have argued against the existence of causal moral luck, while proposing a distinctive metaphysical account of human agency.[27] This view is known as the "Agent-Causal Libertarianism" and the core idea is that the actions, or at least the formation of intentions, are caused by the persons themselves, without the persons being caused to do so.

MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 1025a25.

[22] For thoughts on Mill's relation to Aristotle on this topic, see Martha C. Nussbaum, "Mill between Aristotle & Bentham," *Daedalus* 133, no. 2 (2004): 60-68.

[23] Thomas Nagel defines *moral luck* as follows: "Where a significant aspect of what someone does depends on factors beyond his control, yet we continue to treat him in that respect as an object of moral judgment, it can be called moral luck." Thomas Nagel, Mortal Questions (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 59.

[24] Bernard Williams, *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Bernard Williams, "Postscript," in *Moral Luck*, ed. D. Statman, 251-258 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

[25] Thomas Nagel, *Mortal Questions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[26] Immunity from luck has been thought by many to be part of the very essence of morality and it has found its inspiration in Kant: "A good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes, because of its fitness to attain some proposed end, but only because of its volition, that is, it is good in itself [...] Even if, by a special disfavor of fortune or by the niggardly provision of a step motherly nature, this will should wholly lack the capacity to carry out its purpose – if with its greatest efforts it should yet achieve nothing and only the good will were left (not, of course, as a mere wish but as the summoning of all means insofar as they are in our control) – then, like a jewel, it would still shine by itself, as something that has its full worth in itself. Usefulness or fruitlessness can neither add anything to this worth nor take anything away from it." Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. and trans. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 4: 394.

[27] See Roderick Chisolm, "Human Freedom and the Self," *The Lindley Lecture*, University of Kansas (1964); Randolph Clarke, "Toward a Credible Agent-Causal Account of Free Will," *Noûs* 27 (1993): 191-203; Richard Taylor, *Action and Purpose* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1966); Timothy O'Connor, *Persons and Causes: The Metaphysics of Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Thus, an agent, while exercising her own causal powers, is an undetermined cause of her own intentions. This said, in my opinion, the *source of one's causal powers* that ensures the *freedom* and *unpredictability* of one's *intentions*, *volitions* and *actions*, by rendering one *the undetermined cause* of them, is the capacity for *genuine creativity*.

Following from the above, I am of the opinion that a will or act which take place for the first time may occur both through intentional rational reflection and/or through imaginativeness[28] of the agent and still without being able to be predicted, since the agent, at least in cases of genuine creativity, operates for sure as the undetermined cause of them. On the relationship of rationality, freedom and causal relationship let us think here Kant's main argument in the *GMS* that regarding oneself as rational implies regarding oneself as free.[29] However, whether through Kant's thought we can succeed in showing that firstly, regarding oneself as free is incompatible with accepting universal causal determinism and secondly, regarding oneself as rational is incompatible with accepting universal causal determinism, remain open questions for further investigation.[30]

This said, I accept that the doctrine of Philosophical Necessity might be true for a majority of human volitions and actions except those of authentic, genuine creativity, which, by definition, occur for the first time, i.e. they are characterized

---

[28] For a historical review and discussion of the notion of imaginativeness, see James Eric Grant, *The Critical Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[29] For thorough argumentation on this, see Corina Mieth, and Jacob Rosenthal, "'Freedom must be Presupposed as a Property of the Will of All Rational Beings' (GMS III, 2)," in Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, eds. Cristoph Horn, and Deiter Schoenecker, 247-284 (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2006); Richard Mervyn Hare, *Freedom and Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963); Allen Wood, *Kantian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Alvin I. Goldman, "The Compatibility of Mechanism and Purpose," *The Philosophical Review* 78, no. 4 (1969): 468-482; William Hasker, "The Transcendental Refutation of Determinism," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 11, no. 3 (1973): 175-183.

[30] For now, however, Wilde's suggestion operates in an illuminating manner: "To say that man is to act from a principle which he can will to be universal law – to make him the supreme law-giver to himself, is to place him above the reach of all law other than his own, or that which he freely makes his own. If, then, as a rational being he cannot be subject to anything without him, he is an end unto himself – an absolute end so far as rational. All men, moreover, as partakers of a common reason, must also be regarded as ends, and so treated, i.e., the ends of each individual must be made the ends of the particular subject. Thus from the idea of law Kant passes to its equivalent, the idea of the self, since the form of law is but the expression of the nature of the rational self. The term 'law' in this connection rather confuses the real identity of these two notions, since it is generally used in Kantian ethics to denote a command. But it is thus used in relation to the lower self as constrained, and not of the higher or noumenal self as the source of law. In regard to this latter, it denotes merely natural law, habit, or nature. The moral law, as issued to the self as object in the form of command, is really the expression of true nature of the rational self as subject. It is only as imposed upon the self regarded as inclination, that it takes the form of command." Norman Wilde, "Kant's Relation to Utilitarianism," *The Philosophical Review* 3, no. 3 (1894): 296.

by historical and psychological novelty. The element of indeterminate surprise of genuine creativity here is more than crucial. This direction places the core argument of this paper on the thin line between compatibilism[31] and libertarianism. More specifically, I certainly support the existence of free will and action (as, in general, Mill does too), but I disagree on the fact that it can always be predicted, and thus I argue for the existence of a more substantially free form of volition. I support the idea that incidents of reality can be considered as determined (orismenoi), but only after these incidents have occurred before at least once. More precisely, a will or action that is formulated through one's capacity for genuine creativity is considered indetermined (aoriston) until it takes place for the first time, when it immediately becomes determined (orismeni) for all the following times that will occur.

In this paper I attempted to suggest that there are cases of human will and action that cannot be predicted even if we possessed all the knowledge that Mill and others believed to be adequate, i.e. both sufficient and necessary, in order to do so. An exemplified case on which this paper was based is the formation of volitions or actions, which occur for the first time ever, through the capacity for genuine creativity. I maintained that in this case, Mill's doctrine of Philosophical Necessity cannot apply, and that the human mind, through its creative processes, has potentially the capacity to formulate a free will or action that, no matter what kind of knowledge we possess, cannot be predicted. I argued, thus, against Mill's attempt of conjunction of the freedom of the will and the doctrine of Philosophical Necessity, while I claimed that a will cannot be free and be predicted at the same time, as both the elements of freedom and unpredictability of the will are founded on the very *process* of its formulation *as an outcome* of *genuine creativity*.

References

Aristotle. *Metaphysics*: *Book V*. Translated by Hugh Tredennick, and G. Cyril Armstrong. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935.

Ayer, Alfred Jules. "Fatalism." In *The Concept of a Person and Other Essays*. London: Macmillan, 1963.

Berger, Fred R. *Happiness, Justice, and Freedom: The Moral and Political Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984.

[31] For further discussion on compatibilism, i.e. the reconcilability of determinism and free will, see John V. Canfield, "The Compatibility of Free Will and Determinism," *The Philosophical Review* 71, no. 3 (1962): 352-368; Harald Ofstad, *An Inquiry into the Freedom of Decision* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961).

Boden, Margaret, ed. *Dimensions of Creativity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994.

Boden, Margaret. *The Creative Mind: Myths and Mechanisms*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Boolos, George. "On Second-Order Logic." *The Journal of Philosophy* 72, no. 16 (1975): 509-527.

Canfield, John V. "The Compatibility of Free Will and Determinism." *The Philosophical Review* 71, no. 3 (1962): 352-368.

Carlisle, Janice. *John Stuart Mill and the Writing of Character*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1991.

Clarke, Randolph. "Toward a Credible Agent-Causal Account of Free Will." *Noûs* 27, no. 2 (1993): 191-203.

Clark, Samuel. "Love, Poetry, and the Good Life: Mill's *Autobiography* and Perfectionist Ethics." *Inquiry* 53, no. 6 (2010): 565-578.

Chisolm, Roderick. "Human Freedom and the Self." In *The Lindley Lecture*. University of Kansas, 1964.

Dennett, Daniel C. "The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity." In *Self and Consciousness: Multiple Perspectives,* edited by F. Kessel, P. Cole, and D. Johnson, 103-115. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1992.

Dennett, Daniel C., Maxwell Bennett, Peter Hacker, and John Searle. *Neuroscience and Philosophy: Brain, Mind, and Language*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

Donner, Wendy. *The Liberal Self. John Stuart Mill's Moral and Political Philosophy*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1991.

Fain, Haskell. "Prediction and Constraint." *Mind* 67, no. 267 (1958): 366-378.

Friedman, Marilyn A. "Autonomy and the Split-Level Self." *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 24, no. 1 (1986): 19-35.

Garrett, Clarke. "Joseph Priestley, the Millennium, and the French Revolution." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34, no. 1 (1973): 51-66.

Grant, James Eric. *The Critical Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Goldman, Alvin I. "The Compatibility of Mechanism and Purpose." *The Philosophical Review* 78, no. 4 (1969): 468-482.

Hancock, Rocer. "Ethics and History in Kant and Mill." *Ethics* 68 (1957): 56-60.

Hare, Richard Mervyn. *Freedom and Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Hasker, William. "The Transcendental Refutation of Determinism." *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 11, no. 3 (1973): 175-183.

Herbst, Peter. "Freedom and Prediction." *Mind* 66, no. 261 (1957): 1-27.

Hood, Bruce. *The Self Illusion: Why There Is no 'You' Inside Your Head*. London: Constable, 2012.

Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Edited and translated by Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Kramnick, Isaac. "Eighteenth-Century Science and Radical Social Theory: The Case of Joseph Priestley's Scientific Liberalism." *Journal of British Studies* 25, no. 1 (1986): 1-30.

Meyers, Diana T., ed. *Feminists Rethink the Self*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1997.

Mieth, Corinna, and Jacob Rosenthal. "'Freedom must be Presupposed as a Property of the Will of All Rational Beings' (GMS III, 2)." In Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, edited by Cristoph Horn, and Deiter Schoenecker, 247-284. Berlin & New York: de Gruyter, 2006.

Mill, John Stuart. *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*. Edited by John M. Robson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963-1991.

Mill, John Stuart. *A System of Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive*. In *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, edited by J. M. Robson. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1974.

Millgram, Elijah. "John Stuart Mill, Determinism, and the Problem of Induction." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 87, no. 2 (2009): 183-199.

Nagel, Thomas. *Mortal Questions*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Nagel, Thomas. *The View from Nowhere*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Narveson, Jan. *Morality and Utility*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967.

Nussbaum, Martha C. "Mill between Aristotle & Bentham." *Daedalus* 133, no. 2 (2004): 60-68.

O'Connor, Daniel J. "Determinism and Predictability." *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 7, no. 28 (1957): 310-315.

O'Connor, Timothy. *Persons and Causes: The Metaphysics of Free Will*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Ofstad, Harald. *An Inquiry into the Freedom of Decision*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961.

Priestley, Joseph. *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated; Being an Appendix to the Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit. To Which is Added an Answer to the Letters on Materialism, and on Hartley's Theory of the Mind*. London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1777.

Rohatyn, Dennis A. "Mill, Kant, and Negative Utility." *Philosophia* 5 (1975): 515-521.

Schofield, Robert E. *The Enlightened Joseph Priestley: A Study of His Life and Work from 1773 to 1804*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004.

Schopenhauer, Arthur. *On the Freedom of the Will*. Trondheim: Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences, 1839.

Skorupski, John. *Why Read Mill Today?* London & New York: Routledge, 2006.

Smart, John Jamieson Carswell, and Bernard Williams. *An Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.

Smart, Roderich Ninian. "Negative Utilitarianism." *Mind* 67, no. 268 (1958): 542-543.

Spir, African. *Denken und Wirklichkeit. Versuch einer Erneuerung der kritischen Philosophie*. Leipzig: J. G. Findel, 1873.

Taylor, Richard. "Fatalism." *The Philosophical Review* 71, no. 1 (1962): 56-66.

Taylor, Richard. *Action and Purpose*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1966.

Urmson, James O. "The Interpretation of the Moral Philosophy of J. S. Mill." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 3, no. 10 (1953): 33-39.

Wilde, Norman. "Kant's Relation to Utilitarianism." *The Philosophical Review* 3, no. 3 (1894): 289-304.

Williams, Bernard. *Moral Luck*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Williams, Bernard. "Postscript." In *Moral Luck*, edited by D. Statman, 251-258. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Wood, Allen. *Kantian Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.