SCHURGER'S EMAIL (in italics) - MY REPLIES (normal)

*Hi, Just to set the record straight: As much as I would like to carry the title of "savior of free will", our 2012 paper does not provide "neurophysiological evidence for free will".*

Yes, I understand that. My reference to your paper was only for the purpose of proving to Coyne that his position (Determinism) is challenged by many scientists, and is not the consensus position that he seems to be trying to make it out to be:

Coyne wrote:

"*... the determinism that most scientifically-minded people agree on*."

I wrote:

"*but it is far from settled in the field of neuroscience;*

*with Schurger's paper being just one example of many*."

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*We certainly never made that claim, and I'm not even sure that the media did either.*

Nor did I; nor did I claim that you did; nor did I claim that the media did.

Half of my reply to Coyne consisted of questions; the other half consisted of pointing out inconsistencies, assertions, and contradictions. Based on my past experience with other Determinists, I don't expect to get any answers to my questions.

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*What we did do was provide evidence against (what was claimed to be) the*

*evidence against free will. That is a very different thing from providing evidence for the existence of free will (I doubt that is even possible).*

When you provided evidence against the claimed evidence against free will, you were acting as a responsible scientist should.

However, Coyne went beyond that. Rather than following your example and providing evidence, Coyne made assertions. He made claims like "*We can't do that* " or "*We are constrained* " but provided no evidence in his article to support those assertions.

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*The existence or non-existence of free will remains a matter of belief.*

Not for Determinists like Coyne and Sam Harris. They do not accept that they, nor we, have the option to choose whether or not to believe. So for them it is not a matter of belief.

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*Science could potentially show that conscious states have causal efficacy, which, if borne out, would count as evidence for "conscious will". But that is still not the same thing as "free will". Science could also potentially provide evidence that conscious free will cannot possibly exist, but that evidence would have to meet some very strict criteria. To date, no such evidence exists. So, to reiterate, it remains a matter of belief.*

I underlined the only part that really matters.

If, and when, Determinists ever get their evidence, *then* they can prance around and claim victory (as they are doing now). But as you just admitted, they aren't there yet.

As I stated in my reply to Coyne - they are celebrating their touchdown at the 5-yard line ... not a very smart thing to do.

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*Yours,*

*Aaron Schurger*

Thanks for taking the time to reply,

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P.S.

Determinists proclaim victory with certainty ... much like our religious friends. And just like the religious, in lieu of the evidence they do not have, Determinists resort to the tactic of attempting to switch the burden of proof, which explains why you had to write a paper, defending against their attacks.

As you just stated

"*evidence for the existence of free will (I doubt that is even possible)* "

So you are not making a claim. However, Determinists are: "*Free will is an illusion*." Therefore, they have the burden of proof ...

a burden they cannot meet.

Benjamin Libet did not interpret the results of his famous experiment as evidence against free will. Determinists (just like Creationists) saw an opportunity to hijack the results and try to use them to support their position. Determinists tore that page right out of the Creationist playbook.

For a professor like Coyne, who battles Creationists, to turn around and use those same tactics against legitimate scientists, is an ugly turn of events which he needs to reconsider seriously.

Coyne, et al., would do well to heed the words of Jesus:

"*You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye*."

Matthew 7:5

(How bad are things getting when an Atheist has to resort to quoting scripture?)

It is to be expected that you will be attacked by the various religions, as nearly all fields of science contradict the lies they have been using to control the masses; and they must fight back if they are to survive. But it is very disappointing when you also have to defend yourself from your fellow scientists; scientists who selectively ignore basic principles of scientific investigation.

Your approach was the scientifically correct one: present the evidence and avoid assertions and victory celebrations ...

until the day comes, if ever, that a scientific consensus is reached.

They (Determinists) should have followed your example.