

Free Will, Neuroethics, Psychology and Theology

Geran F. Dodson

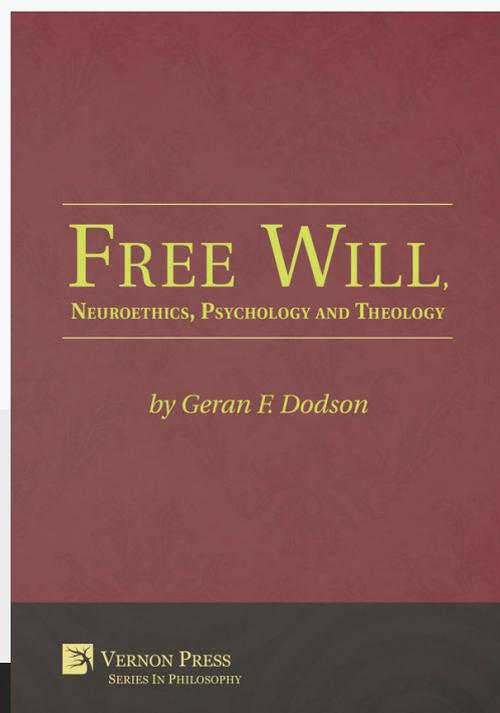
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Summary

The topic of human free will has received more attention in the past several years due to the important discoveries of neuroscience but no consensus of opinion is evident in related disciplines. The traditional approach to understanding free will in philosophy employs conceptual analysis to determine whether humans have freedom of choice. Theology affirms that every person has free choice although God is somehow behind all human decisions. Evolutionary psychology points to human behavior as the product of biological processes and antecedent events. And neuroethics attempts to define what it means to be a thinking moral agent by investigating how neurons in the brain and chemical interactions combine to produce conscious actions. An assessment and evaluation of these various positions is given in light of the evidence. The issue of whether a person can be held morally responsible for their actions hinges on whether those actions originate from free will or are the result of determinism. Theology makes assumptions of the existence of an absolute deity that has a hand in human decision making, but there is no agreement regarding the nature of that intervention. Recent scientific discoveries confront traditionally held religious beliefs and necessitate the creation of a new theology and articles of faith.

About the author

Geran F. Dodson is an adjunct professor at the University of North Georgia, Gainesville, GA, and Strayer University, Atlanta, GA. An instructor in the College of Arts and Letters and the College of Business at both universities, he teaches Philosophy, Religion, Humanities, Economics, and Business. His degrees include the Bachelor of Arts from Millsaps College, Jackson, MS; Master of Divinity, Lexington Theological Seminary, Lexington, KY; Master of Business Administration, Emory University, Atlanta, GA; and Post-graduate studies in New Testament, Emory University, Atlanta, GA.



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