



Exploring the Illusion of Free Will, Second Edition

George Ortega

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Note: For the paperback edition the author has omitted chapter 2. While free will is the most discussed topic in philosophy, few books unequivocally refuting the notion have been published. Dan Wegner's 2002 *The Illusion of Conscious Will* a pioneering, powerfully documented exception, psychology has essentially ignored the matter. That refuting the notion is profoundly important is not asserted solely by author George Ortega. American philosopher John Searle, (who in 2010 was listed the 13th most cited post-1900 philosopher in the world) strongly concurs. According to Searle, for free will to be acknowledged an illusion would be "a bigger revolution in our thinking than Einstein, or Copernicus, or Newton, or Galileo, or Darwin – it would alter our whole conception of our relation with the universe." Since 1997 when Ortega authored a physics paper on why the causality that refutes free will is a fundamental law of nature, he has worked to move the revelation that free will is illusory from academia to the public arena. His first success came in 2007 when he discovered an interested audience among the Internet's leading voice-chat website, Paltalk. Under the username Blisser, Ortega repeatedly brought up and refuted free will in atheist rooms and in his own room completely dedicated to the topic. It was not, however, until early 2010 that Ortega succeeded in creating a major public buzz about free will being an illusion. On April 7th, he founded the Manhattan, NYC Meetup group "The Predetermined Will Society – Busting the Free Will Myth." The visionary message of this world's first discussion group devoted to publicizing the refutation of free will reached innumerable Meetup members, (from among the 22 million New York Metropolitan Area population) who encountered the group's listing millions of times at the Meetup site. On January 6, 2011, Ortega premiered the first-ever cable TV series devoted to the topic, a weekly show called *Exploring the Illusion of Free Will* that continues to cablecast new material to Westchester County, New York, and to Manhattan, NYC. The promotions worked. With its April 16-22, 2011 article, "Free will; The illusion we can't live without," *New Scientist* became the first magazine in history to refute free will in a cover story. On March 6, 2012, best-selling New York Times author Sam Harris published his refutation book *Free Will*, and as its May/June, 2012 cover story, *Scientific American Mind* ran the piece "Who's in Control - How Physics and Neuroscience Dictate Your 'Free' Will." Ortega's unique passion for, and leadership in publicizing, the truth about human will comes across throughout the book's devastating, yet accessible, explanations of why free will is impossible, and in its descriptions of the harm free will-belief causes us personally and societally. What also sets Ortega's work apart from refutations by others is his strong recognition that humanity's overcoming the belief in free will is an historic evolutionary leap in human consciousness. Comprising edited transcripts of the first episodes of his revolutionary TV series, another of his book's defining characteristics is the reiteration of free will refutations and of other salient material. Readers who lean toward free will belief are advised to not discount the utility, in fact the necessity, of such review. The emotional barriers to accepting that free will is impossible are powerful, and will not readily yield to an unrecapitulated presentation of the evidence. Ortega recognizes that unparalleled history has already been made as the age-old belief in free will has fallen to science, logic, and experience. In the epilogue, he includes a virtually complete list of free will-refuting articles in major publications over the last decade, and a list of 24 books devoted to refuting free will. Ortega, who is second cousin to composer Burt Bacharach, continues to reside in his Westchester County, NY hometown of White Plains.

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