



**Universität Innsbruck - Institut für Christliche Philosophie**

## **Gastvortrag**

Organization and Contact: Anne Sophie Spann

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**John Dupré (Exeter)**

# **Indeterminist Compatibilism**

**Wednesday, March 12, 2014, 18:00 s.t.**

**Seminarraum VI (Karl-Rahner-Platz 3, 1. Stock)**

Can there be free agency in nature? Classically, the argument that there cannot has been based on the belief in determinism, the view that everything that happens reflects the expression of universal and exceptionless laws of nature. The dominant response to this accepts the deterministic premise, but rejects the conclusion. I am free if my actions follow my own choices. Who acts freely, and when, on this view, is indeed determined by the inexorable laws of nature. This account is deeply unsatisfactory to many. They feel that their decision-making should make a difference; and though the compatibilist assures them that it does, she has to admit that this difference was settled long before she had the impression of having made the decision.

I approach this issue by rejecting the first move. I don't believe that the world is de-terministic, or that there is a network of universal laws of nature at all. Rather I think that causal order is a local, and often hard won condition. What is special about humans is not their ability to evade this universal network of causal necessity, but their uniquely developed ability to create order and regularity. Organisms generally are, I claim, self-organising processes that have evolved capacities to impose a degree of order on the generally chaotic surroundings in which they find themselves. As living systems become more complex, especially through cooperation, the ability to impose order on the world increases. Human societies represent the ultimate development of this trend. In this lecture, as well as explaining this general view of the living world, I shall argue that human autonomy is as much a social as an individual product.

**JOHN DUPRÉ**, currently Professor of Philosophy of Science at the University of Exeter, since 2002 Director of the *ESRC* (Economic and Social Research Council, UK) *Centre for Genomics in Society* (Egenis), now renamed the *Centre for the Study of Life Sciences*. He recently started working on a five-year project funded by the European Research Council, entitled *A Process Ontology for Contemporary Biology*. Dupré has formerly held posts at Oxford, Stanford, and Birkbeck College, London. In 2006 he held the Spinoza Visiting Professorship at the University of Amsterdam, and in 2013 he was the Diane Middlebrook and Carl Djerassi Visiting Professor of Gender Studies at the University of Cambridge. He is the immediate Past President of the British Society for the Philosophy of Science and a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

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