

ABSTRACT

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Dissertation Title: QUANTUM CONSCIOUSNESS AND FREE WILL: AGAINST UNGROUNDED MENTAL CAUSATION

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Quantum theories of mind claim that mentalistic phenomena can be explained in terms of the entities and facts posited by quantum physics. Such theories have profound philosophical implications, according to some of their defenders, for our understanding of the mind and for the topic of free will. It has been familiar since the work of Benjamin Libet that conscious intent seems to come too late to be relevant for explaining our behavior since it appears to occur after the brain has already performed the necessary actions that bring about the outcome in question before we consciously decide that outcome. Stuart Hameroff – appealing to his quantum theory of mind – claims that quantum processes in the brain involve backward-time referral account for real-time conscious causal agency, which he refers to as ‘conscious free will’. By appealing to backward-time referral, Hameroff seeks to restore consciousness's role intuitively in explaining our behavior and decisions. The researcher will argue that Hameroff's theory is committed to fundamental mental causation and that this commitment is not compatible with a general physicalist program. The argument relies on a thesis that has been proposed by Kroedel and Schulz (2016), which implies that instances of physical causation always ground instances of mental causation and thus that mental causation is never a fundamental phenomenon. The researcher will

argue that physicalists should accept this thesis on general methodological grounds as the default view.

