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## Professor Wins Prestigious Templeton Grant For New Approach on Scientific 'ReductionEmergence' Debates

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## Professor Wins Prestigious Templeton Grant For New Approach on Scientific 'Reduction-Emergence' Debates

May 23, 2007

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Illinois Wesleyan University Associate Professor of Philosophy Carl Gillett has been awarded a John Templeton Foundation Grant to write about his new approach to debates over 'reduction' and 'emergence' within the sciences and philosophy.

The mission of the John Templeton Foundation is to serve as a philanthropic catalyst for discovery in areas engaging life's biggest questions. These questions range from explorations into the laws of nature and the structure of the universe, to questions on the nature of love, gratitude, forgiveness and creativity.

"My work seeks to widen our understanding of these views and their implications about the world we live in and our own natures," said Gillett.

Over the last 80 years, science has developed what Gillett calls a "reductionist" point of view, contending that all objects composed can be *reduced* down to their components, such as atoms. However, at the turn of the 21st century, scientists in a range of disciplines are once again embracing an "emergentist" view that opposes scientific reductionism, accepting that all things, including humans, are thoroughly composed.

"Professor Gillett's work is unusual in the debate over reduction and emergence in that he begins by taking both "sides" seriously," said the John Templeton Foundation Director of Life Science Programs Paul Wason. "It is also unusual in its ambition and promise—to produce a serious philosophical work that will also be valued by scientists for their own work."

With the \$29,000 Templeton Foundation grant, Gillett will continue his research by illuminating the deeper arguments underlying reductionism, and showing that emergentism is a coherent and viable position. His work surrounds a new approach known as the "metaphysics of science," which Gillett uses to show that philosophers have failed to properly understand the strongest versions of either reductionism or emergentism.

"This philosophy of science could have significant implications for central debates in both science and religion and the sciences themselves," said Gillett.

A pioneer in the metaphysics of science, Gillett has been presenting his work across the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe. He continues work on his book, *The Roots of Reduction and Fruits of Emergence*. A member of the Illinois Wesleyan faculty since 1997, Gillett is a founder of the Society for the Metaphysics of Science.



Carl Gillett

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