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Two Causal Mistakes in Wegner's Illusion of Conscious Will

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Abstract

Daniel Wegner argues that our feelings of conscious will are illusory: these feelings are not causally involved in the production of action, which is rather governed by unconscious neural processes. I argue that Wegner's interpretation of neuroscientific results rests on two fallacious causal assumptions, neither of which are supported by the evidence. Each assumption involves a Cartesian disembodiment of conscious will, and it is this disembodiment that results in the appearance of causal inefficacy, rather than any interesting features of conscious will. Wegner's fallacies illustrate two take-away points to heed if making claims about the causal structure of agency.

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