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# The Illusion Of Conscious Will

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Being No One

Consciousness Explained

The Illusion of Inclusion

Mind, Brain, and Free Will

Soul Dust

I Am a Strange Loop

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*The Illusion Of Conscious Will*

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## MATHEWS REINA

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**Being No One** Oxford University Press

Exploring the Illusion of Free Will and Moral Responsibility investigates the philosophical and scientific arguments for free will skepticism and their implications. Skepticism about free will and moral responsibility has been on the rise in recent years. In fact, a significant number of philosophers, psychologists, and neuroscientists now either doubt or outright deny the existence of free will and/or moral responsibility—and the list of prominent skeptics appears to grow by the day. Given the profound importance that the concepts of free will and moral responsibility hold in our lives—in understanding ourselves, society, and the

law—it is important that we explore what is behind this new wave of skepticism. It is also important that we explore the potential consequences of skepticism for ourselves and society. Edited by Gregg D. Caruso, this collection of new essays brings together an internationally recognized line-up of contributors, most of whom hold skeptical positions of some sort, to display and explore the leading arguments for free will skepticism and to debate their implications.

*Consciousness Explained* MIT Press

Richard Swinburne presents a powerful case for substance dualism and libertarian free will. He argues that pure mental and physical events are distinct, and defends an account of agent causation in which the soul can act independently of bodily causes. We are responsible for our actions, and the findings of

neuroscience cannot prove otherwise.

*The Illusion of Inclusion* Penguin

Introduction -- Conscious intentions and decisions -- Neuroscience and causes of action -- Neuroscience and free will -- Intentional actions and the alleged illusion of conscious will -- Proximal intentions and awareness reports -- The power of conscious will -- Conclusion.

**Mind, Brain, and Free Will** Simon and Schuster

New York Times best-selling author and comedian-turned-motivational speaker, Kyle Cease, shows how your obsession with money is actually preventing you from living the life of your dreams. "I can't afford that." "Now's not the right time . . . I need to save up." "Quit my job? Are you nuts?!" Sound familiar? Money is one of the biggest excuses we make to not go after what we really want. Our fixation with money--the desire for more of it, and the fear of not having enough of it--is often really just a longing to feel safe. But this obsession with money is coming at a much bigger cost: our sanity, our creativity, our freedom, and our ability to step into our true power. This book is about eliminating the need to seek safety through the illusion of money, and learning to see ourselves for the perfection that we are--so that we can bring our gifts to the world in an authentic way, and allow ourselves to receive massive, true abundance as a result. Kyle Cease has heard excuses like the ones above countless times at his live events, and he has shown people how to completely break through them. In *The Illusion of Money*, he shares his own experiences as well as practical tools to help readers understand their ingrained beliefs and attachments to money, and how they can tap into our infinite assets and talents. "After 25 years as a

successful comedian, actor, transformational speaker, author and junior-league amateur bowler, I've experienced many times how chasing money is not an effective way to create an abundant and fulfilling life. The most alive I've ever felt was after I left my comedy career at its peak to become a transformational speaker. I left tons of guaranteed money and so-called security for a complete unknown. It was terrifying--but what was on the other side of that terror was a completely different life that is not only more abundant financially, but has more freedom, more ease, more passion, more impact and more joy." -- Kyle Cease

*Soul Dust* Endless Satsang Foundation

Pulitzer prize-winner Chris Hedges charts the dramatic and disturbing rise of a post-literate society that craves fantasy, ecstasy and illusion. Chris Hedges argues that we now live in two societies: One, the minority, functions in a print-based, literate world, that can cope with complexity and can separate illusion from truth. The other, a growing majority, is retreating from a reality-based world into one of false certainty and magic. In this "other society," serious film and theatre, as well as newspapers and books, are being pushed to the margins. In the tradition of Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism* and Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Hedges navigates this culture — attending WWF contests as well as Ivy League graduation ceremonies — exposing an age of terrifying decline and heightened self-delusion.

*I Am a Strange Loop* Princeton University Press

Advaita and nondual teachings are about finding the Truth. This Truth is not a dogma that you study; it is the Truth about life — the Truth about who you really are. This Truth is discovered, not

learned. It is discovered through sincerely inquiring, Who am I? What you discover is that who you are has nothing to do with self-images or roles and everything to do with what you experience when you ask this question. What you discover is that who you think of yourself as is just that – a thought! And beyond that thought is a great Mystery – an experience of nothingness, which is your true nature. Nothing Personal leads you to the experience of your true nature and helps you explore its depth. Through exposition, questions and dialogues, it brings you to a place of realization of the Truth: you are that spacious Awareness in which everything appears, including your thoughts and feelings. Your thoughts and feelings do not define you but merely appear within Consciousness along with everything else. This Consciousness is who you are. Nothing Personal offers a gentle and persistent guide to seeing the underlying truth of your ultimate nature. In this concisely edited collection of satsang talks and dialogues, you are invited to honor the limitless love that is your true nature and to enjoy the sweet richness that is revealed when you give this Truth your undivided attention. From the introduction: Unlike most books, this one is not meant to add to your knowledge or understanding. It is about the Truth that cannot be spoken or written. Although the Truth cannot be contained in this or any other book, each word written here is intended to point you toward that Truth. Many of the words and ideas may seem paradoxical or contradictory because what they point to is larger than our conceptual frameworks. Many questions are asked, which are not answered anywhere in the book. Find out what the experience is like to ask yourself these questions, even if they leave you emptier of knowledge and

understanding. In this emptying, you just may discover what you are looking for. The Truth is revealed when we allow ourselves to not know, so I invite you to set aside all that you know for the time being and allow yourself to look with innocent eyes at what the words are attempting to unveil. Take the time to experience the unspoken truth in each section before moving on to the next. Resist the temptation to read these words with your mind, which is likely to rush right past the Truth. Allow the words to sink into your heart and reveal the truth of who you are.

#### *Consciousness and the Brain* Lexington Books

Did you know that you are not your personality? Beneath your outer layers of self is an authentic, beautiful being exactly as it came from heaven. Discover this wonderful, real you and draw from its miraculous power in *Becoming Conscious*. Learn from clinical psychologist and spiritual teacher Dr. Joseph Howell how to: - Find the root causes of your suffering and unhappiness. - Free yourself of the traps that seduce your ego. - Be renewed with a sense of inner knowing, childlike joy, and wonder. - Stop being driven by what others expect of you. - Increase your tolerance and understanding of friends, spouse, children, and co-workers. - Relate to others on deep, meaningful levels. - Grow in consciousness of your specific divine purpose and your connection to the planet. - Understand your repeated, self-defeating patterns and learn clear ways to stop them. - Become consciously present. Reach your full potential as Dr. Howell explains the powerful and deeply spiritual Enneagram and relates it to your life. Whatever your beliefs may be, *Becoming Conscious* is a life-changing journey.

#### **Intrusive Thinking** Lexington Books

Argues that the key to understanding ourselves and consciousness is the "strange loop," a special kind of abstract feedback loop that inhabits the brain.

**Freedom Evolves** MIT Press

For several years, social psychologist Daniel M. Wegner has been investigating the inability to control thoughts. Drawing on the most recent breakthroughs in this area of research, this is an illuminating explanation of just how human minds work and of the glimmerings of madness in all people.

Illusionism Springer Science & Business Media

Changing preferences is a phenomenon often invoked but rarely properly accounted for. Throughout the history of the social sciences, researchers have come against the possibility that their subjects' preferences were affected by the phenomenon to be explained or by other factors not taken into account in the explanation. Sporadically, attempts have been made to systematically investigate these influences, but none of these seems to have had a lasting impact. Today we are still not much further with respect to preference change than we were at the middle of the last century. This anthology hopes to provide a new impulse for research into this important subject. In particular, we have chosen two routes to amplify this impulse. First, we stress the use of modelling techniques familiar from economics and decision theory. Instead of constructing complex, all-encompassing theories of preference change, the authors of this volume start with very simple, formal accounts of some possible and hopefully plausible mechanism of preference change. Eventually, these models may find their way into larger, empirically adequate theories, but at this stage, we think that the

most important work lies in building structure. Secondly, we stress the importance of interdisciplinary exchange. Only by drawing together experts from different fields can the complex empirical and theoretical issues in the modelling of preference change be adequately investigated.

**The Illusion of Determinism** Academic Press

Can there be freedom and free will in a deterministic world? Renowned philosopher Daniel Dennett emphatically answers "yes!" Using an array of provocative formulations, Dennett sets out to show how we alone among the animals have evolved minds that give us free will and morality. Weaving a richly detailed narrative, Dennett explains in a series of strikingly original arguments—drawing upon evolutionary biology, cognitive neuroscience, economics, and philosophy—that far from being an enemy of traditional explorations of freedom, morality, and meaning, the evolutionary perspective can be an indispensable ally. In *Freedom Evolves*, Dennett seeks to place ethics on the foundation it deserves: a realistic, naturalistic, potentially unified vision of our place in nature.

Elbow Room, new edition Createspace Independent Publishing Platform

Some of our most burning questions surround consciousness: What creates our identity? Do we really have free will? Is consciousness itself an illusion? The rapid rate of developments in brain science continues to open up debate on these issues. This book clarifies the complex arguments and illuminates the major theories on consciousness.

*Consciousness* ReadHowYouWant.com

A new edition of Wegner's classic and controversial work, arguing

that conscious will simply reminds of us the authorship of our actions. Do we consciously cause our actions, or do they happen to us? Philosophers, psychologists, neuroscientists, theologians, and lawyers have long debated the existence of free will versus determinism. With the publication of *The Illusion of Conscious Will* in 2002, Daniel Wegner proposed an innovative and provocative answer: the feeling of conscious will is created by the mind and brain; it helps us to appreciate and remember our authorship of the things our minds and bodies do. Yes, we feel that we consciously will our actions, Wegner says, but at the same time, our actions happen to us. Although conscious will is an illusion (“the most compelling illusion”), it serves as a guide to understanding ourselves and to developing a sense of responsibility and morality. Wegner was unable to undertake a second edition of the book before his death in 2013; this new edition adds a foreword by Wegner's friend, the prominent psychologist Daniel Gilbert, and an introduction by Wegner's colleague Thalia Wheatley. Approaching conscious will as a topic of psychological study, Wegner examines cases both when people feel that they are willing an act that they are not doing and when they are not willing an act that they in fact are doing in such phenomena as hypnosis, Ouija board spelling, and dissociative identity disorder. Wegner's argument was immediately controversial (called “unwarranted impertinence” by one scholar) but also compelling. Engagingly written, with wit and clarity, *The Illusion of Conscious Will* was, as Daniel Gilbert writes in the foreword to this edition, Wegner's “magnum opus.”

**The Neural Basis of Free Will** Andrews UK Limited

A radically new view of the nature and purpose of consciousness

How is consciousness possible? What biological purpose does it serve? And why do we value it so highly? In *Soul Dust*, the psychologist Nicholas Humphrey, a leading figure in consciousness research, proposes a startling new theory. Consciousness, he argues, is nothing less than a magical-mystery show that we stage for ourselves inside our own heads. This self-made show lights up the world for us and makes us feel special and transcendent. Thus consciousness paves the way for spirituality, and allows us, as human beings, to reap the rewards, and anxieties, of living in what Humphrey calls the “soul niche.” Tightly argued, intellectually gripping, and a joy to read, *Soul Dust* provides answers to the deepest questions. It shows how the problem of consciousness merges with questions that obsess us all—how life should be lived and the fear of death. Resting firmly on neuroscience and evolutionary theory, and drawing a wealth of insights from philosophy and literature, *Soul Dust* is an uncompromising yet life-affirming work—one that never loses sight of the majesty and wonder of consciousness.

**Effective Intentions** MIT Press

This book shows that the theory of determinism, the doctrine that everything we believe, feel or do is determined by forces outside our control, is false (and actually self contradictory). The book shows that free will is self caused and involves the choice to use our rational faculty or not. Experiments that claim to prove determinism are refuted. The libertarian view that free will is based on randomness is also shown to be fallacious. A distinction is made between what free will entails and what its limits are. The book shows that determinists' scorn for people who believe in free will (calling this view folk psychology based on ignorance)

is misguided. It is determinists who are victims of a false view of human nature.

Empire of Illusion Business Expert Press

An exploration of the neurological and behavioral mechanisms and processes involved in intrusive thinking. On any given day, unintended, recurrent thoughts intrude on our thinking and affect our behavior in ways that can be adaptive. Such thoughts, however, become intrusive and problematic when they are unwanted, become compulsive, or lead to socially or medically unacceptable behavior. This volume explores what goes on in our brains to create thought intrusions, and how these intrusions lead to maladaptive behavior.

*Exploring the Illusion of Free Will and Moral Responsibility*  
Springer

The modern materialist approach to life has conspicuously failed to explain such central mind-related features of our world as consciousness, intentionality, meaning, and value. This failure to account for something so integral to nature as mind, argues philosopher Thomas Nagel, is a major problem, threatening to unravel the entire naturalistic world picture, extending to biology, evolutionary theory, and cosmology. Since minds are features of biological systems that have developed through evolution, the standard materialist version of evolutionary biology is fundamentally incomplete. And the cosmological history that led to the origin of life and the coming into existence of the conditions for evolution cannot be a merely materialist history, either. An adequate conception of nature would have to explain the appearance in the universe of materially irreducible conscious minds, as such. Nagel's skepticism is not based on

religious belief or on a belief in any definite alternative. In *Mind and Cosmos*, he does suggest that if the materialist account is wrong, then principles of a different kind may also be at work in the history of nature, principles of the growth of order that are in their logical form teleological rather than mechanistic. In spite of the great achievements of the physical sciences, reductive materialism is a world view ripe for displacement. Nagel shows that to recognize its limits is the first step in looking for alternatives, or at least in being open to their possibility.

*The Self Illusion* MIT Press

Making a Scientific Case for Conscious Agency and Free Will makes a series of arguments that certain human behaviors are impossible to explain in the absence of free will, and that free will emerges from materialistic processes of brain function. It outlines future directions for neuroscience studies that can harness emerging technologies and tools for systems-level analysis. All humans have the sensation that they consciously will certain things to happen and that, in the absence of external constraints, they are free to choose from among alternatives. This notion of free will is deemed obvious by the average person based on common experience. Free will is frequently defended with arguments stemming from social, legal, philosophical, and religious perspectives. But these arguments appeal to consequences—not causes—of choices and decisions. In the past 3 decades, debate has raged within the scientific community over whether free will is in fact an illusion. Because free will would require conscious agency, the supporting corollary is that consciousness itself cannot do anything and is merely an observer rather than an actor. - Considers arguments for and

against free will from religious, social, legal, and neuroscience perspectives - Provides thorough coverage of the manifold human behaviors that can be explained only by free will, from consciousness to creativity - Outlines future directions for further neuroscience research into the topic

**From Bacteria to Bach and Back: The Evolution of Minds**

W. W. Norton & Company

This volume is aimed at readers who wish to move beyond debates about the existence of free will and the efficacy of consciousness and closer to appreciating how free will and consciousness might operate. It draws from philosophy and psychology, the two fields that have grappled most fundamentally with these issues. In this wide-ranging volume, the contributors explore such issues as how free will is connected to rational choice, planning, and self-control; roles for consciousness in decision making; the nature and power of conscious deciding; connections among free will, consciousness, and quantum mechanics; why free will and consciousness might have evolved; how consciousness develops in individuals; the experience of free will; effects on behavior of the belief that free will is an illusion; and connections between free will and moral responsibility in lay thinking. Collectively, these state-of-the-art chapters by accomplished psychologists and philosophers provide a glimpse into the future of research on free will and consciousness.

**Biocentrism** Bookbaby

A landmark book in the debate over free will that makes the case

for compatibilism. In this landmark 1984 work on free will, Daniel Dennett makes a case for compatibilism. His aim, as he writes in the preface to this new edition, was a cleanup job, “saving everything that mattered about the everyday concept of free will, while jettisoning the impediments.” In *Elbow Room*, Dennett argues that the varieties of free will worth wanting—those that underwrite moral and artistic responsibility—are not threatened by advances in science but distinguished, explained, and justified in detail. Dennett tackles the question of free will in a highly original and witty manner, drawing on the theories and concepts of fields that range from physics and evolutionary biology to engineering, automata theory, and artificial intelligence. He shows how the classical formulations of the problem in philosophy depend on misuses of imagination, and he disentangles the philosophical problems of real interest from the “family of anxieties” in which they are often enmeshed—imaginary agents and bogeymen, including the Peremptory Puppeteer, the Nefarious Neurosurgeon, and the Cosmic Child Whose Dolls We Are. Putting sociobiology in its rightful place, he concludes that we can have free will and science too. He explores reason, control and self-control, the meaning of “can” and “could have done otherwise,” responsibility and punishment, and why we would want free will in the first place. A fresh reading of Dennett's book shows how much it can still contribute to current discussions of free will. This edition includes as its afterword Dennett's 2012 Erasmus Prize essay.

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