

“The unique human convenience of conscious thought that preview our actions gives us the privilege of feeling we willfully cause what we do. In fact, unconscious and inscrutable mechanisms create both conscious thought about action and create the action as well, and also produce the sense of will we experience by perceiving the thought as the cause of action. So, although our thoughts may have deep, important, and unconscious causal connections to our actions, the experience of conscious will arises from a process that interprets these connections, not from the connections themselves. Believing that our conscious thoughts cause our actions is an error based on the illusory experience of will—much like believing that a rabbit has . . . popped out of [a magician’s] empty hat.”

Wegner and Wheatley (1999)