

Is Neuroscience the Death of Free Will?

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The New York Times:

Is free will an illusion? Some leading scientists think so. For instance, in 2002 the psychologist Daniel Wegner wrote “It seems we are agents. It seems we cause what we do... It is sobering and ultimately accurate to call all this an illusion.” More recently, the neuroscientist Patrick Haggard declared , “We certainly don’t have free will. Not in the sense we think.” And in June, the neuroscientist Sam Harris claimed , “You seem to be an agent acting of your own free will. The problem, however, is that this point of view cannot be reconciled with what we know about the human brain.”

Such proclamations make the news; after all, if free will is dead, then moral and legal responsibility may be close behind. As the legal analyst Jeffrey Rosen wrote in The New York Times Magazine, “Since all behavior is caused by our brains, wouldn’t this mean all behavior could potentially be excused? ... The death of free will, or its exposure as a convenient illusion, some worry, could wreak havoc on our sense of moral and legal responsibility.”

Read the whole story: [The New York Times](#)