

“The Great ‘Upshot’ Argument against Free Action”:

“It really just is that all our decisions to act, and then our actions, including my raising of my hand (our example of a purportedly free action), are all just the upshot of mindless, tiny physical events, mostly occurring in our brains, over which we have no control, in some way (in some good sense of “just the upshot of...”) that renders us really no more responsible for any of them than for any others, nor more responsible than is the victim of our mad scientists (our example of a subject who is not acting freely). Here, we will look at the intuitive view of human decision-making that lies behind that premise and will begin a look at the meaning of the key terms of the argument which makes it intuitively powerful both that the argument’s premise is true and that it implies the argument’s ruinous conclusion. . .”

Timothy O’Connor, “Agent Causation” (in O’Connor, ed., *Agents, Causes, and Events: Essays on Indeterminism and Free Will*, Oxford UP, 1995, pp. 173–200), p. 173, writing against what has been called “Scientiphicalism” [Peter Unger, “Free Will and Scientiphicalism,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 65 (2002): 1-25]:

[I]t seems for all the world to be *up to me* to decide which particular action I will undertake. The decision I make is no mere vector sum of internal and external forces acting upon me during the process of deliberation (if, indeed, I deliberate at all). Rather, I bring it about—directly, you might say—in response to the various considerations: I am the source of my own activity, not merely in a relative sense as the most proximate and salient locus of an unbroken chain of causal transactions leading up to this event, but fundamentally, in a way not prefigured by what has gone before. Or, again, so it seems.