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Introducing Consciousness



Synopsis

Introducing Consciousness starts with the problem of the philosophical relation between mind and matter, explains the historical origins of this problem, and traces different scientific attempts to explain consciousness. Along the way, readers will be introduced to zombies and Chinese Rooms, ghosts in machines and Schrodinger's cat.

Book Information

Series: Introducing

Paperback: 176 pages

Publisher: Totem Books; Second Edition edition (November 13, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1840466650

ISBN-13: 978-1840466652

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 0.5 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.1 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

Papineau accomplishes his goal with this book, about as well as could be expected, thus the 5 stars. I was very pleased with this introduction to consciousness. It was a nice refresher/primer for someone with familiarity in the field. The cartoon-style presentation enhances learning about a fascinating subject, in a balanced manner, at an appropriate level for an introduction. Papineau artfully leads you through the history of development of philosophical, theological and scientific thought regarding consciousness, at the same time guiding the reader through the reasoning behind each belief system, while introducing major questions and important scientific discoveries at relevant times. Any book this length will have shortcomings, but overall I preferred it to Susan Blackmore's "Consciousness: a very short introduction," which was also an excellent book -- different approach, less balanced (would give that one 4 stars) -- though they make nice complements to each other (read both if you can).

Yes, this book explains a lot about consciousness. I own a lot of books from the Introducing-series, and most of them are truly excellent. This book gives a philosophical overview of consciousness. Not a biological or psychological overview. It is a pity that it devotes very little space to SELF-consciousness though. But still: buy it, read it, and read it every year once more.

I have just finished reading "Introducing Artificial Intelligence", "Introducing Mind & Brain", and "Introducing Consciousness" from Icon books. In reading these back to back, it reminded me that they are all different views on the same subject. This was a rewarding experience for me. I recommend that you read these books together if you can.

Needed this for philosophy 101. Came on time and in good condition. Lots of pictures, not really a lot of reading if that's what you're looking for.

I must admit that I'm a big fan of the "introducing" books but the reason that I decided to review this one was because of its particular quality in laying out and illustrating the main theories discussed. In "Introducing Consciousness" Papineau skillfully and chronologically weaves the historical quest for consciousness with relevant discussion of the main theories advanced. In this way, Aristotle and DeCartes and Skinner and Dennett are made to jump off the page with words that are just as descriptive of their views as the accompanying artwork is. Like all generalized introductions, there could be some quibbling on the details like where the mind-brain discussion is alluded to smoke coming from a steam engine (in so describing the phenomenon, the authors inadvertently tip their hands as materialists) but on the whole this very brief readable 171 page illustrated book is well worth the time.

This book is 171 pages, but much of the space is used by cartoons which don't add much content, so the amount of actual text in the book is rather limited. Since consciousness is a complex and difficult subject (maybe THE fundamental subject), the small extent of the book makes it, at best, only a good preliminary starting point. Fortunately, that's exactly what the book is, since Papineau knows his subject well and makes efficient use of the few words available to him. If you want to start by dipping your toes in the water, this book should work well for you. However, if you're ready to earnestly dive in, perhaps after reading this book first, you will need to read something considerably more substantial. In other words, if you have even a moderately serious interest in this subject, you will outgrow this book quickly.

Great book on a fascinating topic. Highly recommended for every conscious being. As a follow-up, I recommend Susan Blackmore's "Consciousness: A Very Short Introduction."

The book is excellent at what it's trying to do : introducing consciousness. It's a very nice overview of different philosophy and problems relative to the subject, explained in a particularly easy to understand way! In my opinion, the only little bad point would be the cartoons: they take too much space while not explaining much more than the text most of the time. ...and they are quite ugly!

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