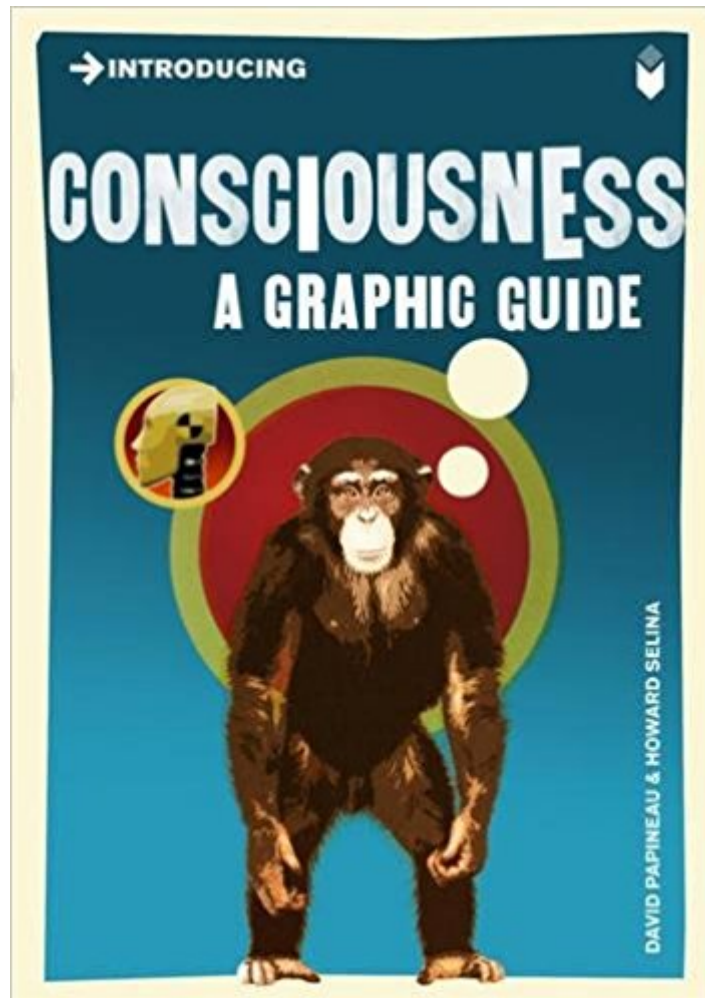




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Introducing Consciousness: A Graphic Guide



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

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Customer Reviews

'An excellent book' Ted Honderich

David Papineau: Professor David Papineau is a Professor of Philosophy at Kings College

London. Howard Selina: Howard Selina studied painting at St. Martin's School of Art and the Royal Academy in London, where he now lives and works. He has also illustrated Introducing series titles on Evolution and Consciousness.

Cautionary warning: This book provides a good introduction only to a specific way of framing the problem of consciousness, and thus only to the specific kinds of questions which befuddle those philosophers of mind who operate within this way of framing the problem. I mean specifically the philosophy of mind in the analytic or logical empiricist tradition, where the primary question is how to reconcile consciousness with a materialist or naturalistic ontology. Thus what is missing is any

substantial coverage of the way consciousness is treated in the phenomenological tradition, particularly in the work of Edmund Husserl. The author does mention Brentano, Husserl, and their claim that consciousness is intentionality, but he misinterprets their concept of intentionality as simply a claim of representationalism, as the latter is conceived in the aforementioned analytic tradition. This is a mistake. For Husserl, intentionality describes how consciousness is always "a priori directed-toward something, toward an object, whether that something is vague or clear in meaning to consciousness. When Husserl describes consciousness as a transcendental condition, he does not mean that consciousness is some kind of 'mental stuff'; rather, the term transcendental is a logical term, describing an a priori condition of possibility for referring to the world and objects at all. The author describes intentionality as the capacity to refer to mental representations of the world, but that is not what Husserl means at all; for Husserl intentionality is simply the way in which we, as consciousness, are directed toward anything at all, the world (how it appears as world to us), objects (how they appear as objects to us), or toward our scientific theories (how they appear as theories), concepts, and even figments of the imagination (as objects of imagination), etc. Problems of dualism or the substance (of consciousness) simply do not arise because Husserl claims that it is a mistake to attempt to 'thing-ize' consciousness as such, when it is the fundamental ground or basis from which things themselves in the world can appear as objects to us at all.

I love this book more than myself.

This is the first I've read on this topic. I think the authors offer a good survey of prominent thoughts about consciousness. The format of the book is exceedingly easy to read. It's easy not to get bogged down over some of the novel concepts that are discussed. The veil has lifted, just a little. I'm glad I read it.

love it

As a basic introduction to the philosophical study of the mind, this is by far the best book I've ever come across. If only it had been in print when I was a first-year grad student... I could have understood the material *so* much better! Papineau does an excellent job of introducing the main areas (e.g., the subjective aspect of mental states, the representational character of certain mental states, the difference between a third-person perspective and a first-person perspective, mental

causation, and the nature of consciousness itself), the main arguments (e.g., conceivability arguments, Jackson's knowledge argument, inverted qualia thought experiments...) and pretty much all the main theories concerning what the mind is, and how it relates to the brain (e.g., substance dualism, functionalism, emergent supervenience, mind-brain identity, behaviorism, etc....). All the technical jargon has been either omitted or is gently introduced, which will greatly increase the beginner's ability to quickly grasp the material. Moreover, each page is illustrated in one way or another, which should be a great help as well. At times the authors whose views are under consideration (e.g., Descartes, Leibniz) are caricatured in the illustrations, which makes it fun for those already familiar with the philosophers in question- a sort of inside joke, if you will. My only disappointment with this approach is that the illustrator didn't draw a caricature of Dave Chalmers or John Searle. This is unfortunate, as they would make great caricatures! But I digress... I also think that Papineau should have noted that not all substance dualists are Cartesians, and he should have briefly described one or more non-Cartesian substance dualisms, such as those found in E.J. Lowe's book, *Subjects of Experience*, and William Hasker's, *The Emergent Self*. All in all though, this work is excellent- especially given the book's price and readability. In short, anyone interested in a readable, informative introduction to the philosophical study of the mind would be a fool to pass up this book!

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