



# Consciousness (Polity Key Concepts in Philosophy)

*Josh Weisberg*

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Each of us, right now, is having a unique conscious experience. Nothing is more basic to our lives as thinking beings and nothing, it seems, is better known to us. But the ever-expanding reach of natural science suggests that everything in our world is ultimately physical. The challenge of fitting consciousness into our modern scientific worldview, of taking the subjective “feel” of conscious experience and showing that it is just neural activity in the brain, is among the most intriguing explanatory problems of our times.

In this book, Josh Weisberg presents the range of contemporary responses to the philosophical problem of consciousness. The basic philosophical tools of the trade are introduced, including thought experiments featuring Mary the color-deprived super scientist and fearsome philosophical “zombies”. The book then systematically considers the space of philosophical theories of consciousness. Dualist and other “non-reductive” accounts of consciousness hold that we must expand our basic physical ontology to include the intrinsic features of consciousness. Functionalist and identity theories, by contrast, hold that with the right philosophical stage-setting, we can fit consciousness into the standard scientific picture. And “mysterians” hold that any solution to the problem is beyond such small-minded creatures as us.

Throughout the book, the complexity of current debates on consciousness is handled in a clear and concise way, providing the reader with a fine introductory guide to the rich philosophical terrain. The work makes an excellent entry point to one of the most exciting areas of study in philosophy and science today.

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