



Consciousness (MIT Press)

William G. Lycan

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What is consciousness? The answer to this question has been pondered upon, grappled with, and argued about since time immemorial. There has never been an answer that achieved consensus; certainly philosophers have never agreed. In this book, William Lycan defends an original theory of mind that he calls "homuncular functionalism." He argues that human beings are "functionally organized information-processing systems" who have no non-physical parts or properties. However, Lycan also recognizes the subjective phenomenal qualities of mental states and events, and an important sense in which mind is "over and above" mere chemical matter. Along the way, Lycan reviews some diverse philosophical accounts of consciousness—including those of Kripke, Block, Campbell, Sellars, and Castañeda, among others—and demonstrates how what is valuable in each opposing view can be accommodated within his own theory.

Consciousness is Lycan's most ambitious book, one that has engaged his attention for years. He handles a fascinating subject in a unique and undoubtedly controversial manner that will make this book a mainstay in the field of philosophy of mind.

Consciousness, with these earlier works, is a Bradford Book.

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