



A Dialogue on Consciousness

Torin Alter, Robert J. Howell

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In recent years, the problem of consciousness has developed into one of the most important and hotly contested areas in the philosophy of mind. Many philosophers regard consciousness as an entirely physical phenomenon, yet it seems to elude scientific explanation. On the other hand, viewing consciousness as a nonphysical phenomenon brings up even larger issues. If consciousness is *not* physical, how can it be explained?

Concise, up-to-date, and engaging, *A Dialogue on Consciousness* explores these issues in depth. It features two main characters, Tollens and Ponens--unemployed graduate students who secretly live in a university library--who bring the debate alive. Tollens and Ponens examine the most significant theories and arguments in the field, quoting key passages from both classic and contemporary texts. Their discussion encompasses an expansive and diverse range of ideas, from those that originated in the Enlightenment up to today's most current perspectives. The dialogue concludes with a consideration of the pros and cons of modern physicalist views and nonphysicalist alternatives. An extensive annotated list of suggested readings directs readers to the most relevant and helpful primary sources.

An accessible and entertaining introduction to this complex issue, *A Dialogue on Consciousness* ideal for courses in philosophy of mind and consciousness. It also serves as an excellent supplement to introductory philosophy courses.

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