

Preface

The concept of consciousness has returned to a central position in psychology following a long period of banishment during the behaviorist era (Hilgard 1980). When I was an undergraduate in the early 1960s, introductory psychology textbooks made little or no reference to mentalist concepts such as consciousness, introspection, attention, mental imagery, dreaming, and hypnosis. Today most introductory textbooks include a chapter on states of consciousness and many colleges and universities offer courses on consciousness.

The psychology of consciousness covers a wide range of topics related to normal waking consciousness and altered states of consciousness, including: characteristics of consciousness, factors that influence the stream of consciousness, the distinction between conscious and nonconscious mind, the relationship between the brain and consciousness, introspection, daydreaming, sleep, dreams, hypnosis, meditation, psychedelic drug states, and other topics listed in the first chapter.

I approach the psychology of consciousness from a natural science and cognitive psychology viewpoint. In this view, consciousness is a natural phenomenon—a product of the brain's functioning. I emphasize research on topics of interest to cognitive psychologists, cognitive neuropsychologists, and personality and social psychologists. I also discuss clinical applications for a number of topics, such as hypnosis and meditation. And although the emphasis is on research and theoretical interpretations, important concep-

tual and philosophical issues of consciousness are also discussed, particularly in the first four chapters.

The incentive to write this textbook developed over a period of years during which I have taught a course on the psychology of consciousness at the University of Maine. The reading assignments have come from a variety of short paperbacks and reprinted journal articles. The reading list has never been satisfactory because it has been hard to find materials with the right breadth and depth of coverage while also being up-to-date. It became apparent that a comprehensive textbook on the psychology of consciousness was needed. Thus, the major reason for writing this book is to provide, in a single volume, a review of research and theory on the psychology of consciousness at a level suitable for advanced college courses.

A second reason for the book is to introduce psychologists to the psychology of consciousness. Many of today's academic and clinical psychologists went through graduate school without having any systematic exposure to these topics. I hope that the book will stimulate interest in teaching and research on topics of consciousness.

In order to make it easier for teachers to adapt the book for their courses, I have broken the material for some topics into two or three chapters. In these cases the first chapter covers the most basic and essential material, while additional interesting material is covered in the second (and third) chapter(s).

I would like to hear about reactions to this book from teachers, students, and other readers. In particular, I would like to know which chapters teachers assign in their courses, and which topics they would like to have greater or lesser emphasis on in future editions. Please write to me at the address listed below.

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And, last but not least, special thanks to my wife, Carol, for her patience and support over the five years that I spent working on this project. With appreciation and love, I dedicate this book to her.

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