



Consciousness and the Brain: Deciphering How the Brain Codes Our Thoughts

By Stanislas Dehaene

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WINNER OF THE 2014 BRAIN PRIZE

From the acclaimed author of *Reading in the Brain*, a breathtaking look at the new science that can track consciousness deep in the brain

How does our brain generate a conscious thought? And why does so much of our knowledge remain unconscious? Thanks to clever psychological and brain-imaging experiments, scientists are closer to cracking this mystery than ever before.

In this lively book, Stanislas Dehaene describes the pioneering work his lab and the labs of other cognitive neuroscientists worldwide have accomplished in defining, testing, and explaining the brain events behind a conscious state. We can now pin down the neurons that fire when a person reports becoming aware of a piece of information and understand the crucial role unconscious computations play in how we make decisions. The emerging theory enables a test of consciousness in animals, babies, and those with severe brain injuries.

A joyous exploration of the mind and its thrilling complexities, *Consciousness and the Brain* will excite anyone interested in cutting-edge science and technology and the vast philosophical, personal, and ethical implications of finally quantifying consciousness.

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Editorial Review

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Starred Review For 15 years, professor of cognitive psychology and science writer Dehaene (*Reading in the Brain*, 2009) and his team have been working to identify and understand patterns of brain activity, or “signatures of consciousness.” He now brings us up to speed on the whole of consciousness research in this exciting delineation of the scientific breakthroughs, including the advent of brain-imaging technologies, that have illuminated the brain’s astonishingly complicated anatomy and intensely intricate, lightning-fast processes. Dehaene recounts experiments involving visual illusions and semantic processing that reveal key facts about the brain’s management of the incessant stimuli bombardment and ponders the evolution of our all-important “language of thought.” An excellent teacher with a gift for vivid analogies, Dehaene writes that “consciousness is like the spokesperson in a large institution . . . with a staff of a hundred billion neurons” issuing briefs that tell us what we need to know moment by moment. He then explains his and his colleagues’ groundbreaking theory about the “global neuronal workspace,” where information is made “available to the rest of the brain,” wowing us with descriptions of our pyramidal neurons and their spiny dendrites and the discovery that each neuron “cares” about such specific stimuli as “faces, hands, objects.” A stunning examination of the “exquisite biological machinery” that has made us an animal unlike any other. -- Donna Seaman

Review

This book's spunky writing and popular topic should have made transforming it into an appealing audio an easy proposition. But David Drummond's repetitive tonal patterns give the production a flat quality that falls short of making this title the "joyous exploration of the mind" that the publisher claims it to be. Drummond's phrasing is always clear, but he repeats the same pitch sequences again and again. However, the author's boyish enthusiasm for this kind of psychological inquiry saves the production and helps it deliver a stirring look at how today's scientists are parsing the experience of being conscious. T.W.

About the Author

Stanislas Dehaene is the director of the Cognitive Neuroimaging Unit in Saclay, France, and the author of *Reading in the Brain*.

David Drummond has narrated over seventy audiobooks for Tantor, in genres ranging from current political commentary to historical nonfiction, from fantasy to military, and from thrillers to humor. He has garnered multiple AudioFile Earphones Awards as well as an Audie Award nomination. Visit him at drummondvoice.com.

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like reading through a book? Sometime, individual feel need book whenever they found difficult problem or even exercise. Well, probably you'll have this Consciousness and the Brain: Deciphering How the Brain Codes Our Thoughts.

Scottie Hicks:

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Luke Palmieri:

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