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Thought: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)

Tim Bayne

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There is no denying that thinking comes naturally to human beings and that thinking is indeed central to what it means to be human. But what are thoughts? How does the brain--billions of tiny neurons and synapses--accomplish thought? In this compelling Very Short Introduction, Tim Bayne offers a compact but wide-ranging account of the nature of thought, drawing upon philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, and anthropology. Bayne touches on a stimulating array of topics. Does thinking occur in public or is it a purely private affair? Do young children and non-human animals think? Is human thought the same everywhere, or are there culturally specific modes of thought? What is the relationship between thought and language? What kind of responsibility do we have for our thoughts? In what ways can the process of thinking go wrong? Beginning with questions about what thought is and what distinguishes it from other kinds of mental states, he explores the logical structures of thought as well as the mechanisms that make thought possible. In sum, this book provides an engaging survey of what we know--and what we don't know--about one of the most central of human capacities.

About the Series:

Oxford's Very Short Introductions series offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, Literary Theory to History, and Archaeology to the Bible. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume in this series provides trenchant and provocative--yet always balanced and complete--discussions of the central issues in a given discipline or field. Every Very Short Introduction gives a readable evolution of the subject in question, demonstrating how the subject has developed and how it has influenced society. Eventually, the series will encompass every major academic discipline, offering all students an accessible and abundant reference library. Whatever the area of study that one deems important or appealing, whatever the topic that fascinates the general reader, the Very Short Introductions series has a handy and affordable guide that will likely prove indispensable.

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