

*The Mysterious Flame*, Colin McGinn

Read the last chapter, “The Unbearable Heaviness of Philosophy.” (The title is a pun on the title of a novel by Milan Kundera, “The Unbearable Lightness of Being.” It was also made into a movie starring Daniel Day-Lewis.) McGinn is a delight to read and I am sympathetic to his point of view. In a word – he thinks that consciousness cannot be understood.

- Explain how he has come to this opinion. What is your evaluation?
- McGinn has a very specific reason why we cannot understand consciousness. Can you think of any other reason why it might be impossible?
- Suppose we assume that McGinn is right. Would there be any point in continuing to try to understand consciousness?