

Multi-Level of Human Consciousness

Supplementary Subject

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1. Consciousness and Unconsciousness

Consciousness is a mental state in which the person is thinking and aware of what is happening around him or her. On the other hand, Unconsciousness is a mental state of unawareness (loss of consciousness) in which the person is unable to respond to people and other stimuli around him or her.

There is an altered mental state of consciousness in which the door between the conscious and unconscious mind is opened and a deeply relaxed state is obtained, which is called as a hypnotic trance

Since our unconsciousness mind is our greatest protection mechanism, it will not tolerate any suggestion with which we would be uncomfortable, so if for example, the therapist suddenly flipped out and suggested to the patient that they should hop around on one leg for the rest of the day, the patient would wake immediately and the suggestion would not taken on board.

Contrary to another myth, the patient usually remembers all that they have experienced and what the therapist has said during the session. People often think that hypnosis induces amnesia and indeed it can, but this would only be employed in very rare instances with the patient's permission. It is much more usual for patients to think that they haven't been hypnotized at all because they have been aware of the normal sounds around them or the fact that their nose was itching, etc. This is because the conscious mind doesn't shut down when we enter the altered state of consciousness. It simply continues to run, taking on board everything that is going on, but at the same time a deeper level of consciousness is accessed and we are more focused on that.

2. Hypnotherapy

In recent studies, hypnotherapy has been found to be extremely successful in alleviating the distressing symptoms of Irritable Bowel Syndrome and in making childbirth more comfortable and enjoyable for mother and baby. It can be used to induce anesthesia and has been used successfully as a substitute for anesthetic in many dental procedures. Patients with

chronic conditions like arthritis can also be taught a form of self-hypnosis, which helps with pain management and can help reduce the number of painkillers that patient, may need to take in the day. Even patient's under-going treatment, which have unpleasant side effect, can gain some control over those symptoms using hypnosis.

3. Experiments about Consciousness - The right and left hemispheres of the brain

(3.1) Roger Sperry's Experimentation

Roger Sperry and other scientists proceeded with experimentation in order to determine the relationship between the right and left hemispheres of the brain.

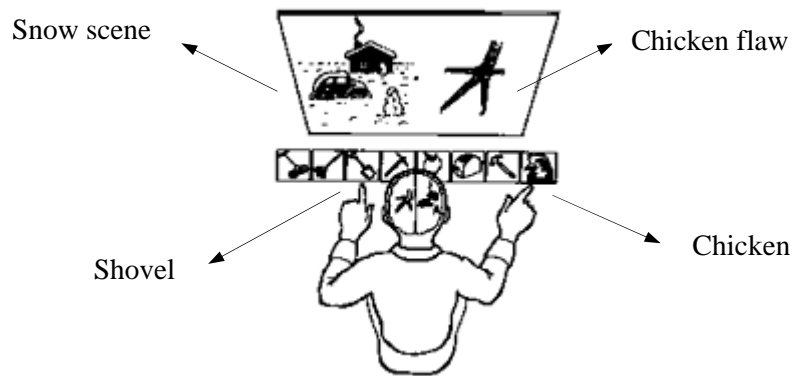
In one experiment, a word (for example "fork") was flashed so only the right hemisphere of a patient¹ could receive the information. The patient would not be able to say what the word was. However, if the subject is asked to write what he saw, his left hand would begin to write the word "fork".

If asked what he had written, the patient would have no idea. He would know that he had written something, he could feel his hand going through the motion, yet he could not tell observers what the word was. Because there is no longer a connection between the two hemispheres, information presented to the right half of the brain cannot convey this information to the left. Interestingly enough, the centers for speech interpretation and production are located in the left hemisphere. Similarly, if the patient is blindfolded and a familiar object, such as a toothbrush, is placed in his left hand, he appears to know what it is; for example by making the gesture of brushing his teeth. But he cannot name the object to the experimenter. If asked what he is doing with the object, gesturing a brushing motion, he has no idea. But if the left hand gives the toothbrush to the right hand, the patient will immediately say "tooth brush".

(3.2) Micheal Gazzaniga's Experiments

Micheal Gazzaniga, who did his graduate work in Sperry's laboratory, did further experiments which showed the attempts of the left hemisphere to compensate for it's lack of information, as well as attempts by the right hemisphere to get it's knowledge conveyed.

¹ The Patient was not able to communicate information from one hemisphere to the other, almost as though he now had two separate brains.



In this particular test, each hemisphere was simultaneously presented with a different cognitive test. Each hemisphere was presented with a picture and told to pick the object which relates to that picture. The left hemisphere was shown a chicken claw, while the right viewed a snow scene. You can see that the patient is pointing to a chicken with his right hand, and a shovel with his left. After each hemisphere responded, the left hemisphere was asked to explain its choices. The way the subject verbally interpreted the double field stimuli is of particular interest. When asked what images he saw on the screen, the patient responded, "I saw a claw and I picked the chicken, and you have to clean out the chicken shed with a shovel."

Trial after trial, this kind of response occurred. The left hemisphere could easily and accurately identify why the right hand chose the corresponding picture that it had, and then subsequently, and without batting an eye, it would incorporate the right hemisphere's response into the framework. While observers knew exactly why the right hemisphere and made its choice, the left hemisphere could merely guess. What is interesting is that the left hemisphere did not offer its suggestion in a guessing vein but rather as a statement of fact.

4. Three functions of the mind in Human Consciousness – Freud

Freud understood the mind as constantly in conflict with itself, and understood this conflict as the primary cause of human anxiety and unhappiness. Freud's investigations into internal conflicts such as this led him to an eventual division of the mind into three parts, three conflicting internal tendencies, the well-known id, ego, and super-ego. This division, it is important to note, is not the separation of the mind into three structures and functions which exist in physical partitions in the brain; they are not even truly structures, but rather separate aspects and elements of the single structure of the mind.

(4.1) Id

As the baby emerges from the womb into the reality of life, he wants only to eat, drink, urinate, defecate, be warm, and gain sexual pleasure. These urges are the demands of the id, the most primitive motivational force. It is ruled by the pleasure principle, demanding satisfaction now, regardless of circumstances and possible undesirable effects. If a young child was ruled entirely by his id, he would steal and eat a piece of chocolate from a store regardless of the menacing owner watching above him or even his parents scolding beside him.

(4.2) Ego

The eventual understanding that immediate gratification is usually impossible (and often unwise) comes with the formation of the ego, which is ruled by the reality principle. The ego acts often suppressing the id's urges until an appropriate situation arises. This repression of inappropriate desires and urges represents the greatest strain on, and the most important function of, the mind. The ego often utilizes defense mechanisms to achieve and aid this repression. Where the id may have an urge and form a picture which satisfies this urge, the ego engages in a strategy to actually fulfill the urge. The thirsty five-year-old now not only identifies water as the satisfaction of his urge, but forms a plan to obtain water, perhaps by finding a drinking fountain. The ego's effort at pragmatic satisfaction of urges eventually builds a great number of skills and memories and becomes aware of itself as an entity. With the formation of the ego, the individual becomes a self, instead of an amalgamation of urges and need.

(4.3) Super-Ego

While the ego may temporarily repress certain urges of the id in fear of punishment, eventually these external sources of punishment are internalized, and the child will not steal the chocolate, even unwatched, because he has taken punishment, right, and wrong into himself. The superego uses guilt and self-reproach as its primary means of enforcement for these rules. But if a person does something which is acceptable to the super-ego, he experiences pride and self-satisfaction

5. Several levels of Human Consciousness

(1) The **Perceptual** level includes the first set of filters called **physical** filters.

(2) The **Emotional** level includes the second set of filters called **biological** filters. At this level of awareness we identify solely with our organism as existing in space and time. This knowledge creates an existential need to survive, and the fear of death.

(3) The **Symbolic** level includes a third set of filters called **sociological** filters. At this level, we are not anymore directly identified with our total psychophysical organism as existing in space and time. We now identify solely with a mental representation or picture of our self. In other words, we are aware of our ego, our self-image. We feel that we exist in our body and not as our body.

(4) The **Rational** level includes a fourth set of filters called **psychological** filters. By psychological filters we refer to all the representations of the world that we create during the course of our life, based upon our own unique personal experiences, and genetically predetermined models of human behavior.

(5) The **Creative** level is the level where our mind **integrates** all ideas and experiences into a unified picture and model of the world. We now comprehend a massive network of ideas, how they influence each other, and what their relationships are. There is no more separation but rather, integration of the human psyche. The rational and symbolic levels are integrated into one level of the mind (the Creative level).

(6) The **Supra-Individual** level is the realm of high **religious** intuition and literal inspiration, of audible illuminations, of blue, gold and white light. The subject is identified with an object of faith. At its peak, the subject dissolves into the object.

(7) The **Trans-Individual** Level is the **complete union** with God, in which all pervious levels become completely integrated and dissolve into a formless, infinite, unbounded consciousness.

(8) At the **Universal** level we identify with the Universe and our consciousness becomes space-less and timeless, and therefore, eternal and infinite. This is the state of nirvana, samadhi, the state of **completely liberated consciousness** and peaceful mind. There is no more distinction between subject and object, self and not self, seer and seen. There is no more sending and receiving of information. - The End -