

# Unconscious Processes

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## Introduction

Consciousness has to do with two aspects of mental life: monitoring ourselves, so that our experiences, thoughts, and actions are accessible to phenomenal awareness; and controlling ourselves, engaging in voluntary behavior that goes beyond reflex, instinct, and conditioned response. The unconscious mind—whether it exists at all, and if so what its scope and limits are—has been an important theoretical issue since the beginning of scientific psychology. There are of course many physical and biological processes that, in some sense, proceed unconsciously: the orbiting of planets around the sun and photosynthesis are two examples. Changes in blood pressure are not accessible to phenomenal awareness; and the brain activity which gives rise to consciousness itself goes on unconsciously (neurosurgeons assure us that there is no afference in the brain). But there is little point in talking about something being *unconscious* if that same thing cannot also be conscious, in the sense of being accessible to phenomenal awareness and voluntary control. Therefore, the adjective *unconscious* only makes sense when applied to mental states and mental activity, as an adjectival contrast to *conscious*. These mental states come in various forms—namely cognition (percepts, memories, thoughts, and knowledge acquired through learning), emotion (positive and negative feelings), and motivation (desires and goals of approach and avoidance). Usually, these mental states are accessible to consciousness, in that people are generally aware of what they are thinking, what they want and feel, and what they are doing. “The unconscious” is shorthand for mental states and processes that are inaccessible to introspective phenomenal awareness and voluntary control. The question is whether, and to what extent, mental states can exist (and mental activities transpire) outside the scope of phenomenal awareness and voluntary control. *Objection*: If these mental states and activities are unconscious, how are we to know them? *Answer*: We know them indirectly by virtue of their effects on our ongoing conscious experience, thought, and action. Question: If there are two kinds of mental states and processes, conscious and unconscious, how do they compare and contrast? Answer: In principle, unconscious processes differ from conscious processes because they operate outside phenomenal awareness. And because conscious awareness is the logical prerequisite for conscious control; unconscious processes are not susceptible to voluntary self-regulation. Other differences between conscious and unconscious processes are empirical questions.

## Textbooks

There are no textbooks specifically devoted to unconscious mental life, but there are several that discuss various aspects of the unconscious in the context of the more general philosophical, psychological, and neuroscientific literature on consciousness. [Blackmore 2012](#) focuses mostly

on the mind-body problem. The best of these texts is [Farthing 1992](#)—now out of print, but well worth finding on the used book market. [Revonsuo 2018](#); [Wallace, et al. 2011](#); and [Zeman 2002](#) provide more up-to-date coverage. Although none are as comprehensive as Farthing, they are good alternatives for classroom use. There have been many philosophical monographs dealing with the mind-body problem and other aspects of consciousness, some of which also discuss the problem of the unconscious. There is as yet no comprehensive textbook treatment of this philosophical debate, but some flavor of the current scene can be gleaned from [Searle 1997](#) and [Seager 2016](#). There is also [Blackmore 2005](#), which is a contribution to Oxford's Very Short Introduction series, and even a graphic treatment of the topic, [Papineau and Selina 2000](#).

- Blackmore, S. 2005. *Consciousness: A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

DOI: [10.1093/actrade/9780192805850.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780192805850.001.0001)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Too short to serve as a standalone text for a course in consciousness but an excellent ancillary text for courses on philosophy of mind, cognitive psychology, and cognitive neuroscience—and, as intended, as an introduction for the general public.

Find this resource:

- Blackmore, S. 2012. *Consciousness: An introduction*. 2d ed. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Expressly intended as an undergraduate text, like most books on consciousness it focuses mostly on the mind-body problem but also covers the evolution of consciousness, consciousness in artificial intelligence, and altered states of consciousness.

Find this resource:

- Farthing, G. W. 1992. *The psychology of consciousness*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Some twenty-five years after its original publication, this remains the best and most comprehensive textbook for a course on consciousness: the model for any who would aspire to replace it. Covers, sometimes in multiple chapters, introspection, the mind-body problem, explicit-implicit dissociations, daydreaming, hypnosis, sleep and dreams, meditation, and psychedelic drugs.

Find this resource:

- Papineau, D., and H. Selina. 2000. *Introducing consciousness: A graphic guide*. London: Icon Books.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Comprehensive illustrated inquiry into the mind-body problem, “the last frontier of science”; not just for young people and other reluctant readers.

Find this resource:

- Revonsuo, A. 2018. *Foundations of consciousness*. Oxford: Routledge.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

In the absence of a new edition of Farthing, these can serve as the core textbook in an undergraduate course on consciousness. Excellent coverage of the neural correlates of consciousness and other aspects of the mind-body problem. Compared to [Farthing 1992](#), there is less extensive coverage of altered states of consciousness.

Find this resource:

- Seager, W. 2016. *Theories of consciousness; An introduction and assessment*. 2d ed. New York: Routledge.

DOI: [10.4324/9780203485583](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203485583)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Comprehensive coverage of contemporary philosophical analyses of consciousness.

Find this resource:

- Searle, J. R. 1997. *The mystery of consciousness*. 1st ed. New York: New York Review of Books.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Reprints Searle’s reviews of major monographs on consciousness by Daniel Dennett, David Chalmers, and others, as well as responses from the authors and rejoinders to them.

Find this resource:

- Wallace, B., B. B. Oswald, and L. E. Fisher. 2011. *Consciousness and behavior*. 5th ed. Dubuque, IA: KendallHunt.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Also a good choice as the text for an undergraduate course, with much the same coverage as [Farthing 1992](#), and the addition of chapters on parapsychology and sensory deprivation.

Find this resource:

- Zeman, A. 2002. *Consciousness: A user's guide*. New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Written by a practicing neurologist, this is also an excellent choice for a core text. Contains lots of material on the neural bases of consciousness but less on altered states and unconscious processes.

Find this resource:

## Anthologies

As with textbooks, there are relatively few anthologies devoted to the unconscious as such. [Block, et al. 1997](#); [Cohen and Schooler 1997](#); [Carter 2002](#); [Baars, et al. 2003](#); [Bayne, et al. 2009](#); [Velmans 2018](#); and [Zelazo, et al. 2007](#) are primarily concerned with consciousness in general but contain many articles concerned with various aspects of unconscious mental life. [Underwood 1996](#) and [Kirsner, et al. 1998](#) expressly focus on unconscious processes. [Hameroff, et al. 1996](#) records the proceedings of the first of a series of biennial conferences (held in 1984) focused on “The Science of Consciousness,” sponsored by the Center for Consciousness Studies at the University of Arizona, whose presenters frequently discuss unconscious processes as well.

- Baars, B. J., W. P. Banks, and J. B. Newman, eds. 2003. *Essential sources in the scientific study of consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Collects nearly seventy seminal papers covering vision, attention, short- and long-term memory, imagery, unconscious processes, and contemporary theories.

Find this resource:

- Bayne, T., A. Cleeremans, and P. Wilken, eds. 2009. *Oxford Companion to Consciousness*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Like its companions in the Oxford Companion series, consists of more than 250 individual entries covering various aspects of consciousness, arranged alphabetically from “absent qualia” to “zombies”; a brick of a book, but the brevity of the entries make for excellent bedtime sampling.

Find this resource:

- Block, N., O. Flanagan, and G. Guzeldere, eds. 1997. *The nature of consciousness: Philosophical debates*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Covers philosophical issues such as qualia, intentionality, the explanatory gap, conscious inessentialism, and ephiphenomenalism. Also includes important papers on methodology and neuropsychological approaches to consciousness.

Find this resource:

- Carter, R. 2002. *Exploring consciousness*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Approaching coffee-table status, this large-format, generously illustrated book collects provocative essays on various aspects of the mind-body problem along with integrative commentary by a distinguished science writer.

Find this resource:

- Cohen, J. D., and J. W. Schooler, eds. 1997. *Scientific approaches to consciousness*. Scientific approaches to consciousness. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Proceedings of the twenty-fifth annual Carnegie Mellon Symposium on Cognition, held in 1993. With authoritative essays on attention and automaticity, subliminal perception, various aspects of the explicit-implicit distinction, and neuroscientific approaches.

Find this resource:

- Hameroff, S., A. W. Kaszniak, and A. C. Scott, eds. 1996. *Toward a science of consciousness: The 1st Tucson discussions and debates*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Proceedings of the first in a regular series of conferences on “The Science of Consciousness,” which draws an eclectic “Who’s Who?” of psychologists, philosophers, neuroscientists, artists, and writers. The biennial conferences, some of whose later proceedings have also been published, track our progress and give a good picture of the field as it stands. For a somewhat humorous view of the 2018 conference, see “Has Consciousness Lost Its Mind?” by Tom Bartlett, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 6, 2018.

Find this resource:

- Kirsner, K., C. Speelman, M. Maybery, A. O'Brien-Malone, M. Anderson, and C. MacLeod, eds. 1998. *Implicit and explicit mental processes*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

One of the few anthologies to focus on unconscious mental processes, in the form of variations on the explicit-implicit distinction.

Find this resource:

- Schneider, S., and M. Velmans, eds. 2017. *The Blackwell companion to consciousness*. 2d ed. Chichester, UK: Wiley.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

More than fifty extensive essays, with full references, on a wide variety of topics from the evolution and development of consciousness, to varieties of conscious and unconscious mental life, theories of consciousness, and related topics in cognitive psychology and neuroscience.

Find this resource:

- Underwood, G., ed. 1996. *Implicit cognition*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Contributions exploring various aspects of the explicit-implicit distinction in memory, perception, learning, thinking, etc.

Find this resource:

- Velmans, M., ed. 2018. *Consciousness (critical concepts in psychology)*. Routledge Major Works Series. London: Routledge.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Monumental collection, in four volumes and over two thousand pages, covering all the bases from Aristotle to Tononi and Koch, introspection to brain-imaging.

Find this resource:

- Zelazo, P. D., M. Moscovitch, and E. Thompson, eds. 2007. *Cambridge handbook of consciousness*. Cambridge Handbook of Consciousness. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Extensively documented articles covering all aspects of consciousness, including altered states, social and cultural differences, and cognitive and affective neuroscience.

Find this resource:

## Metacognition

“Metacognition” refers to “knowledge about cognition” and includes both our awareness of what we know (and believe) and our understanding of how our minds work. Thus, metacognition is about consciousness, and unconscious processing implies the absence of metacognition. In a psychological context, the prefix *meta-* was coined by [Gleitman, et al. 1972](#) and popularized within developmental psychology by [Flavell 1979](#). Research on metacognition, especially in children, served as a bridge between the Piagetian view of cognitive development and the more modern focus on the emergence of a theory of mind (which is also, in some respects, a theory of consciousness) and the broader “theory theory.” [Nelson 1992](#), [Metcalf and Shimamura 1994](#), and [Reder 1996](#) provide excellent overviews of the topic. Historical footnote: in a 2002 news conference conducted during the run-up to the Iraq War, then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stated that “as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don’t know we don’t know.” Rumsfeld omitted the fourth logical category: *unknown knowns*, including unconscious percepts, memories, knowledge, thoughts, emotions, and motives that influence our experience, thought, and action outside introspective phenomenal awareness and voluntary control, and that can be known only by inference.

- Flavell, John H. 1979. Metacognition and cognitive monitoring: A new area of cognitive-developmental inquiry. *American Psychologist* 34.10: 906–911.

DOI: [10.1037/0003-066X.34.10.906](#)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Traces the emergence of metamemory, and metacognition in general, as an alternative to the traditional Piagetian theory of cognitive development.

Find this resource:

- Gleitman, L. R., H. Gleitman, and E. Shipley. 1972. The emergence of the child as grammarian. *Cognition* 1:137–164.

DOI: [10.1016/0010-0277\(72\)90016-9](#)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Records the first usage of the prefix *meta-* to describe “knowing about knowing,” portraying language development as the development of “metalanguage,” or knowledge about grammar and other aspects of language, a component of metacognition in general.

Find this resource:

- Metcalfe, Janet, and Arthur P. Shimamura. 1994. *Metacognition: Knowing about knowing*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

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Anthology of readings on various aspects of metacognition, with emphasis on the “feeling of knowing” and other aspects of metamemory. See pp. xiii, 334.

Find this resource:

- Nelson, Thomas O. 1992. *Metacognition: Core readings*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Another anthology of readings on various aspects of metacognition, emphasizing the connections between metacognition and consciousness.

Find this resource:

- Reder, L., ed. 1996. *Implicit Memory and Metacognition*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

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Proceedings of the Twenty-Seventh Carnegie Symposium on cognition, held in 1995.

Find this resource:

## Historical Background

Although Sigmund Freud (see [Freud 1900](#) and [Freud 1915](#)) is generally credited with “discovering” “the unconscious,” [Whyte 1960](#), [Ellenberger 1970](#), and [Klein 1977](#) show clearly that the idea of unconscious mental life had been around for at least a century before Freud. [Kihlstrom 1995](#) provides a brief overview of this legacy. After the dark age of functional behaviorism, which virtually banished “consciousness,” not to mention “the unconscious,” from psychologists’ vocabulary, the cognitive revolution in psychology promoted a resurgence of interest in both conscious and unconscious mental life. [Kihlstrom 1987](#) and [Kihlstrom 2013](#) summarize a new view of the unconscious that owes little to Freud and everything to developments in cognitive psychology.

- Ellenberger, H. F. 1970. *The discovery of the unconscious: The history and evolution of dynamic psychiatry*. New York: Basic Books.

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Monumental, must-read scholarly treatise covering the philosophical and psychological antecedents of the “dynamic psychiatry” of Pierre Janet, Sigmund Freud, C. G. Jung, and Alfred Adler, which emphasized the importance of unconscious processes in personality and psychopathology.

Find this resource:

- Freud, S. 1900. The interpretation of dreams. In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*. Edited by J. Strachey, 4–5. London: Hogarth Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Introduces Freud’s “topographical” division of the mind into three systems: conscious, preconscious, and unconscious.

Find this resource:

- Freud, S. 1915. The unconscious. In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*. Edited by J. Strachey, 14. London: Hogarth Press.

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Companion to Freud’s 1915 essay on “Repression” reflects Freud’s later thinking about the nature and role of “the unconscious” in mental life.

Find this resource:

- Kihlstrom, J. F. 1987. The cognitive unconscious. *Science* 237.4821: 1445–1452.

DOI: [10.1126/science.3629249](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.3629249)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Summarizes four lines of research contributing to the revival of interest in unconscious mental life: the distinction between automatic (unconscious) and controlled (conscious) mental processes, dissociations between implicit and explicit memory observed in the amnesic syndrome, renewed interest in “subliminal” perception, and research on hypnosis.

Find this resource:

- Kihlstrom, J. F. 1995. The rediscovery of the unconscious. In *The mind, the brain, and complex adaptive systems*. Edited by H. Morowitz and J. L. Singer, 123–143. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

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Connects the literature surveyed in [Kihlstrom 1987](#) to 19th-century philosophical and psychological analyses of unconscious mental life, including Helmholtz's "unconscious inferences" and Hartmann's "philosophy of the unconscious."

Find this resource:

- Kihlstrom, J. F. 2013. Unconscious processes. In *Oxford handbook of cognitive psychology*. Edited by D. Reisberg, 176–186. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

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Comprehensive survey of unconscious processes in perception, memory, learning, and thinking, on which this annotated bibliography is based.

Find this resource:

- Klein, D. B. 1977. *The unconscious: Invention or discovery? A historico-critical inquiry*. Santa Monica, CA: Goodyear.

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Critical survey of Freudian, pre-Freudian (e.g., Hartmann), and non-Freudian (e.g., James) ideas about the unconscious. See also Klein's useful companion volume, *The Concept of Consciousness: A Survey* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).

Find this resource:

- Whyte, L. L. 1960. *The unconscious before Freud*. New York: Basic Books.

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Brief survey of philosophical, theological, and literary analyses of the unconscious mind leading up to Freud, from St. Augustine to Marx and Engels, Descartes to James, and Shakespeare to Dostoyevsky.

Find this resource:

## Automaticity

In contemporary psychology the most popular construal of "the unconscious" is in terms of *automaticity*. According to this view, some mental processes are inevitably evoked by the appearance of certain stimuli and incorrigibly executed once set in motion; they consume few or no cognitive resources and do not interfere with conscious mental activities. Automatic processes are unconscious in the strict sense of the term, because they operate outside phenomenal awareness and voluntary control and can be known only by inference. Automatic processing, an idea with its scientific roots in Helmholtz's ideas about the role of unconscious inferences in

perception, is exemplified by the Stroop color-word effect. [MacLeod 1991](#) reviews the massive literature on the Stroop effect, while [Besner, et al. 1997](#) reports experiments indicating that Stroop interference might not be as automatic as generally assumed. The list of canonical features associated with automatic processing was developed in a series of papers published in the 1970s and 1980s, culminating in [Shiffrin and Schneider 1984](#). Interest in automaticity reached its apex with [Kahneman 2011](#) and its distinction between “System 1” (fast) and “System 2” (slow) thinking. [Jacoby 1991](#) introduced the process-dissociation procedure for separating the contributions of automatic and controlled processes to task performance. [Yonelinas and Jacoby 2012](#) reviews the wealth of studies that have employed the PDP. On the other hand, [Curran and Hintzman 1995](#) and [Merikle and Joordens 1997](#) express doubts about some of the assumptions underlying Jacoby’s method—particularly that automatic and controlled processes operate independently of each other. A comprehensive overview of the literature on automaticity is provided by [Moors 2016](#).

- Besner, D., J. A. Stolz, and C. Boutilier. 1997. The Stroop effect and the myth of automaticity. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review* 4:221–225.

DOI: [10.3758/BF03209396](#)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

One of a series of papers by Besner and his colleagues offering a critical analysis of the “myth” that the “Stroop” color-word phenomenon is a product of automatic processes.

Find this resource:

- Curran, T., and D. L. Hintzman. 1995. Violations of the independence assumption in process dissociation. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, & Cognition* 21:531–547.

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Shows that the estimates of controlled and automatic processing provided by Jacoby’s process-dissociation procedure may be inaccurate when the two processes are not in fact independent and suggests that this may often be the case.

Find this resource:

- Jacoby, L. L. 1991. A process dissociation framework: Separating automatic from intentional uses of memory. *Journal of Memory & Language* 13:513–541.

DOI: [10.1016/0749-596X\(91\)90025-F](#)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Introduces the process dissociation framework, and its associated method of opposition, for determining the strength of automatic and controlled components of task performance.

Find this resource:

- Kahneman, D. 2011. *Thinking fast and slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

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The idea of automaticity has its roots in Kahneman's 1973 book, *Attention and Effort*. Here the 2002 Nobel laureate in economics links automaticity to the "heuristics and biases" approach to judgment and decision making, which he pioneered with Amos Tversky.

Find this resource:

- MacLeod, Colin M. 1991. Half a century of research on the Stroop effect: An integrative review. *Psychological Bulletin* 109.2: 163–203.

DOI: [10.1037/0033-2909.109.2.163](https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.109.2.163)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

The Stroop "color-word" phenomenon, is the example *par excellence* of automatic processing.

Find this resource:

- Merikle, P. M., and S. Joordens. 1997. Measuring the relative magnitude of unconscious influences. In *Scientific approaches to consciousness*. Edited by J. D. Cohen and J. W. Schooler, 109–123. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

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Another alternative to Jacoby's process-dissociation technique, also assuming that automatic and controlled processes are redundant and *not* independent.

Find this resource:

- Moors, A. 2016. Automaticity: Componential, causal, and mechanistic explanations. *Annual Review of Psychology* 67:263–287.

DOI: [10.1146/annurev-psych-122414-033550](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-122414-033550)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Provides a comprehensive overview of research and theory on automaticity, including the relations among the cardinal and secondary features of automatic processing: automatic evocation, incorrigible completion, parallel processing, and efficiency and causal theories of automatic processing.

Find this resource:

- Shiffrin, R. M., and W. Schneider. 1984. Automatic and controlled processing revisited. *Psychological Review* 91.2: 269–276.

DOI: [10.1037/0033-295X.91.2.269](https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.91.2.269)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Schneider and Shiffrin’s two 1977 *Psychological Review* papers were largely responsible for popularizing the automatic-controlled distinction within cognitive psychology. This paper reflects on developments since those papers and responds to some criticisms.

Find this resource:

- Yonelinas, A. P., and L. L. Jacoby. 2012. The process-dissociation approach two decades later: Convergence, boundary conditions, and new directions. *Memory & Cognition* 40:663–680.

DOI: [10.3758/s13421-012-0205-5](https://doi.org/10.3758/s13421-012-0205-5)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Retrospective review of the contributions of (and controversies concerning) Jacoby’s process dissociation procedure.

Find this resource:

## Automaticity in Social, Personality, and Clinical Psychology

The concept of automaticity was quickly imported from cognitive psychology into social psychology. John Bargh established himself as a leader of this movement, but many other personality, social, and clinical psychologists have taken similar positions. [Wegner and Bargh 1998](#) argues that many of the classic experiments in social psychology—on aggression, conformity, obedience, and the like—involved automatic, reflex-like responses to primes contained in social situations. [Uleman and Bargh 1989](#); [Hassin, et al. 2005](#); and [Bargh 2007](#) detail the application of automaticity to a wide scope of problems of personality and social and interaction. [Chaiken and Trope 1999](#) and [Sherman, et al. 2014](#) advance a number of “dual-process” theories of social cognition and behavior. These theories generally agree that many interpersonal behaviors generally attributed to controlled, conscious processing can also be performed automatically and unconsciously. Because automatic processes are executed quickly and effortlessly, most “dual-process” theories emphasize the dominance of unconscious automaticity over conscious control. Enthusiasm for automaticity led [Wegner 2002](#) and some other theorists (following the lead of [Libet 1985](#)) to doubt the role of conscious will in human behavior. On the other hand, [Kihlstrom 2008](#) argues that many studies of automaticity fail to employ rigorous operational definitions of the concept, or to actually compare the strength of automatic and controlled processes. Leaning on [Miller, et al. 2011](#), [Kihlstrom 2017](#) argues that Libet’s provocative findings are wholly artifacts of his method. It is important to note that some of the most provocative demonstrations of “social priming” and other aspects of automaticity in emotion, motivation, and social interaction have proved difficult to confirm in independent laboratories, contributing to the “replication crisis” in contemporary psychology.

- Bargh, J. A., ed. 2007. *Social psychology and the unconscious: The automaticity of higher mental processes*. New York: Psychology Press.

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Anthology exploring the effects of automatic processing on many aspects of social interaction.

Find this resource:

- Chaiken, S., and Y. Trope, eds. 1999. *Dual-process theories in social psychology*. New York: Guilford.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Anthology containing authoritative surveys of dual-process theories of social perception and judgment, attitudes, stereotypes, emotion, and self-regulation.

Find this resource:

- Hassin, R. R., J. S. Uleman, and J. A. Bargh, eds. 2005. *The new unconscious*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

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The “old” unconscious was Freud’s. The “new” one is automaticity—which is also rather old, dating back to Helmholtz’s “unconscious inferences.” Anthology focuses on applications of automaticity in personality and social psychology.

Find this resource:

- Kihlstrom, J. F. 2008. The automaticity juggernaut. In *Psychology and free will*. Edited by J. Baer, J. C. Kaufman, and R. F. Baumeister, 155–180. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

DOI: [10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195189636.003.0008](https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195189636.003.0008)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Critical analysis, arguing that many studies employ weak operational definitions of automaticity and fail to compare the strength of automatic and controlled processes. Worries that automaticity theories are “behaviorism with a cognitive face” (p. 171).

Find this resource:

- Kihlstrom, J. F. 2017. Time to lay the Libet Experiment to rest: Commentary on Papanicolaou. *Psychology of Consciousness: Theory, Research, & Practice* 4.3: 324–329.

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Commentary on a review of literature stimulated by the Libet Experiment, concluding that Libet's findings are "wholly an artifact of his method" and have no bearing on the question of free will.

Find this resource:

- Libet, B. 1985. Unconscious cerebral initiative and the role of conscious will in voluntary action. *Behavioral & Brain Sciences* 8:529–566.

DOI: [10.1017/S0140525X00044903](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X00044903)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Based on evidence of event-related potentials in the EEG, Libet argues that apparently conscious actions are initiated unconsciously, with conscious awareness serving only as a post-hoc "veto."

Find this resource:

- Miller, J., P. Shepherdson, and J. Trevena. 2011. Effects of clock monitoring on electroencephalographic activity: Is unconscious movement initiation an artifact of the clock? *Psychological Science* 21.1: 103–109.

DOI: [10.1177/0956797610391100](https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797610391100)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

After all the attention paid to the Libet experiment, this shows that Libet's findings were an artifact of having subjects watch a clock while deciding when to move their hands.

Find this resource:

- Sherman, J. W., B. Gawronski, and Y. Trope, eds. 2014. *Dual-process theories of the social mind*. New York: Guilford.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Anthology containing authoritative surveys of dual-process theories of attitudes, social perception, thinking and reasoning, habit and motivation, and self-regulation.

Find this resource:

- Strack, F., and N. Schwarz. 2016. Editorial overview: Social priming: Information accessibility and its consequences. *Current Opinion in Psychology* 12:iv–vii.

DOI: [10.1016/j.copsyc.2016.11.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2016.11.001)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Introduction to a special issue of the journal, surveying recent research and theory on automaticity in social interaction.

Find this resource:

- Uleman, J. S., and J. A. Bargh, eds. 1989. *Unintended thought*. New York: Guilford.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Anthology collecting papers on the role of automatic processing in personality and social psychology.

Find this resource:

- Wegner, D. M. 2002. *The illusion of conscious will*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

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Argues, based on the Libet Experiment and other evidence, that the experience of free will is an illusion and that the “true causes” of behavior are unconscious.

Find this resource:

- Wegner, D. M., and J. A. Bargh. 1998. Control and automaticity in social life. In *Handbook of social psychology*. Vol. 1. Edited by D. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, and G. Lindzey, 446–496. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Argues that many of the classic findings in experimental social psychology, such as Milgram’s experiments on obedience to authority, reflect the operation of automatic processes.

Find this resource:

## Implicit Memory

Research on automaticity reveals the role of unconscious *processes* in experience, thought, and action, but traditionally the percepts, memories, and thoughts generated by these processes are assumed to be accessible to phenomenal awareness. Evidence for unconscious mental *contents* emerged with studies comparing alternative measures of memory in amnesic patients and normal subjects. In priming effects, for example, presentation of a stimulus (the prime) such as *doctor* makes it easier for subjects to complete stems *doc\_\_* or *nur\_\_* with legal English words. In repetition priming, the target is physically similar to the prime. In semantic priming, the relationship between prime and target is based on meaning. According to [Schacter 1987](#), explicit memory refers to recall or recognition; implicit memory refers to any change in behavior



attributable to a past event. When priming occurs in the absence of recall or recognition, we say that implicit memory is dissociated from explicit memory. Implicit memory is not merely an indirect measure of memory: when priming and similar effects occur in the absence of conscious recall or recognition, they count as expressions of unconscious memory. It might have been preferable simply to distinguish between “conscious” and “unconscious” memory, but the explicit-implicit distinction avoided the psychoanalytic and other baggage with which the concept of “the unconscious” is freighted; and it is here to stay. [Graf and Masson 1993](#) is a collection of early reviews of various aspects of implicit memory, and an update has been supplied by [Kihlstrom, et al. 2017](#). The most popular theory of implicit memory, influenced by the neuroscientific doctrine of modularity, is that explicit and implicit memory are the products of separate memory modules or systems in the brain: variants have been offered by [Schacter, et al. 2000](#); [Squire 2004](#); and [Eichenbaum 2008](#). A competing view assumes that there is only a single memory system but that implicit and explicit memory differ in terms of the processes involved: variants have been proposed by [Mandler 1980](#); [Jacoby 1991](#) (cited under [Automaticity](#)); [Roediger and McDermott 1993](#); [Reder, et al. 2009](#); and others. “Hybrid” theories, such as those proposed by [Henke 2010](#) and [Cabeza and Moscovitch 2013](#), assume that different modes of processing are mediated by different brain systems. Most studies of implicit memory involve repetition priming: evidence that implicit memory extends to semantic priming challenges most popular theories. Even though explicit and implicit memory are dissociable, [Yonelinas, et al. 2010](#) reviews mounting evidence that both amnesic patients and forgetful subjects can capitalize on the feeling of familiarity associated with priming to enhance their performance on explicit memory tests.

- Cabeza, R., and M. Moscovitch. 2013. Memory systems, processing modes, and components: Functional neuroimaging evidence. *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 8.1: 49–55.

DOI: [10.1177/1745691612469033](https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691612469033)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Synthesis of “memory systems” and “processing” views of memory: memory is regulated by a large number of processing components, each associated with a different brain module or system.

Find this resource:

- Eichenbaum, H. 2008. *Memory systems*. Edited by J. H. Byrne. 4 vols. New York: Elsevier.

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The medial temporal lobe, including the hippocampus, is critical for performance on explicit memory tasks. Offers a “relational processing” theory that the hippocampus is critical for encoding arbitrary or accidental relations between the features of a to-be-remembered event. Explicit memory typically depends on relational processing, while implicit memory typically does not.

Find this resource:

- Graf, P., and M. E. J. Masson, eds. 1993. *Implicit memory: New directions in cognition, development, and neuropsychology*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Collects authoritative articles extending and updating [Schacter 1987](#); especially good on developmental aspects of implicit memory, which is a topic still largely unexplored.

Find this resource:

- Henke, K. 2010. A model for memory systems based on processing modes rather than consciousness. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 11:523–532.

DOI: [10.1038/nrn2850](https://doi.org/10.1038/nrn2850)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Another “hybrid” theory, suggesting that three different processing modes are each associated with a different brain system; the extent of explicit-implicit dissociations will depend on the brain system(s) involved in each task.

Find this resource:

- Kihlstrom, J. F., J. Dorfman, and L. Park. 2017. Conscious and unconscious memory. In *Blackwell companion to consciousness*. 2d ed. Edited by S. Schneider and M. Velmans, 562–575. Oxford: Wiley.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Update of the literature on implicit memory, including the several varieties of multiple- and single-memory theories of explicit-implicit dissociations. Argues that, far from being independent (as implied by some multiple-systems views), implicit memory can contribute to performance on explicit memory tasks.

Find this resource:

- Mandler, G. 1980. Recognizing: The judgment of previous occurrence. *Psychological Review* 87.3: 252–271.

DOI: [10.1037/0033-295X.87.3.252](https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.87.3.252)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Written before the explicit-implicit distinction was formalized, Mandler offers a dual-process theory of recognition memory with implications for the explicit-implicit distinction: implicit memory occurs by virtue of the automatic activation of preexisting memory structures at the time of encoding; explicit memory requires effortful elaboration, creating new relations among activated structures.

Find this resource:

- Reder, L. M., H. Park, and P. D. Kieffaber. 2009. Memory systems do not divide on consciousness: Reinterpreting memory in terms of activation and binding. *Psychological Bulletin* 135:23–49.

DOI: [10.1037/a0013974](https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013974)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Comprehensive review of literature on priming and other effects often labeled as “implicit memory.” While the explicit-implicit distinction divides memory tests based on consciousness, argues that the more appropriate division is based on whether the test requires relational processing. Explicit memory requires the formation of new associations, while implicit memory does not.

Find this resource:

- Roediger, H. L., and K. B. McDermott. 1993. Implicit memory in normal human subjects. In *Handbook of neuropsychology*. Edited by F. Boller and J. Grafman, 63–131. Amsterdam: Elsevier Science.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Focuses on explicit-implicit dissociations observed in neurologically intact subjects, and offers an interpretation of explicit-implicit dissociations in terms of transfer-appropriate processing. Explicit and implicit memory are dissociated when one task (typically, the implicit test) depends on “perceptually driven” processing and the other (typically the explicit test) depends on “conceptually driven” processing.

Find this resource:

- Schacter, D. L. 1987. Implicit memory: History and current status. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 13:501–518.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Seminal paper on implicit memory, defining the phenomenon and reviewing relevant research, leading to an interpretation of explicit-implicit dissociations in terms of dissociable memory systems in the brain.

Find this resource:

- Schacter, D. L., A. D. Wagner, and R. L. Buckner. 2000. Memory systems of 1999. In *Oxford handbook of memory*. Edited by E. Tulving and F. I. M. Craik, 627–643. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Updates the “memory systems” view of explicit-implicit dissociations.

Find this resource:

- Squire, L. R. 2004. Memory systems of the brain: A brief history and current perspective. *Neurobiology of Learning & Memory* 82.3: 171–177.

DOI: [10.1016/j.nlm.2004.06.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nlm.2004.06.005)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Offers another “memory systems” view of explicit-implicit dissociations. Note, however, that Squire favors the label “nondeclarative” over Schacter’s original “implicit”—potentially confusing the explicit-implicit distinction with the distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge.

Find this resource:

- Yonelinas, A. P., M. Aly, W.-C. Wang, and J. D. Koen. 2010. Recollection and familiarity: Examining controversial assumptions and new directions. *Hippocampus* 20:1178–1194.

DOI: [10.1002/hipo.20864](https://doi.org/10.1002/hipo.20864)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Comprehensive review of evidence suggesting that explicit and implicit memory may be produced by independent memory systems. But they can nonetheless interact, as when subjects strategically use the feeling of familiarity that accompanies priming effects to improve performance on recognition tests.

Find this resource:

## Implicit Perception

By analogy with implicit memory, implicit perception refers to the influence of events in the current stimulus environment that cannot be consciously perceived. The most familiar example is subliminal perception, a literature comprehensively reviewed in [Dixon 1981](#). The term was coined by [Kihlstrom, et al. 1992](#) because there are many examples of unconscious perception where the stimulus is not truly subliminal. The newer term also avoids methodological controversies over the details of threshold-setting procedures and focuses attention on whether the stimulus is consciously perceptible. In implicit memory, the prime is consciously perceived at the time of presentation but not consciously remembered afterward; in implicit perception, the prime is not consciously perceived to begin with. Because perception is not complete until the stimulus has been identified and classified, the ultimate test of implicit perception is semantic priming—evidence that the stimulus has been processed for meaning, not just for physical structure. Interest in “subliminal” perception was revived by [Marcel 1983a](#) and [Marcel 1983b](#), whose observation of “masked” semantic priming were confirmed by [Cheesman and Merikle 1984](#) and [Greenwald, et al. 1996](#), among many others. Beyond subliminal, masked, and other forms of preconscious priming, implicit perception includes blindsight, analyzed by [Weiskrantz](#)

[1986](#) and [DeGelder, et al. 2001](#). [Young 1998](#) discusses unconscious perception in prosopagnosia and other pathologies of face recognition. [Logie 2013](#) does the same for unilateral neglect and other neurological disorders of attention. [Mack and Rock 1998](#) finds evidence for semantic priming in inattention blindness, and [Rensink 2013](#) reviews evidence for priming in various forms of attentional blindness such as repetition blindness, the attentional blink, and change blindness. [Kihlstrom and Cork 2017](#) discusses the most extreme case of implicit perception—priming by stimuli presented to surgical patients during general anesthesia. There may be no conscious perception without attention, but attention apparently does not guarantee conscious perception, either. Still, the meaning of unperceived events may be processed unconsciously, outside awareness. Subliminal perception occurs, but in most cases it is analytically limited and its effects typically do not last very long.

- Cheesman, J., and P. M. Merikle. 1984. Priming with and without awareness. *Perception & Psychophysics* 36:387–395.

DOI: [10.3758/BF03202793](#)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Demonstrates masked priming in the “subliminal Stroop” paradigm. Distinguishes between the subjective threshold, below which there is no conscious awareness of a stimulus, and the objective threshold, below which there is no discriminative response to the stimulus.

Find this resource:

- DeGelder, B., E. H. F. De Haan, and C. A. Heywood, eds. 2001. *Out of mind: Varieties of unconscious processes*. London: Oxford Univ. Press.

[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Festschrift honoring Lawrence Weiskrantz, who first documented “blindsight” in a brain-damaged patient, marshaling evidence for unconscious processing in a wide variety of domains, including vision, audition, memory, emotion, and action.

Find this resource:

- Dixon, N. F. 1981. *Preconscious processing*. Chichester, UK: Wiley.

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Updates Dixon’s *Subliminal Perception: The Nature of a Controversy* (1971) classic, comprehensive review of the literature on subliminal perception, reflecting a broader view of unconscious perception, beyond the narrow definition of “subliminal.”

Find this resource:

- Greenwald, A. G., S. C. Draine, and R. L. Abrams. 1996. Three cognitive markers of unconscious semantic activation. *Science* 273:1699–1702.

DOI: [10.1126/science.273.5282.1699](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.273.5282.1699)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Summarizes rigorous studies employing subliminal (actually masked) affective priming in studies that solve the “threshold bugboo” once and for all. Also discusses cognitive limitations on subliminal perception.

Find this resource:

- Kihlstrom, J. F., M. Terrence, and Douglas J. Tataryn. 1992. Implicit perception. In *Perception without awareness: Cognitive, clinical, and social perspectives*. Edited by R. F. Bornstein and T. S. Pittman, 17–54. New York: Guilford.

[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Introduced the term “implicit perception” as a broader alternative to “subliminal,” with coverage of sensory-perceptual disorders associated with hypnosis and the conversion (“hysterical”) disorders.

Find this resource:

- Kihlstrom, J. F., and R. C. Cork. 2017. Anesthesia and consciousness. In *Blackwell companion to consciousness*. 2d ed. Edited by S. Schneider and M. Velmans, pp. 682–694. Chichester, UK: Wiley.

[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Views as altered states of consciousness and discusses evidence for implicit perception in general anesthesia and conscious sedation.

Find this resource:

- Logie, R. H. 2013. Disorders of attention. In *Oxford handbook of cognitive psychology*. Edited by D. Reisberg, 131–146. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Reviews research on impairments in visual consciousness observed in brain-damaged patients, such as unilateral spatial neglect, including evidence for unconscious perception of stimuli presented in the neglected portion of space.

Find this resource:

- Mack, Arien, and Irvin Rock. 1998. *Inattention blindness*. Bradford Book Series in Cognitive Psychology. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Describes a program of research on inattention blindness, in which subjects do not detect supraliminal stimuli because their attention is focused on another portion of the visual field. Conclusion: conscious perception cannot occur in the absence of attention. See pp. xiv, 273.

Find this resource:

- Marcel, A. J. 1983a. Conscious and unconscious perception: Experiments on visual masking and word recognition. *Cognitive Psychology* 15:197–237.

DOI: [10.1016/0010-0285\(83\)90009-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0285(83)90009-9)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

The study that revived interest in “subliminal” perception. Clearly demonstrated masked semantic priming in a lexical decision task: subjects were quicker to identify targets (e.g., *nurse*) as legal words when they were preceded by a semantically related word (e.g., *doctor*), even though a masking stimulus prevented them from being consciously aware of the prime.

Find this resource:

- Marcel, A. J. 1983b. Conscious and unconscious perception: An approach to the relations between phenomenal experience and perceptual processes. *Cognitive Psychology* 15:238–300.

DOI: [10.1016/0010-0285\(83\)90010-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0285(83)90010-5)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Lays out Marcel’s theory of the relations between conscious and unconscious perceptual processes.

Find this resource:

- Rensink, R. A. 2013. Perception and attention. In *Oxford handbook of cognitive psychology*. Edited by D. Reisberg, 97–116. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

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Reviews research on what might be called “attentional” (as opposed to “inattentional” blindness. In cases of attentional blindness, such as repetition blindness, the attentional blink, and change blindness, perceivers are unaware of stimuli presented within their field of attention. In some cases, there is evidence of priming effects of the stimuli in question.

Find this resource:

- Weiskrantz, L. 1986. *Blindsight: A case study and implications*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Classic case study of Patient RB, who lost a portion of his visual field from damage to his striate cortex but nevertheless was able to make better-than-chance judgments about many properties of visual stimuli.

Find this resource:

- Young, A. W., ed. 1998. *Face and Mind*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Anthology collecting research on various aspects of face perception and recognition, including prosopagnosia and other forms of “face-blindness.”

Find this resource:

## Implicit Learning

Apparently subjects can also learn unconsciously, in the sense that they can acquire new knowledge that affects their ongoing experience, thought, and action, even though they are not aware of what they have learned. Pioneering studies such as [Reber 1967](#), which coined the term, showed that subjects can pick up on the “grammar” by which meaningless strings of letters have been arranged. This permits them to discriminate between grammatical and ungrammatical letter strings, even though they cannot articulate the grammar itself. [Reber 1993](#) and [Berry and Dienes 1993](#) offer comprehensive overviews while describing their own research programs. Similar effects have been observed in a number of different paradigms, including categorization, the detection of covariation, sequence learning, and the control of complex systems. [Stadler and Frensch 1998](#) is a valuable anthology offering reviews of empirical, methodological, and theoretical aspects of implicit learning. Implicit learning is sometimes classified as a special case of implicit memory, but there is an important difference. Implicit memory is an unconscious expression of episodic memory, while implicit learning covers abstract, context-free semantic and procedural knowledge. In implicit memory, subjects do not consciously remember the experiences that give rise to priming and other effects. In source amnesia, a variant on implicit memory studied by [Evans and Thorne 1966](#); [Schacter, et al. 1984](#), and others, subjects are aware of knowledge they have recently acquired, but cannot consciously remember the learning experience. In implicit learning, subjects remember the learning experiences, but are not aware of knowledge acquired from them. Nevertheless, this newly acquired knowledge influences their performance on various tasks. [Shanks 2017](#) marshals conceptual and methodological criticisms of this literature (and the literature on implicit perception as well). In contrast to memory and perception, it is not easy to equate the informational value of the cues provided for the explicit



and implicit tests of learning—in which case apparent dissociations can emerge as artifacts of test differences in cues or difficulty. [Wagenmakers, et al. 2012](#) reviews the problems with statistical interactions (which is what explicit-implicit dissociations are) and how they can be addressed. Even if implicit learning were to be satisfactorily demonstrated to be unconscious, there remains the question of just what is learned in implicit learning. Most accounts of the artificial-grammar paradigm, for example, assume that subjects unconsciously acquire procedural knowledge, which guides their grammaticality judgments. An alternative view is that they acquire something like a prototype of a grammatical string, which would be a piece of declarative knowledge. [Perruchet and Pacteau 1990](#) reports experimental findings consistent with this proposal. [Seger 1994](#) and [Perruchet and Pacton 2006](#) offer good theoretical overviews.

- Berry, D. C., and Z. Dienes. 1993. *Implicit learning: Theoretical and empirical issues*. Hove, UK: Erlbaum.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Comprehensive coverage of various aspects of implicit learning, framed by the authors' own programmatic research.

Find this resource:

- Evans, F. J., and W. A. F. Thorne. 1966. Two types of posthypnotic amnesia: Recall amnesia and source amnesia. *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis* 14.2: 162–179.

DOI: [10.1080/00207146608412959](https://doi.org/10.1080/00207146608412959)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

An early experimental demonstration of source amnesia.

Find this resource:

- Perruchet, P., and C. Pacteau. 1990. Synthetic grammar learning: Implicit rule abstraction or explicit fragmentary knowledge. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 119.3: 264–275.

DOI: [10.1037/0096-3445.119.3.264](https://doi.org/10.1037/0096-3445.119.3.264)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Reports experiments suggesting that rather than reflecting unconscious procedural knowledge, successful performance on the artificial-grammar task is mediated by conscious but fragmentary knowledge of smaller legal letter combinations.

Find this resource:

- Perruchet, P., and S. Pacton. 2006. Implicit learning and statistical learning: One phenomenon, two approaches. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 10.5: 233–238.

DOI: [10.1016/j.tics.2006.03.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2006.03.006)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Argues that implicit learning and other forms of “incidental” learning are special cases of a domain-general “statistical” learning mechanisms.

Find this resource:

- Reber, A. S. 1967. Implicit learning of artificial grammars. *Journal of Verbal Learning & Verbal Behavior* 6:855–863.

DOI: [10.1016/S0022-5371\(67\)80149-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-5371(67)80149-X)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Long before the explicit-implicit distinction was applied to memory, Reber introduced “implicit learning” to psychological research and theory.

Find this resource:

- Reber, A. S. 1993. *Implicit learning and tacit knowledge: An essay on the cognitive unconscious*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Provides a comprehensive overview of relevant research and argues that implicit learning is an evolutionarily prior, and extremely powerful, mode of learning.

Find this resource:

- Schacter, D. L., J. L. Harbluk, and D. R. McClachlan. 1984. Retrieval without recollection: An experimental analysis of source amnesia. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 23:593–611.

DOI: [10.1016/S0022-5371\(84\)90373-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-5371(84)90373-6)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

First observed in hypnosis by F. J. Evans, and subsequently observed in cases of “organic” amnesia as well, source amnesia occurs when a person retains conscious access to declarative and procedural knowledge but cannot consciously remember the episodic circumstances under which that knowledge was acquired.

Find this resource:

- Seger, C. A. 1994. Implicit learning. *Psychological Bulletin* 115:163–196.

DOI: [10.1037/0033-2909.115.2.163](https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.115.2.163)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Comprehensive, succinct overview of methods and theories concerning implicit learning.

Find this resource:

- Shanks, D. R. 2017. Regressive research: The pitfalls of post hoc data selection in the study of unconscious mental processes. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review* 24:752–775.

DOI: [10.3758/s13423-016-1170-y](https://doi.org/10.3758/s13423-016-1170-y)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Update of Shanks and St. John (1994), expressing similar doubts about implicit perception. Argues that many experiments ostensibly demonstrating these phenomena are vulnerable to methodological and statistical artifacts such as regression to the mean.

Find this resource:

- Stadler, M. A., and P. A. Frensch, eds. 1998. *Handbook of implicit learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Anthology collecting authoritative reviews of various aspects of implicit learning: its nature, proper methods for investigation, and unresolved theoretical issues.

Find this resource:

- Wagenmakers, E. -J., A.-M. Kryptopos, A. H. Criss, and G. Iverson. 2012. On the interpretation of removable interactions: A survey of the field 33 years after Loftus. *Memory & Cognition* 40:145–160.

DOI: [10.3758/s13421-011-0158-0](https://doi.org/10.3758/s13421-011-0158-0)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

In statistical terms, explicit-implicit dissociations are two-way interactions, and these can be misleading unless the explicit and implicit tests are equated for potentially confounding variables such as task difficulty. This paper updates the argument, initially made by Loren and Jean Chapman (*Psychological Bulletin*, 1973) and Geoffrey Loftus (*Memory & Cognition*, 1978).

Find this resource:

## Implicit Thought

Again by analogy to implicit memory, [Kihlstrom, et al. 1996](#) defines implicit thought as the influence of an internally generated idea (or image) on experience, thought, or action in the absence of conscious awareness of that thought. The idea of unconscious thinking is inspired by a large corpus of anecdotes from mathematics and science, such as Kekule's discovery of the structure of the benzene molecule. [Wallas 1926](#) proposed an influential model of problem solving and creativity in which intuition and incubation lead to insight, but some research led to skepticism concerning the validity of intuitions. But research reviewed in [Sio and Ormerod 2009](#)

cast doubt on the very existence of incubation. Interest in intuition was revived with a series of studies, with [Bowers, et al. 1990](#) showing that subjects could predict which verbal problems had correct solutions without being aware of the solutions themselves. In addition, [Dijksterhuis and Aarts 2010](#), [Topolinski 2011](#), [Kounios and Beeman 2014](#), and others showed that the unachieved solutions primed performance on other tasks. [Bechara, et al. 1997](#) obtained a similar result by recording anticipatory physiological responses during the Iowa Gambling Task. [Myers 2002](#) provides a balanced review of this literature, while [Lieberman 2000](#) views intuition in the framework of cognitive neuroscience. On the developmental side, [Siegler 2000](#) shows that children who are learning to solve arithmetic problems show signs of shifting to a more efficient cognitive strategy before they are aware of having done so. [Haidt 2001](#) implicates intuitive “gut feelings” in irrational (or, at least *non-rational*), emotion-based theories of moral reasoning. In the case of implicit thought, the source of the unconscious influence on task performance is neither a percept (i.e., a mental representation of some event in the current stimulus environment) nor a memory (i.e., a representation of some event in the past). Instead, it is something internally generated by the subject, albeit outside of conscious awareness: an idea (or perhaps an image). While it is certainly possible to construct situations where intuitions can lead us astray, in the ordinary course of everyday living it appears that intuitions can be rational guides to appropriate choice.

- Bechara, A., H. Damasio, D. Tranel, and A. R. Damasio. 1997. Deciding advantageously before knowing the advantageous strategy. *Science* 275:1293–1295.

DOI: [10.1126/science.275.5304.1293](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.275.5304.1293)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

In a study employing the Iowa Gambling Task, both normal subjects and patients with bilateral damage to ventromedial prefrontal cortex showed differential galvanic skin responses to advantageous and risky choices before they reported conscious insight into the best strategy. These physiological cues predicted the performance of the normal subjects but not the patients, suggesting that prefrontal cortex mediates response to unconscious physiological cues.

Find this resource:

- Bowers, K. S., G. Regehr, C. Balthazard, and K. Parker. 1990. Intuition in the context of discovery. *Cognitive Psychology* 22:72–110.

DOI: [10.1016/0010-0285\(90\)90004-N](https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0285(90)90004-N)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Revived research on intuition by showing that subjects could guess which of two verbal problems, similar to those presented on the Remote Associates Test (RAT), had a correct solution, even though they did not know what the solution was.

Find this resource:

- Dijksterhuis, A., and H. Aarts. 2010. Goals, attention, and (un)consciousness. *Annual Review of Psychology* 61:467–490.

DOI: [10.1146/annurev.psych.093008.100445](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.093008.100445)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Reviews a substantial body of research stimulated by [Bowers, et al. 1990](#), indicating that thinking can proceed unconsciously even though it requires attention and a goal-directed mental set.

Find this resource:

- Haidt, J. 2001. The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review* 108.4: 814–834.

DOI: [10.1037/0033-295X.108.4.814](https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.108.4.814)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Argues, from responses to the “Trolley Problem” and other evidence, that moral judgments are shaped by unconscious, automatic, emotional responses to the situation.

Find this resource:

- Kihlstrom, J. F., V. A. Shames, and J. Dorfman. 1996. Intimations of memory and thought. In *Implicit memory and metacognition*. Edited by L. M. Reder, 1–23. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Integrates Bowers’s revival of intuition with Wallas’s stage model of problem solving. Contains a summary of Shames’s (1994) doctoral dissertation, which demonstrated unconscious semantic priming by RAT-like items and laid the foundation for many subsequent studies of intuitive thinking. Much the same material is covered by Dorfman, Shames, and Kihlstrom in “Intuition, Incubation, and Insight: Implicit Cognition in Problem Solving,” in G. Underwood, ed., *Implicit cognition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Find this resource:

- Kounios, J., and M. E. Beeman. 2014. The cognitive neuroscience of insight. *Annual Review of Psychology* 65:71–93.

DOI: [10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115154](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115154)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Solving RAT-like problems benefits from right hemisphere activation of a coarse semantic network, leading to unconscious semantic processing that, while unconscious, is nonetheless contingent on adopting a problem-solving mental set.

Find this resource:

- Lieberman, M. D. 2000. Intuition: A social cognitive neuroscience approach. *Psychological Bulletin* 126.1: 109–137.

DOI: [10.1037/0033-2909.126.1.109](https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.126.1.109)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Links intuition to implicit learning processes and reviews neuropsychological and brain-imaging research indicating that the neural substrates of both are to be found in the basal ganglia.

Find this resource:

- Myers, D. G. 2002. *Intuition: Its Powers and Perils*. New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Balanced coverage of the promise and perils of intuitive thinking.

Find this resource:

- Siegler, R. S. 2000. Unconscious insights. *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 9.3: 79–83.

DOI: [10.1111/1467-8721.00065](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8721.00065)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Showed that elementary-school children achieved insight into the solution of an arithmetic problem before they were able to report the solution.

Find this resource:

- Sio, U. N., and T. C. Ormerod. 2009. Does incubation enhance problem solving? A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin* 135.1: 94–120.

DOI: [10.1037/a0014212](https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014212)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Quantitative review of 117 independent studies, covering a wide variety of problems, confirming a positive effect of incubation, particularly on divergent-thinking tasks.

Find this resource:

- Topolinski, S. 2011. A process model of intuition. *European Review of Social Psychology* 22.1: 274–315.

DOI: [10.1080/10463283.2011.640078](https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2011.640078)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Considering a wide variety of tasks, supports a model of intuition in which both priming-related processing fluency and a spurt of positive affect play a role in having, and acting on, intuitions.

Find this resource:

- Wallas, G. 1926. *The art of thought*. New York: Harcourt Brace.

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A classic of the literature on thinking, describing five steps in problem-solving and creativity: preparation prior to the problem; intimation (intuition) about the correct solution; incubation as the solution rises to the threshold of consciousness; illumination (insight) as the solution crosses that threshold; and verification that the insight is, indeed, correct.

Find this resource:

## Implicit Emotion

Implicit memory, perception, learning, and thinking comprise the cognitive unconscious. [Hilgard 1980](#) points out that, in addition to cognitive states of knowledge and belief, mental life also includes emotional and motivational states—raising the question of whether these, too, can operate unconsciously. [LeDoux 2000](#) proposes a neuroscientific model of emotion in which conscious emotional states can be automatically and unconsciously elicited by relevant stimulus events. [Feldman Barrett, et al. 2005](#) reviews evidence that conscious emotions can also occur as expressions of implicit perception and memory. Although unconscious emotion seems to some theorists to be a contradiction in terms, [Lang 1968](#) proposes that, in principle, every emotional state has three components: the subjective feeling, the physiological correlate, and the behavioral expression. Usually these components vary together, but [Rachman and Hodgson 1974](#) argues that various desynchronies among them can be observed in certain clinical syndromes. [Kring and Mote 2016](#) reviews a great deal of evidence for such desynchronies in various forms of mental illness. [Kihlstrom, et al. 2000](#) argues that unconscious (implicit) emotion entails desynchronies (dissociations) between explicit emotion, defined as the subjective feeling state, and implicit emotion, defined as the overt behavioral or covert physiological components. [Cameron, et al. 2012](#) reviews evidence that measures of individual differences in affective priming can serve as measures of unconscious social attitudes, which have an emotional component by definition. [Banaji and Greenwald 2013](#) offers the Implicit Association Test (IAT) as a reaction-time measure that can reveal prejudices and other attitudes that subjects are not aware of harboring. [Nosek 2007](#) reviews evidence that the correlations between explicit and implicit measures of the same attitude are relatively low—although they are still high enough to question whether the attitudes measured by the IAT are truly unconscious. Unfortunately, assessments of explicit and implicit attitudes and other emotional states are so different in character as to question whether discrepancies between them might be artifacts of differences in cues or task difficulty. Both affective priming and the IAT are beset by a number of potentially confounding variables. [Arkes and Tetlock 2004](#) and [Kihlstrom 2004](#) review theoretical and methodological considerations that

question whether they really measure unconscious attitudes (as opposed to unobtrusive measures of conscious attitudes), or even if they are measurements of attitudes at all. Moreover, as noted in [Automaticity in Social, Personality, and Clinical Psychology](#), some of the most provocative demonstrations of unconscious processes in emotion have proved difficult to replicate in independent laboratories. For these reasons, “implicit emotion” represents a plausible, but not firmly proven, construct.

- Arkes, H. R., and P. E. Tetlock. 2004. Attributions of implicit prejudice, or “Would Jesse Jackson ‘fail’ the Implicit Association Test?”. *Psychological Inquiry* 15:257–321.

DOI: [10.1207/s15327965pli1504\\_01](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1504_01)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Critical analysis of the IAT and similar measures, suggesting that responses may reflect knowledge of cultural stereotypes rather than prejudice, explicit or implicit.

Find this resource:

- Banaji, M. R., and A. G. Greenwald. 2013. *Blindspot: Hidden biases of good people*. New York: Delacorte.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Popular-press argument in favor of implicit prejudice, written by the leaders of the team who devised the IAT.

Find this resource:

- Cameron, C. D., J. L. Brown-Iannuzzi, and B. K. Payne. 2012. Sequential priming measures of implicit social cognition: A meta-analysis of associations with behavior and explicit attitudes. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 16.4: 330–350.

DOI: [10.1177/1088868312440047](https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868312440047)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Comprehensive review of studies of priming measures of stereotypes, attitudes, and prejudice.

Find this resource:

- Feldman Barrett, L., P. M. Niedenthal, and P. Winkielman, eds. 2005. *Emotion and consciousness*. New York: Guilford.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Anthology covering a wide variety of research programs concerned with conscious and unconscious emotion.



Find this resource:

- Hilgard, E. R. 1980. The trilogy of mind: Cognition, affection, and conation. *Journal for the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 16:107–117.

DOI: [10.1002/1520-6696\(198004\)16:2<107::AID-JHBS2300160202>3.0.CO;2-Y](https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6696(198004)16:2<107::AID-JHBS2300160202>3.0.CO;2-Y)  
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Reflections on the classic tripartite distinction of mental functions: cognition, emotion, and motivation.

Find this resource:

- Kihlstrom, J. F. 2004. Implicit methods in social psychology. In *The Sage handbook of methods in social psychology*. Edited by C. Sansone, C. C. Morf, and A. T. Panter, 195–212. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

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Presents an overview of the use of priming measures and the Implicit Association Test to measure unconscious attitudes and other constructs relevant to implicit emotion, along with a conceptual and methodological concerns.

Find this resource:

- Kihlstrom, J. F., S. Mulvaney, B. A. Tobias, and I. P. Tobis. 2000. The emotional unconscious. In *Cognition and emotion*. Edited by E. Eich, J. F. Kihlstrom, G. H. Bower, J. P. Forgas, and P. M. Niedenthal, 30–86. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Introduces the concept of “implicit emotion,” defined as a dissociation between the subjective, experiential component of emotion and the behavioral and/or physiological components.

Find this resource:

- Kring, A. M., and J. Mote. 2016. Emotion disturbances as transdiagnostic processes in psychopathology. In *Handbook of Emotion*. Edited by L. F. Barrett, M. Lewis, and J. M. Haviland-Jones, 653–669. 4th ed. New York: Guilford.

[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Comprehensive review of emotion in various syndromes of mental illness, noting discrepancies between various components of emotion in schizophrenia.

Find this resource:

- Lang, P. J. 1968. Fear reduction and fear behavior: Problems in treating a construct. In *Research in psychotherapy*. Edited by J. M. Schlein, 90–103. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

DOI: [10.1037/10546-004](https://doi.org/10.1037/10546-004)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Proposes an influential multicomponent view of emotion comprising subjective experience, behavioral expressions, and physiological changes, and calling for assessment of each component in diagnosis and treatment.

Find this resource:

- LeDoux, J. E. 2000. Emotion circuits in the brain. *Annual Review of Neuroscience* 23:155–184.

DOI: [10.1146/annurev.neuro.23.1.155](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.neuro.23.1.155)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Reviews advances in affective neuroscience, including LeDoux's own neuroscientific theory of emotion (particularly fear), allowing for dissociations between various aspects of emotional experience and expression.

Find this resource:

- Nosek, B. A. 2007. Implicit-explicit relations. *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 16.2: 65–69(5).

DOI: [10.1111/j.1467-8721.2007.00477.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2007.00477.x)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Reviews results of many studies with the Implicit Association Test, showing relatively low correlations between explicit and implicit measures of social attitudes.

Find this resource:

- Rachman, S., and R. E. Hodgson. 1974. Synchrony and desynchrony in measures of fear. *Behaviour Research & Therapy* 12:311–318.

DOI: [10.1016/0005-7967\(74\)90005-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0005-7967(74)90005-9)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Based on Lang's multicomponent view of emotion, proposes that in anxiety disorders the three components may become dissociated from each other.

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# Implicit Motivation

Again based on an analogy to implicit memory, implicit motivation may be defined as any change in experience, thought, or action attributable to a goal or motive, in the absence of conscious awareness of that motive. [McClelland, et al. 1989](#), which coined the term, argues that motives themselves can be unconscious, such that people are not aware of the reasons they do what they do. In addition, [Bargh 1990](#) argues that goals and motives can be automatically elicited by various environmental stimuli. [Gollwitzer and Bargh 1996](#) provides extensive coverage of theories of automatically elicited goals and motives, while [Pessiglione, et al. 2007](#) shows how motives can arise as expressions of implicit perception or memory. [Schultheiss and Brunstein 2010](#) collects a number of articles on various aspects of implicit motivation. [Kollner and Schultheiss 2014](#) reviews evidence that there are low correlations between “objective” assessments of motives by such means as self-report personality questionnaires, and “projective” assessments by means of such techniques as the Thematic Apperception Test or Picture-Story Exercise. As with implicit learning and implicit emotion, however, there are substantial differences in how explicit and implicit motives are assessed: enough to raise the question of whether the typically low correlation between them indicates that they differ in terms of accessibility to consciousness or is simply a reflection of method variance. [Thrash, et al. 2010](#) reviews these concerns. However, an experiment in [Schultheiss, et al. 2009](#), which carefully matched the assessments of explicit and implicit motives, suggests that motives can be unconscious after all. However, as with other studies of priming and automaticity in social, personality, and clinical psychology, some of the most provocative demonstrations of unconscious processes in motivation have proved difficult to replicate in independent laboratories.

- Bargh, J. A. 1990. Auto-motives: Preconscious determinants of social interaction. In *Handbook of motivation and cognition*. Edited by E. T. Higgins and R. M. Sorrentino, 93–130. New York: Guilford.

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First statement of Bargh’s theory that goals and motives can be automatically determined by environmental stimuli and guide behavior outside awareness and voluntary control.

Find this resource:

- Gollwitzer, P. M., and J. A. Bargh, eds. 1996. *The psychology of action*. New York: Guilford.

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Anthology of papers employing the concept of automaticity to integrate theories of motivation with advances in our understanding of social cognition.

Find this resource:

- Kollner, M. G., and O. C. Schultheiss. 2014. Meta-analytic evidence of low convergence between implicit and explicit measures of the needs for achievement, affiliation, and power. *Frontiers in Psychology: Personality & Social Psychology* 5:826.

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Reviews evidence for the low correlations between explicit and implicit measurements of the three great social motives: achievement, affiliation/intimacy, and power.

Find this resource:

- McClelland, D. C., R. Koestner, and J. Weinberger. 1989. How do self-attributed and implicit motives differ? *Psychological Review* 96:690–702.

DOI: [10.1037/0033-295X.96.4.690](https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.96.4.690)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

First statement of the idea that people can be unconscious of their motivational dispositions, and preliminary analysis of similarities and differences between explicit and implicit motives.

Find this resource:

- Pessiglione, M., L. Schmidt, B. Draganski, et al. 2007. How the brain translates money into force: A neuroimaging study of subliminal motivation. *Science* 316.5826: 904–906.

DOI: [10.1126/science.1140459](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1140459)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Demonstrates that muscular performance can be influenced by “subliminal” presentation of reward cues. Neuroimaging indicated that the effect is mediated by a network including the ventral pallidum and supplementary motor area.

Find this resource:

- Schultheiss, O. C., D. Yankova, B. Dirlikov, and D. J. Schad. 2009. Are implicit and explicit motive measures statistically independent? A fair and balanced test using the Picture Story Exercise and a cue- and response-matched questionnaire measure. *Journal of Personality Assessment* 91.1: 72–81.

DOI: [10.1080/00223890802484456](https://doi.org/10.1080/00223890802484456)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Important study confirming a dissociation between explicit and implicit motive measures employing tests equated for cue values.

Find this resource:

- Schultheiss, O. C., and J. C. Brunstein, eds. 2010. *Implicit motives*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

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Anthology surveying various empirical and theoretical issues concerning implicit motivation.

Find this resource:

- Thrash, T. M., S. E. Cassidy, L. A. Maruskin, and A. J. Eliot. 2010. Factors that influence the relation between implicit and explicit motives: A general implicit-explicit congruence framework. In *Implicit motives*. Edited by O. Schultheiss and J. Brunstein, 308–340. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

DOI: [10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195335156.003.0011](https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195335156.003.0011)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Reviews evidence on factors that moderate the relationship between explicit and implicit motive measures.

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## The Freudian Unconscious Revisited

Freud did not discover the unconscious—according to [Hall 1912](#), the “iceberg metaphor” of the unconscious, commonly attributed to Freud, was coined by Fechner, inspired by Herbart, while Freud was still in short pants. However, Freud’s essentially Romantic view of unconscious mental life dominated Western culture in the 20th century. The essay collection [Roth 1998](#) celebrates this influence; the collection [Crews 1998](#) is more critical. [Shevrin 1992](#) compares and contrasts the Freudian and non-Freudian views of the unconscious. [Rapaport 1942](#) provides an early overview of attempts to study repression and other emotional influences on memory in laboratory settings; [Singer 1990](#) provides an update. The programmatic research efforts of [Silverman, et al. 1982](#) and [Shevrin, et al. 1996](#) to validate psychoanalytic theory both made use of subliminal perception methods. [Westen 1998](#) is among those psychoanalytically inclined writers who claim that modern research on the cognitive unconscious validates Freud’s essential claims. But nothing in the research literature validates Freud’s specific claims about the repression of trauma. Freudian theory was at the root of the controversy, regrettably still with us, over “repressed” and “recovered” memories of child sexual abuse and other traumas. [Crews 1998](#) provides a critical view of the recovered memory literature, while [Kihlstrom 1998](#) offers a formal definition of the “false memory syndrome.” While Freud’s notion of repressed memories reappearing as neurotic symptoms is consistent with what we know about implicit memory, there has never been any convincing evidence that traumatic memories are subject to repression; in fact, emotional arousal, whether positive or negative, tends to enhance memory. Despite efforts to bolster Freud with modern scientific psychology, psychoanalysis remains seriously flawed, both as a scientific theory of mind and behavior and as an approach to the treatment of mental

illness. [Macmillan 1997](#) offers a comprehensive analysis of classical Freudian psychoanalytic theory, while [Crews 2017](#) offers a critical view of the early (prepsychoanalytic) Freud. What Ebbinghaus famously wrote of Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, we can also say about Freud's psychoanalysis: "Wherever the structure is touched, it falls apart" and "What is true is alas not new, the new not true." Although there are certain general aspects of Freudian "metapsychology" that are intuitively appealing to psychologists, Freud appears to have gotten every detail wrong: a worse success rate, someone once remarked, than could occur simply by chance.

- Crews, F. C. 2017. *Freud: The making of an illusion*. New York: Metropolitan.

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Drawing on archival sources, including recently released correspondence, Crews—a literature scholar who once embraced psychoanalytic theory as a vehicle for literary criticism, paints a devastating picture of Freud's misunderstanding, misrepresentation, and mendacity.

Find this resource:

- Crews, F. C., ed. 1998. *Unauthorized Freud: Doubters confront a legend*. New York: Viking.

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Collects essays by critics of "the emptiness of Freud's claims and the whimsical nature of his interpretations" (p. xii), largely in response to the 1998–1999 exhibit celebrating Freud at the Library of Congress.

Find this resource:

- Hall, G. S. 1912. *Founders of modern psychology*. New York: Appleton.

DOI: [10.1037/10879-000](https://doi.org/10.1037/10879-000)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Highly readable history of 19th-century scientific psychology, written by a student of both William James and Wilhelm Wundt. No mention of Freud, but a good chapter on Hartmann and his *Philosophy of the Unconscious* (1867).

Find this resource:

- Kihlstrom, J. F. 1998. Exhumed memory. In *Truth in memory*. Edited by S. J. Lynn and K. M. McConkey, 3–31. New York: Guilford.

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Discusses research bearing on the current controversy (still with us) over “repressed” and “recovered” memories of child sexual abuse and other traumatic experiences. Offers a formal definition of the “false memory syndrome.”

Find this resource:

- Macmillan, M. 1997. *Freud evaluated: The completed arc*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

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A monumental work in the history of science, Macmillan details the evolution of Freud’s theory of personality, with special attention to the evidence that Freud himself cited in support of his ideas.

Find this resource:

- Rapaport, D. 1942. *Emotions and memory*. Baltimore, MD: Williams & Wilkins.

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Classic discussion of experimental studies of the effects of emotion on memory. Reminds us that repression is not about forgetting the merely unpleasant but rather operates on memories of vital threats that cannot be reproduced in the laboratory.

Find this resource:

- Roth, M. S., ed. 1998. *Freud: Conflict and culture*. New York: Knopf.

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Collection of essays published in conjunction with the exhibit of the same name mounted in 1998–1999 by the Library of Congress, exploring the impact of Freud on society and culture.

Find this resource:

- Shevrin, H. 1992. The Freudian unconscious and the cognitive unconscious: Identical or fraternal twins? In *Interface of psychoanalysis and psychology*. Edited by J. W. Barron, M. N. Eagle, and D. L. Wolitzky, 313–316. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

DOI: [10.1037/10118-013](https://doi.org/10.1037/10118-013)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Compares and contrasts the views of the unconscious in psychoanalysis and modern cognitive psychology, finding that the two are largely compatible with each other, particularly with respect to the “nonrepressed realm of the unconscious.”

Find this resource:

- Shevrin, H., J. A. Bond, L. A. W. Brakel, R. K. Hertel, and W. J. Williams. 1996. *Conscious and unconscious processes: Psychodynamic, cognitive, and neurophysiological convergences*. New York: Guilford.

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Describes an extensive research program employing neuroscientific methods, especially event-related potentials, to assess unconscious conflict and its relationship to symptoms.

Find this resource:

- Silverman, L. H., F. M. Lachman, and R. H. Milich. 1982. *The search for oneness*. New York: International Universities Press.

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Presents a program of research exploring the positive and negative effects, on psychiatric patients and normal subjects, of subliminal presentations of the “symbiotic” stimulus *Mommy and I Are One*.

Find this resource:

- Singer, J., ed. 1990. *Repression and dissociation: Implications for personality theory, psychopathology, and health*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

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Contributions summarize recent research on repression, and the related (though different) topic of dissociation.

Find this resource:

- Westen, D. 1998. Unconscious thought, feeling, and motivation: The end of a century-long debate. In *Empirical perspectives on the psychoanalytic unconscious*. Edited by R. F. Bornstein and J. M. Masling, 1–44. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

DOI: [10.1037/10256-001](https://doi.org/10.1037/10256-001)[Save Citation »Export Citation »E-mail Citation »](#)

Argues that modern (post-Freudian) psychoanalytic theory, stripped of its references to primitive sexual and aggressive urges, finds considerable support from laboratory studies of implicit memory and subliminal perception.

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