
UNIT 3 MIND AND EMOTIONS

Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
 - 3.1 Introduction
 - 3.2 Brain and the Mind
 - 3.3 Understanding the Mind
 - 3.4 Philosophers on Mind
 - 3.5 Emotions and Philosophy
 - 3.6 Let Us Sum Up
 - 3.7 Further Readings and References
-

3.0 OBJECTIVES

Our lives are filled with emotions such as love, happiness, envy, boredom and excitement, and they are central to our identities and our experience of the world. In this unit we shall try to understand the concept of emotions, their relationship with mind and brain, and some views of various philosophers on this concept.

At the end of this unit, you will be able to

- state and explain the concept of mind in simple words
 - describe and discuss the relationship between brain and mind
 - construct that the emotional mind consists of subconscious, unconscious and subconscious components
 - describe the functions of various components of the mind and express the relationship with emotions
 - express the views of various eminent scholars on the concept of mind
-

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Arnold Bennett (1867-1931) says, “There can be no knowledge without emotion. We may be aware of truth, yet until we have felt its force, it is not ours. To the cognition of the brain must be added the experience of the soul.” No aspect of our mental life is more important to the quality and meaning of our existence than emotions. Emotions are what make life worth living, or sometimes ending. So it is not surprising that most of the great classical philosophers—Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Descartes, Hobbes, Hume—had recognizable theories of emotion, conceived as responses to certain sorts of events of concern to a subject, triggering bodily changes and typically motivating characteristic behavior. What is surprising is that in much of the twentieth-century philosophers of mind and psychologists tended to neglect them—perhaps because the sheer variety of phenomena covered by the word “emotion” and its closest neighbors tends to discourage tidy theory. In recent years, however, emotions have once again become the focus of vigorous interest in philosophy, as well as in other branches of cognitive science. In view of the proliferation of increasingly fruitful exchanges between researches of different stripes, it is no

longer useful to speak of the philosophy of emotion in isolation from the approaches of other disciplines, particularly psychology, neurology, evolutionary biology, and even economics. While it is quite impossible to do justice to those approaches here, some sidelong glances in their direction will aim to suggest their philosophical importance. Here we begin by outlining some of the ways that philosophers have conceived the place of emotions in the topography of the mind, particularly in their relation to bodily states, to motivation, and to beliefs and desires, as well as some of the ways in which they have envisaged the relation between different emotions. Most emotions have an intentional structure: we shall need to say something about what that means.

Psychology and more recently evolutionary biology have offered a number of theories of emotions, stressing their function in the conduct of life. Philosophers have been especially partial to cognitivist theories, emphasizing analogies either with propositional judgments or with perception. But different theories implicitly posit different ontologies of emotion, and there has been some dispute about what emotions really are, and indeed whether they are any kind of thing at all. Emotions also raise normative questions: about the extent to which they can be said to be rational, or can contribute to rationality. In that regard the question of our knowledge of our own emotions is especially problematic, as it seems they are both the object of our most immediate awareness and the most powerful source of our capacity for self-deception. This results in a particularly ambivalent relation between emotions and morality. This unit begins by trying to explore the relationship between mind and body, mind and brain. Further, it takes you to explore the emotional mind through the analysis of various components of our mind to understand the fine dividing line between emotions and feelings.

3.2 BRAIN AND THE MIND

Understanding the relationship between the brain and the mind — [mind-body problem](#) is one of the central issues in the history of [philosophy](#). It is a challenging problem both philosophically and scientifically. There are three major philosophical schools of thought concerning the answer: dualism, materialism, and idealism. [Dualism](#) holds that the mind exists independently of the brain; [materialism](#) holds that mental phenomena are identical to neuronal phenomena; and [idealism](#) holds that only mental phenomena exist.

You may question as to what is the relationship between the physical brain [matter](#) and the mind. The relationship physical brain, [matter](#) and the mind is known through both direct and indirect scientific evidences. The impact physical alterations to the brain have on the mind, such as with traumatic brain injury and [psychoactive drug](#) use helps us to understand the relationship between the two. In addition to the philosophical questions, the relationship between mind and brain involves a number of scientific questions, including understanding the relationship between mental activity and brain activity, the exact mechanisms by which drugs influence [cognition](#), and the [neural correlates of consciousness](#).

Through most of history many philosophers found it inconceivable that cognition could be implemented by a physical substance such as brain tissue (that is neurons and synapses). Philosophers such as Patricia Churchland posit that the drug-mind interaction is indicative of an intimate connection between the brain and the mind, not that the two are the same entity. [Descartes](#), who thought extensively about mind-brain relationships, found it possible to explain reflexes and other simple behaviors in [mechanistic terms](#), although he did not believe that complex thought, and language, in particular, could be explained by reference to the physical brain alone. Philosophy of mind is the branch of [philosophy](#) that studies the nature of the mind,

[mental events](#), [mental functions](#), mental properties, [consciousness](#) and their relationship to the physical body. The mind-body problem, i.e. the relationship of the mind to the body, is commonly seen as the central issue in philosophy of mind, although there are other issues concerning the nature of the mind that do not involve its relation to the physical body.

[Dualism](#) and [monism](#) are the two major schools of thought that attempt to resolve the mind-body problem. Dualism is the position that mind and body are in some way separate from each other. It can be traced back to [Plato](#), [Aristotle](#) and the [Samkhya](#) and [Yoga](#) schools of [Hindu](#) philosophy, but it was most precisely formulated by [René Descartes](#) in the 17th century. [Substance dualists](#) argue that the mind is an independently existing substance, whereas Property dualists maintain that the mind is a group of independent properties that [emerge](#) from and cannot be reduced to the brain, but that it is not a distinct substance.

3.3 UNDERSTANDING THE MIND

Emotional Mind

When we think of mind, many thoughts flit through our brain. We often wonder as to what is the difference, if any, between emotions and feelings. The question which must have often come to your mind may be what causes emotions and feelings?

Before we go further, it is important to emphasize here that

- Your subconscious mind determines how you respond to things.
- Your unconscious mind determines how you feel about things.
- Feelings communicate subconscious needs to the conscious mind.
-

Feelings can be better understood by breaking down the different effects they have on us. The term “feeling” feeling for example, refers to how your emotions make you feel and the physical expression of those emotions. Emotions themselves are generated in your subconscious mind, whilst the physiological changes they cause (the effects they have on your body) originate from the unconscious processes that occur in the brain. Therefore, in order to fully understand your feelings, you first need to have a basic understanding of the conscious, subconscious, and unconscious parts of your mind. So, let’s have a look at these now.

Conscious Mind

The conscious mind is what you are using right now to read this course book. It is also what you think with everyday, and what determines how you perceive yourself and your surrounding environment. Though your conscious mind is actively involved in your day to day existence, remember that the conscious mind is fairly limited in what it can process, as it can only remember only 7-9 pieces of information, or hold one thought, at any given time. Whatever information or thought is being held by the conscious mind during this time, will then be analyzed for the most logical solution right now in the current moment or maybe at a later moment. So for example, if I think to myself “I am Hungry”, my conscious mind will analyze this thought and come up with a solution that will get me something to eat. But it will not think of a way for me to do something else (e.g., get something to drink), unless I start thinking about something to drink. The problem with the conscious mind is that this analysis may often be impaired by the unconscious parts of the mind. One of the most powerful influences are emotions, which can cause a person to react irrationally by dominating and bypassing their

conscious analysis. That is why we often do things we regret when we are feeling very emotional, such as when we feel very angry or very sad.

Subconscious Mind

Unlike the conscious mind which is very limited in its processing in its processing power and storage capacity, the subconscious mind has the ability to store everything that has ever happened to you in your life. But, because this information is stored in your subconscious, you cannot access it through normal means (i.e. by thinking about it). That is why some people undergo hypnosis, as it allows them to get to the root cause of the problem by finding out what is buried in their subconscious. Over time as your subconscious mind begins to fill up with more and more information, it begins to form a model of the type of person you are. This model then determines how you view yourself, other people and the world you live in. Typically, this model is firmly established by the time you reach your teens, although it can still be modified by subsequent life events and experiences.

Unconscious Mind

The unconscious mind is similar to the subconscious, in the sense that you have no conscious awareness or control of it. However, the unconscious is not really a mind but rather a series of processes that occur in the brain which result in the regulation of autonomic bodily functions. For example, breathing, sweating and beating of your heart (autonomic bodily functions) are all a direct result of the unconscious processes that occur in your brain. These keep your body working, without you having to think about it.

Unconscious Feelings

The unconscious part of your brain is also, what makes you feel the way you feel when exposed to a certain stimulus. For example, when you experience fear that emotion is first generated in the subconscious. But the feeling you feel from that emotion, comes from the unconscious part of your brain which causes adrenalin to be released in the body. This adrenalin then causes you to feel the feelings associated with fear, such as an increase in the heart rate, breathing and alertness. When you experience emotions, such as being happy or sad, is largely due to what has been programmed (stored) into your subconscious mind throughout your life. A simple way to demonstrate this can we found with the films we like and dislike. For example, you may like a particular film, but your friend might think it is boring. The emotions that each of you experienced from watching that film were determined by how your subconscious (through its programmed beliefs) perceived that information. So, for example, if you have had a keen interest in space, since you were young, you are likely to find films about outer space much more interesting and entertaining than someone who has no interest in outer space. Likewise, a person who loves comedy films may find them more entertaining and relaxing than a person who is more of a technical buff who may feel bored while watching such a film. However it is important to note that this example takes into account, just one factor, that being, whether you have an interest in space/ comedy or not. In reality, all the information that has been stored in the subconscious will be used to determine how you perceive and therefore react to, any given piece of information.

Subconscious Filters

A
h
i
i
e
n
t
T
f
r
s
s

s
t
y
y
r
t
b
d
i
r
e

S
s
s
S
N
v
e
“
b
e
a
d
f
s
t

r
A

a
n
r
g
u
d
e
e
e
s

C
“
s
r
d
b
h

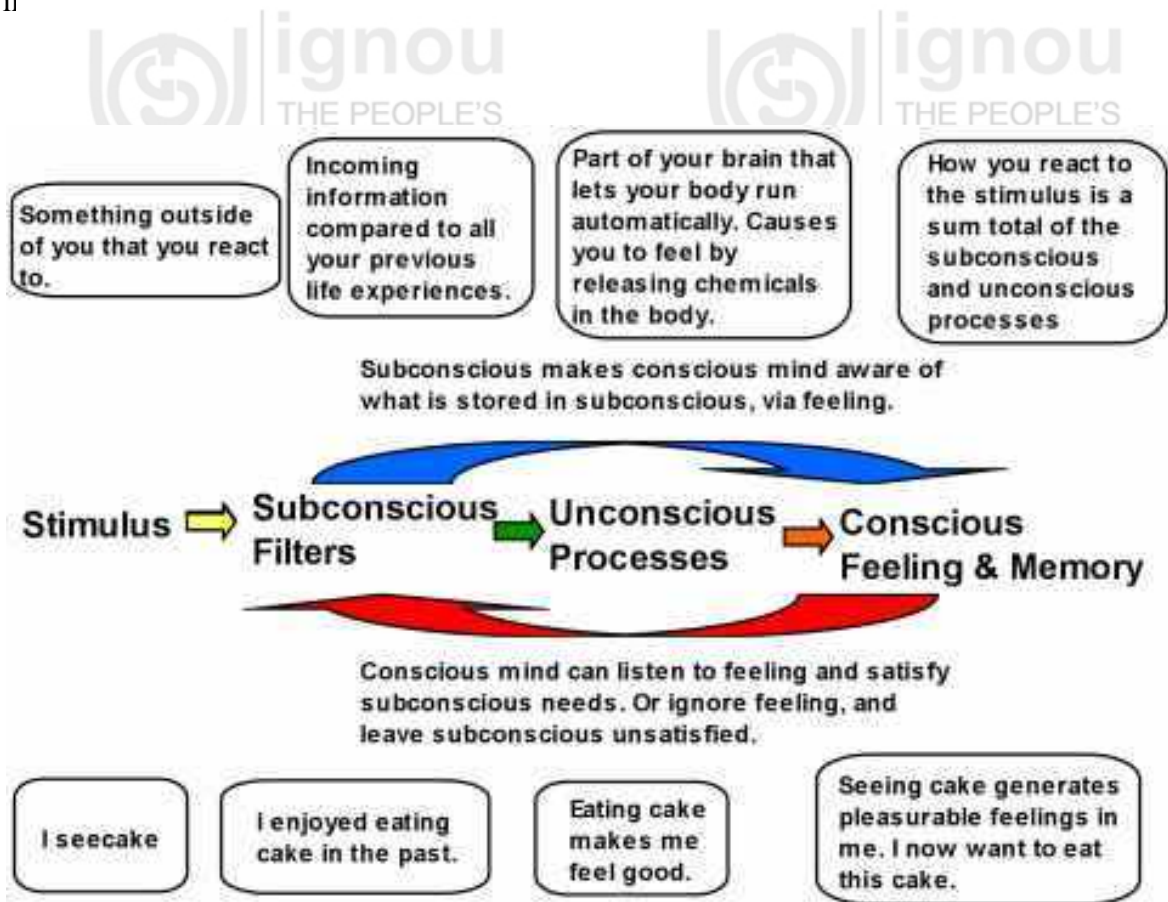
e
r
s
e
e
u
t



Negative Thoughts

Negative Feelings



y
iiC
Y
iiS
T
c
y
h
yU
Y
a
y
t
p
c
e
s

e

o
n
e
itg
r
d
s
s
d
r
n

years) it will trigger your previously stored negative experience you had with that dog when you were five. Associated with that previous experience was fear, and so your unconscious mind caused you to feel fear when you saw the dog. Unless this negative stored subconscious memory is resolved (by you overcoming your fear of dogs), this memory will continue to affect you for the rest of your life. The purpose of you feeling this fear, was your subconscious mind's way of telling your conscious mind that you have an unresolved issue stored in your subconscious that you need to overcome. So to sum it all up, your emotions (and the feelings you experience from those emotions) are messages from your subconscious to your conscious mind about things which need your attention.

Let us briefly examine as to how our brain has developed to have a better understanding of the emotions and feelings. Given here is a Triune Brain Model which gives us an idea as to how our brain has developed. The Triune Brain Model is a fascinating theory of how the brain developed and what the different regions of the brain developed for. There are three regions of the brain according to this model. The PRIMITIVE BRAIN which controls the basic human desires; The EMOTIONAL BRAIN which influences how you feel about things; And the THINKING BRAIN which is what you use for making logical decisions.

To have a better understanding of yourself, it is important to understand how and why your brain works the way it does. Once you understand the basic functioning of your brain, you will be able to understand your emotions and feelings. This, in turn, will enable you to be in a much better position to make positive changes to your life rather than being a victim of self-sabotage. Let us briefly look at the brain to have a better understanding of the concept of mind. In animals, the [brain](#), or encephalon ([Greek](#) for "in the head"), is the control center of the [central nervous system](#), responsible for [thought](#). In most animals, the brain is located in the head, protected by the [skull](#) and close to the primary sensory apparatus of [vision](#), [hearing](#), [taste](#) and [olfaction](#). The figure given here gives you an idea of the regions of the brain. You must also take note of this point that all [vertebrates](#) have a brain, most [invertebrates](#) have either a centralized brain or collections of individual [ganglia](#). Primitive animals such as [sponges](#) do not have a brain at all. Brains can be extremely complex. For example, the [human brain](#) contains more than 100 billion [neurons](#), each linked to as many as 10,000 others.

3.4 PHILOSOPHERS ON MIND

The concept of mind is understood in many different ways by many different traditions, ranging from [panpsychism](#) and animism to traditional and organized religious views, as well as secular and [materialist](#) philosophies. Most agree that minds are constituted by conscious experience and intelligent thought. Common attributes of mind include [perception](#), [reason](#), [imagination](#), [memory](#), [emotion](#), [attention](#), [free-will](#) and a capacity for communication. A rich set of unconscious processes are also included in many modern characterizations of mind.

Theories of mind and its function are numerous. Earliest recorded speculations are from the likes of [Zoroaster](#), [the Buddha](#), [Plato](#), [Aristotle](#), and other ancient [Greek](#), [Indian](#) and, later, [Islamic](#) and medieval European philosophers. Pre-modern understandings of the mind, such as the [neoplatonic](#) "[nous](#)" saw it as an aspect of the [soul](#), in the sense of being both [divine](#) and [immortal](#), linking human thinking with the un-changing ordering principle of the [cosmos](#) itself.

Which attributes make up the mind is much debated. Some psychologists argue that only the "higher" intellectual functions constitute mind, particularly reason and [memory](#). In this view the emotions—[love](#), [hate](#), [fear](#), [joy](#)—are more primitive or subjective in nature and should be seen as different from the mind as such. Others argue that various rational and emotional states cannot be so separated, that they are of the same nature and origin, and should therefore be considered all part of what we call the mind.

In popular usage mind is frequently synonymous with thought: the private conversation with ourselves that we carry on "inside our heads." Thus we "make up our minds," "change our minds" or are "of two minds" about something. One of the key attributes of the mind in this sense is that it is a private sphere to which no one but the owner has access. No one else can "know our mind." They can only interpret what we consciously or unconsciously communicate.

Broadly speaking, mental faculties are the various functions of the mind, or things the mind can "do". [Thought](#) is a mental activity which allows human beings to make sense of things in the world, and to represent and interpret them in ways that are significant, or which accord with their needs, attachments, goals, commitments, plans, ends, desires, etc. Thinking involves the [symbolic](#) or [semantic](#) mediation of [ideas](#) or data, as when we form [concepts](#), engage in [problem solving](#), reasoning and making [decisions](#). Words that refer to similar concepts and processes include [deliberation](#), [cognition](#), [ideation](#), [discourse](#) and [imagination](#). Thinking is sometimes described as a "higher" cognitive function and the analysis of thinking processes is a part of [cognitive psychology](#). It is also deeply connected with our capacity to make and use [tools](#); to understand [cause and effect](#); to [recognize](#) patterns of significance; to comprehend and [disclose](#) unique contexts of experience or activity; and to respond to the world in a meaningful way.

[Imagination](#) is the activity of generating or evoking novel situations, [images](#), ideas or other [qualia](#) in the mind. It is a characteristically [subjective](#) activity, rather than a direct or passive experience. The term is technically used in [psychology](#) for the process of reviving in the mind [percepts](#) of objects formerly given in sense perception. Since this use of the term conflicts with that of ordinary [language](#), some psychologists have preferred to describe this process as "[imaging](#)" or "[imagery](#)" or to speak of it as "reproductive" as opposed to "productive" or "constructive" imagination. Things that are imagined are said to be seen in the "[mind's eye](#)". Among the many practical functions of imagination are the ability to project possible futures (or histories), to "see" things from another's perspective, and to change the way something is perceived, including to make decisions to respond to, or enact, what is imagined.

[Consciousness](#) in mammals (this includes humans) is an aspect of the mind generally thought to comprise qualities such as [subjectivity](#), [sentience](#), and the ability to [perceive](#) the relationship between [oneself](#) and one's environment. It is a subject of much research in [philosophy of mind](#), [psychology](#), [neuroscience](#), and cognitive science. Some philosophers divide consciousness into [phenomenal](#) consciousness, which is subjective experience itself, and access consciousness, which refers to the global availability of information to processing systems in the brain. Phenomenal consciousness has many different experienced qualities, often referred to as [qualia](#). Phenomenal consciousness is usually consciousness of something or about something, a property known as [intentionality](#) in philosophy of brain and mind.

3.5 EMOTIONS AND PHILOSOPHY

Philosophers interpreted the relationship between emotions and mind differently. Plato in the Republic describes three basic components of the human mind: the reasoning, the desiring, and the emotive mind. For Aristotle, the emotions are not represented as constituting a separate agency or module, but they had even greater importance, particularly in the moral life. Aristotle regarded emotions to be largely due to the effect of learning and felt that it depended on the capacity of the individual to feel the right emotions in the right circumstances. Hume's notorious dictum that reason is and ought to be the slave of passions also placed the emotions at the very center of character and agency. For Spinoza, the emotions are not lodged in a separate body in conflict with the soul, since soul and body are aspects of a single reality; he says that emotions, as affections of the soul, make the difference between the best and the worst lives, as they increase the soul's power to act, or diminish that power. Kant saw emotions as essentially conative phenomena, but grouped them with inclinations enticing the will to act on motives other than that of duty. Hobbes referred to emotions as assimilated "passions" attributable to specific appetites or aversions. James-Lange (1884) theory of emotion states that emotions are specifically feelings caused by changes in physiological conditions relating to the autonomic and motor functions. When we perceive we are in danger, for example, this perception sets off a collection of bodily responses, and our awareness of these responses is what constitutes fear. This is essentially the interpretation of emotions in context of psychology. Antonio Damasio's (1999) "feeling theory" states that the capacity for emotions involves a capacity for the brain to monitor the body's past and hypothetical responses, both in autonomic and voluntary systems, in terms of "somatic markers". This view does not fully explain the intentional nature of emotion.

3.6 LET US SUM UP

This unit is concluded with the point that most of the classical philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Descartes, Hobbes, Hume had recognizable theories of emotion conceived as responses to certain sorts of events of concern to a subject, triggering bodily changes and typically motivating characteristic behaviour. It is also important to emphasize here that in much of the twentieth-century, philosophers of mind and psychologists tended to neglect the subject of emotions. This is because of the sheer variety of phenomena covered by the word "emotion". In recent years, emotions have once again become the focus of vigorous interest in philosophy as also other branches of cognitive science in psychology. You must understand that due to fruitful exchanges between researches of various disciplines, it is no longer to consider philosophy of emotions in isolation from approaches of other disciplines particularly psychology, neurology, evolutionary biology, and even economics.

3.7 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

Churchland PM. *Neurophilosophy at Work*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
 Smolensky, Paul. "Computational Model of Mind." in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Mind*. Samuel Guttenplan. Ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994.
 Wilkes, K. V. "Mind and Body: Some Forms of Reductionism." in *An Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. G. H. R. Parkinson. Ed. London: Routledge, 1988.