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## Cognitive Psychology

Volume 15, Issue 2, April 1983, Pages 238-300

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[https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0285\(83\)90010-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0285(83)90010-5)

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### Abstract

An approach to the relationships between conscious perception and nonconscious perceptual processes is outlined. Its basis is the rejection of the assumption that phenomenal experience is identical to or is a direct reflection of representations yielded by perceptual processes. Nonconscious perceptual processes automatically redescribe sensory data into every representational form and to the highest levels of description available to the organism. Such processes (a) provide records of each resultant representation, (b) produce perceptual hypotheses in different domains, (c) activate related structures, and (d) affect analog aspects of actions. Conscious perception

requires a constructive act whereby perceptual hypotheses are matched against information recovered from records, and serves to structure and synthesize that information recovered from different domains. These processes are related to three aspects of phenomenal experience: awareness, unity of percepts, and selectivity. Consciousness is seen as an attempt to make sense of as much data as possible at the most functionally useful level. Explication of the approach consists of (a) discussion of differences between conscious and nonconscious representations and processes; (b) exposition of the characteristics of the process of recovery; (c) a theory of central visual masking as a consequence of temporal and spatial parsing involved in recovery, wherein masking is seen as an aspect of the structural nature of consciousness whose goal is event perception, and does not affect nonconscious perceptual processing; (d) an interpretation of various clinical neuropsychological and normal phenomena in terms of limitations and impairments in the processes of recovery and synthesis; (e) reinterpretation of several perceptual phenomena in terms of the recovery of information and of how nonconscious processes precede and affect consciousness.



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