



## The Psychology of Consciousness

*Robert Evan Ornstein*

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In this revised edition of his revolutionary study, Ornstein reexamines what is known about consciousness today through a consideration of intuition and reason.

## **The Psychology of Consciousness Details**

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## **From Reader Review The Psychology of Consciousness for online ebook**

### **Keleigh says**

Plucked this from the "free table" at Mills. 70s-era foray into the intersection of science and spirit.

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### **Erik Graff says**

This book was published during the left/right hemisphere fad of the seventies, a distinction Ornstein plays on in order to argue for an integration of rational and what he calls "intuitive" functions correlated to traditional Western and Eastern world-views. Although the author is a neuropsychiatrist, this book is quite accessible to laypersons and has been repeatedly updated.

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### **Ralph Zoontjens says**

A classic by a psychologist who understood the full evolution of human consciousness, all the way up to the eternal mystical consciousness.

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### **F.X. Altomare says**

An excellent, if slightly dated, overview of psychobiological theories of consciousness. Accessible but without oversimplifying, Ornstein presents what was known about consciousness in the late 60s--much of which has not significantly changed, even with the advent of advanced imaging technologies. The coverage of William James's work on consciousness and its later corollaries in the empirical literature was particularly comprehensive. A great introduction to some of the foundations of modern consciousness research.

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### **Cameron says**

I bought this book when I was 13 and never read it. I WISH I had. Although published in 1972, the book covers a wide spectrum of topics that are considered mainstream today. These include meditation techniques, mindfulness in activities and present-focus, right-brain vs left-brain physiology and psychology, psychoactive substances and other methods of entering altered states of consciousness, shamanism, as well as eastern vs western psychology traditions. In addition, he presents a number of studies on parapsychology and brain research that although dated, are quite interesting. He even covers Sufism and Whirling Dervishes. Frankly, this book is an excellent primer (or summary) on the Psychology of Consciousness because it incorporates so much in 250 pages. He also includes an excellent bibliography. I am shocked at how much was already known and culturally popular in the early 70's. Makes me wonder why we consider the new books on the evolution of consciousness and what it means

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### **Jeanine Joy says**

This author was ahead of his time in 1972 with many recommendations that are finally being implemented (for the betterment of humanity) today.

I have been thoroughly enjoying his exploration of consciousness, looking at both Western and Eastern psychology in an objective way. He explores areas of knowledge Westerners rejected for decades because our paradigm was not broad enough to believe in the possibility. Now that, in some areas, we can scientifically see the truth of the rejected claims using Western methods, our paradigm has shifted.

This is a consistent issue with new ideas and it is one reason progress comes much slower than it could.

I am fascinated by many of the recommendations he makes that echo my own recommendation for today. That someone was advocating these beneficial steps so long ago and we still have not adopted them shows the stickiness of outdated ideas that lack a firm foundation. It also shows that anyone who wants to find a better way, leading to a better life for themselves, their families and children, can do so. The knowledge exists. Just as some are early adopters of new technology, there is nothing stopping some from benefiting from these ideas--we don't have to wait for the crowd to take advantage of them.

I really enjoyed some of the stories and analogies he uses that are not well-worn from repeated use elsewhere.

Even though I am familiar with most of what he wrote about, I found his perspectives helped me broaden my own perspective further in several areas...thus creating an even clearer picture of reality and human potential.

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### **Bart says**

This book begins with great originality and then begins to sputter and repeat itself. Its greatest originality lies in casting sensory receptors as agents of restriction, primarily, and not reception.

Something like:

*Our normal personal consciousness is not a complete, passive registration of the external environment, but a highly evolved, selective, personal construction that is aimed primarily at individual biological survival. ... All humans have evolved with identical sense organs, which select only certain aspects of the flux of available stimulation. (p. 42)*

The book's second half repeats itself three or four times unfortunately.

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### **Joseph McCaleb says**

I started the 2nd edition (1977) but midway changed to 3rd (1986) which integrates more material from

Idries Shah, particularly the teaching-story (especially in Ch 8). Many chapters begin with Nasruddin teasers that help to make translations across the right & left hemispheres. Arthur Deikman's essay on "Deautomatization and the Mystic Experience" is also included and identifies 5 principal features: intense realness, unusual sensations, unity, ineffability, and trans-sensate phenomena. Some of these seem characteristic of Boyd's "Particular Level" and thus have application to that feature of teaching-stories. The concluding chapter effectively draws together themes into suggestions for application including a Sufi perspective on "work" as a space for extending consciousness including the point that "the individual, alone, is not the 'unit' of enlightenment, or higher understanding. It is the group, correctly organized, that has this possibility" (p. 292). While drawing on traditions, Ornstein stresses that "any formulation must undergo a fresh adaptation" in order to serve evolving consciousness, and yet the model remains "speak to those in accordance with their understanding." The variance in levels of understanding affirms the need for discursive forms that function on multiple levels, thus supporting again the need for the teaching-story and the connection with Idries Shah. "This deepened understanding of life is conveyed through stories, myths, and legends, in which man's place in the world is explained and conveyed from generation to generation" (p. 294).

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### **William says**

One of the best books that is unfortunately little known or talked about. Wisdom writing at its best.

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### **Jean says**

I've had this for a long, long time, finally read it. Interesting about right and left brain functions. A newer edition came out in 1996, I'd be interested to see how the theories and knowledge have changed.

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### **Joseph Manfredonia says**

It's a must read if you desire to understand the depths of psychology.

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