

In and rayner (1920)
did a condition
exercise



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In this essay there will be arguments between different scientists explaining how the mind works and how the mind thinks.

This essay will include ways in how the mind works and is easily and not so easily influenced by the environment. Explanations from different scientists will be included in this essay with their thoughts on the mind and their scientific evidence to support their theories. This essay will show what scientists think about free will and how they would describe their views on the mind. This essay will also explain how a person being influenced, having a mental illness or having social issues (ie. depression) can affect their mind and free will. Behaviourists explain behaviour by looking into events that have caused a person to respond in such a way. Behaviourists have two ways to explain the way that a person can learn, these are classical conditioning and operant conditioning. Classical conditioning is when a person can use an existing response to a new event.

For example, Watson and Rayner (1920) did a condition exercise on a young boy named ' little Albert' to respond with anxiety to the stimulus of a white rat. This was done by connecting the rat to a loud noise that had already been known to trigger Albert's anxiety. This test was done to see how Albert's mind would unconsciously react to the loud noise and to see what actions he would do when hearing the loud noise. Operant conditioning is when a person will operate on their environment and the consequences to their actions will determine whether their actions should/can be repeated or not. For example, Edward Thorndike (1898), did an experiment which included a puzzle box, fish and a small number of cats. Thorndike created a puzzle box which resembled a maze and placed the cat at one end and the

fish at the other. The experiment was the cat making its way towards the fish until it found a lever which opened the latch. Once the cat had learned to open the latch by using the lever, Thorndike would place the cat back at the beginning and see if the cat could remember its previous actions and find its way back to the latch and the lever and do it in less time than the time before.

By doing this experiment, Thorndike created the 'law of effect'. Thorndike's conclusion was that when a person's consequences to their actions are good, they will continue doing what they have done. When a person's consequences to their actions are bad, then they will stop doing it.

The mind can be described as being similar to a computer in the ways that it works. For example, a computer processes information and performs computations or a set of operations, transforming that information into experiences and actions. The mind can run the same or similar programmes as it would on machines. This is saying that the mind takes in its surroundings and information and acts upon it unconsciously from previous/similar tasks. The human mind processes information using input, storage and retrieval processes. Once we understand how these ways work, we can predict and have full control over our behaviour and actions.

Our mind has three ways of working, attention, perception and memory. Some approaches to psychology see determinism as being on the outside of a person, more well known as environmental determinism. For example, Bandura (1961) show that children who grew up around violent parents and have been in a violent environment will be more likely to become violent

themselves when they are older. This is because they have seen the actions from their parents and have learnt the same actions. Behaviourists, such as B. F.

Skinner, said that 'free will' and 'motivation' are illusions that hide the real causes of human behaviour. B. F. Skinner (1971), said that these causes lay in the environment, being more in the physical and psychological reinforcers and punishments. Skinner's explanation to this was that a person would not be aware of environmental causes of their own behaviour or others' behaviour and because of this they are tricked into believing in their ability to choose.

Skinner also explained that he felt that a person who commits a crime has no real choice and that they are pushed this way from environmental circumstances and personal feelings, this could make breaking the law a natural feeling. Free will can be massively affected by mental illnesses in a person. For example, a person who suffers from OCD can lose control of their thoughts and actions and people who suffer from depression, for example, can lose control over their emotions which can then lead to loss of control over their mind and free will. A man named Erich Fromm (1941), wrote in his book "Fear of Freedom" that all of us have the potential to control our own lives but many people are afraid to do so.

Sigmund Freud argued his point that there are two different types of drives that humans are born with, these are Eros and Thanatos. Eros is a life maintaining drive in which the human needs food, water and sex and the Thanatos drive is where the human can become destructive and aggressive.

Sigmund Freud also argued that a human's personality also consists of three different parts which are, Id, Ego and Superego. Id is the mind unconsciously responding only to instincts (E.

G. the drives). It could be said that we are unconscious of our actions when acting out the drives as our bodies know how to eat, drink and get warm already and we don't need to think about each step to perform the actions as it is automatic through our mind and body of what to do. Ego could be described as consciously using your mind to plan and make decisions for future actions, this could be described as having a conscious mind because the person has to think about their what they are going to do, how they will achieve this and what they will do once their goal is achieved.

Superego can be described as the feelings and thoughts that a person can have a conscience over. For example, Superego can cause a person to feel guilt, shame and low self esteem for bad behaviour or even bad thoughts. Superego can also cause a person to feel pride, high self esteem and joy when they have good behaviour and make the rights choices and actions.

Our minds unconsciously performing our actions due to unconscious conflict also have defence mechanisms which are believed to change a person's view of reality and reduce the anxiety and tension to the person's mind and feelings, this is done by the mind redirecting its unconscious thoughts and drives to a substitute object. ' The cocktail party effect' (Cherry, 1953) is a very good example of the mind unconsciously focusing on one object rather than a few at a time. The example used for this effect could be two people having a conversation at a party and one of the people have their full

attention on the other person's voice and face. This is because the person speaking and their voice is the main focus in the mind, unconsciously the mind picks up on that voice and is able to separate it from background noise and unconsciously, that is the only voice being listened to by the other person. " The unconscious mind always operates in the present tense, and when a memory is buried in the unconscious, the unconscious preserves it as an ongoing act of abuse in the present of the unconscious mind.

The cost of repressing a memory is that the mind does not know the abuse ended." (Renee Fredrickson, *Repressed Memories: A Journey to Recovery from Sexual Abuse*). This quote by Renee Fredrickson clearly states that a person most of the time acts unconsciously in the moment and doesn't put much thought into their actions and doesn't have much control of the mind.

Then Renee states that when a bad memory is buried in the unconscious mind, it preserves this as an ongoing act of abuse in the unconscious mind which could also be known as guilt or having a guilty conscience." Social psychology is the study of how people interact with each other, and how their thoughts, feelings, behaviours or intentions are influenced by the actual or implied presence of others." (Allport, 1924).

For example, Smokers or past smokers could be influenced to have a cigarette because they have seen or smelt a cigarette around them. Even though scientists have given the public proof that smoking is bad and have proved that the bad chemicals can cause lung cancer, people still choose to smoke because it is an addiction, addictions can cause the mind to want and do something without having to think about it. Therefore, the mind causes a

person to reach for a cigarette when their mind is influenced by other people around them. Smokers can be said to have free will and a choice to smoke or not but the environment, motivation and addiction can easily take over and change the mind.

Driving is another very good example of unconscious use of the mind. When a person first learns to drive, they have to consciously think about the clutch and gears. When the person has been driving a while, that's when they can drive whilst unconsciously using the clutch and changing the gears.

This essay has proved that there are many theories to the subject of the conscious and unconscious mind and that there are many issues or environmental factors that can affect the mind in the way it works. People can be easily influenced by other people and certain objects that reminds them of something that they would usually do without thinking about it.

There are different beliefs in this essay that suggest in some circumstances we do have power over our actions and we have a choice against what we physically and emotionally do, others suggest that we have no control over over our actions and and that our actions are caused by influence and environmental factors.

There are no right and wrong answers to explain free will and our control over our actions, but there can be many theories and thoughts around the subject and to why the actions could happen.