The cover-up model of the mind

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Methodology and observations

Trained empirical phenomenology (through intensive Vipassana meditation)

Universe of discourse: our potential consciousness (see Barendregt [1988], [1996])

1. The Process

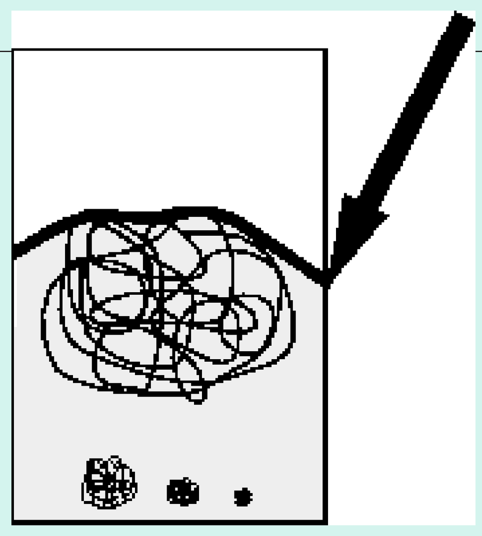
There is a *process* with the following qualities

- It is constantly fluctuating — chaos
- It is unbearable — dissociation
- It is beyond our control — non-self

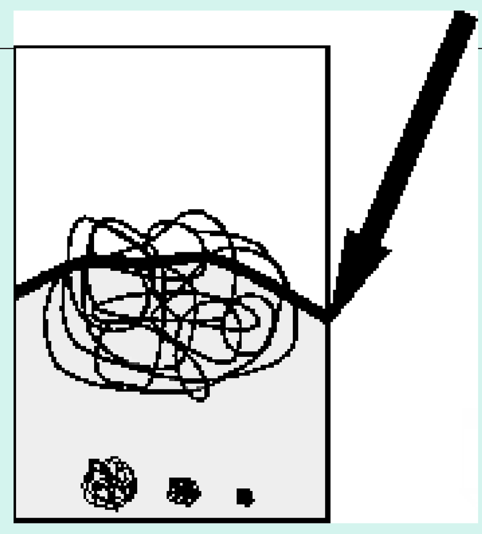
2. The cover-up

There is a *cover-up* that (partially) hides the process

Circumstances determine the level of cover-up

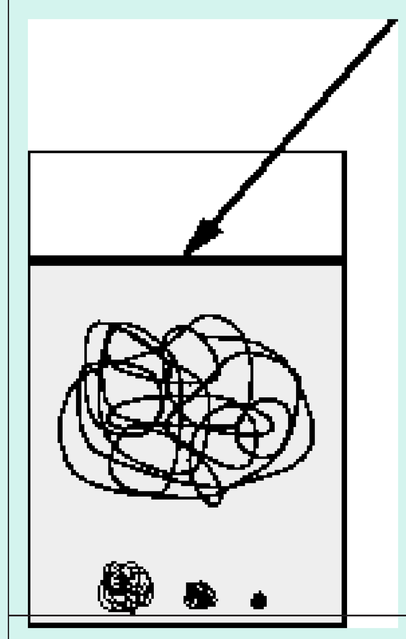


Pleasure



Suffering

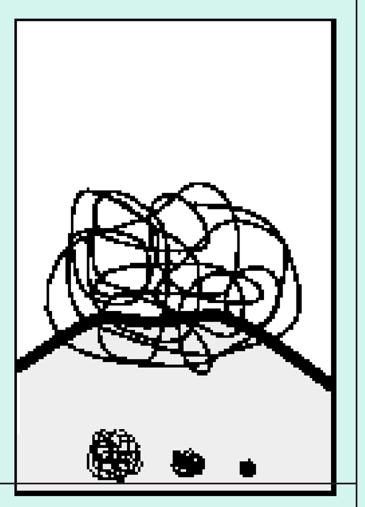
Pleasure and suffering are determined by level of cover-up



Ecstasy

⇐ A high level of covering results in an ecstatic state

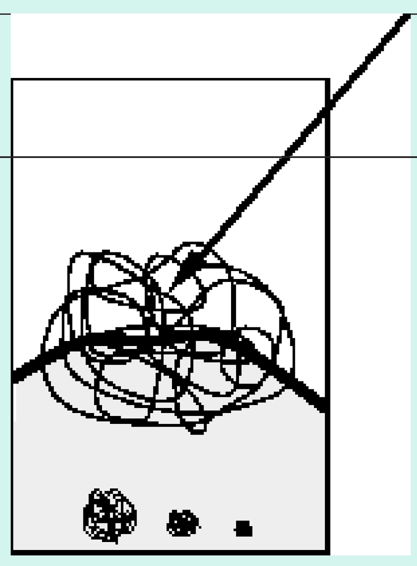
⇒ A low level of covering results in a dissociation. A person wants to avoid these states at all costs



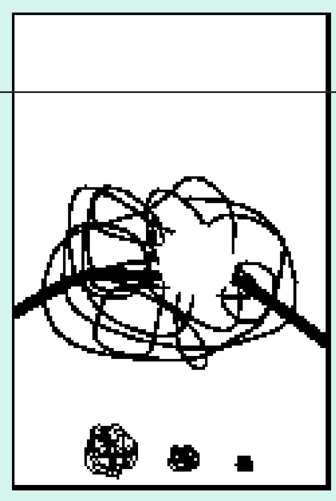
Dissociation

3. Purification

There is a way to *purify* and *eliminate* the process using *concentrated mindfulness*

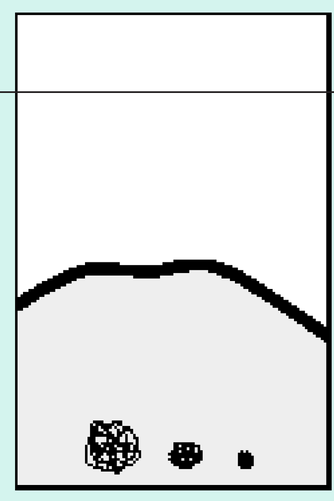


Concentration and mindfulness



Insight

Fundamental Insight



Cessation

There are more processes to eliminate, 4 in total*

4. Structural psychological changes

Cessation of process #	Change in personality
1	elimination of *insecurity, belief in self* and *superstition*;
2	dilution of fear and desire
3*	elimination of *fear* and *desire*
4*	elimination of *conceit, restlessness, sleepiness, attachment to existence* and *ignorance*

*Not experimentally verified by the author, but by others

Related hypotheses

1. The 'power-brain'

The binding problem asks how our various inputs, cognitions, feelings and reactions come together as mental events. One suggestion is (see von der Malsburg [1981], Singer et al. [1995]) that mental states are coded as subsets of the collection of neurons that fire in synchrony. (A subset of a set X is an element of the power set $\mathcal{P}(X)$, hence the name 'power brain'). Hypothesis. The operating system of our mind is correlated with the fluctuating subsets of synchronously firing neurons. In psychiatric patients as well as in Vipassana meditators one obtains a view of this chaotic neural storm that underlies our normal mental functioning.

2. Volume transmission

The idea of volume transmission, see Agnati et al. [2001], is suggested as a neuronal mechanism in which the neuro-messengers are not transmitted via a synapse, but as a broadcast through the extra-cellular fluid or the cerebro-spinal fluid (liquor). In the mental state of ecstasy (see ⇐) the subject still can perceive pain, but no longer minds it. Opioids injected in the spinal liquor have a similar effect. Hypothesis. The liquor in the brain ventricles is used for a broadcast of chemical messengers, including opioids. This is studied in Calle et al. [2002]. Additional arguments for this ventricle hypothesis:

- the broadcast is faster than in the rest of the brain and on a timescale compatible with emotions;
- the limbic system is nearby (para-ventricular organs).

3. Applications of mindfulness

The practice of mindfulness (detached attention) on all mind/body phenomena can lead to an increased awareness and insight. This may cut through vicious circles. Hypothesis. The mental development of mindfulness can be used effectively as treatment for various emotional and psychiatric disorders. For initial evidence see Kabat-Zinn [1990], Segal et al. [2002], Baer [in press] and Giommi et al. [submitted]. This treatment has also been applied to chronic pain and terminal patients. In the latter two cases the treatment was directed towards a decrease of the suffering.

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