



Maps of the Mind

Charles Hampden-Turner

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The author presents the first comprehensive attempt to collect, describe, and draw in map form the most important concepts of the human mind.

Maps of the Mind Details

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Jen says

Ok, I give up. I love the idea of the visual diagrams of all these different psychological theories, but I just can't get into the writing. There are better books to be read.

Steven Peterson says

The strength of this book also contains within it its main weakness. The book lays out a variety of "maps of the mind," views as to how the brain acts. The author notes that (Page 8): "This book brings together in visual form numerous ways in which mind has been conceived." The book looks at different levels of ideas about mind--from narrower to broader concepts. Level 1, for example, examines (Page 10): "Here the human mind is struggling to emancipate itself from servitude to the gods or the laws of Newtonian mechanics. . . ." The highest, Level 9, notes (Page 11): "At its most inclusive mind is seen as inhering in the structure of myth, institutions, and cultures."

Some examples of maps appearing throughout this volume.

Map 21, level 3 represents Paul MacLean's "triune brain," in which three parts of the brain, each building upon older parts of the brain, structure human consciousness and behavior. The reptilian brain is conceived to be characterized by hidebound following of instinctive urges. The limbic system overlays this with emotion. Finally, the cerebral cortex provides new ways of learning and coping.

Map 25, level 3: Karl Pribram's Holographic Mind. Pribram wanted to understand consciousness in terms of new experience with preexisting memories. He used the metaphor of the hologram to explain how new experiences interacted with extant memories.

Map 54, level 8 focuses on the structure of scientific revolution and tries to wed Thomas Kuhn (with his idea of scientific paradigms) with Allan Buss' view of psychological adaptation.

Thus, there are many "maps" discussed. The downside? Only a few pages are devoted to each. Thus, the book gains breadth at the cost of depth. However, if one wants a sense of differing views of the mind at the time of the book's publication, it still serves a useful purpose.

James M. Madsen, M.D. says

I've had this book for a long time and still find it to be one of the very best presentations of various ways of seeing the workings of the mind. Edward Tufte would be pleased with the visual depictions (I certainly am!), which add immeasurably to the accessibility of the book. Even though it was published in 1982, it's still a worthwhile and very enlightening read!

Randy Benson says

love it.

Dr M says

The best and most comprehensive book dealing with history ideas and of human thought.

Toby Newton says

Hampden-Turner romps, but carefully and instructively, through a century's worth of psychological insight and theorising. Towards the end, as he began wrapping one map around another in his own somewhat Byzantine cybernetic synthesis, I was unable to keep up, but his gloss on some thinkers with whom I was already familiar was never less than interesting.
