

Singing and Unconscious Thinking: Freud, Jung, Hypnosis and Split Personality

At the very end of this chapter dedicated to the questions of singing and thinking, I would like to address an important issue of possible connections between the singing and the unconscious mind through the evolutionary scenario suggested in this book.

Two great scholars who are at the very beginnings of the research of human unconscious mind, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, had cardinally different attitudes towards music. Very unusually for a Viennese aristocrat at the turn of the 20th century, Freud was indifferent and even suspicious of music. According to his own words, he did not want to trust something he could not understand where the source of its emotional power was coming from. Freud would sometimes go to classical music concerts for social reasons, and instead of enjoying music, he preferred writing notes during the performance.

For Jung, on the contrary, music was the source of great spiritual wisdom, the sphere that could connect human psyche with an individual's inner self, to help obtain the harmonious unity of the conscious and unconscious parts of our mind, or as he called this process, 'individuation'. Jung was particularly fascinated with strong African drumming rhythms.

Regarding the sphere of unconsciousness, Freud and Jung also had different views. For Freud unconscious was mostly a repository of repressed emotions, memories and desires. His suggestion, that our conscious emotions can be deeply affected by the hidden processes that are not under our deliberate control, is regarded as one of the great scientific discoveries. Jung proposed the idea of the 'collective unconsciousness', common to all humanity and transmitted genetically to every human. Jung believed that the unconscious mind was the main source of human arts and inspiration.

Following the Darwinian approach that everything must (or at least may) have an evolutionary reason, I would like to discuss the following questions in this section: (1) what was the evolutionary function of the unconscious mind? and: (2) Are there any connections between the unconscious mind and human singing?

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The model of two emotional states for early humans, suggested in the third chapter of this book, gives a new evolutionary perspective to understanding of the unconscious mind. I hope the readers of this book remember that, according to my model, early humans had two mental states: the 'ordinary' state, or the state which was present in everyday non-critical situations, and much more rare 'critical' state, which was appearing only when the total dedication of the whole human group was necessary for the physical survival of the group. Although instances of the appearance of the 'critical' state were rare, it was crucial for the physical survival of our ancestors. Evolution provided powerful neurological mechanisms to promote the interests of the group over the individual interests when it mattered the most. That's why in this state our ancestors had a neurochemically-created uplifting feeling, a spiritual disregard of earthly needs including feelings of fear and pain, and had the intoxicating feeling of obtaining a super-personality. In order to achieve this state when it was needed, our ancestors developed elaborate rituals, mostly based on strong rhythms: loud drumming, group singing, group dance, use of verbal formulas or mantras, together with visual elements of personality change: body and face painting, use of clothing and most likely the use of masks. The central goal of human (and even hominid) rituals was to affect the mental state of the participating individuals, to turn their mental state from individual, or 'everyday' state into the collective, or 'critical' state of mind. This was an amazing transformation of mental state, nothing short of the changing of identity of a whole group of people, turning them from separate individuals into the members of a common single super-personality.

Most importantly for us, as physical survival was the biological priority, the orders of the collective or 'critical' state of mind were overriding any opposition from the 'ordinary' state of mind. The phenomenon known as 'common sense' is obviously a product of logical thinking of an individual in 'ordinary' state, but the 'critical' state of mind produces set of behaviours that often contradict the logic of common sense. In this state a person can do both deeply moral or extremely immoral things, from sacrificing his own life in order to save somebody else's life on one hand, to doing horrible atrocities during battle on the other hand. Such atrocities, committed in a state of a battle trance (and usually together with the members of the combat unit), are difficult to comprehend from the point of view of common sense, often even for those who actually committed them.

Most importantly, I am maintaining that these two 'ordinary' and 'critical' states of mind are present in the brain of every normal and healthy individual. These two states can be quite independent from each other, similar to two different personalities residing in one brain. In a way, *we all have a 'split personality' in our healthy brain, but our second personality takes charge only in the most critical moments of our life.*

With the progress of civilization the number of dangerous situations that could push us into the 'critical' state of mind are gradually diminishing, but this still may happen. If the shock is too strong, then the 'critical' state takes over on a profound level, and we might experience amnesia, or a loss of memory of the events

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in a critical situation, although it is obvious that our brain and body were actively functioning in this moment. Jacqueline Kennedy went instantly into this 'critical' coma state of mind when her husband, USA President John F. Kennedy, who was sitting next to her in a car, was fatally shot in head in Dallas. As a result, she could not remember the fact that she was dangerously climbing out from the moving car following the fatal shot. If a reader of these lines ever had a great and sudden shock and does not remember his or her reaction for the next few seconds or even minutes, a reader must have had the experience of going into the critical state of mind, or in the 'second personality.' After such an experience the 'first personality' does not have the knowledge what has happened, because it was actually the 'second personality' who responded to the situation, and only the second personality has the knowledge of the actual events from the critical situation. That's why hypnosis is arguably the best way to find out what has happened in the critical moments, moments that our conscious brain has no recollections.

So let us remember, in the critical moments of life our 'critical' state of mind takes over and overrides all other orders coming from our logical mind. In such moments we go into the extremely focused state of mind, where we instinctively follow either the group behaviour (if we are in a group), or follow the orders coming from the external source (for example, a group leader, or a hypnotist), or some other, instinctive and mostly unknown impulses from inside of our own brain.

The phenomenon of hypnosis is crucially important for understanding of the nature of trance and the unconscious mind and its connections to rhythmic music. Under the hypnosis a person is put into a 'critical' state of mind by a hypnotist. In this state a person loses the ability to think critically and instead blindly follows the orders of a hypnotist. Importantly for our subject, listening to rhythmic music (or just the sounds of drumming) is one of the most effective techniques to induce hypnotic trance to a person. There are various levels of hypnotic trance, and in the deep level, known as hypnotic coma, people are unable to question any orders given to them. Possibly even they are unable to ask questions at all in this state (this would be actually something very interesting to check!). Contrary to a popular belief that hypnosis is a state close to sleep, Clark L. Hull proved in the 1930s that hypnosis and sleep had nothing in common. Hypnosis is actually a wakeful state of extremely focused attention and heightened suggestibility. In other words, a hypnotized person is ready to act, but has no decision making ability, and instead is ready to follow orders. Any orders.

Historical examples when manipulative politicians could turn civilized people into the hordes of killing machines are sadly well known from human history.

The phenomenon of the post-hypnotic suggestion also proves that the conscious brain cannot resist orders coming from the 'higher authority' - the unconscious brain. A person who receives an order while still under the hypnosis (so the order is received by the second identity), will carry out the order after receiving the triggering signal, already in full consciousness, after the session, even if following

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the order causes a fully conscious person great embarrassment or even some personal danger.

Although today hypnotic trance is mostly (although not always) induced to individuals, group hypnosis must have been the original environment for the emergency of this state. I propose that the origins of hypnotic trance must be found in the primordial state of the battle trance, when for the sake of survival a group of individuals were acting as a single organism, with united single conscience and single aim. So I suggest that the individual unconscious was designed by the forces of evolution as a part of a united 'collective conscience', to promote the survival of a species. And here let us remember one more time, that loud rhythmic music and loud drumming were the central elements of inducing trance in our ancestors several millions of the yeas ago in African savannah, and the same method can be used today as well, not only in the shamanic rituals in the native peoples of North Asia or America, but in the comfortable lounge of the hypnotist as well.

Unconscious Mind and Split Personality, or Why Did You Kill John Lennon?

One of the most fascinating characteristics of the human brain is that these two states of mind, ordinary and critical, may act as two independent personalities, two identities locked in the head of a single individual. These two different personalities, different identities may not even be aware of each other. The process of 'individuation' suggested by Carl Jung, is a process when these two states of one mind, or two identities, with their sets of memories and activity agenda, are becoming aware of each other. Cases of amnesia, when a person is not aware of the deeds he conducted in the 'critical' state, suggest that the 'critical' identity might have some 'secrets' from the other, conscious identity (and vice versa).

As a result, if you put a person into a hypnotic trance and ask him/her about his/her behaviour regarding some facts from his/her personal past, there is a big chance that you will not get a correct answer despite the full submission of the conscience of a person in a trance. There are a few reasons for this: (1) first of all you are most likely talking to the 'wrong personality', virtually a different identity who does not have knowledge to answer your questions; and also, (2) a person under the deep hypnotic trance is most likely unable to answer negatively to the questions of the hypnotist, so patient's brain in a deep hypnotic trance might create a fake explanation, an obvious lie, in order to follow the order and to answer a question positively. This lie will be interpreted as the ability of a person in a deep hypnotic trance to trick the hypnotist, but I suggest that this lie has a different nature. It is actually the result of the combination of two factors: (1) desire to blindly follow the order on one hand, and (2) the absence of the real knowledge of the events on the other hand. For example, I predict that if you ask an ordinary person in a state of deep hypnotic coma 'Why did you kill John Lennon?' you might get some fake explanations of the reasons of killing, instead of the statement of the truth 'I did not kill John Lennon'. So a hypnotist should be aware, that a personality sitting in front of the hypnotist might be literally a different personality, a personality who does not have the knowledge to answer so many trivial questions which the same person in the ordinary state of mind would answer without any difficulties.

We can remember here, that from the 18th century onwards hypnotists were reporting that a second personality was emerging in the hypnotic state, and were puzzled how two minds, two personalities could coexist in a single brain.

The phenomenon of two identities in a healthy human brain can explain why most of horrible memories (like sexual abuse, violence, etc) are stored in the unconscious part of the brain. I propose that these memories are not only 'stored' there, they actually 'happened there', with the second, 'critical,' 'collective' identity. In situations of strong stress or abuse, as a defense mechanism the human brain

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naturally switches to the 'second personality', so the bad memories remain stored in the place where they were perceived, in the second, 'critical' identity.

I suggest that, as part of the heritage from our evolutionary prehistory, we all have two identities in our brain, and there is nothing abnormal about this. The relationship between these two different identities usually does not cause us any discomfort, on the contrary, it can be a source of great artistic creativity and spirituality. But as anything else, the neurological and chemical balance between these two identities can go wrong for some genetic or environmental factors, and in this case we may have disturbing and intrusive identity problems. I propose, that so called 'split personality', or Dissociative Identity Disorder, has its origins in the double mental state of a perfectly healthy human brain, although it is a disorder that affects the normal functioning of a human brain. Hearing inner voices, ordering a person to do something, or other associated symptoms might be ominous signs of a communication breakdown between these two personalities (although hearing voices might be happening to perfectly healthy humans as well). Involvement of such a person in different forms of arts might help to restore the right balance between the two identities in his/her brain (see also the box: 'Avoiding Stress or Searching for Stress?').¹

These two states of mind also refer to two sides of our human nature: individual and social. Like two masks of the ancient tragedy, happy and sad masks, we all have two personalities in a single brain, personalities that might not even know each other very well. Finding the balance between them is crucially important for a healthy and happy mental life. As Jung proposed, music and other arts help us keep the healthy balance between these two sides of our personality. Arts can connect us with our second, hidden, or 'critical' identity. I suggest that this mysterious power of different arts, including music, dance, painting, the use of masks, clothing, leading to the artistic transformation and the virtual change of our identity, originate from the ancient ritualistic exhilarating rhythmic dance and song, designed by the forces of evolution during the millions of the years in order to physically survive.

¹ **Avoiding Stress or Searching for Stress?**

Another fascinating side of the ancient 'critical' state is that for the normal functioning of our brain in the long run, we need to activate our 'critical' state from time to time, in order to feel our 'second identity' and to have a healthy relationship between the two sides of our selves. The millions of years of everyday battle and going into the 'critical' state of mind, where our ancestors were ready to fight for the higher aim, left us with a legacy where we crave the exhilarating feel of dedication to a higher aim, higher than one's own life. To experience this feeling, we use very different techniques: immersing ourselves into the arts (both creating and experiencing arts), doing meditation séances, praying and going into religious trance, listening to loud rhythmic music, dancing, abusing our health with chemical substances, and endangering our life with different activities (climbing mountains, swimming with sharks, doing bungee jumping, petting tigers and lions, running on the tracks in front of the racing cars, and even paying handsome sums of money to arrange our own kidnapping as a newly established service in Paris offers). From the point of view of the common sense some of these activities simply do not make sense. Extremely different in their actual forms and results (from reckless and life-endangering behaviour to altruistic religious and community based behaviour), these activities are directly or indirectly connected to the activation of our deep brain structures, and involving our 'second identity', the 'critical', or collective state of our mind.

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I believe that in his suspicion and desire to resist the power of music, Freud was inadvertently rejecting the best possible way to reach his own unconscious mind, the mind that he himself discovered, but with his own over-suspicious scholarly approach, turned it into a place of dangerous and uncontrollable negative desires and feelings only.

We do not need to stick together today in order to physically survive, apart possibly from army units, where the ancient survival function of the collective identity is still actively used in its primary practical function. As a result of the increasing safety standards during the last few thousand years, humans became increasingly individualistic and the fabled 'common sense' became the centerpiece of the human thinking process. However, our evolutionary past through millions of years of deep psychological experiences does not allow us to forget our profoundly social nature, our interdependence on each other, and as a result we are today searching for venues to feel our collective identity in the individualized world. We are all still humans, and we all still crave to experience the same spiritual feeling of being a part of something larger than ourselves. If our personal life is the only thing we are left with, even with all the comfort of contemporary life, but without experiencing ourselves as a part of a something bigger, then we may experience feeling of losing the meaning of life, and this feeling can be the most devastating emotional stress for our profoundly social nature. Religion and arts are central among the ways to experience the higher meaning of life.

And as usual, music is the gracious host to lead us into this mysterious, and possibly the most ancient, emotional state of our mind, our second identity where we feel ourselves primarily as social beings, intertwined with other fellow humans in a state of collective identity. From the origins of human intelligence and the ability of asking questions, from the beginnings of human language and speech, through the good and bad times for millions of years, up to the depths of the human unconscious mind, music has always been our greatest practical aid and source of spiritual transformation.