

DESCRIPTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC (IN ENGLISH)

How much do we experience, when we briefly see the world around us? Intuitively, many people would say that we experience a complete and detailed image of the outside world. This view is supported by some researchers, but other say that we do not necessarily experience much of the outer world when we see something briefly. While such a view may go against our intuition, it is backed by data from several experiments.

The debate is ongoing and one problem is that we cannot measure people's experiences directly. As researchers, we have to for instance systematically ask people or to try to guess what people saw from how well they do in a given task (for instance of recognising images, that was flashed on a screen). This leaves some room for interpretation and several classic experiments are interpreted to support the idea that our experiences are complete by some researchers and fragmented by other.

This project takes the approach of making different predictions on behalf of the two views and testing them against the results of three new experimental setups. As the theories are different, we propose three experiments where the predictions of one theory go against the other. It would, therefore, be possible to support either theory, but not both at the same time. The three questions are:

- 1) Are we able to name objects, we have only experienced weakly?

- 2) When we weakly experience standard letters, will we then be able to see "unusual" letters placed amongst them?

- 3) When several objects, which complete a figure together, are experienced weakly is the complete figure experienced or only the individual objects?

Testing these predictions will pose a challenge to the existing, leading theories of consciousness. When the project is finished, the aim is to have a refined view of the two theories added to our current best knowledge of consciousness. This means that we can get more knowledgeable about the inner experiences of the outer world.