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Spatio-temporal Ingredients in NLP Therapy: a Quantum-cybernetic Model

Introduction

Spatio-temporal concepts figure significantly in many NLP therapeutic techniques such as Time Line Therapy (James, 1994) or the Swish Pattern (O'Connor & Seymour, 1990). One can confidently note that no other psychological teaching or therapy has emphasized the usefulness of time and space as therapeutic modalities as NLP has done. This could be attributed to the ingenuity of the NLP innovators. Yet such an explanation might block a deeper level of inquiry, relating our psychic experiences to the most revolutionary scientific discoveries of our century: quantum mechanics and relativistic physics.

This article seeks to demonstrate that the use of the notion of space–time in NLP psychotherapy fully accords with:

1) the brain–mind model advocated by contemporary physics, and;
2) the modern concepts of second-order cybernetics.

In classical physics, time and space are inextricably linked to each other. Newton (1729) rejected the concept of absolute space, but believed that time was absolute and symbolized by the clock; thus the clock has come to symbolize absolute scientific time. Advances in science often conceptually unify things previously thought to be unconnected; Einstein's special theory of relativity (Einstein, 1905) unified our concepts of space and time. Quantum mechanics and relativity theory have brought revolutionary insight: space, time, and object are in some sense continuous, mutually dependent, and inseparable.

NLP seems to have amended what Eccles (1994) describes as the failure of the laws of classical physics and the laws of the derivative sciences, chemistry and biology, to make any reference to consciousness of mind. Eccles maintains this invalidates the claims made by all materialists that their brain–mind theory is in accord with natural

law.

The distinguished quantum physicist Margenau (1984) states that the mind may be regarded as a field in the accepted physical sense of the term, but it is a non-material field; its closest analogue is perhaps a probability field.

In its endeavour to explain mental phenomena, brain research has gone through different stages to keep pace with the state of physics and technology. Early explanations using the metaphor of hydraulics have been replaced by electrochemical mechanisms, to which we may add now quantum effects and chaotic processes.