

What Mr. X's struggles with hemispatial neglect reveals about human consciousness

When I was a graduate student 25 years ago, I met a man I'll call Mr. X, who had recently recovered from a stroke to the right side of his cerebral cortex.

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We took a large sheet of paper, filled it with scattered horizontal line segments...and put it on a table in front of him. Then we gave him a marker and asked him to put a vertical mark through every horizontal line on the page.

I remember he laughed and said, "This again!" before confidently crossing out every horizontal line on the right-hand side of the page, but none on the left.

...[Mr. X] suffered from a syndrome called hemispatial neglect. No matter how hard he was pressed to try, he had no concept of the left side of space.

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Hemispatial neglect is the purest known disruption of consciousness caused by brain damage...One of the lessons from neglect is that...consciousness is not a single, unified entity. It breaks apart along spatial lines—left versus right and near versus far.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [The Brain Damage That Hides Half the World](#)