Somatic adaptivity, affect and ego: a cursory analysis—from consciousness to social complexity

Is ego the seat of anxiety? That is what the Freud says. Let's dive in a take a look. The conflict between Jung and Freud is a simple misunderstanding I will address below. If an idea is old or new, is not meaningful, only if it is correct! These old ideas, have led to many new pathways. Please read this paper: http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/wjns.2016.61007, and you can see how useful and worthy an affective neuroscientific approach is in relating depth psychology to anatomy. Read section 4. Ego, affect and the transference from unconscious sources which create reality are vital concepts, which if understood to detail may allow healing, without recourse to harmful drugs.

OK, first a few facts about consciousness, and we will be in the hunt!

1. Consciousness as evolutionary unconscious affective primacy

Evolutionary biology, and neuropsychoanalysis correct the typical idea, that cortical tone is consciousness. Yes, conscious experience has a clear relation to energetic distributions which extend from the ARAS to create a cortical tone, and a waking state. However, this is a later adaptation which is demonstrably secondary, and the true root of conscious experience is far older. The REM system is older than the sleep onset system yielding SWS, and, it is older than the waking system itself (Panksepp, 1998, pp. 125-143). *REM…this core system is lower, and older, than the waking system.* The highest concentration of REM initiating neurons are caudal to the ARAS. The Basic Rest Activity Cycle (BRAC) demonstrates the embedded REM cycle (Panksepp, 1998, p. 129). All that implies from many directions, that REM was once primary consciousness (Panksepp, 1998, pp. 133-135).

Also, remember the fact that EMOTION, the primary element of dreams (Stickgold et al., 2001; Hobson & Pace-Schott, 2002) is also demonstrably primary in maintaining consciousness: the periaqueductal grey, the locus of emotion and the primitive affective motor "self" (at its intersection with the superior colliculi) (Panksepp, 1998, p. 312)…this piece of tissue, the PAG, is the smallest bit upon which consciousness is dependent (Solms, 2013, p. 12). Our consciousness is an emotional one…a consciousness of affect.

Please note this further role of the embedded REM system as it performs functional dynamics associated with an evolutionarily primary consciousness:

The FTG neurons, the giant neurons of the reticular tegmental fields which mediate rapid movement while awake, exhibit storms of spiked activity during REM (eg., PGO spikes), indicating their probable role participating in that same capacity, as orienting reflexes, associated with a primitive conscious REM (Panksepp, 1998, pp. 133-135).

We see the underlying older system revealed in dreams. The Dorso Lateral Prefrontal Cortex (DLPFC), is demodulated in REM. Emotion is released. The hidden emotive definitional processes are amplified as well (hyper-modulated limbic system), allowing us to watch. "This would be in keeping with the proposed role in waking of these structures in the identification of mismatches between expected and actual behavioral outcomes (122–125) and would also explain the similarities seen between cholinergic and PGO activity in the amygdala during REM on the one hand and during alerting and orienting responses in awake animals on the other (126–128)" (Stickgold, 2001, p. 1056). The DLPFC is inactive, logic curtailed. So in REM, the brain is aminergically demodulated (low noradrenergic, serotonergic and histaminergic activity), and

along with predominant acetylcholine modulation, the primary underlying system is revealed.

So, the underlying REM system, which is older than the waking system was once primary consciousness for our evolutionary ancestors, and this primary conscious source, can be revealed as ego structure and logical processes are curtailed, as in REM dreams, where the DLPFC is demodulated, or, by way of linear (ego) destructuralization revealing primary processes fostered by extensive meditative practice, or, to some extent as well, in psychedelic drug use:

From: The default-mode, ego-functions and free-energy: a neurobiological account of Freudian ideas; R. L. Carhart-Harris and K. J. Friston, *Brain,* 2010:

"We substantiate this synthesis by showing that Freud's descriptions of the primary process are consistent with the phenomenology and neurophysiology of rapid eye movement sleep, the early and acute psychotic state, the aura of temporal lobe epilepsy and hallucinogenic drug states.

LSD given to humans immediately prior to . . . or during sleep . . . has been shown to promote REM sleep and dreaming. These studies provide converging evidence that a specific mode of cognition (primary process thinking), rests on brain states, which possess a characteristic neurophysiology." (Carhart-Harris and Friston, 2010).

Now, let us consider the cortex in its relation to affect. Neuropsychoanalysis has allowed us not inconsiderable insight here. *Libido*, is the undifferentiated affect which powers our modern waking state. Think of libido as undifferentiated systemic potential, mediated by precious few recombinations of neurochemical distribution, issuing from the ascending reticular activating system so as to create cortical tone (Kaplan-Solms & Solms, 2002, pp. 264-267).

We may rightly conclude, consciousness is affective at its primary process formative level, and, affective at the level of the cortex as well. Human consciousness is entirely affect dependent.

2. Analysis of basic affective motor-self as primary adaptivity (leading to ego structure):

It has long been known that unconscious content may be interpretively accessed, and unconscious processes observed in REM dreams (Freud, 1900). We can find in REM dreaming a return to what was once a rudimentary affective primary consciousness in our distant ancestors (Panksepp, 1998, pp. 133-135; Norman, 2015*d*). In REM we see intrinsically sourced basic upper motor system activation associated with: pyramidal tract neurons, cerebellar red nucleus, ventro-lateral thalamus, and most pontine giganto-cellular field (FTG) neurons, the last being similar to activational patterns observed in waking animals (Satinoff and Teitelbaum, 1983; Stickgold et al., 2001). It is possible to trace the mammalian historical record of evolutionary development as it stretches backward toward its earliest origins (Panksepp 1998, 2012). Basic bodily orienting responses are sourced in the ancient connective somatic juncture of the superior colliculi and the Peri Aqueductal Grey (PAG) alongside the adjacent mesencephalic locomotor region, a basic affective motor-self designed to provide *rapid bodily response* to sensory indication of actual or possible somatic impingements (Panksepp, 1989, p. 312). I have deduced that the manifest complexity of later unconscious, hence conscious and psycho-ontological operative presentation, is in fact, of somatic origin, and may well have epigenetic underpinnings (Norman, 2015*c*). I will spell a bit of that out below. You can see the Jung comes of the same source as the Freud.

From this juncture it becomes clear, that as more complex life forms evolved, the basic source of consciousness, affect, must be allocated so as to create correct symbolic valence for objects and situations from under the restrictions of phenomenological constraint. Experience is a

symbolized estimation of external fact. The process is based around an unconscious somatic reactive kernel, which is omnipresent and ancient. Here we may look a bit into that, and then, find our conclusions:

Please read here, for a basic detailing and historical analysis of super-ego structuralization, its (introjected) relation to masochism, and a proposed method of mnemic re-consolidation:

http://www.thejournalofunconsciouspsychology.com/web_documents/who_fired_prometheus_black_watch.pdf

http://www.thejournalofunconsciouspsychology.com/web_documents/re-polarization_theory.pdf

We can see from those papers, that for modern Man, our dangers are (mainly) socially mediated, and (entirely) somatically based. What gives human phylogeny its elevated and mysterious appearance, is the increased complexity in which those dangers are embedded, and their repressed seat of influence as agents of direct association, and also dynamic valence stemming from unconscious fantasy, distributing by way of transference, experiential qualitative valence. It is from this layered topology and substantial complexity, that the archetypes, and Freudian unconscious structures alike, both do spring.

3. Epigenetic phylogeny as complexification of the somatic instincts:

Here in what we call the phylogenetic, we see the processes which create instinct, nothing more. The appearance of something deeper is created by way of complexity. I will place the picture in context, then restrict the focus to gain an ontological macro-analysis.

Macro-derivation of onto-physical formative "laminated" process:

As one progresses across isomorphisms of cognitive and physical scale, an alternation between distributive processes and result is created, as a laminated structure which alternates logical and affective layers. Here you can see affect, feeling, give rise by self-recursive dynamism to logic, and, logic, underlying affective distributions. Under that, is wave function itself, which again, appears to be sort of proto-affect, a primary affective physical/biological conscious fount! So the universal and ontogenetic ontological systems, consciousness in ontogeny and other quantum physical systems, alternate process specificity as one moves across scales.

http://blog.theultranet.com/2015/08/logic-a-quantum-ontologic-self-recursive-affective-product-and-affective-distributional-basis.html

http://blog.theultranet.com/2015/08/wave-function-as-onto-physical-transference-collapsean-abstract-encoding-pt1.html

Psycho-ontology and phylogeny; epigenetic instantiation and expression as instinctual somatic basis complexification:

Ontology in human ontogeny presents within a limited framework derived from human existential phenomenology. Ontology, as instinct, can be observed and derived as sourced from a somatic basis:

a. Lower neural structures and those more centrally located are older. As the cortex is damaged or removed, if the damage is sufficiently specific or extensive, dreams take on a somatic quality

(think of the work of Solms).

b. The REM system is older than the sleep onset (SWS) and waking system (ARAS) [see above link on wavefunction]. REM activates the PGO system, and the FTG neurons, which are primitive orienting reflexes, and serve a similar somatic function in waking. *REM was once primary consciousness for our ancestors, and can be seen as evidenced in waking, embedded in the Basic Rest Activity Cycle* (Panksepp, Affective Neuroscience, Oxford Press, 1998; see above links for more).

c. Hallucinatory representation of undistorted unconscious content in SSRI withdrawal is all but entirely somatic in the content revealed. (Norman, 2011, *The Tangible Self*, and links below).

http://www.thejournalofunconsciouspsychology.com/web_documents/who_fired_prometheus_black_watch.pdf

http://thejournalofunconsciouspsychology.com/blog/2013/12/21/5-ht-and-repression-the-key-indoleamine-the-unconscious-gateway-of-civilization-creativity-and-hell/

http://www.thejournalofunconsciouspsychology.com/web_documents/background_info_black_watch.pdf

http://www.thejournalofunconsciouspsychology.com/web_documents/re-polarization_theory.pdf

d. The oldest most primary affective motor SELF is deeply embedded and ancient, a somatic reflexive nexus found at the junction of the superior colliculi and the periaqueductal grey (Panksepp, Affective Neuroscience, Oxford Press, 1998). Soma! Ontological self extends from soma at the lowest available level. Instinct!

Simply imagine the situation in ever increasing social complexity, the rewards and punishments now associated with very complex interwoven situational specifics. We must recognize these complex emergent social structures and respond to avoid danger and secure reward. The anima beckons, authority threatens social rebuke, etc. Now, highly complex psycho-socially endemic structural specificity—archetype—and basic punitive moral structures—super-ego/guilt—can be seen rightly as tracing back to their ancient physical roots, and creating somatic variations in result: epigenetic expression or lack thereof.

So, I hope to have drawn a picture in your mind. Please recall the Freud: Ego is a hapless creature, which must act to please many masters! It is a stimulus barrier between external experience and internal perception, and also, between consciousness and the repressed.

Please read this paper, for a good candidate for ego: (Carhart-Harris and Friston, 2010 The default-mode, ego-functions and free-energy: a neurobiological account of Freudian ideas. *Brain,* doi:10.1093/brain/awq010). Think of what happens when you block 5-HT (LSD) or lower it (SSRI withdrawal)…ego is reduced in its efficacy and we hallucinate! Ego is an internal stimulus barrier. Also, all of external experience is increased in its potency of presentation. (Ego is an external stimulus barrier). What happens when we meditate?... just as the Buddhists predict, ego is destructuralized. DMN, looks like a nice fit indeed.

Meditation experience is associated with differences in default mode network activity and connectivity: Judson A. Brewer, Patrick D. Worhunsky, Jeremy R. Gray, Yi-Yuan Tang, Jochen Weber, and Hedy Kober.

http://www.pnas.org/content/108/50/20254.full

http://thejournalofunconsciouspsychology.com/blog/2013/12/21/5-ht-and-repression-the-key-indoleamine-the-unconscious-gateway-of-civilization-creativity-and-hell/

So I hope you can see the ancient somatic origin of fear and anxiety responses, now presented within social situations (and as instinctual renunciations and repressions), and the relation to ego.

The specific detailed interconnections of separate areas, and activational intrasystemic allocations which determine valence, the balance admitted into the conscious transference, the allocational nexus of response and reaction: Ego. Change the intraconnected allocational structure, and change…the world.

I hope this was well aimed, and comprehensible. To me, these ideas are a gateway to creating new hope, for myself, and the rest of humanity as well. Read the paper above available for download after paragraph one, and know, the malleable intrasystemic balance…is hope.

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