

Jason Brown's *Neuropsychological Foundations of Conscious Experience*

I love books. A particular sort of book peaks my interest, and it is not the usual kind. I read a review of what seemed like a magic book, a book which promised to reveal something more of what I had discovered, a bit more about the nature of consciousness and how it relates to unconscious processes and brain anatomy. I have been observing this hidden thing for many years now, and so few people have any understanding but a false one concerning this strange and deeply concealed territory, the inner continent, the process by which reality is given form and all the world is mirrored from internal to external. No one has this thing right. All get it backwards. Here, this author is more clear headed than most. The review was plain enough—Jason Brown saw the proper dynamic of reality creation and mental processes. The book was reviewed in my favorite journal, *Neuropsychoanalysis*, and I decided to spend what for me is two months worth of book money, and invest it in this one expensive book. I waited with great anticipation for the package from Europe to arrive, so I could enter this new world of knowledge, a world crafted by a highly intelligent author, a scientist with over 200 papers to his credit! He has based his theories on his years of work with aphasia patients.

The book was costly, and thick. At first, the author's style left me swimming in words, but soon, my background in philosophy cleared the air, and within fifty pages or so, I became quite at ease to read this unusual style, which disappeared, leaving the meaning naked before me. It seemed that I held nearly the exact same idea of things as this author, who understood quite correctly, what I have understood—symptoms are but observable indications of the hidden aspects of the mental process in normal cases. What is typically a hidden, formative piece of the process, where unconscious sources form the dynamic of reality creation from within, is now revealed to observation in symptomatology. The aspects of reality which seem to be gathered from without, are not in any way formed as such, but instead, as a fountain rises from within, the process creates our world, and the impressions of that world have no reality until the process provides it. Dr. Brown calls this an Epoch. I was stunned. The author understood it rightly! No one, has this right. All get it backwards.

By the time I was around halfway through the book, the author's point was quite clear, and I had only one concern: there was no specificity to the theory concerning the specific content of the mind, none, only the processes, and this struck me as deeply troubling, as it would preclude the theory from involving the real causes of mental illness in cases where brain injury was absent. I formulated a definition of the neuroses in the specific language of Dr. Brown's micro genetic theory:

"Neurosis is the instantiation of particular unconscious content into perception over process. The process of world/reality creation is thusly distorted. In neurosis: content affects process distortion."

Surely this author sees that the processes of the mind are affected by its contents, and that this is the source of distorted neurotic mentation. To be in a position to directly observe

what was unconscious, I have seen these contents and how they affect all aspects of the thinking process, because they are so very, very painful—and are often made so by way of reaction formation. Can he imagine as real, the most deeply repressed and distorted view which ignores the very truths of psychoanalysis...can he think this beautiful lie... is real? As I read on, my heart sank, and I understood, Dr. Brown was a beautiful soul. Never trust a beautiful soul. Nothing is as seductive as the resulting confusion.

I was deeply saddened to read several purposeful misunderstandings of Freud, distortions so grotesque they remind one of the misstatements of the later Jung regarding the works of Nietzsche and Freud. So wrong, they cause one who knows the material to become nauseous, as this text did in my case. So much repression is a function of reaction formation, the conscious and unconscious wishes condensed into a piece of content to give what is unconsciously a pleasure and a wish, a changed valence, and cause the ideation to become painful, and thereby, repress it. In reaction formation, as is so well known to even a beginning student, we see a pleasurable unconscious ideation become painful by conscious influence. This is first year, undergraduate level information! Read this sore misunderstanding which is so clearly mistaken, a point so very incorrect and self-serving: "The problem of pain illustrates a wider problem with theories of the unconscious, especially psychoanalysis (see below), in that the account of the unconscious is modeled after that of consciousness so that unconscious pain or, if one considers this an oxymoron, unconscious thought, memory, etc., are assumed to be qualitatively identical to what is in consciousness except that they are unconscious" (pp. 205-206). This book is filled with concepts, and few real life clinical examples. There is a reason for this. These ideas are wrong, and they become obvious and clear as beautiful lies once exposed to the ugly test of reality, cure and illness. Let us take an example, a *real* example and see if Dr. Brown's statement is true, or a beautiful fake.

During the course of SSRI withdrawal, many memories and memories of fantasies which were deeply repressed became available in consciousness. Take a typical example of a mutilation murder fantasy first envisioned at a specific time from the teen years. The fantasy involves a machete, genital mutilation, and a female parental object. Perhaps you can see already why a beautiful soul would wish to lie about such thoughts? Fear not my friends, I am honest, and not a beautiful soul! I will tell you the truth! This fantasy was repressed by reaction formation, as it is utterly anathema to my ego and kind personality, however, this fact is only a *conscious* moral objection, the unbearably painful quality associated with this unconscious ideation is not endemic to the unconscious aspect in any way, which is a wish, a desire most seductive, a regressed sexual wish, turned into a wish of violence. Both, are wishes, pleasurable wishes. That, is the unconscious aspect. It is a specific objective memory trace [or current fantasy] in every case. No exceptions. In this case, the memory was of a particular and specific fantasy. Try it. Locate ten pieces of unconscious content, you will find ten objective and specific memories or fantasies. Use my techniques and try it. See for yourself who is lying! See how unpleasant it is *not* to be deceptive and beautiful? Do not blame Dr. Brown. He is right to lie to us, it is more beautiful, isn't it? Ha! Bunk! Beauty is honesty's province! No healing takes place without honesty. See it and know—the unconscious aspect in such a case is pleasure, the reaction is moral, a conscious creation added after the fact to create the

painful reversal of valence and cause repression. *Conflict!* To consciousness the ideation is painful, a secondary conscious reactive addition has altered its *conscious* valence, to the unconscious, it is pleasure, a specific wish *complete with an object*. This statement is a lie: "The problem of pain illustrates a wider problem with theories of the unconscious, especially psychoanalysis (see below), in that the account of the unconscious is modeled after that of consciousness so that unconscious pain or, if one considers this an oxymoron, unconscious thought, memory, etc., are assumed to be qualitatively identical to what is in consciousness except that they are unconscious" (pp. 205-206).

Clearly, Dr. Brown is not fond of the unpleasant and soiled feeling honesty about the specifics of mental life brings with it. One can hardly blame him, but, he is wrong nonetheless. To deny this thing, has left a somewhat bitter taste in his mouth, or so his words seem to convey: "In the unconscious psychoanalysis has found its most congenial home, but it is less a workplace of novel ideas than a graveyard of midnight rumblings with imaginary ghosts doing the work left over from the preceding day . . . Links from psychoanalysis to psychology are unconvincing, while attempts to correlate psychoanalysis with neuroscience, which are meant to rehabilitate the scientific credentials of a theory bereft of innovation, remain tenuous and forced (see Brown and Stremler, 2008) (p. 211)." How amazing! Dr. Brown's theory, so tenuous and forced is laid along the most innovative work psychology has ever known, that of Sigmund Freud, and he claims the reverse! And even more stunning, the obvious bitterness toward the excellent clinical success of Mark Solms and neuropsychology, finally acknowledged after the publication of Mark and Karen Solms's book, *Clinical Studies in Neuropsychology*, which has so effectively married the neurosciences and psychoanalysis to superb result. I believe a bit of resentment may even have crept in toward the neuropsychological acceptance of the work of Jaak Panksepp, in several comments about the disparity between the consciousness of animals and people, but Dr. Brown may simply be honest, and mistaken here (p. 200).

And let us examine this bit of text and see if it is true, or a fake: "A wish is intentional. Is the unconscious intentional? The unconscious may drive to an end, but the object of the wish is not in sight when unconscious process is active. To construe unconscious process as a wish implants the object of the wish before it is decided. The drive that is antecedent to desire shapes and configures the wish in specifying an aim. Unconscious motivation presumes a goal that becomes clear as the act materializes" (p. 212). Again, a simple examination of reality, of a real example dispels the fakery. Note how in the example above, the object of the wish is oh so very clear from the start! Another lie. Note how one can see the very thing he denies in his language. Use some Freud and behold: "the object of the wish is not in sight when unconscious process is active." Here we interpret so easily to find—a *wish!* An unconscious wish is "not in-sight"—the wish for repression itself! Please sir, read your own words, and then, hear them too!

And this statement... true or a fake? "Unconscious material is not suppressed or de-innervated in repression or resistance. . . The transition from possibility to fact in the passage to consciousness does not entail a defense against unwanted ideas" (pp. 216-217). Look at the example. Is there a defensive process which rejects an unwanted

idea? Hmmmm? How beautiful it was to read this book! How ugly it was to read this book!

Dr. Brown is so very intelligent and learned. He has correctly described the processes of the mind and the mind's dynamic activity in the creation of reality. His insights here are magnificent. His ideas about the relationship between creativity and mystical experience, and in the context of mysticism, the relation of unconscious content to processes is also correct, in fact, I had articulated a similar view some months before buying this book. Please read: "Brahma and universal process identification: Enlightenment—a psychoanalytic perspective," an article available in this magazine, in the "New Ideas" section. Dr. Brown is quite brilliant. He is also, quite bitter—a beautiful soul. He is correct about the glass, the processes are as he says. A stunning and well presented analysis. But the content, the specifics, their importance and how they relate to the process he describes...here, he is wrong—*utterly*. Believe him, and believe that the glass is all there is, and the liquid inside of it means nothing. That is a wish, a beautiful wish...a wish *not* to see something. Something specific. I believe, if you read the last two sentences of his book, perhaps, you can figure out what it might be. Here, can you spot the piece of unconscious content, or perhaps two, which this beautiful soul will not know?

"This opens the way to a novelty generated by the multiple relations of unrealized parts. Put differently, the incomplete analysis permits the arousal of unexpected parts that are tacitly subsumed within wholes that have not yet individuated" (p. 345).

—Rich Norman © 2014

The book:

Brown, J. (2010). *Neuropsychological foundations of conscious experience*.
Belgium: Les Editions Chromatika. www.chromatika.com