

Fig: Ure It Out

A Creative Psychoanalysis

NEIL MURPHY

A tree falls in the forest.

Fig 1: from Ashfield, with the long brown ponytail, and she

The young lady from Ashfield, with the long brown ponytail, used to walk to the gym every day after work. Did so for six months. Then it became too expensive, too crowded, too far. Told this to the young lady from Ashfield, with the long brown ponytail, and she agreed, only, really she just wanted to go home and take her shoes off.

This is called rationalisation.

Fig 2: a sandwich wrapped in plastic, an apple, a bottle

The man in steel-cap boots rode the train at midday. His weathered skin hadn't perspired and his small esky was still full: a sandwich wrapped in plastic, an apple, a bottle of water. He went home and fell into his armchair. One month later and he

was still sitting there. At night his wife put the children to bed, the washing machine churning in the background, the pressed clothes piled neatly on the ironing board. She collapsed on the sofa and sighed at the sink full of dirty dishes. The man snapped. STOP WHINING YOU LAZY BITCH!

This is called projection.

Fig 3: in a pile of rubbish,

Didn't realise she was trying to hide her shopping bags. Always did though, as she passed the steps, in the walkway that joined the shopping centre and the car park. Also quickened her pace unknowingly, near the steps, as if suddenly she was in a rush to be somewhere. Plus, she would fiddle, played with her jacket zipper or rearranged the bag strap on her shoulder, anything to divert her eyes at the right time. Wouldn't call it fear though, more like submission, a surrender to an unusual force that kept her anxiety at bay. And just like that she would be driving off in her car, oblivious to the steps, the homeless person sleeping in a pile of rubbish underneath them.

This is called repression.

Fig 4: a H2N2 that followed the Spanish Flu

While waiting in line the American wore a respiratory mask, he said 'back in 1976 there was a Swine Flu threat in the US that scientists thought was linked to the Spanish Flu or La Grippe Espagnole which we all know killed between fifty and one hundred million people in 1918 and don't forget the Russian Flu also a H1N1 virus type that followed the Asian Flu a H2N2 that followed the Spanish Flu and of course there was also the Hong Kong Flu 1968 maybe 34,000 deaths all of which preceded this 1976 threat which preceded the Avian Flu and now th...'. He readjusted his mask.

This is called intellectualisation.

Fig 5: quite irrational: They hide reality from us.

'Defence mechanisms protect us from our discomfort, enabling us to believe that we are behaving quite reasonably.' This is him, quoting Dr Deborah DuNann Winter's words. 'Defences are actually quite irrational: They hide reality from us.' This is him, quoting Dr Susan Koger also. 'They demonstrate the illogic of our behaviour while

also illustrating the vulnerability of our self-concepts.' This is still him, summarising Freud, repeating fragments of *The Psychology of Environmental Problems*.¹ This is him, distancing himself from his best friend with the shotgun. 'Freud believed...', him explaining his distancing from his mate's irrationality, still standing there though, with a shotgun, black ski mask, wads of cash.

Again, intellectualisation.

Fig 6: bin, started lecturing

The teenage employee of a fast-food outlet had dealt with protestors all week. Yes, she was aware of unsustainable palm oil and animal cruelty, and every other sign bombarding the store. She was tired by Friday, more than usual, grumpy in fact. Went home, saw the newspaper in the bin, started lecturing her parents about recycling.

This is called displacement.

Fig 7: isn't that great to see' and

The two ladies embraced in a way that suggested they were long-time friends. The affection and respect expressed in their long hug was noticed by others as well, brought about such remarks as 'Oh, isn't that great to see' and 'To think that such friendship still exists'. The glowing smiles on their faces as they released was heart-felt. To think no one realised the two ladies hated each other that much.

This is called reaction formation.

Fig 8: silently to the forefront of

The last full stop was planted. Everyone sat there, pondered, maybe wiggled in the seat a little or rubbed their cheek or touched their hair, wrinkled foreheads, ambiguity brewing inside. Then whatcanIdoaboutit? crept silently to the forefront of the mind, perhaps as far as the throat. And with that, everyone got up and left.

This is called denial.

Meanwhile, another tree falls in the forest. There is no sound.

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Neil Murphy is a Bachelor of Communications (Writing & Publishing) graduate from the University of Western Sydney. His interests in the natural environment and the creative arts attract him to different locations around the world.

—NOTES

¹ Deborah Du Nann Winter and Susan M. Koger, *The Psychology of Environmental Problems: Psychology for Sustainability*, 2nd edition, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey, 2004, p. 33.