

case example that more aptly fitted his situation and that gave him some hope that his life could still have value.

This book has existential ideas at its core (although this is not explicitly stated), particularly in relation to meaning and existence. The book conveys these ideas in a very readable way. I like the fact that Rowe talks about her own experiences and occasionally uses examples from real life to demonstrate her points, such as the Enron scandal of 2002. The book talks a lot about religion which I sometimes found off-putting, although I agree wholeheartedly with Rowe about the importance of therapists asking about and respecting their clients' religious beliefs. If a client of mine wanted to read a book about depression then I would recommend this book as a way of generating some fruitful discussion about the client's own experience.

Dr Jenny Maslin

The Embodied Therapist

Robert Shaw. (2003). London: Brunner-Routledge.

The embodied psychotherapist examines the role of the therapist's body and highlights the importance of the body within therapy. Robert Shaw believes this is an important area and has been ignored for too long. The book explores the role the body plays within the therapeutic encounter through a consideration of the significant effects it has on the therapist within sessions.

Shaw has divided the book into three sections to address the concept of the embodied psychotherapist and to take an in-depth look at the role of the body in therapy. The three sections cover: 1) The body in psychotherapy, 2) Psychotherapists' body narratives and 3) the embodied psychotherapist. Shaw introduces the concept of embodiment and outlines how he will discuss this issue throughout the book. Shaw explains how his interest in the body's role originates from working originally as an osteopath and the physical contact you have to heal the body along with his training as a psychotherapist and the emotional contact you have with a client.

In the first section Shaw reviews a number of background theories in relation to the role of the body within psychotherapy. Shaw defines the major terms he will be using throughout the book and their relevance to the topics he will be addressing. Within this section Shaw cites a clear and interesting background to this theory and looks at the Post-Reichmann therapy followed by biosynthesis - working with mind body duality. Shaw defines the live-body paradigm theory and how this theory links in with the term embodiment. To define and explore the term embodiment he quotes Turner;

The body is never simply a physical object but always an embodiment of consciousness, ...to perceive the world is to reflect upon possible actions of my body on the world

(p. 32).

This leads the reader to feel what Shaw is portraying, something which is nicely followed by a clear explanation of the term live-body paradigm and its importance. This theory originates from the phenomenological school of thought and how we, as humans, interpret the world through our senses, the starting point, of discovery and learning being our bodies. Shaw draws on Merleau-Ponty's theory throughout this section and his work on the term embodiment. Shaw also draws on subjective experience and intersubjectivity. He posits an interesting explanation of the embodied experience stating it is a means of exploring the intersubjective world between therapist and client. Shaw concludes the first section with a chapter addressing narrative within psychotherapy and the powerful part that narrative can play within therapy in determining how client's issues are interpreted. Shaw states there is a sound basis for this therapy as it is the client's experiences that are paramount and not the therapist's approach. For Shaw narrative methods and synthesis of embodiment:

...provides a powerful, challenging and more egalitarian discourse for therapy.

(p. 139).

Shaw concludes the section by examining self-disclosure and the cautions one needs to bear in mind when using it in the therapeutic encounter.

To guide the reader into the next section Shaw provides a concise outline of the chapters within the section. Shaw states that this section explores the actual physical experiences of the therapist's body. Shaw cites the term 'body narrative' he defines this as the strategies and metaphors of the body as a receiver, which he suggests makes sense of the somatic experience.

The first chapter addresses the therapist's physical reactions. To portray these Shaw provides examples he has discussed with the therapists he interviewed during his research. The therapist's physical experiences cover a range of areas, for example nausea/sweaty palms, feeling pregnant and symptoms of asthma. Shaw states the importance of questioning these sensations and to ensure they are linked to the client so they can be used productively in the therapeutic encounter. Shaw's work on the body as a receiver is particularly interesting. He suggests the body tunes into particular aspects and emotions in therapy and highlights the importance of the therapist being aware of their personal history. He cites the need to understand body experiences they have encountered during change and the necessity to explore these in their own therapy and with the client. Shaw

also links it in to somatisation as a bodily phenomenon located in the therapist's body.

The final chapter of the second section is titled 'embodied styles of working' and Shaw defines this as

...techniques that the therapists employ derive from their sense of embodiment

(p. 112).

Shaw leads this section through an examination of the therapist's experiences and draws on a range of theories to consider this. Shaw positively discusses culture and what can be drawn from this, before highlighting the impact psychotherapy can have on an individual. In section one Shaw discusses the issue of touch and the different schools of thought around this. In this section he turns to this issue again and identifies how problematic and sensitive this area is and the need to be aware and recognise what the client desires and its suitability within the therapeutic encounter. Following this Shaw discusses the impact of body empathy in therapy on the therapist, he portrays this through various examples, one example being of a therapist who felt contaminated constantly and secondly it led a therapist to withdraw from friends and socialising.

In the final section Shaw undertakes an in-depth examination of body empathy and draws on therapists experiences. In one example the therapist describes how he felt cold with clients and described this as 'existential cold.' Shaw states how the therapist found Dante's *Divine Comedy* led him to understand his feelings. Shaw summarises the book and sets the scene of Dante being in a dark wood trying to find his way out and Dante portrays the cold;

...circles of hell underneath a frozen lake

(p. 137)

Shaw also notes the importance of highlighting his personal experiences of the body in psychotherapy and the need to take embodiment seriously within the psychotherapeutic encounter.

His final conclusion draws on the findings of Spinelli and Shaw agrees on the degree of philosophical naiveté in therapists and the impact this has in their work and intervention with clients.

Does the book achieve what it sets out to? Shaw opens the book with a quote from Merleau-Ponty and thus sets the scene for the book;

It is through my body that I understand other people

(p. 186)

In the introduction Shaw clearly lays out what led him to write the book and how it is based on a research study he has conducted. The aim of his research was to explore somatisation in clients and to reclaim the body in psychotherapy. Shaw is clear about how this can occur:

The importance of taking our bodies and our own sense of embodiment seriously is a crucial aspect of this book. I strongly suggest that, as a profession, it behoves us all to become more bodily literate and this book offers an opportunity to do this

(p. 1)

The layout of the book is intelligible and systematically structured allowing the reader to follow through the book and learning simultaneously. Shaw uses reflective skills throughout the book within which he refers back to his aim thus providing support and affirmation for the subject he is discussing. I feel that Shaw's book does achieve what it sets out to. The experiences he cites provide a good and clear understanding of the concept he is portraying.

The book is also extremely well-written and the layout of the book means it can be easily followed. There were a few sections where I found some of the concepts and terms he used confusing but due to his clear summaries I was able to deduce their meaning. For each chapter he provided a clear introduction, good sub-headings and a concise summary thus enabling the reader to retain and learn the content better. This also allows the reader to refer to different sections as they require.

I appreciated how Shaw brought his research in to the book, thus being able to give true examples of what he was discussing. This enables the reader to relate to the phenomena which could otherwise appear inconceivable.

Shaw's references to other schools of thought within therapy and philosophy created an interesting text for the reader as it brought a wider perspective on to the concept of the embodied psychotherapist. Shaw brings in and considers differing schools of thought and addresses their theories in connection with the concept he is discussing. Shaw basis a major part of his theory on the live-body paradigm, which is based on phenomenology and has some similarities to existentialism. Spinelli and Merleau-Ponty are usefully anchors throughout the book.

I would recommend the book to any individuals in a multi-disciplinary team who work in a therapeutic environment with the clients, for example, drug/alcohol workers, nurses, counsellors, psychologist (assistants and trained) and psychiatrists. I feel it plays an important role when working with people on a one to one therapeutic level. I have colleagues whose work is very much related to body sensations and feel it would be useful for them to perceive how this information can be used and the importance

Book Reviews

of it. I found it very interesting and helpful in explaining experiences I may have during a therapy session and the importance of being aware of these and bringing them in to the therapy. Embodiment is an important concept to consider and therapists should be aware of and familiar with it. In my opinion it could equip a therapist as a useful tool in therapy sessions. It also explains any unknown bodily sensations the therapist may encounter.

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