

quotes when only the original text would make sense. All these quotes are fully referenced.

There are 320 entries, thoroughly cross-referenced and in using this dictionary quite extensively for teaching and checking references and primary sources in marking essays and case studies I have found it extremely useful and accurate. The most often used quotes are referred to appropriately.

Although it can obviously be read as a dictionary to find out about a single idea it can also be read as a narrative that begins anywhere and goes off with an endless number of plot lines each of which is coherent with the other. That way it can be an exciting and inspiring read as well as informing and teaching readers who acquaint themselves with existential psychotherapy for the first time.

All books have limitations; no dictionary can say everything and some entries for me like the for example the one on Jaspers and his concept of limit situation seemed relatively short. For this reviewer Jaspers deserves a bigger space considering the importance that his concepts and his life as a practitioner who was also a philosopher had for the development of existential therapy. But this is a small point and I suspect most readers will have similar thoughts from time to time. This is the nature of such a project.

This dictionary is a significant contribution to the field of psychotherapy and counselling. As someone with a considerable experience of existential philosophy and psychotherapy I often found its clarity enlightening. As with the Rycroft dictionary it is invaluable for philosopher and practitioner, for student therapist and experienced therapist and also for people of unfamiliar with Existential theory and practice keen to know more.

Reference

Rycroft, C. (1972). *A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*. London: Penguin.

Barbara Karban

The Words to Say It: An Autobiographical Novel

Marie Cardinal. (1993). London: The Women's Press. 295pp. Paperback: £7.99.

This is a moving, beautifully written book, first published in 1975 as '*Les Mots Pour le Dire*', that charts the breakdown, subsequent analysis and recovery of Marie Cardinal. What, for me, makes this book strikingly different from most other accounts of analysis is that it is written entirely and only from the client's point of view; thus it becomes a fascinating

insight into the experience of a particular client during their therapeutic process. This is a richly descriptive story of the protagonist's struggle to find the words to express what she had previously felt inexpressible and unknowable, to find 'the words to say it'.

The book is written in a delightfully contained format. It starts with Marie Cardinal's arrival at the cul-de-sac in Paris for the first session and finishes with the door closing on the last session. Within this format there are two narratives that run next to, interweave and throw light on each other. One is a timeline account of her life story from childhood to adult but the second is a description of the analysis which does not move within the same linear sense of time. Instead this part of the account sometimes shows great speed '*When something happens during a session it happens very fast*' whilst at other times it is stutteringly slow or completely static - these are periods within which nothing or very little is said - '*.....nothing was happening, again there was the vagueness, the great, flat, grey desert extending beyond my closed eyelids...*'. It is during the latter experience that Marie Cardinal begins to realise something important about the quality of the faltering pace and its link to resistance to the process. As Marie Cardinal so eloquently says: '*The mind procrastinates. It goes back and forth. It delays, It hesitates. It keeps watch. And when the time has come, it stands motionless in front of the gate like a setter, paralyzed. Then the dog's master has to come and flush the game.*' It seems to me that these few sentences capture a profound observation about not only the varying and variable pace at which a therapeutic process may proceed but also the possible, and important, use of the gentle guiding hand of the therapist.

In keeping with the basic premise that this book is purely about client's experience, it feels that we hear remarkably little about the analyst himself. There is detailed description of the cul-de-sac construction, the layout of the room, the style of the furniture within but very little that places the analyst as a person. Instead he remains an almost ephemeral figure on the sidelines, like an actor on the stage staying within the shadows: '*...he was very slight, very formally dressed and very distant*'. And yet his presence is felt very strongly: '*He showed me with his eyes that he listened attentively, that I could continue*'. And '*Talk, say whatever comes into your head; try not to choose or reflect, or in any way compose your sentences. Everything is important, every word.*'. But this is not freedom without constraints - for example, the analyst is very firm about the boundaries of time, sometimes, to the protagonist's extreme annoyance, finishing the session abruptly. This contrast between the firm holding aspects of the boundaries and Marie Cardinal's appreciation of the quality of attention from the analyst give rise, for me, to a different appreciation of what we call the 'therapeutic relationship'. This is not theoretical information written within whichever approach we use, this is how it actually felt for this particular client, this is 'lived' therapy. And the

following quote shows how these elements came together to bring about an important realisation: *'His manner of speaking was serious and I felt he wanted me to listen to him and to think about what he was saying. For the first time in a long time someone was addressing me as if I were a normal person. And for the first time in a long while I was behaving like a person capable of assuming responsibilities.'*

Again and again, in this multi-layered book, there are instances such as these - descriptions of the experience of being a client that are so movingly and powerfully written that they cut through theory and get straight this client's experience. This in itself feels like a vitally important reminder that the heart of the therapy process is the meeting of and relationship between two human beings.

But there is so much to this book that a short book review cannot do it justice; at every reading (and, yes, I have read it several times and am sure that I will read it many times more) I have found that some new question or idea arises or is revealed.

For example, intriguingly, this book is subtitled 'an autobiographical novel'. For me this raises questions about where the edges between fiction and fact end and begin? What does this say about what clients reveal? And how do we judge what is 'true' or 'real'? As the book progresses though the 7-year analysis, we gradually become aware that the 'truth' is the one that the client is slowly revealing to herself.

A further strong theme is the relationship between somatic symptoms and what may be expressed or trying to be expressed through our body. With this particular client the 'presenting symptoms' were strongly associated with physical symptoms connected to menstruation, symptoms which had dominated and made her life very difficult up to that point. But through the power and use of 'the words to say it' the realisation arrived that *'then I understood there was an entire area of my body which I had never accepted and which somehow, never belonged to me'*.

There is so much to recommend reading and re-reading this powerful, fascinating and moving insight into a personal experience of psychoanalysis. But rather than continue, let me instead leave you with some of the final 'words to say it' revealed by Marie Cardinal at the very end of her analysis: *'I had to go far away... to dare to listen to my voice utter these three words: "I" (the madwoman, the woman who is not mad, the child, the woman) "You" (my mother, the beauty, the expert, the proud and haughty person, the demented one, the suicide) "love" (attachment, union but also warmth, the kisses, and again the possible joy, the wish for happiness).'*

Kathy Parsons