New dimensions in Body Psychotherapy, **Editor: Nick Totton**
Publisher: Open University Press (2005) 201 pages. £21.99

This book builds on 'Body Psychotherapy: An Introduction' (2003) written by Nick Totton giving a 'showcase' for innovative practitioners and their approaches to Body Psychotherapy. As with all potpourris, there is something for everyone who is interested in the directions that body psychotherapy and dance movement therapy are going. Whilst there is a nominal structure with some chapters coming under the rubric of' New Dimensions of Theory' and others under 'New Dimensions of Practice', most were a bit of both.

The structure that emerged for me was as follows:

A. The new generation of integrative body psychotherapies.

B. Current approaches in dance movement therapy.

C. Contemporary issues in psychotherapy as a whole in relation to the body.

A. The new body psychotherapies.

These are six chapters by Nick Totton, Michael Soth, Yorai Sella, Gottfried Heuer, Ruella Frank, and Jean Claude Audergon who describe their own particular integrations. Although their starting points are different and distinctive – Freudian, Jungian, Reichian, Gestalt and Process Oriented Psychology – they arrive at the similar conclusion; namely, that the body is self and the self is always part of a co-created field (social, cultural, political and spiritual). This leads to a moving away from approaches to the body that focus exclusively 'within the skin' and towards an understanding that 'resistances' are as Nick Totton puts to be respected as we would 'respect the organism's resistance to infection or the individual's resistance to oppression'. (I wonder if as psychotherapists we are all equally blind to our own capacity for benign oppression – Fritz Perls attributed this sin to the behaviourists and analysts of his day but subsequently have been denigrated for his devaluing of the thinking function.)

Given the constraints space I will pull out some of the nuggets I found most interesting:

'Charge': Soth draws a helpful distinction between two meanings of the word. The first sense is of vegetative charge of energetic aliveness which can be influenced consciously by breathing and postural exercises. The second is a relational charge 'arising from the spontaneous and inherent meaningfulness of the contact, internally, externally or both'. Hence a client may have low charge in the first

sense and still have a 'sense of embodiment' that connects him to who he is rather than who he thinks he should be.

'Friction': Using the template of the birth process, Sella illustrates with case examples how friction (physically and energetically) may be perceived sometimes as constriction and sometimes as providing a purchase in the client's attempt to find a sense of direction.

'Symptoms': Audergon reminded me of the dangers in too easily' assigning 'meaning' to a symptom [before it has been] fully grappled with and understood on its own terms'.

'Spirit' and 'Matter': Totton talks of these as 'directions or polarities of energy'. Matter tends towards 'thereness'; spirit towards 'everywhereness'.' Spirit is linked to awareness; matter to existence' we become embodied …in order to temper our being, as a sword is tempered by plunging it red-hot into water. The plunge into matter defines us'.

B.Current approaches in dance movement therapy

There are three chapters in this section by Katya Bloom, Linda Hartley and Emilie Conrad.

Approaching these chapters from the perspective of a client/ participant rather than a practitioner, I discovered common themes in the first two chapters and the previous section. Both describe a personal synthesis of movement, therapy and meditative practice. Each emphasise the advantages of movement as a way in to preverbal states/patterns in doing clinical work.

The third chapter I found the most thought provoking at the same time as being the least psychological. Conrad, who founded Continuum Movement, takes fluid as the starting point in the evolutionary sense that we came from the ocean and and in the ontological sense that are character, personality and movement habits are 'stabilisations' of fluidity or flow. Her interests in movement education take her into questions like 'What is paralysis?' which, though not speaking directly to psychotherapeutic concerns provoked some questions about 'stuckness' in my work as a therapist.

C.Contemporary Issues in relation to the body.

All three topics covered – neuroscience, trauma and the use of touch – are contributions to an ongoing debate for practitioners. Peter Levine and Roz Carroll have written at length elsewhere about the necessity to work with the body to release fully the effects of trauma and the useful corroboration that neuroscience is giving to attachment theory and relational approaches in psychotherapy.

I had not come across David Tune who addressed the ethical issues of touch in the therapeutic relationship. What he said was sound though I thought it spoke to psychotherapists generically rather than

to body psychotherapists where the tensions between 'the technical' and 'the personal' elements in the therapist's role are different.

In conclusion, I found a number of gems, and the writing was of a generally high standard. If it inspires readers to find out more then it will have achieved its purpose. The format of the book was I think inherently unsatisfying – like eating finger food at a buffet; it made me long for a good sit down meal.

Andrew Forrester

Being Happy: A handbook to greater confidence and security
By Andrew Matthews Pub Media Masters £8.99 pp136

Being Happy is written and illustrated by Andrew Matthews, and is intended as a self-help book to enhance readers' confidence and security. Matthews claims that the book is about understanding yourself, being able to laugh at yourself, becoming more prosperous and being able to forgive yourself.

The book has six chapters, each of which is subdivided into short, easy to read sections addressing such issues as life patterns, self-image, health, pain and prosperity; giving numerous examples of common experiences.

From the beginning, Matthews adopts an entertaining stance; immediately introducing a third party to recall familiar stories, which are sometimes humorous and very similar to the kind of incidents which happen to all of us at some point in our lives. This has the effect of encouraging the reader to read on. His positive, confident style of writing, often exposing his own vulnerabilities, cleverly lures the reader by allowing them to identify with him through his often witty anecdotes. At the same time it entices the reader to want to gain more of his apparent confidence.

The text is punctuated with short sections titled 'In a Nutshell', which summarize key information and give permission to the reader to shed the things in life which bog them down and consolidate the patterns and behaviours which can push them forward and empower them to make changes.

Being Happy is easy to read and manageable. Its cover is bright and cheerful and the text is clearly laid out. Matthews' style is amusing, both verbally and visually, but this does not detract from his straightforward approach. The 'In a Nutshell' sections are useful in that they allow the reader to flick through the pages and find useful and powerful messages. He suggests several techniques to assist the reader, including the use of affirmations, making lists of goals and using motivational tapes.

There are aspects of the book I have found personally useful. The chapter on patterns, for instance, encouraged me to reflect on what

my life patterns might be and whether these were positive or negative. I found myself questioning whether or not I had become overly attached to some patterns and therefore felt stuck in certain directions when in fact, on giving myself permission to become less attached to these patterns I felt a sense of freedom and real choice.

The section on limitations I found particularly useful, both personally and also when helping a friend through a difficult time. I suggested to him that he might like to read this section, which helped him realise how entrenched he had allowed himself to become in thinking that he could not achieve. This had not only been self-defeating, but had also involved him being quite controlling of others. He continually claimed that he just couldn't organise his life and needed someone to help and used this to avoid exercising the personal discipline which he needed to become an achiever. I found one sentence very powerful:

'Whether you think you will succeed or not, you are right'.

In other words, the only thing that limits our achievements is the thought that we can't achieve.

Evaluating the book's efficacy, there are certain points to consider. I think that Matthews write in a positive, uplifting way, but I wonder whether someone suffering from depression or has very low self-esteem would find it so? They may consider that the author really doesn't understand them and is simply making money out of writing go-getting, superficial books about real-life problems. So too the procrastinators? I suspect they may continue to procrastinate after their read as they tend to be 'out of relationship' with themselves and with the world. They would be able to convince themselves that they've tried to change, simply by purchasing the book and making lots of 'to-do' lists.

There are also cost implications to bibliotherapy. Whilst many would gain from self-help input, it is important to be aware that cost may prevent certain groups of people from being able to reap the rewards and this should be considered before recommending a book such as this to a client. It has been argued that self-help books make the assumption that the same techniques will be effective for all people with the same problems. However, it is also true that individuals will take only what they need from a book and therefore there is minimal risk to the reader.

I also wonder whether certain aspects of the book, particularly the chapter on prosperity, may prove of little use to those whose culture finds the discussion of money vulgar or offensive. However, whilst I believe that we do need to be aware of cultural, political and ethical diversity, we also need to take into account Egan's (Egan 2004) suggestion that, if legitimate principles relating to diversity were pushed too far, no one would be able to understand and help anybody else.

Both as a trainee counsellor and personally, I have found this book very useful bibliotherapy. I particularly value the possibility of dipping into the book and extracting useful succinct passages which contain powerful messages. For this reason I would definitely recommend it.

References

Egan, G. (2004) *The Skilled Helper* 7th edition London Brooks Cole

Jenny Sutherland *is a counselling student in the final year of her training.*

Revolutionary Connections – Psychotherapy and Neuroscience **Edited by Jenny Corrigal and Heward Wilkinson** Pub 2003 Karnac Books pp223 £ 19.99

In these post-Layard days, when there is increasing pressure on therapists and counsellors to evidence base their work, the light that neuroscience could potentially shed on what were previously unprovable hypotheses must surely be welcome. Concrete evidence to support therapeutic approaches, especially those other than the conveniently operationalised CBT, could be a godsend, particularly for counsellors and therapists working in health-care settings who are involved in funding negotiations with medically minded establishments. It is tempting, then, to leap precipitately aboard the bandwagon of neuroscience, blinkering ourselves to the limitations of what is still, taking into account the complexity of the subject, an infant science.

It is in the nature of human beings to have an ambivalent relationship with certainty. On the one hand, we crave predictability, order and re-assurance and on the other we can never be said to truly live unless there is some element of the unknown in our lives. Our present culture in the UK could be described as 'risk averse'. We think that if we have enough information and are able to use it to eliminate all possible risks that nothing bad will happen. We think that if bad things *do* happen, usually because we haven't been able to achieve the goals implied in the previous sentence, that there are predictable, rational and reliable ways of putting them right or alleviating their bad effects. Individually we may want to deny these modes of thought, but our actions, both collectively and personally can clearly be seen to be based on such thinking.

Wisdom, on the other hand, tells us that it is impossible to predict every hazard, that energy devoted to preventing bad things happening will decrease the possibility of good things happening and that such value judgements are often misguided in the first place!

Human beings just *are* paradoxical and it is in this spirit of paradox or, as John Rowan puts it (Rowan 2005) 'dialectic', that we need to

approach the current trend towards connecting neuroscience and psychotherapy in general and *Revolutionary Connections* in particular. There are many aspects of this work which are gratifying and, in the right context, useful. However, it would be a mistake to be seduced by the implied positivist myth that it is only a matter of time before we will understand exactly how the brain functions and therefore be able to prove conclusively that psychotherapy works and that Freud was right all along!

Revolutionary Connections consists of papers, most of which were presented at the UKCP Professional Conference of 2001 and one, by Allan Schore, which was presented as the seventh annual John Bowlby Memorial Lecture earlier in that year. It is the latter which forms the first chapter of the book. Allan Schore is one of the pioneers of neuropsychoanalysis and presents an impressive array of evidence to support Bowlby's, and ultimately Freud's, theories on attachment, not only between the infant and his/her primary care giver, but also between therapist and client. In addition, he presents closely argued psychobiological support of the relational style of therapy advocated by later writers such as Mearns and Cooper (2006). In theory this ought to be satisfying, but somehow isn't.

'The relevance of hemispheric specialization to psychoanalysis continued in the work of Miller (1991), Levin (1991) and particularly Watt (1990), who offered data to show that the right hemisphere contains an affective-configurational representational system, one that encodes self-and-object images, while the left utilizes a lexical-semantic mode.'

Passages such as that leave me hungry – unsatisfied. What was this data which showed what the right hemisphere contains? How was it obtained? I understand that Professor Schore is condensing a lot of information into a small space, originally of time, but without answers to the kind of question I've asked here, which arose frequently for me when reading this chapter, I feel I'm being asked to take things on trust. As it happens, what Professor Schore is saying about attachment makes perfect intuitive sense to me and I would, in another context, be perfectly happy to take his word for it, but then I wonder why we have the neuroscience in there at all? It would be exciting, and therefore satisfying, to read something about *how* the data which supports the existence of what have sometimes been criticised as speculative hypotheses about infant development have been obtained, especially when there really is 'hard' evidence rather than scientific speculation.

I'm speaking here as someone with a background in neuroscience as well as in psychotherapy, but I imagine that Allan Schore's audience has more of the latter than the former. All the more reason, I think, why it is important to include detailed evidence rather than to over-simplify.

In the next chapter Colwyn Trevarthen presents some interesting work on carer-infant communication with a particular emphasis on the 'music' of early 'proto-conversation'. This chapter supports the idea of infants being actively relational and playful and the importance of the 'music' of language as well as its content – two notions which have considerable implications for therapeutic practice. However, my use of inverted commas around the word 'music' is quite important here. I found myself much less in sympathy

with Trevarthen and his colleague's analysis of the 'music' as Music. That there is 'music' in carer-infant interaction and that literal attunement is involved in this process is an important observation. To analyse his in terms of the artificially constructed Western musical system is more than is necessary here. It is such a pity that the spectrographic analyses, which would have interested me more, were so illegibly reproduced.

In Chapter 3 Douglas Watt at last presents us with some 'hard' and suitably cautious neuroscience. An example of his caution would be:

'...I'm offering the following as possible established principles with the obvious caveat that these principles apply more to long and mid term therapy approaches and less to very short term and technically focussed approaches. It is also worth mentioning that these are just my sense of a set of basic integrative principles, and other clinicians, investigators and theorists might have a very different set of suppositions.'

The 'hard' neuroscience is challenging, but satisfying in that Watt doesn't go in for simplistic explanations which can lead to an illusion of understanding and, as he observes in his critique of the 'mono-aminization' of psychiatry, to the adoption of simple 'solutions' to complex problems such as depression.

This chapter will definitely challenge the non-neuroscientist, but it is worthwhile persisting with the abstruse sounding sets of initials. Most of them *are* explained early in the text and it's just a matter of flicking back through the pages to find the first reference.

Watt's recommendations for the future with which he concludes the chapter are more focussed on clinical psychology than on psychotherapy. I'm left thinking that a basic understanding of neuroscience should join the research requirement that is increasingly becoming the norm in counselling and psychotherapy training.

Danya Glaser's chapter on *Early experience, attachment and the brain,* is valuable, not only for its treatment of the subject matter, but also for the clear account of experimental methods and neural development. It explores the neurobiological features of what is observed in children and adolescents as bad, or unregulated behaviour. Ms Glaser links these with abuse or neglect during early childhood periods of marked neuroplasticity and includes a cautious reference to 'a disturbance not unlike ADHD' which she links with stress.

Oliver Turnbull's chapter on *Emotion, false beliefs and the neurobiology of intuition* is inspiring, as much for the writing style as for the depth of his thinking. Turnbull writes with self-awareness. He *does* simplify, but he tells us that he's doing it and refers us to specific texts which will fill in the details he's had to leave out for reasons of space. He is also aware of the limitations of the current state of knowledge and is not afraid to share this with the reader.

The chapter takes us from what is basically a Freudian notion of emotions as 'sense organs' by which the conscious mind can access the unconscious

drives to the importance of the *ventromesial frontal lobes* in validating the process whereby affect is linked to cognition, particularly as part of the decision making process. Although Oliver Turnbull cites a gambling task as an illustration, I find myself wondering whether the linkage of affect and cognition isn't also a requirement of effective psychotherapy.

Oliver Turnbull concludes his contribution, after some interesting exploration of false belief, which he attributes to an imbalance in favour of affect over cognition, with an exhortation to readers to involve themselves in bridge building between the two disciplines.

The next chapter, by Chris Mace, differentiates neatly between the use of neuroscience as a means of enriching the language used to describe psychotherapeutic models and the *validation,* by neuroscientific research, of those models. He doesn't deny the possibility of the latter, but laments the paucity of work involving:

'what actually transpires in the brains of those providing and receiving psychotherapy as it happens'

Having distinguished, most usefully in my view 'between the use of biological metaphors in psychotherapy and the *biology* of psychotherapy' (my italics), Chris Mace goes on to examine three key issues in psychotherapy from a biological standpoint – the selection of patients for psychotherapy, outcome in psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic process. Unfortunately, in only one of these, that of selection, is he able to offer us anything conclusive. Even here, although the prospect of having a reliable indicator of which depressed patients are likely to benefit most from psychotherapy is extremely attractive, the practical and economic implications of recording potential patients' 'sleep architecture over two nights in a sleep laboratory' are just too much to contemplate in an NHS setting. There is, as Chris Mace himself concludes, more work to do!

Cairns Clery's paper *Constructing a psychobiological context – science, neuroscience and therapeutic collaboration* is interesting in that the author baldly states his intention to:

'openly cherrypick certain neuroaffective findings to propose that their subjective deployment can be of assistance in understanding complex and disturbing material.'

I really appreciate his honesty here. Later in the paper he suggests that:

'Before embracing neuroscience as explanatorily all powerful, on the one hand, and a complete denial of its usefulness on the other, therapists should continue to take a pragmatic approach in their work with patients'.

He goes on to illustrate his own use of his neuroscientific awareness by means of a moving case study in which he is able to hold his client by virtue of being himself 'held' by the neuroscientific normalisation he is able to apply to her behaviour.

The last paper in the book, *At the border between chaos and order*, is exciting, but ultimately perplexing. Roz Carroll's central thesis, that there are processes in the brain which are non-linear, is straightforward enough. Researchers such as Freeman and Skarda (1987) were experimentally demonstrating the existence of strange attractors in the brain twenty years ago. What is irritating and simplistic is the 'Old science bad/New (Age?) science good' polarity which is implied in this paper without a solid demonstration of the application of chaos theory to an actual brain process which, in turn, has links with psychotherapeutic process. I think what we have here is what Chris Mace (see earlier quote) would call chaos theory enriching the language used to describe psychotherapeutic process.

I couldn't help but observe that the rest of the science cited in *Revolutionary Connections* is solidly linear and that some of the mechanisms which Ms Carroll describes as non-linear, e.g. the feedback loop, are clearly not. Negative feedback loops, such as exist in my central heating system, are hopefully linear and the whole point about positive feedback loops, which happen, for example, when you put a microphone too close to a loudspeaker is that *because* they are linear, they lead to an overload – the nasty noise that we've all experienced at rock concerts. Above all, I am at a loss as to why the principle of non-linearity hasn't been applied to Panksepp's delineation of seven emotional operating systems. All this is rather a pity since, theoretically at least, chaos theory has a lot to offer neuroscience and psychotherapy although I don't know for certain whether anyone has followed up Walter Freeman's work.

In a way, the last paper epitomises my concern about this trend in psychotherapy. The idea of connecting up this vague stuff we do when sitting with a client to something tangible and measurable which is taking place inside either or both of our brains really is exciting. This makes it all the more important to differentiate between (revolutionary?) connections which can be demonstrated to exist and those which either make sense as metaphors or which we strongly believe *do* exist, but can't quite prove it….yet!

References

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Geoff Lamb