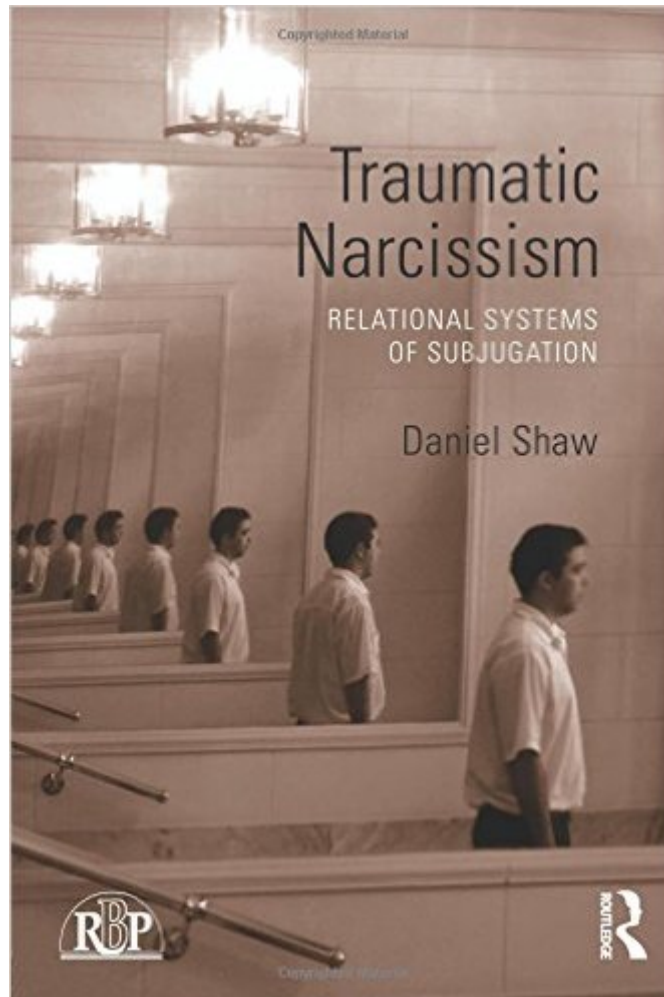


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Traumatic Narcissism: Relational Systems Of Subjugation (Relational Perspectives Book Series)



Synopsis

In this volume, *Traumatic Narcissism: Relational Systems of Subjugation*, Daniel Shaw presents a way of understanding the traumatic impact of narcissism as it is engendered developmentally, and as it is enacted relationally. Focusing on the dynamics of narcissism in interpersonal relations, Shaw describes the relational system of what he terms the 'traumatizing narcissist' as a system of subjugation – "the objectification of one person in a relationship as the means of enforcing the dominance of the subjectivity of the other. Daniel Shaw illustrates the workings of this relational system of subjugation in a variety of contexts: theorizing traumatic narcissism as an intergenerationally transmitted relational/developmental trauma; and exploring the clinician's experience working with the adult children of traumatizing narcissists. He explores the relationship of cult leaders and their followers, and examines how traumatic narcissism has lingered vestigially in some aspects of the psychoanalytic profession. Bringing together theories of trauma and attachment, intersubjectivity and complementarity, and the rich clinical sensibility of the Relational Psychoanalysis tradition, Shaw demonstrates how narcissism can best be understood not merely as character, but as the result of the specific trauma of subjugation, in which one person is required to become the object for a significant other who demands hegemonic subjectivity. Traumatic Narcissism presents therapeutic clinical opportunities not only for psychoanalysts of different schools, but for all mental health professionals working with a wide variety of modalities. Although primarily intended for the professional psychoanalyst and psychotherapist, this is also a book that therapy patients and lay readers will find highly readable and illuminating.

Book Information

Series: Relational Perspectives Book Series (Book 58)

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: Routledge; 1 edition (September 19, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0415510252

ISBN-13: 978-0805839906

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.4 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars – See all reviews (29 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #263,209 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #288 in Books > Medical Books > Psychology > Movements > Psychoanalysis #354 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting >

Customer Reviews

I purchased this book after hearing the author speak at a conference, and to contribute to my studies of abusive churches/cults. Daniel Shaw present two ideas that I found particularly powerful and enlightening in this book.¹ There is a type of narcissist rightly called a "traumatizing narcissist"; one who transfers his/her shame/inadequacy/fear, etc., out of himself/herself, and onto those whom he/she relates to. Shaw's perspective is primarily shaped through his observations as a psychoanalyst, but readily applies to the more severe instances of pastoral/spiritual abuse found in some churches. The book contributed greatly to my studies of false teachers/false prophets in Christian churches.² A worthy goal in people-helping is to seek a healthy expression of what Shaw terms "analytic love." This is a relationship goal in which both the client and the analyst relate as equals in a mutually respectful relationship marked by consideration, kindness, empathy, and equality. Shaw's primary focus is to address and criticize the coldness of a professional relationship in the counseling environment, in which the counseled is de facto "under" the care and authority of the counselor. The counselor (in this defective system) may express superiority, lack of love/concern, etc., in any number of subtle (and not so subtle) ways, perpetuating the distance between the "helper" and the one being helped. In doing so, the counselor often creates the same conditions of which the client/patient is seeking to recover from: an absence of love and protection from care-givers.

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