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*Source / Izvornik:* **Psihoterapija, 2022, 36, 224 - 228**

**Journal article, Published version**

**Rad u časopisu, Objavljena verzija rada (izdavačev PDF)**

*Permanent link / Trajna poveznica:* <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:184:077155>

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*Download date / Datum preuzimanja:* **2025-02-05**



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### **/ PHILIPPA PERRY: COUCH FICTION, A GRAPHIC TALE OF PSYCHOTHERAPY – BOOK REVIEW**

Tanja Frančišković

Možda ima samo jedna stvar složenija od same psihoterapije, a to je proces edukacije budućeg psihoterapeuta, gdje treba naučiti kako pratiti i prepoznati sve nivoe komunikacije i odnosa koji se razvijaju tijekom psihoterapijskog procesa. Za to su, u više manje svim psihoterapijskim školama, uspostavljena tri dijela edukacije: onaj teorijski, iskustveni i supervizijski. No uza sve to, kao edukator sam se uvijek pitala koliko stvarno uspijemo preneti svu složenost psihoterapijskog procesa svojim edukantima, naravno, prisjećajući se vlastite edukacije i svih upitnika koji su mi kružili (i još kruže) iznad glave pri svakoj seansi s klijentom.

Teško priznajemo da su susreti sa teorijom nerijetko lutanja u kompliciranim tekstovima i nedorečenim teorijskim konceptima, često pisanim uz uporabu zbunjujuće terminologije.

Iskustveni dio edukacije dodatno je zbunjujući jer edukanta stavlja, uz slo-

Perhaps there is only one thing more complicated than psychotherapy itself, and it is the process of training a future psychotherapist, who must learn how to monitor and recognize all the levels of communication and relationships that develop during the psychotherapy process. For this purpose, pretty much all psychotherapy schools have established three parts of training: theoretical, experiential, and supervisory. However, as a trainer I have always wondered to what extent we really manage to convey all the complexity of the psychotherapeutic process to our students. Of course, I remember my own training and all the questions that ran (and are still running) around my head in each session with the client.

We are reluctant to admit that our encounters with the theory often end up with aimless wandering through complicated texts, vague theoretical concepts, and confusing terminology.

ženi položaj klijenta, i u ulogu promatrača vlastite terapije.

Uza sva supervizijska nastojanja, uvijek bi se s pravom čula zamolba edukanata, „...a kada bismo mi to mogli vidjeti uživo?“ Brojni prikazi slučajeva u literaturi svakako ispunjavaju dio tih pitanja – kako psihoterapija stvarno izgleda – povezujući žive primjere s teorijskim razmatranjima. No najčešće su to izabrane vinjete koje nam daju samo djelomičan uvid u to što se u terapiji događa. Mogućnosti za uporabu skrina u edukacijskom procesu su minimalne, a i ne postoji značajan entuzijazam za takvim pomagalom među edukatorima. Naravno, donekle mogu pomoći snimljeni materijali koji su sve popularniji posebice kada se radi o poznatim psihoterapeutima koji uz snimljenu seansu pojašnjavaju razloge za neku intervenciju. Ipak, u takvim edukacijskim materijalima rijetko nailazimo na pojašnjenja transfernih i kontratransfernih problema koji se tijekom terapije pojavljuju. Gledanje poznatih psihoterapeuta u akciji nerijetko rezultira pomišlju „...ja to nikad neću moći tako prepoznavati, smisliti intervenciju...“

U svakom slučaju, moja razmatranja o tome kako proces edukacije učiniti lakšim nisu me odvela puno dalje od uobičajene metode.

Na sva ova razmišljanja nedavno me ponovno potakla knjiga koju sam dobila od

The experiential part of the training is even more confusing because the trainees have to put themselves not just in the complex position of the client but also in the position of the therapy observer.

With all the efforts of supervision, the students would all ask, and rightly so, “when can we see this first-hand?” Cases described in literature certainly respond to some of these questions – what psychotherapy really looks like – connecting living examples with theoretical considerations. However, most often these are selected images that give us only a partial insight into what is happening in therapy. The possibilities of using a screen in the training process are minimal, and there is not much enthusiasm for it among trainers either. Of course, recorded materials can help, especially the materials created by renowned psychotherapists who, in addition to the recorded session, explain the reasons for choosing a particular intervention. Nevertheless, in such training materials we rarely find the clarifications of transference and countertransference issues that arise during therapy. When we watch renowned psychotherapists in action, we often think, “I’ll never be able to work that way...”

In any case, my reflections on how to make the training process easier have not taken me much farther from the usual method.



jedne moje edukantice. Radi se o knjizi Philippe Perry, *Couch Fiction, A Graphic Tale of Psychotherapy*, u izdanju Penguin Life, izašoj 2020. godine. To je nevelika knjiga od 140 stranica koja prati jedan psihoterapijski proces od početka do kraja, opisujući ključne seanse terapije.

Philippa Perry dvadeset godina radi kao psihoterapeutkinja, a posebno je postala poznata po svojim popularnim savjetima koje objavljuje u *Guardianu* i na svojem blogu, te svojim knjigama *How to Stay Sane*, objavljene 2012. i *The Book You Wish Your Parents Had Read*, objavljene 2018.

Knjigu sam pročitala u mahu vozeći se od Zagreba do Rijeke, a jedan od razloga je i način prikaza terapije. Ona je, naime, prikazana u stripu i upravo se tako stripovski tečno čita. To me najprije nasmijalo, potom me prisjetilo svih onih stripova koje sam čitala u časopisima iz davnih vremena (poput *Plavog vjesnika*, ako se toga još netko sjeća...) i novijih japanskih stripova hektičnih crteža kojima se danas oduševljavaju mlade generacije.

Ilustracije u ovoj knjizi uradila je njeva kći Flo Perry, a one su gotovo dječje, plošne i duhovite.

Kako se navodi i u pogovoru, oblik stripa ima specifičnu mogućnost kao malo koji drugi medij, da u isti mah prikaže ono što se zbiva unutar i izvan njegovih juna-

A book that I received from one of my trainees made me think deeper about all this. It is Philippa Perry's *Couch Fiction, A Graphic Tale of Psychotherapy* published by Penguin Life, 2020. Consisting of 140 pages, it follows a psychotherapeutic process from start to finish, describing the key therapy sessions.

Philippa Perry has been working as a psychotherapist for twenty years, and has become famous for her popular advice, which she publishes in *Guardian* and on her blog, but also in her books *How to Stay Sane*, published in 2012 and *The Book You Wish Your Parents Had Read*, published in 2018.

I read it in an instant, on a bus ride from Zagreb to Rijeka. The reason why reading does not take long is that the book is written as a comic strip. As such, it is read quickly and easily. It made me laugh at first, and it reminded me of the comics I used to read when I was young, but also of the more recent ones, the Japanese comics with their unique drawings that delight young generations of the present.

The illustrations in this book were made by the author's daughter, Flo Perry, and they are almost childish, two-dimensional, and humorous.

As stated in the afterword, the form of comics has a specific ability like few other mediums: it can show at the same

ka. S druge strane strip se doima jednostavnim pa i kada su prikazana zbivanja složena. Priču usvajamo glatko, koristeći i vizualnost kao kanal, pa nam riječi laganije nalaze put do razumijevanja.

Autorica opisuje rad sa klijentom Jamesom tijekom 43 seanse terapijskog postupka u kojem koristi elemente raznih psihoterapijskih tehnika. Ispod slika na svakoj stranici nalazi se tekst koji sadrži dodatna pojašnjenja onoga što se u terapiji događalo sa referiranjem na teorijske koncepte koji to najbolje opisuju, najčešće iz psihodinamičke vizure. No kako je i sama autorica navela na početku, ovaj dio možemo i ne moramo čitati. Naime, već sam prikaz bez ovih pojašnjenja, koja su dana kratko ali vrlo informativno, može dati dobar i živ uvid u proces.

I u tako jednostavnom obliku autorica je uspjela ukazati na složenost psihoterapijske komunikacije i na niz fenomena koje susrećemo tijekom psihoterapijskog procesa, uključujući transferna/kontratanferna zbivanja i mogući rad sa snovima.

Prikazane su ključne seanse terapije, ali na način da imamo uvid u ono što se događa sa klijentom, o čemu on razmišlja, što se događa sa terapeutkinjom, o čemu i kako ona razmišlja i kako to uobličiti u intervenciju i naravno, što se događa između njih dvoje. Dotakla se transfernih zbivanja, ali i kontratan-

time what is happening inside and outside the hero's mind. In addition, comic strip appears simple, even when the presented events are complex. We read the story smoothly, using the visual aspect as the channel, so the words become much easier to understand.

The author describes her work with a client named James, in 43 sessions in which she uses elements of various psychotherapeutic techniques. The notes under the pictures contain additional clarifications of what happens in therapy, with reference to theoretical concepts that best describe it, most often from a psychodynamic viewpoint. The clarifications are brief, but very informative. However, as the author herself stated at the beginning, we may skip them and just read the story, as the pictures themselves offer a great insight into the process.

Using such a simple form, the author was able to describe the complexity of psychotherapeutic communication, with a range of phenomena that we encounter in psychotherapy, including transference and countertransference, and dreams.

The author presents the key sessions in psychotherapy in such way that we get a genuine insight into what is going on with the client, what he/she is thinking, what is going on with the therapist, what is going on between the two of them.



sfernih reakcija. Tijekom seansi analizira se jedan Jamesov san, a prikazan je i razvoj i razrješenje erotskog transfera. Sve je opisano bez suviše mistifikacije, uz duhoviti odmak koji je dijelom posljedica grafičkog rješenja i oblačica tekstova koji obuhvaćaju u isto vrijeme izgovoreno i ono što nije izgovoreno.

Knjiga završava pogovorom Andrewa Samuela, profesora analitičke psihologije u kojem se iščitava zadovoljstvo zaigranošću cijelog štiva, ali i potreba izvjesnog odmaka od primjene ovakvog načina u opisu nečega za što smo navikli da ima formu serioznih stručnih tekstova. Vjerojatno će dio čitalaca, posebice onih koji su dugo u psihoterapiji, imati upravo takav stav.

Moram priznati da sam zatvorivši korice knjige, negdje pred Rijekom, pomislila, ovo je nešto što bi svaki edukant rado pročitao. I što bih mu rado preporučila.

Sigurna sam da će dio kolega sve to shvatiti kao nedopustivu simplifikaciju.

Drugi će možda reći da je prikaz ove knjige rezultat moje davne očaranosti stripom i potrebe za pojednostavljenjem kompliciranih pojmova i teorijskih konstrukata.

I neće pogriješiti.

The presented sessions also include the analysis of one of James' dreams, with the development and resolution of an erotic transference. And yet, everything is described without superfluous mystifications, with a humorous detachment resulting from the comic strip layout.

In his afterword, Andrew Samuels, professor of analytical psychology, commends the playfulness of the whole reading, although one can sense his need to distance himself from such ways of describing things that normally assume very serious forms. It is likely that some readers, especially those who have been working in psychotherapy for a long time, would adopt such a stance.

I must admit, when I finished the book, I thought this was something that every trainee would love to read. And I would certainly recommend it.

I am also sure that some of the colleagues will see it all as an intolerable simplification of things.

Others may say that the description of this book is the result of my long-ago fascination with comics and my need to simplify complicated concepts and theoretical constructs.

And they won't be wrong.

## LITERATURA/REFERENCES