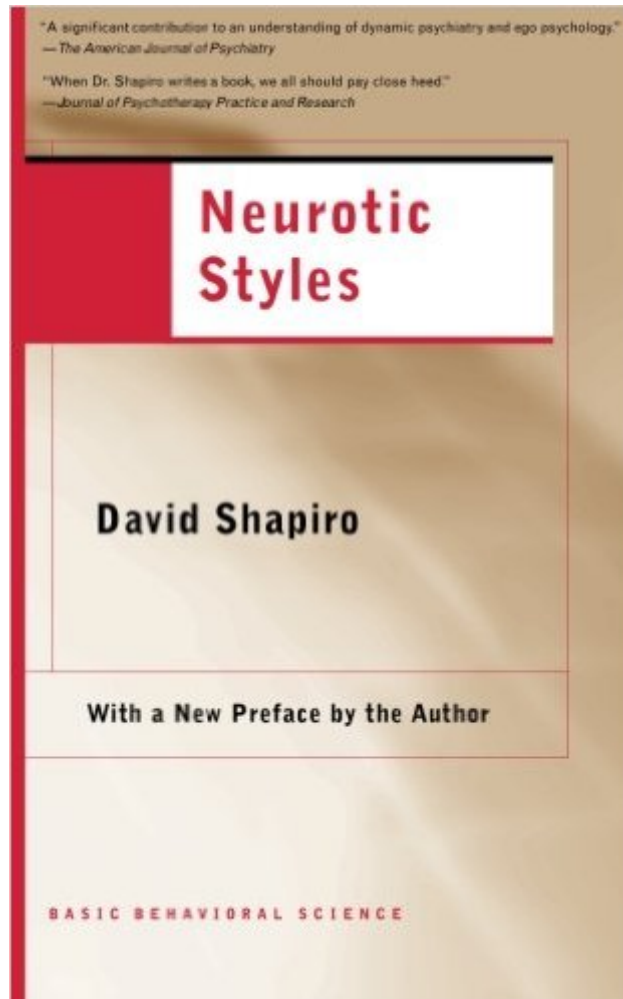


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Neurotic Styles (The Austen Riggs Center Monograph Series, No. 5)



Synopsis

This new edition of one of the books most closely identified with clinical psychology since 1965 will expose a new generation to Shapiro's stunningly defining conceptualizations of the Obsessive-Compulsive, Paranoid, Hysterical, and Impulsive ways of being.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Another reviewer had to read this in preparation for his graduate work in psychology. He found it "fatuous." I read it during my graduate work in psychology and found it refreshing. It was a relief to read something that was qualitative in its nature. There's not a statistic in a cartload. Instead, Shapiro takes an inside point of view -- or what's called an "emic perspective" in cultural anthropology -- to examine ways of thinking ("cognitive styles") found in different neurotic personality types -- the obsessive-compulsive, the paranoid, the hysterical, and the impulsive. The result is an easily understood set of organized personal experiences, and their intuitive explanations, based on Shapiro's own research and experience. It's less "formal", less behavioral a set of descriptions, than impressionistic. The subject is the mind, not so much the activities that express it. It's really so old-fashioned that it's revolutionary. Well, I'll try to sketch an example of how he goes about his business. The first neurotic style Shapiro examines is the obsessive-compulsive. The central image is that of a worried and rigid guy whose mind is controlled by a strict "overseer" laying down rules that the victim must follow. The interests of the obsessive-compulsive become so narrowed by these rules that everyday problems become a desperate matter of finding a solution

that "fits". The solutions lose flavor and become technical. If he listens to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, he's listening to the fidelity of the recording, not responding to the music. He can't see the forest because he's focused on a particular tree. How much psychology do you need to know in order to get something out of the book? Not much.

It was difficult for me to digest those reviews which suggested Shapiro might just be pompous or outdated. It is for this reason I call attention to this book. Not only is it not outdated, but it has become a springboard of sorts to cognitive behavioral theories dealing with depression, phobias, addictions, to name a few. With a level of detail and elaboration demonstrating what actually goes on in the mind of a mentally disordered or neurotic individual, Shapiro is my number one clinical theorist. Just read some of his books incorporating theory and psychological testing protocols, especially in forensics, and you will see manifestations of ideational and subjective distortions spelled out qualitatively by character. Snider tells us that, "Pleasure is a kind of sympathy, the fundamental one, in which feeling becomes sympathetic with itself. All free energizing of the ego has in it pleasure, as a kind of harmonious response to itself. The primal act of feeling is declared agreeable, which agrees with what? Certainly with itself, which agreement is our first pleasure, (self-esteem). There comes sooner or later an external power, a Determinant which stops it, diverts it, transforms it to its opposite, Pain. If this determinant is external, coming from the outer world through the senses, we may call the resulting pain Sensational or Organic Pain, but if it is internal, springing out of the inner life of the mind, we may call the resulting Pain Ideational. Ideational pain springs from this inner world with its ideas, images, or conceptions" (Shapiro's frames of mind and attitudes of mind). (Feeling, Psychologically Treated, Denton Snider, 1905, pp.39-43).

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