

**Keynote to OISE, University of Toronto Conference, 4 June 2007.
Dialogue with the Body in Clinical Practice**

DRAFT ABSTRACT

Here Comes Everybody: Multicultural perspectives on the body in therapy and mysticism

Counselling and psychotherapy are largely western conversational methods for addressing individuals' personal, psychological difficulties or aspirations. Multiculturalism challenges this hegemony. Increasingly, the recognition that we are much more than talking heads also challenges traditional psychological therapy. In this keynote, an attempt is made to forge some links between conventional therapy, aspects of the body and associated 'body therapies', embodied mysticism and its transcultural sources, and the need for a convergent understanding of plurality.

We cannot deny the complexity of life but neither can we realistically work with it: a degree of simplicity and convergence has to be aimed at. Another way into this problem is to speak of difference and commonality across cultures, models of therapy, and individuals. Difference is colourful and valuable but can obviously fuel conflict. Commonality cannot be denied but can lead to dehumanising uniformity and standardisation. We see both these trends at work on the world stage.

Among the topics being touched upon will be neglected and problematic aspects of the body in therapy; non-verbal communication; the psychosomatic; bioderegulation; western and non-western views of the body and practices related to the body; the body in mystical experience; and the dangers of illusion in both convergent and pluralistic approaches to understanding the body.

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