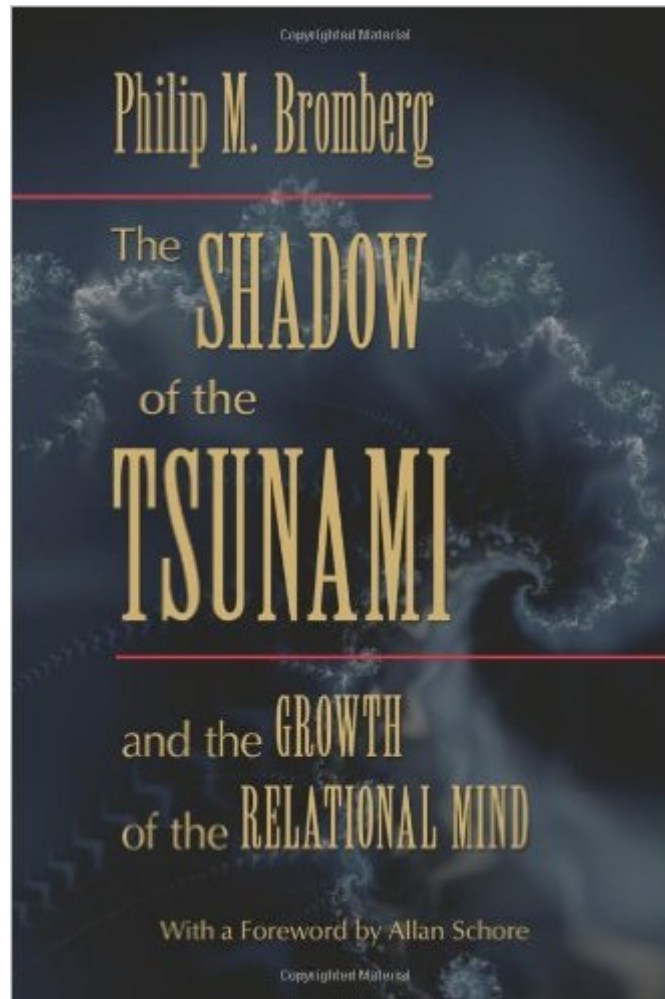


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The Shadow Of The Tsunami: And The Growth Of The Relational Mind



Synopsis

During early development, every human being is exposed to the relative impact of relational trauma — a “disconfirmation of aspects of oneself as having legitimate existence in the world of others” — in shaping both the capacity for spontaneous human relatedness and the relative vulnerability to “adult-onset trauma.” To one degree or another, a wave of dysregulated affect — a dissociated “tsunami” — hits the immature mind, and if left relationally unprocessed leaves a fearful shadow that weakens future ability to regulate affect in an interpersonal context and reduces the capacity to trust, sometimes even experience, authentic human discourse. In his fascinating third book, Philip Bromberg deepens his inquiry into the nature of what is therapeutic about the therapeutic relationship: its capacity to move the psychoanalytic process along a path that, bit by bit, shrinks a patient’s vulnerability to the pursuing shadow of affective destabilization while simultaneously increasing intersubjectivity. What takes place along this path does not happen because “this” led to “that,” but because the path is its own destination — a joint achievement that underlies what is termed in the subtitle “the growth of the relational mind.” Expanding the self-state perspective of *Standing in the Spaces* (1998) and *Awakening the Dreamer* (2006), Bromberg explores what he holds to be the two nonlinear but interlocking rewards of successful treatment — healing and growth. The psychoanalytic relationship is illuminated not as a medium for treating an illness but as an opportunity for two human beings to live together in the affectively enacted shadow of the past, allowing it to be cognitively symbolized by new cocreated experience that is processed by thought and language — freeing the patient’s natural capacity to feel trust and joy as part of an enduring regulatory stability that permits life to be lived with creativity, love, interpersonal spontaneity, and a greater sense of meaning.

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Customer Reviews

The title of this book refers to the after effects (shadow) of the dissociative response to trauma (emotional tsunami) that forces one to "escape where there's no escape," where one often ends up saying that they feel like they are sleep walking through life, going through the motions in a semi-trance-like state, not really being all that present in the here and now, and not feeling fully alive. The book does an effective job of putting this condition into "thinkable inner conflict" terms. One of the effects of trauma is for the mind to develop an "emotional smoke detector," which when activated sets the mind off into deeper fragmented self-states or "separate islands of truth" that don't communicate with each other (ie: compartmentalize). When one is in a therapeutic relationship with a friend, partner or therapist, one that allows for safety and risk, a person who experienced trauma, developmental or otherwise, can learn to "shrink the tsunami" and process/digest/integrate/metabolize/"mentalize" things more easily (ie: enhance one's ability to self-soothe without external aids or "primitive defense mechanisms" and build bridges or "stand in the spaces" between various self-states or "islands of truth" through self-reflection, working towards an enriched "personal synthesis (Janet 1907)." The author includes a description of the novel, *The Fly Truffler* by G. Sorbin, which follows one man's loneliness after a traumatic event. Although the story offers a unique case, it provides a cautionary tale of what might happen when one avoids "standing in the spaces" between self-states for too long. In other words, just find someone to talk to.

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