

*As you push back my hair
- Which could do with a comb
But never mind –
You murmur
We're nearly there*

(Dunmore, 2017: pg 70)

Woods concludes his book reflecting on how the mind works to accommodate itself to death while at the same time there is a need to create 'something that wards off the imminence of destruction... so the mind has to dig deep in to the self to produce something that not only survives, but is renewed' (p 46). Indeed, having retired from the NHS, he is now in private practice and, amongst other things, working with people affected by cancer. Having come through a long period of illness myself, I know how rewarding it can be to return, enlarged by the experience, to the trials and joys of our profession.

Woods concludes he is not sure about being grateful to the cancer for this journey but he would not have been without it.

Diana Pringle

References

Dunmore, H. (2017). *Inside the Wave*. London: Bloodaxe Books.

Existential Perspectives on Relationship Therapy

Emmy van Deurzen & Susan Iacovou (eds.) (2013). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

This is a very thorough rundown, with its seventeen chapters and twenty-three contributors. The introduction by the two editors makes the point that little has been written about relationships from an existential standpoint, so that this is an important and groundbreaking contribution.

They show that Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, Buber, Jaspers and Levinas all had a good deal to say about relationships.

The first chapter, by Emmy, shows good handling of a difficult case. The next chapter seems oddly incomplete, as if there is something missing. Chapter 3, by Naomi Stadlen, has a good discussion of some tricky issues. The next one struck as very technical, a bit too much so. The next chapter, by Betty Cannon and Reed Lindberg, seemed excellent and quotes Sartre to good effect. Chapter 10, on the challenge of ethics and the call to responsibility, is a strong chapter with an interesting case illustration.

It would be tedious to go through all the chapters in this long book. Chapter 16, by Simon du Plock, on couples presenting with issues of addiction, I thought particularly good. He says that 'anything can be addictive

which powerfully and quickly and predictably changes how you feel’.

There are not many books on the existential approach to therapy – in fact, this is the only one I could find on Amazon. Strongly recommended.

John Rowan

Zen and Therapy: Heretical perspectives

Manu Bazzano (2017). London and New York: Routledge

Manu Bazzano’s *Zen and Therapy* is not a straightforward book to review. On the one hand, the author’s intention is clear; Bazzano considers both Zen and psychotherapeutic practice to have a great deal to offer each other and, drawing upon personal experience, spiritual teachings, critical theory and Western and Eastern philosophy, *Zen and Therapy* is Bazzano’s exploration into where the two disciplines both commune and contravene. Over eight interacting chapters, Bazzano skilfully weaves a provocative and challenging discourse deeply relevant to both psychotherapists and Zen practitioners. However, I have come to the view that *Zen and Therapy* is, at heart, a book about getting lost. And, I have realised, with gratitude, that Bazzano’s poetics and philosophical explorations have helped me lose my way.

While not a text on existential therapy *per se*, I consider *Zen and Therapy* the most relevant book to existential psychotherapists that I have encountered in some time. Bazzano writes from and into a rocky terrain where a neat synthesis between Zen and psychotherapy refuses to form. The subheading ‘Heretical Perspectives’ (Bazzano is using the word ‘heretical’ in its most literal form – the choice to abstain from dogma) should be indication enough that this is not a book for those wanting yet another treatise on meditation and therapy, where brain scans and happiness scales affirm the wonders of both. It is a book however, for readers who want to encounter an essential critique of anthropocentric notions of self, from which, in my view, existential psychotherapy is not exempt. It is a book for those who wish to encounter the perplexing spirit of Zen and the chiaroscuro of this practice life. It is most definitely a book for Heideggerian devotees who are willing to have their faith in his ideas challenged. And, it is a book for those who – perhaps tired of the *terra firma* of evidence-based-in-a-nutshell-integrations – prefer instead, to get lost.

An ordained Zen monk, philosopher, prolific writer, lecturer and psychotherapist, Bazzano is well placed to explore the relationship between Zen and psychotherapeutic practice. He writes from the ‘borderlands’ between the two ‘where no checkpoint has yet to be erected and no passport is required’ (p 1). A distinctive characteristic of Bazzano’s writings is the peripheral location he always writes from, refusing to land and settle into