

BOOK REVIEWS

One of my clients shared in late 2022 that rather than making endless lists with New Year's resolutions, which would only become a source of disappointment before the end of January, they come up with a unique word to symbolise and reflect their intentions for the year. I had never heard of this custom and promptly decided to adopt it, even when it transpired from the internet that it was not that original. I soon realised that writing that infinite list of all that I 'must fix' in my life is much easier. Finding that word, so much harder. Forward seemed a simple and straight(forward) concept; who does not want to move forward? But do I want every aspect of my life to move forward and if so, what kind of forward? Or perhaps equilibrium would be more suitable after several years of upheaval on the personal and global front? I certainly yearn for a world in equilibrium, but personally I rather like a tiny bit of disequilibrium in my life – keeps me on my toes. Perhaps imagine or pause or change; too much like forward? Enough said. This requires quiet contemplation. So, as I dwell on my words, let me share with you the reviews (of nine books no less) on the next pages.

The section starts off with a review of the two volumes of *Senses of Focusing* edited by Nikolaos Kypriotakis and Judy Moore. The different chapters in the books cover the development of, and new thinking around, Gendlin's Focusing theory. It is followed by a review of *Young Children's Existential Encounters* by Zoi Simopoulou, whose book is about how young children have been viewed by both psychoanalysis (where extensive research on infant development has taken place) and existentialism, which appears to have neglected the earliest of human experiences.

Next, is the first of our double reviews which considers *One Beat More: Existentialism and the gift of mortality* by Kevin Aho and *Making Death Thinkable* by Franco De Masi, two books that take different approaches to thinking about death. This is followed by a review of *What Does 'Existential' Really Mean?*, the third book in the SEA dialogues series in which Professor Miles Groth and Professor Tamás Fazekas, two prominent Daseinsanalysts, ponder the questions and challenges that Daseinsanalysis faces today. There is another double review, this time of two books by Adam Phillips, *On Wanting to Change* and *On Getting Better*.

Last, and in the art department, is a review of *Opera on the Couch: Music, emotional life and unconscious aspects of mind*, edited by Steven Goldberg and Lee Rather, not just for opera lovers. The book (and the review) considers operas through the lens of the composer's inner life, as an expression of unconscious wishes and conflicts, or as myths that represents

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universal unconscious themes. It reminds me a little of von Franz's *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales*.

Ondine Smulders

Reference

Franz, M.L. von (1996). *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales*. Boston & London: Shambala.