

of the other complexities that arise in therapy. This point is actually only really acknowledged on the final page of the book.

The editorial choice to use the terminology ‘sadness’ and ‘fear’ did not sit easily with me, suggesting that these were all encompassing terms for the more diagnostic labels of anxiety and depression. I thought that this was an oversimplification of these terms, and from an existential perspective, anxiety would not necessarily be equated to fear. I somewhat warmed to the use of these terms as I read through the book, but by the end was still frustrated by the apparent omission of other common phenomena that I have come across in therapy, such as identity, ambivalence, paradox, confusion, and alienation. I wondered how limiting this use of language would be to someone in training.

In answering some of the criticisms of counselling and psychotherapy (p334), more interesting critical debate with the text was provoked for me. For example, trying to encourage therapists towards research by stating that therapists ‘rarely study their own practice to see how what they are doing impacts on their clients’ (p335) was an extraordinary thing to say, given that most therapists are encouraged to use ongoing professional supervision, CPD, therapy etc; to engage with a reflective practice, although I accept that these processes may not be seen as research methods in a more orthodox sense.

Overall I enjoyed reading this book, finding it stimulating, well written, and provocative. I thought it would make an excellent introductory read, especially if this was augmented by critical debate and discussion. For me it is an engaging read and provides both a clear and contextually relevant background to its subject, although I feel it will always be limited in its scope given the vast range of themes that could be discussed here.

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Malcolm Freeman

The End of Belonging: Untold Stories of Leaving Home and the Psychology of Global Relocation

Greg A Madison. (2010). London: Createspace.

The End of Belonging is a beautifully written book which should appeal to many Journal readers. As well as introducing the concept of ‘existential migration’ it deals broadly, and in some depth, with the fundamental existential themes of ‘home’, ‘belonging’, ‘leaving/returning’, ‘identity’, ‘community’ and ‘loss’. It places ‘existential migration’ alongside other forms of migration, exile, and social movement.

Before proceeding further, I'd like to acknowledge my own relationship to this book. I have known the author, Dr. Greg Madison, for some time, and he and I share a keen interest, if not an intense fascination, with the themes I've just referred to, and more. In fact, Madison kindly references my workshop, 'A Stranger in a Strange Land', and it was probably during one of my early workshops that we first met properly. So I do not claim to approach this book from a neutral perspective, rather, one of keen interest and intrigue, and perhaps even 'longing', a sensation common to those described in the book. As a voluntary migrant myself, I've searched to find myself within its pages. One particular description really spoke to me:

My family cannot understand; anyone who chose to stay behind would not comprehend...The imperative was to follow 'potential' as an end in itself, not as a means to material betterment....After all is said, there is also optimism and satisfaction and some pride from having followed the mysterious path of the unknown with courage, concurrent with a niggling thought that it might actually have taken more courage to stay.

(p128)

The book offers a commentary on early 21st-century living, and the consequences of a 'global village approach'. It makes useful reading for anyone considering their own style of living, or those working with people from the many diaspora communities, or in fact, those who have found themselves compelled to leave, and perhaps to leave again and again.

Madison has based this book on his doctoral research with individuals, all of whom have, on the face of it, left home 'voluntarily'. And much of the writing is presented through the very eloquent and evocative voices of his research participants.

As with many topics, the theme of this book, 'existential migration', a term coined by Madison, can be seen as a human enterprise applicable in some way to many, but writ large in the process of the existential migrant. Having said that, Madison is at pains to say that he wants to avoid another 'diagnostic category', or 'personal label'; rather he offers 'there may well be individuals who are more likely to engage in 'existential migration' due to their openness to certain sensitivities or potentials in life...(p122). This is a little tricky. As ever, naming something is both invaluable and linguistically useful, while limiting and sedimenting. Madison goes on to speak of 'recognising someone from the tribe'. Perhaps there is a loose 'tribe' that this name refers to. I remember Eva Hoffman, in *Lost in Translation* describing being an 'immigrant' as a metaphorical place. It seems difficult, if not impossible to get away from the social nature of humans, and the draw towards some sort of group identity. Ironically this is fundamentally what the book is about.

One of the unexpected bonuses the book offers is an introduction to an array of authors I hadn't encountered before. The likes of American philosopher, Glen Gray, who is quoted as describing the mood of existentialism as 'a feeling of the homelessness of man' (Gray, 1951: p114), or Andreea Ritivoi, author of *Yesterday's Self* (p.132-133) and Nigel Rapport, author of *I Am Dynamite*, both postmodern writers who grapple with questions of self, identity, and the implications of the migrant experience.

While reading the book, I found myself returning again and again to the title itself, *The End Of Belonging*, so dense and so evocative. Early on, we are given a hint of Madison's own view when he says '...if we notice the world is hurdling towards a global enterprise that may turn out to be the end of belonging itself' (pp14-15). He goes on to offer us his understanding of how the concepts of home and belonging inter-relate, or not, and the tragically, paradoxical nature of belonging.

In the second part of the book, devoted to a more theoretical consideration of the experience of leaving home, and the development of global homelessness (p130) he says, 'We are in danger of entering an era of lostness, the end of belonging in either its restricted conforming sense or its more open authentic sense...' (p176).

I found myself deeply engaged with the book, at times, arguing with the sentiments or thoughts expressed; at other times, pondering questions I hadn't actually thought of before, which is always a bonus.

It does present a radical thesis...it's as if there is something more 'authentic' about the experience of 'existential migration' than other forms of living. And of course, there is an argument to be had. I once heard George Steiner suggesting that we should all be 'refugees'. Madison refers to Heidegger (p176), *what is most authentic for humanity is always what is out of the ordinary*, and goes on to say, 'Such sentiments clearly echo the attitudes and experiences of many of the participants.'

While recognising my own restlessness, nevertheless, in response, I found myself inclined to shout, 'but what about noticing the newness, the unfamiliar in the familiar?', as displayed most vividly perhaps in the work of the Italian artist Vitali, who spent decades painting the same still-life arrangement.

While Madison sets out to introduce and put 'existential migration' on the map, and therefore to present its validity and acknowledge its worth as a way of living, the implied subtext, that a settled life is in some way a compromise, is a familiar conundrum, very 'existential', rather provocative, indeed potentially patronising. It seems difficult to resist the hierarchical, competitiveness that besets us in so many dimensions of life. And so, yet another very, very interesting theme is opened up.

The book as a whole, is powerful, and potentially very challenging reading for some, while for others, will perhaps offer that illusive sense of coming home, being recognised and validated.

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Harriett Goldenberg

The End of Belonging: Untold Stories of Leaving Home and the Psychology of Global Relocation

Greg A Madison. (2010). London: Createspace

The haunting title of Dr Madison's book combined with the ambiguity of the photographic image on the front cover of a boy-child-monk, dressed in traditional rust-red and orange Buddhist robes whilst immersed in his Gameboy, intrigues. It is at once calming and seductive; where is this going?

Written in the style of a research study, this book attempts to address the universal question of Home; what does it mean to feel at-home or homeless and, in particular, to expose the many untold stories of leaving home and the psychology of global relocation. It is written in two parts; the first part investigating individual accounts of the phenomenological act of leaving, and the second part bridging these acts with deeper philosophical explorations informed by the works of Freud on 'The Uncanny' (1919/1955) and Heidegger's 'Unheimlich' (1962). The second part addresses the practical implications involved in a call for authenticity around the idea of 'homecoming', challenges common assumptions, and concludes with a cautionary note on globalisation.

The haunting aspect is reflected in the Introduction, where Dr Madison highlights the ghost-like experience of the many and growing number of human beings in the 21st century who are relocated, choose to move, are forced to flee or, follow their spouses to a foreign location, and whose stories are unrecorded and unacknowledged. He coins the term 'existential migrant' to describe these people and uses words such as invisible, lurking, on the edge, and solitary to elaborate and offer a sense of their experience. The Introduction sets up a picture of something completely opposite to the common idea of home and, therefore, the sentence 'Home is a human aspiration' both resonates and startles.

When Dr Madison writes that he hopes the book offers succour to existential migrants, he is particularly interested in those people whom he describes as voluntary migrants; those who choose to leave home for a variety of reasons but for whom their very existence, sense of aliveness or survival, in philosophical, psychological and spiritual ways, depends upon an attraction to difference, foreignness, the alien, etc. For example, 'she realized that by leaving home she was in fact choosing to exist. She was heeding a call to save herself from a life of ghostly servitude to others' expectations.'

(p88). The author is keen to convey that it is too simplistic to reduce this act of leaving to a causal explanation of childhood or family experiences alone, because although there may be a fleeing from, there is also a strong pull towards something different. It is this difference which is highlighted as valuable but often ignored, and the twist being that attraction to difference may mean a loss of belonging.

This particular way of being manifests in a perpetual state of homelessness, which may be seen as choosing to exist or dwell in an authentic manner, but does not eradicate the sense of loss and longing for the original home. It is like a yearning, searching, or a call for authentic living which comes at a price of never indulging in feeling a sense of belonging. For a minority of people, this feeling of being attracted to difference compels them to leave home and can result in feeling more at home in a state of foreignness than in a conventional home. 'Are some of us doomed to the disappointment of searching for what can never be realised?' (p93). Despite this need to be somewhere different and the flavour of nostalgia, most of those interviewed said that given a second chance, they would have to go again.

Reading these descriptions provided acknowledgement of the all too often unacknowledged, and did provide a soothing effect on the one hand but an unsettling effect on the other. It may be calming to feel understood, but the acknowledgment may provoke action. Personally, it helped and comforted me in the surprising isolation of thesis writing.

One of the most striking and impressive chapters was a description of the author's own self-imposed isolation, where he chooses to exaggerate his own personal existential migrant status by renting a room for four months in Budapest, to honour and transcribe his participants' interviews, immersing himself in an alien culture whilst writing this book. He talks of his own isolation both as a *breathhtaking reluctance*, but also how this isolation raises awareness of the lure of the exotic, and how this evasive dream-like, wishing, wanting, desirous quality, or something so *other*, as experienced earlier in India, comes as a relief in the face of the *repulsion of conventional settled life*.

Although I would recommend this book to anyone in general, as it is ram-jam-packed with gems of provocative thought, I think it is of specific interest to psychologists and psychotherapists. In particular because our clients' sense of dis-ease may well stem from the unacknowledged meaning of home, whether that be a person, place or thing, literal or metaphorical, and whether we have had to leave home to discover that, or not. In an article written shortly after the death of Elizabeth Taylor earlier this year, the following quote encapsulates what home might mean to some:

But there was one letter even Taylor, the consummate celebrity, couldn't share with the public: the last one Burton wrote to her

just before his death in 1984, saying he wanted to come home, and that Taylor was home. That letter remained in her dressing table drawer, next to her bed.

(Freeman, 2011)

Dr Madison wonders whether researching these stories will expose something universal about human beings and since reading this, perhaps unsurprisingly, my awareness and interest in the subject has been heightened and I have found the questions around the meanings of home abundant in the therapy room.

Reminiscent of Heidegger's interest in phenomenology, 'To the things themselves!' (1962: p50) reading this book shone a light onto a particular aspect of our existence that seems to underpin all lives but often lies quietly hidden and undiscovered.

As with many presenting difficulties in psychotherapy, the root of the problem is often hidden from view, and although this subject may be of particular interest for those existential practitioners working with cross-cultural and international people who have been willingly or unwillingly uprooted from their home, the question of home concerns us all. It may be that this theory of existential migration, with the possibility that the question of home is a universal 'given' of human experience, could provide a way in which to help some clients access that of which they may be currently unaware.

It emerged that the interviews conducted were therapeutic for most of the participants and produced a uniquely emotional response. Although initially, I imagine, of particular poignance to immigrants, refugees, ex-pat communities, international students, anthropologists, etc., reading this book made me aware that this is a question I had rarely asked anyone about, myself included. Now, this is puzzling as I clearly fall into the category of existential migrants, being someone who took off to the South of France in a white mini as soon as I could drive, with the sense that there was no choice, I had to go somewhere else, somewhere foreign. This behaviour continued for approximately 25 years, and even with several years of therapy, the question of home did not arise in this particular way until reading this book. I find that illuminating in itself – unrecorded and unacknowledged.

If there is a weakness for me, it would be the individual stories themselves; interesting, necessary and succinct vignettes as they are, I found Dr Madison's interpretations, innovative insights and thoughts much more stimulating. The research-study style of the book might be a reason for not recommending it to the lay person as, although very readable, it may not be what was expected.

The End of Belonging was a very lively read which provoked original thoughts and ideas all the way through and, in particular, what may have been lost never to be regained; '....the closer she was to being accepted by the culture, the more incompatible she was with herself.' (p113). It could be helpful to those existential migrants who may not have thought

too much about their experience in this light, and helpful to non-existential migrants for understanding those *others*.

The book left me with the sense that it may be beneficial to go into therapy specifically with these questions in mind and particularly, due to a serendipitous Jungian moment, on realising that the author and I were both sitting in Kathmandu airport, at the same time, whilst he was finally editing these lines in April 2009. However, reading the book was almost like going into personal therapy as it raised so many incisive and unavoidable probing questions, which I felt impelled to discuss with several others from a variety of backgrounds. It is very clearly personal work-in-progress for the author, and often those were the bits which were particularly captivating, for instance, the very moving descriptions of an early morning roof-top experience in Calcutta.

It would be challenging for anyone to read this book without asking some original questions of themselves, (What has been lost? What is missing?) and possibly finding some surprising answers (a more fragile sense of self? A homelessness?). So for those of us interested in existential philosophy or psychotherapy, personally or professionally, it is a good read.

Dr Madison's writing is unique and original within the context of psychological literature in that, for me, it had the ability to bring vividly and immediately alive so many dormant memories in an almost Proustian manner; it surprised, resonated and then I often felt the visceral pain of recognition long buried. That description is meant to signify a 'highly recommended' reading label.

The End of Belonging made me feel a sadness and loss which truly was previously unacknowledged and unrecorded.

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How to Live: A Life of Montaigne In One Question And Twenty Attempts At An Answer

Sarah Bakewell. (2011). London: Vintage Books.

For my entire adult life I've carried a paperback book with me, usually low-rent – police procedural/crime detection or science fiction – based