

exemplars for therapeutic practice whereas Grosz's brief episodes encapsulate and make memorable insights into a wide range of typical client dilemmas. Both approaches have their merits. Most importantly, these books worked for me in stimulating reflection on my way of working and development of my internal supervisor, which I think is the main purpose of this genre.

Notes

¹ Details about this study are available on the internet : 'Adult depression study (TADS) | Tavistock and Portman'; and 'Pragmatic randomized controlled trial of long-term psychoanalytic psychotherapy for treatment-resistant depression: the Tavistock Adult Depression Study (TADS) - Fonagy - 2015 - World Psychiatry - Wiley Online Library'

Diana Pringle

Hardship & Happiness

Lucius Annaeus Seneca (2014). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Stoicism appears to be having a major resurgence at the beginning of the 21st Century. Three authors still celebrated today are Lucius Anneus Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. Like their Hellenistic predecessors, these three Roman stoics concentrated on developing concrete, therapeutic philosophies about daily behaviour and suffering. Today, it is widely accepted that some of the ancient stoic remedies for emotional problems bear a resemblance to Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy and Cognitive Therapy. Thus, Albert Ellis and Aaron Beck both took explicit inspiration from stoic philosophy. However, in some ways the roman stoics are closer to existential therapy and existential philosophy. This similarity is evident in *Hardship & Happiness*, which collects a range of essays by Seneca intended to instruct on how to achieve happiness or tranquility in the face of a difficult world.

Stoicism is born between an old foreseeable world falling apart and a new multicultural mass society, the empire of Alexander the Great and the Roman Empire. Stoic philosophy takes off because it offers human flourishing and security in a time of existential alienation and rootlessness. It is a practical and therapeutic teaching aimed at freeing human being from worries and suffering due to irrational emotions. We can have a life that truly involves flourishing if we free ourselves from externals beyond our control and concentrate on the moral and existential aspects of life that lie within our control. Furthermore, if we have a reflective relation to our feelings, we can avoid being affectionate and led away from ourselves. If you lose it, you lose! Similar to the early Greek stoics, the later Stoics of Roman Imperial times, Seneca, Epictetus and Aurelius, therefore idealize

the stoic sage who has gained insight into life and is immune to misfortune.

The question that dominates the essays in *Hardship & Happiness* is how an individual can achieve a good life in hard times. The book begins with three essays that offers consolation to three people who are bereaved. In Seneca's time, consolation had become a special literary genre, drawing on philosophy and rhetoric to present a therapeutic programme. According to Seneca, grief with the death of a loved one is the product of false beliefs about death and its effects on the deceased. Since the soul survives, the deceased person is better off dead than alive. One should also not grieve over someone who lives in social or existential exile. Because the masses are themselves estranged from truth. Our everyday involvements and distractions in mass society do tend to represent a worse kind of alienation. Seneca rather encourages us to detach ourselves from vulnerability to external circumstances and look within ourselves. However, this is not an easy task. Seneca is almost similar to Friedrich Nietzsche, Albert Camus and Emmy van Deurzen in his way of portraying existential and moral progress as an arduous struggle.

Seneca wrote the fourth essay *On the Shortness of Life* after returning from his own exile in the year 49. Long before Martin Heidegger published *Being and Time*, Seneca reflects on how we experience and use the vital time that makes up our life towards death. Our existential freedom depends on our mastery over time, which involves that full living comes from training to death. Thus, stoicism is an art of living based on living in the here and now, and by promoting an intolerance of time wasted through submission to comfort or vices, procrastination or meaningless engagement in trivial pursuits. Seneca's *On Leisure* tell us how the philosopher must remain active throughout his whole life. However, he or she may find it suitable to do this by withdrawing from the pervasiveness of everyday social conflicts and unrest.

The essay *On the Constancy of the Wise Person* elaborates on the principle that a good life does not depend on good fortune or social status. What matters to the wise person is mental freedom with a personal autonomy grounded in reason and virtue. He or she will be able to endure the injuries and insults of everyday society. Seneca's *On Tranquility of Mind* likewise has some similarities with existential therapy. The essay proposes a cure for someone's mental suffering from an inner conflict between personal values and outsiders' values. We are able to achieve calmness of the soul by engaging in society but freeing ourselves from exterior disturbance and pursuit of wealth and property.

Unlike the rest of the essays, *On the Happy Life* focuses on how to live a good life in times of good fortune. Seneca refutes that pleasure and wealth are the highest good, but he also states that the wise person does not need to reject these. The final essay *On Providence* shows that misfortune

in life is not necessarily something bad. In a more spiritual or religious perspective, Seneca explains that misfortunes have a teaching purpose as moral lessons. They are Gods way of testing and training us to be as good and outstanding as we can be. By enduring misfortune, we learn to be ourselves and we gain capabilities for living. Thus, Seneca agrees with most modern existential theory that we are able to convert painful events in life into self-knowledge and abilities to do well to others.

Hardship & Happiness has an obvious relevance to existential analysis. Seneca's therapeutic philosophy probably has the greatest similarity to van Deurzen's existential approach. They both insist on combining ethics and therapy into an art of living. However, Seneca's experiential approach to existential issues relates to a wide range of existential authors. In recent years, The University of Chicago Press has republished many works by Seneca. I hope that this effort will influence the existential community.

Dying for Ideas. The Dangerous Lives of the Philosophers

Costica Bradatan (2015). London & New York: Bloomsbury.

French philosopher Albert Camus begins his book *The Myth of Sisyphus* from 1942 with the famous proclamation that there is only but one truly philosophical problem and that is suicide. Suicide is the confession that life is not worth living, and to Camus the fundamental question is whether this confession must follow the realization that existence is absurd. The teachings of the book *Dying for Ideas* from 2015 by American philosopher Costica Bradatan seems to be a reversal of Camus' problem. Following Bradatan, we need to rephrase the most serious problem for a true philosopher: What is worth dying for? To me, this also seems to be a fundamental existential question in our current western culture, preoccupied with individual wellbeing and happy endings. Camus actually embodies this issue being a resistance fighter in World War II. Yet, the question remains whether the rest of us have anything to die for in the 21st century, and whether the artificiality of most academic philosophy might be reflecting this shortcoming.

Bradatan actually forms part of a new way of perceiving philosophy that relates closely to the existential tradition. At the end of the 1970's and the beginning of the 1980's, French philosophers Pierre Hadot and Michel Foucault advocated a reinvention of philosophy as an existential art of living. Hadot and Foucault argued that originally, Greek and Roman philosophy was a therapeutic form of life, very different from current mainstream academic philosophy. From Socrates to Marcus Aurelius this art of living seemed to focus on transforming and reinventing peoples' selves and lives around the notion of a training to death. Bradatan expands this notion by following the martyr-philosophers from Socrates to Jan