

Notes

1. Wedding, D. & Corsini, R. (eds.) (2019) *Current Psychotherapies* [11th ed.], Boston: Cengage. This textbook contains chapters, for example, on Gestalt *Therapy*, Family *Therapy*, Rational-Emotive *Therapy*, etc. but one may also read about Psychodynamic *Psychotherapies*, Adlerian *Psychotherapy*, Positive *Psychotherapy* – and Existential *Psychotherapy*. The American Psychological Association considers all existential psychotherapies (a set of multiple approaches) to be among the humanistic psychotherapies. See Craig, M., Vos, J., Cooper, M. & Correia, E.A. (2016). Existential Psychotherapies. In Cain, D.J. et al. (eds.) *Humanistic Psychotherapies: Handbook of research and practice*. [2nd ed.] Washington: American Psychological Association. 283-317. Three of the authors of this article are also contributors to the handbook. Their list of existential ‘therapies’ varies from the handbook’s, especially in including among named approaches ‘existential analysis’, ‘the British school of existential therapy’, a variety of ‘meaning-centered’ approaches other than logotherapy, ‘Lantz’s existential psychotherapy’, ‘experiential-existential group psychotherapy’, ‘supportive-expressive therapy’ and ‘cognitive-existential therapy’ (p 286). Logically, the whole cannot be part of one of its parts, which puts the Existential-Humanistic and Existential-Integrative therapies described in the handbook in a strange place. Perhaps in an effort to be relevant and up-to-date, the humanistic strain has expanded to include Humanistic-Relational approach. My point is that ‘therapy’ is not shorthand for ‘psychotherapy’, unless it is a matter of imprecise usage. It is also worth noting that the British Library’s CIP rubric for classification is ‘existential psychotherapy’, not ‘existential therapy’. The field is perhaps overpopulated with approaches.
2. One of the handbook’s editors recalls this perspective of American psychology. See Craig, E. (2015) The Lost Language of Being: Ontology’s perilous destiny in existential psychotherapy. In *Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychology*. 22 (2): 87.

Integrating Counselling & Psychotherapy: Directionality, Synergy and Social Change

Mick Cooper. 2019. Sage: London.

I approached this book with a sense of expectation, curiosity and excitement. Somehow, I did not manage to read any Cooper book until now, nor did I ever hear him talk. This lack was highlighted to me on a course at the

Minster Centre recently, as almost to their entirety, my peers cited Cooper as the go-to person for their understanding of the existential position; they were shocked that in my studies of existential psychotherapy I had never read him. So this book felt like a way to correct that and to potentially understand the position of non-existentialists-in-relation-to-existential-psychotherapy. My excitement was very much down to the title words 'social change'. For me, so much of our professional literature is bereft of engagement with this concept, and indeed the world in which I (we?) find ourselves.

Cooper divides the book into three parts after a standalone introduction. Part I is 'A common framework for counselling, psychotherapy and social change: Describing the elephant'. It comprises Chapters 2 to 9 inclusive, covering the philosophical foundations of directionality (Chapter 2), the idea of wellbeing and emotions: a life 'on track' (Chapter 4) to Chapter 9 'from intrapersonal to interpersonal levels of organisation: playing to win-win. Part II, titled 'Resources for an integrative practice: Putting the elephant back together', looks at approaches in the psychodynamic, humanistic, existential and cognitive-behavioural frameworks and discusses how they relate to integrative practices with a chapter on each.

Part III is called 'Directional practices: Riding the elephant'. It is shorter than the previous two parts with only four chapters in goal-orientated practices, working with directions in counselling and psychotherapy, developing interpersonal synergies and a conclusion. It is in the conclusion that Cooper directly addresses social change, in one page, as well as in Chapter 16, feels like a short changing of the title of the book, based in a large part on an exploration of the prisoner's dilemma.

The chapters follow a pattern throughout with short sections under clear, descriptive sub-headings before some suggested 'questions for reflection' and some further reading. For example, in Chapter 3, 'A phase model of directionality: from fantasy to action', the sub-headings are the phases in the model (emergence; awareness; evaluation; intention; planning; action; feedback; and termination) before a brief discussion on what has just been written. Two questions are posed including 'How would you profile yourself on the directional arc?' (p 41), while the reader is asked to consider the questions in relation to a current client. This approach is somewhat useful in helping to pick apart what is important from what has just been said, although it feels very textbook-esque.

While reading, I found myself feeling nostalgic for my undergraduate studies where I read a couple of sports psychology modules. Coopers style echoes the introductory nature of my reading at the time, and while the nostalgia for a simpler time in my life was there, so was the sense of being overwhelmed. This is born out of the sheer range and number of references; thirty-six pages of 609 references, of which twenty-nine are of books or articles where he has

been the lead author or editor. As an aside, the glossary is a 'web resource' rather than part of the book somewhat frustratingly (p x).

The result of the massive number of references is a lack of depth, especially around the existential position(s). There is a section on 'in-the-world' where Cooper posits against rational choice theory and psychology generally; 'a person's directionality can be considered fundamentally embedded in their *world*' (p 23). This strikes me in two ways. Initially, there is no reference to Heidegger, which I considered strange given the borrowing of the hyphenated way of writing. Furthermore, the idea of directionality as being embedded in their world suggests that Cooper feels the world and the person are two discreet entities which are not bound together, a position that seemingly misunderstands the concept of 'being-in-the-world'. In the conclusion, directionality is said to be 'about agency and going out to meet the world; but there is another side of human being which is about taking in the world, a 'receptivity' or what Heidegger (1966) terms *gelassenheit*' (p 249). In this redefining of directionality, the language is suggestive of a split where the human being can be outside of the world not meeting it. This feels like an error of understanding. Of course, it is conceivable that Cooper is using his own definition, but I am not sure what is gained by not including the origins of the phrase in this context, especially since he uses other Heideggarian phrases to try and expand his view. This is indicative to me of a cursory rather than deep examination of things.

I feel the need to own my position; I am a psychotherapist whose experience of psychology extends to four modules (two generic and two sport-specific) during my undergraduate studies, some basic reading when looking at employee engagement in the corporate world and being 'treated' by some psychologists during a stay at a private psychiatric institute. What this means is, I am not entirely adverse to psychology, but to me this book feels like the equivalent of a butcher writing how a rotisseur should cook meat. The two fields are related but to find an equivalence is to misunderstand what each is doing, or even trying to do. Cooper is a Professor of Counselling Psychology and a UKCP-registered psychotherapist. We are seemingly trying to do different things when working with clients. I do not recognise the idea that 'successful therapy, if it can happen...comes down to having an effective, and synergetic, plan for approaching plans' (p 228).

At the end of his introduction, Cooper posits the question 'starting from an ethic of respect and responsibility... how can I engage with my clients – and with the wider world – in a deeply valuing and respectful way?' (p 12). This seems to be based on the premise that, quoting from Maslow, 'good human beings will need a good society to grow' (p 248). This sounds like positioning the responsibility away from a client's autonomy; my own experience is that human beings grow in their society and try to make sense of it, however they categorise it.

Cooper's aim was 'to try to describe something of what that elephant might be like: to articulate a common framework – and vocabulary – for counselling and psychotherapy that can support the integration of understanding and methods from across orientations, help to improve communication and collaboration between the schools and bring greater clarity and cohesion to the field' (p 5). Reading this, I see parallels with the ScopEd project currently being undertaken by the UKCP, BACP and others (I write in mid-2019) which, to my mind, is trying to bring 'everything' under one roof as though a singular roof is better than inhabiting different houses. Recently, I have studied at the Minster Centre. Early on, our group collectively realised that each of us have different starting points on our responsibility for or towards the client. Everything else comes after that, and that is in a group of eleven psychotherapists. Quite how Cooper hopes, or why he desires, to bring the 'field' together, I am not sure.

I have struggled to work out how I would end this review as I had a very vivid reaction. Over the course of two months, I battled with the reading, taking me back to when I was eight. I had been quite a precocious reader until that point, and was able to read the 'set texts' at school quickly enough to encourage my parents to let me read whatever I wanted at home. That is, until I hit a book about a chicken that flew to the moon. I could not read this book, I did not want to read this book, yet by dint of being in that primary school I was not allowed to progress to another book until I had read it. It took me two terms to read that book as I dug my heels in, because I could not see the benefit of reading about the chicken's experience of the moon. This was similar. I have no doubt, and the reviews on the inside flap convey this, some will find this book interesting and insightful. I, on the other hand, feel more confused than before I read the book. I did not feel an affinity with its aims nor do I believe that its aims were realised.

Ben Scanlan

Ecotherapy in Practice: A Buddhist Model

Caroline Brazier (2017), London and New York: Routledge

While still on the peripheries in terms of training curricula and mainstream therapeutic discourse, there is increasing interest within the growing field of eco-psychology, which carries a varied range of definitions and practices, including 'ecotherapy', 'environmental therapy', 'nature-based therapy' and 'wild therapy'. Where these definitions commune, however, is in extending therapeutic practice beyond the interiority of a consulting room and into outdoor environments – be they urban or rural. The motivations for taking therapeutic practice outdoors range from the simple, well-established premise that being outdoors positively impacts