

BOOK REVIEWS

I found this another extremely challenging year. I feel exhausted from the limited contact I have had with colleagues, friends and family. Even though I was able to work face-face throughout, all events and training have been online and loved-ones remained distant (literally and virtually). I am human, as are you, and these past twenty-one months have been particularly stressful. COVID was not the only issue; my responsibilities, difficulties and personal challenges did not wane or change simply because of the pandemic.

As I write this in late 2021, I have but one wish for you and me, that we get through this as best as possible and be able to return to a normal life where we all meet in person, look into each other's eyes and simply are together again.

Until that moment, I have an interesting selection of books for your reading pleasure. We start off with *Contexts of Suffering: A Heideggerian approach to psychopathology* by Kevin Aho, a book that renders the title subject's complex ideas into clear and understandable language. It is followed by a review of Belliotti's *Dante's Deadly Sins: Moral philosophy in hell*, a book that attempts to disentangle the practical and lay meanings of two of Dante's key works. Next is a review of Stuart-Smith's *The Well-Gardened Mind: Rediscovering nature in the modern*. This book is well-timed for these COVID times with its message that gardening is an existential consolation for the mind that can be healing too. *The Industrialisation of Care: counselling, psychotherapy and the impact of IAPT* by Jackson & Rizq (eds.), also of our times, is a rather disheartening but important read, considering the NHS's IAPT mental health services. The review (and the book when I finish it) felt familiar, reminding me of my own time during training where I was lucky enough to operate existentially in an IAPT setting supervised by benign managerial (blind?) eyes. Last, I have a review of the Towles novel, *A Gentleman in Moscow*, an absorbing read steeped in the existential themes of relationships, the outsider/other, the cycle of life, responsibility, freedom and spatiality. What better way to start the year than in this novel's hotel world, metaphorically pulling us into the wonders of all our worlds, lives, and relationships.

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