Italy, which is pierced in its very heart with the double arrows of the Vatican and the Catholic Church, inheritors of public burnings at the stake of thousands and thousands of bodies considered obscene. Italy is unable to accept the vital body of Pasolini, a body that resists automatism, homologation and capitalist reification.

The year 2015 was marked by the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of this great author's death. Despite the empty rhetoric displayed by the media, despite reams of journalistic nonsense, Pasolini's 'obscene' body is still being displaced. Some made a vague stab at posthumous beatification – with very little success. Very few in Italy, besides the odd academic, read Pasolini's poems, and even fewer know of *Petrolio*. In 40 years, films such as *Pigsty* or *Salò, or the 120 days of Sodom* have nearly vanished from TV networks. On the 40th anniversary, three of his films were shown at the unpopular times of 11 pm, 1 am and 3 AM on a week day. The recent death of Franco Citti, protagonist of several of Pasolini's films and friend of the director, has been barely mentioned.

I would like to end with a final note. A few times I have looked with eyes wide open at the face of the poet, bloodied and horribly bruised by his killers. That image, vivid in my mind, brought back to my heart, through a wayward route, another image by James Hillman (Hillman & Ronchey, 2001, p. 156), who in conversation with Silvia Ronchey in 2001 spoke of the death mask:

> The last revelation. For this reason many centuries ago people made death masks, in order to capture that essence. As soon as someone died, they made a death mask to capture the image freed by that person at the moment of death.

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Beyond self-help

Modern psychology and ancient wisdom: psychological healing practices from the world's religious traditions, edited by Sharon Mijares, New York, The Haworth Press, 2015, 284 pp., £24.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-138-88452-6

The declared aim of this compilation is to provide practitioners in psychological therapy with an idea of the tools and methods available to use from a range of

religion-based traditions. It is unfortunately not unusual for people to forget the rich traditions of psychological medicine and therapy in ancient cultures, from the oldest-known traditions in ancient China, to the first asylums set up by Alexander the Great, to the work of Hippocrates and the continuation of psychological therapies in the Islamic world and the Christian traditions. Reference is gleefully made by some modern humanistic practitioners to the use of mindfulness from Buddhism, or its equivalents such as Naikan with Zen Buddhism, but typically there is a lack of discussion around practices that might be linked to a 'faith' or 'belief system'. This has always struck me as ironic, considering that Freud was famously steeped in the Jewish faith, and Jung enthusiastically explored eastern traditions, virtually at the start of the largely recognized dawn of psychological medicine. Thus, it is only logical that we accept that there must be methods that can be drawn from traditions, whether religious or not, to complement the mindfulness, meditation, yoga, Tai Chi and other already widely accepted forms.

Unfortunately both the book's editor and some of the writers of chapters within the book do not help the secular reader to delve into these traditions with an open mind. Rather than clearly state from the outset that many eastern traditions can be considered either a faith or non-religious philosophy (Taoism and Buddhism in particular), the overall feel of the book is that it defends religion's right to be included in psychological practice. This may or may not be the case, but allowing that premise to be writ large at least through insinuation may well 'switch off' the more critical secular reader.

Each chapter is written by a selected author or expert in that field, both the greatest strength and the greatest weakness of this compilation. Some of the chapters are following the mandate of describing useful tools and methods that could be duplicated without reference to faith within psychological practice, thus providing really interesting material. Other chapters let the overall book down by doggedly adhering to the presence of the 'God' in question as core to the process. In particular the Christian chapter by Dwight, aptly named 'Rediscovering Christ the Healer', fails to describe common methods used in, for example Christian Counselling Theotherapy which can be used completely separately from faith, such as 'crossing the bridge' to meet the abuser for reconciliation in abuse healing, and instead dedicates itself to a series of essentially prayer models, all invoking Christ. This seems inaccessible for a secular therapist working, for example, with an atheist client.

The chapter on Goddess spirituality by Mijares (the editor) is unusual for a different reason. Mijares does declare that she works extensively with abused female clients, and within that context and with that group the chapter makes sense, but the application appears limited. The thrust of the chapter seems to be feminist empowerment, the challenging of misogynistic narratives and rejoicing in feminine identity. As far as this goes, the chapter is interesting, and the methods are clearly applicable and adaptable to that specific user group. It would have been good to see a more rounded chapter on the Neo-Pagan traditions, perhaps including Wicca with its strong empowerment of non-heterosexual identities, and, as with many such traditions, its rich examples of healing visualizations and meditations which could be used for a wider range of issues. Also, the use of ritual appears absent, which whether in a healing visualization or a physical action such as a long walk, dance or creative action, features largely in Goddess and Pagan traditions.

The chapter on Judaism and Kabbalah is particularly frustrating. The title refers to the 'kabbalistic pathways' but then the chapter ignores the most obvious psychotherapeutic use of the Tree of Kabbalah, which is the relationship between spheres and pathways on the symbolic tree, which in psychoanalytic terms present opportunity for rich object relations and interpersonal relationship work. The meditations are valid but very faith-based, and not really transferable into secular therapy. The pathways and spheres can be used for meditations and essentially free association work without the need for faith as such, and the object relations and gender balance meditations are likewise non-religious. These would have provided far more transferable tools.

The chapter on shamanism, again by the editor, takes a surprising direction. Rather than describing the varied methods of ritual, visualization and contemplation available within the shamanic tradition, such as constructed journey, use of archetypes, use of imagery to analyse interpersonal relationships and so on, the chapter is largely focused on drug use. Mijares has some interesting observations concerning the use of legal and non-legal substances in trance and visualization, but this is not what the book is really meant to be about if one takes the title as a guide. Both the Goddess and shamanism chapters appear to be more about what Mijares finds interesting philosophically and sociologically (and these *are* interesting) rather than the expected therapeutic content.

All of the above may seem fairly bleak and negative. However, the rest of the chapters are actually very good. The chapter on Buddhism by Wegala is a quite wide-ranging contemplation of mindfulness-based methods, and refreshingly the chapter touches on more than just the obvious mindfulness meditations that are the norm for mass-produced paperback self-help fare. There is also an emphasis on integration into psychotherapy and real life, therefore clouding what is sometimes referred to as 'active' mindfulness (as opposed to passive/meditative).

The chapter on Sufism by Douglas-Klotz is extremely interesting and covers a faith often overlooked in the field where Buddhism, Zen and Hinduism tend to dominate. There is a comprehensive description and mapping of the model, identifying some useful and transferable concepts. Then there is a description of the relationship between the student/client and the teacher/therapist. This is particularly interesting since the student follows in the footsteps of the teacher in a model more like following a guru or mentor than a therapist in the traditional sense. One is left wondering how outside life coaching this might be adapted to meet the requirements of psychotherapy for ethical relationships, yet rather than eliciting a dismissive attitude, it leaves a sense of curiosity.

The chapter on Taoism by Tong is excellent. As a Taoist practitioner I was concerned that this chapter might be a disappointment after the rather variable nature of the preceding chapters. Instead, the piece covers a wide range of examples of specific methods, including Tai Chi, breath-work and lifestyle, together with philosophical concepts of how to use Taoism to examine the perceptions and behaviours of the client. For the first time in the book, a clear explanation of the difference between the post-enlightenment scientific splits in the West and the still unified forms in the East is offered. The overall message, too, is clear that the method is philosophical and not religious. The contrast with the Christian chapter could not be more pronounced, not just because of the style of underpinning faith itself, but in the

presentation of the information and the choice of methods and tools offered. The chapter is also fairly well underpinned with references to research, case examples and data.

The final contributed chapter is on Yoga and Hinduism by Criswell and Patel. This is again an excellent chapter, comprised of a range of methods, tools and philosophies, underpinned with rich referencing to research studies and data. Of particular note is the relationship drawn between the subject area and mind–body psychotherapy. As with the Taoism chapter, the reader can begin to see real reasons why these systems have something different to offer. In both cases, 'God' as such is not needed in the conversation. Instead, the systems offer a holistic framework for mind–body well-being.

In conclusion, despite its best efforts to 'turn off' the reader with the incessant 'God' type references in a couple of the chapters, and its tendency to go 'off message' in places, this book does contain some very interesting and useful 'toolboxes', particularly in the chapters on Sufism, Taoism, Buddhism and Hinduism. The depth of knowledge shared probably would not leave a practitioner feeling confident in trying any of the methods listed, but there is enough depth to whet the appetite for further exploration, and perhaps consideration of how the individual practitioner might explore and develop personally and professionally in some of these areas. The book also illustrates very well that there is more out there than just mindfulness.

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People, not illnesses

The man who closed the asylums: Franco Basaglia and the revolution in mental health care, by John Foot, London, Verso, 2015, 424 pp., £16.95 (hardback), ISBN 978-1781689264

Reviewed by Paola Valentini, counsellor

The peak of the Cold War between Washington and Moscow, with the first man on the moon, the clash of generations in Europe and the rise of Italian economics rolling on in the background, makes up the stage for Franco Basaglia and his personal revolution as the result of the convergence of different actions, carried out with courage by the generation that saw the war and fascism, and since the 1960s had another vision of the society, of the Republic, giving shape and substance to the constitutional mandate, within a wider framework, that of the constitutional thaw: not a reform movement, but a revolutionary movement. This movement carried Italy into a series of forced and hurried political actions, set up bureaucratically through Law 180 in 1978.