Self & Society, 2016
Vol. 44, No. 2, 94–103, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03060497.2016.1192338

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

On the road to nowhere? Social-materialist psychology and depressive realism compared

The Midlands Psychology Group*

The two schools of thought known, respectively, as social-materialist psychology and depressive realism – (hereafter abbreviated to SMP and DR) – count themselves as 'realist' and science based. They reject the received Western notion of the person as the rational creator-entrepreneur of their own life, and they take a dim view of the current market-driven social and political order as the harbinger of yet more instability to come – economic, political and environmental. However, there are important differences between the two standpoints. For DR, all notions of human perfectibility are futile, whereas social-materialist psychology holds that improvement is conceivable. Our shared bodily experience of a social world structured by power offers some (albeit fragile) potential for achieving agreement about the shape of a common and more humane future, and about how to get there.

Keywords: social-materialist psychology; depressive realism; critical realism; personal distress; enlightenment values; psychological therapy

> Today, we need social theory as never before, but we need it to reunite us with our estranged bodies, and to rediscover the sense of humility which a view of the world at this scale entails. (Robertson, 2001, p. 222)

What is social-materialist psychology?

In the UK and throughout the developed world, psychologists, their teachings and their therapies are in great demand. And yet close scrutiny of the research literature for the talking therapies shows that they are not nearly as effective as practitioners, consumers or the wider public seem to think. Moreover, evidence that most psychological problems are spawned by an inimical world beyond the reach of therapeutic techniques has been accumulating for decades (Epstein, 2006, 2013; Moloney, 2013; Newnes, 2014).

Surprisingly, few therapists have had much to say about the implications for practice, and even less for our understanding of the human predicament. An exception is the school of social-materialist psychology (SMP), as formulated by the late British clinical psychologist David Smail and colleagues (Midlands Psychology Group, 2012; Smail, 2005). SMP has dual roots: first, in clinical experience within the

*The membership of the group is: John Cromby, Bob Diamond, Paul Kelly, Paul Moloney, Penny Priest and Jan Soffe-Caswell. Email: admin@midpsy.org

British National Health Service, and second, in that portion of the mental health and social science literature that seeks to relate subjective experience (and particularly distress) to social inequalities and to the abuse of power. The approach is realist in the sense that it sees humans – including our capacity for consciousness – as material entities, embedded in a physical universe impervious to our wishes. It is also 'critical', in the sense that it understands how science as a practice can be prone to serving established myths, institutions and political interests, the influences of which must be acknowledged, examined and resisted if researchers and theorists are ever to approach the truth (Bhaskar, 1998).

From the SMP viewpoint, the mental health treatment industries, contrary to their preferred image, exist not so much to ease socially generated distress as to endorse it, under the fable of its cure or 'management'. As the mirror image of 'homo economicus' or 'rational man' beloved of neoliberal economists, the vast majority of talking therapy brands school their willing clients into seeing themselves as capable of solving their own problems with a bit of expert help, via internal adjustment of their own mental apparatus (Midlands Psychology Group, 2012; Smail, 1987).

But there is little reason to suppose that we are like this. If many can be cajoled into thinking and acting more hopefully in the therapist's consulting room, it does not follow that we can magically unlearn the hard lessons that life has forced upon us, any more than we might decide to shrug off a painfully acquired knowledge of how to read and write, play piano or speak Chinese, and for similar reasons. For the most systematically downtrodden individuals, a *feeling* for the world's many cruelties has been inscribed into their living tissue as a state of chronic unease, far beyond the reach of mere language, therapeutic or otherwise (Smail, 1987, 2005).

Indeed, well-being and longevity depend upon our access to money, security and social position, which themselves are the gift or whim of a much bigger world, of geopolitical events and decisions made in a realm far beyond the orbit of our individual lives (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2013). Swayed by a culture – commercial, therapeutic and above all disciplinary – that encourages us to obsess about what is happening inside of us, we mistake our internal responses – our feelings of disquiet – for the ultimate cause of our subjective experience and conduct. In reality, the further away the sources of economic and political power from our own personal horizon, the stronger and potentially more harmful their hold upon us. As when, in the name of 'fiscal austerity', governments start to shake the economic and institutional structures that give shelter, schooling, care and livelihood to millions of ordinary people. The disintegration of long-established social norms, niches and rituals is likely to be experienced as an entirely personal distress, for which we must somehow be responsible (Clark & Heath, 2014; Smail, 1993).

Rather than sovereign authors of our own story, we are the organic embodiment of an ineradicable history and of a given social and physical environment. To gain a clearer understanding of our 'selves' we must learn to cultivate 'outsight' into our surroundings and into how they impose themselves upon us, and then work their way under our skin.

In its rejection of popular notions of will power and 'the self', social-materialist psychology shares some ground with the perspective known as depressive realism (DR) or anti-humanism, which comes in part from clinical mental health practice, and from the writings of academic philosophers and of 'deep' ecologists. On the mental health side, the so-called 'depressive realism model' of unhappiness grew out

of robust research which suggests that individuals who experience low mood have more realistic insight into their own limitations and prospects for success when compared to individuals who say they are well adjusted and 'happy'. This finding has raised questions about the extent to which 'accurate' thinking is helpful or otherwise in daily life.

The assumption of many leading brands of therapy, especially the 'cognitive'-based ones, has always been that 'rational thinking' is a good thing. This finding has also raised doubts about how far talking therapists should be encouraging the positive illusions versus the realistic apprehensions of their clients. Two branches of talking therapy – existentialist and humanistic – hold that full acceptance of the latter is the best option on ethical and clinical grounds, since it is only by having their outlook acknowledged that the troubled person can find the self-acceptance and dignity needed to negotiate a new way forward (Ghaemi, 2007; van Deurzen, 1998). In comparison to approaches like Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), which claim to fix faulty thought and feeling, these therapies are less popular – but in their fidelity to the experience of the client, no matter how bleak, these approaches have an affinity with the SMP outlook.

The depressive realism of John Gray

In contrast to the world of therapy, philosophy is no stranger to pessimism. In the nineteenth century, Schopenhauer famously argued that beneath the humdrum surface of our lives there lurked an energy of desire: blind, amoral and uncontrollable, and mocking all claims to ethical progress in the long run. Later thinkers as varied as Freud, Nietzsche and Wittgenstein questioned the extent to which we can really know ourselves and ever hope to agree upon universal truths and values (Howard, 2000).

In the early twenty-first century, Schopenhauer's outlook has been revived. The gene-centred 'modern synthesis' of Darwinian evolution and 'Gaia theory' tells us that the human species is a planetary infestation, busily destroying its home – through hunting, farming, urban development, industrialization and climate change. Soon we will run out of energy supplies. Unchecked, this pattern has always led to famine, war and civil collapse. In the coming decades it will be the turn of our twenty-first-century global civilization. Far from saving us, advanced technologies herald the evolutionary demise of humankind and its replacement by machines that are destined to outwit their creators, perhaps with the assistance of new weapons of mass killing. 'Epidemiology and microbiology are better signposts to our future than any of our hopes or plans', writes John Gray, in *Straw Dogs* (2002).

A former student and critical interpreter of the renowned liberal humanist Isaiah Berlin, a teacher at the universities of Oxford, Harvard and Yale, and one-time Emeritus Professor of European Thought at the London School of Economics, Gray is a leading exponent of this pessimistic creed. A strong – and for many persuasive – stylist, Gray's epigrammatic writings sometimes recall the works of Nietzsche in his darker moments, but syntactically streamlined and clothed in contemporary scientific thought. Gray's writings mine rich seams of material: the work of theoretical and evolutionary biologists Richard Dawkins and James Lovelock, the dystopian novelist J.G. Ballard, tough-minded witnesses to war and social trauma such as Roman Frister, and

poets of bleakness like Wallace Stevens – to name only a small handful (see Gray, 2002, 2013).

Depressive Realists (DRs) like Gray acknowledge (how could they not?) that human beings have an extraordinary capacity for artistic and technical creativity. However, they find little to celebrate. For all its capabilities, the human brain is a material product of evolution. It is a tool for furthering survival rather than truth or happiness – the values that, contrary to the comforting illusions of humanism, cannot be reconciled. Our lives, as revealed by science, have no inherent meaning or larger purpose. Clever invention and freedom of choice are no more to our credit than is the production of milk to a cow. If our own projects culminate from complex skeins of influence, impossible to trace, in the end they are just as predetermined by environment and history. There is little solace to be found in our nobler sentiments. Empathy is only one trait in the nature of '*homo rapiens*', which embraces the historically well-documented appetites for domination, greed, sexual predation and murder. 'Genocide is as human as prayer' (Gray, 2002).

Gray's main target is teleology, the intellectual thread – running from the ancient Hellenistic, Judaeo-Christian and Islamic worlds to our own – which traces a hidden purpose to life, awaiting discovery through reason or revelation. Its modern incarnation: the hope that, by ridding ourselves of irrationality and superstition – including religion – we can enlarge individual freedom and ease the burden of suffering and tragedy. This secular project, otherwise known as the Enlightenment – owes a big debt to European thinkers and writers of the eighteenth century such as Voltaire and Kant, who linked ethical progress to political emancipation for the masses. For Gray, this misguided civilizing mission is fuelled by the same yearnings for transcendence and sacred meaning that drives all the great theistic religions. The desire for moral and political progress through violent revolution is a form of hubris that inevitably yields results as bad as, or worse than, the brutal political systems they were supposed to supplant.

The barbarity and degradation wrought upon ordinary citizens by Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany, Pol Pot's Cambodia and Mao's Great Leap Forward, the rather less dramatic – but perhaps in the longer term equally damaging – social and environmental costs of the current free-market fundamentalism (the 'common sense' of most governments and ruling elites across the world) – these are among only the most obvious instances. Every attempt to engineer a 'perfect' society via a single blueprint has foundered upon the stubborn contrariness, unpredictability and wickedness of the human animal. Our knowledge is always sketchier than we think, and it is reckless to believe that we can transcend our human limits. The more we try to solve our social and political problems with all-encompassing rational schemes, the more we are doomed to make them worse (Gray, 2007).

An atheist, Gray maintains that scientific humanism is less truthful than religious myth and poetry, which, at their best, are unequalled in their ability to unmask the vanity and wretchedness of the human creature. He is no fan of postmodern fantasizing, either. At bottom, the universe is probably unknowable and perhaps chaotic, but it is never transformed by the way we choose to talk about it (Gray, 2011).

In his two most recent works, *The Silence of Animals* (2013) and *The Soul of the Marionette* (2015), Gray comes, logically enough, to an unbridled admiration for the mute existence of animals and of human artefacts – untroubled by myths of freedom and purpose. Gray makes a lyrical argument that we in the West have been

seduced and fooled by our obsession with personal autonomy, and have paid a high price in crippling self-consciousness and in perpetual restlessness and anxiety, as we strive for endless improvement – whether personal or political. The only real escape from our culturally fabricated prison lies in contemplation, unclouded by hope or sentiment, of our lowly place in an indifferent cosmos. As Gray acknowledges, attainment of this outlook, or something close to it, has been the goal of mystics and shamans down the centuries.

His eloquence notwithstanding, many of Gray's scientific, historical and geopolitical claims are open to question. Gaia theory, for instance, has not stood up well to independent examination, and Lovelock's predictions of imminent ecological catastrophe have not come to pass (Tyrell, 2013). In biology, the neo-Darwinian synthesis has been questioned for reducing living animals and their subtle interactions with their environments to mechanistic, gene-driven strategies (Rose & Rose, 2012). And while it is incontestable that in recent decades some nations have exchanged consumerism for civil rights or have slid backwards into kleptocracy, this is not the same as saying that the Enlightenment project has failed. Across most of the world, slavery and racism are reviled and continue to retreat, while women's emancipation steadily gains ground, and democratic government based upon a recognition of human rights is either expanding or seems to have become an aspiration for a growing majority (Grayling, 2007; Malik, 2014).

Despite these qualifications, it is clear that the depressive realist and social-materialist viewpoints share common ground. The universe is probably an accident and God is missing, presumed dead. Human beings overestimate their own importance and powers of influence, and are blind to their flaws, many of which are ineradicable. Science cannot magically solve our problems, and the postmodernist fixation with the control of imagery and 'discourse' as the answer to our impasse is just another fad. In a consumerist and secular world, denial of the tragic realities of life is widespread. Anyone who questions this pact for compulsory good cheer is likely to be branded cynical, obsolete or clinically depressed. Indeed, David Smail, in his critique of therapeutic optimism, was sometimes dismissed as an exemplar of all three.

Perhaps it is no surprise that unreflective commentators see these two positions as almost identical. But they are wrong. The differences are more important than the similarities – especially when it comes to ethical and political implications. Described by his long-time friend Norman Barry as a 'philosophically promiscuous' scholar, who 'couldn't form a steady relationship with any thinker', John Gray's intellectual sojourn has moved restlessly from Thatcherite free-market defender to centre-left anti-capitalism and thence to Green/Taoist anti-humanism, tinged heavily with traditional conservative values (Postle, 2003). By contrast, the ideas of David Smail and colleagues have a cumulative history, rooted in the sociological and critical mental health literatures and, most significantly of all, in long clinical experience within the UK public health services. Consistency is no guarantee of scientific value, and can signify sclerotic thinking. However, it can be argued that precisely because SMP has never strayed far from its roots in daily contact with flesh and blood human beings, then its diagnosis of our predicament is thereby more subtle, coherent and, ultimately, helpful than the DR version, beginning with the most compelling of our experiences – volition.

The question of whether or not humans have 'free will' is one of the most vexed in philosophy and neuroscience: it has never been satisfactorily resolved and, to the

extent that it is a branch of the mind–brain problem, may never be (Rose & Rose, 2012). For most thoughtful observers, it has nonetheless been clear that there is something wrong with 'common sense' conceptions of will power, at least within Western culture. For depressive realists, free will – the capacity to make choices that are not fully determined by past and present circumstances – is an illusion. Fatalism is therefore the best response: if all attempts to influence things for the better are predetermined and as likely as not to cause more problems anyway, then why bother to make the effort?

For social-materialist psychology, determinism is plausible when viewed from the vantage point of an imaginary omniscient being, capable, by definition, of forecasting all of our deeds with complete accuracy. However, for psychological purposes this scenario has limited relevance. Determinism fails on the plane of daily life because we cannot know all of the influences that act upon anyone – including their own inner speech and feelings – and because 'there is no conceivable situation in which human beings could have full knowledge of their circumstances and yet still be completely determined by them' (Smail, 1987, p. 75). And yet we are not free to do and feel as we wish or *believe* we should. We have good reasons for our conduct, which issue from the combined weight of personal biography, circumstances and interests. Our options depend upon the array of choices open to us, and this range cannot but reflect our position in the social pyramid. Those with the least power and resources will have the smallest room for manoeuvre and the least ability to overcome their socially induced misery.

This is a tragic reading of the human condition, but it helps the sufferer to avoid the self-blame that accompanies so many other forms of therapy, including the humanistic and existential varieties, which trade upon the false assumption that the client can (and should) conquer their malaise by marshalling their own powers of self-determination (Moloney, 2013; Newnes, 2014; Smail, 2005). As far as Gray is concerned, it is not true that he altogether lacks benevolence. He is sometimes moved by the torments of his narrators, as they confront the abyss of oblivion and meaninglessness that underlies everything. Still, there is a strong misanthropic streak in his gleeful anticipation of the extinction of the human race. As befits the work of clinicians, the SMP outlook is more compassionate. It finds a way to redeem personal suffering as an important message about the toxic world that we have created, and perhaps about how it might need to change, if it is to be less spiritually mutilating.

Gray of course takes a conservative, Hobbesian view of humans, as misguided or inherently selfish and destructive, especially en masse. He looks to established cultural institutions and traditions, including many religious ones, as defensive bulwarks. For a left-leaning philosophy, SMP is unusual in holding a position that is somewhere in between this dark reading and a form of utopian hopefulness. On the one hand, it acknowledges that we are not fully perfectible. We are overshadowed by our own past, both as individuals and as participants in the many social and cultural institutions that are either openly coercive or that, more commonly, exist to disguise control as care. Moreover, life is frustratingly wasteful and contingent. We seldom attain our aims as we had hoped, and none of us can fully explain the reasons for our conduct. Despite our best intentions, we are likely to pass on our acquired emotional deformities to future generations, and perhaps inflict some new ones into the bargain (Smail, 1987, 1993).

On the other hand, the SMP analysis of the body–mind as an entity that is at once biological, material and, above all, social allows some scope for indicating what a better world than the present one might look like, and perhaps even how to get there.

If science can never provide a list of values and aims – if it cannot produce an 'ought' from an 'is' – then careful attention to our embodied experience can at least guide us in respect to what kinds of social arrangements are more likely to be harmful and best eschewed, if we want to keep our allotment of emotional pain and ennui to the unavoidable minimum. Exploitation, impoverishment, rejection and exclusion, boredom and meaninglessness, hierarchies of abusive power – these are the evils that social and epidemiological research, not to mention clinical experience, finds at the bottom of so much of personal and social distress (Sayers, 2015; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2013).

Humans are quintessentially communicative and meaning-making creatures. Given the opportunity, they find lasting satisfaction, not in the pursuit of happiness as defined by pleasurable stimulation or excitement, but in acts of creativity and in working together peaceably for a common purpose. While the private pleasures of home and hearth are an important (and for many essential) foundation of well-being, we are at our most fulfilled when able to use our bodies instrumentally to act into the public world, for communal rather than narrowly selfish purposes (Archer, 2000; Smail, 1987). If this view is correct, then it is not hard to see why so much of our current social organization – dependent upon the commercialized stoking of desire, competition and mistrust – is psychologically corrosive, and why depressive realists might be wrong, up to a point, in their resolutely glum reading of the human condition (Smail, 1987, 2005).

SMP sides with those modern thinkers, such as Rousseau and Kant, who did not see ethical and moral progress as linear and inevitable, but who nevertheless argued that it was worthwhile attempting to make things better. They saw the Enlightenment not as a fundamentalist movement, a new version of Christianity with humankind replacing God, but as a sustained capacity for questioning received assumptions and ideas on the basis of reason, experience and of public dialogue and debate (Malik, 2014; Todorov, 2009). Largely ignored or downplayed by Gray, this outlook – as measured as it is constructive – remains at the heart of the SMP project.

On the road to somewhere?

Though it finds a ready ear in our troubled times, Gray's scepticism about the scope for social and cultural progress is not new. The eighteenth century had its doubters: in practice, according to the philosopher Susan Neiman, because of the Terror of the French Revolution; and in theory, via Kant's influential argument that progress in ethics and morals was no more than an ideal. Nineteenth-century optimists suppressed these darker questions, but they erupted again in the mortal conflict between capitalism and labour, the civil war in America, the Paris Commune and in the pogroms in Russia (Neiman, 2002). The ongoing catastrophes of the twentieth century, including the horrors of World Wars I and II, continued to fuel these doubts for many, just as others found hope in the post-war settlement and the economic 'golden age' that followed (Hobsbawm, 1994).

We therefore have to look further than the collapse of the Soviet Union and the misdeeds of Pol Pot to account for why depressive realism finds such a ready audience

today. Further reasons can be found in the mood of pessimism within Western culture that came with the oil shock of the 1970s, and with the succeeding banking crises that have revealed the unwillingness of the political class to act in the interests of ordinary citizens (Lanchester, 2010). The widespread failure of intellectuals to meet their obligations to speak truth to power in the public interest may also have some bearing upon a loss of belief in their programmes for a better world (Furedi, 2004; Robertson, 2001). We inhabit what the late Tony Judt called 'an age of fear'. Unease is once again a major feature in the political landscape of the Western democracies. Anxiety spawned by terrorism and, more stealthily, by the overwhelming pace of change, by loss of control over the routines and rituals of daily life, by fear of joblessness and by dread of losing out to others in the fight for a share of an economic pie that is being sliced with less and less concern for justice. Above all, Judt argues, there is the troubling sense that those in authority have themselves lost control, to powers past their reach (Judt, 2010).

In circumstances like these, courage and even faith are required. Not in their religious guise, but as a form of acceptance required if we are ever to attempt anything of significance in the public realm: acceptance that we do not have verbal access to some of the reasons for our conduct, which may be expressive of possibilities that we cannot see. 'Faith is not a substitute for technical certainty […] but rather a necessary attitude or stance without which life cannot be lived except as private indulgence.' This is a form of trust which 'does not have to be faith in anything more than possibilities one cannot see' (Smail, 1987, p. 122). Given the slow evolution of the social world, it might take many generations before compelling reasons for our existence, should there be any, can be discovered or invented (Smail, 1987).

None of this is to imply that Gray's work is without value. Like David Smail, he is among that select group of contemporary writers who have brought the problem of evil – its nature, its provenance and the challenge that it presents to our sense of meaning and purpose – back into the centre of philosophical thought, where it always should have belonged (see Neiman, 2002). His panoramic tapestries should be required reading for those who believe that everyone is ultimately redeemable, or that all of the world's problems can be solved by a mixture of therapy and good will.

In the end, however, Gray's writings lack theoretical depth and coherence. They amount to an *I ching* of tragedy and farce, rather than a guidebook to any destination worth visiting. By comparison, social-materialist psychology, in its focus upon the embodied subject, points not towards some false utopia but to the possibility of a more bearable world – the precise details of which need not be specified in advance, even though the broad aims are plain enough: an effort to guard the natural environment, to increase social and economic equality within and between nations, to protect and reclaim a public space that has all but disappeared into the private and corporate dominions, and a concerted attempt to promote the rights of the weak and to restrain the strong. These are among the milestones upon a road to nowhere that is perhaps impossibly steep, and whose future twists and whose final terminus we will never see. But if we want to live decently and in hope of a more humane future, it is the only road we can afford to take.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes on contributors






The Midlands Psychology Group (http://www.midpsy.org) is a voluntary association of clinical, counselling and academic psychologists who have dedicated themselves to questioning the assumptions and politics of mainstream psychology – especially in its therapeutic and applied aspects. The membership of the group is: John Cromby, Bob Diamond, Paul Kelly, Paul Moloney, Penny Priest and Jan Soffe-Caswell.

References

Archer, M. (2000). *Being human: The problem of agency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bhaskar, R. (1998). *The possibility of naturalism: A philosophical critique of the contemporary human sciences* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.

Clark, T., & Heath, A. (2014). *Hard times: The divisive soul of the economic slump*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Epstein, W. (2006). *The civil divine. Psychotherapy as religion in America*. Reno: University of Nevada Press.

Epstein, W. (2013). *Empowerment as ceremony*. New Brunswick: Transaction.

Furedi, F. (2004). *Where have all the intellectuals gone?* London: Continuum.

Ghaemi, S. N. (2007). Feeling and time: The phenomenology of mood disorders, depressive realism, and existential psychotherapy. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 33, 122–130.

Gray, J. (2002). *Straw dogs: Reflections on humans and other animals*. London: Granta.

Gray, J. (2007). *Black mass: Apocalyptic religion and the death of utopia*. London: Penguin.

Gray, J. (2011). *The immortalization commission: The strange quest to beat death*. London: Allen Lane.

Gray, J. (2013). *The silence of animals: On progress and other modern myths*. London: Penguin.

Gray, J. (2015). *The soul of the marionette: A short enquiry into human freedom*. London: Penguin.

Grayling, A. C. (2007). *Towards the light: The story of the struggles for liberty and rights that made the modern West*. London: Bloomsbury.

Hobsbawm, E. (1994). *Age of extremes: The short 20th century*. London: Widenfield and Nicolson.

Howard, A. (2000). *Philosophy for counselling and psychotherapy*. London: MacMillan.

Judt, T. (2010). *Ill fares the land: A treatise on our present discontents*. London: Allen Lane.
Lanchester, J. (2010). *Whoops! Why everyone owes everyone and no one can pay*. London: Penguin.
Malik, K. (2014). *The quest for a moral compass: A global history of ethics*. London: Atlantic Books.
Midlands Psychology Group. (2012). Manifesto for a social-materialist psychology of distress. *Journal of Critical Psychology, Counselling and Psychotherapy*, *12*, 93–107.
Moloney, P. (2013). *The therapy industry: The irresistible rise of the talking cure, and why it doesn't work*. London: Pluto.
Neiman, S. (2002). *Evil in modern thought: An alternative history of philosophy*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
Newnes, C. (2014). *Clinical psychology: A critical examination*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
Postle, D. (2003). Gray's anatomy. Retrieved from http://www.thenation.com/article/grays-anatomy#
Robertson, A. F. (2001). *Greed: Gut feelings, growth, and history*. London: Polity.
Rose, H., & Rose, S. (2012). *Genes, cells and brains. The Promethean promises of the new biology*. London and New York: Verso.
Sayers, A. (2015). *Why we can't afford the rich*. London: Policy Press.
Smail, D. (1987). *Taking care: An alternative to therapy*. London: Dent.
Smail, D. (1993). *The origins of unhappiness: Towards a new understanding of psychological distress*. London: Constable.
Smail, D. (2005). *Power, interest and psychology: Elements of a social materialist understanding of distress*. Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books.
Todorov, T. (2009). *In defence of the Enlightenment*. London: Atlantic Books.
Tyrell, T. (2013). *On Gaia. A critical investigation of the relationship between life and earth*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
Van Deurzen, E. (1998). *Paradox and passion in psychotherapy: An existential approach to therapy and counselling*. London: John Wiley.
Wilkinson, R., & Pickett, K. (2013). *The spirit level* (2nd ed.). London: Penguin.