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.

Stuart Morgan-Ayrs

http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03060497.2016.1167328

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.

John Foot here asks the reader to follow the story of values, dreams, ideals that became behaviours and actions – the power of the synergic work aimed at pushing public opinion and government to see the persons, not their illnesses.

The Italian government enacted Law 180 relating to 'TSO' – *Accertamenti e trattamenti sanitari volontari e obbligatori*; this law would be a way to modernize the psychiatric care clinical setting, establishing human relationships between staff and society, fully recognizing the patients' rights and their need for a good quality of life, in well-kept territorial facilities. People with mental disorders would be assisted in decentralized services or, in severe cases, in special units included in civil hospitals, with a maximum of 15 beds.

Franco Basaglia was a Venetian psychiatrist with great commitment to human beings rather than their sickness; he believed in care and protection, in the relationship between doctor and patient: an *existential* relationship in the radical sense of the term. He refused an academic career because his ideas were considered too innovative and revolutionary, unfit for the world of bureaucratic procedures.

He arrived in Gorizia in 1961 to manage its psychiatric hospital; everyone considered him an esteemed intellectual. The impact of the psychiatric hospital was shocking: a real concentration camp where patients entered as persons and were transformed into objects. He simply could not accept it. People affected by Down's syndrome, epileptics, alcoholics, former fascists and former partisans were all considered mad. Straitjackets and electroshock treatments were just two of the devices used for the so-called 'care' of patients, left alone in their vomit and excrement. That was not therapy, treatment or attending to the needs of the patient. There was no relationship between patients and staff, no one took responsibility for the well-being of 'the guests'. Basaglia knew perfectly well that no one facing such inhuman conditions of life could respond in any way to any type of stress. He decided to put the illness in parentheses, something for which he was criticized. He wanted to restore dignity to these people, reminding them that they were first of all persons, not patients, by returning them to the importance of sociality, of work. He was not against diagnosis per se, but against its management and treatment in the asylums.

John Foot underlines that the psychiatrist was never alone: a staff of professionals decided to follow him and work together in order to reset and rebalance the idea of mental care, starting with Franca Ongaro, Basaglia's wife. After long years of hard work, public opinion began to recognize Basaglia's work; then tragedy struck. A patient on daily leave went home and killed his wife. The press violently disapproved of Basaglia's 'anti-psychiatry'. This case illustrated the main problem of the doctor's battle with Italian public opinion: responsibility. As long as death and suffering were hidden behind the asylum's walls, people could pretend to ignore it. John Foot describes the struggle behind Basaglia's decision to move to Trieste, the divisions within the professional team, the personal crisis and the willingness to start something completely different from Gorizia. His 1968 book *L'istituzione negata* (*The Denial of the Institution*) became the symbol of his battle against intellectual hypocrisy and the search for meaning, inspiring the movement for the reform of psychiatric hospitals. Perugia, Arezzo, Reggio and Emilia were gradually starting to create territorial structures for mental illness, outside of hospitals, in the community. The basis of internment in mental hospitals born in 1904 was dug out by the Mariotti Law in 1968: forced hospitalization was finally eliminated. In January 1977, Franco Basaglia announced the closure of Trieste's mental hospital.

The following year, in a tense atmosphere, Law 180 was passed. Patients would be recognized as people with human rights. The most important issue of this law was the prohibition on building new asylums.

This book is a must read. It reverses the populist and demagogic point of view, highlighting the extent of manipulation in Italian politics. The mighty struggle Basaglia and his team were engaged in is described vividly, brought to light and duly honoured. The author does not hide his admiration for Italian society, and at the same time feels a duty to contextualize it in his brilliant and revolutionary way, to protect it from those who, today, mistakenly criticize Basaglia, identifying his work with Italian public health policies, with particular reference to psychiatry, in a situation where the weight of the patient's management has inevitably fallen back on the patient's family. Anti-psychiatry is still viable: today it means attention and information; it means commitment and dedication in guiding the patient through the course of treatment, giving meaning to human relationships, rejecting academic explanations and hierarchies. Anti-psychiatry means allowing the practise of contact between individuals, fair conditions and fair relations. There is much we owe to this Venetian psychiatrist, to his staff and their sheer vigour. They are a true inspiration for every health professional.

Paola Valentini

http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03060497.2016.1192346

Not another theory

The wisdom of not-knowing. Essays on psychotherapy, Buddhism and life experience, edited by Bob Chisholm and Jeff Harrison, Axminster, Devon, Triarchy Press, 2016, 181 pp., £12.50 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-909470-91-0

Reviewed by Cristalle Hayes, existential psychotherapist

The Wisdom of Not-Knowing is a collection of 13 essays written by practising psychotherapists and Buddhists. The book is a refreshing balance of personal, philosophical and theoretical explorations of not-knowing, providing an insightful and stimulating read. The essays are relevant to anyone who grapples with the experience of not-knowing, whether therapists or practising Buddhists. Discussions and explorations of theory and philosophy are accessible and add insight to existing writing around therapy and Buddhism. The personal reflections on either client work or life experience bring the theory and philosophy to life, adding a much-needed sense of humility to psychotherapeutic discourse. The personal accounts make the book more interesting, and it is often a delight to read how others experience this very human stance of not-knowing. The book does justice to the complexity of human experience as well as to the complexity of the concept of not-knowing.