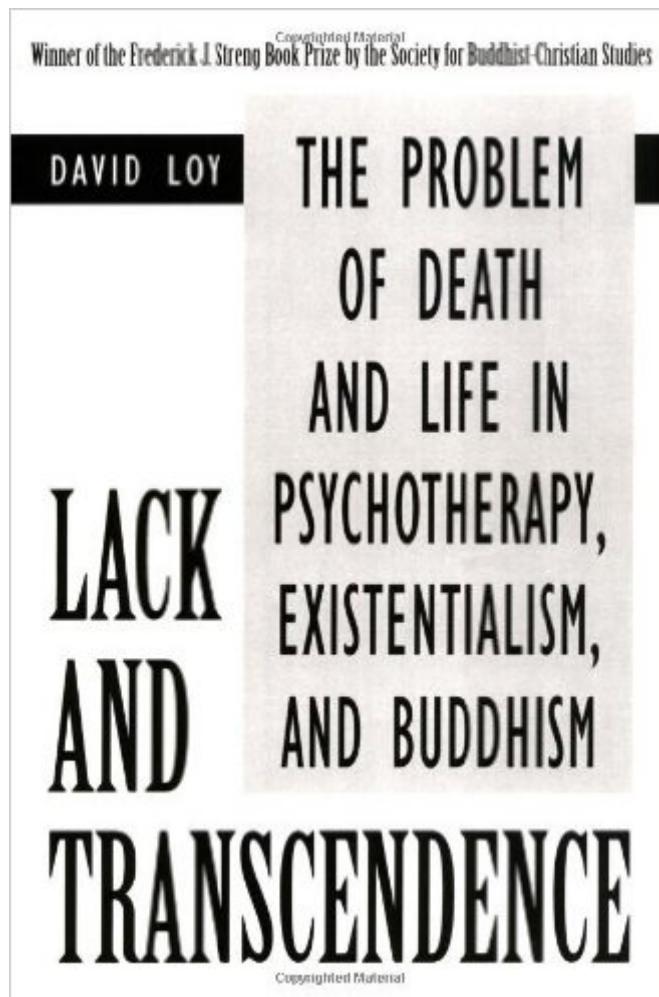


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Lack And Transcendence: The Problem Of Death And Life In Psychotherapy, Existentialism, And Buddhism



Synopsis

Whatever the differences in their methods and goals, psychotherapy, existentialism, and Buddhism are concerned with the same fundamental issues of life and death and death-in-life. In this unique work, David Loy brings all three traditions together for the first time in a synthesis receptive to the insights of each, thereby casting fresh light on familiar problems. Dr. Loy's work grew out of the cross-fertilization of two basic ideas: the psychotherapeutic concept of repression and the Buddhist doctrine of nonself. Buddhism implies that our primal repression is not fear of death but the quite valid suspicion that "I" am not real. This shift from libido-instinct to the way we understand our situation opens up new perspectives and possibilities which this book explores. Written in a clear, jargon-free style that does not assume prior familiarity with the topics discussed, this insightful book will appeal to a variety of readers including psychotherapists, psychoanalysts, psychologists, scholars of religion—particularly of Buddhism—Continental philosophers, and literary and culture critics.

Book Information

Paperback: 218 pages

Publisher: Prometheus Books/Humanity Books (November 1, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9781573927208

ISBN-13: 978-1573927208

ASIN: 1573927201

Product Dimensions: 8.2 x 0.7 x 5.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (13 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #496,973 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #22 in Books > Medical Books > Psychology > Movements > Existential #202 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Movements > Existentialism #1499 in Books > Medical Books > Psychology > Psychotherapy, TA & NLP

Customer Reviews

David Loy, scholar-comparative philosopher-Zen Buddhist, does a wonderful job of giving both an overview of the perennial philosophy/quest, and the most modern understanding of it; in a nutshell, the paradox of 'lack' (the fact of our groundlessness) and 'transcendence' (the awareness of all this). This is a tour de force synthesis of Existentialism, Psychoanalysis and Buddhism, a dense and

rich and sometimes difficult, but rewarding study. (In this regard it is the opposite of, yet complimented by, his more recent, accessible, poetic, down to earth, yet reaching for the stars book, *The World Is Made of Stories*.) Some quotes for a taste of what you have to look forward to: "If transference is distortion of encounter, what transferences are more powerful than hatred and resentment? Negativity is the best example of a karmic projection that rebounds to haunt us. It is our usual way of dealing with what Jung so aptly called 'the shadow', those aspects of ourselves that we cannot cope with because they threaten the particular identifications by which we try to overcome our sense of 'lack'. If that sense-of-lack manifests in consciousness as an obsession with certain symbols, the shadow is a constellation of those symbols that represent failure to us, which we cannot accept or integrate." (pg 14) (Ortega's and Becker's assumption is) "Once we realize that the human condition is chaotic and terrifying, we must cling to whatever we can in order to make sense of it. But what if, instead of finding oneself in such a fashion, one were truly to lose oneself - that is, let go, sink, drown? What might happen then? R.D Laing opined that the mystic swims in the same sea the psychotic drowns in. Are there different ways to die, with different consequences? Can one die to oneself?

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