



# The Topic of Cancer

*Jonathan Burke*

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# The Topic of Cancer

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## **The Topic of Cancer** Jonathan Burke

This book focuses on our emotional responses to cancer by offering a range of perspectives: psychoanalytic, medical, spiritual and religious, as well as literary. Once suppressed, akin to a taboo, the topic of cancer is now very much in the public consciousness. The prevalence of the disease and well-publicised medical advances in its treatment demand it. *Topic of Cancer* begins with Freud's cancer, widely known of but rarely understood in its historic and analytic context. Psychotherapeutic reflections are then offered on our understanding of the adult and adolescent with cancer, and the challenges of sustaining a thoughtful presence in the face of the trauma experienced when a child is diagnosed with cancer, and during treatment. The dilemmas and challenges faced by today's psychotherapist with cancer are explored next and, for the first time in cancer literature, an account of the emotional demands on nurses involved in sensitive, intimate care. With an increasing number of people living longer with cancer, "survivorship" and palliative care are the focus of the chapters that follow. As cancer is not the domain of any one discipline, *Topic of Cancer* looks next at the nature of religious and spiritual experience in addressing the psychological needs of people with cancer, and then considers how a poet might address painful experience, such as having to confront the possibility of approaching death. Lastly the cancer memoir is explored as an increasingly contemporary means of coming to terms with the "Emperor of all maladies".

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