BOOK REVIEWS

FROGS INTO PRINCES: Neuro linguistic programming, by Richard Bandler & John Grinder (edited by John O. Stevens), Real People Press 1979. Distributed by Compendium Bookshop, Camden Town.

This book is the rendering, by John Stevens, of a typical 3-day workshop led by Bandler and Grinder, based on tape recordings of several workshops. It has captured a lot of the immediacy of the live event. It has the enthusiastic commendation of Daniel Goleman, Sam Keen, Barry Stevens and Richard Price. "NLP wears seven-league boots, and takes 'therapy' or 'personal growth' far, **far** beyond any previous notions."

That last quote was from Barry Stevens, and changes my opinion of her. Before, I suppose I idealised her, and thought of her as more or less a complete human being, if ever there was one. Now I'm not so sure. I remember how she was always attending to some great man, and boosting him.

I have been put into more conflicting feelings about this book than by anything since James Hillman's **The dream and the underworld** - but with NLP my conflict is much more painful and difficult. Bandler & Grinder say so many good things, and are so obviously expert, and have such an infectious enthusiasm, that one can't help being impressed

by them. But basically they remind me most of all of the tailors who sold the invisible suit to the Emperor. I'm not saying that NLP doesn't really work, I'm just saying that these two come across like conmen to me. There's a kind of Houdini quality about them. As one of them says - "I have a rule which says I have to succeed". I just don't want to mix with that kind of person.

And yet the fact does seem to be that they have made really important discoveries about how to manipulate the unconscious mind, if that's what you want to do. In this book are anecdotes and actual demonstrations of getting rid of a long-standing phobia in just a few minutes - and John Stevens testifies that the technique they use can be passed on, it is not just peculiar to these two men.

The technique used has a lot to do with hypnotism - it is all based on very acute observation of what changes take place in the client's body, and using changes in one's own body to gain control over that. It also has a lot to do with subpersonalities - there is a curious mixture of respect for the subpersonalities of a client and a cavalier way of inventing new subpersonalities on the edge of the moment. But it is not really hypnosis, and certainly not psychosynthesis.

They are very explicit about what they do. For example, to cure a rigid pattern of behaviour which the person wants to get rid of, they use a technique called reframing. Here is how it goes:

1. Identification of the pattern to be changed.

2. Establishing communication with the subpersonality in charge of the pattern.

3. Distinguishing between the pattern itself and the motive of the subpersonality in producing it.

4. Creating new, more flexible ways of satisfying that motive and that subpersonality.

5. Checking that the subpersonality is willing to take responsibility for generating the new alternative ways of satisfying itself.

6. Checking that there is no other subpersonality which couldn't cope with such a new set-up. (If there is, they go back to stage 2 and re-cycle.)

Now this all seems very logical and very sound, and certainly fits with my own model of the unconscious and how it works. And because they are so clear about what they are doing, they can go through this whole process in about half-an-hour with someone, in many cases. They even do this without knowing, or needing to know, what the pattern actually is.

I can't rid myself of the feeling that they are secretly identifying with the Magician in the Tarot pack, who exhibits a very masculine type of mastery. Their hero, very obviously, is Milton Erickson, a hypnotherapist, and the stories they tell about him are highly suspect in this way.

> Milton Erickson did what I think was one of the shortest cures that I've ever heard about (with) a seventeen-year-old adolescent . . . They brought him in and there was this man with two canes standing there behind the table, and an audience in the room. They walked up in front of the table. Milton said "Why have you brought this boy here?" And the psychologist explained the situation, gave the case history as best he could. Milton looked at the psychologist and said "Go sit down". Then he looked at the young boy and said "How surprised will you be when all your behaviour changes completely next week?" The boy looked at him and said "I'll be **very** surprised!" And Milton said "Get out. Take these people away".

And lo and behold, the next week the boy's behaviour did change - "from top to bottom and from bottom to top". Now the fact that they quote this with so much approval indicates to me that they just love this "magical" way of doing therapy. And this is rather confirmed by the fact that one of their earlier books was called **The structure of magic**, and had on the cover a man in a pointy hat, and a robe covered in stars. Even the title of the present book, of course, is a reference to old legends of magical powers. In therapy, this leads to what I have called "expertism" - the desire to be special and looked up to with awe.

At first their obvious desire to avoid mystification tends to militate against such an analysis. How can we accuse them of expertism when they are so explicit about what they do, and so anxious to explain and teach it to others? I don't know. All I know is that, in their presence, I feel more as if I am in the presence of a conjuror who shows you how to do a trick (only of course he doesn't) or a craftsman who says you can make plaited loaves just like him (only of course you can't).

Here they are describing themselves in action:

> One woman had been a homosexual for years, and had fallen in love with a man. She was really stuck in this dilemma. A very strong part of her now wanted to become heterosexual. There was another part of her that was afraid it was going to have to die. She was going through the visual squash (a technique for pushing two subpersonalities into one) with these two parts. She was trying to pull her hands together, and she was wailing "I can't do it! I can't do it! I can't do it like that!" Richard and I were standing on either side of her. We looked at each other and then we each grabbed one hand and pushed them suddenly together. The changes that occurred in that woman were fantastic!

What I really object to most, I think, is that at no point in this book do the authors express any real interest in any person. The interest is reserved completely for the techniques and what they can do with them as therapists. They express a great deal of love and care for the techniques, forging and revising and tinkering and tuning them up to a great peak of perfection; but no love or care for the people they are meeting.

You may ask the question - "Would you rather lose your phobia with Bandler & Grinder, or keep it with some less effective therapist who is warm and caring?" I suppose that is the crunch question. And I suppose the answer is obvious, just as it would be obvious if you said - "Would you rather have a taxi-driver who knows the way and is bad-tempered and surly, or one who is a great conversationalist but easily gets lost?" In both cases it depends on how desperate you are.

This is a fascinating book, and I think anyone interested in therapy, counselling or personal growth just must read it. But I can't help feeling dubious about it all.

John Rowan

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY by Richard Nelson-Jones. Holt, Rinehart & Winston 1982 pp.533 pb £7.50

Many people don't realise that there is a lot more to counselling than there is to psychotherapy. Counselling includes a whole host of activities which psychotherapists don't get into.

Nelson-Jones (who is British and works at the University of Aston in Birmingham) starts off with a discussion of four approaches to counselling: the Humanistic, the Psychoanalytic, the Behaviourist and the Occupational. Already it is clear that a psychotherapist could not need or want to include the whole two-chapter discussion of occupational choice and development theory.

His second section is on Practice, and includes an interesting discussion of goals and stages in counselling ("in general,counsellors and their clients should focus on goals relating to experiencing, thinking and acting, in that order"), a good description of the fundamental counselling relationship ("Many clients, especially after the nurturing stages of counselling, need more active interventions by counsellors to help them to still higher levels of self-realizing. Such interventions have a more specific rather than a general focus".); and a number of chapters on specific areas such as psychiatric considerations, thinking difficulties, marital and sexual problems, academic hangups amongst students, occupational concerns (two chapters) and so on. There is a poor chapter on groups and a quite good chapter on humanistic education.

Two appendices deal with the provision of counselling psychology services in Britain and the development of professional associations in Britain, America, Australia and Canada.

This is a thorough academic work, replete with references (over 500 books and papers in the bibliography) and a definition which reads as follows:

> Counselling psychology is an applied area of psychology which has the objective of helping people to live more effective and fulfilled lives. Its clientele tend to be not very seriously disturbed people in non-medical settings. Its concerns are those of the whole person in all areas of human psychological functioning, such as feeling and thinking, personal, marital and sexual relations, and work and recreational activity. Its methods include counselling relationships and activities, psychological education and consultancy, and self-help. People using the methods of counselling psychology include professional psychologists, paid and voluntary counsellors, and social workers. The settings for provision of counselling psychology services include education, medicine, industry and numerous community and voluntary agencies. Counselling psychology is distinguished from psychiatry, clinical psychology and educational psychology mainly by its emphasis on well-being and self-actualizing rather than on sickness, severe disturbance and maladjustment.

It can be seen that this is quite sympathetic to humanistic psychology, and a good deal of space is given to the humanistic approaches. It seems a pity that Nelson-Jones only includes under this heading Rogerian counselling, reality therapy, RET and TA. There are very brief mentions of psychodrama, gestalt and integrity groups in the chapter on group counselling only.

Funnily enough, he does the best justice to humanistic psychology under the heading of "Psychological Education", where many examples are given of work actually being done in Britain along humanistic lines.

But in the main body of the text, the author is terribly limited by his academic stance, which leads him to say only things which are respectable in the eyes of the very conservative British Psychological Society. There is no breath of a hint of a suggestion anywhere, for example, in all these pages that there might be a spiritual dimension to counselling. The words "transpersonal" or "psychosynthesis" do not occur in the index, and even the work of Jung is not referred to at all. In one place it almost seems perverse, where he gives a model of personal growth (p.480) which includes sections headed "Sensing", "Feeling", "Thinking" and - at last, I thought, he's going to mention "Intuiting", the fourth of Jung's functions, but no - "Doing" was the fourth goal mentioned! "Intuiting" is another word which is not in the index. This seems quite wilfully obtuse.

The book is interesting as a portent, because it represents what may well become the counselling orthodoxy of the future. The author has set up a "Counselling Psychology Section" in the BPS, and further moves may follow to make this book the model for the way counselling is taught in British universities and polytechnics. Nearly all of it is relentlessly aimed at adjustment on the mental-ego level, in spite of a certain amount of lip-service to self-actualization and some real appreciation of the work of Carl Rogers.

It is fascinating to see how, in his rather elaborate instructions for relaxation of the whole body, he starts off bravely with the right hand, and ends up with the left foot - but misses out the back, the buttocks, the genitals and the whole pelvic area! To miss out some of the prime areas in which, as Reichians well know, tension can be held, seems extraordinary. But then, Reich is another word which does not appear in the index.

This is not a bad book. There is enough recognition of development goals and self-realization to make it usable by a genuinely humanistic

counsellor. There is a certain sense of the social context which comes through occasionally, in such statements as - "At the institutional and societal levels, counselling goals may provide a basis for social and political change", (p.198). But there is no mention of co-counselling, which has said more than most about this aspect of the matter. Jackins and Heron are two more names not to be found in the index.

At the end of each chapter there are questions and exercises which indicate that this is intended to be used as a textbook on college courses. This is rather worrying. I just hope that we are not seeing here a new and very restrictive orthodoxy coming into being - an orthodoxy which denies a great deal of what humanistic psychology stands for, and leaves out even more.

James Crippledini

THE MENTAL HEALTH YEAR BOOK 1981-82. Mind publications, London

As a newcomer to this field I found this publication (as yet the most recent edition) to be of enormous value. It really did map out the 'lie of the land' as it were.

It is divided into two sections, Part 1 logically sets out to provide a directory of information. In this section is listed government departments, handicap and mental illness hospitals, local authority mental health resources, national and international organisations dealing with diverse aspects of mental health, research and training bodies and legislation about mental health.

To help the reader digest this wealth of information, the second section contains a selection of shortish essays, complete with bibliographies on the development of services for both the mentally ill and handicapped people. The development of voluntary agencies in the mental health field and a look at legislation.

In short this book is a real 'goody' and with this one could - with luck - find one's way through this very problematic, complicated and controversial field.

Susi Wilton

OUTSIDE IN . . . INSIDE OUT by Luise Eichenbaum & Susie Orbach. Penguin 1982. pp.133 £1.95

This book is subtitled **Women's psychology: A psychoanalytic approach,** and consists of material originally prepared for an in-service training programme for mental-health professionals, organized on behalf of the Equal Opportunities Commission. It presents an Object-relations approach to ego development and psychotherapy, based on the work still being done at the Women's Therapy Centre in London.

It starts off, after some introductory material, with the process of development in infancy, following very much the ideas of Fairbairn, Guntrip and Winnicott. But the authors point out that they do diverge from these people in quite important ways:

> For we acknowledge that mother is not an object, mother is a person, a social and psychological being. What becomes internalized from this perspective then is not the object, but the different aspects of mother. What the object relations theorists have failed to take into account is the psychology of the mother and the effect of the social position of women on the mother's psychology.

So they lay a lot of emphasis on the mother-daughter relationship, and have a lot of very important things to say on this subject. One of the main points they make is that women have inside themselves a needy little girl, based on their unsatisfying infancy, and which they find it difficult to come to terms with. So when the daughter comes on the scene -

> Mother unconsciously acts towards her infant daughter in the same way as she acts internally to the little girl part of herself. The little daughter becomes an external representation of that part of herself which she has come to dislike and deny.

This results in a whole chain of events, all linked together in a very logical and self-reinforcing manner. But another element in the whole process is the set of messages coming from the mother about men:

FLOWERS OF EMPTINESS by Sally Belfrage. Womens Press 240 pp. £3.95

Sally joined two friends on a pilgrimage to Bhagwan Shri Rajneesh in India. She was attracted by the religious zeal and excitement, had three moving audiences with the Guru, became a *sannyassin* but

retained her own independence and integrity and returned to England, picked up her life again and wrote this book about her experience. Totally involved, and yet aware of discrepancies and contradictions in the teaching, she was at all times open to experience - on the uncomfortable dusty trains, surviving the cultural shock of Indian administrative incompetence and teeming misery of the population and a "gin and tonic" session with a rich Parsee family in Bangalore.

Her residual feeling about Bhagwan was to be open to the charisma and the magic while voicing some criticism of the entourage and the organization. She also raised a forgiving eyebrow at Bhagwan's own "all or nothing" approach to disciples. She sent him a copy of the book. The comment that came back to her was "she escaped". But her feelings towards Bhagwan was one of gratitude, not fealty.

> *The sycophancy and paranoia in his followers, all the gimmicks of power that seduce initiates and secure their submission - group pressure, bullying, isolation, the Us versus Them outlook - seem to have influenced him as well. If he were more interested in the truth behind his words than in the sound of his voice proclaiming them, he could not say I had "escaped". It is disappointing, in fact, that the many sources he has culled and the effective synthesis he has made of them are submerged by a banal organization which counts heads over blessings. But if I am happy at home with my children, does wearing orange prove it? Yet I am happier since Poona, largely because of what I learned through Bhagwan".*

Vivian Milroy

THE WAY OF SPLENDOR by Edward Hoffman. Shambhala Publications. 1982. £5.95 247 pp.

This book sub-titled 'Jewish Mysticism and Modern Psychology' is distributed by Routledge & Keagan Paul. It is extremely academic and in the early chapters very devoted to jewish readers. I can understand, with their history of persecution, it must be hard to forget but their race has produced so very much that is brilliant it does grate a little.

The book is primarily concerned with the Kabbalah and how many of its precepts are common to the ancient spiritual teachings and to the most recent views on holistic healing and/or therapy. The links are convincing but there is very little of any practical value

for a would be disciple. I do not intend to quote from the book but certain key ideas do deserve endless repetition.

1) There is nothing new under the sun. (How often I have laboured at some concept only to find it had been there all the time if I had understood).

2) Everything is interdependent and whole. All our theories and equations are only ways to help us understand. Even Einstein agreed.

3) Many of the greatest spiritual leaders only taught orally. It was their disciples who wrote the teachings. It was considered that certain ideas are dangerous to the initiate, who has not a disciplined mind.

4) Faith undirected can follow false teachings.

5) Many paths can lead to transcendance; symbolism, music, dance, breathing, meditation and nature: to name but a few.

Hoffman is a humanistic psychologist and I do not think there is much to offend in this work but it is rather heavy going and there is little on the Kabbalah to help anyone to grasp its teachings.

Mark Matthews