# BOOK REVIEWS

**TRANSFORMATIONS OF CONSCIOUSNESS - Conventional and Contemplative Perspectives on Development** by Ken Wilber, Jack Engler and Daniel P. Brown. New Science Library, 1986, $14.95 Reviewed by Steven Hendlin.

This volume of theoretically-sophisticated articles argues in favor of a universal and cross-cultural spectrum of human development, examining in depth both conventional and contemplative perspectives. The authors relate stages of human development to corresponding levels of pathology and the (theoretically) appropriate therapeutic interventions. **Transformations** brings together the developmental-spectrum thinking of Ken Wilber with related contributions by Engler and, on the contemplative end of the spectrum, by Brown. A chapter on psychiatric complications of meditation by Epstein and Leiff and a chapter on Christian Mysticism by Chirban round out this volume.

All but two of the chapters have been previously published in the **Journal of Transpersonal Psychology.** The articles are technical and require some familiarity with both conventional psychological development and contemplative approaches to development.

In correlating each stage of psychological development to specific arrests, or pathologies, Wilber argues for the importance of relating specific stage-level pathologies to specific clinical interventions. My objections to Wilber's model will follow my comments on other authors' contributions.

The first chapter, by Engler, is a solid contribution focusing on the self as viewed by psychoanalytic object relations and Buddhism. This article clearly articulates the core issues, problems and confusions that borderline and narcissistic personality disordered persons experience in meditation. This chapter fits nicely with the thrust of Wilber's work.

Two chapters by Brown and Engler document the results of research with the Rorschach Ink Blots on intensive meditators, both Eastern adepts and Western students. This exhaustive and sophisticated experimental study validated the classical descriptions of psychological changes characteristic of each stage of meditative practice. For those familiar with the Rorschach blots this will be interesting reading. For those who aren't, the responses by meditation adepts will not make much sense.

Daniel Brown's chapter on stages of meditation from a cross-cultural perspective charts meditative stages from three traditions (Tibetan, Hindu and Buddhist). It confirms that stages of meditation are cross-cultural and universal, when analyzed at a sufficient depth.

The chapter by Chirban on Christian mysticism balances the primary focus on Asian perspectives. The chapter by Epstein and Leiff seems out of place before Wilber's spectrum of development and of pathology. This chapter might have been better placed after Wilber's chapters or omitted altogether, as its contents may be found in more detail scattered about in other chapters.

I want to focus on two objections to Wilber's line of thinking in his model of pathology and treatment. I was struck by the great variety of treatment modalities a clinician would have to be proficient in to address the "correct" therapeutic needs of a patient at a given stage of pathology (this, of course, after correctly diagnosing the patient's difficulties across the spectrum of pre-personal and personal development). The transpersonal pathologies are, realistically, beyond the province of most clinicians, and even those few who specialize in "spiritual emergence" work will be addressing issues related to psychic disorders. Most therapists will view "subtle" and "causal" level disorders as interesting theory that they do not encounter in actual practice.

My general point relates to the detail and complexity of the levels of pathology and related treatment modalities. Wilber's model is elegant in theory but, for most clinicians, not practical or reality-based. Most clinicians, with study, training and continual effort, can master only a fraction of the modalities Wilber proposes as "correct" for various disorders. I do not argue that Wilber's sophisticated correlating of pathology and treatment lacks heuristic value: we need to train more well-rounded clinicians who are generalists rather than specialists focused on one approach to one aspect of one school of thought (for example, Jungian-Senoi dreamwork).

My second, specific, objection to Wilber's model concerns what he includes within the "pre-personal" realm of developmental pathology. Wilber's "pre-personal" pathologies involve the stages "leading up to the emergence of a rational-individuated-personal selfhood and its differentiation from pre-personal structures, impulses and primary process thought". These stages include the psychotic, neurotic and borderline disorders. While I agree that psychotic and borderline disorders are pre-personal, I don't believe that neurotics operate **primarily** from the prerational mental structures of primary process thinking. And although Oedipal issues may be part of their psychodynamic picture, these people do not share the distorted thinking common to more severe borderline and narcissistic personalities.

My experience is that neurotic issues include and spill over into what Wilber calls "script pathology" and "identity" issues (which he connects to the next two higher-level categories of development). The representational mind. characteristic of the neurotic, is not the same as the phantasmic-libidinal mind of the borderline, but a conceptual egoic self. In the neurotic, conflict or repression within the self-structure (ego, for example, represses id) is more weighted toward the rational repressing side, whereas in the borderline and narcissistic personality there is too little self-structure to perform repression.

My objection is a technical but theoretically significant one that points to the need for making theories of development and related pathology consistent with actual clinical experience. Missing from these theoretical models are more clinical examples which would show the distinctions being offered between pathological structures. The meaning of "pre-personal" and "personal" need to be more clearly defined in practice-related terms.

This book will interest researchers, clinicians and scholars studying the spectrum of mental and spiritual development across cultures. It is good to see these quality contributions in one anthology.

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*A footnote by John Rowan*

*Hendlin says - "Most clinicians, with study, training and continual effort, can master only a fraction of the modalities Wilber proposes as 'correct' for various disorders". In my opinion this is the great challenge for psychotherapy in our time. We have somehow to train psychotherapists to cover the whole spectrum, or at least that portion of it which is most common and most often found. And the position is even more complex than Hendlin lets on, because Wilber has written to me in private correspondence to say that he really intended to include another fulcrum, which he labels as "f-0", which deals with prenatal traumas and conflicts. The only reason it did not get in was that he wanted to revise it just at the time when his wife Terry had a relapse in her illness, and he wanted to spend more time with her.*

*So what we have here is an enormous and quite inescapable challenge, which is simply for psychotherapists to match the complexity of their clients. Ultimately this is what has to be done, and this book shows at the very least what the basic shape of this problem looks like.*

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**HANDBOOK OF COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY** - Steven D. Brown & Robert W. Lent (eds). John Wiley & Sons, 1984. pp.982 £69.40

This is a huge compendium, which features 23 chapters by 45 authors. There are six main sections: Scientific and professional issues; Vocational and career work; Personal counselling; Prevention and community interventions; Training and supervision; and Special issues.

It is one of the most hideous and frightening books which I have ever seen. It is consistently dominated by the old paradigm of science and objectivism which reduced people to objects. It is full of external observations, external measurements, external assessments and nothing else. The chapter on research has never heard of new paradigm research in any shape or form: even action research is not mentioned.

Here are some of the words which are not in the index: Group work; Psychodrama; person-centred; client-centred; humanistic psychology; psychoanalysis. The chapter on peer counselling does not mention Harvey Jackins.

The word "psychodynamic" does actually come in, but is dismissed quickly in these terms: "The theory relies heavily on hypothetical constructs, resulting in a good deal of ambiguity and a noticeable lack of operational definitions. The paucity of critical research on the basic precepts of psychodynamic theory seriously undermines its validity as a model of behaviour change". This is almost a parody of plonking old-paradigm phraseology, and it betrays total unawareness of thirty years or more of critique of this sort of language.

One section is headed "Phenomenological approaches", and I naturally expected here to see some of the ideas of Laing, MacLeod, Jaspers, Merleau-Ponty and others in that tradition. But the section is actually about Carl Rogers, together with Carkhuff and his colleagues! This chapter was written by three authors, one of whom was the co-editor of the whole book. If they don't know the difference between phenomenology and the Rogerian approach, what hope is there for any appreciation of our work? It's rather like the thing about all Chinese looking alike - all these things are non-behaviourist, so they must be all alike really.

I shouldn't really accuse these people of being behaviourist, though their sympathies clearly lie with the cognitive-behavioural axis, because they are not really interested in theory at all. They are only interested in empirical research along positivist lines. The result is that hardly a page in this enormous book is readable or worth reading. It is quite possibly the most disappointing book I have ever come across.

**John Rowan**

**MENTAL HEALTH OR MENTAL ILLNESS:** Psychiatry for Practical Action, by William Glasser, 1960/84, Harper Paperback, 208 pp. £3.50

Reality Therapy was pioneered by William Glasser over a quarter of a century ago. So doubtless the publishers think that a grateful public may welcome the restatement of such a clear and pragmatic approach to personal problems after market saturation by subsequent theories of greater complexity and mystification.

The sub-title reflects the fact that it was Reality Therapy which social workers, and particularly probation officers, latched onto in the hope that it would help them rehabilitate delinquents in the good old days when we were allowed to use the phrase. Also, we have had a rising number of young criminals since then, although, to be fair to Glasser, he consistently points out how difficult it is to repair damaged egos and faulty identities. He expresses this in a particularly period way in the chapter on **Special Character Neuroses - Sexual Neuroses** when he diagnoses homosexuality as being amongst the most serious and incurable of these!

However, it would be a pity if AHP readers said: 'Read no more! ' for Glasser's Reality Therapy, to the initiated, is worth considering, and his book is a model, short and simply written basic text. He has four sections, the first of which is on **Normal Human Functioning,** and which introduces a basic diagram of the person within the inner circle of the ego and the outer circle of the world. His subsequent sections on abnormalities, psychiatric treatment and mental hygiene, feature variations of this diagram which clearly illustrate his main tenet that it is the mediatory role of the ego to the world in its function of coping with reality which is of prime concern. He was incidentally one of the first practitioners to stress that aggressiveness is an activity of the healthy ego, although deviants have to learn to express this acceptably. He develops this thesis in a straightforward way, distinguishing between neurosis and psychosis in classical tradition, and giving good descriptions of psychosomatic illnesses.

His preferred option of treatment is by psychotherapy although he finds a helpful place for ECT in treating depression because it 'acts as an ego-clearing mechanism . . . releasing the ego from immobilisation' and thus enabling personal growth to move forward. This relates to his belief that blocked anger is dangerous, and that those egos which are too weak to recognize and express it, benefit from the electrical purging.

The final section on mental hygiene is in some respects the most interesting because he considers that bad parenting is responsible for much ill-health, and he indicts 'the misguided group who promulgated progressive or permissive child raising', when the child wants a caring and controlling love. Add to this his wish to establish a community mental health agency to promote psychic well-being and we have another '1984' - or would we like it if it were run by the AHP?

**Jane Conway**

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**PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY COUNSELLING AND THERAPY: An integrative approach** by Richard Nelson-Jones. London: Harper & Row 1984.

This is a book for the practising counsellor or therapist, containing both theory and practical advice. It is written by someone who obviously has a great deal of academic knowledge and practical experience. It brings together humanistic, existential, cognitive and behavioural approaches and points up the common ground of agreement between them.

The focus of the book throughout is on responsibility, which of course is a very central concept for all of us. But when the author comes to discuss the opposite of this - states of avoiding responsibility, defending against responsibility and the like - he uses a piece of jargon which seems to me euphemistic and not quite real: he talks about responsibility skills deficits. Let us see how exactly he gets to this unlovely formulation. He says:

> Psychological skills are sequences of choices the presence or absence of which determines the degree to which individuals are in the process of being personally responsible. Psychological skills and self-conceptions are inextricably related. If an individual has an unrealistic set of self-conceptions, these both represent and are likely to lead to skills deficits. For example, an individual who has negotiated a self-conception of personal worthlessness is likely to have numerous skills deficits ... Whereas personal responsibility can fruitfully be viewed in terms of skills resources, the converse is not irresponsibility but skills deficits.

This seems to me to be kindly and well-meant, but it has a kind of professional absurdity which needs to be pointed out too. It is as if the person walking away from responsibility for their own choices simply needed to be taught a few skills, and as if nothing much would stand in the way of this. Nor is it enough to say - "Ah well, don't forget what I said about self-conceptions". A self-conception (self concept, self image, personal myth, script, persona or whatever we may call it) is a quite different model from the notion of skills, and just can't be wafted into the same box with a wave of the hand and a few choice words.

The notion of skills deficits implies that I recognise that I haven't got them and need to learn them. But the whole import of self-conceptions, in most cases (and certainly in the examples which Nelson-Jones gives), is that I don't see things in this way at all. I see the problems either as the dirty machinations of other people or as unchangeable facts about me and my history.

So what the author is really talking about is teaching the client to use a new way of thinking. This is of course the standard approach of cognitive therapy, and Nelson-Jones is really closer to the position of people like Beck, Ellis and Meichenbaum than to anyone else. The unconscious is not recognised in this book.

I found it quite stimulating in the early part, where the author is making some quite surprising and interesting connections between different approaches to counselling or therapy. But then we come to a series of no less than twenty fundamental propositions, each with its explanatory paragraphs or pages, which I found very stodgy and plonking. And later we have four chapters on the four R's: Responsiveness, Realism, Relatedness and Rewarding activity. These I also found very worthy and systematic and thorough and boring.

There are some good things in this book (for example, there is a good definition from Glasser: "Responsibility is the ability to fulfil one's needs, and to do so in a way that does not deprive others of the ability to fulfil their needs". And later, the author puts it well when he says - "The notion of personal responsibility provides a framework for counselling, life skills training and living. There is no assumption of mental illness, no concept of cure and no blaming". He comes out in favour of co-counselling and self-help groups), and it could be a useful one for people in training to be counsellors or therapists.

But for me, the author, most of the time, has the words but not the music.

**Brian Rainbow**

**Dictionary of psychotherapy** by Sue Walrond-Skinner. RKP 1986 - £30 pp: 379

**A critical dictionary of Jungian analysis** by Andrew Samuels, Bani Shorter & Fred Plant. RKP 1986 - £6.95 pp: 171

Two very nice and very helpful books, both excellent in their various ways.

The Walrond-Skinner book is the bigger of the two, and justifies its size by giving good references for each definition, and covering humanistic approaches well. In such books, I always turn to **Encounter** first of all, as

this is the word which is most often omitted. First of all we get **Encounter,** which is traced back to Moreno and cross-referenced to **Humanistic Psychology, Client-centred Therapy,** the **Human potential movement** and **Existential** approaches; and then we get **Encounter groups,** traced back to Will Schutz (unfortunately spelt Schultz) and with references to Bach, Burton, Hogan, Kaplan, Lieberman et al, Mintz, Moreno again, Rogers, Schutz and Solomon & Berzon; and cross-referenced to **Human potential movement, T-group training, Psychodrama, Gestalt, Action techniques, Group process, Holism, Marathon, Therapeutic communities, Splitting** and **Projection.** This seems quite handsome to me, and certainly acceptable. As I went through, I often found good things, and generally this seems a sympathetic book.

It is interesting, however, that even here we do not find any reference to subpersonalities, or any synonym therefore.

The Samuels et al book is not susceptible of any such simple test, but it was interesting to compare it on definitions of the same topic. Occasionally, this produces quite surprising results, as for example in the definition of the word **Imago,** which is fairly close to the notion of a subpersonality. Samuels and his colleagues come up with the following:

> *Term introduced by Jung in 1911-12 (CW5) and adopted in psychoanalysis. When 'imago' is used instead of 'image', this is to underline the fact that images are generated subjectively, particularly those of other people. That is, the object is perceived according to the internal state and dynamics of the subject. There is the additional specific point that many images (e.g. of parents) do not arise out of actual personal experiences of parents of a particular character, but are based on unconscious fantasies or derived from the activities of the* ***Archetype.***

There are two points of interest here. One is that the word **image,** which occurs twice in this definition (after its introduction in quotes) appears to be a misprint for **imagos** in both cases. The other is that the same definition, word for word, with the identical misprints, occurs in the Walrond-Skinner dictionary, but with another twelve lines in which the word **imago** is correctly spelled. I don't know whether they copied from one another, or whether they are both using a common source, but it's odd in either case.

But in general the Jungian dictionary is very good, and the definition of **complex** is excellent. It has no definition of the **Electra complex,** on the other hand, whereas the Walrond-Skinner volume does.

Here are two books which are both useful and usable, and I have already made use of both of them in my own work. Strongly recommended.

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