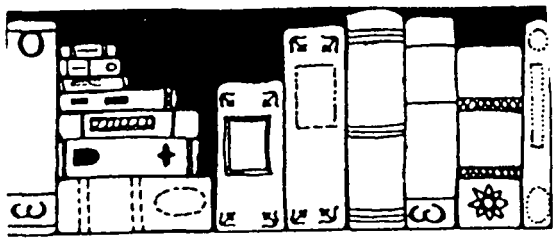
BOOK REVIEWS



Memories and Visions of Paradise: Exploring the Universal Myth of a Lost Golden Age, *Richard Heinberg. Aquarian Press, 1989. £8.99.*

In essence, this is a fine book: thought-provoking, wide-ranging in its concerns, and comprising a wealth of ideas from a broad spectrum of disciplines. Richard Heinberg draws together trans-world accounts of Creation, Paradise and The Fall and investigates their significance with reference to Literature, Politics, Anthropology, Psychology, Religious belief, Philosophy, Mysticism and recent Scientific thought. His palette is broad, his conclusions - to my mind - exciting. the enthusiasm of his search for the truth behind the Paradise Myth (or was it history?) infectious. The book itself is peppered with beautiful quotations, stories and illustrations.

The trouble is that he's a "bit of a waffler" and too often gets in the way of the excellent material he has found: by repetitive descriptions of tales which he quotes in full a few lines later, and by inappropriate opinions of the material of its source. On the other hand, he omits material which I feel would have been more instructively included (e.g. "There is evidence that money had a spiritual dimension..." No evidence is given.) Much of my exasperation with this - it occurs mainly in the earlier expository sections of the book - might have been obviated by heavy editing of Heinberg's own words, and by the inclusion of more source texts, whether in the body of the work itself, or in an appendix or expanded Bibliography. The source texts are strong: they can easily speak for themselves.

When he is being a theorist, he is fascinating and helpful; when he is presenting his research, he is not objective enough. By the end of the book, I felt informed and stimulated; a rereading of the first half confirmed my original reservations. In sum, it's worth the initial plod.

Jim Hill
East Lothian

Other lives, other selves: A Jungian psychotherapist discovers past lives, *Roger J Woolger, Crucible, 1990. 386 pp. £8.99*

This is one of those first-rate books that not only covers a specialised area fully and memorably, but also illuminates the whole field of psychotherapy. I can't think of a single therapist who wouldn't benefit from reading this book. It also makes one think of the scope and the limits of transpersonal psychology.

It starts off in a modest and personal way, telling the story of how the author, born in England and trained at Oxford in behaviourism and linguistic philosophy (two of the most boring and inadequate disciplines know to humanity), discovered meditation and Jung, in that order. He then went to work in Vermont. It was there that he had his first, and very dramatic, experiences with past life recall.

He then discovered the work of Stan Grof and Morris Netherton, and began, with his wife Jennifer, to lead workshops in the area of past lives. He started to use the same approach in his individual psychotherapy practice.

He makes it clear that he does not use hypnotism, but simply encourages the person to follow some feeling, phrase or bodily sensation back to its origins in the past. This is what many other therapists do who work with regression; it is just that Woolger explicitly encourages the client to go back into previous lives if that seems relevant and possible. He deals very well with the objection that it might all be fantasy.

Almost in passing, Woolger acknowledges that we are multiple beings, that our past-life selves can be treated as subpersonalities. Like other subpersonalities, they can be worked with through active imagination, and can be very useful for us to contact and deal with.

He discusses four main ways of looking at past-life phenomena: the psychic, the parapsychological, the religious and the psychotherapeutic.

Woolger is beautifully clear about working in a psychotherapeutic way, and not otherwise. It is not his job, he says, to make his client feel better, but to deal with painful realities:

> While there are some psychotherapists who believe that the summoning of beautiful and transcendent imagery - spirit guide figures, gurus, angels, the Higher Self, etc. - is sufficient to alleviate psychological distress, I must confess I am not among them. (p.86)

He quotes Jung as saying - "We do not become enlightened by imagining figures of light but by making the darkness conscious."

However, he regards himself as really a transpersonal psychotherapist, prepared to go into any of the six realms of the person's life: the body: the here-and-now everyday life (including the relationship with the therapist); the biographical; the past lives; the archetypal; and the perinatal. He arranges these diagrammatically not as levels or stages, but as the petals of a lotus. This enables him to say that whichever of these realms seems to be most reachable at the moment is worth working with:

> The psyche is following its own chain of resonances to release feelings and images that will take us closer and closer to the core of the complex (p.271).

And he gives many interesting case histories to show how this works out in practice.

Woolger makes the point that one of the effects of working in this way is to take the emphasis off the parents. The mother, in particular, often feels that she is being singled out as being responsible - consciously or unconsciously - for all the neuroses of the children. But if, as Woolger believes, the baby arrives with all the scars of its previous lives upon it, all ready to produce effects in its new and current life, the mother cannot be to blame for these. So this theory is politically interesting as well as being practically efficacious.

Strongly recommended.

London, E 17
John Rowan.

Further Learning from the Patient: the analytic space and process, *Patrick Casement, Tavistock/Routledge, 1990, 197p., hb £25 pb £9.99.*

This book is a sequel to Patrick Casement's *On Learning from the Patient* (Tavistock), published in 1985. It consists mainly of revised versions of papers given subsequently which elaborate on themes introduced in that first book. It is written in a similar way, with discussion of analytic concepts and technical ideas interspersed with revealing and thought-provoking accounts of clinical work. This does make for some repetition in both content and style, which at times can be tedious. However *Further Learning* is clearer about the direction in which Casement is taking his thought.

A key aspect of this is Casement's view that psychoanalysis is not only about interpreting the patient's *wishes* but also at times having to meet the patient's needs. He writes, for example:

> If we think of the seductive behaviour of an Oedipal child we can readily see a wish to get some special attention from the opposite-sex parent. We can also imagine various unconscious phantasies to do with getting rid of the rival parent and an unconscious wish to replace him/her. But it is also useful to consider what the unconscious hope may be. The growth-need is for the child's budding sexuality to be affirmed: not to be ignored, run away from, or exploited (p.117).

This distinction between wishes and needs - inaugurated, as far as I know, by Winnicott - brought a new perspective to psychoanalysis. Classically the analyst was taught to think in terms of the patient's unconscious wishes, which were on no account to be gratified by the therapist. Psychoanalysis, said Freud, was to be conducted in a spirit of abstinence. But to write in terms of "growth-needs", which involve "affirmation", and which are either met or not met (rather than gratified or frustrated) is to introduce a different language, and a different register of thinking which involves, I think, a profound reorientation in how psychoanalysis is con-

ducted. Casement does make clear that he is not advocating a form of "corrective emotional experience", as it is for the patient to find, in the course of therapy, that his needs can be met, rather than for the therapist to deliberately set out to meet them. But I suspect that the two registers of wishes and needs are not as easily compatible with each other as he seems to imply.

Casement describes his aim in his work as "wanting to create the atmosphere of a sandpit (playing with different shapes) rather than that of a court-room" (p 13-14). The metaphor of playing with different shapes is taken from Winnicott's work with children, in which he invited them to participate in a game of drawing "squiggles" which would harness their own imaginative ability to speak of what could not previously be put into words. The atmosphere of a court-room is resonant of a dogmatic application of certain classical ideas about psychoanalysis, in which the patient is tacitly "accused" of harbouring unconscious sexual and/or destructive wishes.

The whole thrust of Casement's work is away from this more classical idea of one-way speech, in which the analyst interprets to the patient the hidden meaning of his words and actions. The model here is that of the patient as a dream-text, to be deciphered by the analyst. Here it can only be the patient who learns. But this is indoctrination, not therapy. The great value of Casement's two books is that they show a version of psychoanalysis in which both patient and analyst participate in a dialogue about meaning, in which both learn. Although Casement makes analytic interpretations when he sees fit, he shows his energy to be directed as much, if not more towards keeping the conversation going, inviting or provoking his patients to keep thinking about what they are doing and why they might be doing it.

Casement's strength is in showing *the details* of how this is done. Considering how much of psychoanalytic therapy is concerned with words, it is surprising how little attention has been paid in the analytic literature to precisely how the analyst should speak to his patient. In his case examples Casement shows us how and why he chooses to speak as he does to a particular patient. The most interesting part of *Further Learning* is in a section towards the end where Casement invites the reader to think through the consequences of making a remark or framing an interpretation in one particular way as opposed to another.

For instance if a patient describes his boss as obstructive, and the therapist makes an apparently neutral comment such as "I see you are having difficulties with your obstructive boss", does this not imply the therapist has accepted without question the patient's perception? The therapist might think of taking a more detached position, for example by saying: "You put great emphasis on how obstructive he seems to be". Here, as elsewhere in his book, Casement invites us to try to find that fine balance between speaking for the patient and speaking to him.

Laurence Spurling.

Laurence Spurling is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist in private practice, and a part-time tutor at Birkbeck College on the Diploma course of Adult Counselling. His most recent book is (with W.Dryden) On Becoming a Psychotherapist (Routledge, 1989). He is currently editing a book on tradition in psychotherapy, to be published by Routledge.

Guilt is the Teacher, Loveis the Lesson: A Book to Heal You, Heart and Soul. *Joan Borysenko.Ph.D. Crucible, 1990. 237pp. £6.99.*

If guilt is your central issue, this book is a must; if not, it is still worth reading. Joan Borysenko- co founder of the Mind/Body clinic in Boston - speaks directly and movingly and with humour from her own experience. The emphasis of the text is on illustration and anecdote rather than theoretical exposition. There is, however, a clear and succinct analysis of the guilt- phenomenon, founded upon a distinction between healthy and unhealthy guilt, and a further distinction between guilt per se- acquired by socialization - and shame, which is here considered to be innate.

A number of practical and simple exercises are included, for getting in touch with the innocence of the Inner Child and the energies of compassion and forgiveness.

Don't be put off by the title - as I was. This is no Judeo- Christian apology for the doctrine of Original Sin. In fact, this whole subject is discussed in a way which is sympathetic to the religious traditions (including Buddhism) and yet free from the more negative and damaging aspects of those traditions.

New Age glibness is not much in evidence either, although I did think that some of the pessimism - inducing truths of the human condition had not been quite squarely faced.

Jonathon Stock.

Eternity: Man is God and God is man. Yet he is afraid: Why? *Anwar Shaik, Principality Publishers, 1990.*

This book addresses interesting and important questions about human experience: whence? whither? how? and why? It considers many religious perspectives. But it over-simplifies, thus distorting, 'objective, scientific knowledge' to argue for a subjective position namely that fear of life leads us to create our own suffering.

The author seeks beauty, intellectual, omniscience, spirituality, and humanity. The result however is less than convincing and frequently naive.

Eileen Barker.