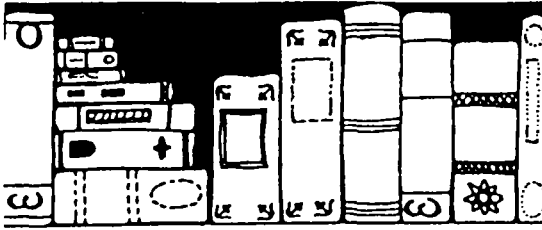


## BOOK REVIEWS



### A Review Article by John Rowan

**Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice and mind, Mary Field Belenky, Blythe Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger & Jill Mattuck Tarkle, Basic Books, New York, 1986. 256 pages. £8.95**

This is an extraordinarily good book, and it is all wrong that it should have taken this long for me to discover it, which I did as a result of going to a conference last year. It needs to be read by anyone involved in humanistic education of training of any kind.

It shows, by careful research of an open-ended kind, that women's intellectual development does not follow the same path as those of men, particularly as outlined in the influential research of William Perry. Perry traced, in college students, a progression from basic dualism (black-and-white thinking) to passive learning, to an appreciation of multiplicity of views, to a subjectivism which says that my opinion is as good as any other, to a relativism subordinate, where the objectivity of an academic discipline is respected as a way of knowing, to a full appreciation of relativism, where it becomes the real way a person thinks, and not just something adopted within a discipline. Knowledge is constructed, not given - that is the final stage of learning.

### Care, Responsibility, Connectedness

This all sounded plausible enough, but it made abstract objectivity the only way forward, and this seemed to be a repeat of much the same error as Carol Gilligan had found in the research on ethical outlooks of Lawrence Kohlberg. Gilligan, a former co-worker of Kohlberg, had shown that his scoring system did not do justice to the ethic of care, responsibility and connectedness which many women adhered to in their thinking. It focused strictly on questions of abstract truth and justice, and again the emphasis was on objectivity.

What the authors found in their research on women was a somewhat different developmental model. The first and most basic position they found was silence. Many women had simply been silenced, firstly by their own families and then by their husbands and other men. They had no voice, and did not acknowledge any right to think.

## **Books - Inner Voice**

The second position was received knowledge, gained from listening to the voices of others. Women at this stage had no respect for their own opinions, and regarded other people and books as the source of all knowledge. (I say "stage", but the authors of this book are much less confident than Perry or Kohlberg that these positions are stages in an inevitable process of development.)

The next position they outline is subjective knowledge: the inner voice. Here the woman has made a breakthrough into respecting her own opinions, her own way of seeing things. But it is limited by the fact that she then finds it hard or impossible to see things any other way. It is as if her hold on it were quite precarious. Such women often reject the masculine world as being alien and hard or impossible to relate to.

The position the authors discuss next is procedural knowledge, which they describe as the voice of reason. But in their major departure from the Perry sequence, they find in women two versions of this, which they describe as the separated and the connected.

The separated version is much like Perry's: it relies on objectivity. In a phrase, it is to play **the doubting game**. Everything that is put up as fact must be doubted, opposed in an adversarial manner. Only that which stands up to the most hostile scrutiny can be accepted.

The connected version is quite different. It is still procedural, it is still reasoned, but this time we are playing **the believing game**. We go into an author or a theory and systemically get inside it, or allow it to get inside us, so that we can really turn it round, examine it, cherish it, experience it until it yields up its secrets. Often this is done in discussion with others, but these are not the discussions of the separated version where each tries to shoot the other down, but more like the sharing of small truths to make a larger truth. More like gossip than debate, and depending upon the participants knowing and respecting one another as people.

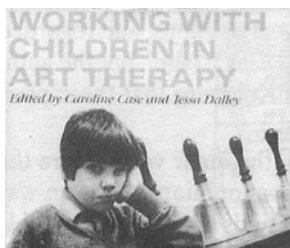
### **Unsuitable for Women**

The final stage the book speaks of is constructed knowledge: integrating the voices. Here the woman sees that both subjectivity and objectivity are important, but that both have to be transcended if any really adequate knowing is to be had. This is a trained and disciplined subjectivity which can cope with anything which may come along. So far, so good, and so interesting. But the authors go on to look at two other very important questions: first of all the families which these women came from, and the startling way in which a woman's way of knowing comes very directly, in the first place at least, from the family atmosphere in which she was brought up.

The second question they deal with, and very fascinating it is too, is what the implications of all this are for those institutions which train and educate women. Here, without oversimplifying, they show that much of the traditional teaching in colleges and universities is quite unsuitable for women's learning. And they give a lot of hints for important changes which need to be made.

Excellent printed and produced too.

**Working With Children in Art Therapy, C. Case and T. Dalley (eds), Routledge 1990 £14.99**



*Working with Children in Art Therapy* is a collection of papers by ten art therapists working in diverse settings and with different theoretical approaches. Their clients are children experiencing a wide range of difficulties such as autism, deafness, learning and behavioural problems, abuse and deprivation.

Useful information is gleaned:

Working with cases of sexual abuse, its causes and effects, specific examples are given how, through Art Therapy, hidden feelings can be released, the damage expressed and repaired. Working with children with bowel disorders of a psychosomatic nature, where the issue is one of compliance or disobedience, in Art Therapy, the child can enact the emotional problems represented by the symptom, and ultimately take control.

In structural family therapy the therapist is the 'active intruder' who enters, and then changes the family system. Art Therapy is used as one of the strategies for change.

The need for art therapists working in schools is justified. Whilst the teacher is trained to focus on the curriculum, in Art Therapy a child can express her needs, wishes and concerns safely, and move towards personal change within the reality of her situation.

However different each paper, the authors independently report similar benefits of working with Art Therapy:

'words about feelings are hard - art is easier'

'it is a means of expression, another language'

'words can change thought; word less exploration can lead to word less knowing'

'The process of experiencing is just as vital as the end product'

'Children's art can facilitate unique insight, express desperation, and lead to recovery'

'Healing and transformation can occur'

'Art Therapy can help a child advance to its maximum capacity'

For me, the most valid evidence supporting such statements come, not so much through theories and speculations, but from the case studies themselves. Reporting a child's art-making process, how the child felt, what the child said and did, and how the child changed through imaging is the clearest proof. To quote from the book: 'The (art) therapists are ultimately enablers - they can do no more than harness a child's own capacity for discovery, mental growth, and change' - Reeves. Overall, the book informs, challenges, and does much to justify the use of art therapy.

Liesl Silverstone.

**Caring for Your Unborn Child, Roy Ridgway. Thorsons 1990 £4.99 pb**

Roy Ridgway's book is necessary because despite widespread coverage of pre-birth issues as per the *Sunday Times* Colour Supplement of September 16 1990, influential media personnel such as Radio 2's Derek Jameson, seem to be scornful about the notion that the unborn child can be so affected as to produce significant behaviour patterns in later life.

The book is very useful because it gives a plain man's (and woman's) guide to what might help and hinder the child in later life by what is given or withheld while in utero. Sometimes, I find myself looking at it from the viewpoint of a perinatal therapist and find it lacking in certain areas, notably background detail and rather short in intellectual meat. Moreover, I find the book uncomfortably organised because it seems to be trying to deal with a number of different people at once e.g. the expectant parents who may or may not be aware of the issues; the practitioners in the field who may be converted or unconverted; and lastly counsellors, therapists *et al.* This is not intended as a criticism at all, but an observation, and others also may find it less than fluent. Many will wish that it was longer and in greater depth because all the three forgoing areas do need to be attended to and a fair stab has been made in this book.

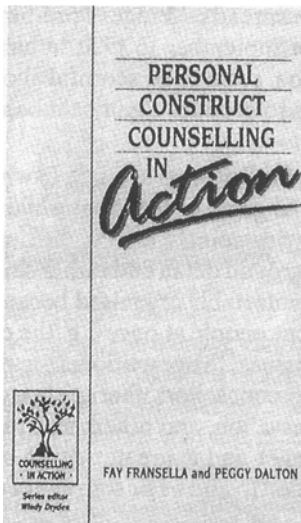
Hopefully, Roy Ridgway's gift and commitment will produce from him further writing which will continue to fertilise generations of parents and practitioners for the well being of the children of the future.

Brighton  
Geoff Whitfield

**Achilles Heel P.O. Box 149 Sheffield S1 3HG. £5 per year.**

*Achilles Heel* is a twice yearly magazine produced by a collective of men who "aim to challenge traditional forms of masculinity and male power, and support the creation of alternative social structures and personal ways of being". It has consistently contained articles that are well-written and thought-provoking, as well as poetry, letters, reviews, and information relating to Men's issues. The articles vary from personal accounts, to practical matters, to social and psychological analysis, which provides a welcome balance, though perhaps some of it is too intellectual for the range of readership which they profess to be aiming at. I would recommend *Achilles Heel* as essential reading for anyone who is seriously interested in Men's psychology or gender issues in society, or any man who is committed to his personal development.

London NW3  
Mike Penney



**Personal Construct Counselling in Action,** Fay Fransella & Peggy Dalton, Sage, 1990. 150 pages, £8.95.

As one of the excellent series "Counselling in Action" this is a sober and decent account of Personal Construct theory which was invented and fostered by George Kelly, a professor at Ohio State University in the 1950's. Personal Construct theory was also developed and used a great deal in this country, through the advocacy of some very influential people, particularly Don Bannister and Miller Mair. The first computer programmes for analysing the Repertory Grid (one of the tools of Personal Construct work) were worked out in this country, so it is very much a naturalised approach.

Fay Fransella was one of the early pioneers, and her book on the whole theory, written with Don Bannister (*Inquiring Man*, now published by Routledge) is a classic. She helped to found the Centre for Personal Construct Psychology in London, and she and Peggy Dalton both work there now. So if anyone knows about this method, these two do.

Personal Construct counselling is a cognitive approach, like Beck's cognitive therapy or Ellis' rational-emotive therapy. The authors seem to have a very intellectual approach to the whole thing, and the relationship between therapist and client is seen as more like supervisor and researcher.

The emphasis is all on what the client does with his concepts or constructs, how they are ordered, how they can be made to change. It appears to be the case that most of the clients are taken on for short-term therapy, consisting of five or six sessions, but this is not clearly spelled out in the book. There is a curious attitude to the past, on the one hand admitting that it is important, and on the other hand obviously preferring to work more with the present. The authors don't really believe in transference, and George Kelly is quoted to the effect that heavy transference is really harmful and to be avoided, while light forms of transference can be handled by immediately dealing with them.

If you want to know about Personal Construct counselling, this is for you, because there is no other book on the subject available, but I fear that the untutored reader might have difficulty with the large number of unfamiliar terms and ideas.

London, E17  
John Rowan

**From Jesus to Christ, Paula Fredriksen. Yale University Press 1990 £19,- hb £9.50 pb.**

The importance of this book for humanistic psychology lies in the fact that Jesus lived in a culture which was addressing the big questions - what is the meaning of life and how should life be fulfilled? More than that it was a culture which valued investigating the nature of life, self and divinity - the precursors of modern theology and of the exploration of self. Christianity evolved in this culture from Judaism and from the gnostic sects. It went on to establish itself as a powerful orthodox church. In doing so it persecuted both of its roots.

This book addresses the question of how the individual who was Jesus and born in Nazareth, became the various versions of Christ in the Christian tradition. It is well written, aimed at the non-specialist and describes the Hellenistic world within which the Christ image was developed, the constructions put on it by the gospels, the force of the break with Judaism and the influence of the Churches. This is done in a scholarly and readable way.

Paula Fredriksen underplays the importance of the gnostics. Her point of view is that of orthodox Christianity which considers gnosticism to be at best an aberration at worst a dangerous heresy. This is disappointing as the gnostics were much like the Human Potential Movement - seeking truth within by disciplined exercises, moving to knowledge which is hidden and cannot be put in words, seeking emotional education and not only the education of reason and having a disregard for social power. (See Elaine Pagel's *The Gnostic Gospels* Weidenfeld 1980 who spells out the similarities). There were several hundred gnostic groups living in 'the middle East' two thousand years ago including the one which Jesus was born into. They were persecuted, died out or were driven out by the power of the established orthodox churches. There is a message here, I think, for the AHPP and the humanistic growth centres from which it sprang in the Democratic West, once political power is gained by UKSCP.

London, SW11

David Jones.

**Women in Therapy and Counselling. Out of the Shadow, Moira Walker, Open University Press, 1990. 185pp.**

Reading this book was an experience that was both heart-warming and enraging: heart-warming because of the wisdom and sensitivity of the author's treatment of her subject; enraging because it brings home not just the oppression and sheer difficulty of most women's lives, but also just how inappropriate much psychological theory, counselling and therapy have been and continue to be.

The book's message is that therapists and counsellors need to take account of all levels of female clients' experience if they are to avoid acting as agents reinforcing the patriarchal status quo that has contributed to their clients' problems in the first place. The power and influence of the systems and society in which women live need to be acknowledged and understood as factors leading to disempowerment

as well as individual history and dynamics. Common myths need to be debunked - myths such as glorious motherhood, which fails to mention loss of independence and exhaustion; men as protectors, when for many girls and women they are the perpetrators of violence and abuse; myths that devalue women, distort and ridicule their qualities and experience, that are negative and destructive, and that serve to shore up the implicit and fundamental assumption that male behaviour is the norm, that it is both correct and the ideal to which both sexes should conform. The book looks at women as women, and includes chapters incorporating case material on pregnancy, mothering and motherhood; depression; eating disorders; and violence against women.

Perhaps the book doesn't say anything brand new, but the message still hasn't been heard in too many places, and Moira Walker brings it all together in a British context in an exemplary fashion. She integrates social history, academic, psychological and feminist theory with hard reality in a highly readable way.

Recommended: should be required for all who work with women.

Ruth Finer

**Crisis Intervention Verbatim, Nira Kfir. Hemisphere, 1989, 169 pp, £9.95 pb**

Crisis intervention is very much in the news these days: counsellors being sent in to natural and manmade disaster areas is something quite normal and expected now. One therefore approached this book with great expectations of it summing up this recent work and offering the latest word on it. Also the word "verbatim" in the title remained one perforce of the marvellous book "Gestalt therapy verbatim" which has become a classic in its field. But this is really rather a disappointing book, in terms of these kinds of expectations. It actually comes out of one rather specific experience, where the author got involved with counselling bereaved and other people affected by the Yom Kippur War in 1973. She later did more work of the same kind, and started to give lectures and lead workshops on it. In 1985 she helped to create a free walk-in crisis centre in Tel Aviv.

The crises dealt with can be very various: disasters and wars; bereavement; loss of a partner; a child getting into bad trouble; threat of divorce; panic reactions; suicide attempts; and so forth. Some people have argued that crisis is just one form of stress, and that it can be best understood as stress, and treated in that way. But Kfir urges instead that crisis is different from stress:

"Crisis situations are totally new, unpredictable, psychologically paralysing, and they pose a shock to the emotional system".

Kfir says that the way in which a crisis hits a person will depend on their "number one priority", which is their existential understanding of psychic-survival. She says that there are four possible number one priorities in this sense, each with its own defence system. These are:

1. Pleasing - These people mainly fear rejection, and have adopted a motto that "I can only survive if I am loved and appreciated". They can be very self-sacrificing in their efforts to gain acceptance and approval. The worst thing is to be unwanted.

2. Moral superiority - These people mainly fear insignificance, and believe they can only survive if they are better, wiser or know more than others. They depend a lot on high achievement. The worst thing is to be unimportant.

3. Control - To avoid ridicule, controllers have to anticipate situations. Their slogan is "I can survive only if I am in control". To experience shame or embarrassment is the worst fate.

4. Avoidance - The important thing for these people is to steer clear of any danger or stress. They do not meet issues or deal with problems, but treat them as temporary issues to be skirted round. The worst things are conflict and pressure.

Each of these types of people will experience a crisis from their own point of view, and will act accordingly. Yet each crisis has certain constant features, and it is these features which have to be coped with in some way or other. These are:

a. Lack of information - The situation is unknown, unfamiliar. There is a strong sense of unpreparedness. The sense of time becomes distorted, with the past seeming the ideal time, and the future more or less non-existent or inaccessible.

b. Aloneness - Often the person is taken away from all the usual supports which have been built up defensively. People in crisis often seem unaware of the support which is actually present and available. The counsellor can help here.

c. No alternatives - There is a dead-end feeling of having no options, no choices at all. The job of the counsellor is to help to open up a greater sense of possibilities.

Finally, Kfir says that there are three stages which a crisis normally goes through, and each of these needs a somewhat different approach.

Stage 1: Emotional shock - This very often puts the person into an "automatic pilot" reaction. In bereavement the shock state may last from 24 hours up to 6 weeks. Shock has to take its course and cannot be hurried very much.

Stage 2: Anger - This is a non-accepting stage, where the person very often feels like fighting back in some way, to undo the reality, or to fight for justice, or to take revenge. The overwhelming feelings of unfairness is predominant.

Stage 3: Pain and grief - This stage is the longest of the three, lasting up to a year or more. It leads to a final acceptance and an ability to move on.

Kfir's model of intervention follows from this analysis and takes all these points into account. All this takes up Part 1 of the book, up to page 64.

The rest of the book consists of case studies. There are nine of these. In each case they include long extracts from interviews taking place within workshops, so that there is a group present. In each case there is just one session. The level of intervention revealed here seems quite low and uninspiring. The approach is Adlerian, and if this is what Adlerian work is like it does not seem very impressive.

It was also disappointing that after all the analysis of the first part of the book we get no sense of an ongoing process going through these various stages and levels of work, merely a rather pedestrian first interview. There is certainly some interesting information and analysis in this book, but the "verbatim" part is quite frustrating.

John Rowan





**Law of Desire - Temporary marriage in Iran, Shahla Haeri, Taurus Press 1990. £9.95 pb.**

Anyone who is interested in the way relationships between women and men are patterned and the assumption made about sexual expression will find this case study important. One line of thought holds that male sexual energy is explosive and if it is not allowed expression then mental, bodily and social harm is done. A frustrated male gets sick and causes trouble. This belief underlies the institution of *mut'a* or 'temporary' marriage which is practised, but with unease, in some Shi'ite communities in Arab countries including Iran where it is called *sigheh*. It is one of the means whereby men can have more than one spouse at the same time, an opportunity denied women who also suffer great stigma from divorce.

Female sexuality is held to be natural, creative, destructive and dangerous and in need of external control. Women are considered to be passive responders to men and either controlled through marriage or *sigheh*. Fear of women and the breakdown of the family and the social order appears to lie behind this. Shahla Haeri has obtained convincing material from centres of pilgrimage where she used her family contacts, and her training as an anthropologist, to talk with religious leaders and with men and women involved in *sigheh*.

It seems fair to conclude that women tend to come off worse than men in terms of humiliation and exploitation but the motives on both sides are complex and extend far beyond sexual gratification. The revolution in Iran and the war with Iraq has led to the ingenious use of the *sigheh* form of marriage in order to achieve companionship, support and affection as well as sex at a time of great social upheaval, national renewal and fundamentalist religion. One of the changes is that *sigheh*, which used not to be talked about is now available for discussion though it arouses great unease among a large part of the population.

London, SW11  
David Jones