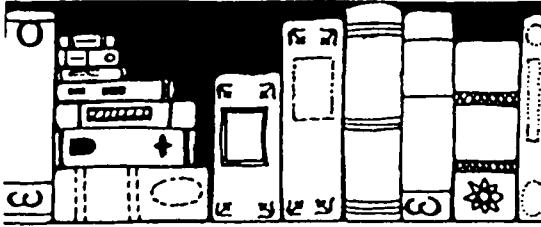


BOOK REVIEWS



"Postmodernism" is Humanistic Psychology? An Extended Book Review by John Rowan

Border dialogues: Journeys in postmodernity, Iain Chambers. Routledge, 1990. 146 pages. £30 Hbk, £8.99 Pbk.

Postmodernity: what does that mean? I had been puzzling over this for some time and had got the idea that it was something to do with not taking things for granted, with questioning the value of grand theory, with doing justice somehow to the fragmentation of everything. And it had seemed to me that this was like Humanistic Psychology, with its determination to take nothing for granted, with its emphasis on individual experience rather than grand theory, with its ability to see people as fragmented as well as whole. Now here was a chance to check out my impressions and see what was going on.

This book is a crash course in postmodernism. It quotes all the big names at length, and really seems to be soaked in this way of looking at things. What does it say?

"Our interpretations of society, culture, history and our individual lives, hopes, dreams, passions and sensations, involve attempts to confer sense rather than to discover it. For it is we - with our histories, languages, memories and constraints - who make sense. We never arrive at the bottom of things: the analysis remains open." (p.11)

This seems to me just like the concern we have in Humanistic Psychology to insist that we take responsibility for our thoughts, feelings and actions. They are not simply there in the world - they are ours, and we have to own up to them. We have to acknowledge that we take up our roles; they do not creep up on us or take us by surprise; they are ours. This is the basic constructivist insight which we can go along with.

But also in this book we find differences from the viewpoint of Humanistic Psychology. One of the postmodern (and deconstructionist) moves is to radicalise this insight by asserting that there is no natural base at all. Not only do we have to take responsibility for our worlds, we also have to acknowledge that there is no basis for this:

"For if we live in a world, that is, a world of our making, in which there is no ultimate foundation to nature or being, then there can be no 'original', no zero point, or day of creation, from which everything commences. There is only the secular infinity of reproductions, of copies of copies, of simulacra." (p.62)

"The surface is everything, appearance is being, and therefore the whole dialectic between 'appearance' and 'reality', between 'surface' and 'depth', so central to the Kantian and enlightenment tradition, collapses at a stroke." (p.94)

Here is where we part company. I cannot follow the author's heroes, Nietzsche and Walter Benjamin, into the wasteland where everything is equally squalid and meaningless. We have this experience, some more and some less, of getting in touch with something inside ourselves which is after all something like an original face, something like a zero point, something like a day of creation, or reality, or depth. These are the peak experiences, the experiences of the real self, of the higher self, which I have argued are different levels of mystical experience. And so I found myself in deep and interesting disagreement with the author when he says:

"The freedom that becomes possible in the world of the mass media and an information society is not perhaps the freedom of the emancipated 'subject' imagined by the idealist tradition and, then in its wake, also by marxism; this 'absolute' subject (totally free, without interior mysteries or limits) was too heavily modelled on God to be realised (it was Sartre, here the inheritor of the idealist tradition, who said that man was the failed project to become God)." (p.77)

To throw out the divine in this way is to say that spirituality is not an option. Yet it seems to me that spirituality is an element in the Humanistic Psychology tradition which is well based in our deepest and truest experiences. When we have our mystical experiences, when we have our breakthroughs, when we have our moments of truth, we somehow cannot deny them. They are outside the realm of society, of what we have made up ourselves or been given by others. They take us into a different realm altogether.

All the same, there is much in this book which speaks to me and makes me salute it as very much in touch with the central concerns of our age, our time:

"We live in a world in which the authority of previous guides has apparently crumbled. They have become fragments, bits of a particular archive (of Western Europe, of the white male voice), part of a local history that once involved the presumption (and power) to speak in the name of the 'world'. How we respond to these conditions, what sense we draw from this situation comes increasingly to depend on the recognition that 'it is the concept of crisis itself that must be understood within the idea of truth.'" (p.82: the quotation is from Giovanna Boradori)

This makes a lot of sense, and makes it clear that the author has taken on board some of the feminist arguments and the black critique. Here and there the author draws back from some of the more radical (indeed absurd) contentions of postmodernism, and in fact the title of the book comes from this drawing-

back process:

"Unlike Nietzsche, who, seeking to break down the walls of the world he has constructed in language, is reduced to scraps of enigmatic speech and eventual madness and silence, or Derrida who provocatively proclaims that there is nothing outside the text, I prefer to inhabit the border country of such discourses." (p.86)

In other words, he himself will not go down the road all the way with postmodernism but reserves his position, believing that even if all our judgements are in the end false, still to renounce these false judgements altogether

"would be to renounce life, would be to deny life" (p.94).

And so he does in the end hold out hope, not in the way of finding a base or foundation, but simply in the networking itself:

"For sense here lies not in the separate fates of individualised identities and isolated accounts, but in the interconnected weaving together of the stories, languages, differences and bodies in which we are caught." (p.110)

There is something much more sympathetic about this vision, which strikes chords similar to those of some of the feminists who speak of connection and interdependence as one of the key concepts for them.

There is also something much more sympathetic in the way in which the author finally recognises the importance of the body in all this. For us in Humanistic Psychology the body is of course very central, but it is rare to find such a recognition anywhere else. So it is with a warm glow that I read Iain Chambers saying:

"Further, we need an ethics that fully recognises the body, previously considered as the site of error and evil; that recognises its languages, written across its surfaces in the alphabets of sexuality, gender and ethnicity; that recognises its rites and rights, its multiple and differentiated histories. The body is eventually the site of sense. In its desires, details and differentiation it also presents us with a zone of uncertainty; here there are things that flee rational arrest. At the same time, it provides the ground for all those mentioned (and unmentioned) differences that condition the possibility of sense.

There exists a 'reason' of the body, of the unconscious, of the traces of memory, that continually signals something more: the body and its great intelligence, which does not say "I" but performs "I". This is not to oppose the body to reason, but to indicate a territory which a previous reason was unable to recognise". (pp.112-113: The quotation is from Nietzsche)

I feel this is well said. It does give credit where credit is due. And I found this whole book engaged me in many ways and at many different levels. It reached out and forced me to reply to it. And this gives the other half of the title of this book:

"Writing is not natural. This is its drama. It is an inscription that tries to come alive, that calls for dialogue... Before the infinity of signs the book becomes a ship's log, a modest exemplar of the small format of thought. Writing involves a confrontation with myself and others". (p.115)

This is true of some of the best books, and it seems to me that if you want a book on postmodernism, it would be hard to find a better one than this. At times it is an infuriating book. It is full of jargon, of poetic flights which do not come off, of Italian phrasing (the author lectures in Naples), of unfamiliar authors, of pretentious fancies, of endless notes (23 pages of them at the back of the book) and of self-references. But in the end it says something which I think we need to consider, which we need to sort out, if we are to make sense of this confusing world in which we live.



Integrative Counselling Skills in Action, Sue Culley, Sage Publications 1991. 148 pp Pbk, £8.95

In this latest book in the Sage "Counselling in Action" series edited by the prolific Windy Dryden, Sue Culley introduces us to the theory and practice of 'Integrative Counselling Skills'. This series is proving invaluable to those looking for straightforward, non-mystifying texts that deal in clear, structured ways with some of the many forms of counselling and psychotherapy now on offer.

Sue Culley does a good job in providing a rationale for an approach to Counselling that goes beyond the merely eclectic, and shows how the skills she describes

can be organised into what she calls a 'consistent and meaningful whole'. There are meticulous descriptions of the microskills of counselling, examples of the strategies that can be used when faced with particular issues within counselling relationships and discussion of the aims and goals of the counselling process.

It is, one might say, a very worthy and thorough book. It draws heavily from the work of Egan and Gilmore, though it provides little in the way of fresh insights. It appears to be a book for 'beginners', and might not be of much value to those seeking new challenges or extended understandings of counselling. However, it is first and foremost a book about counselling as an understandable and rational application of specific skills, and the counselling process as a generally predictable sequence of events or stages.

The examples and case studies are of clients with specific 'problems'. Sue Culley shows how such problems can be managed, and the process of resolution initiated and maintained. There is little or no attempt to show how the model might cope with clients whose needs are not specifically defined, or whose experience has resulted in deep trauma or pain. To that extent, this is not a book that goes beyond its 'Counselling Skills' brief.

A worthwhile book, clear, concise, almost a 'How to do it' book, but most probably limited in its appeal to those undertaking some skills training or looking for a straightforward non-jargon approach.

Tony Merry

The Goddess Re-Awakening - The Feminine Principle Today" compiled by Shirley Nicholson/published by Quest Books 1989 @ £7.95. (280pp)

This book contributes to the growing awareness of the value of the Goddess. It's an anthology of 20 essays by a variety of writers, with an excellent comprehensive introduction by Merlin Stone, authoress of *When God was a Woman*.

The Goddess's complex identities were transformed, during the classical Greek period. The original Goddess personalities contained a multiplicity of qualities, covering traits that are now considered to be both masculine and feminine. In reclaiming the ancient images of the Goddess, we can find new role models for our lives, and challenge the subordination of women that has been maintained by mainstream religions.

Some of the essays are newly written - others have been printed previously - and they are very diverse, considering and examining the phenomena of the renewed feminine principle that has been arising over the last 10 years. Despite this there are still widespread caricatures of what it is to be male or female, with the emphasis of value being given to the male and many negative implications being laid on the female, such as being irrational and hysterical.

The essays are grouped under four headings:

"The Goddess" - Different traditions are explored: in "Oya - Black Goddess of Africa" there are some powerful images portrayed in some traditional verses of praise - she's not a passive symbol! Different aspects of the myth of Demeter and Persephone are taken in two essays; and others look at Isis, Sophia and Buddhist female deities.

"Psychological Perspectives" - In one of these, "A Higher View of the Man-Women Problem", Roberto Assagioli says that the masculine and feminine principles exist to differing degrees in both men and women, and that our aim should be to let go of the mistaken conditioning that the masculine roles are superior. Individuals can become aware of their imbalance and can develop and train themselves in the missing qualities.

"Religious and Traditional Views" - These are about women as mystics in Christianity; the principles of the Schinah, the female aspect of God in Judaism; the Mother of the World in Taoism; and the sacred women of native North America, such as the White Buffalo Calf Woman.

"Socio-Political Concerns" - Just two essays in this section.

"Feminism - A Vision of Love" expresses a feminist ideal of the world that should overturn the oppression of the female spirit.

Trisha Beards.



Women under Pressure, Ursula Markham. Element Books, 1990. Price £6.95.

As a practising hypnotherapist and counsellor, Ursula Markham has produced a useful guide for today's woman who often has to cope with many roles and tasks. She clearly identifies signs of stress such as migraine and sleeplessness and outlines simple but effective stress-control techniques.

She uses case studies to illustrate the types of problems faced by women in the 20th century such as sexual harassment, choosing between career and motherhood, caring for an aged relative etc. Practical solutions are suggested and guilt and anger used in a positive way.

Women are living in a fast-changing and competitive society and if they are to keep on an even keel they should not forget to take some exercise and follow an adequate diet, cope with stress and be assertive. The main message of this book is to find time to relax, to carefully work out one's priorities, to update one's skills and to offset pressure by means of yoga, meditation or aromatherapy and to negotiate relationships with men. The author has also provided a useful list of advisory institutions and a reading list.

London W1
Sandra Eros

Behold the Man, Brian Thorne, Longman and Todd 1991. 80pp £4.95 Pbk

A most extraordinary, ambitious and challenging book from Brian Thorne, a practising Person-Centred therapist and committed Christian. It is an attempt to enter empathically into the sufferings of Jesus at the time of the crucifixion, and to understand the feelings and actions of some of those who surrounded Him. Quite an undertaking.

This is not an easy book to read, at times indeed it is a painful, even harrowing one. Brian spares us little in his descriptions of the almost unimaginable suffering of a human body enduring such appalling torture. Only someone with Brian Thorne's mastery of language could have attempted such a project, and in stylistic terms, carried it off with such success. And only someone totally committed both to the messages of Christianity, and to the human process of 'becoming' would have found the strength, even courage, to have set such personal meditations on paper.

Not a book that will appeal to everyone, but its central message is universal. It is that love and deep understanding, especially of those things that challenge us the most, are as much the bedrock of creative human relationships as they are of the Christian message.

London E7
Tony Merry

Working with Men, 320 Commercial Way, London, SE15 1QN. £5.00 per year (six issues).

Working with Men is a slim new bi-monthly publication aimed at professionals in social work and related fields.

Most issues have had a theme - so far we've had violence, health, and resources for workers. They are keen to report examples of good practice, which could develop into a very valuable resource for those developing ways of working in this field. The focus of these reports so far has been mainly anti-sexism and violence. The perspective of the writers is one of social change rather than therapy, and tends to be rather impersonal and 'male' in style. As well as the usual contacts and events, it also has a regular summary of what the papers have to say on men and masculinity, which is a useful service, though they do need to be careful to have read properly what they are summarising. A useful place for professionals to exchange information and views.

Mike Perry

Therapeutic Psychology: Fundamentals of counselling and psychotherapy (5th edition), Lawrence M Brammar, Everett L Shostrom & Philip J Abrego. Prentice-Hall, 1990. 409 pages, £43.85 Hbk, £16.95 Pbk

This is a big book in every sense. It is one of the only two books known to me which deal with a humanistic approach to therapy in a full way, covering all the topics which would be needed in a training course. It is very thorough, and the first chapter deals with the major theory groups found in the field, making a good background to the second chapter, which is devoted specifically to what the authors call the actualising model.

We then come to the more practical chapters, the first of which deals with the therapeutic relationship, including a discussion of whether and when and how one should be started at all. The second one deals with things like the opening sessions, the types of interventions which are possible - a good discussion which takes up nearly forty pages.

Then we get a very good discussion of the whole question of assessment and diagnosis, raising all the important issues at stake here. The next chapter deals with strategies for facilitating and evaluating change, including a section on termination

of the relationship. This is followed by an excellent chapter of some thirty pages on transference, countertransference and resistance. This is again a humanistic treatment, and well worth reading by anyone who does not want to rely simply on the psychoanalytic ideas on these topics. Then we get four chapters on specific areas of application: first of all groupwork, then couple therapy and family therapy. Career counselling is covered well, and there is a full discussion of ethnic minorities, work settings, gender issues, working with older people, and so on.

Finally there are two chapters on values and professional issues. This includes a discussion of spirituality and transcendent values. It also covers a rather full discussion of relationships with other helping professions, such as psychiatry and nursing and social work. This is an excellent book and deserves to be in the library of anyone involved in training, in spite of its high price.

London E17

John Rowan

Couples in Conflict, Dorothy Freeman. *Relate - Open University Press 1990, 265pp. £14.95*



This is an excellent study of short-term marital therapy, in fact it is an apologia for this type of work. I don't imagine most experienced marital therapists will find anything new here but it provides a stimulation for anyone's practice. It is specially helpful for students and trainees in counselling.

The author describes her work with six couples at various stages of relationships, which both illustrate the particular problems of each stage and the way in which her acute perception is able to address the core issues with each couple. She reveals the process of her work by means of a running commentary written alongside the well selected descriptions of each of the sessions.

She includes notes of her assessments and reflections. Her openness about her approach, which is very flexible, is to be admired and is a valuable model for aspiring counsellors. Finally the author presents a critique and follow-up sections to complete a picture of her most thorough and insightful work.

The limitation of this book is that it seems to deal with couples who fit into the mainstream of marriage. I question the classification of couples into stages, related to age and children, which infers that it is representative of couples who come for counselling. I do not believe that more than a small majority fit into this schema. I found myself looking in vain for any similarity with many of my clients who do not fit neatly into any of these stages, e.g. middle-aged childless couples who have just

got married, second marriages with step children, couples who are not looking for a permanent relationship or having children. There is a complexity about these which is not dealt with here. It is also debatable as to whether the initial task of the therapist "will be to maintain the marriage, if possible". (Chapter 7 on divorce and remarriage was far too short).

The book raises a number of interesting questions about critical points of intervention into troubled relationships and factors for and against short-term counselling. Most couples work is best seen as short-term which serves to underline it as distinctive from longer term individual therapy which might be preferable for either partner. The primary contract is about the relationship, not the solution of one person's problems.

London SW3
Eric Whitton

The New Primal Scream, Arthur Janov. Abacus, 1991, 396 pages. £5.99.

I can't help admiring Janov for his warmth and style and his real sympathy with the underdog; I can't help despising Janov for the way in which he goes to the heart of the matter without bothering too much about the academic establishment; I can't help hating Janov for the way in which he avoids talking about any of his competitors, even when they have produced material which is highly relevant to him. I can't help respecting Janov for his wealth of case histories and the way in which he uses them; I can't help sneering at Janov for the way in which he mixes up fact and speculation and sheer fantasy.

He hasn't changed; he hasn't grown up; this is his latest offering. If you want a good read about some vital issues, here you are. If you want humility, forget it.

London E17
John Rowan

The Essential James Hillman: A Blue Fire, Introduced and Edited by Thomas Moore. Routledge 1990 pb £6.95

James Hillman is a writer of rare calibre on the subject of archetypal psychology and psychoanalysis. This new volume is an edited anthology of excerpts from a wide selection of his books and articles from the 1970s and 80s, including works such as *Inter Views* (1983), *ReVisioning Psychology* (1975) and *The Dream and the Underworld* (1979). It's portable and accessible and presents the work of this often challenging writer in the form of appetising hors d'oeuvres. For those who have not read any Hillman it would serve as a reliable introduction to his world of thought and imagination; and for those who are familiar with some of his work, it has the flavour of a book of poetry or a bedside companion, to be dipped into and savoured in precious moments. It includes many unexpected delights, such as a soulful psychoanalysis of ceilings, and a collection of dreams about polar bears. It is sensitive-

ly and intelligently introduced and presented by Thomas Moore, founder of the Institute for the Study of Imagination in Massachusetts.

Hillman was director of studies at the Jung Institute in Zurich, is now a practising psychotherapist, and is one of our most important, imaginative and artistic thinkers and writers in the field of archetypal psychology. The basic point about Hillman is that he brings back a certain strange and embarrassing word that Jung introduced to psychology, and places it in central place: SOUL. For him, psychologising is all about soul, and if human life has a purpose, it is to do with soul-making. For him, Psyche is not a butterfly that can be pinned down by definitions. Its extent and nature can never be fully fathomed, for it is always mysterious, profound in its depths, paradoxical and unknowable. Who else (apart from Van Morrison) is such a poetic champion of the soul - which he firmly distinguishes from spirit.

Hillman's work on soul is often focused on the central importance of images, particularly dream images.

"The gift of an image is that it affords a place to watch your soul, precisely what it is doing." - *Inter Views*.

These images are not there to be interpreted in the language of our everyday egos or to improve our lives. He says that to interpret dreams too literally is to invite the ego to reduce them to its own service, and that our dream images have to be lived with and experienced for their own sake... that through these images, the ancient components of our psyche, the gods, nature deities, pathologies and other ancient components of our psyche live through us and speak in their own voice.

"If long things are penises for Freudians, dark things are shadows for Jungians. Images are turned into predefined concepts, such as passivity, power, sexuality, anxiety, femininity..."

and if we interpret dreams too literally or too conventionally, we reduce them to mere "moralistic stereotypes", "a simple means of persuasion that forces the dream or fantasy into doctrinal compliance" ...

"In contrast archetypal psychology holds that the true iconoclast is the image itself which explodes its allegorical meanings, releasing startling new insights." (*ReVisioning Psychology*)

Images that are disturbing and distressing are the most likely to break the mould of who we think we are and what we claim to know about ourselves. What they ask of us is that we give them our attention, watch and listen to

"the necessity of the image", "experiencing the unfathomable analogical richness of the image". (*Inquiry Into Image*)

An image Hillman uses himself is that of the "necessary angel".

The Skies were full of angels at the time of Christ's annunciation. But only one angel came forward and gave the news to Mary. This was the necessary angel, just as the images in our own dreams are the ones we need to see and hear.

A further central component of Hillman's work is his belief that the therapist or analyst is the attendant or carer of the soul, no more and no less. Therefore it is not to do with fixing us up so that we do not have to follow the fantastic route our

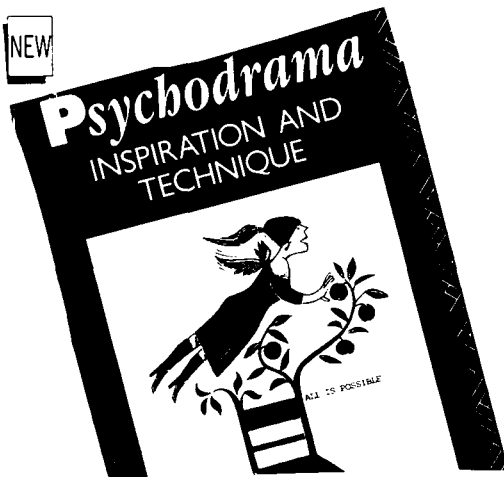
soul takes through life - Keats' "Vale of soul-making". For him, our sicknesses are a doorway into life, into a depth we would not have access to without them. He invites us to reconsider the value of pathological symptoms, to beware the repression of "normalcy". Take depression as an example. We tend to regard depression as an enemy which requires all kinds of repressive or diversionary tactics for its avoidance.

"Yet ... the true revolution begins in the individual who can be true to his or her depression" (*Re Visioning Psychology*).

Hillman's style is rich and unique. He blends a conservative, male, heirophantic athenomeness with the Jungian logos and tradition with startling about-turns and dazzling acrobatics of the imagination. His language is at the same time densely constructed - and often difficult - and passionately sensual. He reinfuses psychology and the bizarre, the mythical and the divine. He brings passion and poetry to psychological writings and removes it far from the world of dry-as-dust literary criticism of the soul.

Totnes

Alyss Thomas



Psychodrama: Inspiration and technique, Paul Holmes and Marcia Karp. Routledge, 1991. 254 pages. £35.00 hbk; £14.99 pbk

This is an up-to-date book of essays around the topic of psychodrama, mainly concerned with how to work with special groups. After a Preface by Marcia Karp, and a couple of short introductory chapters setting the scene, we get a chapter on working with adolescents, and one on working with young people with severe learning difficulties. Zerka Moreno con-

tributes a chapter on family therapy. We then get chapters on working with sexually abused young people, and one by Marcia Karp on working with sexually abused adults. Then back to the adolescents, this time using methods close to group analysis, and one on an anorexic patient. We then move on to alcoholics, and also a chapter on working with adult children of alcoholics and co-dependents. Jinnie Jefferies, who was seen on television in an excellent series on psychodrama, contributes a chapter on working with hard-core offenders. Then Anne Ancelin Schutzenberger tells us about working with seriously ill patients suffering from cancer. A final chapter by Barbara Jean Quin tells us about working with therapists.

Virtually every chapter has copious quotes from sessions, and this gives the book a strong reality base - it is all-most convincing. The chapters are very variable, both in length and in quality. They range from 5 pages to 22 pages, and from the excellent to the fair. The chapter on working with a family makes one wonder why psychodrama is not used much more often in this area. The final chapter, on working with psychotherapists and other mental health workers, would, I think, be of value to anyone working in this field. It gives some very good arguments for using psychodrama in support groups, and goes over some of the things to remember when setting up such groups. In general, this book would be useful to anyone working with groups, but particularly, of course, if working with the specific groups mentioned.

London E17
John Rowan

The Elements of Human Potential, Nevill Drury. Element Books, £4.95, 138 pages

Nevill Drury, an anthropologist, compares scientific psychology with the intangibles such as emotions and intuition. He provides potted biographies of the pioneers of the Human Potential Movement. Transpersonal Psychology is described as the "Fourth Force", following Freudian psycho-analysis, Behaviourism and Humanistic Psychology. Its key figures were Abraham Maslow, who was influenced by Gestalt psychology, and Sutich. Both Sutich and Alan Watts were fascinated by the idea of Satori, the Zen concept of sudden enlightenment. Esalen and Encounter come next and an account of the role of the founder of Gestalt, Fritz Perls. Throughout this book there are some excellent black and white drawings, including that in the chapter entitled "The Psychedelic Years". This touches on the 'Summer of Love' in 1966/7 in Haight-Ashbury, the political activists of Berkeley and the experiments of Timothy Leary. He and his colleagues sought a Buddhist framework for their mystical orientation, and used the Tibetan Book of the Dead. The sixth chapter deals with maps for inner space relating to archetypal levels of spiritual reality. The research of John Lilly and Stanislav Grof is also mentioned. Lilly was interested in dolphin-human relationships; Grof developed a model of the human mind which accommodated deeper levels of consciousness. The holistic perspective is also incorporated. The final chapter refers to the 'New Age' with its focus on healing with crystals, chakra balancing, astrology and the phenomena of shamans and gurus. In conclusion, Jean Shinoda Bolen and Jean Houston suggest we should tap our sacred potential and rediscover the spiritual and universal in everyday life.

London, W1
Sandra Eros

Deeply Touched Inside - Metaphors of Sex and Love, Aron Gersh, illustration by Denise Welsh, Human Potential Press (1990), £8.00

Reading this book, I was deeply touched inside. Aron has written down what I have known all my life. I sent a copy to my lover, because it said more clearly, and poetically, what I had been saying to him, and what women have tried to say to men for years, that the quality of the sexual relationship must be influenced by how we relate outside of sex. It gives me hope to read this written by a man and, I am sure, has taken courage and much soul searching to produce. Letting go of cultural indoctrination is a lengthy process.

I found the prose/poetry style in which most of the book is written arousing. The section on intercourse was very sexy and that on orgasm was orgasmic. The book showed me just how delicate the male/female balance really is and how potency waxes and wanes, in both sexes. I was left with a feeling of peace. Reading the conclusion and afterword was quiet and restful, after passion had completed it-self.

I might have preferred the poetry alone, but thought the explanations necessary, things that had to be said. The pictures are inspiring. But I missed a mention of outer union reflecting inner union. When I am used to being deeply moved by me, then I can be deeply moved by you, if you are deeply moving, without acting out sexually. When I can contain my own feelings, then I do not need to feel contained by you. Otherwise I panic.

But this is a book about sex and love, not psychodynamics.

It says that:

"When our
Physical embrace
is an expression of having
embraced each other's
Hearts and Souls and Beings totally
then
Sex is at its best"

Aron calls this being "fully engaged" and says:

If we are to be truly married
We need to be fully engaged first.

Bravo! I am so glad he said it. This leaves me with the question which I have also had for years: "Is there ever true sexual union outside of marriage?" and "Does a ceremony constitute a marriage?" For he states clearly that he cannot make the feelings happen, they either do or they don't of their own accord. Physical contact alone, even when arousing, is not enough to create a marriage.

My last question, not dealt with fully here, is: "Can I marry you, when I am divorced from my Self?" Is inner union not essential for true outer marriage?

London,
Wendy Freebourne