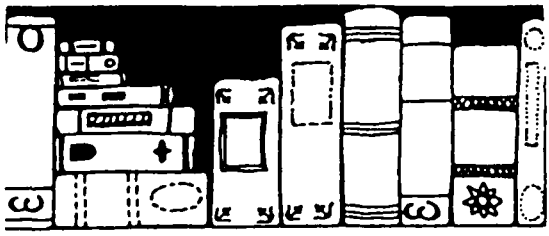
BOOK REVIEWS



The Stormy Search for the Self,
Understanding and Living With Spiritual Emergency, *Christina and Stanislav Grof, Mandala, London 1991*

An Extended Review by Juliana Brown and Richard Mowbray

As its title implies, this book is concerned with the 'rougher rides' on the path of personal growth and self discovery - what the Grofs refer to as "Spiritual Emergencies", a term suggesting both crisis and emergence, danger and opportunity. They define these as:

> "critical and experientially difficult stages of a profound psychological transformation that involves one's entire being."

Triggers

These can be triggered by a wide range of events including near-death experiences, strong emotional experiences such as the loss of a loved one, childbirth, the use of mind altering drugs and involvement in various spiritual practices. There have even been instances where a dental extraction under nitrous oxide has been the catalyst.

The Grofs argue that the concept of mental disease has been inappropriately extended to include many states that, strictly speaking, are natural conditions - manifestations of a natural and evolutionary process rather than a disease process. The process of Spiritual Emergence in general and especially its more dramatic manifestations have come to be viewed as pathological in modern society and in consequence are routinely treated with suppressive medication.

The authors are however at pains to emphasise that true mental diseases exist and require psychiatric treatment and care:

> "While we firmly believe that *some* of the people who are labelled as psychotic are really undergoing difficult stages of spiritual opening, we are by no means implying that all psychoses are really transformative crises. The reader should be cautioned against taking such a generalised attitude."

Emergence and Emergency

Part of the book focuses on criteria for differentiating between Spiritual Emergency and genuine disease processes involving the mind.

The book also seeks to differentiate between Spiritual Emergencies and Spiritual Emergence. Here, the clever play on words may get the better of them as spiritual emergencies sounds rather too similar to Spiritual Emergences. "Spiritual Emergence" refers to the wholing/healing process, the growth process, the primal process, individuation, the process of moving towards a greater awareness of one's true nature. When this process becomes so intense and rapid that it interferes with normal daily functioning, the term "Spiritual Emergency" becomes appropriate.

The emergency exists by and large in relation to the person's **outer** life. The inner process, though it may be stormy, frightening, painful and prolonged, remains in essence a positive healing one, as envisaged by the Grofs. This book has been written in an effort to reduce, through education, some of the hazards of this process emanating from both within and without.

Hazards

There are risks of hospitalisation and the abortion of the unfolding process by drug-based interference which can make the process more difficult to complete and lead to psychiatric labelling, social stigma, reduced job opportunities and reduced access to financial services such as insurance. (And perhaps a reduced opportunity to work with the Grofs at a future stage!) There are dangers of suicide, of accident and of involvement with the police.

The process is fine; the problems are the social and political context in which it occurs and the lack of supportive resources available.

Practical Support

Ten types of Spiritual Emergency are discussed, including the awakening of kundalini, the shamanic crisis, peak experiences, near death experiences, emergence of past life memories, psychological renewal through a return to the centre, and possession states. A strong case is also made out for the various forms of addiction being forms of Spiritual Emergency in many instances and for addiction being a significant hazard for anyone in the throes of such a transformational crisis.

Perhaps the most useful parts of the book are those chapters which deal with practical advice for the person undertaking the inner journey and detailed guidance for those who may help them or with whom they live. How does one "live in two worlds"? Whilst giving due attention to the inner process going on, how can one temporarily contain it when necessary, in order to maintain one's outer life? And, how can one integrate the experience subsequently?

Resources to support rather than suppress the processes described here, are rather thin on the ground (even in California!) In an attempt to rectify this situation Christina founded the Spiritual Emergence Network (SEN) in 1980. This has grown into an international organization that offers information and referral for people involved in transformational processes. A contact address and details of the SEN are provided in the book.

The Grofs also offer a model for twenty-four-hour care centres which would provide a genuine sanctuary for people in these crises - an environment where the process could be allowed to proceed unhindered.

Such centres have been attempted before (such as Perry's "Diabasis") but have tended to founder on the rock of financing. Writing in a U.S. context, the Grofs hope that such centres and their new 'treatments' can in time become acceptable for medical insurance schemes. However, this generates a paradox if the process is not seen as one of disease - unless the practice of medicine is to take on functions of a quasi-religious nature. To us it seems more appropriate that funding (and hence control) should be by new public or private organisations who accept that the fostering of the evolution of our consciousness is a valuable - and vital - concern.

Control and Choice

We feel that there is a certain amount of 'fudging' in this book with respect to the differentiation between spiritual emergencies and psychiatric disorders. On the one hand, the differentiation is made on the basis of whether there is a disease process going on or one of meaningful emergence. On the other hand the distinction is based on whether the process is amenable to the strategies the Grofs propose. Thus where there is evidence of acting out, excessive use of projection, delusions of persecution etc., it is suggested that a medical approach is probably more appropriate than the strategy for spiritual emergency. Maybe so, however this confuses whether or not it is a spiritually emergent process with whether or not it can be worked with. Suppressive treatment may be necessary, but here psychiatry is functioning as an agency of social control rather than as a curative agency.

An issue which is not really addressed in this book is that of choice in relation to spiritual emergency. Why do some people embark on an inner journey that involves total preoccupation with the outpourings of their unconscious day and night for weeks, requiring others to take responsibility for their care, whilst some people manage to grow spiritually without abandoning responsibility for their daily lives?

In the more accepting social climate that now exists in some quarters for this type of event, some people may unconsciously take permission for this type of path without sufficient resources really being in place to sustain it. (Others may consciously yearn for it as a hopefully more rapid alternative to their current path - usually in vain in our experience.)

The Far Side of Madness

The path of Spiritual **Emergency** would seem not to be a preferred one to take in our culture. To embark on such a process in a hostile environment may in itself represent an acting out of self-destructive urges - the death aspect of the death rebirth process. How can the emergent urge be steered towards less hazardous paths?

Much of what is to be found in this book has been said elsewhere particularly by Perry. However, this book is in many ways much more accessible and practical and covers a wider range of phenomena which may emerge in the course of such crises. And, the new terminology is less pejorative and ambiguous than say, referring to such events as "psychotic process".

This book will be a boon to many people and their relatives, friends and professional helpers trying to make sense of what is happening during intense periods of personal transformation, offering as it does an alternative to the prevailing view of the process as pathological. As with the Grofs' other books there is a reassuring matter of factness about the various possibilities on their richly detailed and encompassing map. (The matter of factness helps but can also be irritating - it makes it all sound easy. What if I can't face it? One might well need here-and-now spiritual resources in the form of human kindness and empathy to do so.)

Those who want to go even deeper into this subject would be well advised to read the Grofs' other book in this area (as editors) - *Spiritual Emergency* as well as John Weir Perry's books especially *The Far Side of Madness*. We usually have mixed feelings about the guide book approach to journeys, however this is a 'rough guide' for rough passages. In this case, read before you go.

References:

Stanislav & Christina Grof (Eds.): Spiritual Emergency: When Personal Transformation becomes a crisis, J.P. Tarcher, 1989

John Weir Perry: The Far Side of Madness, Prentice-Hall, 1974.

Journey of the Heart: Intimate Relationship and the Path of Love, *John Welwood. London, Mandala, 1991.*

"Never before have intimate relationships called on us to face ourselves and each other with so much honestly and awareness". So John Welwood opens his most timely book *Journey of the Heart: Intimate Relationship and the Path of Love*. Today family and society no longer either dictate or uphold the form and function of relationships, only the "intrinsic quality of their personal connection" remains as the foundation on which we can build. The author suggests that we see this as a source of opportunity rather than despair. In attempting a new kind of intimacy by trying to unite romantic love, sexual passion and a meeting of equals in one relationship - we can also attempt to heal the age old rift between male and female, heart and mind, feeling and thinking. Furthermore we can also use relationship itself as an instrument for the evolution of both our

own personal and the wider human consciousness. Thus, he says, "intimacy becomes a path ... And relationship becomes, for the first time, conscious".

This book then, is an attempt to see intimate relationship as a practice and a path which may deepen our connection with ourselves, with those we love, and expand our sense of who we are. The first section 'The Nature of Path' maps the general features of this path. The dominant features are openness, awareness, courage and gentleness. The second section 'Personal Path' speaks of the intimacies and challenges of personal relationships, and a way of using such relationships as a mirror of our own intra-personal problems and growth. Enlarging the sphere of relationship, the third section sees the path of relationship as 'Sacred Path', in which sacred refers to the connection with Life's energy. This section expands the personal sphere to include transpersonal and archetypal male and female energies. Through the stages of escaping from the stereotypes of maleness and femaleness, and developing and balancing the internal male and female, celebration of conscious maleness and femaleness is cultivated, inspiring the development of greater awareness, the evolution of personal being, and finally greater connectedness with the whole of life.

This is a book which speaks of important matters in an almost deceptively simple manner. It has been some ten years in the writing, during which time the style and elaboration have been pared down to the bone in an attempt to make its message as immediate as possible. Thus John Welwood wears his learning lightly, though he illustrates his message from literature, myth and therapeutic practice, its solid foundation in Buddhism and contemporary psychology is hardly noticeable, subsumed in its immediate presence. At first I personally missed the wide ranging references found in his earlier writings, (the two collections of articles on East/West psychology *The Meeting of the Ways*: 1979, *Awakening the Heart*, Shambhala 1983 and articles in the *American Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*), but came to accept and appreciate the suitability of the medium to the message. It is written from, and addressed to the 'beginner's mind', the mind unencumbered with theory and prejudice, which experiences things and relationships just as they are in every moment, freed from the constraints and scaffolding of hopes, fears, rules and expectations. Its message is both simple and profound: 'Life's ordinary magic lies right in front of us when we relate fully and directly to things as they are." This is the quest of a fulfilled life. John Welwood shows how we can bring this spirit to our relationships, both enriching them and using them to enrich all of life.

For those who are interested in the wider background to the book, I highly recommend reading it in conjunction with *The Challenge of the Heart* (Shambhala 1985). This is a companion volume containing the most interesting, provocative and helpful writings the author came across during the many years he worked on the present book. John and his wife Jennifer have developed a training programme for working with intimate relationship as a path based on the principles and practices in the book.

Devon

Gay Watson

Meditation in Six Steps, *David Stevens, Deadfingers Press, 1990*

An easily read booklet which describes a basic meditation practice in everyday language. Stevens' easy style de-mystifies meditation and may indeed attract the novice to try the six stage practice. Perhaps in his attempt to present meditation in an ordinary way, he has sacrificed something of the depth and spirit of the practice, understanding the difficulties and denouncing the need for a teacher. He skims over the uncovering of the shadow with its concomitant responses and dangers. Despite this criticism, I commend his attempt to introduce meditation to a wider audience.

Dartington
Maura Sills

Fire in the Lotus: The Dynamic Buddhism of Nichiren, *Daniel B. Montgomery. London, Mandala, 1991.*

For many, the word *Nichiren* probably means very little. Few would recognise the thirteenth century Japanese Buddhist teacher who railed against his government as they dithered in the face of imminent Mongolian invasion, while proclaiming that the destiny of Japan lay in the Nation paying exclusive heed to what he, Nichiren, had to say. What relevance, one may ask, could this man have in our present world? Yet since the Second World War there has grown up in Japan a lay-organisation affiliated to Nichiren Shoshu, one of the traditional branches of Nichiren Buddhism, which now claims sixteen million members (out of a population of 100 million). It is the largest lay religious organisation in the world, has spawned a political party which is now the third largest in the Japanese parliament, and by the twenty-first century "expects to be the most powerful political-religious force in the world". This organisation, called "Sokagakkai", has established an international network, with a growing and increasingly influential membership around the world. In Britain it goes under the acronym NSUK (Nichiren Shoshu U.K.) and conducts it affairs from Taplow Court, a lavish stately home in Berkshire. According to Daniel Montgomery, the Japanese economic miracle is believed by members of Sokagakkai "to have its origin in the spirit of Japan as elucidated by Nichiren. To prosper further it must renovate the world."

Unlike many of the better-known forms of Buddhism, which are renowned for their serene and peaceful demeanour, meditation, detachment from the world and sublime metaphysics, Sokagakkai offers a form of religious practice that is not only simple and straightforward but actively involved in the world - from business and politics, to sport and the performing arts. The practice involves the daily chanting of NAMU MYOHO RENGE KYO (the Japanese pronunciation of the title of the Buddhist Lotus Sutra) often to the accompaniment of a beating drum. The organisation has a somewhat missionary flavour and in the

past has come under considerable criticism for its practice of Shakubuku - i.e. aggressive conversion techniques. It is also not noted for an open-minded attitude towards other Buddhist groups, who, in the spirit of its founder, it dismisses as being largely irrelevant to the contemporary situation.

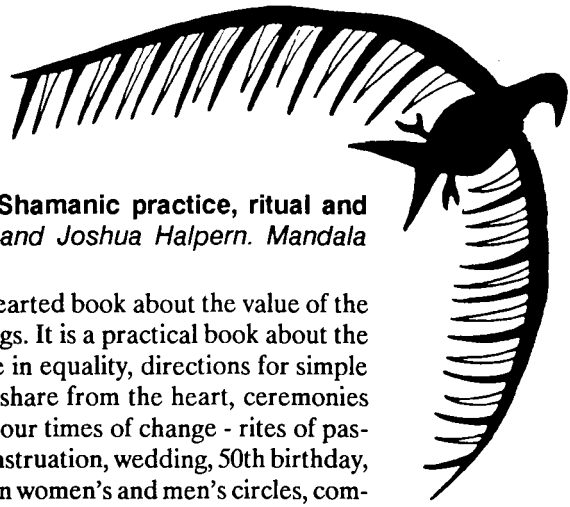
Fire in the Lotus is a comprehensive and readable account of the history and current state of Nichiren Buddhism. It starts with an account of the historical Buddha and traces the development of Buddhist thought and practice, thus enabling the reader to understand the religious and historical context out of which Nichiren evolved his teaching. By necessity, these sections of the book are sketchy and on occasion misleading (the author makes a rather confused distinction between the Lotus and the Flower Garland sutras, for example). The narrative does not really take off until we encounter the impressive figure of Nichiren himself. We follow his life through its trials and hardships, his banishment into exile, attempts on his life and the grudging beginnings of acceptance in his later years. He was a prolific and outspoken writer and his own words (amply and judiciously quoted) offer the best clues to his character. We then follow the careers of his disciples and the complicated schisms that divided them, leading over the subsequent centuries to a wide range of schools.

Of the modern movements, Montgomery justifiably covers Sokagakki at the greatest length, but also describes other modern off-shoots of the Nichiren faith, such as Reiyukai and Rissho Kosei-kai, both of whom have more than two million members world-wide.

If Nichiren Buddhism in its various forms continues growing at the pace it has since the war, it might well achieve the religious eminence it aspires to. It challenges not only the West's perception of Buddhism as a passive, ascetic religion, but also the other traditional forms of Buddhism, such as Theravada, Zen and Vajrayana, which are developing in Europe and America along very different lines. It may be accused of being fundamentalist, evangelistic and even simplistic, but it clearly is addressing the needs of modern men and women and offering a form of religious practice that more and more people, from all kinds of cultural, social and ethnic backgrounds, find to be effective. Montgomery's timely study of this movement does not probe deeply into the psychological and spiritual roots of the attraction that Nichiren Buddhism exerts, but it provides an excellent and balanced survey of the phenomenon.

Stephen Batchelor

Stephen Batchelor is the author and translator of several books on Buddhism. His most recent publication is The Faith of Doubt: Glimpses of Buddhist Uncertainty.



The Ceremonial Circle, Shamanic practice, ritual and renewal. *Sedonia Cahill and Joshua Halpern. Mandala Books, 1991. £7.99*

This is an excellent warm-hearted book about the value of the circle in all its many meanings. It is a practical book about the ways of relating in the circle in equality, directions for simple ceremonies to help people share from the heart, ceremonies to honour the Earth; to honour times of change - rites of passage - such as birth, first menstruation, wedding, 50th birthday, death and so on. Chapters on women's and men's circles, community circles, political action. There is a nice piece on the Medicine wheel and the meanings of the directions, and quite a lot about vision questing.

This book is written from the heart, with lots of personal anecdotes, and it has a very good 'feel' to it. Also it includes contributions from other medicine teachers such as Vicki Noble, Starhawk, Brooke Medicine Eagle and Anna Halprin. Recommended!

London
Leo Rutherford.

The Spirit of Shamanism, *Roger N. Walsh. Mandala Books, 1991. £7.99*

This is a very scholarly work and gives an overview of shamanism and the world of the shaman. It is well worth a read for information, but Roger Walsh is a professor of psychiatry and philosophy at the University of California, and it shows. What this book is NOT, is a book of personal experience because it becomes clear that the author does not have a great deal of that. Hence the "spirit" of shamanism is the one thing that this book is not about, much more the psychology of shamanism.

The first four sections of the book where the author is on his own ground of history and facts, where he draws quotations from many authoritative sources, are very informative. He weaves together many strands and he attempts to delve into the psychology of what the shaman does, though sometimes drawing oversimplified conclusions. When in section five he gets on to a comparative study of shamanic altered states of consciousness, his lack of personal experience invalidates his efforts and I find myself parting company with him.

All in all a worthwhile book for background knowledge and for its comparative work on transpersonal psychology and shamanism, but also a flawed book. To be read with a red pencil handy.

London
Leo Rutherford.

Moving Heaven and Earth: Sexuality, Spirituality and Social Change, *Lucy Goodison, The Women's Press 1990, 498pp, Hb £30.00*

When I heard that Lucy Goodison had brought out a fat new book (500 pages) on sexuality and spirituality I knew I wanted it, even before I had looked at it. And when I started to read it I knew my faith was justified: it is an exciting and fascinating book.

Her book has two linchpin ideas which she argues fully and convincingly. First, she says that we in the modern West have a world view which thrives on splitting things into opposites: active/passive, good/bad, black/white, body/spirit male/female, heaven/earth... (This for me is only too apparent now, in wartime, when the will to fight depends on such a split: 'we' are good, honourable, merciful, right; 'they' are bad, dishonourable, cruel, wrong.) As human beings we use and are influenced by symbols, and our symbols too partake of this splitting, so reinforcing our view of a divided world.

Secondly she argues that our symbol systems are not fixed, they only represent our current views of the world. (She has some interesting things to say here about Jung's archetypes, as well as Freud's sexual imagery - and Lacan, who I admit I have never read.) So, though symbol systems which are unconsciously accepted can strengthen the status quo, we have the possibility of changing and creating our own symbol systems, and so redefining, indeed reshaping, our world.

Having made these main points, Goodison moves on to describe one culture which does not seem to have needed to deal in opposites. The culture is that of Crete in the years 3000 BC to 1600 BC - one which has had to bear the heavy burden of 'proving' to some wishful thinkers that a genuine woman-orientated, gentle, ideal society once did exist. Goodison is scholarly and critical, as well as imaginative, and she makes plain to the reader what is fact and what is interpretation. Without idealising anything she paints a convincing picture of a society where things we consider irreconcilable opposites were woven into an organic whole: where death was not opposed to life, but seen as a stage on an everlasting process; where women were not inferior and men superior, but where humans were rich with potential; where the world wasn't divided up into bosses and workers; and where the body wasn't seen as separate from the spirit.

This last is the crux of the matter, the separation of sexual body from spirit, of earth from heaven, a split which has so damaged, and so continues to damage, the societies of the Western world. As Goodison says, if she can show that 'in one small pocket of time' heaven and earth were not split off from each other, then she can show that our whole twentieth-century system of beliefs - which depends on this split - is not universal or valid for all time.

Having discussed her views of Ancient Crete (which, with the next chapter, formed the basis of her PhD thesis and which are well worth reading in themselves) Goodison describes the process by which this culture changed, so that heaven and earth became separated and both became ruled by men - a male god in heaven, and male humans on earth.

But we need not despair. The second, and larger, 'half' of the book is practical. Chapter by chapter it offers alternative, holistic, ways of describing and understanding our experience, ways which do not depend on splitting men from women, body from soul. The first chapter in this section is on dreams.

Goodison urges the importance of imagination in order to move beyond stereotyped thinking, and offers exercises to help us liberate our imaginations and dream-worlds from the constraints of imposed symbol systems.

The next chapter discusses the symbols of alchemy, tarot, astrology and the astral and again seeks to liberate us - this time from the power of the unknown, the 'occult'. These are not systems which are 'right' but unknowable, incomprehensible. Nor are they 'wrong'. But they are systems which have worked for many people, to explain, to guide, to offer interpretations of experience; and we too may find them useful, but need to test them against our experience. (And, again, Goodison offers exercises to help us do just that.)

The next chapter suggests ways of looking at the body and spirit as one. Having discussed the various subtle energy fields of the body she offers an idea that I love. 'Instead of notions of spiritual energy being 'trapped' in the solid body or 'attached' to it in some arbitrary way, we have rather the metaphor of the physical body as the tip of the iceberg: the only visible part of a far larger structure of which it is an intrinsic part... Instead of imagining an alienated soul on the inside trying to get out, we have a closely connected continuum of subtle energies trying to get in, to express through.'

In the last chapter Goodison turns to the political, and to political action, and to ways of bridging the gulf between spirituality and politics.

In this review I have not been 'critical', pointing out the pros and cons, and debating Goodison's arguments. Somehow, in reviewing such a mammoth work, that would feel like carping. And anyway I would need to leave the book for a while and then read it again in order to get the necessary distance. Then you would not get this review for ages, and I want you to read this review, and to buy and read the book. Then you can make your own criticisms.

London
Fran Mosley

Domination and the Arts of Resistance - Hidden Transcripts, *James C. Scott, Yale University Press*

I begin by quoting the author:-

> "The bond between domination and appropriation means that is impossible to separate the ideas and symbolism of subordination from the process of material exploitation" (p188)

An exciting book for sociologists and political scientists redolent as it is with libertarian philosophical analysis and close observation of people in denigrated and downtrodden circumstances. However it is a book that neither oppressor nor oppressed will ever read, and it is difficult to see how a professional book like this could help either, locked as they too often are in a blind mutually denigratory struggle over apparently scarce resources.

The book is worth reading, particularly for those of us who habitually think "psychologically" and offers a reminder of the complexity and abiding force of power relations in and between groups.

Scott doesn't romanticise the downtrodden, but does suggest that silent, hidden resistance if it can be but recognised is continuously ready to burst out of any situation of long-term repression.

He also points out that severe repression bodes ill for the behaviour of those people who have suffered it, after the immediate circumstances of domination have ceased. Something our overseas policy ought to be taken into account when faced with anti-western feeling of murderous intensity. He also offers a series of theatrical metaphors to suggest how ruling classes enact their fantasies of hegemony by ceremony and rituals of domination and how subordinate groups enact through gossip, rumour, storytelling and non-compliance their own mute resistance. However, despite its length and complexity the book doesn't hang together. Like the revolts it describes it is fragmentary and incomplete.

It is silent on relations between men and women, and between parents and children. I would have preferred less interpretation and more and longer extracts from the fascinating texts and stories that Scott has accumulated.

Returning to a more psychological viewpoint, and particularly a developmental one, an area where the book is silent, it would be very worthwhile to study tyranny as an internal and abiding aspect of psychic life, which might in turn shed light on the destructive tenacity of sado-masochistic relationships across many human societies. Donald Meltzer's book *Sexual States of Mind* comes to mind; however, a comprehensive understanding that links material deprivation and self and other inflicted psychological suffering isn't yet available to us yet is the problem of our times.

We cannot respect Nature, until we come to respect our internal nature, something that is difficult while an internalised sado-masochistic relationship prevails in the family or polity each of us carries inside ourselves.

Taunton,
Nigel Williams

A Special Scar, *Alison Wertheimer. Routledge, 1991. £35.00 Hb, £10.99 Pb*

This book covers, in some depth, the experience of people who have been bereaved by suicide. The author has suffered this experience herself, but is careful not to make the assumption that other people's experiences will necessarily be similar to her own.

Wertheimer has interviewed fifty people who were the children, parents or siblings of a suicide victim. These relatives who have been bereaved she calls 'survivors' of suicide. Appendix B gives information about the interviewees: their age at the time of the suicide, their relationship to the victim, and the victim's age at the time of the suicide. However, although Wertheimer had interviews of between one and three hours with each survivor, I was unable to piece together the whole story of any one survivor because their quotations are scattered throughout the book under various topic headings. Several quotes from different survivors follow fast upon each other so that I gained a general view of typical attitudes towards, say, the coroner's court, rather that a deep understanding of one person's feelings.

This gave the book an impersonal feel, and so my initial anxiety that I would be deeply upset by reading this book unfounded.

Wertheimer covers a vast range of topics and uses subheadings to guide the reader to specific areas, such as Chapter 6, entitled "Why did it happen?" with subheadings: "The search for meaning; The nature of the search; You cannot ask the victim why; What sort of person was the victim?; Suicide notes; Doubts about the victim's intentions; Wisdom with hindsight" and "Living without all the answers."

The impression I'm left with after reading this book is that it's a well researched competent and highly sensitive account of the pain and the problems experienced by survivors of suicide. As such it would provide comfort and practical help (Appendix A lists relevant support organisations for survivors of suicide) for survivors, and provide insights into the problems for those who wish to help them.

One thing sticks in my mind. Wertheimer says (p.72) "two words used to describe the victim seemed to crop up frequently - 'perfectionism' and 'loss'." Later that day I read a national newspaper, headline: "Deathfall Doctor in plea to mother"; and in the text - "He was a perfectionist and said he wanted to do everything right."

Jane Carlisle

Family Belief Systems, Therapy and Change, *Rudi Dallos. Open University Press, 1991, 190pp, £12.99 Pb*

What do we know about contemporary family life? The **UN 1991 Convention on the Rights of the Child** estimates that an average one in every ten children is sexually abused in Britain each year. The current NSPCC annual report says that 53,000 children were physically, emotionally or sexually abused in 1990, 80% of them in the home. A Manchester University study, recently popularised on television, shows that one in seven women reported being raped by their husbands, one in five whilst pregnant, and a noteworthy Court of Appeal ruling has just recognised that spousal rape is a crime. The statistics for domestic violence are even more significant, the Metropolitan Police Domestic Violence Units now receiving three times as many referrals as in the previous year. The horrific details uncovered by all the research on family violence may appear unbelievable but a lifetime's commitment to this area of human pathology has led Professor Michael Freeman in his study, *Violence in the Home* (1979), to call the family the cradle of violence, with the greatest likelihood of death for babies under one year.

Freeman is supported in his view by all the many research studies I have had to consider in my own ongoing evaluation of family crisis intervention, yet Rudi Dallos, with his responsibility as a Staff Tutor in psychology, and as co-founder of the **Family Research Group**, does not address this central issue of concern. His book sets out to discuss 'the understandings, beliefs, explanations, and **constructs** that people use in order to manage their relationship in families, and his first chapter looks at 'images of families'. Yet it does not consider the foremost critique in most psychological, sociological and legal studies, reinforced by marxist, bourgeois and libertarian feminist alike, that 'the family' is a site of ideological struggle, in which dominant groups, for political and economic purposes, have encouraged unequal patriarchal relationships to provide informal social control mechanisms. Instead Dallos focuses on family life-cycle models, and then goes on to link these with systems theories, and Kelly's personal construct theory in particular.

He uses this to lay the foundation for a dynamic view of family life, and then reviews the contribution of cybernetic/systems theory-based models. Subsequently Dallos uses personal construct theory to analyse the family within the system, and then group processes and shared construct systems. He develops the unexceptional concept that couples and families are guided by mutually interlocking cycles of beliefs and actions, although his stated ecological perspective gives inadequate attention to the effects of the socio-economic environment and its variable determinants. Finally he applies his ideas to theories of change, although here again these relate more to internal relationships than the critical social exchanges with the wider community involving employers, the police, health and welfare personnel, with whom families come in contact.

In all this Dallos displays professional and academic competence in describing and advocating his constructed construct, although some AHP readers might

have preferred him to include some kind of brief examination of, and contrast with, other theories of human relationships. For instance, there is no reference to Sue Walrond-Skinners' important early work in family therapy. Even more seriously, there is no awareness shown of the work of family conciliation services and their role in family crisis intervention in uncovering the dynamics of family systems which is the chief focus of the book.

This returns us to those crucial issues for family life with which this review began. Family therapy is, quite rightly, the first and most important option for impaired and distressed families (as well as to be recommended to many pseudo-healthy ones), but it is now being considered as inadequate and even counter-productive for families where violence is present. Family therapy is familization, can mask the legitimate relationships which contain hidden terror for its most vulnerable members. Not only crisis intervention centres like those of Chiswick Family Rescue, whose Director, Sandra Horley advocates an immediate arrest-and-legal injunction policy before family therapeutic work begins, but also Home Office psychiatrists, Dr Grubin and Dr Gunn of the Institute of Psychiatry, are now recommending women to resist forcibly immediately and any violence shown to them. Seligman's theory of 'learned helplessness', not discussed in Dallos' book, which contributed a significant understanding to the cultural role of women in a machismo society, is now being extrapolated into a search for an understanding of what 'learned resistance' must mean for women and children today. As a person with 36 years of happy marriage and family life, for which I am grateful, there is no general male hostility in my comments. Men and women together have made possible the development of violence in society, as much throughout social history as now. It is, as Freeman has said, a norm, and society's 'technicians of human relations', as Donzelot (1980) call us, the police, and other social controllers have masked the violence of the 'private order' and concentrated the most politically necessary unmasking on the violence of the 'public order'. However, I thank God that our conscientization, as Freire described it, has now begun and that we have become sensitised to the harm and destruction with which we construct our intimate relationships. It is on this basis, that I find it so sad that an excellent specialised student textbook should show no recognition of these salient problems with which its subject should be concerned. I can only hope that family therapists who read it will also face the challenges of my critique, and help men and women to work together to develop the beneficial family life that our creator intended.

Donzelot,J. (1980) The Policing of Families, Hutchison
Freeman, M. (1979) Violence in the Home, Saxon House

London
Yvonne Craig

The Challenge of Art to Psychology, *Seymour B.Sarason. Yale University Press 1990, £18.95*

The question this book deals with is one familiar to me as a primary teacher - why on earth do children, who when young show such competence as artists, grow for the most part into adults who show so little of the talent they once had? We teachers have consoled ourselves with broad, general, answers - blaming a society that undervalues the arts, and an education system that constrains and limits children's growth rather than encouraging it. Seymour Sarason, too, points the finger at (modern, Western) society and its education system. But he also blames our psychologies which have expended so much of their energy on measuring and defining existing behaviour rather than exploring the possibilities of human potential - and which, in so doing, have helped limit our conceptions of what human beings can be and can do.

Some of the discussion in this book may feel superfluous to readers familiar with criticisms of Establishment psychology, and the writing style tends to the heavy and academic rather than the friendly and readable - but this may be necessary in order to bend the ears of the academic psychologists he is challenging. The book does, however, have some fascinating chapters where Sarason describes the work done by artist Henry Schaefer-Simmern with 'mentally retarded, institutionalised individuals' and the work of poet Kenneth Koch with children in a 'ghetto school' and old, depressed people in a nursing home. These chapters were illustrated with examples of the work produced, and I found them inspiring. I wish the book had included far more of these pictures and poems - for my own pleasure, to help me in my own work with children, and to encourage me to develop my own (sadly undeveloped) drawing and painting abilities.

Sarason's argument, if followed through, does have certain very uncomfortable implications for child-rearing, education, and so on - basically, we need to rethink what we do to children. It also has implications for us as individuals - what talents have we each personally suppressed which, if allowed to flower, might transform our lives and, by osmosis, help transform our society?

Frances Mosley

Creative movement in dance and groupwork, *Helen Payne. Winslow Press, 1990, 269pp, £15.95 spiral bound*

This is a book for group leaders which can be strongly recommended. It has something for everyone, from the person leading an adult personal growth group to the person leading a group in special education. It can be used as an introduction, for leaders who have not used this kind of approach before, or it can be used as a useful compendium for experienced leaders, simply extending their scope. There is an enthusiastic Introduction by Donna Brandes, writer of the *Gamesters' Handbooks*, which many of us have found very valuable over the years.

The book gives a brief historical introduction, and continues with equally brief practical and theoretical pointers to current practice, including hints on planning and evaluating a workshop. But the biggest section of the book gives 180 exercises and activities, each of which is explained in detail, including the time taken up by it. Each one is clear about the aims intended, and also in some cases gives extended outcomes which are possible with the exercise. At the end there is a section with helpful addresses (some of which are already out of date, some very much so), a two-page glossary (which includes a slightly misleading account of Leonard Orr's Rebirthing), a set of references and bibliography (not quite sure why both) and an index of the activities mentioned. As long as you want practical materials more than anything else, this is an excellent book.

London, E17
John Rowan

The boy who couldn't stop: The experience and treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder, *Judith Rapaport. Collins, 1990, 246pp, £8.99 Pb*

Obsessional thoughts and behaviour: Help for obsessive-compulsive disorder, *Frederick Toates. Thorsons, 1990, 192pp, £4.99 Pb.*

Here we have two books on the same subject. The first one comes from a doctor who treats what she calls OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder) as if it were a disease. She finds that clomipramine is the cure, and that behaviour therapy can help too.

The second one is from a sufferer, who is very explicit about exactly what happened to him. He, too, found that clomipramine was the most helpful thing, but tried everything else as well. Everything else except humanistic psychotherapy. Both of these books seem to think that psychotherapy means psychoanalysis, and both of them seem quite opposed to psychoanalysis. My own view is that psychotherapy can be very useful with people suffering from compulsions, as long as it is willing to go far enough back into the base of the original decision.

The Rapaport is the more systematic and the more professional of the two books. But the Toates book is the more human and personal. It does get a bit out of hand at the end, where he gives a thumbnail sketches of great obsessionals of the past, such as Samuel Johnson, Soren Kierkegaard, Hans Anderson, George Borrow, Howard Hughes, and Woody Allen.

The trouble with clomipramine is that you have to keep on taking it. The obsessive thoughts grow weaker, but do not disappear. There is the strength to give up rituals, but they still seem tempting. This is good, but of course there are some side-effects, and taking any drug forever seems a bad idea.

There still seems to be some way to go in really dealing with these problems, and one may doubt whether it helps very much to give the whole complicated mess a neat name like OCD, a disease which can be fixed in short order.

London, E17
John Rowan

New Methods in RE teaching: An experimental approach, *John Hammond et al, Oliver & Boyd, 1990, 231pp*

This is an outgrowth of the Alister Hardy religious research work in Oxford. This research is into the natural occurrence of spiritual experiences (such as, for example, peak experiences), which has been written up in such books as *Exploring Inner Space*, the well-known book written by David Hay, who contributed to, and writes the Foreword for, the present volume. A group of primary and secondary teachers interested in this research got together in Nottingham University and tried out a number of different approaches with children of different ages. This book is the result of all that work.

In the first chapter the authors make what I think is rather a nice point about their work: Rather as a novel cannot be appreciated unless the reader enters into the story, although not thereby becoming part of it, so religion also needs to be entered into the order to be appreciated properly.

They go on to say that without an appreciation of the intentions of religious people, the whole thing may seem meaningless.

Some of the first exercises, which can be done with adults just as well as with children, is simply to write out two lists, one of all the associations with the word "religion" and the other of all the associations with "spirituality". When this is done with various groups, it seems that certain differences quite regularly emerge, religion being associated with what is objective, explicit, outward, institutions; and spirituality with what is subjective, implicit, inward, feelings and experiences. Yet the two are obviously connected.

They go on to say that contemporary developments in spirituality in Britain are extremely rich and varied: drawing not only upon cross-fertilisation between Europe and Asia, but also on a sophisticated use of the techniques of psychoanalysis, an understanding of humanistic psychology and a recovery of the arts of spiritual direction, or the following of a guide or guru.

But they tend to be based on experience, and the research shows that over fifty percent of the population of Britain have had no experience at some time in their lives which they could describe as "peak", or "numinous" or "mystical". Quite often these experiences first came in childhood. But up to now, no one has been connecting up these experiences of children with their religious education.

Most of the education now available does not encourage children to pay any attention at all to their own inner experience. And yet it is only by paying attention to our own experience that we can learn to pay any attention to other people's experience, and to respect that.

And most of the education now available does not teach the importance of metaphor in interpreting experience. In particular, the kind of metaphor known as a "model of the person" is unexamined and ignored. Children are not taught that the map is not the territory. This book is strong in all these areas.

The largest section of this book (145 pages) is devoted to exercises, carefully

structured to acclimatise the learner to the experimental way of working, to raise awareness, to embody awareness, to frame awareness and to extend awareness. (These terms are carefully explained along the way.) Time, material, conditions and so forth are given in detail.

In the third and last part of the book, careful descriptions are given of how the ideas of the book can be integrated into school courses and syllabuses. There is a discussion of more unusual approaches which can be incorporated, such as movement, music and massage.

Quite a number of the books recommended at the end are familiar to readers of *Self and Society*. And much of this book will be ringing some very familiar bells. I liked this book enormously, and I hope it will be used a great deal in schools, and by parents too, because it is something which can be shared across the generations.

London, E17
John Rowan

Reality isn't what it used to be: Theatrical politics, ready-to-wear religion, global myths, primitive chic and other wonders of the postmodern world, *Walter Truett Anderson. Harper & Row, 1990, 288pp, £13.95*

Dear Walt,

This is a curious book coming from you. I remember you as author of *Politics and the New Humanism* in 1973, putting forward a striking case for the importance of Humanistic Psychology (you were then, and I believe are now, a member of the AHP) in understanding and informing political action. I remember you as author of *The Upstart Spring*, all about the importance of decentralisation, and how important it was not to serve the gods of bigness. I remember you as editor of *Rethinking Liberalism* in the same year, showing how the humanistic approach can take use beyond liberalism. And yet now here you are putting forward the case that none of this meant anything, that all that you were saying was just a story, a fiction - because all we can ever utter are stories, are fictions.

I thought at first that you were just giving an account of constructivism and postmodernism, to show us what they were like, but then I realised that you were actually espousing and recommending and urging these ideas on the reader. I first got the real clue that you were doing this when you had a whole chapter on the self ("Being Someone: The Construction of Personal Reality") and never mentioned the real self, or self-actualisation, or anything that happens in therapy, or any of your own self-discovery. In fact there is very little of you in the book at all. The Walt Anderson that I used to read and want to meet (but never did) seems to have gone.

The problem with postmodernism is that it is rootless and easily distracted. You yourself come up with some rather reassuring ideas at the end, that we can agree on some decent norms for humanity, and that these do not depend upon us all agreeing with some absolute, or single system. You even give some evidence

that this is happening. But I think this is because deep down you are a decent man, and have some roots, even though you don't want to talk about them. Someone not so nice, given the total permission which postmodernism gives to make up any old story, could arrive at some very different conclusions.

You have produced a spirited book, which I am sure will be very useful for the tortured student who has to write an essay on constructivism, but I feel sort of sad that at the end of all the struggles for a better society, you have to come to this.

London, E 17
John Rowan

Between therapist and client: The new relationship, *Michael Kahn, W H Freeman, 1991, £7.95 Pb. 175pp*

It looked so good. It promised so much. It talked about bringing together "the humanistic psychologist's concern for a warm and empathic clinical relationship" and "the psychoanalyst's interest in bringing to the surface the unconscious aspects of that relationship". And this was to be done, according to the first pages, by paying attention to the statement - "The relationship is the therapy". I was so excited I almost fell of my chair. Later the author said things like - "therapists commonly believe that the old pain or the old impulse must be re-experienced in therapy; each school has its own way of trying to bring this about." (p.58) Not many writers get this far, and I really began to hope that his was going to be worked out in details. It looked like just the kind of integration which we had been waiting for.

There are good expositions of Freud, of Rogers, of Kohut and of Merton Gill humanly and practically written so as to be of real use to the practitioner. There is not such a good exposition of countertransference. Anyone who can "consider countertransference to include all feelings and attitudes about the client that occur in the therapist" has not really taken Rogers on board at all. And really, apart from agreeing that empathy is important, there is not much of Rogers in this book. So the promise begins to break down.

All the way through the writing is clear and persuasive, and the book is a pleasure to read. But finally all we get is a liberalised psychoanalytic psychotherapy. "Re-experiencing therapists believe that transference is the royal road to that understanding". (p.157) - says the last chapter. This leaves out all the re-experiencing therapists in psychodrama, in Gestalt therapy, in primal integration, in body work...

For people working in a psychoanalytic way, this may be a helpful practical book. But it is not the book on integrating the analytic with the humanistic that I thought it was going to be from the promise of the first few pages. That book has still to be written.

London E17
John Rowan