Love in an Age of Uncertainty

Jocelyn Chaplin
Aquarian, 1993, £9. 99, 220pp.

Goddess spirituality in action: the goddess is love, is the life force.

Jocelyn Chaplin shows that life is a constant flux, where change and uncertainty are the norm; that the way to ride this roller-coaster is on a flood tide of love, a rhythmic linking of opposites, a spiral progress in which inclusion overcomes division and difference is honoured. The rhythms of her book dance between the clarity of thinking and the energy of feeling. She expounds a spiral model for existence and shows it in action through the stories of her own and others' journeys, and the myths of goddesses and gods.

Reality is not denied, and yet a radical vision is glimpsed and drawn out. 'We are all born tingling with love energy all over our bodies and interconnected with the similar energies in the universe around us. This is like a state of being in love. It is our natural birthright.' The spiral model shows how the love energy manifests in the world. There is a continuous flow from the centre — the Goddess — to the structures we need for daily living. If we can trust this flow, then we can transform patriarchy and live ecstatically. Just two examples of the revolution: First, we can 'transform our basic models of thinking about relationships from hierarchical, linear, goal-directed ones to rhythmic, fluid ones' then 'great healing can take place, not just between woman and man, man and man, woman and woman, but of the planet itself'. Second, we can redefine Eros away from phallic sexuality towards Eros as the spirit within matter, and 'a valuing of the eroticism of everyday life, a sense of feeling turned on' all the time in different ways by different people, things and events.'

This is a book for everyone: for women and for men, for therapists and for clients. Here we witness one woman's courage in using her imagination to present utopian visions of how she might live her life if she and her society were to invite in Eros and live by love. This book is a well-thought out, rhythmically conceived testament. It opens up many questions for debate, and tells us how to live more passionately, how to go with the flow of love energy. What it does not do is concede an inch to the establishment. Many received ideas of the patriarchal world are challenged, especially those to do with gender difference, sexuality and spirituality. Only the authenticity with which the author relays her experience, could offer the beginning of a bridge to people whose fear of living is contained by hierarchy. I hope it will be read and allowed to do the work of the goddess. I fear it will be ignored or vilified for its challenge to that hierarchical structure.

Gina Lomac

Beyond Carl Rogers

David Brazier (ed)
Constable, 1993, £9.95, 288pp.

This excellently assembled symposium looks in detail at how the work of Carl Rogers has grown up over the past twenty years and now, after his death, how it may develop. In the process we are also provided with an expertly guided tour through all his basic ideas and approaches.

In his introduction David Brazier emphasises the political minefield that Rogers left behind him. 'Rogers believed that the therapeutic relationship was only a special and intense form of the species of human relationships in general. This, however, is not how the great majority of clients or professionals, including even those who purport to follow Rogers' philosophy, see it. Rogers believed in equalising the power between providers and users of human services, but this principle of equality undermines the foundations upon which all such institutions are founded.' This is echoed in the last paper on 'Eclecticism' where Robert Hutterer calls for Rogerian therapists to keep their client-centred practices from being diluted with more dramatic and more market orientated systems. Hutterer sees this as a particular problem for Rogerian therapists who, he claims, tend to be 'persons who have problems of self-confidence.'

In the first paper, Germaine Lietaer examines the interdependence of Rogers' two core concepts of congruence and empathy. Unless the therapist is fully congruent, i.e. relaxed and easy in their own self, there cannot be a meaningful empathic relationship with the client. In order to experience some fellowship with your client's world, you must be fully at home in your own. And later she writes, '. . . the client finds himself faced with a therapist who is "rooted" in his own experience and who is, from there, trying to understand his message'. From this Litauer develops what she sees as an evolution from the therapist being non-directive and working totally within the client's own frame of reference to an experiential approach that encouraged the therapist to respond to the client's experience from their, the therapist's, own frame of reference. '. . . What the therapist experiences in contact with his client is now considered as important material and potentially useful . . .'

Brazier's own contribution 'The Necessary Condition is Love' raises a fascinating and paradoxical view of Rogers' 'positive and unconditional regard' — and turns it on its head. He points out that the main beneficiary of the loving concentration of attention in the therapy session is the therapist herself. It is not the receiving of love that is self-enhancing; it is the giving of love. ('More blessed to give than to receive.') He points out that the baby's first smile at its mother may not be because it wants to induce its mother to smile back but because there may be an

instinct to love before there is a need to be loved. This is why children, however badly they are abused and mistreated by their parents, will against all the odds want to stay with them and feel good about them. And he points out that eighty years ago Freud had said that 'we are bound to fall ill if, in consequence of frustration, we are unable to love.'

Brazier's new theory suggests that 'the problem for the child is not so much one of trying to get the good regard of the parent, but of trying to sustain a positive view of the parent.' And so in cases of bad parenting children may take the blame on themselves with consequent damage to their own feelings of self-esteem.

There is more evidence of the diffusion of Rogers' ideas through other disciplines in a lively discussion on Gendlin's 'Focusing' by Ann Weiser Cornell. And Joao Marquis-Teixeira describes the use of client-centred psychodrama for family therapy.

What is evident from this book is how widely Carl Rogers' ideas have spread throughout the humanistic scene - and how valuable they have been. I have immensely enjoyed reading the book and have gained much from it.

Vivian Milroy

Michel Foucault: Subversions of the Subject

Philip Barker
Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993, £12.95, 232pp.

This not an easy book and is probably aimed at students of contemporary philosophy. It focuses on the theme of the individual subject, particularly in the development of ideas in the Middle Ages, examining the work of Lovejoy, Collingwood and Freud. Barker develops Foucault's own work on the history of sexuality, and discusses the significance of Abelard's writings and the need to control women's sexuality in 12th century France in order to assure the authenticity of a patriarchal line of inheritance.

The discussion of Freud's work, especially Barker's interpretation of the central idea of the 'unconscious' and the 'Oedipal conflict' is more contentious. He emphasises the relevance of 'autobiography' in Freud's theories and applies this concept to the history of philosophy, psychoanalysis and the history of ideas, (i.e. culture). Indeed, he claims that 'philosophy today is predicated on the autobiographical voice and its supporting subject' and, as Foucault acknowledged, is related to personal ethics.

Betty Gould

How to Survive as a Psychotherapist

Nina Coltart
Insight, 1993, £9.99, 120pp.

This is a lighthearted guide to enjoying life as a therapist, both the enrichment of the work and the pleasures of relaxing and meditation in one's private life. Nevertheless Nina Coltart is a very wise and experienced practitioner and there is much to be learnt from her writings. She is well known amongst psychoanalytically oriented therapists for her papers on assessment and her advice and guidelines in this essential skill are profound. Her pleasure in this art is obvious, but so is her warmth, humour and humility in referring to alternative therapists where this is appropriate.

There is an interesting chapter on recognising and using paradoxes; especially in the choice of what is 'fed back' to the patient in using both transference and counter transference. Dr Coltart discusses the whole relationship in its special characteristics: the frequent termination of supervision in training which can provoke acute separation symptoms, and the generally accepted 'Ethics' of the profession.

Practitioners of alternative therapies may disagree about touching and physical contact, but it is good to be reminded of the need for boundaries and constant awareness that everything that is said and done in sessions has significance for the relationship. We may be seen as wise and ever skilful in dealing with problems, but we know we are anxious, fearful, uncertain, and, hopefully, always learning. Such paradoxes beset us just like Bion's advice to 'enter every session without memory or desires'.

In being fully present, suspending judgements and expectations Nina Coltart draws the parallel with Buddhist meditation. Her practice has obviously been of great value in enjoying her work and leisure to the full.

We are concerned with understanding and alleviating suffering; often sitting silently, focusing on the pain, but helping people towards a more creative understanding of the hindrances and attachments which increase their distress. Therapists can lead isolated peculiar lives, with people who become very dependant on us, so it is important not to become omnipotent. Dr Coltart recommends constant reappraisal of our intuition and technique, with respect for the patient and the process; just like the Buddhist practice which requires faith and patience, compassion and awareness. She also provides fascinating case material and helpful advice on setting up and managing a successful practice. A valuable little book for all counsellors and therapists.

Betty Gould

The Reluctant Adult. An Exploration of Choice

Jill Hall
Prism, 1993, £9.95, 250pp.

Jill Hall's intention is bold. She asserts that, lacking an Einstein of psychology, we must nevertheless question the Newtonian causality assumed by Freud and his followers. Causality leads to simplistic explanation, to blame, and the veneration of the victim position.

A sentence which for me sums up her message is 'We . . . therefore urgently need disturbance of our systems of meanings in order to generate the asking of new questions.' (p.85) My balancing cavil is that in her enthusiasm, Jill Hall gives me new answers as often as asking me the new questions.

Another snatch which may convey the writer's excitement, and even transmit enough of that excitement to reinforce the meaning of the lines, is here: '. . . We are constructed of pure energy and cannot help but be in ceaseless contact with All That Is. The universe in which we creatively participate is like one vast mind firing continuously, making connections and disconnections, forging pathways which eventually, perhaps, reveal themselves as recognisable causal sequences on more manifest levels.' (p. 123)

I like the idea of one vast mind firing away, and have intimations of the same sort of thing myself. She uses the American Indian Medicine Wheel as an analogy of individual and general consciousness. This has a likeness to Richard Gardner's philosophical/psychological model, which has the same perhaps metaphorical value as Jung's four aspects of the self, or Freud's original three manifestations of mind. These are all metaphors, born I suppose from the same inspired excitement that transmits so clearly in this writing. Jill Hall goes on to show us, implicitly, the interdependent nature even of creativity, by adapting the Medicine Wheel into a Circle of Responsibility and a Circle of Reaction. Both of these I can imagine as eminently usable therapeutic models of mind.

As I read, I was repeatedly fascinated at the underlying process which resulted in this piece of writing. In some ways it reminded me of Lucy Goodison's *Moving Heaven and Earth.* In that case the writer made a scholarly work and added sixteen years of doctoral research to her lambent vision of unitary consciousness. '. . . The more we let go of our habit of making judgements, and allow unimpeded awareness of the complexity and specific quality of our participation in life, the more directly we contact our energy, experience our richness, and know ourselves as part of the operations of the universe itself.' (p.220)

There is a sense of conviction here, of seeing and knowing, that approaches the ecstatic. From the more earth-bound state of consciousness in which I write, I could suggest that this book is in one sense a mass of excited judgements. So I would

amend her phrase-making judgements to something more like acting from entrenched prejudice. The business Hall is engaged in here is to refine, deepen, broaden, change, rather than abandon her judgements. From this desirable place she can allow in more information, and perhaps treat that information with reverence, before seeing her new conclusions or visions, which are of themselves new judgements.

What is important is to honour this state of consciousness which I think I am right in attributing to Hall. In my experience it is ephemeral, though long-lasting in its mind-expanding effects. In this way it can perhaps be likened to a pilgrimage or a conversion experience or certain kinds of psychotic episode. For the changes in the world that she visualises to come about, an enormous lot of people would need to have the same sort of experience at about the same time.

Hall has a central conviction that as infants people make the mistake, at a profound level, of getting preoccupied with material, biological survival, and forget their spiritual integrity and abilities. This, she reasons, brings about the infant-mother victim-persecutor collusion which probably colours all later interactions. Here, in her own kind of imagery, she administers a bit of a wallop to some of the followers of Alice Miller. I like that.

It is a bit harder for me to accept her dismissal of human groups and systems as secondary to the individual, as I have just written a book with more or less the opposite view. What is easier for me to take on board is her argument that you cannot change systems radically until the people in them have experienced fundamental change within their psyches. Even here, I say, 'Up to a point, Lord Copper'. Groups and systems of themselves produce alterations of individual consciousness. So both approaches need consideration.

At the same time that political fragmentation is creating maiming, death, and social havoc and horror of a most dreadful kind in many parts of the world, an opposite, a polar movement of thought seems to be happening. Integrative psychotherapy is arriving. Holism is the inspiration of scientists, and of visionaries such as this writer. There is a yearning for all things to be made plain. For this writer in some ways all things have been made plain. She does well to remind us here and there, or imply, that her vision has been illuminating to her, but is not necessarily the reader's vision.

Without using the word, Hall implies a faith in anarchy as the most likely political system to promote individual and collective evolution. To have such a vision is a massively important first step. Then there needs to be the far longer and less exciting task of education, of unlearning and relearning. There are political and religious fanatical models for such a process. A new model is needed of how to set up a beneficent revolution in people's minds, and one that is neither on the minute scale of the therapy room, nor at the mad level of the Nazi Rallies. How are we to be ourselves, be aware, and stay connected?

Gaie Houston

Experiential Training: Practical Guidelines

Tony Hobbs (ed.)
Tavistock/Routledge, 1992, £14.99, 207pp.

This book will be of practical help to people running participative workshops, and those interested in collaborative learning (Note: the NVQ criteria for trainers include this style). It is an updated version of an out of print book 'Running Workshops' which came from a group founded by Stephen Murgatroyd and Ray Woolfe within the Open University in 1979. The six authors of 'Experiential Training' include Richard Pates on working with sexuality and Mike Shooter on workshops for coping with death. Two extra chapters on the evaluation of change and development through workshops (showing this is fraught with difficulty) and guidelines for effective workshop practice (rather stern, especially about shamanistic entrepreneurs) are an addition to the original book which is valuable.

Although Tony Hobbs is Senior Consultant at the centre for Crisis Psychology, Skipton, Yorkshire, none of the chapters is about crisis counselling. However, he writes an excellent core chapter on communication and counselling skills.

The chapter by Sylvia Rhys about workshops she ran for student health visitors on helping skills is particularly engaging. She writes with humour and honesty about the work and, as often happens with this open and flexible approach by the leader, received a number of surprises herself. Her group enjoyed themselves so noisily that an outside member of staff interrupted them. 'He was somewhat taken aback to find the leader was also larking about and rather bewildered to hear that having fun was part of the learning process'.

Stephen Murgatroyd describes various pitfalls in evaluation, for example, positive feedback received straight after a workshop is more likely to be due to warm feelings about the group and each other and less indicative of any sustained shift in attitudes or behaviour later on. The leader's credibility, indicated by a list of qualities and a checklist of influencing skills, influence the outcome of the work, as does the willingness to learn and change on the part of the participants. Extra issues arise when a leader is facilitating a workshop on stress for organisations rather than individuals, as the organisation itself may need to change some of the stressors.

Experiential training has been found to be especially effective in areas where strongly held beliefs and attitudes may need to be challenged (the facts that counselling skills have a value system of client responsibility, or that challenging could help, seemed incredible to some participants). In emotionally charged areas, such as dying or sexuality, learning from experiencing is more useful than from a didactic or theoretical approach.

The book is clearly written, with many

references to research which give the book a professional and authoritative feel. I have found it very useful in my own work as a trainer for counselling skills and stress management. It also might be helpful to someone researching this kind of training.

Margaret Davis

Why Men Hate Women

Adam Jukes
Free Association Books, 1993, £9.95, 345pp.

This is a heavy book. It speaks out with an uncompromising and rather hectoring tone, telling men how it is. The basic message is that 'men exist in a permanent state of enmity towards women which they express overtly and covertly, by controlling and dominating them'. It comes out of five years' work with violent and abusive men at the London Men's Centre. It is also an honest book, in that the author does not claim to be exempt from the attitudes he is discussing. He describes his own process of development, from a gestalt therapist to a psychodynamic therapist to a feminist therapist.

It is an extreme book. It sets out the terms of the problem in such a way as to make it virtually impossible to solve. Freud's work is used throughout to show that because men's hatred for women comes from the Oedipus complex, and because women's complementary responses come from the same source, there is no way of solving the problem other than universal psychoanalysis, which the author himself says is out of the question. It is not even clear whether he believes in the efficacy of psychoanalysis, even in the ideal case: he keeps on talking as if he himself has not found any way out. There is a Lacanian drift in this book which is quite hard to place, because he hardly ever refers to Lacan directly, but he continually used Lacanian phrases and concepts.

But the worst thing about this book is the way it is written. It is full of repetitions, divagations and general verbiage: the reader is made to feel quite bludgeoned by hearing the same thing repeated over and over again in slightly different words. Every chapter could be cut by two thirds or so with advantage. And some of the language is quite appalling in its jargon. What about this, for example?

'The psychological origins of misogyny, and the ultimate structuring of the original experience, are relatively clear. I have postulated that the origin of the "self" leads to the development of an encapsulated psychosis with a psychic skin of primitive sadomasochistic objects, and hence to the eroticisation of dominance-heterosexuality' (p.311). We do actually understand this a little better after reading the rest of the book, but I don't like this kind of writing.

This is not only a book of theory, how-

ever, it is also a book of practice, based on much work with men. Here there are some strange contradictions. We are told that the author's programme to stop the violent and abusive behaviour of the men who come to him attempts 'to achieve this goal in a time-limited context which does not pretend to touch these deeper levels of functioning but focuses instead on the cognitive aspects, the learned and conscious expectations, attitudes, thoughts, feelings and beliefs about men and women which accompany a batterer's behaviour.' (p.291) Yet a few pages further on we are told that such programmes cannot work 'for the simple reason that many of these expectations are preverbal, even ineffable. At these levels we need to understand the profoundly deep roots of misogyny, and this involves going beyond simple behaviour and cognitive processes.' (p.319)

All in all, I find this book, for all its apparent simplicity and certainty, a confused and confusing work. And there is a hopelessness about it which I find quite offputting. It is as if the author had no real idea of a relationship which could work — that has to wait until the world-wide feminist revolution has taken place. Yet we do know that it is possible to set up enclaves, oases, small areas of happiness, where a man and a woman can genuinely do things for and with each other, and not get caught up in violence and abuse. Like Marcuse before him, he has set up a system in which the Great Refusal is impossible. And this is to deny, it seems to me, that any form of psychotherapy is any use in such areas. Yet on his own argument, if it is to do with the Oedipus complex, is this not the very thing which psychoanalysis is supposed to resolve?

I found reading this book a really tedious experience, and only my great sense of duty led me to persevere with it. I wouldn't recommend it to any but the most hardy professional.

John Rowan

Stopping Rape: A Challenge for Men

Rus Ervin Funk
New Society Publishers, 1993, £9.99, 178pp.

It is obvious that rape is one of the most traumatic and painful experiences that anyone — male or female — could go through. Sometimes it is hidden within such blanket terms as 'sexual abuse', or 'incest' or even 'seduction'. But it has received little attention from men as such. Now here comes someone trying to do more justice to the intensity of this problem.

Stopping Rape is a right-on book written by a pro-feminist man, and makes many good points in a direct and well-balanced way. Anyone who wants to know what rape is like and what men have to do to confront it, should read this book. It goes

very well into the difficulties women run into when they start opposing the conventional ideas about this — how they get accused of being anti-men or anti-sex. It also goes well into the question of women's reactions — how men should not expect to get pats on the back from women if they oppose the culture of rape. It is not about being 'good' instead of 'bad', rather it is a matter of raising our awareness about things which may be quite uncomfortable for us as men. It is not about guilt, but about response-ability. The author says:

'The feeling that men are bad or wrong is not true. Those feelings need to be validated, but men are not the problem. Rape, abusiveness, harassment, heterosexism, racism and sexism are the problems. We need to distinguish between the person and the behaviour, and find ways to support ourselves emotionally, spiritually and physically at the same time that we are working to clean up our behaviour and attitudes.' (p.128)

I hope a lot of men read this book and take it to heart. There are some good exercises, a full reading list and a list of American contact addresses.

John Rowan

Revisioning Men's Lives: Gender, Intimacy and Power

Terry A. Kupers
The Guilford Press, 1993, £12.95, 200pp.

This is a book by a psychiatrist, which has a sane and balanced view of men and covers a wide range of issues. He agrees that there are factions within men's groups on the question of gender, but does not think they are necessary: 'The men's movement can relate to the personal needs that cause men to seek change while remaining aware of the social tragedies that are unfolding in front of our eyes.' (p.5)

There are chapters on homophobia, pornography, fathers and sons, men in therapy, male friendships, and sexual politics.

The book is full of examples and case histories, and is very well written. I think it should be read by anyone interested in this area, as it brings to life many of the issues which sometimes seem very abstract. For example, he points out something which I don't remember seeing anywhere else — the way in which men refuse to acknowledge the importance of their own cycles of energy and depletion. They often act as if they could do anything at any time, and do not recognise their own ups and downs. This is good stuff.

John Rowan

Rage, Power and Aggression

Robert A Glick and Steven R Roose (eds)
Yale University Press, 1993, £27.50, 269pp.

This book consists of thirteen chapters by different people, loosely grouped around four themes: clinical and theoretical perspectives; children and their development; origins and sources; and historical and political expressions. The aim of the book is to integrate the theory of affect into contemporary psychoanalysis.

As usual with psychoanalytic writing, there is a good deal of speculation, linked to case histories. Otto Kernberg has an interesting chapter on hatred; there is a chapter on penis envy by a woman psychoanalyst, showing how important it is. There are chapters by Elaine Pagels and Kenneth Thompson.

This is a curious mixture of a book, full of psychoanalytic jargon and assumptions, yet structured like an academic book with references and charts. I suppose someone might like it.

John Rowan

Did you agree at last year's AHP conference to take books to review? Around a dozen people did, and so far two of them have sent us their reviews. Can we have the rest please, sent to John Button at the reviews address inside the front cover? Thanks.