Understanding the Self

Richard Stevens (ed)
Sage/Open University Press, 1996, £15.95 pb, 376pp.

There are at least two radically different ways in which to judge this book. One way would be to focus on the title and to assess the degree to which the book measures up to the reviewer's ideal for a volume on this topic. Another approach would be to consider the context and aims of the book (rather than its title) and to assess how far it achieves the goals set by the editor. These alternative approaches lead to very different evaluations.

For this reviewer, an ideal book on understanding the self might involve the presentation, comparison and integration of a broad range of ideas concerning the self from across a wide range of disciplines and perspectives. In such a book I would expect contributions from anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers, psychologists and the rest. I might hope for a substantial contribution on western and eastern ideas on the self, and a detailed discussion of 'multiple identities', in terms both of normal sub-identities and of the condition variously referred to as 'multiple personality disorder', 'dissociative personality disorder' and so forth. Such a book, ideally, would also include an extensive section on the development of identity and would focus on the various identity diffusion processes which occur in the context of intimate relationships and powerful groups (where 'I' consciousness might be supplanted by 'we' consciousness).

Some of these issues are indeed touched upon, but they hardly constitute the core. However, I was not disappointed, because I view this book from a different standpoint. I feel it needs to be judged with an awareness of the context in which it is published, and its intended readership and function, and not by its title alone. It was produced for, and is an integral part of, the new Open University course (D317) 'Social Psychology: Personal Lives, Social Worlds'. The edited volume reflects what I consider to be the hallmark of Open University social psychology coverage — the denial that there is a single 'legitimate' approach to the subject, coupled with a strenuous effort to consider alternative approaches (the 'metaperspective'). Evaluated in this way, I judge this book to be something of a triumph. It provides many valuable insights into how social psychologists work within different paradigms and with quite different assumptions.

The first of the seven long chapters is written by the editor and introduces a number of fundamental issues about how we can understand ourselves and others in the social world. The other chapters then explore these issues from a variety of very different perspectives (biological, experimentalist, experiential, social constructionist, and psychodynamic). In the concluding chapter the editor attempts to draw the threads together.

Throughout, the writing is clear, central issues are constantly re-examined, and sight is never lost of the whole 'task' of the book. A wide range of material is used to illustrate key points, and a number of activity suggestions and other learning aids are provided.

Readers of this journal may feel that humanistic approaches have not been given due regard. I am also aware that many others who adopt a highly partisan view of what counts as 'real social psychology' are likely to feel that their own approach has not been duly emphasized. Such people may be enraged by the fact that their own 'golden pathway' to understanding self, social interactions and social relationships has been treated merely as one fragment of a composite picture. Indeed, there can be no yardstick for what a 'perfect' social psychology text would look like; but by my reckoning this book addresses central issues both adventurously and provocatively. Students who use it are lucky to have such a feast provided, and they are bound to find the material both challenging and stimulating.

I am reassured to find myself in good company in my positive evaluation. Kenneth Gergen describes the book as 'the most forward-looking text I have ever encountered', and Jerome Bruner borders on the ecstatic: 'An absolutely terrific book — very innovative and in some ways really revolutionary: a wonderfully thoughtful volume'. I have said this is a book not to be judged by its title; but there is still much much more about self issues in this text than in any comparable social psychology text. And that, in itself, is a major achievement.

Neil Frude

Richard Stevens is a long-time member of the AHP, and we have been to each other's houses. I feel as if I know him quite well. Some people may remember he used to run the wonderful PEOPLEMEET events at Jackson's Lane some time back. So it is quite painful to have to say this is not a good book.

Its format is quite straightforward. After a substantial introduction by Stevens himself we get five chapters written by different people with contrasting perspectives: biological from Frederick Toates; experimentalist from Mansur Lalljee; experiential from Richard Stevens; social constructionist by Margaret Wetherell and Janet Maybin; and psychodynamic from Kerry Thomas. Then there is a substantial concluding chapter by Richard Stevens and Margaret Wetherell drawing together the threads.

The trouble is that there is not much here about the self. We have to wait until page 350 before we get any mention of authenticity, and then it is not really dealt with, but skated away from in a great hurry. Yet for humanistic psychology, the notion of self-actualization is quite central. Authenticity (comprising as it does self-respect and self-enactment) is then one of the prime values. In this book the only mention of the real self is in conjunc-

tion with Winnicott's notion of the 'true self', but this is dismissed as 'hidden permanently deep in the unconscious'. Not much help there. When the word 'self-actualisation' is mentioned, it is again evaded in a one-line mention. The nearest we get to a discussion of this is in the last chapter, where Stevens and Wetherell say: 'As Taylor has pointed out, the word "authentic" has come to refer to the idea that the "self" is the source of value, and that to be authentic means getting in touch with the "true" self. However, its existential meaning refers not to this but to an acknowledging of the experiential realities and conditions of our existence — in particular, that we are capable of choice and changing the way things are, and can play some part in creating who we are.' But Taylor is quite wrong about this, if indeed it is what he says. The 'existential meaning' of authenticity can only be discerned by referring to existentialists. Karl Jaspers, for example, says: 'The "I" casts off its shells, which it finds untrue, in order to gain the deeper and authentic, infinite, true self.' This is what humanistic psychology has taken from existentialism, but it is nowhere to be found in this book.

In the same way, there is nothing here about subpersonalities, or what has more recently been called the polypsyche. This alternative idea is that the person is typically and normally multiple rather than single. We are different people in different situations, and there is nothing wrong with this. But none of the writers in this book seem to have heard of the idea, even though it is now recognised in at least sixteen schools of psychotherapy and by numerous researchers in the fields of social and cognitive psychology. The word 'subpersonality' is mentioned once, in conjunction with some of Jung's ideas — Jung is hardly mentioned — but in general, for the people in this book, multiplicity means fragmentation, and is regarded as a bad thing. It is true that in the chapter by Wetherell and Maybin it is mentioned, but only as an exotic Japanese concept which does not fit with the western mind. Even the idea that there might be two people inside us — recognised at least since 1784 — is explicitly rejected in the chapter by Frederick Toates.

And again, there is nothing here about the view that ultimately there is no self, that the self is an illusion. In the chapter by Kerry Thomas, the idea of the empty self is mentioned, but only as something pathological, to be deplored. There is nothing here about Ken Wilber, and the way in which he has clarified the whole field of psychospiritual development. There is nothing here about mysticism or spirituality at all.

So in the end this book does not seem to be about the self. It is more about ways of avoiding all real consideration of what the self is or how it might work, or how many definitions of it there might be. The real title of this book might be *How to Avoid Understanding the Self.*

So what *is* it about? Well, the chapter by Toates deals with drugs and alcohol, genes and behaviour, and consciousness. What does he have to say about consciousness? 'However, it is revealing to examine recent discussions that try to illuminate the physical base of conscious-

ness. These show clearly that, after 2000 or more years of consideration of such questions as the nature of the relationship between mind and body, we are still groping in the dark . . .'

The chapter by Lalljee is about categorisation, attribution errors, information processing, control and helplessness, individualism and collectivism. It hardly mentions the self at all.

The chapter by Stevens is about conscious experience, metaphor, imagination, the experience of time, the experience of choice, and the experience of meaningfulness. It is supposed to draw on 'three related theoretical perspectives — phenomenological, existential and humanistic'. But like so many people, he chooses to represent the humanistic outlook of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. Well, these are certainly important, but so are Rollo May and Alvin Mahrer and James Bugental, none of whom have the optimism of the familiar Rogers-Maslow axis, even though they are just as identified with the humanistic position. The *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* is mentioned, but not *Self & Society*. The self is hardly ever mentioned in this chapter.

The chapter by Wetherell and Maybin is about culture and psychology, discursive psychology, the development of social beings and sociological social psychology. 'The self, in this approach, is not an object to be described once and for all but is taken to be a continuously changing and fluid history of relationships.' This reminds me of the conjuring trick where the magician says — 'Now you see it, now you don't.' There is an interesting and extended discussion of Japanese ideas about the self.

The chapter by Thomas is about basic psychodynamic assumptions, Freud, Klein, object relations theory, and the self as a defensive system. The idea that there might be 'a series of selves' is mentioned but not pursued very far. At one point Thomas says: 'There is an increasing acceptance of sub-selves that are evoked to some extent by situations and especially by particular relationships.' But this is not pursued or explained. It is ironic that the main mentions of such a humanistic idea are to be found in the psychoanalytic chapter.

There is nothing in this book about the origins of the self. Prenatal life, birth itself, linked very powerfully by people like David Wasdell with society and social problems, are out of the picture. Similarly, the primitive psychological field described by Mahrer is not described or mentioned. This is surprising, because Mahrer's work in particular occupies the territory between self and society which this book is trying to explore.

So what is the book good for? Presumably it is good for passing examinations. It is co-published by the Open University Press. It is well provided with academic references, though the index is not very good. According to the introduction, it is part of the Social Psychology course of study. So it represents an attempt to provide what academics need. It is a pity that they evidently don't need a good book on understanding the self.

John Rowan

A response to John Rowan's review of Understanding the Self

I appreciate the opportunity the Editor has offered me to respond to John Rowan's review. Let me first say that the negative tone of this review is quite out of keeping with other comments on our book. Jerome Bruner (who can, if anyone can, claim to be the world's most respected psychologist) wrote of it as 'An absolutely terrific book — very innovative and in some ways really revolutionary: a wonderfully thoughtful volume... designed to teach people not just about social psychology, but how to think social psychology'. Ken Gergen, another eminent American psychologist, described it as 'The most forward-looking text I have ever encountered. Where most textbooks are composed of dry summaries of past accomplishments, the present volume draws students into dialogue on cutting edge issues. Both teachers and students will be enriched.'

I suspect that there are two reasons for the discrepancy between these critiques and John's view of the book. The first is that he has not appreciated what the book is trying to do. I acknowledge that this may be partly due to its final title, which may not perhaps have been the most apt choice. The original title was *Perspectives on the Person in a Social World*, and this does express more precisely what the book is designed to do. It is intended for students of personality and social psychology, and engages with contemporary debates about the nature of being a person and social behaviour by contrasting accounts from five perspectives—biological, cognitive experimental, experiential, social constructionist and psychodynamic. It is specifically designed to provoke reflection in the reader, both on their own experience and on the nature of social psychological understanding. What kind of social psychology of the person is appropriate and possible in a postmodern age?

This brings me to the second reason, which is highlighted by Bruner's comment that the book is 'in some ways really revolutionary'. The philosophical basis of John's views on psychology and the self seems to have remained largely set over the years I have known him. True he is widely read and has developed new elements to his ways of conceptualising psychological life. But he remains essentially realist. He believes in a true self, in subpersonalities, almost, from the way that he writes about them, as some kind of existing entities. We believe such a realist view (which paradoxically can be found in experimental as well as in some humanistic approaches to psychology) to be open to dispute. The value of this book is that it challenges this philosophically suspect notion. Our position is that any form of psychological understanding is a construction. The great achievement of this book (and the course of which it forms a part) is to explicate this position by contrasting different psychological perspectives and the epistemological assumptions and the models of the person and society on which they are (usually

implicitly) based. John's position does not appear to acknowledge these complexities: his (in my opinion misguided) view seems to be that there are certain unassailable facts in psychology and the rest is just plain wrong.

While allowing for such differences of expectation and philosophy, I have to say that at times I wondered whether John had really read the book at all. His failure to understand what it is trying to do, the occasional inaccuracies and the slant of much of his account of what is in it, make it appear almost as if he had just thumbed through the index and skimmed the chapter subtitles. Finding little reference there to his own usual stable of favourite authors and concepts, and no support for his own particular viewpoint, seems to have been enough for John to judge the book wanting. Perhaps if he read it afresh with a more open mind, he might learn something new.

Richard Stevens

Sons, Mothers and Other Lovers

James Park
Abacus, 1996, £7.99 pb, 239pp.

In many ways I enjoyed and appreciated this book. It explores how different kinds of mothering can affect boys, shaping them to become one of seven kinds of dysfunctional adult — the Lovelorn, the Idolater, the Wild Man, and so on. The book is full of anecdote, drawn from interviews with over 120 men and 80 mothers, and these snippets of people's lives have an inevitable fascination for a reader who is also a therapist. And I appreciate the fact that the author is director of an organisation called Antidote, whose aim is to explore (and presumably disseminate thoughts on) 'the emotional issues behind contemporary political debates' and which promotes the cause of emotional literacy. I find it hard to criticise a man who is involved in such a worthwhile activity.

However as I read I was bothered by several things. Park does seem to be referring to a family where mother does the childcare and dad is absent. I know this is by far the commoniest scenario, but it isn't the only one. I would have liked more acknowledgement of other family set-ups — dad or gran doing the childcare, families without a mum or with two mums . . .

Park is kind to mothers, and does not apportion blame for the way they bring up emotionally crippled men, but I think he lacks some of the understanding of the power issues that lie behind this. Mothers are the way they are not just because their dad and their partner are emotionally absent, but because of the power structures of the society we live in. Park talks of mum having lots of power and the difficulties the son has trying to deal with his fear of this power. But the reason she wields her power in the home with so much eagerness is precisely because it is denied her in the outside world.

I also felt once or twice that Park was denying the significance of unconscious processes. He refers to a peaceable, 'unaggressive' mother who warns him of the vicious dog in her garden, then he dismisses the dog as having no significance. To my mind, an 'unaggressive' woman with a vicious dog is telling us a great deal about her relationship with anger and aggression. However, all in all it's worth reading, and if it promotes the cause of emotional literacy it will have done a good job.

Fran Mosley

Counselling and Social Work

Judith Brearley
Open University Press, 1995, £11 99 pb, 148pp.

This book, part of the *Counselling in Context* series edited by Moira Walker and Michael Jacobs, considers counselling in the specific context of social work and shows how it may shape the environment in which it is offered, the nature of which will include both opportunities and considerable constraints.

It is a useful book, which offers rather more than the title suggests, and it seems to be aimed at a wide readership. Judith Brearley gives an historical overview of social work, and the counselling aspect within it as this has evolved over time. This will be of interest to people thinking of entering the profession who are not familiar with its background, and will also be particularly relevant to people in other professions who have reason to engage in inter-agency communication with a view to good co-operative working. She has a lot to say about such work, stressing the usefulness of insights and attitudes drawn from the values and approaches familiar to those who already have a basic understanding of the ethos of counselling and therapy, and the potential of such insights for the resolution of inter- and intra-agency conflict.

Judith Brearley writes from a psychodynamic standpoint, but gives attention to some other theoretical underpinnings of both counselling and social work. Counsellors working privately, or in agencies with no statutory responsibility, are in a vastly privileged position compared to local authority social workers who try (and are expected) to include periods of counselling in their work. They share completely the values of acceptance, respect and non-judgemental attitudes, among others, but then all too often comes a divide, in looking at what each is able to do. Social workers must make explicit that they cannot keep confidences where a child may be at risk, for instance. In addition, they have the power to grant or refuse financial aid, or access to a particular scarce resource. Another common difficulty, which Judith Brearley does not mention, is the likely disruption to a planned period of counselling with a so-

cial work client because of crises in other cases having to take priority, or suddenly having to cover intake work on duty because a colleague is sick.

She identifies the particular challenge to social workers as being the ability to offer counselling in a way that is integrated with all the other aspects of the work with an individual client, 'often within the same interview'. She describes the counselling dimension of social work in terms of the skills underlying the whole range of tasks, which is certainly what is required by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work. This aspect of the book, together with its emphasis on the value of using counselling skills when relating to other agencies, staff supervision, training and management, seem to be its most useful lesson, and I hope that numerous people who have these sorts of responsibility will read it.

Margaret Novakovic

Intimate Terrorism: The Deterioration of Erotic Life

Michael Vincent Miller
W.W. Norton, 1995, £16.95 hb, 250pp.

This excellent book offers a socio-cultural perspective on current 'crises of intimacy', taking account of, yet moving beyond, the individualised explanations of psychoanalytic theory. For Michael Vincent Miller, Freud's historically specific Oedipal metaphor is being superseded by a culture of abuse — what he rather sensationally calls 'intimate terrorism' — stemming from too much freedom which we are not remotely equipped to handle emotionally.

Accompanying our enhanced freedoms are greatly heightened anxieties about abandonment or engulfment by 'the other', that, for all its limitations, the rigidly structured society of Freud's time did not typically exhibit. In turn such anxieties precipitate a pathological exercising of power in relationships (rooted in fear of powerlessness), disguised as love and caring for the other's welfare. The greatly enhanced fear of abandonment or engulfment leads to a desperate need to feel oneself to be in control of a situation which is fundamentally and inevitably outside one's control.

As the initial romantic idealisations of adolescence begin to fade, each party often begins to seek power over the other for self-protection, and almost inevitably at the other's expense. Under a full-blown regime of intimate terrorism, real communication becomes impossible, and couples sometimes even choose to feed the resulting tensions and conflicts.

Intimate terrorism, then, arises because of the unbearable anxiety experienced in the face of 'the other's radical freedom to move toward or away as he or she wishes', and manifests in a variety of ways, depending on people's

personal developmental histories. Such anxiety-driven, control-oriented, power-infused ways of relating are the very antithesis of a healthy and mature intimacy, 'for love cannot be controlled; it has to be freely given' (Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*).

The book ranges discursively from critiques of postmodernism through a Darwinian perspective on 'emotional scarcity', to diverse and illuminating commentaries on popular culture (*The Great Gatsby*, *Annie Hall*, O.J. Simpson). Miller's proposal is for an ironical view of love, which 'tolerates . . . imperfect, disappointing outcomes . . . accepting uncertainty and . . . multiple meanings in one's love life'. This in turn requires a playful sense of humour, a sense of the ridiculous, and 'a romance of the ordinary' — and above all, a culture which affords a new myth of love that enables society to 'take care of the unavoidable remnants of infantility in its adults'.

This is a particularly useful book for anyone working with couples, or with clients (or themselves!) around difficulties of intimacy in relationships.

Richard House

Time on our Side: Growing in Wisdom, Not Growing Old

Dorothy Rowe
Harper Collins, 1995, £17.99

An experienced clinical psychologist and popular writer, Dorothy Rowe shows much warmth and understanding of our attitudes to ageing: the fear of becoming forgetful, dependent, confused or chronically ill, so prevalent in western society where the experience and wisdom of the elderly is rarely valued. She talks to many people about their attitudes to ageing and how the young hate the old, and the old fear and misjudge the young. Yet she thinks the problems of the elderly are exaggerated, that most of them could be ameliorated with better understanding. Her acceptance of emotional pain, the sadness of loss, pain, anger, disappointments and fear of loneliness reveals her deep insight and experience of helping people in distress, yet she avoids jargon and theory, so that this book could be very useful to a wide range of people.

Her message for us all is to take responsibility for ourselves, since we can't change others; to live fully in the present; to enjoy others, to love and accept them and to appreciate ourselves and the joy of relationships. Dorothy Rowe obviously manages these life skills and she writes clearly and inspiringly, with humour and poetry too. The only criticism I would make of this long and well-stuffed book is that there is enough material here for at least four volumes: attitudes to ageing; world-wide cruelty to children; lack of recognition of unhappiness; depression amongst children and teenagers; mother-

hood and abuse of power.

However, it's a good read, packed with quotations, extracts from journalism as well as textbooks, and with rich notes. But who would you recommend it to? Teachers, nurses, parents? 'A'-level students of sociology, perhaps?

Betty Gould

Toward a Transpersonal Ecology

Warwick Fox
Green Books, 1995, £12.95 pb, 380pp.

This was published in 1990 by Shambhala in the USA, so this is the first British publication. It is a very well-written and very thorough examination of different theories of ecology, culminating in a full explanation of Warwick Fox's own approach, which is a renamed version of Arne Naess' deep ecology.

He makes it very clear that this approach to ecology involves an identification with nature. His favourite analogy is that of a tree. If nature is a tree, then we are leaves on that tree. The health of the tree is then our health. We care about nature because we have to care about the whole of which we are part.

Why does he call this 'transpersonal'? There is something very curious about this. He has a full appendix all about Maslow and Sutich, in which he talks about the pre-personal, about Zen and eastern spiritual traditions, about Roger Walsh and so forth, indicating that he knows very well that the transpersonal is about spirituality and contact with the divine. But when he uses the word throughout the book, all this disappears, and he uses it to mean something more like 'identification with all of nature'.

It is a question of whether we have a sense of heights and depths, which is normally what we mean by distinguishing between the pre-personal and the transpersonal, or whether we are thinking in terms of a kind of flatland where there are no heights or depths. This of course raises the question of whether nature is arranged in a hierarchy or not. Arne Naess himself thinks it is: 'We have therefore a complex realm of gestalts, in a vast hierarchy. We can therefore speak of lower- and higher-order gestalts . . . This terminology — a vast hierarchy of lower- and higher-order gestalts — is more useful than talking about wholes and holism, because it induces people to think more strenuously about the relations between wholes and parts.'

But Warwick Fox thinks that it is not, and explicitly rejects the idea of a Great Chain of Being. This means, of course, that he cannot encompass any idea of the divine, which is very strange for someone who wants to use the word 'transpersonal', and who often quotes Spinoza.

As I have said, this is a superb book in its reach and detail, and anyone who wants to know exactly what each ecologi-

cal school has to say must read it. There are good critiques of many other ecological positions. The scholarship is good throughout, in the sense of giving copious references and notes for all the points made. This is almost an embarrassment at times, because he quotes Erich Jantsch, thus indicating that he knows of his work, yet ignores it in his discussion. Jantsch is well known as one of the main exponents of a hierarchical (or what Ken Wilber calls, perhaps more acceptably, a holarchical) structure for the world.

I should possibly declare an interest, because Fox actually quotes me at one point, but in an extremely minor way.

All in all, then, this is a thorough and excellent book, which should be read by anyone interested in these matters.

John Rowan

George Kelly

Fay Fransella
Sage, 1995, £9.95 pb, 177pp.

The question with George Kelly, of personal construct psychology fame, is 'where does he fit in?' And this book makes it clear why this is so hard a question. It is because George Kelly was a fragmented man. The author starts off with a biography, goes on to talk about his contributions to theory and to practice, deals with some criticisms and rebuttals, and finishes up with some comments on his general influence. The biography is the first one I have seen of Kelly, and it was clearly very hard to write, because not only was he a very private man, he was also a man in bits and pieces.

Of course, what I was particularly interested in was the question of how he relates to humanistic psychology. I was a bit miffed when the historical bit talked about psychoanalysis and behaviourism, and how Kelly was opposed to both, but never mentioned humanistic psychology, which was also opposed to both. One would have thought that some word about the similarity or difference might have been in order there. Instead, Kelly is given credit for 'slaying the dragon of stimulus-response psychology' single-handed!

Similarly we get a discussion of the 'invitational mood' advocated by Vaihinger, Adler and others, but nary a mention of the way in which this is crucial to the work of gestalt therapy, among others.

At one point the author tries to convince us that Kelly was a dialectical thinker who really saw the point about people's meanings often being submerged and not available to consciousness, and then emerging with cathartic force when the right trigger comes along. But the example given does not appear to support this interpretation, and in my view Kelly was profoundly limited in his thinking to formal categories and logical relations of the familiar Aristotelian kind, just like Dewey and some of his other exemplars.

Again, in discussing the question of research methodology, the author goes out of her way to mention that humanistic psychology was critical of formal assessments and measurements, but nowhere gives any hint that humanistic versions of research have become extremely important since then.

At another point she describes three cycles which Kelly mentioned in his work: the experience cycle (anticipation, commitment, encounter and confirmation or disconfirmation); the creativity cycle (loose to tight construing); and the CPC decision-making cycle (circumspection, pre-emption and choice). These seem to me considerably inferior to the much more complete and adequate gestalt cycle, well described in a number of books.

It is made clear that Kelly had no notion of the real self, and even explicitly dismissed such a notion. Similarly, there is no notion of a subtle self or a causal self, or anything going beyond the categories of the everyday. This is a flatland psychology with no unconscious and no superconscious.

One of Kelly's most famous sayings, of course, is that man is basically a scientist. And this has made people think that he downplays emotion and falls into the camp of the cognitive psychologists. Fay Fransella spends some time combating this notion, explaining that Kelly does not say much about emotion because emotion is so central in his mind to the whole process of construing (making sense of) the world and other people. Yet what are we to make of such statements as that the relationship between therapist and client is most like that between supervisor and research student? What are we to make of the extract from an actual therapy session conducted by Kelly himself where all Kelly's interventions are questions pushing the client into an intellectual appreciation of what he is doing? What are we to make of the author's statement (apparently with approval) that 'personal construct theory has been described as a skeleton without any flesh'? There definitely is, in my experience, something bloodless about the Kelly approach.

So my eyebrows went up when I read that 'there is no doubt that personal construct psychotherapy is a "humanistic" therapy in that it is very different from psychoanalytic or behavioural therapies'. This is a classic instance of the proverb 'my enemy's enemy is my friend'. But I don't think this is necessarily true. The proof of this particular pudding was revealed to me when the personal construct people had to decide which section to join in the UK Council for Psychotherapy. After some long and friendly discussions, they decided not to join the Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy Section, but to co-create a new section of their own, together with the neurolinguistic programming people, called the Experiential Constructivist Therapies Section.

Fay Fransella ends by calling personal construct psychology 'the most complex, the most human, the most far-reaching and futuristic and the most widely applicable theory about human individuals that has yet been devised'. I can't quite agree about that. But this is a very good book, because it covers all the points well, even if not convincingly for me.

John Rowan

Therapists on Therapy

Bob Mullan (ed)
Free Association Books, 1996, 402pp.

This is a free-form set of interviews with 21 therapists. There is no index, and no books are quoted or mentioned. The questions are not the same for every therapist, and the interviews go along quite spontaneously. Since there is no structure, and since there are no particular themes emerging, there is nothing much to say about it, except to give a list of those involved. If you know the person, you might be interested to see what they have to say.

The 21 are: Derek Gale (humanistic psychology), Susie Orbach (psychoanalysis), Brian Thorne (person-centred therapy), Charlotte Sills (transactional analysis), Peter Lomas (psychoanalysis), Dorothy Rowe (personal construct psychology), Paul Taylor (humanistic/transpersonal psychology), Brian Sheldon (cognitive-behavioural therapy), Ernesto Spinelli (existential therapy), Peggy Sherno (gestalt therapy), Annie Keller (neuro-linguistic programming), Lennox Thomas (psychotherapy and race/ethnicity), Adam Phillips (psychoanalysis), Naona Beecher-Moore (psychosynthesis), John Andrew Miller (bioenergetics), Anne Geraghty (groupwork), Fay Fransella (personal construct psychology), Ian Gordon-Brown (transpersonal psychology), Margot Messenger (rebirthing), Sally Berry (psychotherapy for women) and Noel Cobb (archetypal psychology).

There are a few questions which get asked fairly often. Bob Mullan seems to be interested in false memory syndrome (so-called), the UKCP, the question of fees, social issues, the effects of therapy on people's partners, therapeutic burnout, touching in therapy, self-monitoring, length of sessions, how people came to be therapists . . . But none of these questions is asked of everyone. and no particular length of answer is required.

If you are interested in these particular people, this could be a very interesting book.

John Rowan

That Why Child

Carol Jeffrey
Free Association Books, 1996, 127pp.

This is a book by a 98-year-old Jungian about her life and ideas, copiously illustrated with coloured plates of her paintings. She never actually met Jung, but they corresponded and he gave her some detailed comments on some of her drawings — one letter is included in the book. Her analysis with Michael Fordham extended over twenty years, and he has contributed a foreword to the book. It

mainly consists of case histories, quite a number of which are about children.

There is a chapter on working with pictures, with a number of coloured illustrations, but it is very brief. In fact, all the examples are brief: there are no full case histories, but rather a set of case vignettes, mostly quite short, and sometimes breaking off just as it is getting interesting.

There are also some theoretical ideas, mostly a restatement of orthodox Jungian doctrines, as for example about the anima and animus. Feminists would find all this a bit unsatisfactory.

This is a very agreeable book, with a number of good coloured illustrations, and it would be liked by anyone who knew Carol Jeffrey.

John Rowan

Paedophiles and Sexual Offences against Children

Dennis Howitt
Wiley, 1995, £15.95 pb £24.95 hb, 289pp.

This is a rather nasty book, which purports to give all the research and points of view on paedophilia, but which actually lingers on all those aspects which support the views of the paedophiles themselves. While presenting a superficial appearance of objectivity, it actually serves the cause of those who sexually abuse children. I do not understand why Wiley agreed to publish it. It makes me quite angry. In their blurb, they say that it is 'at times controversial' — they would have done better to withdraw and pulp it.

John Rowan

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Eric Whitton (Transactional Analysis) **Robin Rudwick** and **Pippa Smith** (The Feldenkrais Method) **Guy Gladstone** (Bioenergetics/Psychodrama) **Silke Ziehl** (Pulsing/Energetic and Postural Integration) **Richard Mowbray** (Primal Integration).

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