Women's Studies and Culture: A Feminist Introduction

Rosemary Buikema and Anneke Smelik (eds)
Zed Books, 1995, £12.95 pb

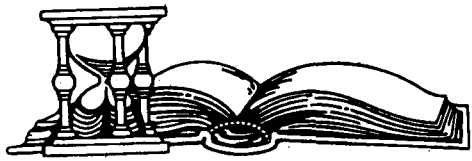
This would be a very useful book for a student of women's studies, as it includes an exploration of feminist academic practice and an overview of feminist theory. It also examines the impact of women's studies on linguistics, literary theory, popular culture, history, musicology, art, history, theatre, film studies, psychoanalysis, black criticism, lesbian studies and semiotics.

The authors teach women's studies at the University of Utrecht and have included articles by other academics in Holland; so this is a wide ranging book which also explores the three areas of equality, difference and deconstruction. Certain political and theoretical backgrounds crucial to the development of a differentiated feminist critique of western science are also explored. What I missed most is a closer study of the specific feminist contribution to philosophy, although there is some discussion of Lacan's theories; his influence on black feminists, through his idea of the instability of identity and the central place he gives to language (rather than biology) and anthropology. The chapter on psychoanalysis, with its focus on the cases of 'Dora' and 'Anna O', is rather disappointing, but saved by a good bibliography for further study which includes the work of the French writer Luce Irigaray.

Each chapter includes good references, as well as the general bibliography, a useful glossary of terms and some suggested assignments for further studies in each area. However, the prominence given to Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* can be irritating.

A feminist and anti-racist perspective in the dominant white male academic institutes which focuses on the link between knowledge and politics is extremely important for the humanities; the deconstruction of masculinity, whiteness, classicism, heterosexism and ageism are necessary before we can assert new values such as 'diversity, multiculturalism and environmentalism'. 'Difference' has been colonised by power relations that reduce it to inferiority, just as no text is unaffected by political and cultural attitudes and language. A stimulating read which hopefully will expand our understanding of feminist theory and practice.

Betty Gould



Power and Sex: A Book About Women

Scilla Elworthy
Element Books, 1996, £15.99 hb, 338pp.

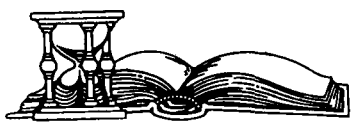
The author of this book is a remarkable woman: she helped found the Oxford Research Group in 1982 in order to find out how decisions about nuclear weapons are made, and her interviews with leading politicians, civil servants and armament manufacturers are fascinating, revealing all the defensive ploys of the 'male' power and the domination inherent in this world-wide abuse of power. No wonder women feel powerless. The theme of this book is the possibility for men and women to develop a different kind of power, drawing on inner strength based on a fusion of masculinity and femininity. To this end Scilla Elworthy explores the evidence of ancient goddess-worshipping cultures which existed around the Mediterranean for thousands of years; how Christianity transformed their serpent emblems into symbols of the devil, and how the fear and persecution of woman's sexuality and intuitive healing powers led to the drowning and burning of thousands of women in the Middle Ages.

Throughout the book the question of sexuality is endemic: whether physical attraction and sexiness gives a person power and how this can used manipulatively by both sexes; how public display of feminine sexuality was used in the ancient world and in the temples as part of religious rituals and is still feared and controlled or exploited in many cultures today.

Exploring this idea of developing a different type of power from within, Scilla Elworthy discusses self-knowledge, especially in acknowledging and understanding emotions; power from the body and from meditation; the wealth of creativity; and the strength that comes from acknowledging responsibility, rather than the guilt and helplessness of the 'victim' role. It is difficult to give a sense of the richness of this book, since it covers such a wide area, including sections headed Additional Material, Notes and suggestions for 'Going Further'. I particularly liked the quotations from Thich Nhat Hanh, Ram Das and Osho, and also a recommendation for John Rowan's books *The Horned God* and *The Transpersonal.*

Using the strength of others is an important theme: 'Domination power seeks out the weakness of others and trades upon it. *Hara* power looks for other people's strengths and relies on them.' Scilla transforms her anger into constructive ideas based on co-operation and personal empowerment: an inspiration!

Betty Gould



Power and Sex is a really superb book, dealing with a most important subject. It is subtitled *A Book about Women*, but really it is just as valuable for men as it is for women. It is about politics, but not about party politics: it is about how real change can take place. It is about how we can take power effectively, but not abusively.

The author's own experience is instructive. She helped to form the Oxford Research Group, whose mission was to talk personally to international decision makers, find out how their minds worked and introduce seeds of alternative thinking. This was very effective and seemed to work better than the usual method of argument and confrontation. She got involved in many different kinds of direct action.

After discussing six examples of female peace initiatives in as many different countries, she says: 'Without in every case knowing precisely how, these women are vitally enthusiastic to find or rediscover ways of living differently, in greater harmony with their environment, and to investigate the roots of violence in the structure of their societies.' There are many versions of power: power over, power with, power from within; coercive power, referent power, legitimate power, charismatic power, manipulative power, rational-persuasive power and so forth. Scilla Elworthy talks particularly and persuasively about *hara* power. This is a power centred within the person, yet in touch with the universe. It is based on self-knowledge. It is related to love, and to sex. Sexuality and spirituality are seen as very close together and related in significant ways.

Unfamiliar ideas are made familiar and usable in this book, which is attractively and readably written. I found it easy to get on with and very sympathetic. But at the end there are fifty pages of notes for those who want to investigate further any of the points made, and more pages of addresses and contacts and further books to read. It is more scholarly than it looks.

John Rowan

Pink Therapy

Dominic Davies and Charles Neal (eds)
Open University Press, 1996, £16.99, 234pp.

As a therapist and supervisor I was delighted to come across this book, as it seems to fill a real gap in the whole area of working with people who are gay, lesbian or bisexual. The editors acknowledge the appalling sins of omission in most training courses, and aim to offer a starting point for education in this important field. The tone is one of firm challenge, from contributors who are entitled to take this position, many of them being gay, lesbian or bisexual.

The essays are grouped so that the first half of the book comprises core reading, including an historical overview of homosexuality and therapy; homophobia and heterosexism; and a very important chapter offering a gay affirmative model of therapy. This section sets out to inform therapists, particularly heterosexual ones,

about aspects of lifestyle and psychology in such a way as we cannot in fairness, beyond a certain point, expect from our clients.

The second half is very wide ranging and covers clinical issues such as alcohol and substance misuse, working with young people, and working with people in relationships. I found the one on working with older gay men (Bernard Ratigan) useful, as it dares to confront the ageism within certain current male gay culture and has some poignant case studies. The essay on religious and spirituality conflicts (Bernard Lynch) both inspired me and nudged me into subtly altered positions within myself: it makes the central point, 'Gloria Dei Vivans Homo' — the glory of God is woman/man fully alive. Any subtle adoption by the therapist of a 'love the sinner, hate the sin' framework have to be confronted. There are useful appendices offering resources for therapists and gay clients, an excellent bibliography, and a chilling 'Heterosexual Questionnaire', which says it all. I liked this book because it 'works' the reader; one not to be missed, particularly by those of us who like to think of ourselves as liberal in our attitudes to difference. I look forward to more in this field.

Angela Willow

Music Therapy Research and Practice in Medicine — from out of the Silence

David Aldridge
Jessica Kingsley, 1996, £18.95, 336pp.

David Aldridge begins his book by relating the story of his first encounter with music therapy, and his conviction from what he had observed and sensed that 'there is healing in the art of music'. Immediately he was confronted with the challenge which daily faces all music therapists — how could he explain this in a meaningful way to other practitioners in the clinical setting? His book addresses this issue in a scholarly, but also very human, way. In particular his regard for human beings as 'symphonic' rather than 'mechanical', and his view of a person's identity as 'a musical form that is continually being composed in the world' make one warm to his approach. Aldridge clarifies the problems realistically, pointing the way forward to possible solutions. He describes his own setting up of a research programme, and suggests various ways in which a culture of research might be encouraged. Always his concern is not just for academic research for its own sake, but to 'foster a climate of clinical research that produces material pertinent to the daily practice of the music therapist'.

As the title indicates, the book's emphasis is on music therapy research in medical settings, and Aldridge examines the use of music therapy as a treatment for various medical conditions including cancer, Aids, dementia. Music therapists work from a wide variety of therapeutic stances and

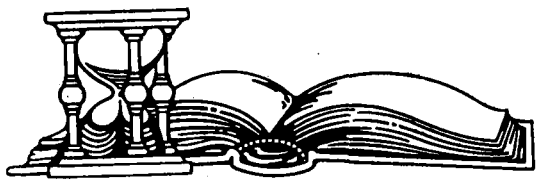
backgrounds, so it should be noted that the music therapy work described here is confined to the Nordoff-Robbins approach, where the musical relationship between therapist and client and the process of improvisation itself are regarded as the medium for therapy, there being no psychotherapeutic interpretation of the actual music created. Nevertheless this does not detract from the relevance of the main thrust of the book, which is to encourage therapists into research and into seeking a common language through which to share with colleagues.

Anecdotal support for the effectiveness of music therapy has always been plentiful, but the tradition of rigorous research in the profession needs to grow and develop further. Music therapists have often been cautious about research, feeling perhaps that the creative act which is central to the process of therapy may somehow be compromised in the course of it. Aldridge always holds in balance scientific and aesthetic considerations ('truth and beauty'), maintaining the necessity of finding a research strategy which remains true to what lies at the heart of music therapy and indeed all creative therapies.

Aldridge suggests the single case study design as an appropriate and valid model for music therapy research, focusing as it does on both the process of therapy, and the clinical outcomes. (In a climate where therapists are more and more being called upon to give practical evidence of their effectiveness, this is a very relevant consideration.) He describes several approaches to this method, fully illustrating these with examples of actual research. There are interesting chapters offering comparative studies between music therapy and art therapy work with individual patients, and comparisons between music therapy and medical interpretations of patients with various medical conditions, in which Aldridge seeks to explore the development of a shared language of communication to promote understanding between clinicians. There is much here also of interest to professionals other than music therapists.

This book does not always make easy reading, but the author's enthusiasm for music therapy, and his commitment to finding research approaches which uphold its central tenets, are always evident and repay any effort. Above all, the message is that music therapy research has to be done, that 'rather than sit around for ever discussing what will be the best way', we have to actually try it out. David Aldridge's book is certainly an encouragement and guide to doing just that.

Jeanette Morrison



Folie à Deux — An Experience of One-to-one Therapy

Rosie Alexander
Free Association Books, 1995, £15.95, 165pp.

I found this a very compelling book. The words leapt off the page and I wanted to return to it when unavoidably interrupted. Yet for practising counsellors, therapists and their clients it makes uncomfortable reading, as indeed no doubt it should. It upsets almost any notions of beneficence in the therapeutic endeavour, especially for those who, like myself, have on occasion struggled with the erotic transference that Rosie Alexander writes so movingly and tragically about. Disturbingly, too; for this emotionally distressed client ('Rosie Alexander' is a *nom de plume*) found almost no one professionally able or willing to assist her in her desperate attempts to heal. Notably it was other ex-clients who most empathised with her.

As a client myself (as well as a therapist) struggling with the wounds inflicted upon me in early childhood, I found I could empathise deeply with Rosie Alexander and the plight she found herself in. Thus for me the book was utterly believable, whilst at the same time not written as a diatribe against therapy. I, however, count myself fortunate to have found appropriate psychotherapeutic help, albeit principally through a loving relationship with my long-suffering partner.

This, for me, seems to be the nub of the problem that Rosie Alexander encountered. The same one that so many clients and ex-clients are now increasingly writing about. That actually, despite her lonely talk of not wanting to become dependently attached to a fellow human, that is precisely what she wanted. That is, if I am right, not a therapist, but a loving partner. As therapists, that is the one thing we cannot offer. Yet, if this is not made explicitly clear both at the outset of therapy and throughout it in periodic reviews, then clients, especially those looking for intimacy, risk becoming emotionally attached to us; and if we ourselves are at all emotionally vulnerable, or are prepared to offer what the Buddha came to call 'idiot compassion', then we as therapists can so easily be drawn into that erotic transference of which in another situation, where girl meets boy or girl, we would say 'she's fallen in love'.

Indeed, Rosie Alexander, citing a fellow ex-client, says of a good therapist 'it all depends on the bond between therapist and patient — on their particular relationship, not on any particular theory, *like marriage*' (my italics).

Surely as counselling therapists we have to answer Rosie Alexander, without defence and in our training curriculums. In his clear and forthright afterword to this book, Ernesto Spinelli, principal lecturer in Counselling and Psychotherapy at Regent's College, goes a long way towards accepting the need for a radical rethinking and re-organising of how we encourage, rather than train, therapists to work and, most importantly, to see the

therapeutic relationship. For, as he writes, 'the crucial factor in all cases of effective therapy turns out to be the bond that therapists form with their clients'; then he reflectively cites Shlien: 'therapists' attempted entry into the world views of their clients is a form of "love making"... just as failure to enter or misunderstanding is a form of "hate-making"'.

The enormity and profoundness of these words cannot in my opinion be underestimated, coming as they do from a practising therapist who still 'remains convinced of the beneficial potentials of therapy', yet also encourages us all to be 'challenged by the issues raised here' — hopefully non-defensively and honestly.

This book is thus both a tragic love story of presumably unrequited love (not hearing from the therapists — a sad if inevitable omission — we cannot of course be certain) and an important, if disturbing, account of a client's experiences of one-to-one therapy.

In the spirit of Chiron, the Wounded Healer, I personally thank Rosie Alexander for having the courage to publish her story and will ensure that the book goes on my book list for all students of counselling and therapy who study with me. Whether it will impact upon them in their often blissful state of hopeful ignorance and inexperienced *naiveté* (ah how I remember those days) as it has on me in my own recent awakening to the enormous dangers inherent in the intimacy of the therapeutic relationship, I cannot tell. I can only trust that readers of the often harrowing stories in this book will attempt to read it empathically and consider deeply the consequences of it for us who continue as practising therapists, hopefully attempting to be both ethical and non-possessively loving of our clients.

John Sivyer

Counselling Supervision

Michael Carroll
Cassell, 1996, 198pp.

Michael Carroll has written a thorough, academic and practical review of this very necessary aspect of professional counselling. At the same time he writes very understandingly about the complex relationship that exists between supervisor/supervisee that obviously reflects the intimate relationship between counsellor and client.

In the first chapter the author successfully attempts an understanding of the term 'counselling supervision', with definitions, different forms, styles and models; tracing the historical development of supervision and a review of both British and American literature on the subject. As many questions as answers are postulated, both here and in the second chapter on recent trends and debates. In the latter he interestingly notes the trend from the

'counselling bound models' — following the apprenticeship model of handing down skills from a master practitioner to a trainee — to a more educational model, where supervisors are trained to encourage and enable trainee and novice counsellors to discover their own individual styles of counselling. He argues here that in counselling 'the main tool used is the person of the individual, rather than simply the skills he/she has'. He further argues that this apprenticeship model has encouraged a perpetuating of certain orientations of counselling, as shown for example in the psychodynamic supervisor, the cognitive/behavioural supervisor or the person-centred supervisor. It thus passes on a more rigid style of counselling, rather than encouraging a fluid, creative and individually integrative style that acknowledges the uniqueness of both counsellor and client and honours the centrality of the relationship dynamic in the counselling process.

Michael Carroll acknowledges other viewpoints, but clearly nails his own colours to the mast. He would choose, if he had to, a supervisor who was a poor counsellor/good educator rather than a good counsellor/poor educator: 'education is more at the heart of supervision than is counselling'. He also wishes to see educative supervisors able to move between the two extremes of totally didactic teaching and totally self-directed learning, as appropriate, because 'good teachers are able to integrate a number of learning formats'.

As an educator himself, Carroll is likely to argue for this educational model; he makes a more powerful point when he says that 'supervision is becoming a profession in its own right', with its own codes of ethics and mushrooming training courses. His philosophical perspective seems to be humanistic/integrative, in that he acknowledges and encourages the uniqueness of both the counsellor and the client and the relationship that exists between the two — mirrored, he hopes, in the supervisor/supervisee relationship. For example, listing the attributes of effective (as opposed to ineffective) supervisors, he cites 'help[ing] trainees find their way of being' rather than the supervisor 'insisting their way of counselling is the only way'. I believe this is a potent argument, powerfully debated in this book; both here and in later chapters Carroll stays closely to the practical and therefore craft-like nature of the counselling endeavour, recognising the subtle blend of theory, the personality of the counsellor and his/her philosophical and stylistic orientation with the practice, the activity of counselling.

This very readable, easily accessible book is thus both a powerful polemic, coming at a time of a burgeoning interest in the profession of counselling supervision, and at the same time a usefully practical guide for counsellors and supervisors alike. Everyone interested in this area of development — and all practising counsellors! — should read it. Michael Carroll writes clearly and forcefully, calling on both his own experiences and lots of research material. His thesis is that 'Good supervisors are characterised by respect, empathy, genuineness, honesty, non-sexist and non-authoritarian attitudes, are able to share their own work in a facilitative manner,

are open to negotiation, flexible in working, and create clear boundaries.' His book will surely advance the necessary debate on this most important subject of counselling supervision.

John Sivyer

Narrative Therapy: The Social Construction of Preferred Realities

Jill Freedman and Gene Combs
W.W. Norton, 1996, £28 hb, 305pp.

This is one of the best books on doing therapy that I have ever read. I can't think of any therapist who would not benefit from reading it.

It is written from a fresh standpoint, social constructionism, which does not come directly from any of the existing schools. Much of the work described is family therapy, but how it is used in individual therapy is also made clear and spelt out in detail.

Much of the approach is about asking questions, and a great deal of the space is taken up with helpful indications as to what varieties of question are used; but the crucial point is that questions are used to give information, rather than to get information.

One of the things which interested me is that the authors have taken feminism on board, too. They talk about a session in which a couple came to see the role that patriarchal patterns had played in shaping their relationship. As a result of this insight the couple decided that they wanted to be in charge of their relationship, rather than relying on patriarchal gender roles that were clearly not working well for them. 'We do not want to reproduce, in therapy, the oppression many people have experienced at the hands of the dominant culture.' They speak very well and very thoroughly about the social context in which all therapy takes place. They have a perspective which locates the individual client in a matrix of supporters, antagonists, reference points and social realities. And they are prepared to enter into this social process and get involved with it. They talk about not just having these ideas, but living them: 'When people, through the "unmasking" process of relating problems to societal discourses, see their local problems as particular instances of political problems in the larger society, they can become motivated to deal with them differently. When people stop living by the dictates of a political problem at a local level, they help deconstruct the problem at a societal level.' They talk about 'an insurrection of lost knowledges', and there is a radical flavour about their whole approach.

There is an emphasis on the position of not-knowing, and a mistrust of diagnostic systems and labels. However, they also make it clear that this is not an 'I don't know anything' position. They express the hope that therapy is a process in which people experience choices, rather than set-

tled certainties, with regard to the realities that they inhabit. They quote Anderson and Goolishian: 'The goal of therapy is to participate in a conversation that continually loosens and opens up, rather than constricts and closes down. Through therapeutic conversation, fixed meanings and behaviour are given room, broadened, shifted and changed.'

They say that as they listen to a client, they notice and question the assumptions they themselves are making. One of their favourite quotes is 'Flirt with your hypotheses, but don't marry them'. They tend to begin their sentences with phrases such as 'Could it be that...', or 'What if...', and maintain that 'Such constant questioning of our assumptions invites people to question theirs'.

One of their key moves is to externalise problems, rather than accepting the client's view that the problem is inside. 'The person is not the problem: the problem is the problem.' And so if someone says that their problem is that they are so shy, they will treat shyness as the problem, and ask questions like: 'You have said that shyness often attacks you suddenly and without warning, but have there been any times when shyness tried to attack you, and you didn't give in?' In my own work I use the idea of subpersonalities, and it occurs to me that this is rather a similar idea. Here is a brief extract from one of their therapy sessions:

Jill: So, you were sort of talking back to the fear? Is that what you were doing ?

Laverne: I was just basically like telling it that I wasn't going to allow it to come into my body kind of thing. As if it were sitting next to me.

Jill: Wow.

Laverne: But I just like, I just like, that just seems like a good way to think about a lot of things, not just that, you know.

As well as reminding us about subpersonalities, some of this is very similar to the work in transpersonal psychotherapy where we talk about myth and countermyth. And again some of their emphasis on asking 'how' rather than 'why' is reminiscent of the work of Fritz Perls and gestalt therapy.

One of the important ideas Jill Freedman and Gene Combs take from Jerome Bruner's version of social constructionism is the notion that there is a landscape of action and a landscape of consciousness, and that in therapy we can weave back and forth between them. In the landscape of action, we (if we adopt this view) are interested in constructing an agentive self with people. We ask questions with an eye to enhancing those aspects of the emerging story that demonstrate personal agency. In the landscape of consciousness, we are interested in the meaning of various actions. 'In other words, in the landscape of consciousness, people reflect on the implications of experiences stored in the landscape of action.' Moving from one to the other and back again is a key part of the work to be done. This represents, say Freedman and Combs, a move forward from the notion of simply drawing on people's positive resources, in the manner of NLP.

In practice, this means asking questions such as: 'Have there been times when you've done this kind of thing before?' There are clear connections here with the work of Alvin Mahrer and his idea of going into the past and the future with a newly discovered self, and also with the work of Stanislav Grof and his idea of the COEX system. This all helps to write what they call 'a history of the present'.

There is in fact a whole chapter devoted to nothing but questions — all the different styles and types of questioning procedures used in this form of therapy. This alone offers a wonderful resource for the therapist, going much further than anything I have seen in print before. The key point they are making is that their questions do not merely access experience: they co-generate it. 'Part of what we are trying to express in this critique of our own work is that we are part of the dominant power/knowledge domain. We cannot be completely outside of dominant practices, but we can take responsibility for working to see through dominant cultural stories. This requires that we deconstruct our practices and situate our ideas in our experience.' It is rare to come across such a degree of self-awareness and social awareness in a therapy text.

There is some very exciting material here about these authors' work in family therapy. As many readers will know, much family therapy is carried out by one or two therapists working directly with a whole family in one room, while in the next room, separated by a one-way mirror, sits a team of co-therapists who comment on the work while it is being done, and sometimes give hints and tips to the therapists through an earpiece. The approach of these authors is to make a radical change in this set-up: 'At some point in the meeting the therapist and family switch places with the team so that the team is in front of the mirror, observed by the family and therapist, who have gone behind the mirror. The reflecting team members then discuss their ideas, questions and thoughts in response to the conversation they have just heard among family members and the therapist.' This reminds me so forcibly of the origins of the T-group, where Burt Lewin broke all the rules in a strikingly similar way. But this approach can be used in family therapy generally, whereas the Lewin innovation led to the setting up of a different kind of group work.

One of the implications of this approach is that team members don't talk to each other when they are behind the mirror. They save all their observations — and possible disagreements — for when they are in front of the mirror. They point out that behind-the-mirror talk can all too easily become disrespectful or pathologising. Conducting all their conversations in front of the family helps them practise respectful and nonpathologising ways of talking and thinking. 'These practices of language bring forth a reality that we prefer.' And they say: 'We describe what in our personal and professional experience supports our ideas and makes particular events stand out for us. Team members speak as individuals, not as representatives of "knowledge" or "authority". This allows family members to understand where we are coming from and to freely

adapt our ideas to fit their experience. Our situating comments help flatten the hierarchy and contribute to the transparency of the process.' This approach can be used in one-to-one therapy by asking the client whether she or he would like to hear our ideas. If they say yes, 'we begin to recount something that was said in the therapy conversation and what we wonder about it. We then situate our comment in our own experience.' A similar approach can be used in couple work.

They say they like to begin sessions with some reference to 'sparkling moments' in the previous session. These moments sound rather like the 'good moments' or 'very good moments' talked about by Alvin Mahrer in his research. They also use the term 'unique outcomes' to refer to the same kind of thing — the moments in the previous session where a glimmer of hope appeared, or where an exceptional experience was remembered and built upon. 'Unique outcomes are experiences that would not be predicted by the plot of the problem-saturated narrative.' Each such instance is seen as a potential opening on to an alternative life narrative. So referring back to it is an invitation to adopt that alternative story. If the sessions are interrupted or there is a longer gap between them, the therapist may write a letter along these lines. There are many unusual ideas here, such as giving a child a 'Certificate of Bravery', or enrolling a person into the 'Fighters for Social Justice and Good Feelings Team'.

This latter idea links with the serious way in which these people treat the social milieu. They look on the list of people who have abused the client in the past as the 'abuse team', and encourage the client to look around for a 'nurturing team' to compensate and help in the fight back against such treatment. Instead of relying solely on autonomy and self reliance, they see the social context as having a part to play in the ultimate mental health of the person. Instead of criticising the person for being too dependent, the aim is to set up good forms of dependence and interdependence which will be genuinely nourishing for them. For example, the client may be encouraged to join or help to set up an 'Anti-anorexia and Anti-bulimia League'. Or several therapists and several clients (who may be adults or children) may together assemble a book such as *The Temper Tamer's Handbook*, or *The Fear Facer's Handbook*.

There is a good discussion of ethical principles in relation to community and social context, and a real social sense permeating all this work, with some very interesting comments on research. The authors are interested in entering into co-research projects with people, consulting about the effects of particular practices on particular problems. 'In a very real sense, all narrative therapy is co-research. When we listen carefully to people's stories we are doing research. When we ask meaning questions and preference questions we are asking people to join us in research. When we reflect — with or without a team — on unique outcomes, on the effects of various practices, on preferred directions in life, or on any other aspect of therapy, we are doing co-research.' And they say that in the light of this kind of approach, their work is

always changing.

Is this work humanistic? Certainly it does not mention Maslow or Rogers, though I detect a Rogerian turn of phrase here and there. Certainly it does not mention Laing, Perls, Bugental or May, though I can detect some parallels with Mahrer's work here and there. Certainly there is no mention of spirituality or the transpersonal, though some of the ideas are close to the use of myth, legend and fairy story by Jean Houston, David Feinstein and others. Certainly there is no mention of birth or prenatal life, though some of the work of Grof seems quite relevant here and there. Certainly there is no reference to a real self, and indeed one of the criticisms one might have is that there is an over-reliance on society and language as the answer to everything. If language were all, there could be no preverbal experience — yet even personal construct theory now agrees that there can be such a thing.

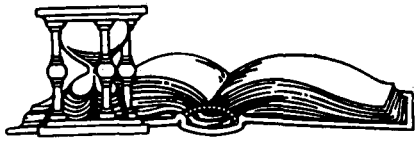
The whole of the second chapter is quite dubious from this point of view, moving much too far, in my view, in the direction of postmodernism. 'Postmodernists believe differently. We focus on how the language that we use *constitutes* our world and beliefs. It is in language that societies construct their views of reality. To postmodernists, the only worlds that people can know are the worlds we share in language, and language is an interactive process, not a passive receiving of pre-existing truths.' This is language imperialism at its worst. If this were true, there could be no prenatal experience, no birth experience, no Kleinian experience, no preverbal experience of any kind. Yet the work of people like Verny and Chamberlain and Grof and Lake and Laing and Farrant and many others makes it quite unassailable that there is memorable experience before words come on the scene. So this has to be resisted.

In spite of all that, the spirit of this book does seem to me very humanistic, both in its aims — which in the case histories I feel are more about liberation than about adjustment — and in its social conscience. And its approach to research is parallel to what people like Reason, Heron and I have been saying from a humanistic point of view. I certainly feel that any humanistic therapist who did not find something useful here would indeed be lacking in appreciation and dead to imagination.

I have already started to use some of the ideas in my own work, and find them very compatible with what I am doing already. Here is something which can give all of us a fresh look at what we are doing.

John Rowan

(This is the book referred to at the beginning of John Rowan's review of Peter Goldenthal's *Doing Contextual Therapy* in the November 1996 issue of S&S.)



Healing Research (Vol 2): Holistic Energy Medicine and the Energy Body

Daniel J. Benor
Helix, 1994, 279pp.

This is a book of ambitious scope, covering psychodynamics and psychopathology; psychotherapy; suggestion; hypnosis; biofeedback; unusual human abilities; special brain and body functions; self-healing programmes; the mind and the brain; autogenic training; chiropractic; aromatherapy; applied kinesiology; crystals; mind-altering machines; music; nutritional therapies; yoga; acupuncture; osteopathy and craniosacral manipulation; homeopathy; visualisation; meditation; the transpersonal in holistic medicine; auras; Kirlian photography; laboratory measurements of biological energy fields; dowsing and radionics; astrology; and healing in the Bible. It is the second in a four-volume review of research relating to *psi* healing.

It is often a very dogmatic book, presenting its points in a confident style reminiscent of the bedside manner of a medical doctor. And there are some mistakes in the parts with which I am familiar. We are told, for example, that 'the Feldenkrais and Alexander methods are gentler forms of body-based psychotherapy'. I do not believe that they are forms of psychotherapy at all — at least I have never heard them described as such before. The entry on transpersonal psychotherapy does not mention psychosynthesis or any of the other schools in this country, but restricts itself to F. David Peat and John Pierrakos.

Some of the entries report copious research, often contradictory and confusing. Some of the entries are much briefer and more dogmatic. There is a large bibliography, 33 pages of it, with two columns and tiny print, and a good index.

This could be a good book for someone who knew nothing about these matters, and wanted a brief introduction which could then be followed up. It does not deal with any of these things in enough detail to be useful to anyone already conversant with each field.

John Rowan

Mary Parker Follett: Prophet of Management

Pauline Graham
Harvard Business School Press, 1995, 309pp.

This is the book I have been waiting for. Most of Mary Parker Follett's work is shamefully out of print, and now here is a great selection of her writings down the years, with introductions and comments from Peter Drucker, Rosabeth Moss Kanter,

Warren Bennis, Henry Mintzberg, Sir Peter Parker, Paul Lawrence and others. She was a humanistic writer on organisational matters long before Maslow came on the scene, actually starting to write in the 1920s, yet she is more up-to-date than most people writing today.

The book contains many extracts from *The New State*, chapters three and four of *Creative Experience*, two essays from *Dynamic Administration* (the only volume of hers that most people will have come across) as well as another lecture from the same period, and five lectures from *Freedom and Co-ordination*, perhaps her best work. I tried for years to get publishers to reprint *Freedom and Co-ordination*, but failed: now here it is, nearly all of it — marvellous.

For anyone who wants an inspiring humanistic vision of organisation, both small-scale and large-scale, this is the place to come. Yet there is nothing high-flown or blue-sky about this: Follett writes simply and clearly and makes points that sound so obvious, once she has said them, that you wonder why they are so little known and so little heeded. Perhaps because she was a woman? She never uses the word 'empowerment' for example, yet her work is full of the spirit of what we now call empowerment — the encouragement of people to develop and grow and support each other in their work.

Anyone concerned with conflict resolution will find much of value in this book, which makes clear the difference between compromise and integration. In her introduction Pauline Graham says: 'Perhaps every generation will need to rediscover Mary Parker Follett.' Here is a chance for this generation to do so.

John Rowan

The Revival of Death

Tony Walter
Routledge, 1994, 228pp.

This book deals with death by relating it to theories of modernity and postmodernity. A death today may be conducted in ways which are traditional, modern or postmodern (neo-modern, as the author prefers to call it). One of the main points of the book is that death today tends more often to be chosen by the individual, rather than being part of a shared tradition.

Parts of the book are based on 45 interviews conducted by the writer: nine with hospice administrators, eight with clergy and chaplains, seven with doctors, six with nurses, four with bereavement counsellors, three with social workers, two with leaders of bereavement self-help organisations, two with Buddhist hospice workers, two with volunteer carers and two with members of AIDS organisations. Nine of these were conducted in San Francisco, and the rest in southern England.

There is some emphasis on story telling, and the way in which the stories told by people who are dying and bereaved are

used to create one overarching meta-story which in turn influences subsequent story telling. At the end of each chapter is a list of books for further reading, and a list of questions which can be used for discussion purposes. This suggests that the book could be used on courses featuring such a subject.

The book ends with a suggestion that the individual can die his or her own death, but only in company with others. Almost always the family is involved, drawing on family traditions, past experience, coping styles and agreed ideas. Nicholas Albery's Natural Death Centre is mentioned here. This is not a particularly inspiring book, but it is useful and thorough, and contains many references to other work in the field.

John Rowan

The Anti-group: Destructive Forces in the Group and their Creative Potential

Morris Nitsun
Routledge, 1996, £16.99 pb, 318pp.

The author is a follower of Foulkes, as against the other traditions of group work, but he wants to add to Foulkes some material which supplements the usually rather optimistic view taken in group-analytic work. He says: 'The predominant areas of dissonance I encountered were (1) resistance to participation in groups linked to fear and dislike of groups, (2) hostility and anger arising in the group that could not only threaten interpersonal cohesion in the group but be directed destructively at the group itself, and (3) spiralling destructive processes in the group that could not be contained by the usual clinical management.' The whole discussion is conducted in psychoanalytic terms, and there is little awareness of the literature on group life cycles developed in humanistic work (though there are two brief mentions of Bennis and Shephard, and one of Tuckman), nor of the literature on catharsis in the group developed in the work of psychodrama. There is a good deal of criticism of the work of Yalom.

There are some good descriptions of group work in this book, and it is anchored very much in actual group life. Possibly the best example of this is the whole chapter devoted to a case study of one group, which lasted for six years. But nowhere in this book is there any awareness of the possibility of a really good outcome, the sort of thing which humanistic writers talk about all the time. Give me Schutz, Elliott and Mintz any day.

Of course Foulkes isn't as bad as Bion, and to that extent this book is hopeful rather than hopeless, but the basic depression of psychoanalysis keeps on coming through again and again. The legacy of Freud still hangs heavy here. There is a good bibliography and index.

John Rowan