Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy

Professor Brian Sheldon
Routledge, 1995, £14.99, 280pp.

This is an excellent book. Clear, comprehensive and concise, it provides a thorough grounding in cognitive-behavioural therapy, including much of the latest research, case histories and techniques. The emphasis is on therapy in a social work setting, but this does not obscure the wider validity of the content.

So why would it be of interest to humanistic practitioners? Mainly, I think, because it explains, though not in so many words, why therapeutic qualities such as warmth, empathy and congruence bring about therapeutic change. As Sheldon points out when refuting the notion that behavioural approaches have to be mechanistic to be successful: 'In reality, any understanding of reinforcement principles shows immediately that distant, automaton-like behaviour is unlikely to sustain co-operation.' This may not be the friendliest jargon, but the principle is embodied in all humanistic modalities.

The book opens with an overview of cognitive-behavioural therapy and the occupational world in which it resides. The first chapter includes an excellent section on the problems of working in psychotherapy, a field beset with multiple opinions and no facts. Sheldon provides a useful overview of how to assess theories in a scientific way, including Popper's notion of what constitutes scientific knowledge: it must be potentially refutable (sorry, Sigmund) and logically consistent (sorry almost everyone).

Sheldon then looks at the philosophical implications of therapeutic approaches, under such tempting headings as 'Mind and Behaviour' and 'Free Will versus

Environmental Control'. As a convinced determinist I was sorry that he didn't come down more firmly on the side of Hobbes, Russell and Einstein. However, perhaps this indicated an intention to be totally open-minded while promoting his central thesis.

The chapter on 'Learning Theory and Research' looks at the influences of childhood and provides a succinct overview of processes such as classical conditioning and stimulus generalisation. Much of this chapter will be familiar to (ex-) psychology students, but it is still a useful and comprehensive summary, containing many case histories and research examples. The book then examines systems of emotional responses before moving on to a more technique-oriented section.

This was where I started to part company with it. I cannot accept an approach to therapy which does not encompass the realities of defences, transference and the huge power of the unconscious. It is not sufficient for me to have someone say: 'Change the behaviour and the client will be happy,' despite the fact that behavioural techniques are definitely a part of what I do — every time I reframe a patient's self-perception, for example, or simply greet them with a smile. It's just that this is not enough.

I can recommend this book. It didn't make me into a cognitive-behavioural therapist, but it might make me a better humanistic practitioner by reminding me of what I'm 'really' doing when I interact with my patients.

Christopher Coulson

Arts Therapies and Clients with Eating Disorders

Ditty Dokter (ed)
Jessica Kingsley, 1994, £19.95, 320 pp.

This is a valuable look at a number of different arts-related modalities in the treatment of eating disorders, particularly anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. The therapies covered are Art Therapy, Dramatherapy, Psychodrama, Dance Movement Therapy and Music Therapy, so the orientation is essentially humanistic. All seventeen contributors are female, from a variety of backgrounds but all well-versed in their fields.

I missed any exploration of Louise Kaplan's theory of eating disorders as female perversions, and would also have liked to see something on parental influences — not just in the aetiology of the symptoms but in the assistance/resistance to therapy of any kind. Frequent references to Orbach's writings on the subject are an indication that societal influences on women are taken very seriously. There is, however, generally a failure to differentiate between culture as a *cause* of the disorder and its simply being the reason for its selection.

I found the book very conventional in its views on eating disorders but valuable as a way of seeing how different arts therapies approach emotional distress. My guess is that the success or otherwise of

any of these approaches has more to do with the client, the client's family and the personality of the therapist than with a particular modality. Sooner or later the client has to face up to the fact that her (probably) disorder cannot be shed or altered without unhappy consequences. At that point a serendipitous combination of therapy and therapist can make all the difference.

A worthy collection that will be of value to anyone working in this niche, especially as they are probably also having to work in/with a medical setting.

Christopher Coulson

Challenges To Counselling and Psychotherapy

Alex Howard
Macmillan, 1996, £11.99, 192pp.

Alex Howard has over twenty years' experience as a tutor and manager in adult education, with particular involvement in self-help programmes and support groups. This is his fourth book. As an author his overall theme is that of exploring ways to survive the human condition with as much self-awareness, realism, humour and mutual support as is possible, given our precarious and little understood position on the third stone from the sun. His stance could best be described as that of the valuable outsider — from his perspective no emperor is safe from being told that he is wearing no clothes. He writes well — I've rarely read a non-fiction book which bowls along at such a cracking pace. Perhaps one is carried along by the excitement of wanting to know which sacred cow will be next to have its throat slit!

I doubt if this could have been written by an insider to the counselling profession. To do so would have taken both an enormous amount of courage and a blithe disregard for career prospects . . . It is an important book which should be widely read, especially by counsellors and psychotherapists — but it is tough: on the profession, its theorists, its managers and its practitioners.

Howard's context is the huge contemporary rise of the industry of paid caring as a symptom of overall social disintegration. He points out that caring now appears to be the number one activity of every organisation from Nintendo to the Bank of Scotland. He considers the word 'counsellor' to have become so devalued by indiscriminate use that it ought to be dropped for a while. He also wonders whether all the trumpeting about caring conceals a reality where, both collectively and individually, we care far less for one another than we once did.

He takes the professional world of counselling and psychotherapy to task for having neither defined at any stage just what counselling *is*, nor offered anything very clear on what its outcomes are. In the chapter entitled 'Counselling plc?', where he gives an overview of the main regulatory and training bodies in the USA, Europe and

the UK, he points out that the long march towards encompassing as many 'counsellors' as possible within regulatory structures dependent upon training, supervision, experience and accreditation is as much to do with professional/financial protectionism as with the protection of clients.

His overview and critique of the main theoretical approaches, client-centred, cognitive/behaviourist, psychodynamic and transpersonal, is pungently clear. He reserves the full weight of his odium for the Rogerian, person-centred approach, attacking what he sees as the naïvety and hypocrisy of practitioners whose credo is to offer unconditional positive regard, always and only provided that the client can meet the primary condition of being able to pay the fee.

His conclusion is that as the millennium draws to a close it might well be more constructive for us to turn our collective attention to what ails our whole culture, rather than encouraging individuals to retreat into their own private space with their paid carer to contemplate their personal *angst*. 'There is nothing final, neat and tidy about the mystery of being helpful, loving and caring . . . such services can never be straightforwardly sold or purchased in the marketplace or provided free by a caring State.'

My only criticism is that Alex Howard rightly criticises the BAC for not consulting counsellors' clients when deciding whether or not a counsellor should be accredited, yet nowhere in this book does he himself offer us the views of the consumers of counselling services. A chapter on clients' experiences of counselling, exploring both positive and negative facets, would have added a valuable dimension which I felt was missing. But perhaps that is for another book?

Anne Whitaker

Armfuls of Time

Barbara Sourkes
Routledge, 1995, £8.99, 187pp.

This is a very moving and sensitive book about the psychological impact on children of having a life-threatening illness, and the issues involved in doing therapy with such children. Barbara Sourkes describes how she works with children who are very ill or dying, using drawings, toys, writing, talk. She helps them understand and try to come to terms with their illnesses, with sometimes painful and distressing medical procedures and, in some cases, with impending death. The book is full of snippets of dialogue, case studies and children's pictures which the author uses to illustrate her points, and these really bring the book and the stories alive. I think this book would interest almost anyone — we all have to face our own and our loved ones' deaths in the end. And I think it would be of particular use to anyone working with ill or dying adults as well as children.

Fran Mosley

The Adoption Reader

Susan Wadia-Ellis (ed)
The Women's Press, 1996, £8.99, 252pp.

This is a British edition of a book published in the USA in 1995, and it does feel very American. It is a collection of autobiographical pieces about the experience of adoption. It attempts to cover a wide range of backgrounds and is divided into three sections, each with a different viewpoint: that of birth mothers, adoptive mothers and adopted daughters. (I have a difficulty with this last: why exclude adopted sons?) The experiences described by the adopted daughters and the birth mothers are nearly all extremely painful, and mostly enforced — the mothers, young and poor, were forced to give up their babies for adoption by unsupportive and moralistic families living in an unsupportive and moralistic society. These stories match those I have heard from people I know in this country who were themselves adopted or who have lost a baby to adoption (or both — one loss can seem to lead to the other). The deep, deep sense of bereavement felt by both mother and child comes through over and over again. The one exception is the story of a child brought up in her wider family, where the loss of mother is felt, but is moderated by a sense of belonging to the family circle, and of being a woman among others in a milieu where womanhood is OK.

Given that these two sections describe such pain, it is almost ironic that sandwiched between them is the section by adoptive mothers. Aren't these adoptive parents colluding with the wrenching apart of mothers and children, coming between them in reality as well as on paper? My reading of the book only partly assuaged this concern. In some cases the child was genuinely in need of an adoptive family, and these tales are very moving. But in other cases, particularly the international adoptions, it felt like the same old pattern was reappearing: parents who could not afford to bring up a loved baby giving that baby up to the rich Americans who could afford it, but couldn't make one of their own. There is no doubt that the adoptive mothers of international babies who write their stories in this book all love their adopted children. But love is not an excuse for unthinking behaviour and I cannot forgive what seems to me to be no less than a trade in children. Wouldn't financial or practical support for the birth parents be more appropriate, enabling them to continue in their parental role? Readers of this review will by now realise that this book can arouse very passionate feelings. If you want some strong feelings, read it. If you are likely to meet clients for whom adoption is an issue, read it. If you want to stay calm and unmoved, don't.

Fran Mosley

R.D. Laing — A Divided Self

John Clay Sceptre
Hodder & Stoughton, 1997, £7.99, 308pp.

This very readable book portrays the charismatic and iconoclastic Laing in a most enthralling and captivating way. Written by a sympathetic Jungian therapist, it introduces us both to the man, clearly a brilliant, innovative yet troubled soul; and to his ideas.

Like so many trained therapists, influenced at first by the established order (Carl Rogers, Eric Berne and, to a lesser extent, Carl Jung, with whom he shared some ideas), Laing very soon came to challenge the authorities and establishment, in particular their ownership and custody of power. He passionately wanted psychiatrists and society in general to accept those labelled as 'mad' and, in particular, schizophrenics, as deserving the same respect as anyone else. Laing had the ability to enter empathically into the world of the schizophrenic, as he graphically, and often dramatically, demonstrated both in public appearances and in print. As John Clay says, Laing himself crossed the mad/sane line with such frequency, sometimes with the assistance of LSD, that he has contributed enormously to our understanding of so-called insanity, a label he always challenged. (His criticism of the DSM III was vitriolic; he likened it to a fifteenth-century manual on witchcraft.) However this regular journeying between altered states of consciousness and ways of being clearly took its toll, not only in his early death at the age of 61, but in his increasingly erratic and disturbing behaviour. Clay observes that especially in the last years of his life, Laing always evoked either strong love or strong hate, and sadly but understandably became more and more marginalised in society.

For, despite writing so pointedly on madness and the family, Laing himself found difficulty in both areas of his personal life: in the three families which he helped to create and in which he often painfully resided; and within his own psyche, clearly so troubled from his psychologically harsh upbringing as the only child of a 'mad mother' with whom he shared a bedroom in a small box room named the 'dog kennel' while his father slept apart.

Clay presents Laing as a humanising influence upon the often clinically austere and distanced stance to which professionals so easily become attracted. It remains to be seen how effective his criticisms and frequent ridicule of psychiatry will prove to be. Society's view of 'madness', its collective fears and entrenched response to emotionally distressed people who so often exhibit disturbing behaviours, presented Laing with an enormous mountain to climb. His energy and vibrancy in attempting the huge task of bringing about cultural change in the way we all view 'insanity' is very well recorded in this book.

Personally I found the life of Ronnie Laing, as portrayed here by the sensitive

and perceptive words of John Clay, by friends and in his own published words, affected me more profoundly than I can say. Emotions of rage, sadness, love, misery and a close affinity that developed from identifying with him so much all combined to move me deeply. Indeed Laing, during his lifetime encounters with people, affected many by his retelling, reliving and re-experiencing of the sanity, madness and follies of his tragic, yet inspiring life.

Through this excellently crafted book, I felt Laing reach inside my own psyche and contact that craziness that in my more lucid moments I know to be both my insane and my most sane being. To read of his life and work is to experience the sanity and madness that so well define part of the human condition. What it is to be human.

John Sivyer

Death and Bereavement

Dewi Rees
Whurr, 1996, £19.50

This is a comprehensive survey of the psychological, religious and cultural interfaces of death and bereavement, and takes us sensitively and at times very movingly through what we all have to come to terms with. How do we prepare for death? Is it possible to prepare for death? This book covers all aspects of its subject, starting with Western attitudes, encompassing Egyptian and Islamic as well as Christian responses. The author then covers Eastern attitudes before moving on to Japan and China and finally the African continent. Freud and Jung and their dealings with death are treated to a chapter each. The book expands from ruminations about reburial rites and the excavation of long dead bodies into the present-day realities of the death of a child and, indeed, gives six pages to the consequences of the death of a pet.

As a humanistic tool this book does not have any direct relevance, but for bereavement counsellors it is indispensable.

Julian Nangle

Feminist Perspectives in Therapy: An empowerment model for women

Judith Worell and Pam Rener
Wiley, 1996, £15.99

This is a good book and does exactly what it sets out to do in its subtitle: it supplies an empowerment model for women within the context of therapy. Humanistic insofar as it is holistic in its approach to the problems that bring women into therapy (abuse, sexism, changing roles), it breaks new ground in bringing to-

gether 'social work' literature and 'psychological' literature into one very readable volume. Part of its success is attributable to the innovative interactive 'self-assessment' charts at the mast-head of each chapter. For example Chapter 4 is entitled 'A Feminist View of Counselling and Therapy' and has a self-assessment chart which invites the reader to answer fifteen questions in one of three ways. Each way earns either one, two or three points and the reader ends up with a score showing how closely their values match feminist therapy approaches. To have this opportunity for self-assessment over such a wide range of questions within such a tightly maintained overall focus is good enough on its own. However Worell and Rener go much further in expounding why the feminine perspective is vital to the continuing fulfilment of all women, and just how this can be facilitated through the *Feminist Perspectives in Therapy* approach.

Julian Nangle

Principles of Shamanism

Leo Rutherford
Thorsons, 1996, £5.99

This starts with a 'personal' explanation of how the author got into a new way of seeing and thinking. Classic mid-life crisis stuff. For those who need a layman's description of shamanism it offers 'cross-cultural anthropology'. This is a self-help book, in the business of seeing life as it is, rather than through Westernised, Christianised, dogmatised eyes; free of our conditioning. It's a thorough and helpful commentary on a discipline which, in Rutherford's view, is fortunate in having developed a recognisable name (Shamanism) for itself, since it encompasses so much of everything else in its field, not unlike Vedanta. However the central core to Shamanism, the medicine wheel and the Native American Indian's mythology in general are well covered here.

Julian Nangle

The Meditative Mind

Daniel Goleman, with foreword by Ram Dass
Thorsons, 1996, £7.99

This is a professional and deep study of the art of meditation in the context of the world's great religions. It draws on a host of traditions: Buddhist, Hindu, Moslem, Jewish and Christian. It is divided into four parts. Areas covered include comparisons of Eastern and Western mysticism, the healing properties of meditation, the different meditative techniques and the psychology of meditation. The final part,

on the psychology of meditation, is as good and profound a piece of writing on how to handle our state of being in the Western world at the beginning of the 21st century as one is likely to come across. Wishing to harmonise his actual experiences in India with his scientific life in America, the author sets out evidence of a trial he organised where he had a sample of seasoned meditators and a sample of virgin meditators (but keen to learn). He showed both groups a stress-provoking film about industrial accidents and monitored the effect. The trial showed as clinically as is possible that meditation is good for us! This is the kind of book that should be included in school curricula and taught, if necessary, by volunteers from the community. Great stuff.

Julian Nangle

The Love Crucible

Susan Lindsay
Marino Books, 1995, £8.95

I found this a very wise and loving book. It describes the essence of counselling in clear and simple terms, yet captures the deeply spiritual nature of its very everyday ordinariness. It covers all the main features of general counselling, including work with the 'inner child' and learning to love and be true to ourselves.

It would make an excellent present for someone who doesn't know much about counselling and may even be somewhat sceptical, or for someone who doubts the spiritual nature of the work. Christianity and Eastern spiritual approaches are both mentioned, but there is no preaching and both are incorporated into its basic human spirituality. There is a sense of earthy common sense throughout.

The chapter on 'Relationship' is particularly good, combining radical insights around gender stereotyping with sensible advice that could be digested even by the kind of person who wouldn't dream of reading the typical American self-help book.

But this is also a volume for practising counsellors, to remind us just how central the place of love is in our work.

Jocelyn Chaplin

Everyday Mysteries: Existential dimensions of psychotherapy

Emmy van Deurzen-Smith
Routledge, 1997, £15.99, 307pp.

This is a complex and many-layered work, which mixes the excellent with the dubious in a coruscation of changing light. It seems intended as a complete *vade*

mecum for the aspiring existential analyst.

The first section is entitled 'Philosophical Underpinnings' and consists of thumbnail sketches of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Jaspers, Buber, Tillich, Ricoeur, Derrida and Foucault. To cover all these in 80 pages is quite a feat, but achieved at the cost of great superficiality in some cases, particularly those of Husserl, Derrida and Foucault. The account of Kierkegaard, however, is much better and genuinely helpful.

The second section is called 'Existential Dimensions: A map of the world'. It introduces us to and takes us through Emmy van Deurzen-Smith's own vision of the physical, the social, the psychological and the spiritual. Again, to do all this in 36 pages leads to a certain thinness. And there is no developmental sense in any of it, even in the psychological chapter, where it seems most obviously lacking. The most curious chapter is the one on spirituality, which seems quite idiosyncratic. Here is a quote: 'Psychoanalysis and humanistic psychology do try to address those hidden layers of humanity. I pursued both enthusiastically at different times, but each failed to convince me of being rationally correct. Both psychoanalysis and humanistic psychology suffer from too much religiosity and wishful thinking. The theoretical basis is often rather narrow and unsystematic, but it is mysteriously adopted by many in an uncritical manner and adhered to as dogma. I still welcome the descriptive forms of theorising that exist in these domains and consider that it must be possible to bring them together with factual information from the cognitive and human sciences. The existential dimension of thinking allows it all to be put together under the overall, meaningful denominator of philosophy.' This seems really quite arrogant and yet curiously unsatisfactory. The author has obviously not heard of Ken Wilber, who puts these matters into more convincing order.

Part 2 is about practice. In the first section we again get a parade of names: Jaspers, Minkowsky, Lacan (why?), Binswanger, Boss, May, Yalom, Bugental, Rogers, Gendlin, Frankl, Laing, Szasz, Hoogenjijk, Achenbach and Emmy's own school. Again these are polished off in short order — 46 pages for all these. It should be said that she gives references for further reading on all her people. I think she is too kind to Frankl, and quite unfair to humanistic psychotherapy, throughout the book.

We then come to what I think is the best part. This section is about Emmy's own practice and recommendations to therapists. This is warm, human, useful and well-considered stuff, which I think would be of interest to any therapist. She discusses the physical setting and the therapeutic relationship in various aspects. There is a long discussion of the concept of the unconscious, and a suggestion that 'the client's bias' be substituted for 'transference' and 'therapist bias' for 'countertransference'. She writes well about the 'in-between', the interaction between therapist and client. I liked her statement that 'too much empathy and mollycoddling spoil the client's initiative and hard work as much as too many confrontations and too much probing'. She

makes the point that existential psychotherapists *are* entitled to make interpretations. This section ends with her cyclic model of emotions. I don't like this, as it seems to me rather rigid and mechanistic, and not at all like the Emmy of the rest of the book.

The book ends with a case history. This is based on a contract for brief therapy as part of a research project, and as such is a bit odd, particularly since the client also had another counsellor at the same time, and there were some long breaks due to unforeseen factors. But it is sincerely and honestly done, with full involvement of the client, and is readable and interesting.

This is perhaps the moment to remark that all of us who have known the author are extremely disgusted at the way in which Emmy was ejected from Regents College. The hostile and punitive way in which the College pursued her even after she left is a black mark on the judgement of the owners. Now that David Smith has left too, who knows what the future may bring to that erstwhile very impressive set of courses?

For all the criticisms I have made of this book, it is the only one to give a complete conspectus of all that is covered in existential psychotherapy, and for that we must be grateful. I hope it sells a million copies.

John Rowan

Counselling: The BAC counselling reader

Stephen Palmer, Sheila Dainow & Pat Milner (eds)
BAC and Sage, 1996, £18.95, 641pp.

This is a huge undertaking and a great success. The book comes in five parts: Counselling Approaches, which gives brief rundowns on twenty different schools of counselling; Counselling Contexts and Practice, which gives some very good and useful information on twenty-one more specialised forms of counselling; Counselling Issues, with twenty-six chapters taking us into some fascinating controversies; Counselling and Research, with seven good quality chapters; and The Last Word, giving us some predictions about the future of counselling.

Chapters that I particularly liked were mostly in the second and third of these sections. Julia Segal's 'Use of the concept of unconscious phantasy in understanding reactions to chronic illness' is a succinct rundown on Kleinian counselling, and could easily have been in the first section — very well done. Diane Hammersley and Linda Beeley contribute an excellent chapter on 'The effects of medication on counselling' — well informed and helpful. Adam Jukes has a chapter on 'Working with men who are violent to women' which I think is much better than his book. There is a fine chapter by Peter Dale on 'Counselling adults abused as children' which it would be helpful for any counsellor to read.

Colin Feltham has a spirited chapter on 'The place of counselling in the universal

scheme of suffering and folly' which he wrote in 1987, and it is interesting to read his updating comments as of today. Alan Frankland's chapter 'Exploring accreditation' should be read by anyone interested in this issue from whatever angle. It is the best account I have seen of why accreditation is important, and it is by no means uncritical. A very useful chapter by Peter Ross deals with the question of 'Paperless client records', and shows how very difficult it is to arrive at a diagnostic scheme for clients, even with the best will in the world. A striking chapter on 'Transference and countertransference' by Fergus Cairns shows how difficult it is to master this area for the beginning counsellor.

I cannot resist mentioning the remark made by Windy Dryden at the end of an article which he wrote in 1994. He says that he is continuing to write and edit books on counselling: 'However, I promise to stop when I reach a hundred . . . books, that is, not years!!' Just recently I attended a publisher's party to celebrate the publication of his hundredth book. Can we really expect a sudden cessation of activity from this source? Or are promises only to be taken as seriously as New Year resolutions?

There are many other good things here, and this book is strongly recommended.

John Rowan

Breakdown and Breakthrough

Nathan Field
Routledge, 1996, £13.99, 157pp.

This is a quirky and readable book which opens up a number of fascinating areas in psychotherapy. It is written by someone who is not afraid to speculate and not afraid to enter into some difficult and disputed territory. I really enjoyed it.

If it had to be summed up in a word, I think that word would be 'closeness'. Nathan Field is exploring closeness from a number of different angles and in a number of different ways. He combines Freud and Jung and occasionally strays into the territory of Rogers and Grof. He says, 'there are phases in the therapy when the patient regresses to a stage where the therapist is required to adopt an altogether different approach; not one of interpretation, which makes no sense at this level, but of simple attunement'.

Here it sounds as if the closeness is due to regression, to merging in the unconscious. Later, however, Field goes on to suggest that closeness can come in a different way. He calls it 'entering the fourth dimension' and regards it as something spiritual or transpersonal. 'One of the ways in which the four-dimensional state can be experienced is the simultaneous union and separation of self and other. I have in mind those moments where two people feel profoundly united with one another yet each retains a singularly enriched sense of themselves.'

He wrestles with this idea, which is so different from anything which Freud wanted to endorse, though not so remote

from Jung. 'If I insist on calling it four-dimensional it is to acknowledge a relationship beyond the therapeutic alliance, beyond the depressive position, beyond object relationship, beyond secondary process into something which incorporates, underlies and transcends the ego.' He feels that Bion understood this, and talked about it under the heading of 'faith' and of 'O'.

Field ultimately comes to the conclusion that this sense of closeness as a higher level of development 'is not a delusion, but carries with it the subjective conviction of being our true state; or at least closer to our true state than everyday consciousness.' He discusses the relevance of all this to sexual feelings between therapist and client, and comes to the conclusion that there is no particular need for anxiety. It is something different from four-dimensional consciousness, even though the word 'closeness' could be applied to both.

I really liked his statement almost at the end that 'there is a greater readiness among therapists and analysts to let their unconscious fuse with that of the patient; temporarily to give up trying to understand and simply share their confusion; even to give up trying to be therapeutic but work from moment to moment, trusting that the patient's own healing capacity can use them for its own purposes'.

John Rowan