The Reality Game: A guide to humanistic counselling and psychotherapy

John Rowan
Routledge, 1998, £13.99 pb, 244pp.

This is a new edition of Rowan's highly popular guide to humanistic counselling and psychotherapy which really is the best such general guide available in this country. The book covers the origins of the humanistic approach, and that approach in practice in relationship to assessment, the tasks of the therapist, transference, resistance and so forth. There are also useful chapters on humanistic research and supervision. Much of this is necessarily and usefully updated to take account of recent developments in the field. A chapter on professional ethics and accreditation has been added.

As is to be expected, not all of this is covered in equal depth and Rowan is particularly strong in those areas where his own interests and contributions lie — namely Mahrer and Wilber, humanistic research, the patripsych and models of personal development where he has made his own important contributions to the field. For the trainee and beginning counsellor/therapist there are extremely useful chapters on the first interview and opening sessions, which as a guide to actually doing humanistic therapy have possibly not been bettered.

Rowan's particular gift is his ability to summarise quite complex models and ideas into succinct and comprehensible forms, without being patronising or simplistic. At its best, as in his elucidation of Mahrer and Wilber, this is very helpful. He's also very good at talking frank common sense about the practice of humanistic therapy in an open and non-defensive way. The negative end of this particular gift is a tendency to glibness and superficiality when he's in areas where his own knowledge is clearly skimpy, as in his rather cursory dismissal of the various critiques of the hierarchical professionalisation of counselling and psychotherapy, which selectively ignores much of what has been written and is clearly ignorant in certain important respects.

This exception apart, Rowan's ability to summarise succinctly a variety of different approaches to counselling and psychotherapy and to see what they have in common, together with a real sense of quiet authority, of having lived it and done it, continue to make this book a modern classic of humanistic psychology, essential reading for the counselling and therapy trainee.

David Kalisch

Counselling and Psychotherapy in Private Practice

Roger Thistle
Sage, 1998, £10.99 pb, 135pp.

This immensely helpful little book provides a complete and clear guide to the issues and practicalities involved in setting up as a private practice therapist. It comes in the Sage 'Professional Skills' publications which is a very useful series of practical guides and manuals, essentially for the beginning practitioner but also full of tips for the established and experienced worker. Before becoming a counsellor Roger Thistle was in banking and this book is packed with useful information on everything the beginning private practitioner would need to know, from tax law to keeping records and making contracts and from choice of premises to safety, insurance and ethical issues.

The book is informed by two considerations and how to merge them successfully, namely, ethical practice and business enterprise. For the many people who plunge into private practice work without fully seeing the ethical, personal or business pitfalls along the way, a book like this could serve as an essential 'highway code'. In particular the chapters on business planning should almost be compulsory reading for anyone considering the private practice option. As well as all the legal, contractual and practical information there are very useful tips on promoting one's 'business' and also on looking after one's health and welfare. There are helpful chapter summaries and a copy of the BAC *Code of Ethics and Practice for Counsellors* in the Appendix. I will certainly be recommending this book to trainees and to anyone thinking of making the leap into private practice.

David Kalisch

The Compassionate Revolution: Radical politics and Buddhism

David Evans
Green Books, 1998, £9.95, 228pp.

This passionately argued book sets out an analysis of contemporary institutionalised global cruelty and oppression and then advocates the Buddhist principle of compassion as a more promising basis for radical politics than the ideology of anger that often motivates dissent.

A prime aim, therefore, is to recommend a new basis for radical politics. The book never doubts that the Buddha favoured a radical stance. The main political arguments are that (a) though Western governments endorse democracy at home they support totalitarianism abroad, in

order to retain command of the world's raw materials, especially oil; and (b) though we tend to believe that we have a 'free press' the media are actually controlled by the big corporations that either own them directly, or control most of the revenue which comes from advertising, so that 'Western democratic societies are subject to a level of thought control far exceeding anything achieved by Hitler or Stalin, or imagined by Orwell'.

Chapters one and four are concerned with the ways in which Western democracies support violence and even genocide in the Third World in order to maintain the disparity of wealth which keeps Westerners rich and comfortable and Western-based corporations profitable. Chapters two and three are devoted to demolishing the credibility of the idea of press freedom in a capitalist environment. In chapter five the Buddhist principle of compassion is introduced and it is explained how this natural tendency in people is neutralised by processes of denigration, particularly by devaluation of other ethnic groups and of the non-human species we exploit. 'In short, a substantial proportion of the population of the US and other Western societies has been successfully inoculated against compassion.'

In chapter six a more extensive description of the principle of compassion in Buddhism is given, its transforming power asserted, and some of the basis of what a Buddhist politics might look like begins to unfold.

Compassion is asserted to be more important than equality or justice and 'the greatest good of the greatest number' is rejected as a justification for keeping some in misery. Buddhist meditation techniques for the cultivation of compassion are described and proposed as basic training for radical political activists. Chapter seven starts with the famous question 'What then must we do?' and shows the inseparability of combating greed, hate and delusion in ourselves and in the institutions of society. It includes an interesting discussion of the Buddha's rejection of sacrifice and the need for the world to stop sacrificing some for the well-being of others. Individually and collectively, the need is for compassion and generosity. The book is strongly written and a valuable addition to the growing literature on engaged Buddhism.

David Brazier

The Handbook of Psychodrama

M. Karp, P. Holmes and K.B. Tauvon (eds)
Routledge, 1998, £16.99, 305pp.

It is more than twenty years since Ira Greenberg edited *Psychodrama*, which brought together the Morenos and other contributors to describe and teach their subject. So it seems time for a new book, and one which bridges the American and

the British culture, as Marcia Karp has done in her work at Holwell.

The title of this new work is confident, even ambitious. The book itself is well grounded, clear, patiently explanatory, often illuminating, and has the feeling of being a complete work, reminiscent of Anthony Ryle's *Cognitive Analytic Therapy*, another book that presented its subject in such a way as to give the reader full access.

In a format reminiscent of *Psychodrama*, more than a dozen contributors have written chapters that cover the historical background of Jacob L. Moreno and of the psychodrama he gradually invented, starting with children in the parks in Vienna, through to a full description of the stages of the work, and descriptions of actual psychodramas.

What a magnificent creative talent and social vision! Moreno's remarkable inventiveness underlies so many techniques and theories in many therapeutic orientations, and yet his name is often unfamiliar to those who speak of sociometry, group therapy, spontaneous theatre, empty chair work, and most of the active techniques of present day therapies. Haworth's chapter on the man shows a sadly familiar story of rejection in his own time, and a litter of brilliant inventions, often undeveloped for lack of that warm honouring of a person's questions or perceptions that he himself insisted on in psychodrama. Freud, often Moreno's bugbear, was another Viennese who suffered greatly from the detractions of uncomprehending or envious colleagues.

Yet so much has come through, much of it still nurtured by Moreno's wife Zerka who has written the preface, and who describes the dynasty of psychodrama which, in this country, is largely carried on by Marcia Karp, who trained with him and has trained most of the contributors.

The schema of the book echoes the progress of a psychodrama session, starting with the warm-up phase. In the book this incorporates an introduction to what psychodrama is, as well as showing how to conduct the warm-up considered integral to the work. Here we have again a familiar concept that many therapists use, but do not associate in any way with Moreno.

The other phases unfold in a way that is self-explanatory and clear, and has both caveats and encouragement for those who are undertrained but enthusiastic about the applicability of psychodrama.

This book creates a new image in my mind. Before it appeared, I could imagine Moreno's fate as a scene like Scrooge's vision of his death, with stealthy visitors carrying off all that he had, so that he was left with little to identify him. This handbook is more like a bountiful will, which distributes great wealth with as great generosity, so that as many as possible shall benefit. And, I hope, many will recall his name with gratefulness for a vision that extended from personal to social change, empowerment and enlivenment.

A way of working first intended for psychotic patients has been adapted through the Moreno Institute in New York for a great range of applications. It has a place in the integration of therapeutic techniques and models that is gathering force in the present field of psychotherapy and counselling. At the heart of it is the acceptance

and attempt at empathic understanding of the protagonist, the client, that needs to be central to any form of therapy.

The illustrations by Ken Sprague are described in the book as being a kind of chapter in themselves, and to me they were vigorously successful as an evocation of the liveliness, the life, and the high order of skill of psychodrama well conducted.

All of which adds up to saying that this is a book to buy if you have any interest in psychodrama or in the history of the humanistic schools of therapy.

Gaie Houston

Solution-focused Therapy with Children

Matthew D. Selekman
Guilford Press, 1997, £22.95 hb, 232pp.

This book is a joy to read. I can't recall enjoying a textbook so much since the days of discovering that doyen of therapy, Sheldon Kopp! Here is a therapist with a great sense of fun, with a very positive attitude to children and to the potential social skills of parents, too. He draws on the family's previous problem-solving experiences, if necessary bringing in the child's friends as well as other carers in the school and community to help combat the 'problems-saturated sagas' families can present.

Art, family games, stories and visualisation exercises using the idea of a crystal ball or a magic wand or visiting 'parenting land' are all used to find helpful changes, but Selekman also emphasises the importance of patient listening. I particularly liked his suggestion of operating from a Buddhist stance of doing nothing, using a 'don't know mind', forever open, fresh and fertile with possibilities.

There is much we can learn about the art of asking questions in order to define the problem, externalise it, assess the potential for change in the family system, co-author a new family story and encourage confidence and optimism by building on areas of competence.

Formulating a diagnosis too early, based on previous experience and rigidly held theories, needs to be challenged by 'pulling the rug out' from under our belief systems. For instance, the child development theories we use in assessing a child 'are not built of stone'. Very young children can contribute through games and art. Parents may need help to support the 'maturational process' famously described by Donald Winnicott, who employed his 'Squiggle Game' to great effect, but also used 'not knowing' until something meaningful emerged in his 'holding environment'. Selekman fully involves children in defining the problem, utilising their intelligence and creativity to reveal parental behaviour which contributes to their distress, suggesting how both parent and child might change constructively to reduce the conflicts. Involving the child can reduce the length of treatment, as his well-documented research shows. There is

so much wisdom here, so many helpful suggestions of creative strategies which could be utilised with other 'stuck' clients to engage them in the therapeutic process. For its optimism and sense of fun alone this is well worth reading.

What's more, it's a pleasure.

Betty Gould

Child-centred Family Therapy

Lucille Andreozzi
Wiley, 1996, £39.95 hb, 374pp.

Frankly this long treatise on family therapy is hard work. I find it very repetitive, jargon-loaded and heavy going. In the preface the author describes it as 'combining child development and family process, a developmentally focused, family initiated, and therapeutically induced model of system change ... its activities and interventions practical and behavioural'. A pity then that it should be so difficult to get a clear picture of the therapists' interactions with the families. Those presented as case material are interesting enough, and the use of living sculptures and family role play are mentioned; it's just that the emphasis on therapy is so turgid and obtuse — and long-winded.

We do have 12 pages of 'charting normal development' which may help newcomers to the field. But I distrust such oversimplification, because children vary so much in their pace of development, and these explanations can create much anxiety. Then we have 'psychopolitical configurations ... to convey how individual behaviours, personal puzzle pieces of family members, their player parts, combine to form predictable transactional styles and interactions'. Ten pages for a 'therapy process long form' and another ten for 'reviewing progress' and 'termination'. The author has a doctorate in Education. Unfortunately she needs a good editor.

Betty Gould

Long-term Counselling

Geraldine Shipton and Eileen Smith
Sage, 1998, £12.99, 156pp.

A disappointing read. I can't imagine who would find this helpful. Students? Perhaps. But there is now an enormous literature available on counselling. Those in private practice probably do tend to see clients for more than 20–25 sessions if they can afford the fee. For many working in public services or group practices,

confined to short-term contracts of six to eight sessions, the possibility of open-ended work is not available. Even the casework described is not very interesting — I do like to find the client and counsellor exchanges at least as enjoyable as a novel. And I can think of many contemporary novels which present more fascinating characters whom counsellors could learn from!

Betty Gould

The Mind of Your Newborn Baby

David Chamberlain
North Atlantic Books, 1998, £10.99 pb

There was a time when people — especially doctors — believed that the foetus and the neonate were simple organisms, without many feelings and without much intelligence. How many mothers of my generation (babies born in the late 1960s) and later were told 'New babies don't smile'. Fortunately I was obstinate enough to insist that mine did! In this important book, David Chamberlain brings together the research of the last 30 or so years and shows how wrong these ideas were on the emotional and intellectual capacities of the foetus and neonate. Fortunately, like me, many parents never believed them! What is concerning is how many doctors did.

Fundamental to this book is the message that babies remember their birth, and their intrauterine period. This is not new to various forms of breathwork, including rebirthing and holotropic breathwork, nor, now, to many other transpersonal therapies.

In his introduction Chamberlain describes the historical attitude to babies' abilities and dispels through evidence various myths including that babies don't feel, that they have poor brains, that they can't think, that they have no sense of self, and that they don't need their mothers. Besides that, he insists that they remember their birth and recognises that birth memories can come up through various therapies. His own preferred method is hypnosis. He finds that some people have always remembered their birth and calls for them to communicate with him.

In Part One, 'Your extraordinary newborn', Chamberlain deals with how the body and brain develop. He describes the many ways in which foetuses and newborns are alert and aware. They respond to different tastes when fluids of different kinds are injected into the womb, and hear and recognise voices there. They respond once born to stories that were read to them in the womb. They respond to light and movement immediately after birth. Foetuses and new babies learn and remember. They have engaging and unique personalities and are gifted communicators, rich in facial expressions and variety of sounds.

In Part Two, 'Babies remember birth',

Chamberlain reviews the history of birth trauma memories. While rebirthing and holotropic breathwork bring up the feeling aspects of the birth trauma, hypnosis brings out the narrative aspect, including evidence that 'lucid thought processes and deep feelings ... were going on in the infant at the time of birth'. Between the ages of two and three many little children remember their births. Chamberlain worked with mother–child pairs in hypnosis to see whether they remembered the birth in the same way and found a very high consistency. There is a chapter on 'Birth: as Babies see it', including what they feel about labour, life in the delivery room and being separated from their mothers. There is also a chapter on how careless, insensitive talking in the labour room can mark the infant for life: under hypnosis people remember rejection, hostility and critical remarks. All of this information is supported by case histories.

In Part Three, 'Birth: the inside story', there is a lot of evidence for sophisticated thinking on the part of babies during their birth experience, including that they can feel intelligent and wise, they can know very well what is going on, they feel care for their mothers during dangerous births, they need touch after birth, and they value love and being wanted. Chamberlain concludes his book with some advice on 'living with your conscious baby', a perspective on the ten years since the first edition of this book came out, and a sensitive chapter on the problem of abortion. There are references to many very interesting books.

The title of this book refers to 'your newborn baby' so it seems to be about present and future babies. It is also about past babies — us! It is about the many of us who are unconsciously living with birth trauma right now and who may or may not be going to therapists to try to heal wounds and insults that are as old as we are. This book is about those of us who are aware of the nature of this wound in ourselves and in our clients, and who have developed the skills to work with it.

I hope it will be translated into all of the world's languages, and used as a set book for all gynaecologists, paediatricians, midwives, parents, social workers, teachers, politicians, and everyone else connected both with the birth process and with children, so that babies will be better welcomed into the world, and children better respected. If we think about it, how can a child who suffers a violent birth become a peace-loving, peace-creating individual? Look what our society is showing us in the evident lack of feelings of being loved as shown by enormous numbers of suffering people who are either helpless outside society, sleeping on the streets, or who deny their vulnerability in acts of violence towards others. We certainly need to read this book, to enjoy it, to be moved and amazed by the information contained, and to be aware of the scientific research that supports our experiences regarding the birth trauma, and to act so that the information it contains becomes ever more widespread.

Joy Manné

Do You Feel Loved By Me?

Philip Rogers
Living Well, 1998, £5.99, 135pp.

The author claims that this book 'offers practical suggestions for more caring relationships', with chapters on developing listening skills, giving affirmations and on how beliefs can sabotage personal growth. But 'cushion-bashing' as a 'positive expression of anger' leaves me in doubt about how up to date the author is in his understanding of emotional development. There is a distinct possibility that such an exercise, bandied about so much in the 1960s, can escalate anger rather than resolve it. I am also uncomfortable with the premise that asking 'Do you feel loved by me?' is any less manipulative than 'I love you'. Both these phrases can both become part of a game that is not in the spirit of love. And as for giving unconditional favours, 'as long as it is not against the law' — the mind boggles!

So, is this book to be recommended? It could be useful, if clients who are interested in self-help texts are willing to try out the exercises and explore their effects as part of the therapy session. But there are better books than this!

Jen Popkin

On the Sublime in Psychoanalysis: Archetypal psychology and psychotherapy

Petruska Clarkson (ed)
Whurr, 1997, £37.50 hb, 300pp.

This has been an exceptionally difficult book to review for two reasons: firstly, there is so much in it that it is difficult to précis, and secondly, I found reading it very hard going. If ever a book were not to be judged by its cover (plain white with simple black headings) then this must be it!

Clarkson has brought together some learned and experienced practitioners from the worlds of psychoanalysis, archetypal psychology and psychotherapy, who each attempt in their own way to give their definition of the sublime and its impact on a whole wealth of areas. These cover fine art criticism, synchronicity and fate, countertransference and politics, the erotic, classical literature and music and last but not least the practice of psychotherapy.

The book is certainly an education. I learnt about Dicken's horrific childhood employment as a living mannequin in a shop window, jeered at until rescued by his father. I learnt something of the art appreciation which considers the anorexic body a revolutionary statement on beauty. I

learnt something of the music of Debussy and the plays of Maeterlinck and even found myself contemplating the 12th century love poetry transcribed by a dervish named Shaykh-al-Ishraq, 'The Master of Illumination'. (I also found myself seriously worried at how 'dumbed down' I had become as I resolved to definitely watch less television in future.) It really is very difficult to condense the book as each chapter is so different in subject matter, quality and style of writing.

Marie Angelo's chapter is an attempt to 'place' the sublime in a kind of psychic geography. This is illustrated when we talk of 'rising above things' or 'putting things behind us'. Angelo gives a fascinating description of the alchemists' view of the unconscious, which they called 'memoria', and she proposes the cosmology of the Kabbalah which believes that the sublime is not something located 'out there' or 'up there' but as existing congruent with every part of the imaginal universe — wherever we are in it. The Kabbalistic view is that everything is in everything else but also acts upon everything else. She quotes Scholem:, 'What is below is above and what is inside is outside,' and maintains that using this approach prevents practitioners getting stuck in eurocentric psychic geography.

Alan Bleakley's chapter, 'Sublime moments in the body of the double pelican', describes the sublime experience of the 'conjunction', the coming together often pictured as the physical union of man and woman but which applies to an internal as well as an external union. The 'double pelican' is a dual vessel that offers circulation between flasks; a partnership where each sacrifices for the other to create a third — the relationship.

Andrew Samuels writes about the mysteries of countertransference. He provides two useful terms, 'embodied countertransference' (where the therapist behaves as if they were someone in the client's life) and 'reflective counter- transference' (where the therapist's experience reflects where the client is at that time). Samuels talks of his work researching this phenomenon, concluding that it could be seen as a mystical communication channel and might even be useful when working politically with groups. A scribe at a workshop picking up the 'group message' by paying attention to his or her own countertransference experiences. I do not know how radical this is in the Jungian world, but I know it is regularly used in the gestalt and humanistic models of working with groups. Samuels seems to think it may prove therapeutic on a political level, and could help groups in their relationships with each other. A very interesting idea, which I feel is unlikely to be taken seriously by most politicians... or am I simply reflecting the general pessimism that politicians and others feel about being able to effect change politically?

Other chapters from Thomas Moore, Eva Loewe and Noel Cobb explore the value of the erotic life, artistic images of impossible love, and a husband's loving description of his late wife's way of living and of practising psychotherapy by elevating beauty. There are also articles by Clarkson on the archetypal absent father, parallel process in supervision, and work-

ing with what the Jungians call the inferior function in such a way that it ends up becoming a superior function. (We each use four functions, feeling, sensation, intuition and intellect; some are more dominant than others and so are called by Jungians 'superior'.) This reminded me of the gestalt approach where a client is encouraged to fully 'enter into' whatever behaviour is troubling them at the time — by a strange and paradoxical injunction, giving permission to the troubling behaviour often allows it to flourish in a healthier form.

It has been said that it is the mark of genius to take complicated ideas and present them simply. William James knew this, Freud too ... I wish that someone had mentioned this possibility to the majority of authors in this compilation, who seem to think that the sublime is akin to the obscure.

On a more positive note I would like to single out two contributors for high praise. Both write about complex ideas simply and in an engaging way: Ginette Paris, who describes 'everyday epiphanies' (in everyday language), and the late Gerhard Adler, whose chapter explores his experiences of fate and synchronicity. Adler's chapter in particular was a *tour de force*, describing the tearing of the space–time continuum as a possible explanation for fateful events, and explaining why he found himself able to dream into the future. Paris writes about the difference between the Christian experience of epiphany as something that 'tears the veil', taking one into the realm of the gods, whereas the Pagan experience of epiphany illumines the everyday. Pagan societies just accept that the gods are walking abroad; this enables them to feel a personal connection with their gods that is not as available to the Christian, who may need someone to intercede between God and human. This chapter came like a breath of fresh air. It was simple, clear, humorous, intelligent and in my opinion truly sublime.

I would recommend this book to those with a considerable knowledge of Jungian terminology and to those who are practitioners in the field. For general readers interested in humanistic ideas I think it would prove quite difficult to understand the concepts, even if one did possess a Latin dictionary.

Jessica Woolliscroft

Broken Images, Broken Selves: Dissociative narratives in clinical practice

Stanley Krippner and Susan Marie Powers
Brunner/Mazel, 1997, £26.25 hb, 372pp.

This is a book of 16 chapters by the same number of different authors. It is divided into three parts: 'The realm of dissociation'; 'Narratives of dissociative experiences'; and 'Truth and culture'. The standard is very high, and this is a book to

interest all those concerned with issues of self and the plurality of self.

The first chapter, by Stanley Krippner (a long-time member of the AHP in the USA), is introductory in nature, taking us over the whole field in a very helpful way. He introduces us to an issue which arises again and again in this book, the importance of cross-cultural awareness. A dissociative state, such as a trance, may be indicative of pathology in one culture, but be completely normal in another. Possession by a god or goddess may be regarded as demonic and/or psychiatric in one culture, but be easily acceptable in another.

Another issue which he raises is that there is a big difference between experiences which remain at the level of the ego-self, and experiences which rise to the level of the All-Self. The All-Self is the term he uses to refer to transpersonal experiences (often of the nature of glimpses) in the broad realm of the mystical. 'An experient may become aware of this 'oneness' in ritual prayer or any other procedure in which the ego-self gradually merges with the All-Self (i.e. controlled awareness). Another experient (2) may contact the All-Self while dissociating from the ego-self, as when "channelling" messages from a source of "universal knowledge" (i.e. controlled dissociation). A third experient (3) may momentarily feel a "oneness" with nature, with an infant, or with one's lover (i.e. uncontrolled awareness). Finally, an experient (4) may ingest a powerful drug and enter a "void" in which self-identity is lost (i.e. uncontrolled dissociation) yielding unmitigated terror, transcendent bliss, or something in between.'

This is both interesting and valuable, but I have mixed feelings about it. On the one hand, it is very much worth while to have such a category as the All-Self, so that a place is left for the transcendent. On the other hand, it seems inadequate to me to have just one term for the whole transpersonal realm. It plays into the hands of those who want to say that the transpersonal is one great mishmash called 'spirituality'. To me it seems much wiser to acknowledge that there are a number of distinct regions of the transpersonal, that there are maps (such as those of Ken Wilber or van Eckartsberg) of this field, that those who have been there most often and most regularly say that such distinctions are important. I have written about this at great length in my book on the transpersonal.

The other chapter I should like to comment on is by Rhea White, who also uses the term 'All-Self', which is all about what she calls Exceptional Human Experiences, or EHEs. She adopts a wonderfully open attitude towards a vast range of human experiences which include dissociation. In fact, she has made a collection of such experiences, which expands from day to day. She has quite a strict definition of what she includes under that rubric, involving seven separate and distinct conditions: 1, the experience is spontaneous; 2, it seems very special and meaningful; 3, ordinary rational explanations break down; 4, it seems genuine; 5, the consensus of others is that the experience is not true, or is meaningless, or can be explained away; 6, the experience goes on increasing in meaning over time; and 7, the

experiencer gets a sense of being in touch with the All-Self. She says this has to do with the concept of a 'calling', which alerts the person to a sense of unrealised potential and having a purpose on this planet. There is a sense of having been chosen, and the question then is: 'Am I going to choose back?' As we know from Maslow, people often fall into what he calls the 'Jonah complex' at this point, and refuse the calling.

She has found that EHEs fall into five main groupings: psychical, mystical, encounter, death-related, and exceptional normal experiences. This is fascinating stuff, and well worth further study.

Another chapter which contains some interesting material is by Bruce Greyson, writing about near-death narratives. Someone who has had a near-death experience he calls an NDEr. He says: 'Regarding the NDEr as a victim of the experience is countertherapeutic. Conversely, helping the patient to appreciate his or her active role in the creation or unfolding of the NDE may help the individual understand and resolve problems arising from the experience. The therapist should encourage grief work for those parts of the ego that may have died. Unwanted parts of the ego that were abandoned or transcended in the NDE may need to be mourned.' This is an important insight which I have not seen in print before. All in all this is an excellent book which repays close study, and is also good for general reference, because it covers so much of the area. Strongly recommended.

John Rowan
