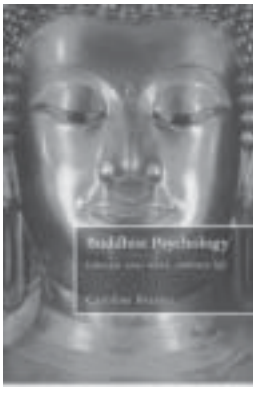


Buddhist Psychology

Caroline Brazier

Robinson, 2003. £7.99

The photo of the author, Caroline Brazier at the front of the book, hair shaven, smiling enigmatically, and wearing the insignia of 'an engaged Buddhist order' sets the tone of the book. It is the work of a committed Buddhist practitioner. She and her husband, David Brazier, live in a Buddhist community, have published other books on Buddhism, and together they have been running training programmes in applied Buddhist psychology and psychotherapy for some years, both in UK and internationally. The Amida Trust, their joint creation, based on original texts of the Mahayana tradition of Buddhism, offers a core theory psychotherapy programme.

The prologue and preface introduces the author's personal views on Buddhist psychology and gives details of her own history, in a straightforward style. This overview of her life and reflections on living in the world today is a pleasant prelude to the theoretical ideas and models she develops in the rest of the book.

Part 1, Theories and Models, looks at our Western world through Buddhist eyes, and for the curious this is fascinating. It does, however present certain challenges; the reader needs to become familiar with the Sanscrit vocabulary, although the terminology is carefully explained, with a glossary given at the end. Buddhist concepts also demand a completely new mind set. The author is aware of this problem, and asks the reader to stop, and consider their reactions. For example, when you recall a childhood friend, ask yourself if the memory is part of your mind: where does it arrive from? 'Direct experiential knowledge and understanding' is considered the way forward to understanding or enlightenment. This is similar to the ideas of Edmund Husserl, modern phenomenologist, as the author acknowledges.

Chapter 1, An Afflicted World, tells the well-known story of Siddharta, the prince who became Buddha, the enlightened one. His ideas about suffering, and the Four Noble Truths, underlie Buddhist psychology and practice. The reader needs to grasp the

concept of Dukkha, or affliction: the inevitability that we have painful experiences, while Skandhas are the emotional reactions to these worldly events. 'We tend to cling on to things we cannot have…..falling into compulsive patterns of avoidance behaviour'. Addictions of all kinds result from our desire to avoid our painful feelings. The author gives case studies to illustrate the practical ways the Buddhist therapist deals with these. Meditation, conscious breathing, and visualisation techniques are some that have also found their way into different schools of therapeutic practice.

This is a comprehensive and scholarly text book on Buddhism and its approach to psychology. It feels like a substantial amount to absorb, including the interesting comparisons with Western psychology. Brazier notes critically of Carl Rogers' idea of a person's frame of reference:

'simply responding from within the other person's frame of reference will reinforce the illusion that what is perceived as real is in fact real.'

Parallels with Freudian ideas of the Self structure are shown diagrammatically, id, ego and super-ego, compare to similar Buddhist 'energies' needing to be 'harnessed to the process of enlightenment, not to social conformity'. While Jung's idea of the shadow, the disowned parts of the personality, are like the Buddhist dark forces which can 'overwhelm and haunt us'.

Buddhism is concerned with practice and ethics, and also living in community, with a spiritual guide, 'aiming at the transcending of self, rather than its creation'. In Chapter 8, Beyond Self, the cult of the individualistic self that we find in Western culture today, is contrasted with the Buddhist paradigm of non-self. Brazier does not see it as necessary to abandon everything Western, and highlights some ideas and practices that are acceptable to Buddhists although they are aiming at different goals. The author sees much to criticise in a value system which emphasises the self-love position.

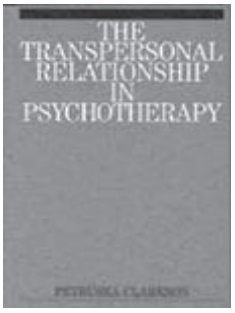
I looked for, and found, links to my personal belief system, particularly in Part two, Creating Conditions. A chapter on Grounding explains the benefits of taking time to calm down, to breathe, to centre oneself, to become strong and aware of the earth and our relation to it physically, before working with others. Rogers' core conditions for change: empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard, are recognised as a way of transcending self, similar to the Buddhist goals of offering compassion and stillness in a one to one situation.

Part two has many practical ideas for therapists. These include: recognition of clients' stories, mindfulness training, journaling, choosing one's friends carefully and aspiring to higher goals, continually transcending self. Buddhist concern with 'relationship with the other' and a life of ethical behaviour is the nearest it gets to a transpersonal view of life, since it excludes a deity of any kind. Buddhist spiritual progress connects to the way one lives: the conditions needed, and the rituals, can be found detailed in the chapter entitled Working with environmental factors.

The book covers a variety of contemporary issues, and there is plenty for therapists to consider as well as for the general reader wanting to understand Buddhist ideas and their application. The Buddhist way of working with anger and grief may be of particular interest to therapists. The final chapter focuses on facing death and loss, and the impermanence of our existence. The author's clarity of expression, combined with the summaries at the end of each chapter, help the reader to get to grips with the complexities of this subject.

Vivienne Silver-Leigh

The Transpersonal Relationship In Psychotherapy



Petruska Clarkson

Whurr, 2002. £25

The author describes the transpersonal realm in this book as 'the region beyond words' - an evocative phrase that captures much that is at the heart of the transpersonal relationship. Perhaps, then, it is no wonder that what is rather a wordy book should struggle so much at times to convey the its message.

The book opens with a Chapter entitled 'What is the Transpersonal?', in which the author sets out to communicate the ways in which she uses the term through the book, and the significance for her of Physis - spirit or life force - as the transpersonal element in all things, including the practice of psychotherapy. She also reiterates a previously published seven level model for differentiating levels of discourse in order to engage with the complexities of our world and work.

Like much that is to follow I found this chapter at times infuriatingly convoluted and verbose and, at others, breathtaking in the beauty of the words. However, it must be added that not all of the beauty is original to the author. Like many before her, when faced with the challenge of conceptualising and conveying the numinous and the divine, she draws on the work of the poets to assist where prose is so inadequate. In this instance, the works of Rumi, which are quoted extensively throughout the book, do much to evoke an experience of the transpersonal, to compensate for the failure of words to describe it.

For me, one of the most important and insightful arguments of this chapter (and others that follow, because it is a rather repetitious book) is that, without an appreciation of the transpersonal realm, those of us from the 'first world' will be unable to form a culturally meaningful or helpful therapeutic relationship with clients whose cultural origins are different from our own.

Professor Clarkson goes on, in Chapter 2, to argue the universality of the transpersonal relationship dimension in all forms of therapy, even though other theorists may conceptualise it differently. She concludes with a section on 'Transpersonal Psychotherapy in Practice' in which she illustrates the explicit introduction of the transpersonal dimension into her work with clients through the use of what she describes as 'the meaning of life question'. As with the other places in the book where she writes directly about practice, the work comes to life here. It is her illustrations of practice, such as the examples of the use of ritual in Chapter 3 and, in particular, an extended case study with a client called Jeder, which do more for me to convey the lived experience of working with a conscious awareness of the sacred than any of the lengthy sections of 'theory'.

Chapters 4 to 8 draw on some of the stages of the alchemical process to illustrate the different relational matrices within the therapeutic relationship. Again, these are most movingly illuminated through reference to the work with Jeder. I did however, struggle to see the connections between some of the alchemical stages that she referred to, and the different 'relationships' (reparative, person to person), with which she linked them.

After Chapter 9, which focuses on the timeless concept of eternal return, and the unending cycle of life/death/life as it may be played out in therapy (and life, of course) the book concludes (well almost) with a chapter addressing the need for a transpersonal perspective to held in the work of supervision and training. The book actually ends with a number of appendices.

In all I found the book to be a glorious example of the Curate's Egg – good in parts! Some sections were, to me, overlong, tiresomely repetitive and irritatingly self referential – the author quotes from or refers to some 41 of her previous publications – something which put me in mind of the image of the urorborus – the snake which eats its own tail! It was this frequent drawing upon previously published material that left me feeling that parts of the book were very much a repetition of previous ideas, and that a reader familiar with a cross section of her earlier works may not find as many new ideas as they might wish for in a book of this length.

In other places, the book can be both moving and inspirational and her sections on how to know if what you are doing is 'transpersonal therapy' are both humorous and grounded as well as thought provoking. My overall opinion is that, whilst this book does have much to contribute to the literature which explores the Transpersonal dimensions of the therapeutic relationship, it could have said them in rather fewer, and less frequently repeated words.

Nicky Marshall

Nicky Marshall is an Integrative Psychosynthesis psychotherapist working in private practice with individuals, couples and supervisees. She is also a member of the training staff at Re.Vision.

Ethically Challenged Professions:
enabling innovation and diversity in psychotherapy and counselling
edited by Yvonne Bates and Richard House
PCCS Books, Ross-on-Wye. £17

This is an uneven book, but a rich and deeply stimulating one to which some thirty people have contributed. Some chapters originated as talks. More than a third are reprinted from journals while others have been extracted from books. There are three chapters from consumers of psychotherapy. Apart from what the editors have contributed, few of the remaining chapters appear to have been specially written, but only those who read widely and have access to a good library are likely to have come across much of this material before.

Ethically Challenged Professions is best seen as an anthology, not one that looks backwards from a fixed point of view as anthologies generally do, but instead one that peers forward towards an uncertain future. Its chapters are grouped into five sections, each of which is headed by an introduction. Richard House and Yvonne Bates invite us to view their subject matter from a variety of perspectives and ponder the interconnections.

The editors make it clear from the outset that the key underlying themes are to do with how we, as practitioners, face up to questions about anxiety

and power. To the extent that we fail to respond adequately we are – so to speak – ethically challenged.

The early chapters clear the ground for a post-modern perspective and make it directly relevant to practice. Implicit here is the notion that counsellors and psychotherapists habitually avoid awkward questions that demand attention.

Take training. There is considerable evidence – reviewed here in a paper by Bohart and Tallman – that traditional psychotherapy training is less effective than bodies such as UKCP or BACP would like to believe. How else to account for the persistent finding that paraprofessionals (those with 100 hours or so of training) produce results equal to, or better than, professionals? In elaborating on the notion of the active client Bohart and Tallman provide the most convincing gloss on the research data that I have yet come across. What is required is a shift in attitude on the part of the therapist and thus a shift in the relationship between therapist and client. The role of the therapist has to be redefined in order to take account of the need for a change in the way power operates between the parties.

It is still rare for books on counselling or psychotherapy to seek out clients' views in the way this one has. At the outset of her contribution 'Anna Sands' writes that for her 'the most pressing issue in any debate about therapy is how to avoid its causing us harm'. Her contribution, when read alongside those by 'Natalie Simpson' and 'Rosie Alexander', raises the possibility that, whilst the way counselling and psychotherapy is traditionally practised suits some clients, others experience the power relations involved as abusive. In a chapter he contributes to the first section of the book, 'Challenging Assumptions', Richard House sets out to show that harm of this kind is a consequence of the way therapy is commonly understood and practised. Traditional frameworks for making complaints do not come close to taking account of this problem.

How do we respond to research and client feedback of this kind? Can we use it to build up more coherent explanations – that is to say ones that hold together better? When we do so are there things that don't feel right? If there are, how do we take account of what doesn't quite fit? What kind of a map can we put together? If we treat our map as true do we have a better guide to practice?

These are the kinds of challenge *Ethically Challenged Professions* presents. With such variety it is highly unlikely that anyone would agree with it all – indeed at one point the editors themselves take strong exception to a view expressed by one of their own contributors.

The second of the five sections addresses the question of professionalisation. The conventional view is that this field of work is like, say, mechanical engineering – that is, there is a body of knowledge in which extensive training is required before anyone should be allowed to practice. Unqualified people can't be trusted to apply this expertise safely and it is therefore crucial that entry is carefully policed.

In a contribution titled 'The Baby and the Bathwater' Nick Totton makes a scathing attack on this position. He points out that there has been no proper response to the challenge Richard Mowbray first issued in 1995 in 'The Case Against Psychotherapy Regulation' – which was that the onus should lie with those advocating it to show that the supposed benefits would outweigh the likely drawbacks.

In the meantime anxiety about regulation has been fostered and the membership of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy has grown dramatically. BACP is often seen by its members as a professional association, yet it is an educational charity and, as such, is required to provide the government, its members and the public with balanced information. BACP is a committed advocate of statutory regulation that has failed to engage with the weight of the

evidence. With the exception of Brian Thorne's paper 'Regulation: a treacherous path?', which is reprinted here, BACP has held back in recent years from publishing anything questioning the value of professionalisation. Given the strength of the contrary position, this is nothing short of scandalous.

The last decade has seen substantial strides towards what Richard Mowbray calls *de facto* regulation – a situation in which, even without a formal government initiative, it is difficult for anyone to establish themselves and earn a living without being registered by BACP, UKCP or a similar organisation. As was predicted, creativity has been inhibited and the dead hand of defensive practice has grown apace. There's not much to be proud about here.

At its halfway point the book shifts focus. Instead of dwelling on what's wrong it starts to explore what can be done about it. The third section deals with accountability and co-operation, the fourth with enabling practice and the fifth more specifically with thoughts about the future. In a contribution that draws on his 1979 four volume study 'The Regulation of Psychotherapists' Dan Hogan writes –

'(w)e need to reconceptualise the entire process of regulation. Instead of an almost exclusive emphasis on control and discipline, we need to see how regulation can facilitate the development of the profession'

Next Denis Postle takes one strand in this argument and asks an obvious but fundamental question – 'what do people seeking help with the human condition need to know when hiring a psychopractitioner?' He then describes a way of putting members of the public in a position to make an informed judgement (as opposed to leaving them to pick from a list of approved practitioners or from one containing minimal data).

There's a great deal more in the remaining pages, but perhaps the most important thing about *Ethically Challenged Professions* is the radical new twist signalled in its title. As this collection demonstrates, there is now so much and such varied material available that it's no longer possible to regard the future as simply a matter of the behaviour of the various counselling and psychotherapy institutions. Instead it's now also an ethical question for each and every one of us. Stephen Pattison tackles this point about individual responsibility in his paper, 'Are Professional Codes Ethical?' His answer is that, to the extent that they fail to "develop or support active, independent critical judgement", they are not.

There is plenty of food for thought in *Ethically Challenged Professions*. I have referred to only a few of the many stimulating and often provocative contributions. This is a demanding book, though not a difficult one to read; the attentive reader cannot but question her or his own way of doing things. Should our priority be – as it all too often seems to be – with defensive practice geared to avoiding complaints? Or should we be aiming to extend good practice by listening to feedback and paying attention to it, thereby tackling the more subtle – but arguably more insidious – level of abuse that seems to be inextricably linked to our search for power, status and financial reward?

The book ends with a series of powerful short chapters culminating in some reflections from the editors in which they summarise the core themes. They advocate openness, reflexivity and flexibility as vital qualities and suggest that the ethically challenged are all too often those who are acting out their anxieties by grasping after certainty where it is not to be found.

Arthur Musgrave

Arthur Musgrave lives in Bristol and is a BACP registered counsellor and supervisor. He also belongs to the Western Valleys Group, a full member group of the Independent Practitioners Network. From 1995 to 1999 he served on the Management Committee of BAC (as it then was) as well as for three years on its Standards and Ethics Committee.

The Birth of Pleasure; a New Map of Love,

Carol Gilligan

Vintage, London, 2003. £ 7.99 pb

Reading *The Birth of Pleasure* felt like what I imagine a long labour to be like – painful but very creative. It took me ages to finish, for two reasons. First, each page was so full of insights, revelations and ideas, variously to dream on, agree with, develop, or sometimes refute, that my progress was slow but deep. And secondly, because I often found Gilligan's syntax befuddling, her movement from theorising to literature to myth to clinical experience so rapid and haphazardly organised, that I frequently gave up rereading another sentence and threw the book down in frustration, imagining it to be but a first draft of what would, with more care, have been a masterpiece. I have had similar difficulty with Marion Woodman's writing, though not with her live delivery, so could it be something in me that clings to the linear? Nevertheless, I heartily recommend this book to readers, both lay and professional, for it puts the debate about childhood, gender and relationships back on the map with much refinement.

Pleasure is in someway a sequel to Gilligan's groundbreaking 1982 book, *In a Different Voice*. Once again she takes up a fundamental problem: how the natural self (and in particular the female self), which she says is sensual, being-and–pleasure-orientated gets sidelined, ignored or split-off through the development of a culturally sanctioned inner voice. If this sounds like the superego's battle for the self, it is, in a way. But since the eighties, Gilligan has been involved in several interesting research projects which lend enormous weight to her observations.

Her speciality, as before, is what happens to girls at adolescence, when they often seem to disappear, as it were, to lose their authentic voice. Gilligan sees our culture as having over centuries turned away from certain essentially feminine values, notably those of love and pleasure. She posits an all too predictable dissociation in the mind of the girl, as the conventions of settling for pleasureless relationships seem to be parentally, if not universally, sanctioned. Adolescent girls experience this, she suggests, as a profound betrayal by their elders, particularly their mothers. It is a story which needs more than hearing: it needs to be listened out for, since it is secret, more the stuff of journals than conversation. The result is widespread and rank splitting, argues Gilligan. The body, relationships, and pleasure become, for the girl, mental concepts, rife with the expectation of disappointment rather than grounded in everyday experience. It is in this attitude of compassionate and curious listening that Gilligan's style of psychoanalytic feminism resides.

In the current work, she adds many useful observations from other areas, including a decade-long research project interviewing girls. 'If I were to say what I was feeling and thinking, no-one would want to be with me, my voice would be too loud,' says one 17-year-old interviewee, before adding her chilling statement of self-betrayal: 'But you have to have relationships.'

And this is not new stuff. Gilligan's citing and interpretation of wartime teenager-in-hiding Anna Frank's diary, including noticing where and how her father (who survived her and edited significant parts of her account) is fascinating. It is used to masterly effect to illustrate how a young girl's domestic struggle to identify with her mother, while attempting to stay autonomous and true at the same time, is more acutely engaging and desperate even than a fugitive's plight.

Less convincing is her determination to find parallels in modern literature and her weaving in and out of a myth – that of Eros and Psyche. The theme wandering is sometimes highly distracting, particularly when you feel she has just got going, and you want her to continue. On a single page, for example, she veers back and forth between the myth, a story about her and her mother, her research, a poem, a couple of novels, a client couple, and an extract from Anna Frank. I am sure I am guilty of such meanderings myself when teaching, but while such methods may work in an oral context, in a written one they do not.

Another element that is new in this work is her way of using myth, which differs from the conventions of recent post-Jungian writing, where it often seems to become a cheap short-cut to holding the frame of an idea. In *Pleasure* she uses the story of Psyche as a grid charting the dangers to the female soul, and sees it as the counterpoint to the Oedipus myth. Oedipus is a deeper tale even than Freud thought, I often imagine, but it does not balance out convincingly in female terms, perhaps one of the reasons he failed to discover what women wanted. However, the combined effect of the spell of both myths and complexes, Gilligan argues, constitute the psychological tragedy of men and women in the Western world.

In a different vein, Gilligan reports on a couplework project, where she and Terrence Real, a specialist in male depression, traced the re-emergence into the marital field of many of the gender problems she observed in her work with children. This is eminently useful and creative research, I feel. The classic patriarchal marital bonding pattern she sees as those of mothers and soldiers, but, despite a quarter of a century of changing roles, gender wounds suffered in childhood during the identity forming periods still create profound relationship impasses, she notes.

What most excited me was Gilligan's research and theorising on the dyads of 5-year-old boys and their mothers. Delicately she observes the psyches of such boys on the point of leaving the mother's world - full of home and feeling - about to start school and enter the fathers world - full of notions of masculinity and dissociation from feeling. For Gilligan, this is frequently a one-way ticket, and she notes how its effects reappear in the conjoint couple therapy. She suggests that by the time they are five boys 'know in their sensitive, open hearts about 80% of the mother's disappointment, her unlived life. This knowledge (innocently distorted by the remaining 20% they make up from fantasy in their childish omnipotence, one could add) sets them on an unconscious life-mission that puts them in conflict with the social myths of masculinity, and often ends in resentment and acting out in subsequent relationships. How often I see this in my work with men, in the grip of their unconscious promises to their mothers, failing to use their power in a healthy way! This useful research also gives weight to something we regularly see in Sexual Grounding Therapy role-plays, where the subject in the child role is relieved of carrying emotional burdens and sexual acting-out by the active presence in the home of the father's heart. The primal couple's ability to include and support the child into their loving sexual relationship is a dynamic that Freud overlooked, but one that Gilligan rightly values.

Nick Duffell

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Integrative Counselling Skills in Action (2nd edition)

Sue Culley and Tim Bond

Sage, 2004. Price: £17.99 pb £60.00 hb

You would think it was easy to write a book like this. You would only have to state the obvious and package it neatly. In the case of an integrative approach, the obvious would include pre and perinatal experience, subpersonalities, the transpersonal and the unconscious, of course. So the skills would include the handling of regression, the ways of working with subpersonalities, approaches to the transpersonal and dealing with the unconscious. That would be the minimum.

And of course there would be good discussions of the person–centred core conditions, the problems of transference and countertransference, the handling of homework and so forth. Otherwise it could hardly be called integrative.

Of all these things, the only one that is actually dealt with in this book is the core conditions. And these are not treated well. Empathy becomes transformed into 'empathic understanding', which immediately puts an intellectual slant upon it. Empathy is not a form of understanding – it is a form of direct experience. These authors appear not to have come across the Haugh & Merry (2001) book which is our best resource at the moment. They are still quoting Truax & Carkhuff (p.104). So, of all the things that might make for a genuinely integrative approach, only one is dealt with and that not very well.

So what do we get? The most–quoted author is Gerard Egan. And the whole book is built around his concepts of the Beginning stage, the Middle stage and the Ending stage. The idea that clients obediently go through stages like this is a common one, but not particularly integrative. And then of course we get the familiar Egan concepts of attending skills, observation skills, listening skills, reflective skills, probing skills and much emphasis on being concrete.

This is all very well, but what happens if the client starts to treat the person like someone else, such as a mother? What happens if the client slips into another subpersonality? What happens if the matter requires more skills than are available? What happens if countertransference gets in the way? This is what we get:

'Furthermore, there may be issues in your own life that you think might intrude unproductively; or you may have no previous experience of working with a client who has brought a particular concern. If either of these situations occurs, you will need to ensure adequate support for yourself via supervision, counselling or consultations with an experienced colleague. You may also want to consider referral.' (p.88)

That is it. That is the entire substance of what is said about these issues. The authors do recommend supervision, but not in any very firm way; nor do they say much about the nature of such supervision, other than that it should be 'non–managerial'. There is no mention of homework.

Of course we know that 'counselling skills' is not the same as 'counselling', and that such skills can be used by many different people, in medicine and nursing, social work, human resource management, pastoral care, life coaching, mentoring, community groups and so forth. But it seems to me that this book leaves the reader unprepared for many of the things that might be encountered in such settings, and is far from being the integrative text that is promised in the title.

Not recommended.

John Rowan

Letting the Heart Sing – The Mind Gymnasium

Digital Edition

Dennis Postle

PCCS Books 2004

£37.45 (Personal Edition) £46.81 (Professional Edition)

Reviewing a CD-ROM is a first for me and, I think, for these columns. I am grateful to my son Jonathan (18), the family computer expert, for his contributions to this review.

The CD-ROM is now a familiar part of the paraphernalia which goes with owning a PC. Most usefully, they contain the software which enables the computer to carry out its various functions. For the adolescent, they contain a multiplicity of mindless computer games (Sorry, Jonathan!) and, for the adult, software enabling us to trace our family tree, design a new garden, learn a new language or even, Goddess) help us, pretend to fly a jumbo jet! This is the market into which Dennis Postle is venturing.

The value of a CD-ROM is that it can store a lot of information in a very small space and access that information quickly. Transferring such a comprehensive manual of self-discovery such as *The Mind Gymnasium* onto CD-ROM is therefore a logical step to take, but is it that easy?

The CD describes itself as interactive, and so it is, to an extent. Whether the user experiences it as interactive depends on his/her expectations. It's certainly more interactive than a book, but I was expecting something less pedestrian from a CD-ROM.

'The trouble', opined Jonathan, 'is the program. Adobe Acrobat is great for transmitting documents and brochures, but it's not really interactive'

Jonathan and I explored what we thought would be the most interactive parts of the CD together, i.e. the self-assessment sections. These were interesting, although Jonathan compared them, unfairly if understandably I thought, to the questionnaires in his sister's teen magazines. Undaunted, we went through the questions. This was a companionable experience, but when we accessed the feedback we felt it was a bit general.

'I know', said Jonathan, 'Let's tick "yes" to all the questions and see if we get the same feedback.' Pressing the back button (a useful feature), we tackled the questionnaire again and were not surprised by the result. We tried a few more questionnaires and noticed that some had a counter that totted up your score for you. This was, we decided, the extent of the interactivity – hardly a candidate for the Turing test 2.

And yet……the more time I spent exploring the CD, the more interesting and inspiring I found it. There were sections on relationships, research and assessment, to give just a few examples, which said 'This is how it can be done if only you have the courage to do what you believe in instead of what feels safe.' Dennis Postle certainly deserves credit for this stance as well as for his comprehensive illustration of a humanistic approach to personal growth.

There are advantages to having the book on CD-ROM, such as having Dennis's voice to take you through the guided fantasies and the internet style links, but there are some fundamental problems. It really shouldn't take the degree of persistence I

needed to 'get inside' the CD. Jonathan got bored and gave up shortly after our exploration of the questionnaires. Fair enough, he's 18 and fairly antipathetic to anything connected to what his dad does for a living. However, I'm not sure **I'd** have had the patience to spend the amount of time it took to get interested if I hadn't been reviewing the CD. This would have been a pity as the CD contains some excellent material, as I've said, and is sufficiently comprehensive to interest both newcomers to personal growth as well as professionals working in the field.

The whole point of computers is that they are instant, or at least very, very fast. Whether or not this is a good thing is a moot point, the manic pace of 21st Century life being something that is explored in the body of the work, but it is the name of the game in the electronic cyberworld. If this CD-ROM is going to interest the average computer user then it needs to have more of a computer software feel to it. As it is, I'm left wondering whether the advantages of having what is essentially an e-book outweigh the disadvantages of not being able to read it in my favourite places, i.e. in bed or on the train.

Geoff Lamb

1 I was confused by this myself until PCCS explained that the price differential depended on whether the CD-ROM was going to be used in an institution or not. There is, in fact, only one format for the CD-ROM.

2 For the non computer nerds amongst you, Al Turing, in the 1950's, came up with a theory that if you could ask questions of a computer and were unable to distinguish its replies from those given by a human being, the machine could be said to be thinking.

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