BOOK REVIEWS

TITLE: *Invisible Guests: The Development of Imaginal Dialogue*
AUTHOR: Mary Watkins
PUBLICATION DATE: 1986
PUBLISHER: The Analytic Press, Hillsdale, NJ
PRICE: $24.95

There is practical value in reconceptualizing the psyche as containing many subpersonalities rather than continuing the present psychological tradition of viewing the mind as a relatively monolithic structure. The concept of self is being written about in so many ways that it may be more an obstacle than a heuristic idea in its role as an organizing idea in dynamic psychology. Dr. Watkins presents a scholarly, well-reasoned, persuasive, and clearly written theoretical challenge to the prevailing theories that treat imaginal dialogues as primitive, regressive, or merely derivative. She argues for actively cultivating the mental capacity for receptivity to the imagination to the extent that the characters we encounter are granted enough autonomy to serve as a source of creativity and healing.

The author notes that many novelists and other creative persons utilize the ideas derived from imaginal dialogues. Indeed, the figures who are the source of the dialogues are often experienced as fully autonomous, and the creative person serves as a witness or a reporter. For example, Carl Jung had an imaginal relationship with an archetypal figure, Philemon, with whom he would engage in internal dialogues. The key issue is not simply to entertain these images but to learn to direct them subtly to encounter each other and the interviewing part of the self. More spontaneity is acquired when the imaginal figures are encouraged to speak their minds, rather than remaining relatively silent or stereotypical. The author points out that hallucinations are really not sources of dialogue but rather are rigidified representations. In Morenean terms, hallucinations lack spontaneity while, on the other hand, the conscious evocation of imagination promotes spontaneity.

Dr. Watkins advocates a type of controlled dissociation and, in so doing, invites us to reconsider the nature of dissociation itself. This phe-

nomenon has by no means been fully appreciated. Furthermore, the resurgence of popularity of Ericksonian and other types of hypnotherapy highlights a continuing exploration of this frontier in the behavioral sciences. The author's approach is also consonant with the recent emergence of imagery therapy, as presented by a number of innovators. Of course, these trends were foreshadowed by Roberto Assagioli's method of psychosynthesis and J. L. Moreno's method of psychodrama. In the latter approach, Moreno described the multiple double technique in which the patient is helped to play different parts of himself and to have encounters between those parts (sometimes aided by auxiliaries in the role of doubles). A number of other therapists have also used variations on this technique. One criticism of the book is that the author apparently has insufficiently credited her fellow pioneers. In addition, the book needs a more extensive explication of technique and strategies for dealing with resistances and impasses.

Dr. Watkins has, however, written an important book. Her intellectual critique of the dominant schools of psychology complements the role-theory approach that is part of the foundation of psychodrama. *Invisible Guests* is a valuable contribution and deserves to be recommended to those who want to understand some important aspects of the theoretical basis of psychodrama and many of the new trends in psychotherapy.

ADAM BLATNER

ADAM BLATNER is the director of consultation at the University of Louisville School of Medicine. He can be reached at the Bingham Child Guidance Clinic, 200 E. Chestnut Street, Louisville, KY 40202.

TITLE: *Every Person's Life Is Worth a Novel*
AUTHOR: Erving Polster
PUBLICATION DATE: 1987
PUBLISHER: W. W. Norton, New York
PRICE: $19.95

In reviewing this book, I shall try to present its main idea and then to ask questions from three main points of view: (1) that of the practitioner