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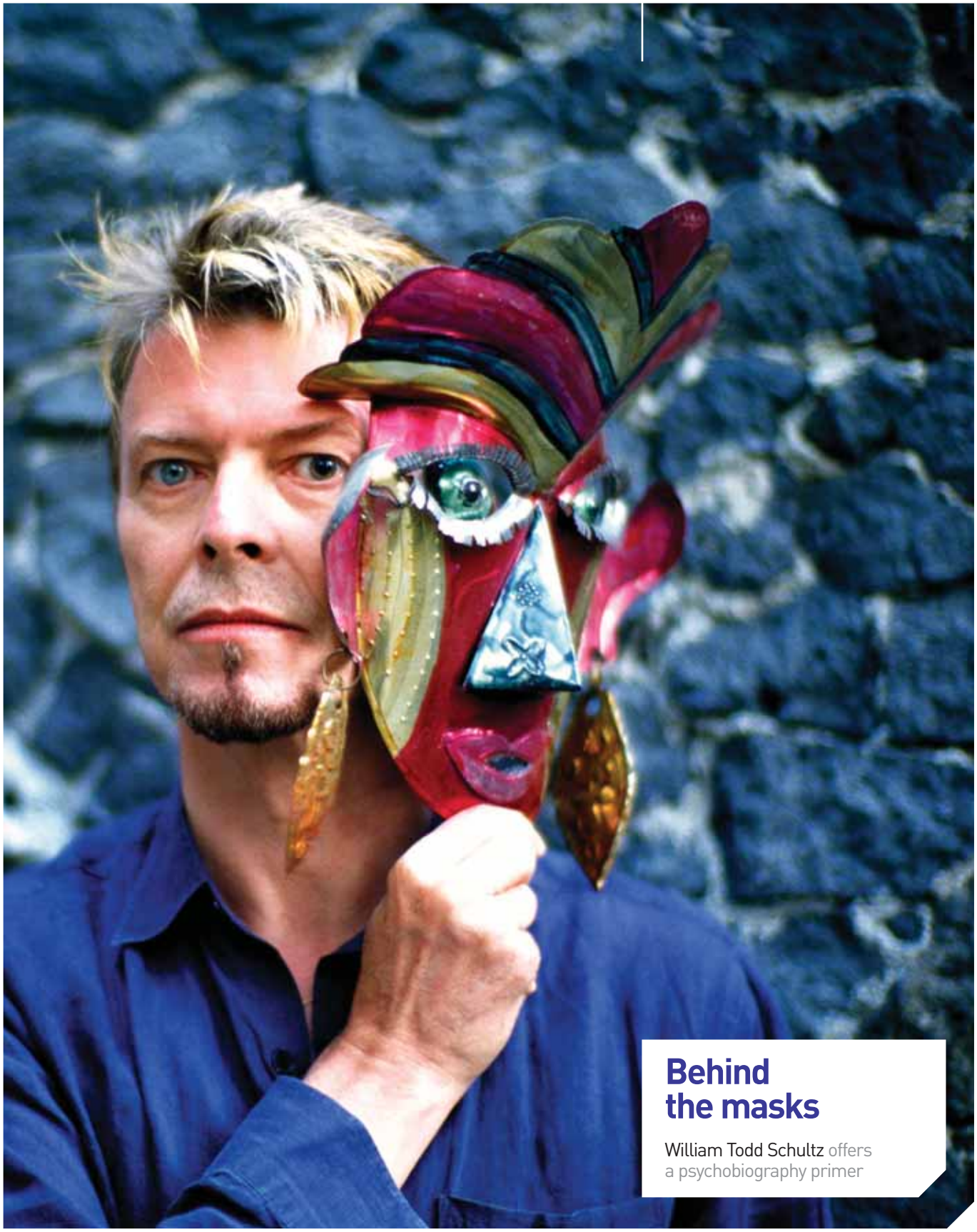

Behind the masks

William Todd Schultz offers a psychobiography primer

The British Psychological Society
Promoting excellence in psychology

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Cover: David Bowie at Frida Kahlo's house with one of her masks. Mexico City, 1997. To buy a limited edition fine-art print signed by Fernando Aceves go to http://www.rockarchive.com

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The Psychologist is the monthly publication of The British Psychological Society. It provides a forum for communication, discussion and controversy among all members of the Society, and aims to fulfil the main object of the Royal Charter, '*to promote the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of psychology pure and applied*'.

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the issue

There's a strong theme of 'the arts' this month, from the main articles to our 'Big picture', 'Careers' and 'Looking back' pieces. On p.630 you'll find the top three in our poetry competition, which attracted more than 50 entries. And on our website you can read a book extract from Charles Fernyhough, on inner voices and the creative muse.

In my mind, the arts have always sat well alongside science in psychology and in *The Psychologist*. I think one of the most gratifying aspects of our development in recent years has been increasing coverage of psychology in its many cultural overlaps: plays, films, novels, music and more. Much of this is collected at www.thepsychologist.org.uk/reviews and you can find regular opportunities to contribute by following us on Twitter @psychmag.

We are currently planning a major overhaul of our 'Reviews' coverage, alongside a wider redesign. We will need your views and your contributions more than ever. Do get in touch to help us write the story of our next decade.

Dr Jon Sutton, Managing Editor
jon.sutton@bps.org.uk

Big picture centre-page pull-out
'Art is the process of memory': **Nicky Clayton** and **Clive Wilkins** on their collaboration as Professor of Comparative Cognition and University of Cambridge 'artist-in-residence' respectively

Revolution in the air?

I was really heartbroken to read the letters in the June issue discussing Peter Kinderman's new position as a BPS President and some of the comments he has recently made. Aurora Dunn questioned where the boundaries lie around psychologists' role in social issues and policy. As correctly articulated context underpins everything we do as psychologists, it seems nonsensical to ignore it for fear of unfortunate consequences or misuse in the future. I find it difficult to see how targeting inequality and creating a fairer society could be detrimental at any point in time, in light of recent research into inequality's correlation with people's distress (Pickett & Wilkinson, 2010).

Psychologists have moral accountability and a unique understanding of the role of reflexivity, and are therefore in a position to help people not just on an idiosyncratic level. David Harper's article ('Beyond individual therapy', June, 2016) was inspiring, and as a trainee clinical psychologist I find the BPS's coverage and support of such a movement is helping to keep me engaged during a time of disillusionment and frustration about many psychologists' fear of questioning the status quo. Mike Davis's letter refers to this movement as 'creep', and this is a creep I very much intend to be part of. I am not part of the 'opinionated elite' to which he refers.

At the DCP Pre-Qualification Group Conference in March, the future of the profession were encouraged by Dr Masuma Rahim to be the 'the grit in the oyster', and Ella Rhodes, reporting the event for *The Psychologist* (May 216), described 'a hint of revolution in the air'. I don't think this is a movement that can or will be stopped. I am also keen to see the development of the Political Psychology Section in an attempt to bring psychology into the real world, which I think Professor Kinderman is well and truly grounded within. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the BPS for covering such views and supporting those who hold them.

Sarah Rose
Teesside University

Reference

Pickett, K. & Wilkinson, R. (2010). *The spirit level: Why equality is better for everyone.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

I am Director of the Division of Clinical Psychology's Professional Standards Unit, Editor of *Clinical Psychology Forum*, and a Clinical Tutor with the Lancaster DClinPsy programme. However, I write to you not in any of these official roles, but simply as a person who was deeply saddened to see *The Psychologist* publish a letter in June's issue that included the line 'the lunatics have taken over the asylum'.

Sometimes people write letters quickly without thinking through the full impact of their words. Therefore it is the responsibility of the publication to ensure comments are respectful and any offensive language is removed. One can express a point

without needing to resort to ridicule and offence. In my mind, it is irrelevant whom this was written about. What is important is how we speak about people and the context of mental health. The British Psychological Society has a responsibility not to perpetuate stigmatising language and attitudes. If we make space for language like that in the publication of our professional body, what do we perpetuate in the streets and therapy settings?

In the contributions section of *The Psychologist* website, you claim 'The Psychologist is all about diversity'. It is good to be inclusive and make space for diverse views; this isn't diversity though, it is offensive name-calling and stigmatising descriptions. In a time when *The Psychologist* is looking to increase access to the publication, I am inclined to ask how this would be explained to those of us who have lived through psychiatric systems, been called names associated with mental health problems, and then had our viewpoint dismissed on the grounds that we are 'lunatics taking over the asylum'.

Dr Stephen Weatherhead
Lancaster University

The first two letters published under the heading 'New Society President stirs debate' (June 2016) leave me wondering whether this journal exercises any editorial standards. Aurora Dunn's letter does not seem to leave the journal (or indeed the Society) with much of a role anyway as it seems to be arguing for the inability of psychology to support any position; then there is Mike Davies's letter with its immoderate talk of impeachment and lunatics taking over the asylum. If anything threatens to bring the Society into disrepute, it is publishing correspondence of this abysmal quality.

Yours more in sorrow than in anger,

Isabel Clarke
Consultant Clinical Psychologist
Moorgreen Hospital
Southampton

The question of whether mental illnesses are 'real' has seen an enormous amount of ink spilled, effort expended and – regrettably – vitriol spewed. But the question is ill-formed and the argument fruitless; in fact, the issue at stake is what it means, socially and culturally, to describe a person as having an 'illness'.

Plainly, at times many people have experiences that they (and/or sometimes others) find deeply distressing and that are statistically unusual, in the sense that they fall outside the range regarded as 'normal' for a given situation. No one seriously doubts that these experiences are: (1) real; and (2) worthy of others' attention, empathy and support. The question is: Are they best described using the concept of 'illness', with the connotations this carries? Some, presumably such as British Psychological Society President Professor Kinderman, would argue that they are not. Others, presumably such as your correspondent Mike Davies (Letters, June 2016), would argue the contrary.

This is complex debate, over which rational and reasonable people can disagree. It is vital to realise, however, that the debate is not about ontology but about the ways in which different discourses delineate and constrain possibilities for action in the social world. It is unhelpful to characterise it as an argument about scientific truth, and more unhelpful still to characterise those sceptical of the utility of the 'illness' discourse as denying the existence of human suffering.

Dr Sam Thompson
Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust

As the Society's previous President, I feel that it is my duty to write on the subject of psychology and politics. All British Psychological Society members are bound by our Royal Charter, which we have now held for over half a century, the Objects of which begin: 'to promote the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of psychology pure and applied…'. As 'large S' Society psychologists, therefore, we are duty bound to diffuse our advancing psychological knowledge wherever most appropriate to our 'small s' society, and this is what I spoke about in my Presidential Address at this year's conference [https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/twelve-ways-make-impact]. Never has there been a more apposite or urgent time to do so, using our research-based knowledge and expertise on decision making, groupthink, leadership, change, loss, bereavement, trauma, survival, positive psychology and hope.

I would urge you all to join your President Peter Kinderman, President Elect Nicola Gage and me in doing so.

Jamie Hacker Hughes
BPS Vice President

Drawn to remember

The studies described in the Research Digest report 'Want to remember something? Draw it' (June 2016) are comparable to the Oliver West method, which aids dyslexic students in the classroom. Instead of note-taking on a particular topic, each drawing represents a visual memory aid to help dyslexic students retain the topic information for a future purpose; for example, revision. This is now a recognised method, supported by the Dyslexic Association, and like your article uses mental processes, such as visualisation and deep-level elaboration. The idea is that you remember the lesson content, thus improving recall, by your drawings.

The article ended by saying that the researchers' experiment at drawing 'words' was hardly representative of an academic setting. However, it also acknowledged that more research was needed and the Oliver West method, which is a very similar drawing technique for memory recall, is already happening in classrooms of students (particularly ones holding Dyslexic-friendly School status), which is, of course, representative of an academic setting. A starting point for further research maybe?

Dawn Nelson MBPsS
Humphry Davy School
Penzance

Father presence

Just a brief reflection on the absent fathers article in the June 2016 issue – the authors offer some very interesting observations about the connections between father absence and accelerated sexual development/behaviour based on their research. However, I couldn't help wondering about the 'opposite' connection between father presence and avoidance/delay of sexual behaviour. Do fathers make early sexual behaviour for females less likely by their very presence in the family home?

I am wondering this as a female whose father did not live with her after the age of seven; and who is well aware that her male teenage friends (future husband amongst them) would have been very unlikely to have been sleeping over in the family living room if he did!

I'd be interested if the authors have any thoughts on this side of the puzzle.

Dr Catherine Haynes
Coventry

Orlando and 'Othering' discourses

In June we have seen yet another atrocity, this time in Orlando, Florida. It is early days and more information will be offered to help us understand it, but two things are clear: this was a terrorist attack and an attack on the LGBT+ community. It is important that we recognise both of these elements and reflect on them thoroughly.

We need to understand the full complexity of events such as these and not simply rely on the usual 'mad or bad' individual trope that is again being offered. The psychological state of the individual is relevant of course, but it is far too limited. As psychologists we know a fair amount about individuals being embedded in their context and culture, about how we utilise available discourses to our own ends and how contemporary 'Othering' discourses lay the foundations for such events through their constant anti-LGBT+ negativity.

As psychologists, we should understand that when media outlets are unusually slow to report the Orlando shootings, relegating news reports to later time slots, pages within newspapers or referring to it solely as a terrorist attack, rather than also addressing its anti-LGBT+ focus, this is problematic. Even if one were to assume that these were all 'accidental' it is important to recognise that it means that once again LGBT+ experience is minimised.

While not assuming that all media are culpable, we even had presenters on specific news programmes *refusing* to recognise the fact that as well as being a terrorist incident, this was a homophobic attack. Psychologically we recognise that the 'either this – or that' binary is neither helpful nor accurate. It is important to recognise that it was both of these things. Yet in some forums this aspect was contested, sometimes forcefully and sometimes quietly, and the argument made that we should not attend to this specific aspect but see it solely as an attack on people. Well intended as this may seem it misses the point. Schoolyard bullies, sleazy tabloids and terrorists do not do their violence just on 'people', they pick their target, there is meaning in these choices, and unfortunately our everyday homophobia facilitates this in the same way that everyday racism and anti-Semitism have been a part of other recent attacks. The specifics are meaningful.

When we downplay the specifics and focus on the general, we are complicit in making these groups all but invisible. On this occasion commentators opted to emphasise gun control and terrorist links alone and this undoubtedly adds to the stress and discrimination that LGBT+ people face. The reporting itself will have significant psychological impact and feed into ongoing and long-term destructive and traumatising attitudes.

These issues in the reporting of homophobic attacks also means that discussion and insight into our cultural prejudices and practices are closed down. As with racism, anti-Semitism and other insidious forms of Othering, LGBT+ experience must not be overlooked. While LGBT+ equality is still somewhat limited in the West, it is absent in many parts of the world. Even where progress has been made it remains contested. LGBT+ people are routinely discriminated against, oppressed and even killed.

All the time that reporting is problematic in this way, we all lose. Such 'invisibilising' means that society is not offered a chance to discuss how discrimination against LGBT+ people, Muslims, people of colour, women, the disabled and other minorities has psychological similarities. How everyday prejudice facilitates and fuels individuals when picking their targets.

We all have a role to play in challenging this. Academic institutions can utilise critical thinking and encourage debate. The media need to review their practices. Professional bodies must target oppressive structures, and LGBT+ people need support in speaking up so their voices can be heard. As the British Psychological Society statement (www.bps.org.uk/news/bps-statement-orlando-shootings) notes, this also provides an opportunity for us to reaffirm our commitment to fundamental and indivisible human rights.

Only by active talking we can learn a lot about to how to best respond to the oppression of minorities. There is currently an onslaught of homonegative and anti-LGBT legislation in the US, and the debate needs urgently progression. A more complex psychological debate is needed, one where intersectioning factors are tracked and illuminated. As psychologists, surely we have a role in this.

Professor Martin Milton
Regents University London

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EYSENCK – ANOTHER SIDE

Professor Taylor dismisses Hans Eysenck as 'aloof' and 'dismissive' (Letters, July 2016). I didn't experience him like that at all. I interviewed him a number of times for *New Scientist*, the French magazine *Psychologie* and my book *Psychologists on Psychology*. The last time I did so I took my then 15-year-old son Reuben (who was very critical of Eysenck's views) with me. Eysenck was very nice to him, much to Reuben's surprise.

The lesson: psychologists have many sides.

David Cohen PhD
London N1

Emotions and language

I read 'Longing for *Sehnsucht*' (Forum: Words and meaning, April 2016) and '216 untranslatable words' (Digest, April 2016) with great interest. As a language enthusiast, the pieces evoked my curiosity regarding my own ability to effectively communicate my feelings in two languages. With Greek being my native language, I would consider myself bilingual as I have been learning English since the age of six.

Judging from my own experience, the fact that I sometimes prefer to write a poem in English and express myself in a language that is not my native one, makes me unsure whether the experience of the emotion would be identical if I chose to express it in Greek.

This promising project brings forward an important perspective of human experience and communication. The questions raised by Dr Lomas's research prompts a very interesting discussion, which will enrich our understanding regarding the concept of emotions in various cultures, an understanding that could potentially lead to diversity acceptance.

What we have been taught is that human beings experience a range of emotions that are the same across cultures. The question is how some civilisations managed to capture a feeling and create a word for it and others failed, either to capture the feeling or express it. Do the socioeconomic circumstances play the most important role in this development, or is it the environment and the climate of each country that determines ways of communication?

The example that triggered this thought is the Greek word *volta* included in the untranslatable words list. In countries like Greece and Cyprus *volta*, which means leisurely strolling the streets – as Dr Lomas explains it – is something achievable on a mostly daily basis due to the good weather. By contrast, few people would prefer to do the same in a country where it often rains and has low temperatures. But would it be fair to assume that a citizen of a northern country does not experience the positive feeling of strolling the streets just because there is no word for it? I believe this is not true.

I wonder what the results of in-depth research would reveal, and whether they could be replicated and be applicable in a multicultural society promoting wellbeing through communication. I look forward to the continuation of Dr Lomas's project and the development of this field.

Elena Pitsilidou
Nicosia, Cyprus

Rewards of academic life

Having just had a book proposal accepted by a major UK social science publisher, I was taken aback to be offered a flat fee of £560 (no royalties) out of which I would have to pay for indexing myself. That doesn't seem much for 100,000 words and a year's work. I was also given the option of paying the publisher £11,000 to have the book made open access.

I guess the next stage in the world of academia will be paying universities for the privilege of sharing one's ideas with students.

(Still looking for a publisher).

Richard Hallam
London SE13

School skirt bans

When I was in high school, I was told that I could no longer wear a skirt to class because the girls in my school were wearing them 'inappropriately'. Now, as a first-year psychology student, I have come to the conclusion that this ban disregards female students' right to express their femininity. I question how this gender disregard can be attributed to psychological explanations, and how we as a society can allow this to happen? I was told in my first lecture at university that 'there is no point studying psychology if you're not going to change the world with it'. I have made this my every intention; first port of call – discussing the ban on school skirts.

Girls are banned from wearing skirts in 63 UK secondary schools (see www.schoolskirtban.co.uk). Which means in 63 schools girls are denied the right to fully express their gendered identity. I now ask: Is this ban a harmless way to regulate the appearance and behaviour of schoolchildren, or it is causing schoolgirls as young as 11 to succumb to a vision of patriarchal ideology? Clothing is not simply a body-covering-tool but a contribution to our identity formation, which is especially crucial in school-aged children where this process is most prominent (Erikson, 1968).

In 1999 legal action was taken against Whickham School regarding their refusal to allow females to wear trousers. I find it astonishing how even today, 17 years later, I am now protesting for schools to allow skirts. When will women finally be able to stop fighting against the appearance ideals of education authorities? The headteachers

of secondary schools in the UK have given reasons for their decision to ban skirts: '[skirts are] distracting for male pupils' (see tinyurl.com/q5rp6og), 'youngsters are placing themselves in undignified situations' (see tinyurl.com/z5b2hdh), 'We do not want our girls going outside with a 'come-hither look' (see tinyurl.com/z9wybjp): In my opinion, these comments epitomise the distortions in gender perception, appearance and identity in our society. When a young girl cannot wear a skirt without being accused of being undignified, sexually provoking and distracting, I feel this marks a crisis for 21st-century gender perceptions.

Some may argue that uniforms enforce unwanted gender binaries, and state that masculinity and femininity is imposed through the use of trousers and skirts. Conventional gendered dress is a hallmark of school uniform tradition, and to neglect this would mean to fully neglect the existence of gender binaries. I urge schools to celebrate our differences and teach schoolchildren to embrace whatever gender they identify with.

Madeleine Pownall
University of Lincoln

Reference

Erikson, H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.

What it is to be human

Earlier this year I visited the Wellcome Collection, London for the first time and thoroughly enjoyed spending time there, which included taking in the exhibition titled Tibet's Secret Temple [see Reviews, January 2016]. So I was very pleased when I recently had the chance to go there again, this time visiting the exhibition called States of Mind: Tracing the Edges of Consciousness [see Reviews online at tinyurl.com/hu4ufwj]. I am writing to recommend the exhibition to other readers of *The Psychologist* as an opportunity to spend a little time in an environment that provides a chance to reflect and ponder on the issues that face us both at an individual level and in a social context.

The exhibition explores states of consciousness as it guides you through galleries that use different perspectives from different periods in time to examine and provoke thinking about: Science and Soul; Sleep and Awake; Language and Memory; and Being and Not Being. It resonated with me as a large part of my work is concerned with the facilitation of learning and development for individuals in leadership roles within the community. The pressures on some of the individuals that I work with mean that they are placed in positions where they are expected sometimes to be superhuman in relation to others in terms of energy and performance. The exhibition draws attention to what it is to be human.

Although not the purpose of the exhibition, at a personal level the Being and Not Being section was a reminder of the fragility of life. This section certainly heightened personal awareness and demonstrated the value of appreciating the present moment.

The exhibition runs until 16 October 2016; but be warned – should you visit the Welcome Collection it also has a practical bookshop, so don't forget to take a large reusable bag as I guarantee you will return home needing to find more space on your bookshelves!

Jacqueline Mansell
Nottingham

The long road to qualification

I started writing this letter to highlight the barriers that aspiring psychologists face in gaining qualifications and development. In doing so, I've been forced to reflect on how that journey has shaped me as an individual and a professional.

After graduating in 2012, I thought 'I can never afford to do a master's'. Despite having always aspired to apply for a forensic MSc, I figured if it wasn't essential to the assistant psychologist criteria, why return to juggling essays and waitressing? What I found was that most other candidates in AP interviews had the magical MSc. Psychologists that I met through my HCA-level jobs advised me that obtaining psychologist posts without one was impossible, never mind applying to the Clinical Doctorate. Alongside this, I was quickly outgrowing my Band 3 positions and became frustrated with not being able to access more development. I felt resentful towards others that seemed to have doors opened so easily because their family had more money than mine.

After five years, I surrendered. I finally ignored my budget and was delighted when King' College London offered me an MSc place. Unfortunately, the hard numbers were still difficult to swallow: £9000 for fees alongside my (conservative) estimate of £11,000 for living the year in central London.

It fast became clear that doing this independently was impossible. Even if I am successful in applying for the new postgraduate government loan scheme, and then am allowed the maximum of £10,000, that still just covers tuition! Advisers told me not to worry and that there were enough scholarships to make up the shortfall. For that course, for a UK student, I found two. I particularly liked how bank loans are also listed on the scholarship page. Isn't that an oxymoron?

Nevertheless, I diligently applied with my redrafted and revised personalised begging letters, but no cigar. So I looked further afield and applied to the charities that I was eligible for. Again, considering the materials available, it sounded like there were thousands. My shortlist came to 16. For the majority I was not eligible because I hadn't been on benefits, or don't have dependent children, or my family do not practise a specific religion or trade. I drew the line at applying to a charity that reserves the right to conduct surprise home visits at any point during your course. Seriously?

I remain hopeful, however, and am reluctantly plodding towards the conclusion that I will need to rely on a Professional and Career Development Loan. Whilst I may have hopefully improved my knowledge and chances of employment, I will have definitely pushed my total debt up to around £30,000. These prospects are the main reason that most of my fellow graduates have abandoned this career path altogether. Many say they are unable or unwilling to gamble with other hopes they have for their future, potentially compromising their ability to buy a house or have a family.

However, in writing this article I have found that I am conflicted. I'm frustrated that my socio-economic status continues to delay my career progression and maybe will eventually stop it altogether. On the other hand, experiences I have been forced to go out and get after graduation have been invaluable.

The limitations of being a Band 3 meant I changed jobs annually. Consequently, I've worked in varied and unique places. My first job was at a high-secure forensic hospital, and my most recent post is at Drayton Park. The house operates as mental health crisis house for women with an all-women team, and also admits women's children in order to keep families together. The ethos there is based on trauma-informed practice, drawing from alternative and systemic approaches, which challenged me to develop my identity as an individual practitioner.

Do I regret the experience I have gained from my low-paid positions? No. Am I angered that to continue developing I will have to take on significant debt? Yes, furious. But I am starting my MSc a more skilled, mindful and versatile individual than the person I was when I graduated. I'm sure it will be a struggle, and it seems wrong to me that there are is so little support available for the many people who work full-time but don't have easy access to £20,000. However, the pride I have for really earning my degree and the enrichment I have absorbed from nursing and working with a variety of extraordinary people is priceless.

Kirsty Hart
London SE15

In the room, and using your voice

Working in an adult mental health service I often think 'What the hell am I doing here?'. It seems like 'personality disorder' is the in-vogue diagnostic label of the moment, and frighteningly powerful medicines are prescribed faster than I can decide what to order from the local takeaway on a Saturday night (even though I always order the same thing!). So given that I struggle to agree with or understand the system I work in, one might question why I chose to work in this area to begin with?

Then I have those moments that remind me exactly why I'm here. Such as the recent time I sat in the community mental health team meeting and a referral requesting a psychiatric assessment for (and I quote) 'transgender disorder' was read aloud. My stomach instantly flipped! Thoughts about the derogatory language used in that one small sentence and the impact system processes could have on the individual being referred flooded my mind. I looked around the room to see if my gut reaction had been mirrored by other members of the team and to my relief noticed some discomfort. So I did the thing I was there to do as the psychologist in the team, I acknowledged that discomfort and talked about the elephant in the room.

It's at times like that I think 'This is exactly where I need to be', offering up psychological ways of thinking and challenging the dominant discourse so often flippantly used in adult mental health settings. So although I might only be a small voice in a loud room, I'm in that room and I have a voice!

Dr Nicola Edwards
Clinical psychologist
Chester

Socialising with work colleagues

After reading the report 'Why organisations should encourage their staff to become friends' (Digest, July 2016), I felt motivated to write a response based on some observations I have made over recent years regarding socialising with work colleagues. Whilst keeping specific details anonymous, I can safely say I work in a somewhat unique working environment. It is unique in that I have never before been employed by a company that promotes colleague socialising in such a salient way. Socialising is such a promoted activity it is felt by some that it should be added to the list of role specific duties!

I am a firm believer that as we spend a lot of time at work, healthy working relationships contribute towards an enjoyable working experience. It can be an organic shift that people we naturally gravitate to at work become friends out of work, and these relationships can long outlast a period of shared employment. Therefore is seems odd for Jessica Methot, the lead researcher in the report, to suggest that employers need to encourage what she refers to as multiplex relationships. Incidentally, why would people actively socialise with people they do not gravitate to at work?

When considering any work-related relationships it would be a fair point to make that they exist on a horizontal and vertical level. Relationships on each level would be subject to very different dynamics, including power relations. A common complaint found within my current company is that senior members of staff are encouraged to set the socialising example and are regularly obliged to attend events. These are possibly the sorts of events they would have been interested in attending in any case, but they actively become antisocial due to an apparent lack of agency over attendance. I often hear around the office negative statements such as 'I will not be "made" to enjoy myself', so they see the event as a chore rather than an opportunity to build good working relations. The potential for a positive working experience and enhanced team performance is unrecognised.

Other negative comments are made regarding vertical relationships. It is a very difficult dynamic to balance when outside work a relationship is horizontal and within work it is vertical. It would be another fair assumption to make that the relationship probably started vertically so the senior/junior boundaries are set and acknowledged norms of behaviour are demonstrated. This shifting between the two relationships could be what Methot was referring to when noting a difficulty in relationship maintenance.

A common observation made within the office is that those who are seen as having multiplex relationships with senior members of staff are more likely to get assigned ad-hoc projects, and more work generally. This additional work is often without pay or recognition, so it is accompanied with feelings of an abuse of the friendship and a lack of trust. There is a very strong sense of unfairness of shared tasks and a lack of real teamwork. Interestingly, those that do not complain about having an unfair workload seem to be the ones that are less sociable and have fewer multiplex relationships.

Name and address supplied

obituary

Alex Harrop (1935–2016)

Alex passed away suddenly on 10 May. He was former Head of Psychology and later Director of the School of Natural Sciences and Psychology at Liverpool John Moores University. Alex first became interested in psychology when training to be a teacher. Whilst teaching he studied part-time to gain an external degree from London University. He then began teaching psychology to trainee teachers at C.F. Mott College in Liverpool. It was while at C.F. Mott that, together which educational psychologist colleagues Eddie McNamara, Colin Critchley and Nancy Crawford he began a series of studies looking at the application of behavioural methods to improve pupils' learning and behaviour. These studies led to his first book, *Behaviour Modification in the Classroom*, which was pioneering for its time in introducing teachers to evidence-based practice that could enhance their teaching and improve their pupils' behaviour. *Behaviour Modification in the Classroom* was to stay in print for over 20 years, a testament to its popularity.

C.F. Mott College was later absorbed into the City of Liverpool College of Higher Education, which subsequently merged with other colleges to form Liverpool Polytechnic, eventually becoming Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) in 1992. Alex was Head of the Centre for Applied Psychology before becoming Director of the School. His responsibilities in developing the Centre and then as Director of a large School meant that he published less. However, when in 1999 he retired from LJMU he began a series of half a dozen papers on teachers' verbal behavior, which led to a second book, *Positive Psychology for Teachers*, as well as papers on bullying in school, attitudes of students in higher education, and the effectiveness of part-time study. A paper he wrote with an Italian colleague, due out shortly, is in the final stages of publication. He also had time to complete a thriller, *Everyman's Hand*, published last year. He was in the middle of his second novel at the time of his untimely death.

Alex had a passion for psychology, a passion he was able to pass onto his students. He loved teaching and genuinely appreciated his students, who in turn valued his inspirational approach. His colleagues recognised the importance of having such a leader during periods of considerable change with the shifts from college, through polytechnic, and finally university Alex was able to ensure that what could have been turbulent times were negotiated with relative ease. Alex will be remembered as a man of great energy and compassion.

Throughout his career he has been responsible for the training of hundreds of teachers and probably more than a thousand psychologists all of whom will remember him with great affection. He was a pioneer in the application of psychology in the classroom and made a highly significant contribution to the development of psychology in Liverpool. He was loved by all who knew him and will be greatly missed for his kindness, compassion and good humour. He leaves a widow Sally, two sons and six grandchildren.

Jeremy Swinson
Liverpool
Eddie McNamara
Les Lancaster

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Brexit – how do we go forward?

'The best argument against democracy', said Winston Churchill, 'is a five-minute conversation with the average voter.' With stock markets wobbling, political parties in disarray and the consequences of Brexit unlikely to be clear for some time, the wisdom the voters is something many may have thought about recently. Given the divisions revealed in the EU referendum, how do we go forward? Especially in a situation where the vanquished are so worried about the case put by the victors.

While it's tempting to generalise about the motivations of the opposing sides (Remainers = elitists, and Leavers = anti-immigration) it is likely we won't fully understand these for a while. It perhaps doesn't help though that, whatever the actual reasons behind the Leave votes, the Leave *campaign* became dominated by Brexit as a means of restricting free movement of workers. I've argued before (McGowan, 2014) that, in a time of economic trouble, the appeal of populist parties and movements rests on, as well as a certain practical vagueness, the finding of scapegoats. So for Donald Trump, UKIP, Bernie Sanders, Jeremy Corbyn and the Scottish National Party, the sources of woe are, respectively: Muslim or Mexican immigrants, EU immigrants, the Establishment, bankers/Tories, and Sassenachs. I suggested that this appeal is a call towards a Kleinian paranoid-schizoid position where the world is split into good (inside oneself) and bad (projected into others), with no attempt at considering greater complexity. However, when Remainers start to turn Leavers into the baddies by a similar process it might be worth remembering that the water is muddied by these fears not just being a psychological fantasy, but sometimes having some concrete basis. Scots may justifiably feel that the political consensus in England has moved away from them and, while the best evidence suggests free labour movement is an economic good, it may be less brilliant for a low-skilled and poorly educated worker than for a latte-swilling elitist like myself (Portes, 2016).

Healing the wounds

It's the week after the EU referendum vote and we are heading towards Brexit. Change is in the air and whether we voted Leave or Remain, many of us are feeling scared, confused, bruised and wounded. We have endured a campaign that tested our faith in our political system, reliant as it was on sloganising, lies and deceit, and an absence of detail about what we would be facing. Many are confused and scared in light of the vicious tone of the campaign too. There is a secondary confusion, as rather than face up to the reality, our politicians seem to have been instructed to recast history: the viciousness we experienced, we are now being told, was simply 'passion'. Apparently there is no need to recover from this onslaught, we have to 'look to the future'. That's the politicians tweeting. Psychologically we know that this is problematic, denying an experience is unsettling and confusing and leads to all sorts of difficulties, for individuals and for communities.

So far the media seem to have avoided any reflection on their role in this. In order to be 'impartial' we are told, it's all about keeping responses to soundbites and making sure that if an insult is thrown one way, it goes back the other. I am surprised people in the audiences did not end up with whiplash. This insistence on short summaries meant that the media also failed to recognise that complexity needs proper, engaged debate and thought, and that can take time. They also kept us handcuffed to two key themes when the electorate needed to talk about a range of other values too. No psychologist worth their salt would run a session in such a regimented fashion.

One thing has become only too horrifically clear, that we are living in a divided nation. The gaps (or should that be the chasms) that exists between us are now crystal clear and they lie on the fault lines of wealth, of race, left- or right-leaning politics, and of geography, and many are scared that it will be evident on almost any aspect of difference. And this is why I think past President Jamie Hacker Hughes is right to remind us that now is a time when good psychology should be ready to contribute… and there are many contributions to be made.

As practitioners, we work with individuals, couples, families and groups that act out, sometimes in ways akin to those I mentioned above. We are trained to do this, we do it methodically and comprehensively, attending to facts and to emotion. We know that emotion can provide insights that a simple reliance on facts cannot. As researchers, we recognise that data can have many meanings, that trying to understand the point of the speaker is necessary if we are to interrogate the meaning of a text or interaction. We also have a wealth of experience and information about the damage done by disrespect,


TIM SANDERS

For Remainers though it may be too soon to accept the full motivations of the Leavers. The stakes might still feel too high. It's hard to avoid the impression that, in terms of Kübler-Ross's (1969) five stages of grief, many are still be somewhere between 1 (denial) and 2 (anger). Thus we have a situation where some people are seriously advocating that this was not a properly democratic process. Reasons offered include: the distortions of the campaign, the percentages required or the legitimacy of referenda more generally. Some are even advocating that the UK Parliament (technically sovereign) should not honour the result. Aside from the questionable sense in disregarding the votes of those who, if we believe the polls, were primarily the poorest and most disregarded people, all such arguments effectively place a specific issue above the validity of the votes cast. Do we really want to start picking and choosing what we are democratic about? The People have spoken in a national referendum, the challenge is that they've said such different things.

Dr John McGowan
Salomons Centre for Applied Psychology
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racism and xenophobia, and other ugly forms of discrimination. And we also know how to help people recover from this.

So maybe we should be readying ourselves to talk to our clients about their Brexit-related confusion and bruising when it comes up (explicitly or implicitly); maybe we should be writing to our MPs – yes as citizens but also as psychologists with insight into the dynamics of local conflict and conflict resolution. Our representatives should have the mandate to speak to policy makers and outline what is known about conflict resolution, and what we know about the need to go beyond numbers (whether that be migration-related or economics). We should remind our leaders that as well as facts, our nation needs to get to know their neighbours again, to learn to be curious and respectful of difference, and that hiding away or relying on instruction is not enough to help with these long-standing wounds.

I don't suggest that we do this alone. But we should contribute. Nor do I think this will be easy – we are not divorced from this ourselves. But at least we have some training in these processes, we have colleagues to support us and when you think it through it this is what the job is all about. And this seems like the time to do it well.

Professor Martin Milton
Regents University London

A glass cliff in the making?

The morning of the referendum result, much of the country woke up to a state of chaos. Less than an hour after the official result was announced, the country was in for another blow, as David Cameron announced his resignation. Unsurprising, considering Cameron had been in favour of remaining, and was aware of the negative consequences of a vote to leave. Indeed, the climate in the UK following the result can be characterised by shock, panic and disarray. It quickly emerged that the Leave side had no plan in the event of Brexit. Meanwhile, SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon has received praise for her response, and appears to be the only MP with an actual post-Brexit plan. Sturgeon's good example has led to some debate as to whether we need more female politicians, and particularly as to whether Cameron's successor ought to be a woman. Coincidentally, Home Secretary Theresa May is considered a frontrunner alongside Boris Johnson in the race to be the next UK Prime Minister. But is this due to her perceived suitability for the position? Psychological research unfortunately suggests there could be an ulterior motive for May's popularity.

Shock, panic and chaos are the perfect conditions for the creation of a glass cliff. Initially coined by psychologists Michelle Ryan and Alex Haslam from the University of Exeter, the term 'glass cliff' refers to the phenomenon in which women are more likely to gain leadership roles during times of crisis (Ryan & Haslam, 2005). Essentially, in times of crisis, women are more likely than men to find themselves in precarious leadership positions than men, with a far lower chance of success. Unfortunately, due to the risky and precarious conditions in which the glass ceiling is so often smashed, female leaders can find themselves on a glass cliff with a greater risk of falling.

Explanations for the glass cliff phenomenon include the idea that women are better scapegoats than men (Rivers & Barnett, 2013), and their (often inevitable) failure can be attributed to the woman rather than the organisation or system. Ultimately, they are more expendable than men. A more positive explanation is that women are perceived as better suited to lead their team in times of crisis due to their creativity, intuition and nurturance (Haslam & Ryan, 2008). Whatever the reason, research clearly shows that appointment of females to positions of power is more common in risky and uncertain climates.

Based on Johnson's downbeat reaction to the result, combined with his initial reassurances being shot down by the EU, the coming months could well see a shift in favour of a female successor such as May. In this event, at best we can hope that the female successor will defy the odds, reunite the nation, and secure a good deal with the EU. However, the stakes are high, and it seems far more likely that a female appointment could create a glass cliff from which the risk of falling is great, and we will all fall with her.

Samantha Wratten
PhD student
University of Bath

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Asking better questions

Decision psychology uses the concept of attribute substitution to describe a particular phenomenon in decision making and decision error. This is the phenomenon where an individual replaces a complex question with a simple one and answers the simple one, rather than engaging with the complexity of the actual question.

Nick Chater from Warwick Business School's decision science group has very entertainingly applied this to the way the competence of the England football manager is addressed in sports commentary. However, in the context of the referendum this predicable cognitive process is more serious in its consequences. The nature of the referendum question invited this cognitive substitution en masse, and the multiple simple questions that have been substituted for the one posed in the referendum have made manifest alarming fractures in our society.

A multitude of different decisions about completely different things have all coalesced into a single overarching question

A multitude of different decisions about completely different things have all coalesced into a single overarching question that we are told to believe is about one thing but is in reality about many different things. Some people made the decision one of immigration, others one of emigration, some made it a question of unnecessary bureaucracy, others were thinking about economics and the question was the stock market, for others the question was the NHS, for some the question was an identity one – of being European, of being British or of being not-European, some were questions of having too little resource and others one of already having too much, some were questions of the past and others questions of the future.

From this muddle of attribute substitution we have a manifest 50/50 split and a psychological civil war. It is critical that we get our psychological savvy embedded in the social world as, in this case, had we ensured that the political process really understood the subtleties involved in asking questions (a core part of our practice as psychologists) we could potentially have contributed to an approach that enabled genuine inquiry and aimed at cohesion in difference, rather than the confusion of having to work with a meaningless average that means everything to so many.

We know the power of the framing bias and the questions we ask are critical to this. We must learn to ask better questions.

Dr Joanna Wilde
Work and Organisational Psychology Group
Aston Business School

Not on the outside looking in

'Let us focus instead on a more practical, more attainable peace, based not on a sudden revolution in human nature but on a gradual evolution in human institutions.' These are not my words, but those of President J.F. Kennedy, in 1963. He was a true believer in the idea that to make the world a better place we need to be committed to each other through treaties, and through international institutions. In the statement lies also a realisation about human beings and psychology. Alone, and focused only on our self-interest, we are prone to be destructive. And waiting for evolution to fix that will be at our peril. He knew he was right as a politician. We know he was right as psychologists. True commitments and true greatness come from doing stuff together, not all alone.

I know Norway has been in everyone's talking points on both sides of the argument in the Brexit debate. And the 'Norwegian situation' has either been described as heaven or as hell. But if you truly want to look to Norway after the dust settles after the storm of the Brexit referendum in the UK, you will se that we are a country truly inspired by the very same ideas that President Kennedy expressed.

We are part of almost all international agreements and commitments you can find in the world, in human rights, education, science, trade, free movement, worker's rights… the list of institutions and commitments Norway has could go on far longer then this text allows. As for the EU we are part of the European Economic Area and Schengen. And 30 per cent of the laws voted on in our Parliament come from the EU.

And we do all this, we commit to all this, because we truly believe that the world becomes a better place if we commit to each other. This is the basis of our social welfare system, free health care, free schools and universities, and our international commitments. And this came long before we started swimming in oil, gold and myrrh. It is the essence of what Norway is.

So being outside the EU for Norway is not being on the outside looking in. It is being part of an understanding that there are no passengers on Spaceship Earth, we are all crew, and we all need to commit to working together.

My hope is that the UK comes out of the EU with that same kind of attitude. That leaving the EU is not the start of a nationalistic project of a destructive nature, but rather that you turn it into something that stimulates international commitments and helps international institutions to evolve.

Tor Levin Hofgaard
President, Norwegian Psychological Association

Political ideology, socio-economic fear and attitudes to immigration

Socio-economic fears and immigration were major issues throughout the EU referendum campaign. Interestingly, recent research has considered the role of political ideology in socio-economic fears and attitudes toward other groups (van Prooijen et al., 2015). Political ideology is frequently seen as a kind of glue that binds diverse social attitudes together. However, scholars have debated whether some attitudes are special in political ideology. If we consider the traditional left–right ideological distinction, one question is whether right-wing extremists are more likely than left-wing extremists to experience socio-economic fear and to possess negative attitudes to groups that are not their own.

Van Prooijen and colleagues examined this hypothesis, proposing that political extremes at *both* ends of the left–right spectrum are more likely to display these responses than political moderates. Their study had two phases. In the first phase, Dutch participants rated the extent to which they identified as being left- or right-wing. A year later, participants answered questions measuring their fear of current socio-economic conditions, attitudes toward diverse social groups (e.g. scientists, soldiers, bankers) and attitudes toward immigrants in particular.

Comparisons of the responses to the question about political ideology with responses to the socio-economic fear and attitude questions were revealing. Supporting the researchers' predictions, people at the extreme on either end of the left–right dimension expressed more socio-economic fear and more negative attitudes toward diverse outgroups. Further, the link between ideology and negativity toward the groups was attributable to the greater socio-economic fear held by people in the extreme left and right.

Interestingly, a different pattern emerged in attitudes toward immigrants. Here, individuals on the far right were more negative in their opinions than individuals on the far left. This suggests that immigration is a defining issue in political ideology: although both extremes manifest socio-economic fear and negativity toward diverse groups, immigration may uniquely separate left and right.

These data are informative for understanding political ideology and attitudes. In the current context, it is important to recognise the importance of immigration in relation to political views, both in the EU and beyond.


JOHN HARRIS/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

Immigration – a defining issue in political ideology? Migrant workers harvesting broad beans in Warwickshire

Greg Maio and Geoff Haddock
Cardiff University

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Are we now self-determined?

Can psychology provide the tools to deconstruct Brexit? I have read explanations focusing on emotional vs. rational decision making ('system 1' vs. 'system 2' thinking), but it seems to me that many people on both sides based their vote on *emotional* feelings towards 'independence' versus 'togetherness' (me included). There seems clear evidence of confirmatory bias on both sides, where people (again, myself included) provided evidence to support their position as opposed to rationally weighing up evidence to form a view. We must caution against the emotive/rational dichotomy fuelling a rather condensing position of the 'rational' view as being the correct one, with the emotional as somehow less valid.

Other psychological explanations focused on the obvious role of identity in relation to the vote. Lord Ashcroft's voting poll suggested those identifying as English not British were more likely to vote leave, as were those reporting that life in Britain is worse now than it was 30 years ago. Those who voted to remain were more likely to see movements such as multiculturalism, feminism, globalisation, social liberalism and the green movement as forces for good, whereas leavers were more likely to perceive these as forces for ill. But can psychology go beyond mere descriptive narrative of differences in positions of leavers and remainers?

I was drawn instead to self-determination theory. This proposes that humans are driven by the fundamental needs of autonomy (the feeling of having volition and freedom over one's choices of actions), competence (the feeling of a sense of mastery and accomplishment) and relatedness (the feelings of being socially connected and having positive and meaningful experiences with others). When these needs are thwarted, individuals may experience negative emotion and strive to regain or satisfy these needs (or adopt defensive strategies).

The pattern of data we have seen could demonstrate that those who feel they belong in both Britain and the EU, those who have the resources and power that bring them autonomy and freedom, and those with status and an associated sense of competence, are more likely to have these fundamental needs satisfied by the current situation. These were more likely to vote Remain. Conversely, it appears to me that these fundamental needs are not being satisfied in many of those who voted Leave. Is it possible that the division in the vote is not purely based on age, education, attitudes and social class, but instead driven by levels of need fulfillment and experiences of self-determination?

Since the result, feelings of belonging and autonomy are surely challenged amongst the Remainers. The decision has been made: it may have been close, but it was a majority, and to challenge it fundamentally challenges notions of democracy. The Remainers are now impotent and powerless; they lack 'competence'. Perhaps it is the challenge to these fundamental needs that has led to the experiences of frustration, anger and resentment, to a negative sense of well-being and lack of self-determination. Exactly the same emotions and feelings, driven by the need for fulfillment and self-determination that led to those voting Leave only days before?

Dr Paul Redford
UWE Bristol

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

33,551,983 UK citizens cast their votes on 23 June in the EU referendum in conditions of high emotion, poor-quality information and great uncertainty. Among the many things psychological science tells us is that decisions made in such circumstances are dangerous.

We seem to find it difficult to retain more than a few of the massive number of relevant facts, our decision making is influenced by emotions, by irrelevancies and by other people. In the chaos, complexity and anxiety, we use 'heuristic reasoning' rather than logic; we are swayed by our initial assumptions, by the most recent, most available and eye-catching, and most memorable information, irrespective of its truth or relevance. We tend to seek out information that confirms – rather than challenges – our assumptions. We seek the company of people who agree with us. Once we've made our (quasi-random) decisions, psychological science tells us that we tend to justify our actions (whatever they were) with hindsight bias and minimise any cognitive dissonance with selective recall and attribution of blame anywhere but to ourselves. Some of us grieve.

So, regardless of the political consequences of the decision, there's plenty there for psychology to unpick.

Politically and practically, the consequences of the referendum are far from clear, and the next few months are highly unpredictable. There are also areas of uncertainty for the British Psychological Society and for the discipline of psychology. Our universities and research institutes have many staff and students from the EU and receive significant EU financial support. Psychologists from the UK work across Europe, and European psychologists work in the UK, not least in the NHS. These arrangements may become part of EU negotiations in the coming months. The BPS will keep a close eye on these developments and stand ready to respond.

We are very concerned about first-hand reports of racist and xenophobic abuse following the referendum. The campaign was associated with divisive and even xenophobic rhetoric, which we have noted with concern (see tinyurl.com/gktdn4a). Psychology can add value in helping society understand the implications of this. We must listen to people with different experiences and attempt to engage those of different perspectives. We must clearly and publicly affirm our commitment to fundamental human rights, reject all forms of racism and discrimination, and reiterate the universality, humanity and inclusiveness of our profession.

We must also do all we can to ensure that education and public services do not suffer in the financial uncertainty following the referendum result. As Margaret McCartney, writing in the *BMJ*, said: 'The Leave campaign said that the UK pays the EU £350m a week and that this would be better spent on UK public services such as the NHS. Well, let's see it – every penny' (see tinyurl.com/gp5xyx4). Science does not recognise national boundaries, and our universities depend heavily both on free movement and on EU funding. We have already begun to work with the Research Councils, the Academy for Social Sciences and the Science Council to address these issues.

Your Society will do everything in its power to safeguard our discipline. You can be confident that the Presidential team, senior officers and our expert staff will be monitoring these negotiations closely and we'll be at the table and fully engaged when the time is right. We will protect and promote our science and the values and skills of our members.

Peter Kinderman is President of the British Psychological Society. Contact him at PresidentsOffice@bps.org.uk or follow on Twitter: @peterkinderman.

Examine our assumptions

Without actually looking over their shoulders in the polling booths, I can say my colleagues in the psychology department at the university where I work voted overwhelmingly (where 'overwhelmingly' means >80 per cent) in favour of 'Remain'. Most conversations assumed that that was the only logical, intelligent position and this was reinforced by university-wide e-mails from the vice-chancellor supporting that view and making it unwise to express any alternative view. Combine this with polls published in the national press mainly suggesting a small lead for Remain in the week leading up to the referendum and this likely created a strong expectation about the probable outcome.

This is the ideal environment in which cognitive biases such as the confirmation bias (a tendency to listen only for information that confirms our preconceptions) and selective perception (allowing our expectations to influence how we see the world) could grow and spread. As psychologists, we are no less immune to these sources of bias than anyone else. They would predict the strength of the surprise and upset most of my colleagues experienced when they woke on Friday morning after the referendum result was announced and, judging by reactions you have published, those of British psychologists more widely.

The solution, as we keep telling our students, is to examine our assumptions more carefully and think more critically about our beliefs and expectations about the world. We might also have sought the opinions of a wider range of people than our academic colleagues to find out what mattered to them.

Dr Peter Forster
Malvern

Brexit and flashbulb memories

We are currently running a 'flashbulb' memory study for the moment people first learned of the outcome of the Brexit referendum. This is a European-wide survey, currently seven countries are participating, and involves completing a questionnaire about your personal circumstances, e.g. where you were, what you were doing, how you felt, etc., when first learning of the news.

Flashbulb memory studies are invariably about negative events, the death of Princess Diana, 9/11, and so on. However, Brexit is interesting in that people are fairly evenly split between those who welcome leaving the EU and those who do not. Giving us an opportunity to examine the degree to which positive versus negative emotions impact on memory. Please visit tinyurl.com/cityunibrex to complete, anonymously, the questionnaire.

Martin Conway
Department of Psychology
City University London

PHIL WOLMUTH/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

The dangers of emotional thinking

As a clinical psychologist, I've spent a lot of time talking to people who are feeling emotional. It's a large part of the job. And when we're emotional, it's hard to think things through properly. Indeed, that's one of the main ideas behind cognitive therapy.

If there was ever a time when we needed to think something through clearly, it was last week – when we had to decide how to vote in the EU referendum – and now, when we are dealing with the aftermath. The importance of the issues – the events of 2016 will likely have a profound effect on UK life for generations to come – is matched only by their complexity. As a psychologist I worry that some of our voting decisions – and indeed the referendum result – may have been partly the product of emotional thinking. Recent political and economic events have left many people feeling stressed, depressed, anxious, hopeless and adrift. Many have lost their jobs with the closure of traditional industries, and with them often their sense of identity and belonging. Buying or even renting a home is often out of reach, people have lost faith in politicians and feel disenfranchised, local shops and pubs have closed leaving people isolated. Many are struggling even to afford the basics: wages are low and unpredictable or they may be just getting by on benefits. Some have to rely on food banks and have felt humiliated by the experience. We worry for our own and our children's future. Emotions are running high.

In this context, many of us will have found the oversimplified stories put out by both sides, but particularly in my view by the 'out' campaign, much more convincing than we might otherwise have done. It's well documented that in extremis, people look for someone to blame: the processes of 'scapegoating' and 'othering' are well documented in social psychology. So the stories are seductive: our problems are due to an influx of foreigners threatening our livelihoods and our public services, and to paper-shuffling, ineffectual Brussels eurocrats siphoning off billions from our national coffers.

Perhaps I'm thinking emotionally myself, but I'm very worried about our future. There are huge echoes for me of earlier periods in our European history when people blamed their problems on 'foreigners' in their midst. The racist attacks that have been reported in the days since the referendum are deeply troubling. The 1930s and 1940s are very present in my mind. And as we know, it didn't end well.

On the other hand, as a 'remain' voter I'm only too aware of the danger of othering and scapegoating people who voted to leave. That way lies huge danger too. Maybe I'm even guilty of doing that here. As psychologists we need to put our energies into helping heal, rather than worsening the rifts that this process has opened up between people. But then I'm feeling emotional. Our awareness of psychological processes doesn't make us immune. But it should make us careful.

Anne Cooke
Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Principal Lecturer at Canterbury Christ Church University.

BPS PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT

A few days after the referendum, on 28 June, the BPS Presidential Team – Peter Kinderman, Jamie Hacker Hughes and Nicola Gale – wrote a letter sent to all Society members stating their commitment to steer the Society through the uncertain times ahead and to safeguard our discipline.

We echo their call to continue feeding in your thoughts to *The Psychologist* as the situation develops over the coming months.

MORE...

Read more on our website and in a free Brexit special in our iOS/Android app

Psychology in the honours

Three British Psychological Society members have been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to dyslexia, psychology in education and family therapy. We spoke to two of them about their achievements and the future of their work.

BPS Fellow Professor Margaret Snowling, Professor of Psychology and President of St John's College, Oxford, was awarded a CBE for services to science and the understanding of dyslexia. Snowling, also a Fellow of the British Academy, said she was astonished and very pleased in equal measure by the award. 'For the past four decades my research has focused on children's reading and language impairments, and I have always been passionate about translating research into practice. Most recently, the work of the group headed by Charles Hulme (UCL) and myself has been concerned with developing and evaluating theoretically motivated interventions for children in schools, particularly those at social disadvantage.'

Professor Margaret Snowling CBE

She added: 'We have recently been involved in a field trial of our Nuffield Early Language Intervention programme, delivered by partners from the charity I CAN and evaluated by the Institute of Fiscal Studies with funding from the Education Endowment Foundation. Even with researchers at arm's length, the intervention has been found to be effective as a way of improving children's oral skills in the early years.' Snowling said in the future she would like to see a shift in the educational policy agenda away from phonics to the oral language skills that underpin reading.

Professor Susan Gathercole OBE

Chartered Psychologist Professor Susan Gathercole, director of the Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit, Medical Research Council, was awarded an OBE for services to psychology and education. She said she had been astonished and touched to have been nominated for the honour.

Gathercole said one of her proudest achievements to date was setting up a new research clinic for children with problems in attention, learning and memory. She added: 'All credit for this goes to the excellent clinic team headed by Joni Holmes and Francesca Woolgar whose dedication has made it possible.'

Innovation in psychology teaching

The University of Lincoln's undergraduate course has won the BPS Award for Innovation in Psychology Programmes. It has been praised by the Society for its peer support, annual undergraduate research conference and staff–student partnerships for programme design.

This award is made annually by the Society's Education and Public Engagement Board and recognises innovative course design, delivery or assessment that benefits students and raises standards in teaching and learning. Lucy Horder, Partnership and Accreditation Manager for the BPS, said the Society saw a number of commendations in Lincoln's provision. She explained: 'We define commendations as anything that makes a demonstrable, positive impact rather than anything that is particularly distinctive when compared across the rest of the sector.'

The programme was commended for its outreach programme, excellent staff and student relationships and the 'community' feel within the School of Psychology. Horder added that its programme also focused on employability and opportunities for placements for students, she added: 'The visiting team were particularly impressed with the Employability Boot-Camp, a week-long focus on careers and employability skills to be delivered once exams are over.'

Professor Timothy Hodgson, head of the School of Psychology at Lincoln, said: 'This is a great honour for the School. When I started working in Lincoln five years ago I discovered a different approach to undergraduate education, exemplified by really positive working relationships between staff and students. There just isn't a them-and-us atmosphere between students and staff here.

'We pride ourselves on listening to our students' views and on letting them participate in areas such as peer support, improving feedback, modules and teaching. So I am absolutely delighted on behalf of everyone in Lincoln that we have been given the award for innovation in psychology programmes.'

Sam Jones, who is set to graduate the Lincoln course this summer, said the staff–student partnership had been apparent throughout his time at the university. He added: 'The staff are incredibly receptive to feedback and genuinely want to ensure that students here not only do well but also enjoy their time here at Lincoln, with students having the opportunity to make an impact on their course, whether that is the co-development of marking schemes or acting as peer support. All these elements put together mean that we have a great community that is comfortable working side by side with each other and isn't based on one side being superior, but instead being genuine collaborative partners.'

Other students echoed Sam's thoughts, another third-year student, Verity Harris, said: 'The psychology course at Lincoln has an excellent relationship between staff and students; they make each student feel valued and that their contributions count. There is a real sense of community that really adds value to each course.' ER

And what for the future? 'At the CBSU we will be continuing to do research on cognition and brain processes that is driven by theory and uses the best contemporary methods with typical individuals as well as those with disorders of neurodevelopment, genetics, neurodegeneration, mental health and acquired brain damage,' she said. Where possible, Gathercole and colleagues will be developing theory-based cognitive interventions for such disorders and improving diagnostic methods. She added: 'Our programme is fully embracing the new world of opportunities provided by big data, consortia science, and remote data collection.'

Finally, Professor Ivan Eisler, Emeritus Professor of Family Psychology and Family Therapy, from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Clinical Academic Group in the IoPPN, received an OBE for services to family therapy. His research interests include the evaluation of psychological treatments particularly for eating disorders, substance misuse, depression and self-harm. His other areas of interest are family therapy, family interaction research and attachment.

A fourth psychologist – Christine Liddell, Professor of Psychology at Ulster University – received an MBE for services to tackling fuel poverty in Northern Ireland. Also rugby union referee Nigel Owens, who was a popular after-dinner speaker at the recent BPS Annual Conference, received an MBE for services to sport. ER

'Travel to learn, return to inspire'

A psychologist from Glasgow will be given the chance to learn about ground-breaking techniques being used to help vulnerable young people across the world thanks to the support of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust. Dan Johnson, a Senior Forensic Psychologist at charity and social enterprise Kibble, will travel to America and Scandinavia to find out more about the ways they work.

The Trust, first established in 1965, with the motto 'travel to learn, return to inspire', awards Fellowships to over 100 British citizens every year. The 'Fellows' are selected due to their vision and motivation to improve their profession and are given financial support to travel and share best practice from across the globe.

Kibble is one of Scotland's oldest charities and works with young people from five to 25, offering services including emergency and respite, residential and day care as well as employment and training. Johnson told *The Psychologist*: 'The research suggests that childhood experiences of neglect and loss are associated with later long-term difficulties including mental health difficulties.'

He said that in Scandinavia government schemes exist that put added resources into young people compared with the UK. He hoped to see what knowledge could be applied in Scotland to help vulnerable young people, adding: 'Young people who have experienced adversity and trauma have some of the greatest difficulties, my hope is that by taking this journey we will be able to learn new, effective ways to help them.'

Johnson said he would welcome suggestions of world-leading centres in American and Scandinavia to visit. E-mail him at dan.johnson@kibble.org. ER

FELLOWSHIPS FOR MEDICAL SCIENCE CONTRIBUTIONS

The Academy of Medical Sciences has named three psychologists among its new Fellows. They are among 47 world-leading UK researchers who have been elected for their contribution to medical research and health care.

Professor Chris Brewin's (UCL) work has explored intrusive imagery in mental disorders, the design of mental health responses for survivors of disasters and terrorist attacks and has carried out experimental studies designed to influence rates of intrusive memory after trauma. He said he was delighted and honoured to be elected to a Fellowship of the Academy.

He told *The Psychologist*: 'In my clinical and research work I have always tried to pay close attention to what patients have to say about the content and form of their troubling thoughts and memories. I believe their accounts provide an invaluable and underused source of understanding and insight, and I am deeply grateful to them for sharing what are often difficult and painful experiences with me.'

Edmund Sonuga-Barke (University of Southampton) was recognised by the Academy for ground-breaking studies of child and adolescent mental health conditions, particularly ADHD and associated conditions. On being elected he said: 'I am surprised and humbled to be elected to such a prestigious and celebrated fellowship. I dedicate it to all the great teachers, mentors and colleagues who have had a formative influence on my ideas, and to my family.

'I am especially beholden to Mrs Olga Maher who did so much to help children with dyslexia in Derby, and to Tim Miles, formerly Professor at the University of Bangor (and now sadly deceased), for giving me my initial chance to undertake higher education all those years ago. My hope is that this recognition will better enable my colleagues and me to work to raise awareness of, and address, the needs of children with mental health problems and developmental disabilities.'

Professor of Clinical Psychology and Rehabilitation (King's College London) Dame Til Wykes (see 'One on One', July issue), has worked extensively with service users in her research on treatments for mental health problems and their outcomes. She also founded the Service User Research Enterprise, which encourages consumers of mental health services to become more involved in research.

She told us she was delighted to be elected to the Academy and added: 'The Academy provides some great opportunities to connect with others in academia as well as the NHS and wider industry. In my research I work with, rather than on, service users, to demonstrate how this can then have much more impact on mental health and the NHS. I hope that being in the Academy will help to increase the spread of this type of research.'

Professor Sir Robert Lechler, President of the Academy of Medical Sciences, said in a statement: 'These new Fellows represent the amazing diversity of talent and expertise among the UK medical research community. Through their election to the Fellowship, we recognise the outstanding contributions these individuals have made to the progress of medical science and the development of better health care.' ER

Psychology by the pint

Across three evenings pubs in the UK, Ireland, France, Italy, the USA, Spain, Germany, Brazil, Australia, Canada, Austria and South Africa, simultaneously held Pint of Science talks. Four academics from the University of Birmingham took to the stage during this year's festival to speak about unhelpful chimps, mind-reading, consciousness and movement in autism. Our reporter *Ella Rhodes* was there.

Can chimps really be helpful? Dr Claudio Tennie kicked off the Birmingham 'Beautiful Minds' stream of the festival by examining some claims that have captured the imagination of people across the world. We can see why competition, what Tennie called 'the opposite of helping', has evolved – in the face of limited resources it makes sense to strive for survival. But helping is another matter entirely: why would animals do anything for another at his or her own cost?

Around 10 years ago in a laboratory setting Brian Hare captured video of apparent helping. He had dropped a piece of wood inside a chimp's cage which he couldn't reach, and a chimp grabbed the wood and handed it back. Tennie said that without a control condition, Hare may have over-interpreted this behaviour. He pointed out that captive chimps are often trained to fetch and are rewarded for doing so. Hare was also banging on the side of the cage to get the chimp's attention – the chimp may have fetched the wood to stop the annoying noise.

Tennie himself worked at a chimp sanctuary in Africa to test out his own helping study. He placed two chimps in opposite cages with a cable running between them, a bolt in one cage and food in the other. In the first condition the chimp with the bolt could release it and thus release the food for its neighbour. In the second, the food would be available for the neighbouring chimp as long as the other chimp did *not* remove the bolt from its own cage. In this way Tennie could see whether chimps would be able to tell the difference between doing a certain behaviour to help and not doing it to help, rather than a single condition that could have the appearance of helping. He saw no difference in the release patterns of the bolt between these two conditions, and therefore concluded that he saw no helping behaviour in the chimps. This hinders cultural development: 4000 years ago chimps were cracking nuts using a stone, and this is still seen today, while in humans technology changes all the time through a form of helping behaviour we call teaching. As Tennie succinctly concluded: 'That explains why we're sitting here today and not them.'

Professor Ian Apperly set out to convince the audience they were all mind-readers and pointed to proof that we engage all the time with what's in the heads of other people. Autism and schizophrenia may provide us with some clues – both have a deficiency in perspective-taking. Apperly said it is interesting to see where people fit on a continuum of clinical conditions such as these. In one paradigm participants carried out a computer task where they saw a shelving unit and an avatar standing behind it who asks them to move objects around, for example 'Move the biggest hairbrush up'. However, crucially, the avatar cannot see all the shelves so participants have to take her perspective into consideration.

Adults can still make errors on this task, and Apperly has found the high-autism-traits and high-psychosis-traits groups make more errors. Interestingly, people who are high in both do not make as many errors – although Apperly said it's unclear why this happens.

But how do we even do perspective-taking in the first place? People who are very good at the shelf task have better working memory, and it seems to involve executive and inhibitory control. Apperly said that while perspective taking seems to be a slow process, there are some elements of it which are quite speedy. In another paradigm he designed, Apperly flashed up images of a person facing a wall side-on. Dots appeared on the wall in front and behind him, and participants simply had to answer how many dots they could see. However they were much slower at this if there was a dot behind the man – it seems as though people process the man's visual perspective, which slows down the judgement of their own.

Later in the Beautiful Minds section of the Pint of Science Festival, neuroscientist Dr Davinia Fernández-Espejo discussed her work with brain-injured people who, while appearing to be in a vegetative state, actually retain their consciousness [see also Adrian Owen's work, http://tinyurl.com/grla4w5]. The areas in the brain responsible for movement are also involved when we imagine movement so, in an MRI scanner, this can be used to assess consciousness and ask patients simple yes or no questions. Fernández-Espejo explained that in the scanner she asks patients to imagine playing tennis and the corresponding motor regions will be active; she also asks them to imagine walking around a familiar place and assesses the brain areas that are active in this task.

With one patient, who was in a vegetative state for 12 years unable to communicate with those around him,

they used the above task to help him to answer questions. Using the activation patterns associated with each imagined movement they could clearly see in which direction he was answering, using this technique to discover that he was without pain and had been enjoying the hockey games his parents had been playing to him.

In another study with patients she found a physical disruption in the fibres connecting the thalamus and motor cortex – explaining the inability these patients have transforming thoughts of movement to actual movement. The damage in these patients lies in connections rather than the whole brain stem. She said she and her team were able to identify a new syndrome, which at first is indistinguishable from a true vegetative state, and she hopes to be able to find something to restore some movement capabilities in these patients.

Dr Jennifer Cook set the scene of her talk by describing how children with autism may have been treated in the 1930s. In those days they would usually be given a diagnosis of 'mental retardation' or 'childhood schizophrenia' and could be sent to asylums. However Hans Asperger, working in Vienna at the time, noticed many of the children he saw were not 'retarded' and did not develop schizophrenia in later life. A group of them showed similar characteristics – were overwhelmed by social situations and used language in an unusual way, they enjoyed logical rules and consistency and patterns. He called it autistic psychopathology.

This symptomology is now well known, and doctors, Cook said, look for similar traits to this day. But how about the body movements of these children? Some work in her own lab required adults with autism and a control group to move their outstretched arm to the left and right horizontally with a flat palm. Each person wore a movement tracker, and Cook saw the control group showed a pattern where they started slowly, sped up in the middle and slowed down towards the end before they changed direction. This helps to minimise the jerk of the movement and keep it relatively smooth throughout the task. But those with autism quickly accelerated their movement then 'slammed on the brakes' before changing direction.

It is unclear why people with autism might move in a jerkier fashion than others. As well as making fine motor tasks trickier, this difference in body movements may affect how people with ASD are perceived in general. As Cook pointed out, movements in a person's body tell us much about how they are feeling or even what they're thinking.

In the 1970s Gunnar Johanssen asked whether it was body movements or facial expressions that told us about emotion. He had actors wear light bulbs on their clothes and filmed them moving in certain ways, as if happy or sad for example. He asked others to guess what emotions they were portraying from the patterns created by the lightbulbs, and people were very accurate. Perhaps people without autism, Cook suggested, find it harder to understand the feelings of people with autism because they move differently to the average person.

In an experiment Cook asked people to move around two triangles on a whiteboard (using magnets underneath the whiteboard) to act out a 'mocking', 'surprising', 'seducing' or 'coaxing' movement from one triangle to another. New participants, without autism, watched the resulting videos and asked them to say on a scale of 1 to 10 how much it portrayed that scenario. When they saw videos made by non-autistic people, they were better at figuring out the scenario or emotion.

Cook ended her fascinating talk with two suggestions: first, if we know a person with autism, we should be aware they may express their emotions differently with their bodies; second, a future direction of her work may be using an Xbox Kinect to train people to move like those with autism, which could potentially give some insight into their feelings.

Inadequate support for the abused

Earlier this year, the NSPCC's 'It's Time' campaign called for significant improvements in therapeutic support for children who have experienced abuse or neglect. The government committed £1.4bn to improving children's mental health services, with local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) asked to produce Local Transformation Plans (LTPs) setting out how they will improve children's mental health. Now the NSPCC has published a review of LTPs for children's mental health, revealing that a significant number of LTPs do not recognise abuse as a major risk factor for mental health issues, do not include abused children in needs assessments, and do not mention services for this group (http://tinyurl.com/j9n5gnk).

The review found that just 14 per cent of plans contained an adequate needs assessment for children who have been abused or neglected. The charity concluded that 3.89 million children (34 per cent of children in England) live in an area where the local plan doesn't mention services for children who have experienced abuse or neglect.

Peter Wanless, CEO of NSPCC said: 'Talking about local NHS plans may not sound exciting but it's essential because they are at the heart of the government's promise to tackle the growing crisis in child mental health. These plans determine how money is spent locally. So it's vital they include services for children who've suffered abuse and neglect, as this one of the biggest causes behind them developing mental health problems.'

The NSPCC is writing to all CCGs to ask them to fully include the needs of young survivors when they refresh their plans. Professor Peter Kinderman, President of the British Psychological Society, commented: 'Whilst the emphasis of the report is on the provision of therapy, the case it makes is relevant to the provision of all forms of psychological support. The best outcome would be for all providers, including practitioner psychologists, to come together with commissioners to develop LTPs for whole-systems solutions.'

Tim Atkin, Chair Elect of the Division of Clinical Psychology's Faculty for Children, Young People and their Families, points out that the British Psychological Society has repeatedly made national representations that improving our understanding of need is crucial to providing better, more appropriate provision. 'The review itself cites a BPS publication *What Good Looks Like in Psychological Services for Children, Young People and their Families*, which makes this very point. So we would encourage members and others to support the NSPCC petition, which calls on the Department of Health and NHS England to require all local areas to properly count abused children in need of mental health support.' JS

Sign the NSPCC petition at tinyurl.com/nspccitstime. The BPS has also recently published guidance on the management of disclosures of non-recent (historic) child sex abuse: see over.

Protecting future generations

Ella Rhodes reports from an event to launch the British Psychological Society guidance on managing non-recent disclosures of child sexual abuse.

Survivors, academics and those working to help unheard generations of abused children, gathered for the launch of new guidelines on what to do when clients disclose historical child sexual abuse. Introduced by the Chair of the British Psychological Society Special Group for Psychology and Social Care, Professor Zenobia Nadirshaw, the day-long event in Oxford saw an atmosphere of strength, bravery and, perhaps most importantly, hope.

In a candid, moving talk, clinical psychologist Dr Danny Taggart (University of Essex) spoke for the first time publicly about his own process as a survivor of sexual abuse as a child, his experience of psychosis and some eclectic sources of comfort. Taggart has also written a paper in response to the guidelines, due to be published in October in *Clinical Psychology Forum*.

Taggart was sexually abused by the headmaster of his Christian-Brother-run school at the age of eight and has had intermittent mental health problems since then. He has also worked extensively in a clinical capacity with men and women who lived through child abuse and are now trying to cope with the consequences. He asked how this could happen in societies across the globe, describing child sexual abuse (CSA) as a 'public health epidemic'.

He went on to illustrate some of the 'models of madness' society holds; the ways in which we discuss mental health problems and how this may not always translate to a person's experience. Taggart said that as social beings, if the damage is done within relationships this is also where healing must take place – including within therapeutic relationships.

During his period of psychosis Taggart said he took great comfort from music, which may have been seen by others as 'mad': John Coltrane and Can's Malcolm Mooney for example. But he said with clients we should understand the meanings people make for themselves, potentially helping them to find something that psychological models alone don't provide – a feeling of not being alone or being understood. He said: 'I couldn't understand ordinary life, it was too anaemic. It was only with music like this that there was any peace.'

Taggart touched on the 'memory wars' debate between false memory and recovered memory advocates. He said he was particularly struck by the tone of this conversation, adding: 'The idea of waging a war over the fragmented mind of an abused child seemed so indecent and disturbing I thought academics and practitioners involved had become disconnected from those they were trying to find help for. The idea we can be removed from people with a cold, analytic gaze puts at risk the qualities of relationships we can make with victims of childhood sexual abuse.'

RESOURCES

To download the new BPS guidelines visit tinyurl.com/hgcjqer
For more information on Momentum in Exeter call 0777 315 1080.
For more on NAPAC see www.napac.org.uk or call the free helpline 0808 801 0331.

He concluded that many psychologists see ethics as simply a means to an end, but how research and therapy is conducted has enormous implications for clients. He said: 'I experienced a breach of trust, the man who did this to me was in a position of power, was god-like in the context of the Catholic Church. We have a profound responsibility for the people who come to us for help, it's vital that they have a different experience.'

Gilli Watson, a Consultant Clinical Psychologist for Devon Partnership NHS Trust, presented evidence from the extensive research base on the long-term mental health consequences of childhood sexual abuse. She said such abuse was a human rights issue and a betrayal of every child's right to safety, nurture and love.

Watson presented research evidence that childhood sexual abuse is a major factor in the development of adult mental health distress across all diagnoses, including depression, suicidality, self-harm, eating difficulties, bipolar disorder, hallucinations and voice-hearing. The strong connection between childhood abuse and adult mental health difficulties, she said, requires adult mental health services to implement routine enquiring about abuse in childhood and adulthood as part of all adult mental health assessments and a focus in on what has happened to a person rather than what's 'wrong' with them.

The NHS Partnership Trust in Devon has been involved as one of six pilot sites in England with the Department of Health to implement routine enquiries about abuse in adult mental health services. Watson said that once a person's abuse history is known, their psychological distress could be formulated in terms of trauma responses rather than misdiagnosed as mental 'illness'. She pointed to international guidelines for trauma-informed practice in mental health services as to the effectiveness of psychological trauma-recovery therapies, including group therapy in providing a safe environment to break the silence of abuse, share profound distress and be empowered through each person's strength and resilience.

Watson said a shift in focus is needed within adult mental health services towards validating people for their survival of abuse and profound resilience and courage, rather than adding new damage through misdiagnosing people as disordered in terms of personality, eating or thought. The psychological model currently being developed by the Division of Clinical Psychology for formulating distress, she added, will provide a strong psychological alternative to psychiatric diagnosis that will enable clinicians to do justice to a person's lived experience.

Watson introduced John Slater who runs, with others, a mutual male survivor peer support group in the Exeter area called Momentum. The group gives men of all ages and backgrounds a safe place to meet talk and feel their emotions. He said: 'Some people still say "men don't want groups", but we have not found this to be so if the groups are backed by individual support and psychoeducation for understanding and managing trauma. We have regular supervision with a clinical psychologist who is well experienced in the field and have access to professional psychological support for anyone in the group to consult.' He emphasised the need for more groups, as sexual abuse in childhood was widespread throughout all of society.

Slater added that survivors, and others, wanted to see a truly collaborative, trauma-informed approach taken up by services. He added: 'Services should involve survivors in their approach, to help them recognise the needs of victims of childhood sexual abuse.' He said it was also essential for survivors to meet other survivors, having chances to hear that others share their sense of shame, rage and the self-blame that can come with being a survivor. 'To hear and feel from others what they feel and struggle with can be the beginnings of a sense of trust and release from isolation. At Momentum we see the real difference that this makes.'

Peter Saunders, founder of the National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC), opened with his view that childhood should be about having 'the confidence to express ourselves and not to be abused in any way'. Also a survivor, Saunders set up the association 20 years ago after his own journey attempting to find help – feeling like 'a piece of dirt' and as if he didn't belong. As well as a support helpline for others needing help and support, the charity has worked with the government in recent inquiries into childhood sexual abuse.

The ongoing Independent Inquiry into Sexual Abuse, led by Dame Lowell Goddard, is investigating whether public bodies and other non-state institutions have done enough to protect children from abuse. Saunders praised Home Secretary Theresa May for getting the inquiry off the ground and for listening to survivors' stories at NAPAC. He added: 'The inquiry is not just about history but what's going on now. People have attacked it because of the cost – it's a small price to pay to ensure our own children and grandchildren won't have to suffer in the same way.'

After he had children of his own and a chance encounter with his abuser, Saunders decided to seek help. 'You go from thinking you're one in a million to finding out half the people in the room may have experienced something similar. It's a humanitarian problem that's so big we can't arrest our way out of it, there's something more we can do. We should have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse.'

Dr Khadj Rouf, Benna Waites and Dr Stephen Weatherhead wrote the new BPS guidance on dealing with disclosures of non-recent abuse. Waites and Rouf's presentation highlighted key aspects of the new document, which is part of the work taking place through the Society's Safeguarding Children and Young People Group. The guidelines draw out the steps that psychologists can take after a disclosure of non-recent sexual abuse. They highlighted that the issues surrounding these disclosures can often be complex and painful for victims. The document emphasises the importance of sharing concerns outside the consultation room, to ensure more children are not at risk. The authors flagged the nuances and dilemmas that can arise during this work, and how to take safeguarding concerns forward in a range of scenarios. They also flagged the importance of a wider role for psychology in shaping the debate around safeguarding and the prevention of abuse.

The authors sought input for the guidelines from numerous organisations including the police, Divisions of the BPS in other areas of psychology, and survivor organisations. Waites emphasised that this first edition of the guidelines and will be reviewed in a year's time. She said, 'This document serves to start a conversation and we hope it will be an iterative process with further input in the future.'

Herself a survivor, Rouf added: 'We have been concerned about the extent of abuse disclosures we've heard from our clients. Recent high-profile cases give us the opportunity to open the debate about how we respond to non-recent disclosures. It's a difficult, uncomfortable conversation, but it's one we should be having.'

The day finished with a panel discussion, hosted by BPS President Peter Kinderman, who emphasised the duty of psychologists to speak up against child abuse. He added: 'This is not just about one-to-one therapy, it's about what we do to protect future generations from abuse.'

Chimp on trial

Ginny Smith, a freelance science communicator, reports from a BPS-supported event at the Cheltenham Science Festival

Chimp society is complex and violent, and it is reasonably common for one chimp to kill another. But is this murder? At Cheltenham Science Festival, a temporary court was set up to debate this topic, before the audience played the role of jury and voted whether the chimp in question was guilty or innocent. The case for the prosecution was led by Dr Kate Cross (University of St Andrews), and Dr Lewis Dean (University of St Andrews) led the defence. They were joined by expert witnesses Dr Katie Slocombe (University of York), Dr Benedict Douglas (University of Durham) and Dr Amanda Seed (University of St Andrews) to guide us through the case.

The event opened with the case being presented: chimp Jack was out patrolling his territory with his group one evening when he came across chimp Steve, who was from a rival troop. After a violent struggle, Jack killed Steve. Was this murder – or just natural animal behaviour?

Murder is defined as 'the killing with intent of a reasonable being, not in self-defence'. In the chimp context, Slocombe explained that boundary patrols are very tense affairs, which often end in attack if a rival group is encountered. Lone males found in these cases are almost always attacked, although some may escape without much damage. Chimps are also known to kill within their group – most commonly a new alpha male will kill the offspring of the previous alpha so their mothers become ready to mate again. It has also been known for females to kill other females' young, particularly if they are new to the group. In the case in question, we know that Jack killed Steve, and that it wasn't, in the traditional sense at least, self-defence. So the big question is whether a chimp is a 'reasonable being' and whether there are any other reasons Jack could be exempt from prosecution.

To commit a crime, you need to understand that what you are doing is wrong. So the first question is, can we claim that chimps understand killing, or even death? Dr Slocombe explained that chimps do seem to have an understanding of death – although their reactions to dead troop members aren't often seen, as most ill or injured chimps leave the group before they die. However in a few cases, chimps have been seen to beat dead bodies, possibly trying to get them to respond, while other times they will stay with the body, grooming it and trying to keep flies away. Mothers have even been known to carry the bodies of their dead infants around for several days. But do these behaviours show understanding of death, or just instinctive reactions?

We know that chimps can show compassion to other chimps, but only (as far as we know) to members of their own group. If a friend is attacked, others will spend time hugging, comforting and grooming them after the attack is over. There was even a case of a chimp who was second in command defending the alpha male after he fell out of tree and broke a leg, so he didn't lose his position. So it seems they do have some understanding of the concept of hurting, or killing others. But do they know that killing another chimp is wrong? Do chimps have a concept of morality?

Dr Slocombe explained that in some cases, they do seem to. They have a strong concept of possession – a more dominant chimp won't take something by force if it is in the possession of a lower ranking chimp, for example. They also have a sense of fairness – studies have found that if one chimp steals food from another, the second chimp will punish the first, even if there is no direct benefit to him. However, we need to be careful when implying that because chimps have some ideas of right and wrong this can map directly onto our own human morality. For one thing, our ideas of right and wrong vary hugely by culture. These findings do seem to suggest that there might be something in the idea of a chimp morality, but it isn't clear if this is enough to say that they can commit murder.

In human courts (in England and Wales), children can't be found guilty of murder until they reach the age of 10, as it is believed that until this point they can't understand right and wrong. So if we are to extend the court system to chimps, this implies we believe their abilities are greater than those of a nine-year-old human. But is that the case? The answer, it seems, isn't clear cut. The answer depends on what ability it is you are testing them on. Dr Slocombe told us that when it comes to chimp comprehension of human speech, they are able to reach about the same level as a 2.5-year-old human, but this is asking them to learn the language of a different species, which would be a difficult task for anyone! We don't yet know enough about their communication within the group to say how sophisticated that is.

It is tempting to try and think of chimp intelligence in the same way as our own, but this is misleading, and it makes it a difficult and complicated question to answer. In other tasks, chimps come out with a much higher human age than in language. Dr Seed explained that they have the ability to solve puzzles, thinking flexibly and changing their actions as the rules of the puzzle change. In this task, some chimps excel, comparing to 3- to 6-year-old children. In other tasks they do even better, perhaps reaching the standard

of an 8- to 10-year-old. But in the eyes of the law, this would still put them as too young to really be responsible for their actions. And not all chimps reach these heights – some are unable to pass the tasks at all.

It is also interesting to wonder about how we came to the idea that 10 is the age for criminal responsibility. One of the things that younger children struggle with is the ability to plan or reason about the future, and predict the outcomes of their actions. If you can't do this, then you can't be expected to know that your actions could kill someone. But chimps are rather good at this. They do seem to be able to plan for the future – in the wild, they will carry their favourite tools with them when they go fishing for termites, and there is even a chimp in a zoo who hides rocks from his keepers at night so he can throw them at visitors (his favourite hobby) in the mornings! But is this really planning, or just habit? Lab experiments have shown that chimps can plan for the future to some extent – choosing a straw over a tastier grape, for example, when they know that a couple of hours later they will be given fruit soup that requires a straw to drink it. Make the challenge harder, however, by increasing the delay from a couple of hours to overnight, and most chimps fail.

So does this evidence suggest that chimps can commit murder? I, for one, was not convinced. Dr Douglas discussed the idea of animals having rights, similar to human rights, and I can see the logic of extending some of these to our nearest relatives. There have even been cases come before the courts that argued that chimps in captivity are effectively slaves and should be freed. But even if we were to extend rights like personal freedom to these animals, I think the idea that they could commit murder is still a step too far. Killing is a natural part of chimp life, and while in some ways their lives are socially complex and similar to ours, there are huge differences too. We are the only animal that has devised rules to help us overcome our natural instincts, and it doesn't seem reasonable to impose these rules on other species. It appeared that the audience agreed, with all but two voting that Jack was innocent of murder.

While this event was entirely fictional, it was a fantastic way to raise some fascinating questions; about what makes us special as humans, how we treat our nearest relatives in the animal kingdom, and how much we still have to learn about their intelligence and their society.

| Find more from the Cheltenham Science Festival at http://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/reports

Welcome to Flatland

How can leaders and managers let go of control? Can psychologists provide routes to collaboration, and work towards developing individuals to 'self-manage'? An event this November as part of the British Psychological Society's professional development offering will prepare its delegates for 'the new paradigm of Flatland'.

Lead organiser Dr Kirsty Wallace is a Chartered Psychologist with over 25 years experience working as a consultant to many organisations from the FTSE 100, as well as the public and not-for-profit sectors. She has noted that coaching and organisational psychologists are increasingly having to engage with an emerging preference for flatter organisational structures, less defined roles and responsibilities, fewer policies and procedures, greater agency and more autonomy in how employees respond in agile and innovative ways to market conditions. She tells us that in 'Flatland' no one has a boss, there are no job titles and no promotions, employees negotiate their roles and responsibilities, everyone can spend the company's money, and be held accountable for the wisdom of their decisions. Each person is responsible for doing what needs to be done, the focus is on delivering benefits and value to customers, and the amount of remuneration is determined by what is internally fair and externally competitive.

But self-management is not for everyone. 'Adapting to life without bosses, a career ladder to climb, or the formal roles, responsibilities, strategies and reporting structures creates its own anxiety,' says Dr Wallace. 'Most employees are unaccustomed to such transparency, democracy and continuous stakeholder engagement, and others may be concerned that external customer value is being compromised by the time and effort it takes to manage oneself within these new complicated internal processes.'

On the day, participants will be asked to consider the impact of transferring and applying the practical takeaways on self-management from this workshop within their own practice. **JS**

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CALL FOR IMPROVED PERINATAL SERVICES

Pregnant women and new mothers need more expert psychological support across maternity services and mental health settings such as community perinatal teams and inpatient mother and baby units, according to a new briefing paper for NHS commissioners from the British Psychological Society's Faculty of Perinatal Psychology.

The briefing, launched at the Faculty's annual conference in June, notes that one in five women suffer from a mental health problem during pregnancy or in the year after childbirth and women often have a clear preference for psychological support for mental health problems over, or alongside, more medicalised interventions such as medication. It recommends that a medium-sized maternity hospital with 3000 deliveries a year should have the full-time services of a clinical psychologist and the services of a consultant psychologist three days a week.

The briefing comes after *The Five-Year Forward View for Mental Health*, published in February by the Independent Mental Health Taskforce to the NHS in England, found that mental health problems not only affect the health of mothers but can also have long-term effects on children's emotional, social and cognitive development. The £8.1 billion annual cost of perinatal mental ill health in the UK equates to almost £10,000 per birth. Yet the taskforce found that less than 15 per cent of localities in England provide effective specialist community perinatal services for women with severe or complex conditions, and more than 40 per cent provide no service at all. Maps highlighting the gaps in provision have been published by the Maternal Mental Health Alliance as part of their #everyonesbusiness campaign.

The briefing paper sets out the difference that clinical perinatal psychologists can make to pregnant women, new mothers and their infants. It also shows the benefits perinatal clinical psychology can provide by delivering clinically effective and cost-effective services.

Professor Peter Kinderman, President of the British Psychological Society, said: 'The Independent Mental Health Taskforce identified the need for an extra £1 billion of spending by 2020–21. This new briefing paper shows that poor perinatal mental health is a widespread and expensive problem and that perinatal psychologists have the specialist skills to help in ways new mothers appreciate, transforming lives at this very important time for families.'

| The briefing paper is available for free download from tinyurl.com/zz97xn8

Going the extra mile for the mind

Some of Britain's most amazing advocates for mental health have been honoured at BBC Radio 4's All in the Mind Awards at a ceremony at London's Wellcome Collection. The awards, set up two years ago to mark the programme's 25th anniversary, recognise a professional, an individual and a project that have gone beyond all expectations to support people with mental health problems.

The judging panel, author Matt Haig, Kevan Jones MP, Marion Janner, founder of Star Wards, clinical psychologist Linda Blair and *All in the Mind* presenter Claudia Hammond, had the difficult task of choosing between scores of wonderful stories.

The winner in the Individual category was Jane nominated by her friend and neighbour Charlotte, an A&E Consultant, who turned to Jane after losing her young daughter Abigail who died in the hospital where Charlotte worked. Jane not only provided comfort to Charlotte but helped her with her difficult return to work – Charlotte told the BBC programme that Jane had been there to support her on her first days back at work.

Upon receiving her award Jane said: 'We British people are quite reserved around death and grief, but there's no need to be. You just have to be open about it and be there for someone.' Marion Janner, who presented the award, said those living with mental illness and those supporting them had all shown extraordinary tenacity, resilience and good humour in the face of incredible challenges.

Glasgow's Common Wheel was named as winner of the Project Award. The group welcomes people with mental health issues who are encouraged to pick out an old bike and repair and restore it over the weeks and months they visit. Christopher, who visited and nominated the project, said learning a new skill and keeping busy helped him get through each day.

Claudia Hammond, Jane and Charlotte

Judging panel member Marion Janner with Buddy the support dog

Presenting the Professional Award, Linda Blair said although mental health workers all do a vital job some go the extra mile. Amy, a support worker from Turning Point, won the award after being nominated by 'John' a former prisoner who also struggled with a personality disorder. Although he was initially suspicious of programmes to help ex-offenders 'John' eventually felt able to open up.

Thanks to Amy's help he now has regular employment and is in control of his own behaviour. On receiving her award Amy said she had seen John's confidence grow and grow since first meeting him at a very low point in his life. John said of Amy: 'Everyone felt comfortable with Amy, people open up and trust her which is hard for people who might be suspicious or paranoid but if you feel someone has your best interests at heart it's very easy to open up.'

The presenter of *All in the Mind*, Claudia Hammond, said the awards provided the chance for people to talk at length about their mental health issues, in a way that the public don't often hear. She added: 'We've heard from many listeners for whom these stories resonated personally. Reading through the nominations, it was reassuring to hear that in times when many services are stretched, there are still some amazing projects out there. It's also humbling to see how far people are prepared to go to help to their friends, or employees or even their neighbours.'

The evening of awards also featured the finalists in the same categories, which also included The Tomorrow Project, a community-based counselling service set up in a Nottinghamshire village after suicides there amongst teenagers. The work of a GP, Dr Dietch, who helped his patient receive appropriate treatment for bipolar disorder, and helped mental health professionals treat her when he was out of the country. A boss called Blair who supported employee Steven through some of the hardest times in his life, including crippling anxiety. Ellie also nominated her mother Bernadette who has helped her cope with suicide attempts and depression throughout her teenage years.

To listen to the awards ceremony and hear the stories of the finalists and winners go to tinyurl.com/ygqfszk **ER**

Parents who think failure harms learning have children who think ability is fixed

Children respond better to learning setbacks when they believe that ability and intelligence are malleable – that is, when they have what psychologists call a 'growth mindset' rather than a 'fixed mindset'. This immediately raises the question of how to cultivate a growth mindset in children.

So far, there's been a lot of attention on how to praise children (it's better to focus on their effort and strategies rather than their ability), but not much else. Surprisingly, parents' mindsets (growth or fixed) do not seem to be related to their children's mindsets. A new study in *Psychological Science* suggests this is because children can't tell what kind of mindset their parents have. Rather, children's beliefs about ability are associated with how their parents' view failure.

The Stanford University psychologists Kyla Haimovitz and Carol Dweck began by surveying 73 parent–child pairs. Parents' and children's attitudes to ability were not related. But parents who saw failure as a chance to learn tended to have children who had a growth mindset, whereas parents who saw failure as more negative and bad for learning tended to have children with a fixed mindset.

Why is parental attitude toward failure seemingly more important than their attitude toward ability? It's to do with what's visible to children. Further surveys of more children and their parents suggested that children don't know whether their parents have a growth or fixed mindset, but they are aware of their parents' attitudes toward failure. Moreover, children who think their parents have a negative attitude to failure tend themselves to believe that ability and intelligence are fixed.

In *Psychological Science*

This seems to be because parents with a negative attitude toward failure respond to their children's setbacks in characteristic ways, such as comforting them and telling them that it doesn't matter that they lack ability, that are likely to foster in children the belief that their ability is fixed. Parents with a more positive attitude to failure, by contrast, tend to encourage their children to use failures as a chance to learn or get extra help – approaches that encourage a growth mindset.

A final study tested whether parents' attitudes toward failure really do cause changes in the way they respond to their children's failures. Over one hundred parents completed an online questionnaire that was either filled with items designed to provoke in them a negative attitude to failure or items designed to promote a positive attitude to failure. Next, the parents imagined their children had come home with a fail grade and to say how they would think, feel and respond. Parents primed to see failure as harmful to learning were more likely to say that they would respond to their children's failure in ways likely to cultivate in them a belief that ability is fixed – such as worrying about their child's ability, or comforting their child for their lack of ability.

'Our findings show that parents who believe failure is a debilitating experience have children who believe they cannot develop their intelligence,' the researchers said. 'By establishing these links, we have taken a step toward understanding how children's motivation is socialised. It may not be sufficient to teach parents a growth mindset and expect that they will naturally transmit it to their children. Instead, an intervention targeting parents' failure mindsets could teach parents how failure can be beneficial, and how to react to their children's setbacks so as to maintain their children's motivation and learning.' CJ

Which pedestrian are you?

In *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*

You know that situation where you're walking across a train station concourse or a park and there's another person walking on a different trajectory that means if you both hold your course and speed, you're going to collide? Are you the kind of person who assumes the other guy will give way, or are you the polite one who slows down and lets the other person cross your path?

A new study in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance* recreated this scenario by pairing up 20 participants – a mix of young men and women – and having one person in each pair walk diagonally from one corner of the room to the other, while the other person walked the other diagonal. On each of many trials, both participants in each pair began walking on a starting signal and they were asked to make sure they didn't collide, all without communication with each other. The participants also filled out personality questionnaires and the researchers recorded their heights, weight and age.

The participants tended to show a consistent pattern of behaviour across trials: roughly a quarter were more inclined to give way to avoid colliding; a quarter usually crossed the potential interception point first, making the other person give way; while the others showed a mixture of behaviours. But crucially, neither personality traits nor gender, age, height and weight were related to what kind of collision avoidance strategy the participants tended to use. It seems some of us are dominant in this situation, some more timid, others ambivalent, but the kind of pedestrian we are is not related to major traits such as extraversion or to our physical size.

Alexander Knorr and his team performed a second study in a bigger room with more participants, and this showed that the decision about who will give way tends to be made very early. The more dominant person actually tends to make a slight adjustment to heading and speed first, but this isn't sufficient to avoid a collision. The second person who ultimately gives way seems to detect these early signals, then waits and makes their own adjustments thus avoiding the collision.

What this research doesn't address, sadly, is that other pedestrian problem of when you're heading straight towards another person, and you both dodge out of each other's way in the same direction, then the other, so you end up virtually colliding and uttering embarrassed apologies – or is that just a British thing? CJ

The lingering burden of seeing a past trauma as central to your identity

In *Applied Cognitive Psychology*

Horrific experiences often cast a pall upon our lives, but for some people it's worse than others. A new study in *Applied Cognitive Psychology* explores a key reason for this difference known as 'event centrality' – when we consider an experience to be core to our identity, the trauma that follows is typically more serious and longer lasting.

Ines Blix and her colleagues surveyed 259 ministerial employees caught up in a particularly grim piece of Oslo history: the July 2011 far-right terrorist attack upon government ministries. At one, two and three years after the attack, the participants reported the severity of their post-traumatic symptoms, such as feeling jumpy, continually vigilant, or numb and closed off from others. They also reported the degree to which the terrorist attack was central to their lives, for example through their agreement or not with statements like: 'This event has become a reference point for the way I understand myself and the world.'

Participants who considered the terrorist event very central to their life one year after the attack experienced higher levels of trauma, both at that time and through the subsequent years. However, they recovered at a faster rate from the trauma, meaning the greater severity of their symptoms compared with the other participants reduced as time went by. This likely reflects the fact that they had more recovery to do. Essentially, seeing a traumatic event as definitive to your life fixes a particular trajectory: Blix's team characterise this as 'launching' the trauma.

It's not just that event centrality reflected how much the participants were caught up in the carnage – when the researchers controlled for whether the person was injured themselves, had witnessed killings, or seen dead bodies, the association between event centrality and trauma severity held true.

There was also some evidence that trauma and event centrality remain intertwined longer term. The two measures were in general highly correlated and in most participants both eventually declined. This might just be a coincidence and the two factors aren't linked; but arguing against that, it's notable that when event centrality increased at the 2013 assessment (two years after the event), trauma recovery also tended to stutter. However, even if the two measures really are linked, we still don't know whether centrality exacerbates trauma or trauma exacerbates centrality.

These new findings add to previous work, such as an earlier study on post-traumatic stress in Vietnam veterans that found higher rates in those vets who attended the experiment wearing medals and other regalia, suggesting that the war was more central to their identities.

It's important to understand how victims think about their traumatic experiences – their 'mental models' of the event – because these models can be interrogated and changed. For example, in a study published last year, a course of acceptance and commitment therapy successfully helped a group of women who had suffered abuse to reduce both event centrality and traumatic symptoms. This new Norwegian study suggests that it may be better to target such treatment early, to help survivors reject the idea an event is life-definitive and prevent it launching them down a path of greater trauma. **AF**

10,000 hours debunked again? In elite sport, amount of practice does not explain who performs best

In *Perspectives on Psychological Science*

In elite sport, what distinguishes the best from the also-rans? A new meta-analysis in *Perspectives on Psychological Science* looks at all the relevant data to see whether the most important factor is an athlete's amount of accumulated 'deliberate practice' – that is, practice that's designed, through feedback and other methods, to improve performance. In fact, the new analysis shows that differences in amount of practice do not explain performance levels among elite athletes. At sub-elite levels, it's a relevant factor, but by no means the most important.

The importance of deliberate practice for top-level performance in sport and other domains, such as music and chess, was famously put forward by Anders Ericsson, the psychologist whose research has been distorted into the mythical idea that achieving greatness depends on completing at least 10,000 hours of practice. Ericsson has actually never claimed that elite performance can be achieved by anyone who puts in enough practice, as suggested by some popular psychology writers. But he and his colleagues have claimed, based on their findings, that 'individual differences in ultimate [top-flight] performance can largely be accounted for by differential amounts of past and current levels of practice'. In other words, they proposed that at elite standards, it is the competitors who spend more time honing their skills who will usually perform at the highest levels.

To test this claim in the context of sport, Brooke Macnamara and her colleagues scoured the literature available up to 2014, and they found relevant findings from 34 published and unpublished studies, involving the practice habits and performance levels of 2765 athletes across various sports including football, volleyball, hockey, swimming and running.

They found that at the elite level, amount of practice was not related to performance (in statistical terms it explained less than 1 per cent of variance in performance). This makes intuitive sense – most professional athletes in the top echelons of their sport practice exhaustively through their careers. Instead of amount of practice time, what likely separates them are physiological

differences influenced by their genetic makeup, as well as complex psychological factors, such as their personality and confidence. Also, competition experience and time spent in play activities might also be relevant, the researchers suggested.

At sub-elite levels, amount of past and present deliberate practice was relevant to performance, accounting for 19 per cent of the variance in sports performance – an important factor, then, but by no means the only or most important factor. This basic finding applied regardless of whether the researchers focused on team or individual sports, or ball vs. non-ball sports. Another related finding was that more skilful sport performers did not tend to have started their sport at an earlier age.

The researchers said their results suggest that 'deliberate practice is one factor that contributes to performance differences across a wide range of skills [but] it may not contribute to performance differences at the highest levels of skill'.

The new findings add to earlier research into chess players and musicians, that also called into question the importance of deliberate practice. However, in a rejoinder to the new meta-analysis, published in the same journal issue, Ericsson argues that Macnamara and her colleagues used too broad a definition of 'deliberate practice' to include 'virtually any type of sport-specific activity, such as group activities, watching games on television, and even play and competitions'. He says that his claims about the importance of deliberate practice to elite performance refer to a much more specific subset of activities: 'individualized practice with training tasks (selected by a supervising teacher) with a clear performance goal and immediate informative feedback'.

As the debate rumbles on, one message that comes through from this new meta-analysis is how so much speculation and argument is based on so little actual concrete evidence. To put things in perspective, the combined research into the role of deliberate practice in elite sport amounts to data from just 228 athletes, and that's using the definition of deliberate practice that Ericsson claims is too broad.

Macnamara and her colleagues end with a call for more research, including studies that look beyond the relevance of deliberate practice to consider other factors: 'Scientists must draw not only from research on skill acquisition and expertise but also from research on cognitive ability, personality, learning, behavioural genetics, and research within the performance domain (e.g. sports science). This effort will shed new light on the origins of expertise.' **CJ**

The material in this section is taken from the Society's **Research Digest** blog at **www.bps.org.uk/digest**, and is written by its editor **Dr Christian Jarrett** and contributor **Dr Alex Fradera**.

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What makes our work meaningful? Do bosses really make it meaningless?

In *MIT Sloan Management Review*

There have been times in my life where work seemed pretty pointless, on occasion because the position was a prime example of what anthropologist David Graeber calls 'bullshit' jobs' – those that give no real value back to oneself or society. But I've more frequently experienced the sense that a job was at some times meaningless, and at others very worthwhile. That's a theme picked up in Catherine Bailey and Adrian Madden's new study published in *MIT Sloan Management Review*, where interviews with 135 people within 10 different occupations explored times when work was meaningful or meaningless.

Like myself, interviewees didn't consider meaningfulness as a fixed property of their job. They described it arising in episodes, highly intense and memorable peaks separated by unremarkable lulls. Some cases exemplified what the work was all about, such as an academic giving what they knew to be a superb lecture, whereas others were quite outside the norm, such as a shop assistant tending to a critically ill customer.

Often, these episodes had a personal flavour, such as the participant who recalled the first music recital attended by her parents. Many involved recognising the impact their work had had on people besides themselves, whether their students' graduation or when their engineering innovation had been translated into products used by others. These personal and transcendent aspects were easily fused, such as in the example given by a refuse collector, where, during a crisis triggered by contamination of the local water supply, he visited one neighbour after another providing clean water.

It's tempting to assume valuable work experiences should be positive – euphoric, air-punching highs – but the interviews teemed with examples that were heavy and challenging. Nurses described end-of-life situations; lawyers, toiling through a heavy, hard case; workers, pushing together

against a seemingly intractable problem. Bailey and Madden suggest that organisations and researchers both may be neglecting such poignant experiences, which don't tally with a superficial account of positive psychology, but may be very important in making work meaningful.

Times that meant something often involved contact with family and friends, peers and particularly the people served by the job. In contrast, managers were mentioned in accounts of meaningless work: times when the interviewee felt treated unfairly, disempowered or taken for granted, or when managerial priorities separated them from important relationships with peers, or disconnected them from the values that mattered most to them, such as when the bottom line was placed over the quality of work. It's for this reason that Bailey and Madden concluded that managerial meddling is often to blame when our work feels meaningless – a claim that has attracted boss-bashing headlines in the mainstream media, such as MoneyWeb's 'Bosses destroy meaningful work'.

But this media coverage, while fun, forgets an important point – in all but the most dysfunctional organisations, managers have a role in determining the conditions around work, which means – as Bailey and Madden themselves note – that a deft manager can be of benefit.

How does the work have a bigger meaning; for example, how does recycled waste actually lead to the creation of new objects? How can people devoted to their work get opportunities to interact with each other, and with the people their work benefits? How can the difficult times at work – like the eventual loss of a resident at your hospice – be met with appropriate support, but also recognised as valuable? And how can grey tasks like filling out forms be reduced, or at the least, be joined up with the important stuff? Should management ever manage to solve such problems, they would fade into the background, and in all likelihood, stay unsung in interviews about meaningful work. But that won't mean that their efforts didn't matter, and hopefully they can take pride – and meaning – in that. **AF**

DIGEST DIGESTED

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You laugh differently with your friends than you do with strangers, and listeners can tell the difference, no matter where they come from. Researchers played recordings of pairs of people laughing to listening participants from 24 countries. They found the listeners could judge whether the pairs were strangers or friends. *PNAS*

Your anxiety during public speaking is probably made worse by the audience members you look at. Students gave a speech to an audience over Skype and those with more social anxiety tended to look more at the tired or unhappy audience members and less at the happy and engaged people. *Cognition and Emotion*

Researchers have created a new questionnaire for measuring the trait of contemptuousness and they found that high scorers are psychologically fragile, tending to be more lonely, self-doubting and insecure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*

It can be a good thing for a therapist and client to disagree about the client's problems. A Swedish study found the therapy outcomes of hundreds of clients were largely unrelated to whether or not they agreed with their therapist about their depression and anxiety levels – in fact some outcomes were better when there was less agreement. *Psychotherapy Research*

When non-artists draw a face, why do most of us put the eyes too high up, instead of at the midway point? The answer is complex and is partly due to a lack of knowledge about the schematic layout of the face, but also to do with our natural tendency to disregard the upper end of vertical space. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*

The bystander effect is about more than the diffusion of responsibility. Psychologists used an economic game to show that people's decisions about whether to help are also influenced by what they know about what other bystanders know. In a sense, then, our helping decisions are strategic – we're less likely to help if other people's knowledge makes it more likely that they will step in. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*

Heroes and villains

Drama hinges on the characters we love, or love to hate. What's their secret? asks **David Robson**

Darcy and Wickham. Harry Potter and Lord Voldemort. Sherlock and Moriarty. Whatever the genre – be it romance, fantasy or detective fiction – many of our favourite stories involve a sublime double act of a hero and villain, characters that inhabit our minds and linger in the imagination long after the tale is over.

Where would our stories be without these shades of light and dark? Why do we find this recipe so appealing? And what makes some heroes and villains particularly delicious to follow?

Literary Darwinism, which attempts to view fiction through the lens of evolutionary theory, may offer some answers. Stories, its proponents argue, are a kind of 'surrogate experience', a simulation that allows us to test the challenges that might threaten our survival. Never mind that the action of our tales today may take place a million miles from the heat of the Savannah; whether they are fighting their battles in the 19th-century ballroom or the Black Land of Mordor, it seems that our heroes allow us to see different scenarios from multiple perspectives, so we can adapt and modify our future behaviour.

In this light, fictional heroes should represent the most effective survival strategies, while the villains should be clever manifestations of the real dangers we can face. This idea has received increasing support during the last few years, from both qualitative literary analyses and experimental studies.

A literary animal

Literary Darwinism is not really such a radical idea, when you consider that stories are the products of human minds forged in the crucible of natural selection. It makes sense that they would reflect any psychological tendencies that allowed us survive and thrive. As the novelist Ian McEwan wrote in the book *The Literary Animal*, many of the struggles we read about today existed long before the birth of our own species. 'If one reads accounts of troops of bonobo …one sees rehearsed all the major themes of the English 19th century novel: alliances made and broken, individuals rising while others fall, plots hatched, revenge, gratitude, injured pride, successful and unsuccessful courtship, bereavement and mourning.' McEwan thinks that it is thanks to this shared framework that fiction can connect people across such vast distances. 'It would not be possible to enjoy literature from a time remote from our own, or from a culture that was profoundly different from our own, unless we shared some common emotional ground, some deep reservoir of assumptions, with the writer,' he adds.

> "readers intuitively understand the characters' mating strategies – who were the better dads, and who were the cads"

Nor is the idea that novels help us to simulate the world particularly hard to believe, with recent fMRI studies showing that reading has many of the hallmarks of the 'surrogate experience'. People reading scary passages from Harry Potter, for instance, showed heightened responses in the 'empathy network', including the motor regions of mid-cingulate cortex (Hsu et al., 2014). Were they becoming highly involved with Harry's behaviour and mentally playing out his physical movements? Reading imaginative stories about people's relationships also appears to exercise the dorsomedial prefrontal cortex – an area that is also known to be involved in more regular social decision making (Tamir et al., 2016).

A well-constructed hero should therefore allow us to travel the world in their shoes, and learn important life lessons as a result. Given that reproduction has been one of the biggest challenges facing almost any individual of virtually all species, it is little wonder that many heroes are teaching us how to find love, in particular. In 2003 Jonathan Gottschall and colleagues analysed around 1500 folk-tales from every corner of the globe and concluded that 'no theme in the sample was as pervasive as the marriage theme'; around 64 per cent of the characters started out unmarried only to find their true love by the end of the tale, with the explicit purpose of finding love the main motivation for about half the characters (Gottschall et al., 2003).

Needless to say, this theme dictates the age and appearance of our heroes: they must be in their prime reproductive years (more than 70 per cent of the protagonists surveyed had just reached sexual maturity), physically attractive (to show off good genes) and, for the men at least, they should generally have a high status that could confer advantages to the child. Hence why 'Prince Charming' is the hero in so many fairytales.

A more nuanced view of our romantic

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heroes may come from considering the mating strategies of our past. The first strategy could be considered 'playing the long game'. Human babies are generally demanding and expensive to maintain, so according to some evolutionary psychologists, women should tend to prefer more reliable men who will help them with the upbringing – even if they lack other desirable qualities. Think of Mr Darcy in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* – a character who proves his honesty and altruism throughout the course of the novel, even if he lacks obvious charm.

The second strategy may be exemplified by the cad Mr Wickham in the same novel – a womaniser who is somewhat mad, bad and dangerous to know. He may be less likely to stick with you in the long run, but according to the 'sexy son hypothesis', there are other benefits to his charms: his cunning, dominance and sexual success mean that he is likely to pass his genes on to another generation, and if his son inherits those traits, they may also spread their wild oats. It is for this reason, they say, that some women prefer the 'dark hero' – they are willing to take the short-term gamble in return for these prize genes (Kruger et al., 2003). Lydia, Elizabeth Bennett's sister in *Pride and Prejudice*, seems to have been willing to make that sacrifice when she fell for the dark hero Wickham.

In a bid to add some empirical data to this literary analysis, the University of Michigan's Daniel Kruger and colleagues invited students to study descriptions lifted from 19th-century romantic novels and then answer questions on their perceptions of the characters and their behaviour, to confirm that they evoke the kinds of reactions you would expect of the two strategies. Sure enough, they found that readers intuitively understand the characters' mating strategies – who were the better dads, and who were the cads.

Then again, Bridget Jones, Helen Fielding's drunk, 30-something diarist, could have told us much the same when describing the appeal of Colin Firth and Jennifer Ehle in the BBC's adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. 'The basis for my addiction,' she writes, 'is the simple human need for Darcy to get off with Elizabeth.' She compares it to a game of football; the testosterone-fuelled fans see the match as a kind of proxy for a tribal battle. 'That is precisely my feeling about Darcy and Elizabeth. They are my chosen representatives in the field of shagging, or, rather, courtship.'

The irony, of course, is that we ourselves are rooting for Bridget in exactly the same way, and it's not difficult to see how the same applies for many modern romances, even when the protagonists are not human, such as *Twilight*.

Not all heroes in literature and film are just looking for love, of course. More generally, Kruger thinks that our favourite characters may help teach us the value of altruism. In the past, tight-knit groups would have had greater success when competing for resources, so cooperation could have been crucial for survival. Asking an expert panel of literary scholars to judge the personalities more than 2000 characters from 19th-century fiction, Kruger, Gottschall and colleagues have found that the heroes tended to be fairly mild and unassuming – not the kind of strong personalities you might expect us to admire. Instead, it was the antagonists who were more ambitious, greedy and hungry for dominance.

You might argue that's just a product of the writers' culture, but in light of the psychology of altruism, it would make sense that many stories portray characters who are rewarded for quietly striving for a better society – rather than setting out to enhance their own fortunes (Johnson et al., 2011). Although they are from a different era, the enchantingly modest Frodo Baggins in *Lord of the Rings*, and Harry Potter, may personify this type of hero.

A hero who makes the ultimate sacrifice and dies for others sees a double benefit. Not only have they showed extraordinary altruism; they can also benefit from the 'death positivity bias', argue Scott Allison and George Goethals. They have shown that when given exactly

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the same account of someone, we tend to ignore their failings and consider them in a better light if we find out they are dead, rather than alive. 'People associate death with greatness,' they write – and it could help explain why the 'heroic sacrifice' is a particularly popular trope in all kinds of fiction, from Jack Dawson in *Titanic*, who drowns in freezing water so his love can escape, to Obi-Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars*, who dies at the hands of Darth Vader to save Luke, Han and Leia (Allison & Goethalls., 2012).

Supervillains

Ironically, the psychology of altruism may also shed light into those darker souls at the other end of the spectrum – the supervillains, such as Lord Voldemort, Darth Vader or Hannibal Lecter, who are, quite simply, 'pure evil'.

The idea formed the basis of a recent paper by Jens Kjeldgaard-Christiansen at Aarhus University in Denmark, who points out that the brain may instantly calculate a 'welfare trade-off ratio' for each person we meet. Someone who gives little (or nothing) but takes a lot, has a low welfare trade-off ratio, and we have an instant gut reaction not to trust them. The lower they score, the more we dislike them, and depending on just how poisonous they are, we may even decide to kick them out of our group – or kill them. The characters that provoke the strongest of these reactions should be considered evil, he says – and hearing those chilling tales should underline the values of altruism, encouraging us to pull together and be more cooperative as a result (Kjeldgaard-Christiansen, 2015).

This framework has allowed Kjeldgaard-Christiansen to create something of a checklist that should characterise the most blood-curdling villains. He points out, for instance, that without a strong justice system, past societies would have been fragile, so a single unpunished act may quickly sow the seeds of wider discontent. For this reason, he thinks we are especially chilled by characters who could spread their evil like a disease. Think of the way Voldemort sows discontent and builds a following of 'death-eaters'. Or consider this passage from Father Merrin in *The Exorcist*: 'I think the demon's target is not the possessed; it is us… the observers… every person in this house. And I think – I think the point is to make us despair; to reject our own humanity.'

Given that most threats may have come from outsiders, many villains will also carry signs that mark them as a member of an outgroup; Kjeldgaard-Christiansen muses that this may be why many Hollywood villains, such as Hannibal Lecter, speak with an English accent. They may also be physically repugnant – such as Voldemort's fetal appearance with no hair or lips and snake-like slits for pupils. As Simone Schnall and Jonathan Haidt, among others, have found, feelings of physical disgust can often prime the brain to make harsher moral decisions – so a grotesque, diseased appearance should heighten those instant gut instincts that might lead us to despise someone (Schnall et al., 2008).

> "we may find ourselves simultaneously appalled and enthralled, a delicious combination that causes us to root for evil-doers"

Needless to say, there is an infinite variety in the villains that populate our stories, and authors can decide just how much they want us to identify with their creations. Kjeldgaard-Christiansen points out that if we can peek too far inside their minds, we might get sucked in and begin to identify with them. This could be considered in light of 'attribution errors' – the less we know about someone, the more likely we are to assume that they are guilty and the more harshly we judge that guilt. If the author hits a sweet spot, however, we may find ourselves simultaneously appalled and enthralled, a delicious combination that causes us to root for evil-doers like Mafia boss Don Vito Corleone in *The Godfather* (Keen et al., 2012).

As with any form of criticism, the danger is that viewing literature through this lens could lead to myopia, or tunnel vision; you begin to see all characters purely in terms of the evolutionary psychology, while missing out on the extraordinary kaleidoscope that has emerged from the human imagination. Kruger, for one, readily admits that there are many exceptions to the more general trends he has found. Consider Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray, or Emily Bronte's Cathy and Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*. These are deeply flawed, selfish, dangerous human beings – people that we should not wish to emulate. Nor are they typical villains. But just because they don't fit the general pattern, it doesn't mean that further study might not reveal ways that they could be interpreted in light of our evolutionary psychology.

After all, fiction, like other forms of culture, such as music, could be considered a 'transformative technology of the mind', defined by neuroscientist Anriruddh Patel as something that 'builds on existing brain systems, but transforms our experience of the world'. As an exercise in counter-factual thinking, more complex characters may help us to understand people we would have never appreciated before.

While many stories may cast an outsider as a villain, for instance, authors can also deliberately subvert these suspicions to make us more open-minded. In a 2012 paper in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* a team of researchers asked participants to read

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'I think the demon's target is not the possessed; it is us... the observers... every person in this house.'

narratives with various kinds of protagonists. Through the course of the action, some of the stories revealed that the heroes happened to be members of minority groups – one was gay, another was African American. Afterwards, they were quizzed on their values and prejudices. Those reading the stories with the minority characters turned out to have more positive views about the characters' group, and were less likely to believe in the usual stereotypes (Kaufman & Libby, 2012).

Understanding complex characters certainly seems to help train empathy: we already know that people who reported reading more fiction tend to have better developed social cognition (Tamir et al., 2016), while reading prize-winning short stories for even a short period of time appears to improve participants' theory of mind, further strengthening the idea that storytelling can train the mind to see the world through different viewpoints (Kidd, & Castano, 2013).

It would be interesting to see how these findings could be put into practice as a more effective way to change behaviours. Does reading about the battle between good and evil really boost our cooperative instincts and make us more altruistic? Might educational psychologists, for instance, be able to set up schemes that harness our love of heroes and villains to curb bullying and reduce prejudice? One possibility is that priming someone to identify more strongly with certain heroic qualities may cause them to be braver and more honest (Kinsella et al., 2015).

There are, of course, already many real-world examples where stories have already helped us to see the world through the eyes of underdog and perhaps changed perceptions for the better. From classics such as *Oliver Twist*, *Cry the Beloved Country* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* to modern films like *Brokeback Mountain*, *Suffragette* and *The Danish Girl*, well-told stories have caused us to question our assumptions and prejudices and look for the real heroes and villains within our society.

At the very least, it's worth remembering the power of storytelling at any stage of our lives. Our evolution may guide the kinds of stories we love, but it has also given us the ability to use those bare bones and build fictional worlds that end up expanding and enriching our own. It allows us to create heroes from villains and villains from heroes – to turn hatred into love.

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Do we have a heroic instinct?

If the recent murder of MP Jo Cox has cast a dark shadow over British society, the bravery of Bernard Kenny offers us all a ray of optimism. The 77-year-old pensioner was apparently just waiting for his wife in the library when he saw the attack, and leaped to her defence, at considerable risk to his own safety.

It was not the first time he had put his life on the line to save others; according to media reports, the former miner had also rushed to the scene of the Lofthouse Colliery disaster in 1973.

What makes real-life heroes like Kenny? And could we all learn from their example?

Although the study of heroism is still in its infancy, David Rand at Yale University has now started to explore this question with an inspiring study on 'extreme altruism'. Previous research on cooperation and altruism had largely relied on small acts of generosity in economic games like the Public Goods Game and the Dictator Game.

Such experiments had suggested that altruism is often an automatic, intuitive act – if we are not given time to think, we will automatically act to help others. For instance, in one experiment the researchers asked participants to perform a tricky memory task as they decided how to share some money with other participants; they were more generous than similar trials when they had more opportunity to think consciously about what they were doing (Schulz et al., 2014). This tendency varies between individuals, of course, but in general, we don't have to rationalise being good, weighing up the pros and cons; we just do it.

Rand suspected that this instinct may also lie behind the extreme altruism of those everyday heroes. So he turned to the Carnegie Hero Fund, a charity that rewards civilians who have risked their life to save another person – and amassed 50 accounts of extreme altruism, cross-referenced with contemporary news sources. A team of independent participants then rated these reports to decide whether they each reflected a deliberative or intuitive act. Sure enough, psychologists judged that more than 90 per cent of the acts were intuitive – a fact confirmed by later linguistic analyses of their accounts (Rand et al., 2014).

Notwithstanding the limitations of retrospectively analysing these accounts, this study at least hints that we should start looking at intuitive social heuristics (rather than rational decision making) if we are to understand heroism. Pointing to evidence that altruism can be cultivated as a habit, Rand speculates that these heroic events may be the culmination of a lifetime of generous acts. Eventually, the caring outlook has become its default, so that the heroes like Kenny didn't even have to think twice before risking the ultimate sacrifice. In other words, regular random acts of kindness may one day blossom into something far more profound.

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ARTICLE

Behind the masks

William Todd Schultz offers a psychobiography primer

Psychobiography is a lumpy, too rarefied term for what we all do, every day, experts and non-experts alike: interpret and try to understand other people. There's nothing particularly fancy about it. Probably 50 per cent of our waking and 80 per cent of our insomniac life is spent dissecting soft collisions with friends, lovers, co-workers and strangers. We can't not do it. Even split-brain subjects, when they see their left hand choose an object as directed by a walled-off, independent right hemisphere, confabulate. That is, they make up a story, despite the fact that they have no clue what is going on. You'd think they might say, 'How do I know why my left hand did that? I'm a split brain subject!' But they don't. They narrate. They interpret.

Psychobiography is a kind of extra explicit form of biography. Any biography (if successful and meaningful) has to provide a suitably complex, convincing portrait of an individual's inner life, what makes a person tick, what they are after, why they do what they do, why they succeed or fail. You come away from the best biographies feeling like you know the person better, feeling as if a lot has been explained. But in biography, psychology stays off-stage. It's invisible. The device is never bared. It's there; you just don't see it. Psychobiography bares the device. It's a way of doing psychology. Scientific findings and personality research concepts are gathered up, highlighted, placed in turbulent context, then aimed at a person in order to illuminate. The psychology in psychobiography is a sort of flashlight. Ideally, it allows you to see what was in the dark before. The goal, usually, is to get at the *why* – hidden patterns, scripts, motives, needs, conflicts, desires.

To say Van Gogh cut off his earlobe because he was psychotic is no different from saying 'I don't know why Van Gogh cut off his earlobe'

Strictly speaking, psychobiography is applied psychology. It tests the usefulness of personality science by seeing what it can accomplish when focused on the lives of real persons. A lot of psychologists don't deal much with real persons, funnily enough. They study processes, mechanisms, brain functions, attitudes. They feel that is enough – knowledge for knowledge's sake. I don't disagree, not entirely. I just feel, as do most psychobiographers, that the individual level of analysis is as worthy of attention as the universal or the group levels. It's often left out of the picture (as if it's none of our business). But isn't our final aim to understand people? If so, we need to try it out occasionally, don't we?

It's here that method-centred psychologists ask, 'But isn't psychobiography rather too subjective, too interpretive?' The key word is 'too'. Subjectivity is spread all over experimental psychology, so the contrast is a bit specious. Results of experiments need to be interpreted. Meaning isn't self-evident. Even reviews of literature are fraught with judgement, opinion, bias. Psychobiography can itself be done relatively quantitatively, via assorted forms of content analysis. It's uncommon, but not impossible. The best example is Tim Kasser's brilliant book *Lucy in the Mind of Lennon* (OUP, 2013) on why John Lennon wrote 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds' .

Whatever the case, I think it's safe to say that the most thoughtful and reasonable psychologists espouse methodological pluralism or what Robert Sternberg calls 'converging operations', a judicious mix of quantitative and qualitative techniques, at least when called for. Even the hardcore trait psychologists McCrae and Costa offer the following open-minded observation: 'Scientific study does not necessarily imply experimentation. Science proceeds by many methods and works best when the method is dictated by the nature of the problem rather than academic fashion and prestige.' Maslow called this being problem-centred; he contrasted it with means-centredness. In psychobiography, the 'problem', so to speak, is the individual case.

There are two particular misconceptions about psychobiograpy that call for clarification. The first is the notion – in my experience, relatively common – that psychobiographers aim to diagnose subjects with some sort of DSM-derived mental disorder. Even Freud opposed this adamantly. He called such a process 'pathography', and regarded it as virtually worthless. I agree. Diagnoses are names – at best simplified descriptions, at worst distortions of complex emotional and behavioural strategies. Let's say the question is, Why did Van Gogh cut off his left earlobe? (By the way, in paintings it's the right earlobe, but that's because the artist used a mirror for self-portraits). Then let's say the answer is, Because he was psychotic. Psychosis, of course, is just a label for a mental state. It's purely, and only ever, descriptive. It can't explain why Van Gogh (a) cut off the earlobe, and not something else; (b) performed the action around Christmas-time; (c) gave

Recommended reading

Alan C. Elms (1994). *Uncovering lives: The uneasy alliance of biography and psychology*. Oxford University Press.

William Todd Schultz (2005). *Handbook of psychobiography*. Oxford University Press.

Dan P. McAdams (2011). *George W. Bush and the redemptive dream: A psychological portrait*. Oxford University Press.

William Todd Schultz (2011). *Why Truman Capote (almost) wrote answered prayers*. Oxford University Press.

William Todd Schultz (2011). *An emergency in slow motion: The inner life of Diane Arbus*. Bloomsbury.

Tim Kasser (2013). *Lucy in the mind of Lennon*. Oxford University Press.

Kyle Arnold (2016). *The divine madness of Philip K. Dick*. Oxford University Press.

the flesh to a prostitute named Rachel; or (d) told her to 'Keep this object carefully.' Really, to say Van Gogh cut off his earlobe because he was psychotic is no different from saying 'I don't know why Van Gogh cut off his earlobe'. The clearest sign of a bad psychobiography is pathography. It's fallacious. The label itself needs to be explained.

Too many people also mistakenly believe psychobiography is intrinsically reductionist, that its explanations take the form of an inverted pyramid, with a host of behaviours traced back to one, and only one, initiating event or circumstance. Pathography, for instance, would be reductionist, in that it gathers up feelings and thoughts and actions and assumes each to be caused by a single mental illness (say, bipolar disorder). Long ago I came upon an essay advancing the farcically simple-minded argument that Sylvia Plath's poetry – across years, across themes, across clusters – was a function of patterns of menstruation. This is prima facie nonsense. (It turns out men endorse 'symptoms' of premenstrual dysphoric disorder just as frequently as do women.) It's also reductionist. The truth is, good psychobiographers begin by expecting that everything we do is overdetermined. The search is for clusters of motives, not one. Back to Van Gogh. He likely cut off his earlobe for several reasons, did so at Christmas-time for several reasons, gave it to Rachel for several reasons. Overdetermination is reductionism's antidote. There are always multiple causes in play, some conscious, most probably unconscious.

So, that's a bit about what psychobiography is and isn't or shouldn't be. Another question that comes up a lot is how it is done. How does one write a psychobiography? What's the formula?

There isn't one, really. The formula depends on the question and, sometimes, on the person being analysed, the medium. I write about artists, and they come with their own sets of challenges, but if the subject is, say, Clinton or Trump, or Freud or Jung, the challenges are different, in some ways less surmountable even, since politicians (for instance) lie, or they say what they say not because they believe it, but in order to get people to vote for them.

Like all my friends, I've been thinking a lot about David Bowie recently, and what his music meant to me. If I were to write a Bowie psychobiography, what would I do? How would I start?

I always begin with the art. You have to try to know it better than almost anyone alive. There has to be a complete immersion. The art is self-expression. It's data, raw material, it's the thing to be explained (via overdetermination). The art is nicely heterogeneous, especially in a person like Bowie. It defies simplistic generalisations, and that's good. At this stage, you want to stay open to all possibilities. I don't usually start with the life because there's a tendency then to overprivilege particular happenings or events. You get seduced by the vivid instance – say, Bowie being punched in the eye as an adolescent, or the basically boring question of Bowie's sexuality.

Slowly what you begin to do – and this can be shown to be valid, it's not imaginary – is see in the art assorted patterns and themes, repetitions. Bowie writes several songs in which he's an alien. He makes three records that together comprise the Berlin Trilogy, just as Sylvia Plath composed a set of poems called the Bee Sequence. The art yields saliencies – elements that stand out, that draw attention to themselves. Artists have obsessions. They need obsessions. What you try doing is noticing them; you are a kind of obsession collector.

Then, always, the question becomes why? To get at sets of whys you superimpose the life over the art. The art is the life, of course, or part of the life at least, so the two domains are reciprocally illuminating. If I read Kafka's *The Judgment* – in which a father sentences a son to death by drowning, and the son promptly drowns himself – I begin to suspect serious father conflicts. Then I read Kafka's *Letter to His Father*, and these suspicions are confirmed tenfold. In the letter, Kafka repeatedly compares himself to vermin. This fact compels a return to the art – specifically, *The Metamorphosis*. It's a constant, iterative back and forth as ideas take shape, some promising, some not.

You always want to pay attention to what the artist says about his art too, not because it's the final word – it isn't; artists can be wrong about their motives – but because it's more material, more evidence. As I listened to Bowie records over the last month or so, I also watched quite a few interviews. In one from 1979 he says this: 'Thematically, I've always dealt with isolation in everything I've written. It's something that triggers me off, if it has to do with alienation or isolation. So, I have often put myself in circumstances or situations in which I'm isolated so I can write about them.' Even his paintings, which at the time he was too uncertain about to show, he describes as 'all people in isolation', and all, in some ways, him. LA comes up, a place he says he detests. He goes there nonetheless, precisely to feel isolated, to feel, as it were, inspired. Years later, in 2002, Bowie repeats similar sentiments: 'As I get older my questions are fewer, but I ask them, I bark them, more… I've consistently written about the same subjects, nearly 35, nearly 40 years. There's really been no change with me. It's all despondency, despair, fear, isolation.' The interviewer interjects, 'What about spaceships?' Bowie replies, 'It's an interior dialogue that you manifest physically. It's my inner space writ large.'

Here, Bowie tells us about his obsession – isolation. It's what triggers him. It has something to do with the spaceman theme. It's the feeling of his inner life that he translates symbolically. You look for patterns in the art; you look for patterns in what the artist says about the art; and sometimes, the obsessions line up perfectly. Lennon was obsessed

Meet the author

'I first got interested in psychobiography out of a dissatisfaction with the traditional experimental paradigm, in which variables were valued far above real living persons. I quickly saw psychobiography as antidotal, a cure for mindless method-fixation in psychology. Looked at this way, psychobiography is a sort of "return of the repressed". It reminds psychology what it ought to be about every now and then: using variables derived from studies in a way that allows us to understand actual people. Experimental findings can be exciting – and psychology is a science, first and foremost – but the individual needs to be accounted for too (or that's what I think, at least). As Henry Murray put it, we are all like all other people, some other people, and no other people. Psychobiography's task, then, is to zero in on uniqueness. It fills a yawning void.

My most recent book is a biography (not a psychobiography) of musician Elliott Smith, and I have written two full-length psychobiographies, on Truman Capote and Diane Arbus. In 2005 I edited the *Handbook of Psychobiography* (Oxford). I curate and edit the Oxford series "Inner Lives".'

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with the image of an enigmatic female in the sky; he imagined her coming down some day to save him. Many of his songs – too many to name – feature mysterious, unreachable women. The best example is 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds'. He keeps running into her; she shows up unexpectedly; but they never really connect, he never really reaches her.

Since psychobiography is a way of doing psychology, there are always questions having to do with theory. I'm no fan of brainless Freud bashing. In fact, what I'm a fan of is Freud. I've loved Freud since college. But personality science has progressed far beyond psychoanalysis, and psychobiographers need to reckon with that fact, and make use of ideas that are not only newer, but more scientifically sound. A psychobiography is only as solid as the theory it rests on, obviously. Bad theory, bad psychobiography.

Dan McAdams recommends that we assess people from the vantage point of three independent levels: traits, characteristic adaptations and stories. This makes sense. We are born with basic endogenous tendencies, traits like extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience; all abstract potentials that incline us towards action. We also evolve habitual, strategic patterns of response – attachment styles, defence mechanisms, forms of coping. Then finally, we narrate it all, tell stories about it, construct theories of self that are organising and self-fulfilling. Silvan Tomkins called these stories 'scripts'. They allow us to interpret what we do. One might fabricate victim scripts, redemption scripts, contamination scripts, addiction scripts – the list of possibilities is endless.

Take Bowie, for instance. What traits are prominent? Certainly openness. Those high in openness are insatiably curious; they have an intense desire to learn, to know. They prefer nuance, complexity, ambiguity, mystery, questions over answers. (Openness correlates with intelligence.) Their range of feelings is wider; they repress less. They believe in magic and ESP and past-lives. They are original, creative, artistic; they are even more creatively productive. They get bored easily; as soon as they master something, what they want to do is extend it, remake it, reinvent it, or move on to different projects altogether. Behaviourally, openness correlates with sensation-seeking, according to research. Open people are experience-seeking, thrill- and adventure-seeking, disinhibited, sexually adventurous. They do more drugs as a way of expanding their minds, raising their consciousness. They also tend to be politically liberal or radical.

David Bowie spoke of becoming a new kind of rock star; he wanted to use rock to explore ideas he had about identity and fabrication (Image from David Bowie Impressions exhibition, Berlin)

Bowie was all these things. He's flamingly high 'O'. He was disarmingly smart, famously well read. His influences, as he described them, extend endlessly, to mime, Kabuki theatre and beyond. He adopted personas, then discarded them – Ziggy, the Thin White Duke. Creatively, he was restless. He acted, he sang, he wrote, he produced, he painted. He spoke of becoming a new kind of rock star; he wanted to use rock to explore ideas he had about identity and fabrication. He played at Ziggy or the Thin White Duke, then he gave interviews in character. It was real and it was an act at the same time. He enjoyed being someone else, he said. His sexuality is a complex subject, but most of the time, in most interviews, he admits to being bisexual. In the least, he was sexually experimental. His styles were all over the map – pop, rock, ambient, folk, soul – he tried it all. Drugs were a problem too, for a time, until he stopped altogether.

Traits are descriptions, individual-difference variables. They are best thought of as a first-read on a person, a conversation starter. They don't get at motives; they don't get at the why. For that, it's necessary to turn to McAdams's level two, which is all about goals, strategies, coping mechanisms, relationship styles. Level two zeroes in on what you want, and how you go about getting it, or how you manage to avoid what you don't want.

I am not a Bowie expert, so I can't satisfactorily answer any of the following questions; but here are level two-type queries. What were Bowie's obsessions and how did he engage them, express them? How did he cope with failure, personal or professional? How did he deal with turbulent, negative feelings? What was the function of his art, what did he get out of it? Did he desire achievement, intimacy, power? How did he feel around people, intimates or strangers? Was he comfortable, anxious, avoidant? What about 'conditional patterns'? That is, which sorts of situations led him to act out of character? In what ways did the setting he was in impact how he felt or behaved? What was he afraid of, and how did he contend with the fear? What brought him the most joy? Was he mostly happy, or mostly sad?

Level three is the narrative level, *post-hoc* constructions in story form of what we have watched ourselves say or do or feel or think. The question here is what Bowie said about his experiences, which he singled out or somehow emphasised or told about over and over as he put together a theory of self. Maybe the time he got punched in the eye is one, but there would be dozens of others. Each single, discrete, affect-laden happening is a 'scene'. Most scenes are quickly disposed of; they don't amount to much. Others persist, in memory or as guides to future actions. What we do is script sets of similar scenes, we bundle them in clusters. Any life will contain thousands of individual scenes, but scripts are fewer in number, by definition.

One script Bowie seemed to employ was the 'alien script'. He saw himself as a rebel, an outsider, a freak, isolated in his

Mike Waters/123RF

oddness, his refusal to simplify, to foreclose on one durable, unmistakable identity. No one seemed ever to know who he was. He was a shape-shifter, not of this world. 'He'd like to come and meet us, but he thinks he'd blow our mind.' He's unreachable, unknowable. The Starman waits in the sky.

The above is a kind of outline. It is not, obviously, a psychobiography; it's more a proposal for a psychobiography. Much would need to be filled in – facts presented, interpretations advanced cogently. But it gives a small taste for the enterprise, the kinds of questions asked, and an *a priori* template to follow, guided by findings from personality science.

There's been progress in the field of psychobiography over the last 25 years or so. Bad psychobiographies still get written – I've read some, by accident. But the presence of bad psychobiography says nothing about the field's possibilities, just as bad dentists don't prove dentistry to be bankrupt. What's needed is not less psychobiography, but more, and better. It's a scientifically informed art. It's also, in some ways, psychology's stiffest challenge: how to make effective sense of one messy, confusing, contradictory and always fundamentally mysterious life. I think psychology ought to show, every now and then, that it can shed light on the most moving target there is – a person. Psychobiography is one way of doing that.

Confirmatory bias?

What about the possibility that psychobiographers simply privilege evidence that fits particular pet theories? That's unlikely. In most cases, especially those involving famous artists or historical figures, the evidence is there for all to see. It's part of the record. It exists in super-abundance. It's publicly available in the form of biographies, letters, journals, and so on. So, if a psychobiographer – or a biographer, for that matter – were to simply omit or overlook data that didn't fit with what they had in mind, they would assuredly be found out eventually, if not instantly, and shown to be careless or, worse, intellectually dishonest. This is where psychobiography differs from clinical case study. The Plaths and Van Goghs of the world are written about endlessly; they exist in a climate of opinion. It is possible to know their 'story'. Subjects of case studies, however, tend to be anonymous for various reasons, some legal. So interpretations *cannot* be checked against evidence. Doing so is impossible almost by definition. Not so for psychobiography.

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Art is the process of memory

Featuring **Professor Nicky Clayton** and **Mr Clive Wilkins**.
Image by Nick Saffell.

Although we think of memory as being about the past, it evolved to think about the future, allowing us to construct and reconstruct alternative scenarios about what might happen as opposed to what has happened. This particular feature helps to explain why memory is not an accurate repository of the past, and it is great for creativity, as artists have known for centuries. The earliest psychologist to publish extensively on the reconstructive nature of memory, in the 1930s, was Sir Frederic Bartlett, the first Professor of Experimental Psychology in the Department of Psychology at Cambridge University. How fitting that the first Artist-in-Residence in that department, Clive Wilkins, is also fascinated by the reconstructive nature of memory. For the past five years he has been collaborating with Nicky Clayton, who is Professor of Comparative Cognition at the university.

'Nicky and I met on a tango dance floor [pictured], a space that is often felt to transcend time,' Clive explains. 'What sparked the collaboration, however, was the recognition that we both shared a passion for understanding how memory works, and more generally, the subjective experience of thinking with and without words. This has been an issue central to Nicky's research on the cognitive capacities of corvids.'

'I found that these birds, like us, can use wordless thoughts to think about the past and plan for the future', Nicky continues. 'Such concerns also appear prominently in Clive's series of novels, *The Moustachio Quartet*, which explore the complexity and illusory nature of memory. Together our work investigates mental time travel, and questions the very nature of perception and consciousness.'

The British Psychological Society
Professional Practice Board

Expert Witness Advisory Group – Chair and Members

The Society's Professional Practice Board (PPB) is seeking to appoint a Member of the Society act as Chair and several Members to join the above Group from September 2016. The Advisory Group reports directly to the Professional Practice Board.

The remit of the Advisory Group is to advise and guide members and the Society on expert and ordinary witness issues. This will include advice on professional standards and good practice for psychologists working as expert witnesses including the production and updating of guidance documents as relevant; promotion and advice on training opportunities in expert witness work as part of BPS CPD initiatives; and responding to relevant correspondence from members and external parties.

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Members will serve on the Advisory Group for a term of 3 years in the first instance. The Advisory Group will conduct the majority of its business virtually via e-mail and teleconference with the potential for ad hoc meetings as necessary.

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Statements of Interest should reach the Society's office no later than **12 August 2016**

ARTICLE

Off the beaten track

Ron Roberts argues for a critical take on modernity, a psychology of heart and mind

> ...truth is relational, not relative (Boym, 2010, p.67)
>
> A body is given me – what shall I do with it, so singular and so much mine? – *Osip Mandelstam*

Artist, cultural critic, writer and philosopher, Svetlana Boym, whose untimely passing was noted in this publication last year, left a rich legacy of ideas for psychologists to ponder. One of the neglected aspects of psychology (Itten & Roberts, 2014) concerns the nature of human experience in the world: how each of us engage with and are engaged by the overarching political system/society of which we are a part. This relationship between the personal and the socio-cultural-political realm – in effect, the human condition – can be considered the core problem of the social sciences.

Boym addressed this in a series of bold and imaginative works reflecting on our personal and collective relationships to the past, our culturally enshrined ideas of freedom and the ensuing longings and belongings that define our time here. Her work dealt with areas of life that are of immense psychological relevance. Her treatise on nostalgia (Boym, 2001) is widely considered as a defining text on the modern condition (Bonnett, 2008; Burton, 2014; Magagnoli, 2015; Mihăilescu, 2011; Olick et al., 2011). I hope to show that Boym has much to offer psychologists interested in our subjective and objective affiliations to the world around us. In critically engaging with the 'modernist' project, she fashions an innovative challenge to how we 'do' psychology and what we consider viable research findings.

The term 'modernity', as introduced by French critic, poet and essayist Charles Baudelaire (1863/2010), was intended as a critique of the new, fleeting rhythms of time and life in the burgeoning urban metropolis of the 19th century. However, the term has come to describe the 'progress' brought about by reductionist science, mechanisation and the drive to industrial modernisation. Modernity's hijacking by the allure of mechanisation and reductionist science – arguably the twin pillars of capitalist modernisation – has given us the form of psychological practice that is dominant today. It's a form embedded within cultural myths of technological and digital progress. It is also a form that some consider is divorced from people's everyday concerns (Itten & Roberts, 2014). Boym argues that these cultural myths of late capitalism may no longer work for us. 'We are', she says, 'right at the cusp of a paradigm shift, and to anticipate it we have to expand our field of vision.' Her concept of the 'off-modern' is an attempt to reinvigorate modernity as a critical project, beginning from the very fact of dislocation and articulating the creative and human possibilities that reside in it. In her words, it does not 'follow the logic of crisis and progress but rather involves an exploration of the side alleys and lateral potentialities of the project of critical modernity' (Boym, 2008, p.4).

Svetlana Boym

An off-modern take on our own intellectual history allows for 'unforeseen pasts and ventures' to be recovered, opening into a '"modernity of what if" rather than simply modernization as it is' (Boym, 2008). This opens up a space within which a different vision, a different way of 'doing' psychology may be articulated.

Boym's expansive elaborations of the off-modern throughout her work – dealing with nostalgia, our relationships to the domestic as well as external physical and artistic environments – reposition and reinvent the psychological within political and everyday history. It's an approach suffused with a fragile temporality that encompasses people, places, language, memory, imagination, emotion, art, artefact and home. In her interviews with Soviet emigrants and their reflections on their current and past circumstances we can see a seamless merging of the search for meaning, dignity, love and freedom in individual life with a broader political canvas in which the ghosts of past actions – and inactions – inhabit the urban and domestic spaces of the real and the might-have-been. By exploring what could have been, but was not, we get a deeper sense of the meanings that circumscribe contemporary

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human life, one with considerable relevance in the post-communist globalised landscape of accelerating change.

Gergen (1973, p.319) noted that 'a concentration on psychology alone, provides a distorted understanding of our present condition'. The beauty of Boym's exposition is that, while the full richness of a psychological framework is maintained, it is not privileged. Her work is elaborated within a critical tradition of comparative literature as well as architecture, philosophy and aesthetics, embracing many disciplinary interests and inviting us to rethink the purpose of psychological inquiry. This accords with others' concerns about the insecurities underlying our present disciplinary pursuits:

> We haven't really discovered how to go on talking and practicing what's called psychology, even defining it... Our epistemological insecurity is fundamental. That is we don't really know what we're doing. If that's the case then we have to articulate another. (Hillman & Shamdasani, 2013, p.14).

Boym's pronounced interest in the human relations that permeate the world makes it possible to imagine psychology (or psychologies) as less concerned with explaining the material workings of the human organism and our statistical commonalities, and more with addressing how we actually deal with the complexities of 'being' and 'having been'. This fragility, this appearance and disappearance from the world, how to actually live one's life, is arguably the issue that generations of psychology students thought they would be addressing. Instead, they have been instructed to forget it by the barrage of scientism and experimental psychology they receive. In the context of politics and history, Hannah Arendt (1998, p.42) took the view that 'application of the law of large numbers' signified the 'wilful obliteration of their very subject matter'. The same may well be said of a good deal of psychology as currently practised.

The 'off-modern', then, questions established narratives of 'progress' and assumptions of linear social time. Boym's (2010) articulation of freedom poses serious challenges to a psychology predicated on an assumed unproblematic answer to the age-old question – 'What must the world be in order that we may know it?' (Arendt, 1978, Book 2, p.199). The historical world is demonstrably neither orderly nor rule-governed, and, as noted by Gergen (1973), it resists the claims of those who would ignore its relevance for psychology. Yet much of psychology still ignores this wildness and insists on a reductionist programme that would see the social and historical world reduced to biology.

Boym's work – seeking to grapple with the problems, puzzles and paradoxes of her own existence as a Jewish political refugee, an emigrant from the former Soviet Union to the United States – moves through scholarly writing, novels, short stories and plays to experimentation with photographic and digital art. Hers is an acceptance that our knowledge and understanding of the world, and what it means to be human, cannot be reduced to a single codified set of rules and procedures that give rise to a single form of knowledge.

Estrangement

Explorers in the landscape of the off-modern may be assisted by acquaintance with the art of 'estrangement' pioneered by Soviet artist Viktor Shklovsky (1923/2005). The Slavic roots of the word suggest both distancing and making strange. Shklovsky sought a radical dislocation from one's usual point of view, one that affords an entirely different set of possibilities – for perception, understanding and action – that enhance one's (and others') life. This is what Boym has in mind when she speaks of estrangement for the world, breathing new life into the possibilities of being. It's there in 'profane illumination', moments of 'time out of time' providing 're-enchantment in a minor existential key' (Boym, 2008). Boym connects with other authors who stressed the importance of renewal and new beginnings in life's affairs – of the 'ordinary marvellous' (Boym, 2005). For Arendt (cited in Boym, 2010) it was the everyday 'miraculous' deed of freedom; for Baudelaire (1863/2010), 'the fantastic reality of life'; and for Benjamin (1999), 'the renewal of existence in a hundred unfailing ways'.

Marx's conception of alienation took in only the negative possibilities of dislocation. That Marx missed what Shklovsky divined is strange, given that

Meet the author

'I took the unusual step of writing to Svetlana Boym after enjoying one of her books. We became friends, and from one of our chats – in Greenwich Park over tea and cake – emerged the idea that I could pursue my take on the human mystery by exploring her concept of the "off-modern" in relation to the possibilities it offers for another way to do psychology.

'In Eduardo Galeano's *Book of Embraces* we are told the world "is a heap of people, a sea of tiny flames". Svetlana's flame blazed fiercely, with an elegance and assuredness firmly rooted to the earth. Anything I say cannot do justice to what a pleasure it was to have known her.'

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it was Marx's own estrangement from bourgeois society that made it possible for him to pursue his lifelong work devoted to building a better society. Within the psychological community, few beyond Wilhelm Reich have given due importance to a sense of wonder in living as a matter inextricably bound up with individual and political freedoms.

There are many more examples than Marx of how estrangement may work in a positive direction. Estrangement lies at the heart of comedy, in which a portion of the world is first made strange (defamiliarised) and later returned (familiarised) with a punchline. It's also at the heart of all creative opposition and resistance, working to undermine a taken-for-granted 'truth'. Irony and satire have long been recognised as means of speaking to power. Yet in official psychological discourse, these are entirely absent… a form of emotionless parlance has been taken as a byword for truth and objectivity.

Boym's and Shklovsky's readings of estrangement are reminders that there are political options other than surrender or defeat. Unlike the favoured motif of dystopian science fiction, resistance is not 'futile' (a position echoed in recent work by Haslam and Reicher, 2012). Boym (2012, p.8) reflects that 'we have to do what it takes to exercise the modicum of freedom – defined by Hannah Arendt as a "miracle of infinite improbability" that occurs regularly in the public world'. If one of the principal functions of art is to disrupt the existing order (see Smoliarova, 2006), then art is central to politics, dissent, participation and change. In an off-modern slant it could become central to a form of psychology where the emphasis has moved away from the measurement of what is or what purports to be, towards a study and practice in which people, their humanity, expression, needs and desires are paramount – a psychology that estranges the status quo and challenges the dehumanising automation of life. Arendt (1998, p.7) reminds us that 'all aspects of the human condition are somehow related to politics'. This, of necessity, must include the psychological. It points to the possibility of a psychology of cheerful resistance imbued with an 'intellectual imagination… freed from its current imprisonment' (Haslam & Reicher, 2012, p.174).

In the early years of the 21st century, corporate hegemony has given birth to a new variant of authoritarianism – policed neither from the political left nor right, but premised on the daily rewriting of memory through public relations, advertising, news control and surveillance. In a recent discussion, Roberts and Hewer (2015) outlined the continuing utility of a Laingian framework for comprehending the social production of adverse states of mind at differing levels of the social hierarchy (family, institution, international relations). This interdisciplinary framework is built on estrangement – an explicit rejection of the notion of value-free reductionist knowledge that permeates the scientific core of the discipline. Shklovsky saw in estrangement the miraculous possibility of maintaining wonder and joy in living. Art is central to this playful, dissenting reworking of the world.

> "…psychology cannot run away from its political nature"

If a radical reworking of psychology rooted in everyday life and the wonder of our earthly existence is to be possible, then we must radically estrange it, uproot it from its corporate nest bed. This will require us to step 'off' the beaten tracks of psychology, to explore the wild undergrowth of ideas in the neglected gardens of knowledge. Instead of absorbing the regular force-fed diet of imminent scientific breakthroughs and the prescribed certainties of future success, we have to entertain the idea that the reality we experience is beyond lived comprehension as a singular totality. Yet there are ways to deal with it, interrogate it, bring it into being and know it – they just don't necessarily involve spoken or written language or the legitimising cloak of science.

Boym's Taitlin with Butterfly 2007 from the series Hybrid Utopia, see www.svetlanaboym.com/main.htm

Psychology, in short, could be made a work of art – celebrating what Eduardo Galeano (1992, p.121) refers to as the 'marriage of heart and mind', approaching discovery, knowing and learning with *sentipensante* (feeling-thinking). In an off-modern psychology, knowledge is generated and discoverable in the idiopathic and idiosyncratic strategies and programmes of the individual. An education in psychology becomes a tailored project in making sense of one's life. For Epictetus, the Greek slave, the proper subject matter of philosophy was each person's life, leading to refinements in 'the art of living' (Arendt, 1978, p.154).

An avowedly political psychology

This challenge is not a new one. Writing in the 1920s, Shklovsky remarked that the Soviet artist of the day had but two choices: 'to write for the desk drawer or to write on state demand' (Boym, 2008, p.20). Despite the absence of a third alternative, Shklovsky argued that that was 'precisely the one that must be chosen' (pp.20–21). Similarly, we must

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abandon two notions – that psychology can sit apart from political statements about its own relation to the production of knowledge (Roberts, 2015), and from people's experience of the world we move through and create. An avowedly political psychology can then develop. One of the lost messages from the Milgram experiments is that psychology cannot run away from its political nature – it is embedded within a network of institutional power relations where the very knowledge it generates affects not only the actions of those institutions but also people's understanding of their predicament within them.

Shklovsky characterised this 'third way' as a 'knight's move' when faced with a repressive binary choice. One must contend with the pathologising of this: in psychiatric parlance 'knight's move thinking' is evidence of a supposed 'schizophrenic thought disorder', said to be a dangerous loosening of thought away from established and accepted patterns of Aristotelian logic (Winokur & Clayton, 1994). The most common diagnosis dispensed by Soviet psychiatrists upon the unfortunate 'deviants' and dissidents sent to the Gulag was 'sluggish schizophrenia'. However, there is perhaps something to learn here. Shklovsky's stratagem was invented in the face of a pervasive, repressive, censoring, intrusive state apparatus that functioned in such a manner that what was officially true and what was not became difficult if not impossible to differentiate – a description increasingly suited to contemporary life in the authoritarian global city. Perhaps the distress shown by individuals now diagnosed with 'thought disorder' is a manifestation of life within a social system where open honest communication is in retreat, and the kind of individual cognitive strategies noted by Bentall (2003) and Harper (2011) amongst others come to the fore.

A psychology of the everyday has been sought in Moscovici's theory of social representations: a 'social psychology of knowledge' (Moscovici & Duveen, 2000, p.280), of common sense. Yet despite its founder's intentions, it has not laid bare the cultural myths underpinning the shared social consensus that props up late capitalist societies. One reason for this, perhaps, is that it has remained tied to professional discursive regimes that dictate how psychology is 'performed', via officially sanctioned methods and publication outlets. The dislocation of social representations theory from the lives of the people whose sense and reality it aims to grasp has more than a little to do with the values that pervade official academic disciplines, and the relations between those disciplines and broader systems of power and privilege (See Giroux, 2014). Social representations theory has failed, not because it does not represent common sense but because the professional psychological discourse it embodies does not represent the voice of common sense against the tyranny that assails it. This, along with the relative isolation of social psychology within the broader discipline, has meant that too few have seen in it a pathway to action.

A profoundly human task

Honouring the paths taken by fellow deviant travellers in the past is an important part of recovering an alternative psychology. Fromm, Laing, Milgram and Kelly, for example, provide us with examples of a form of 'political' psychology that might have taken centre stage but that did not. They are in a sense phantasmagorias – existing in the shadowlands between the not quite remembered yet not wholly forgotten.

Laing, for his sins, estranged both the family and madness from bourgeois sensibility (Laing & Esterson, 1964) while Fromm (1957) did the same for love. Milgram estranged the procedures and institutions behind the very production of psychological knowledge. Kelly (1955), whose personal construct theory for a time threatened to shake up psychology, never got to grips with the material questions of power and influence that shape not only the world but the psychological discourse and knowledge produced in it and to which Foucault (e.g. 2002) devoted some attention. Though Kelly stressed action in the world and our emotional grasp of it as forms of construing, the performative and poetic elaboration/exploration of construct theory's possibilities never took off.

What is needed instead, if we are to avoid the contribution of psychological knowledge to alienation, is a form that is more than a little sympathetic to those it addresses – that is explicitly biased towards those with whom it makes common cause. It cannot settle for being what Moscovici described social representations theory might be 'at its best' (2000, p.280); namely, a 'metatheory' that purports to stand above and beyond the world. Psychological knowledge should instead commemorate the human striving to live well – or even to live at all – and to aid this and participate in an aesthetic devoted to improving and renewing our lot, individually and collectively. Boym (1994, pp.158–159) opened up for consideration an aesthetic commemoration of the everyday art of survival in our lived personal and communal spaces. Her focus was on the inhabitants of Soviet living space – but the very 'human' value and functional worth of her vision (Boym, 2012, p.13) reminds us that at the heart of the real world we inhabit lies the virtual world of past and future possibilities. 'The fantasies of the past determined by the needs of the present have a direct impact on the realities of the future.'

We must still wrestle with the problem of how to write about the human condition in a manner that accords dignity, agency and worth to our experience of being in the world. The mercurial city streets and parks, memory lanes or rural by-ways, in which the lives of the 'great', the 'terrible' and the 'humble' unfold and in which ideas of human nature have been fashioned, have been altogether neglected. The landscape of social relationships and identities that towns and cities in their amalgam of private and public spaces foster, disrupt, nurture and contain lies unconsidered. A psychology that is at once geographical, political and social stands in the shadows.

Scientific psychology remains utopian – enacting a 'charismatic concealment' (Boym, 2001, p.99) of the wider horizons of psychological reality and the birth of psychological ideas and social change. For a political psychology to go any way toward this it must address, amongst other things, the precise (relational) content of human life as it is experienced. Whether such a re-centring (or de-centring) of psychological knowledge is possible, unshackled from formal professional methodology and theory, is a question to ponder. It is most definitely a political question. Understanding politics is not merely to create narratives of victory and defeat, or of the unjust excesses of power. It is always a profoundly human task. In this we are required to evaluate the world through our own moral compass. This is at its most dignified where it involves 'giving imaginary space to the defeated, to their impossible human choices, leaving space and acknowledging the dreams of exit in a no-exit situation' (Boym, 2010, p.275). Given this most human requirement, an off-modern perspective warrants further consideration as the basis for a very different kind of psychology, one where dreams and reality exist side by side. Svetlana Boym left the stage prematurely – but she has left much behind to occupy our lives.

Why research using animals is important in psychology

Stacey A. Bedwell argues the case

The use of animal models in psychology research that is not of a neurobiological nature is quite rare in UK laboratories. This may lead many psychologists to consider the use of animals in scientific research as irrelevant to them. With the continued advancement of technologies and non-invasive methodologies, many ask whether experiments involving animals still have a place in psychology and neuroscience research. It is easy to overlook the basic biological investigations that many areas of psychology are built on, and will rely on in the future to continue to develop. I hope to address this issue, offering an explanation as to why animal models are important to contemporary psychology research.

Animals in scientific research

Historically, animals have played a vital role in scientific research. Much of what is known about the anatomy and physiology of humans, as well as other animals, has come from animal research in various forms. Many of the major researchers in sensation and perception – Hubel, Wiesel, Lettvin, Jacobs, Newsome, Sperry, Bekesy, DeValois, Melzack, and more – used animal subjects in their groundbreaking research.

Animal studies have provided valuable contributions to the development of great medical advances, including general anaesthetics, asthma inhalers, vaccinations against TB, HPV and malaria, and insulin. Nearly half a million people in the UK with Type I diabetes rely on insulin, developed by Macleod and Banting in 1921 through research on rabbits and dogs (see Bliss, 1983), to maintain a quality of life that would otherwise not be possible. Smallpox has been eradicated from the earth thanks to knowledge gained from studies on animals. Advances in surgeries and treatments such as kidney dialysis and heart transplant were also perfected with the use of animals. Cancer survival rates are also continuing to improve due to research using animal models. For instance, Herceptin was developed in mouse models and has greatly improved the survival rate in breast cancer. The development of anti-retroviral drugs using animal models has had a great impact on the lives of those diagnosed with AIDS – it is no longer the death sentence it once was.

It is clear that some medical discoveries have been possible without the use of animals: for instance, Fleming discovered penicillin without animal experiments. However, it was his work with Florey and Chain with mouse models that enabled the application of penicillin to fight bacterial infection.

Animals in neuroscience and neuropsychology

In neuroscience, our current knowledge of homeostasis, intrinsic and extrinsic reward, primary and secondary

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reinforcement and the effects of reinforcement on persistence all derive significantly from animal research. A large body of our present understanding of the physiological and neurophysiological bases of hunger, thirst and sexual motivation has been developed through experiments involving the use of animals. Without these experiments and their findings, our understanding of large areas of neuroscience may be much less. However, what is often unclear is whether the same level of knowledge could have been reached from different, non-invasive methodologies, perhaps without the use of animals at all.

Our current understanding of the neurological and psychological effects of stimulants, glucose and the enzyme calpain on memory (Coon, 1992; Kalat, 1993; Wortman & Loftus, 1992), the occurrence of retrograde amnesia (Baron, 1992) and the role of calcium channels in neurological function (Wortman & Loftus, 1992) stems from research carried out on animals. This is in addition to a large body of animal research carried out to increase our knowledge and understanding of various brain regions and networks. For instance, the complex anatomical organisation of the prefrontal cortex (Bedwell et al., 2014, 2015) and the topographic ordering of cortical and subcortical connections (Berendse et al., 1992; Hoover & Vertes, 2011; Kondo & Witter, 2014) could not have been observed in such detail without the use of neuroanatomical tract tracing in animals. It is currently the best available method for gaining meaningful and detailed data about anatomical organisation of cortical networks. Due to its invasive nature, this kind of work must be carried out on animals. Animal studies have therefore greatly increased our understanding of the basic principles of brain structure and function. Without this knowledge our ability to further develop neurological models and psychological theories of brain function would be impaired.

My recent area of research relies heavily on the use of animals (see box). Therefore, from a personal perspective, I can appreciate that animal models still hold an important place in neuroscience research. I also believe that the anatomical knowledge gained from these studies will form the basis for improved understanding of the prefrontal cortex from a psychological perspective, making animal models important for advancements in psychology as well.

Animals in behavioural and social experiments

Research into psychological development has relied greatly upon the use of animals, particularly primates. A well-known example is Harlow's work on emotional development and maternal deprivation in rhesus monkeys (Harlow et al., 1965; Harlow & Suomi, 1971). To carry out these experiments using human babies would have been highly unethical and impractical. Without these experiments, work that followed in the field of development may have differed; however, it is not clear whether such observational research truly benefited from being carried out on primates.

Beyond social psychology, animal studies have been of great importance in the increased understanding and development of treatments for neurological and psychological disorders. Behavioural therapies are derived from animal research. For instance, aversion therapy, desensitisation and extinction therapies, token economies and systematic reinforcement were all developed from studying animal behaviours and the pioneering work of animal researchers like Pavlov, Skinner and Thorndike. Biological interventions such as psychosurgery, antipsychotics and antidepressants would not have been developed without the use of animal models and experiments using animals. These interventions now improve the quality of life of thousands of patients who would otherwise have faced institutionalisation. It is important to note that the safe use of drugs, across medical science, not just in psychology, relies heavily

Meet the author

'I came into research with rodents through my PhD in neuroscience. Prior to this I had always had an awareness and interest in the ethical treatment of animals. I had spent time during my gap year working with rescued and orphaned primates. I think my care for animals made me a good candidate to work with animals in the lab. I was confident that the project I was undertaking would be beneficial to the field and that the use of animals was a necessary component of the project to meet the desired aims.

My experience of working in an animal lab was positive. Everyone I know working on animal experiments is well trained and the animals are very well cared for. I never experienced an animal suffering either as part of an experiment or while being kept in the facility.

When starting out in the project I was faced with many accounts of scientists in animal testing who faced problems with antivivisection activists. Although I have encountered people who disagree with the use of animals in scientific research, I have taken the opportunity to explain the reasons behind my research and why I think using animals in my studies was beneficial. I have also used the opportunity to dispel common myths about animal labs.

I was always confident in the value of the work I was carrying out and the high standards of animal care in my studies. I am proud of what I achieved from these animal experiments and am keen to explain its importance in the grand scheme of understanding the human brain.'

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upon research carried out on animal models.

How transferrable to humans is data from animal studies?

As with every experimental methodology, there are disadvantages to using animals in experiments. A common argument against the use of animals in experiments is that animals are not good models for humans, based on the observation that we are not simply larger versions of lab rats – our bodies (and minds) work differently. Interestingly, biology shows that rodents are actually rather good models of the human body.

All mammals, including humans, are descended from common ancestors, and all have the same set of organs (heart, kidneys, lungs, etc.) that function in essentially the same way with the help of a bloodstream and central nervous system. Some controversy, however, comes with the study of the mammalian brain in psychology and neuroscience. This is one organ that does differ in some aspects, particularly in terms of cortical volume, quite substantially between species. Despite this, there are many common characteristics between all mammalian brains (e.g. basic cytoarchitecture and structure and neuronal physiology).

The application of findings from animal studies to humans is often a concern in psychology, especially in studies involving complex regions or behaviours thought to be far more advanced in humans, making us unique. If humans are so much more advanced than other animals, especially in abilities such as executive function, then it is understandable why many would question the point of psychology experiments on much less advanced animals like rodents. An animal model is never going to be 100 per cent representative of human anatomy, physiology, cognition or behaviour. However, mice and rats (which share 95 per cent of our genes) are very close models and actually excellent representations of most human characteristics and attributes. For instance, with transplanted human tissue, mouse models can be regarded as possessing a human immune system (Melkus et al., 2006; Shultz, et al., 2012).

My research using animal models has been on the anatomical connectivity of the prefrontal cortex. The prefrontal cortex is a specific region thought to be much more developed in humans compared with other animals, so it is understandable that the usefulness of animal models in experiments involving the prefrontal cortex is sometimes questioned. The presence of prefrontal cortex (PFC) has been recognised in a range of species; however, there remains some controversy in the literature with regard to the presence of PFC in non-primates (e.g. rodents). Brodmann's (1909) representation of prefrontal cortex in monkeys greatly resembles that of the human (although some homologies are unclear). There is a consistent opinion that the architecture of human prefrontal cortex is largely similar to that of other primates (Petrides & Pandya, 1994; Semendeferi et al., 1998). Rose and Woolsey (1948) described orbital prefrontal cortical regions in rats, cats and rabbits based on the connections identified and their similarity to the orbital medial prefrontal cortex described in primates. More recent studies confirmed similarities in both OMPFC and dorsolateral prefrontal cortex between primates and rats (Goldman-Rakic, 1988; Uylings & Van Eden, 1990). There are also thought to be functional similarities between specific prefrontal regions across species, for example dmPFC in rats is thought to represent similar functions to prefrontal cortex regions in primates (Groenewegen & Uylings, 2000; Uylings et al., 2003). It is clear that rats possess much of the prefrontal cortex properties found in primates and humans. However, there is no dispute that rats lack the granular prefrontal cortex found in primates, thought to be a product of evolution. Despite this, neuroscientists have claimed, based on similarities in the effects of lesions and on anatomical and physiological similarities, that the medial aspect of frontal cortex in rats is homologous to the granular lateral PFC in primates (Kolb, 2007; Seamans et al., 2008).

Based on the above evidence, it is reasonable to conclude that although the human brain, even in the highly complex prefrontal cortex, is more complex than those of any laboratory animal model in many ways, there are a substantial number of homologies between species. These homologies not only make mammalian models relevant to humans, they also make the development of increasingly complex models possible, creating the possibility of understanding complex cognitive processes.

Advantages and alternatives

A living organism is a far more accurate way of, for example, testing the effect of a drug or therapy than any other currently available method. There are alternatives in some cases, for example human neuronal cells can be cultured. However, the complexity of a living animal and all of its interconnected systems cannot be fully emulated in culture.

An obvious example is behaviour. Behavioural observation of animals is crucial in determining the effects of lesions, other neuronal damage or the behavioural effects of drugs. Observing behaviour is especially important when investigating the effects of possible pharmacological treatments for disorders including depression, schizophrenia and psychosis. For a start, the behavioural symptoms cannot be simulated in cell cultures, only in living organisms. The case is the same with behavioural effects: it would be impossible to observe the effects of a treatment (pharmacological, cognitive or behavioural) without an animal or human to observe them in.

There are many areas of psychology

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and neuroscience in which human participants are readily used and where human studies provide a vast amount of useful and informative findings. Human participants are used for the majority of the time in social psychology and observations of childhood development (Freud, 1951) and social learning (Bandura, 1971). Research in clinical psychology also uses human participants from clinical populations for the most part. However, animal models are implanted when investigating biological underpinnings of clinical disorders and developing pharmacological treatments, where human participation is not possible.

In neuropsychology non-invasive fMRI, EEG and TMS methodologies enable researchers to investigate functional organisation, localisation of function and cortical activity in great detail. However, it is worth noting that human imaging does not provide enough fine-scale detail in some instances, such as identifying the anatomical structure of specific pathways, which requires neuroanatomical tracing and microscopic analysis of histological samples (Bedwell et al., 2014, 2015). Many studies of neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, and neurotransmitter function require the use of invasive techniques that are unethical to carry out with humans, making animal models a necessity in this field.

Reductions in neuroscience funding in recent years from research councils as well as the closure of pharma-funded neuroscience institutes in the UK may give the impression that research into neurological deficits, psychological disorders, pharmacological treatment and the underlying basic neuroscience is no longer a priority. This inevitability leads to an opinion that the use of animal models in brain research, be it behavioural, physiological or anatomical, should also not be a priority or a necessity. Despite the reduction in available funding, the fact remains that we still have a long way to go in understanding the human brain, from biological, behavioural, clinical and social perspectives alike. Further research across all aspects of brain science is necessary. In my opinion, animal models continue to provide an important contribution to many areas of brain science. It is evident that the use of animals does not play an important, or arguably even relevant, role in most aspects of contemporary human social, behavioural or cognitive psychology. However, animal models are an important aspect of biological research, including anatomy, physiology, behavioural and cognitive neuroscience.

Guidelines on the use of animals in research

It is worth noting that in the UK the Home Office licensing procedure is very strict, and experimenters are required to consistently follow the 3 Rs (reduction, refinement, replacement: see Russell & Burch, 1959). Researchers are required to demonstrate that consideration has been given to replacing animals where possible, reducing the number of animals and refining methodology to minimise suffering. The experimenters must show that there is no suitable alternative way to gain the same quality of findings, and justify the benefits of proposed research compared with the costs to the animals.

The majority of animal use in psychology is in research, and this is covered by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. In the UK the Home Office is responsible for legislation in the field of animal welfare.

Members of the British Psychological Society have a general obligation to minimise discomfort to living animals. The BPS *Guidelines for Psychologists Working with Animals* can be found at tinyurl.com/bpsanimals.

The brain is a complex organ comprising a combination of multiple systems and processes. Without the knowledge gained from work with animals in neuroscience labs on the underlying structure of complex functions, we can never hope to fully understand the social, behavioural and cognitive aspects of the human brain.

Conclusion

It is evident that there are and will always be drawbacks to neuroscience and psychology research carried out and developed from studies using animal models. Despite these, animal studies have historically provided great advances in our knowledge of the brain and continue to provide us with important information in developing a greater understanding of such a complex organ. Therefore, even though it may be indirect, I consider animal studies to hold a significant place in contemporary psychology.

The importance and reliance on animal models may change in the future along with the development of more advanced technologies, but for the time being experiments involving animals are vital for progression in our understanding of the brain and the continued development of neurological and psychological treatments.

'You must be joking' – 007 in the lab and academia

With a proper psychologist making an appearance in the latest James Bond film, **G. Neil Martin** looks at how and why scientists have studied the secret agent

Everyone knows Bond's resident scientist. Major Boothroyd, played by Desmond Llewelyn – the original Q – was a regular foil to Bond's insouciance and cavalier disregard for office equipment. Desmond morphed into John Cleese, who then transmogrified into the dry, youthful, voluminously coiffed Ben Whishaw who operated intriguing security breaches from the matutinal comfort of his pyjamas. His was the youthful demeanour that elicited Bond's exasperated 'You must be joking' response. But Q, of course, has not been Bond's only cinema scientist.

Ignore the dispensable villains and their bacteriological or viral plans for world destruction, and there are some notable meetings of minds between spook and boffin in Bond. There was arguably Bond's first strong female lead, Dr Holly Goodhead (Lois Chiles), the US astronaut in *Moonraker*. And there was, at the other end of the hotpants spectrum, Dr Christmas Jones (Denise Richards), *The World Is Not Enough*'s unorthodox physicist. The first Bond Girl of the Pierce Brosnan era was Caroline (no surname) who was sent to undertake a psychological evaluation of Bond in *Goldeneye*, but ended up unwillingly racing Xenia Onatopp and being seduced by Bond in his DB5. Dr Molly Warmflash did a similar job – this time rehabilitating Bond after his collision with the Millennium Dome – in *The World Is Not Enough*. Doctor Hall was the comically Freudian shrink in *Skyfall*. And, let's not forget – since we are in the era of SPECTRE – Bond's first Eon film villain, Dr Julius No. Treasurer of the greatest criminal organisation in China, SPECTRE member, and dextrocardic (in Fleming's novel, he was born with his heart on the right side), Doctor No went to medical school in Wisconsin but, after an unfortunate radiation accident, ended up having his hands replaced with pincers. And, in the latest film SPECTRE, we have the appearance of Bond's first proper psychologist in a significant role requiring more than just word association and debriefing, Dr Madeleine Swann (Léa Seydoux) (www.thepsychologist.org.uk/formula-stirred-not-shaken).

So science and psychology have intruded on Bond's world, but what about vice versa?

A curious cottage industry exists examining films via the prism of psychological theory and research. Review papers have examined the veracity of the representation of amnesia (Baxendale, 2004), epilepsy (Baxendale, 2003) and neurology (Ford & Larner, 2009) in the movies. Books have been written on the mad scientist archetype (Grayling, 2005), and the representation of mental illness in cinema (Wedding & Niemiec, 2014).

The cottage industry extends to Bond. For example, tucked away underneath the seemingly innocuous title, 'functional connectivity of the macaque brain across stimulus and arousal states' lies an fMRI study of monkeys' brain response to *Tomorrow Never Dies* (Moeller et al., 2009). 'In our first experiment,' Sebastian Moeller and co-authors begin, 'we scanned two monkeys (monkeys L, H) while they viewed clips of the James Bond film *Tomorrow Never Dies*, interleaved with three blank periods.' Via this method, the authors found 20 cortical network regions involved in the processing of arousing visual stimuli (which probably excluded Elliott Carver's portable keyboard taping etiquette), including the visual, auditory, somatosensory, motor, prefrontal and parietal cortices. Bond crops up in another study, on imitation and smoking (Harakeh et al., 2010). Eighty-four smokers watched a Bond film that featured smoking (*Dr. No*) or no smoking (*The Living Daylights*) and which contained breaks for pro-smoking or anti-smoking ads. Watching the smoking in Bond had no effect on 'smoking intensity', according to the study published in *Tobacco Control*. *Tomorrow Never Dies* was also the subject of a paper in *Magnetic Resonance Imaging* – TND is the go-to Bond film of choice for scientists (Whittingstall et al., 2010). This paper examined alterations in EEG activity during the continuous viewing of a two-minute film clip (the first two minutes of TND) in seven participants. The researchers found that the perception of differences between visual contrasts in the film were correlated with increased EEG activation in the primary visual cortex.

Another, psychophysiological study examined participants' responses while they played the part of James Bond in the game, *JB007: Nightfire* (Ravaja et al., 2008). In the experiment, galvanic skin response (GSR) and electromyography were recorded while people either killed or wounded villains, or were themselves wounded and killed. The aim was to discover the psychophysiological responses generated by different emotional and moral perspectives. When an opponent was wounded or killed, participants' skin conductance increased but some of the muscles in the face (zygomatic, orbicularis occuli and

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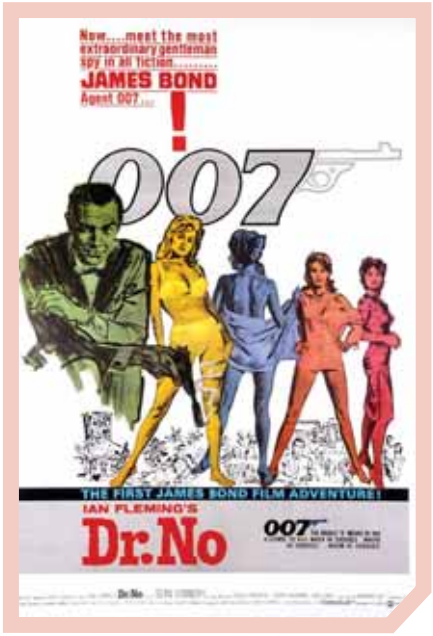
corrugator muscles, all found around the eyes and mouth) decreased. When the protagonist was wounded or killed, there was a similar GSR increase but also an increase in two sets of facial muscles and a decrease in another set. These results suggest that the emotional consequences of attacking another or of being attacked can be characterised by subtle, facial muscle changes.

On the subject of violence, a couple of studies have examined the degree of violence in the Bond movies. Violence in cinema and TV is a perennial favourite of social psychologists exploring the relationship between exposure to violent material and the subsequent expression of aggression or violence. A 2013 study published in *JAMA Pediatrics* found that the portrayal of serious violence in the Bond films increased significantly over time, even when accounting for film length (McAnally et al., 2013). The most severely violent was *Tomorrow Never Dies*, which may explain why scientists have been so keen to use it in their studies. The 2008 re-boot, *Casino Royale*, featured 250 acts of violence involving a perpetrator, action or target, compared with 109 in *Dr. No*. And it isn't just violence that's increased: sexual activity and more violence against women has increased too. A 2010 study of 195 female characters across 20 Bond films, which was published in *Sex Roles*, also found that end-of-film mortality was 'predicted by sexual activity, ethical status (good vs. bad), and attempting to kill Bond' (Neuendorf et al., 2010).

To M (or at least Judi Dench's rendering of M), Bond, of course, was a 'sexist, misogynist dinosaur' and a 'relic of the cold-war'. Some may agree with this harsh personality assessment. Some may argue it has as much validity as the Myers-Briggs. But some dark areas of science publishing have wondered aloud what sort of personality Bond enjoys. For example, one paper, which includes 'James Bond' in its title and then proceeds to mention the name once in the entirety of the paper, suggests that Bond may



express the extreme ends of the Dark Triad. This was based on an analysis of 'upper division and weekend-course psychology students' and was probably a desperate way of attracting attention to a paper that would have been otherwise unremarkable. In a vein more in keeping with ill-judged comic-japery than wit, a study from the *Medical Journal of Australia* attempted to provide a psychological evaluation of Bond by assessing – and I apologise in advance, I really do – the Bond Adequacy Disorder (BAD) using the Bond Additive Descriptors of Anti-Social personality Scale (BADASS). They must have been up all weekend.

One of the more methodical papers investigated how people viewed changing situations or circumstances in films (Magliano et al., 2001). One of the films studied was *Moonraker* (the others were *Star Trek II: Wrath of Khan*, and *Jeremiah Johnson*). Participants made 85 change-of-situation judgements in *Moonraker*, midway between the other two. Shifts in time and movement were particularly noted. Staying with *Moonraker*, the same research team had previously examined people's ability to make predictions while watching the film – i.e. indicate what was going to happen next (Magliano et al., 1996). People were actually quite good at doing this, using visual and discourse clues in the film. Which suggests either that the participants were quite adept at this or that *Moonraker* is a predictable watch. The climax of the scene where Bond encounters Jaws on a plane, fights, bails out and the latter's parachute fails to open and he falls onto a circus tent – a set of scenes grimly illustrated in the paper – was predicted by participants. None of the participants had seen the film before. The best predictors of what was going to happen were the *mise-en-scène*, montage, framing and dialogue. Using these, participants made very specific predictions about what would occur.

And, let us not, despite our better instincts, forget semiotics. Holly Cooper and colleagues from Griffith University in Australia, for example, presented 'a textual analysis of the brand narratives… specifically in the context of James Bond films' (Cooper et al., 2010). 'In engaging with the text of popular culture,' the authors write, 'consumers engage in the story and the embedded brand narratives in that text. Consumers readily draw on these texts for directions in constructing.' Not only that, 'consuming, viewing, and engaging with films and the embedded brand narratives in film fuels consumer dreams and consumption ideals.'

Cooper and colleagues examined the use of brands in all Bond films up to *Casino Royale*. The first analysis begins with 'Vignette 1: The Bollinger Lover Brand Narrative' and goes quickly downhill from there. It describes Bond's seduction of Caroline, the hapless MI6 bureaucrat tasked with psychologically evaluating Bond in *Goldeneye*. 'The Bollinger brand', write the authors, 'embodies the masculine desire of James Bond and presents as a social tool of romance.' Oblivious to even Bond levels of innuendo, the authors thus set the tone of the analysis.

The next vignette pits the Aston Martin against the Jaguar. I've always had a soft spot the Aston Martin – and not just for the nickname possibilities if I were to be employed at Birmingham's second university. The sleek, understated sybariticity, the purring power and modesty, the cunning stealth… these are all devilish attractions, as is the fact that the company was named after Lionel (Martin) and his favourite hill (Aston). Here, Cooper and colleagues stray into the world of the esoteric, in a way that even Derek Akorah would admire. Commenting on the ice-chase between Zao and Bond in *Die Another Day*, they write: 'The depiction of supernatural abilities can only nurture the aspirations of consumers, who are seeking a sophisticated and superhuman status' (the supernatural abilities are those of the motors). They conclude, 'the scene embodies the Jaguar brand narrative of an antihero or an outlaw rebelling against the sanctions of society.' Well, there we are. Think on that when you're next driving the Jag to the Dangerous Sports Society's Annual Ball.

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‘I do not know you but we are intimate, you and I’

We present the top three entries in our second annual competition

Our second annual poetry competition has been won by Katina Offord. Katina is a Society member, psychology MSc graduate and special needs teacher living in Farnham, Surrey.

Katina tells us she has only written a few poems, and never considered publishing them. ‘I wrote this poem after a motorbike rider died of multiple injuries as I tried to give first aid. I had been sceptical about PTSD (except as a result of war) until this experience, after which I saw the scene vividly several times a day as well as during dreams. These flashbacks were triggered by apparently random stimuli and were so shocking that they literally took my breath away until I wrote this poem.’

Our editor Jon Sutton and his father David, a published poet, judged the competition. David commented: ‘“Biker” is really quite striking in its use of detail that comes across as factually true but also resonates at a symbolic level: the leather gloves filled “cup-like with your blood”, the vision of the red pool like a STOP sign. Then we have the rueful wit of “You will not recover in this position”, and the sad unadorned compassion of the last verse. And while the poem is not in a strict form, it shows great formal control in its use of rhythm and varying line lengths.’

We received more than 50 entries: thanks to all who entered, and to Wiley-Blackwell for sponsoring the £50 prize.

Biker

Fastening your helmet for a ride in the sunshine
You did not know that it would not be you who would unfasten it,
But a stranger, fumbling with the unfamiliar buckles in the middle of the road.

The leather gloves shaped by your hands
Make a perfect bowl to cradle your broken head
And fill cup-like with your blood.

You will not recover in this position
And your speed has left too little time to heal these wounds.

Strangely like a drowsy child, with eyes open
You fight this sleep.
But the drips have slowed, the red pool
Large enough now to be seen from the sky
Like a warning to STOP!
Too late
And yet too early for life to be leaving you.

I do not know you
But we are intimate, you and I
For you gave me a front row seat
To see your gruesome acrobatics
And I held your hand as you died.

Katina Offord

This Morning 25 April

It's just a dog some say only a dog
Not a child – no it's not that – nor a substitute for one as some murmur.
Nor a partner/lover/husband/friend
Something more, different, constant
Consistently enthused at seeing me
for reasons only known to her
Feeling like I mattered when I am here or gone
the howling from the upstairs window
despair chilling my departure
For these last 15 years she's been there consistently and now
she fades still trying to show enthusiasm
Looking intensely at me as I come and go
my living declining oracle
This morning was not a good one
walking though food and water bowls
Her duties not making it out the door (twice)
lots of clean up missing getting the grant out
Wondering if it's time
No not a child or partner/husband/lover/friend
Something constant, different, consistently
for just a while more

Paul M. Camic, Professor of Psychology & Public Health, Research Director, Salomons Centre for Applied Psychology, Canterbury Christ Church University

If

If you can keep your head when your client
Is losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when your client doubts you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait for change and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or, being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;
If you can dream – and not make analysis your master;
If you can think – and not make theory your aim;
If you can meet with triumph and disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by the media to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the modality you gave your life to broken,
And not stoop and build 'em up with worn out tools;
If you can make one heap of all your interventions
And risk it on one real-world trial,
And lose, and start again with your intentions
And never breathe a word of blame, nor lose your smile.
If you can force your heart and mind and sinew
To serve your client long after they seem gone,
And so hold on when there seems nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on';
If you can talk with partners and keep your virtue,
Or talk with chief execs – nor lose the common touch;
If neither patients nor close colleagues can hurt you;
If all may count on you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving hour
With fifty minutes worth of distance run -
Yours is the clinic and all that's in it,
And – which is more – you'll be a psychologist my son!
(With apologies to Rudyard Kipling)

Christina Richards
Senior Specialist Psychology Associate and Clinical Research Fellow

‘Pain is inevitable, but suffering is optional’

Kirk Strosahl talks to Kal Kseib about acceptance and commitment therapy

Kirk Strosahl is co-founder of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), a cognitive behavioural approach that has gained widespread adoption in the mental health and substance abuse communities. He is the author of numerous books including *Brief Interventions for Radical Change* and *Inside this Moment*. He has gained international recognition for his innovative approach to the integration of behavioural health and primary care services. Strosahl lives near Seattle and works as a practising psychologist at Central Washington Family Medicine, a community health centre. He also teaches health professionals on how to use the principles of mindfulness and acceptance in general practice.

Who were the psychologists that originally inspired you?

Probably two people, depending on the era of my life. One was Neil Jacobson, who was a mentor and a friend, who unfortunately passed away in 1999. He was a brilliant theorist in cognitive behavioural therapy, doing some of the first studies breaking down the different components of cognitive therapy. He developed behaviour activation just before he passed away. The second would be Steven Hayes, who I met in 1986. We’ve been friends for pretty much our entire careers. So even though we’ve written together, we’ve also had a personal relationship and shared family evolutions. Both of those guys were pretty instrumental in the mindfulness movement early on, so those were the two people that I think of fondly.

How would you describe ACT in a nutshell?

I think ACT tries to promote people who are open to their own experience and can separate themselves from the literal meaning of their experience – so that they’re not governed by thoughts or feelings or emotional reactions to things. They are in touch with their personal values so that they are geared toward living life to its fullest.

What are your most inspired actions?

I think the time I truly felt the most inspired simply in terms of output was writing my most recent book, *Inside This Moment*. I was in a zone for the entire time that I was writing it, it was coming from the heart. It was actually quite an amazing experience. The book zeroes in on how to use the present moment in therapy to inspire people to live their lives to the fullest, and not to run from their own demons, but rather cradle them. So that was enjoyable. Then I’ve also always been inspired to work with Patti [Dr Patricia Robinson]. We have a lot of fun and there’s intellectual growth when we write and get our arms around stuff together. So I’ve been very lucky that way.

Where are ACT and the other so-called ‘third-wave therapies’ heading now?

I think people are going to have to get their arms around what we mean by ‘mindfulness’ in a much more scientifically sound sense. Not the term, not the popular concept, but understanding exactly what goes into it. We’re still very overly general about it in our conversations, and because of that we’re losing leverage in therapy that we would otherwise gain by being more discriminating. That’s one area I think is going to see a lot of further growth. And I think we’re going to be looking at how we get our treatments briefer without losing effectiveness, because resource systems out there simply can’t afford the longer-term version of CBT or ACT for the masses – that’s another big area. How are we going to populate these concepts into public health models and work with lay people, primary care providers and teachers, for example? We’re still very therapist-centric in our profession, and because of that our population health effectiveness has been extremely limited.

I think the other area that is going to become bigger and more important is values-based behaviour change. It’s not like people haven’t been exploring it, but I think the amount of development will increase. There are measurement issues that are going to have to be dealt with, as well as creating more efficient ways of talking to people about motivating factors in their lives.

What is the greatest opportunity ACT has in today’s world?

I actually think that, if we don’t fall on our own sword, it’s going to be about bringing mindfulness concepts into the general public and Western civilisation. That’s not going to mean getting everybody in the West to put in hours of practice a day, sitting on a pillow ‘umm-ing’. Rather it’s this idea that these are actually pretty portable interventions based on neuroscience. They have a very rapid effect on brain neural pathway development and brain efficiency, and they don’t have to be these onerous, lifelong practices. There’s going to be a huge opportunity there if we can get the right message to people – that these are things you can teach yourself and your brain in small bits, and that it’s more about persistence than the amount of time you take. It’s about doing things intentionally and practising intention, as well as practising paying attention. These two things go hand in hand in mindfulness – this ability to pay attention in a particular way and then to act with intention inside of your own space. To me those things are so intricately linked to

psychological health that if we could get those out into the public domain in ways which didn't seem overwhelming to people, that would be a huge accomplishment for ACT, or for any of the mindfulness-based therapies that could get this figured out. So it isn't just in the hands of a few people.

I once came across the ACT metaphor 'find your cliff and jump'. What's your favourite ACT metaphor and why?

That saying sounds a little fatalistic to me! If you ask me which I use most often, it would be the idea that the mind is the schoolyard bully who demands to take your lunch in order to let you go to school. So gradually your entire ritual of going to school is built around making contact with this bully and you forget why you're actually at school. I think the other feature of that metaphor is that it's about making choices – and I can build off that. 'Who do you want making decisions for you in your life – your anxiety, depression, anger, or you?' So it gives people the ability to pick between mind and the human being. I like those kinds of 'choice points'. Another one I use a lot is 'forks in the road', and 'right turns versus left turns'. Journey metaphors are something I use a lot.

Are ACT and CBT actually little more than saying to people 'live with it, or change it'?

There are hidden properties of treatments, and then there are the observable properties of treatments. In ACT the observable properties are quite different, with an emphasis on values. It's saying to people 'don't just tolerate your life, build your life from within'. ACT uses values as a foundation for addressing that.

Then there's the ability to create space between you and what starts to show up in your life when you start doing things that matter. It's an optimistic treatment that assumes people can do amazing things if they get lined up behind the right psychological processes. And it might well be that in CBT, even though ostensibly focusing on helping people change thoughts and behaviours, the act of talking about thoughts and behaviours is in a way itself a kind of a 'defusion' intervention. That's what I mean by 'hidden' properties. You think that the mechanism is about the client becoming more logical and less irrational, but it may in fact be that by talking about thoughts you're actually doing 'defusion' without even realising it.

What would you consider to be your greatest career accomplishment?

Definitely a turning point in my career was the first ACT book. We were, at that point, pretty much unknown and there was a 50/50 chance we were going to be pilloried by the cognitive community. And we did get a little along the way, but it could have been much worse. Also back then we wrote books the old-fashioned way – we didn't have these file-sharing services, so we actually had to get together physically and have writing festivals, and that was a huge plus for me personally. Four or five days at a time with Steve [Dr Steven Hayes], locked in a room arguing about every single thing as we wrote the first book. We had five or six sessions like that which were pretty legendary… in my mind anyway.

> "I try to stay moving in the direction I believe in, which is to help people."

You're a specialist in delivering brief, or 'focused' ACT interventions to patients – sometimes as brief as 15 minutes. Could you give a picture of what you might focus on in a session, say for diabetes or depression?

The goal of focused ACT is to get patients to make direct contact with the unworkable results of their current life strategies. Usually, these strategies involve avoiding dealing with important life issues – such as maintaining social health, managing diet or other health risk behaviours in the case of diabetes. The counter-weight in focused ACT is to get the patient to make direct contact with what matters to them in their life, and whether their avoidance behaviours are helping them move in that direction. This discrepancy creates a 'healthy anxiety', which we encourage patients to accept as a 'signal' that some type of change in personal strategy is needed. You don't get people to change behaviours by giving them a label, or scaring them with adverse consequences if they don't change, or lecturing them about the necessity of change. Change comes from within, not from without. Most patients know implicitly that they are avoiding things, but they don't want to be condescended to, criticised or cajoled about it. So focused ACT is a very humanising approach in which we readily agree that making important changes in life might likely trigger painful emotional consequences or distressing memories of past failures, et cetera. Pain is inevitable, but suffering is optional.

The therapist and patient are on the same journey in this, and they've just happened to run into each other. There is no difference really between us.

These briefer interventions are likely to become increasingly necessary in the NHS. Do they have downsides?

There is no convincing evidence that how much time you spend with someone in therapy directly determines the degree of clinical benefit. It is more what you educate the client in, when you do it, and how you do it. In the US we already have several large effectiveness studies showing that one-, two- and three-session interventions in general practice settings produce clinically significant, long-lasting changes in both symptoms and functional status. The effect sizes of these interventions by and large are comparable to 'gold standard' effect sizes seen from longer-term therapy RCTs with the same condition.

The principles of ACT and FACT are really principles of how to live an intentional, value-based life. I'm confident that if the UK NHS were to adopt a principle-based treatment – rather than technique-based ones – that can be applied across the board with all types of medical and mental health issues, or their combination, that more people in need could be served without sacrificing clinical benefits.

What are your own highest values?

Personally I think of myself as being a really honest person, I'm 'good to my word' as they say in America. I try to do things with integrity. I'm very persistent in my life journey. I try to stay moving in the direction I believe in, which is to help people. And related to that is compassion for people suffering, and also self-compassion for my own flaws and imperfections, which are too numerous to mention.

How would you define success?

Anything that helps clients to get their lives back. We're far from being there yet as a profession, I think. We don't help everybody. I think success is that we never give up searching for ways to improve how we do business and how we help people. I guess if I could 'float over my own funeral', I'd probably want to hear people say, among other things, that 'he never gave up' and that 'he never stopped trying to improve himself'. I see life as a great teacher, and if we are willing to be students it will teach us everything we need to know to prepare us for our death. So everything along the way is part of learning. It's not out of the flow, everything is in the flow.

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An actor's life for me?

Ian Florance meets **Naomi Hynd**

Naomi Hynd had written to *The Psychologist*, querying whether her work with performers and drama schools might interest our readers. Five minutes into the interview I was stunned by the sheer amount of work and training Naomi packs into an average day. I needed some initial bearings. I asked her to describe her life at the moment.

'I have a two-and-a-half-year-old son and a busy husband who needs looking after! I work three days a week in the NHS as a Highly Specialist Clinical Psychologist. I'm part of a neuropsychology service and specialise in stroke, working on two inpatient wards but mostly in the community. I am just finishing the PgDip in Clinical Neuropsychology from Glasgow University and applying for the Qualification in Clinical Neuropsychology.'

Naomi's private practice addresses a variety of conditions, but one of her core passions is mental health promotion. 'We should be helping to pre-empt problems rather than letting them develop. In the NHS I provide psychoeducation to large numbers of stroke patients in lecture format and work closely with staff teams and outside organisations. I'm also trying to get drama schools to provide actors with the skills that will last them through their training and careers.'

This latter focus – the reason Naomi contacted us – links to her own career as an actor. 'This was on hold for a while but it's picking up again. I've just signed with a new agent who is putting me forward for commercials and small parts that I can fit around my NHS commitments.'

'They knock you down to build you up... this can be brutal'

Naomi's acting interests link in with psychology's growing role in shaping a variety of communications (from health promotion to commercial advertising). It also links in with previous interviewees who have applied psychology in other performing roles – musicians and dancers, for instance. What has psychology got to do with acting? Naomi is clear about this. 'Three people dropped out of my year at drama school with mental health problems, and certain personality types can be drawn to the profession. It's a tough life, so in training they knock you down to build you up, but this can be brutal. My tutor at drama school advised me to have a nose job (which I resisted). There's definitely a pressure to get thin and look good.

'Once you're earning a living it doesn't get any better. Obviously auditions involve repeated rejection. Say you get a good job, even a leading part – after the shoot or run is finished you might find yourself back waiting tables. People recognise you only to assume that you've become a failure. Sometimes you can be perfect for a part but still not get it… I was once turned down for a role because I was taller than the male lead! In itself, acting entails risks. Working as a drama therapist demonstrated the importance of "de-roling" patients after an exercise. Professional actors often commit completely to parts that they lose themselves. Then there are long hours and the lifestyle. They can come off stage with a buzz and search for a stimulant – smoking, alcohol, drugs or other high-risk activities. Only 1 in 20 actors earns an annual salary of over £20,000, and many spend long periods of time out of work or touring and away from home. These sorts of issues also affect directors and other backstage staff. The result is a huge range of mental health problems, not to mention drama-specific problems like stage fright. Then come the reviews of your work and the sense of failure if they are not positive. The media can be unnecessarily brutal particularly to famous actors, but what does that do to your self-esteem and sense of control?'

Naomi says it's interesting that there isn't much research in this area. 'I would like to do some work with Equity, but creative professions can be suspicious of those wanting to tinker round in their

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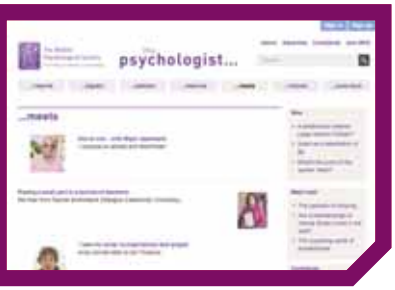

processes – by explaining creativity they feel experts might destroy it.'

Are drama schools interested in this idea of mental health education? 'I've worked with some London drama schools that were very open to the topic, where I've run workshops for actors. Currently if a student develops a mental health problem, they may be referred to a counsellor (depending on the drama school), which is fine but they are not being provided with the skills to manage their mental health long-term. By contrast, I want mental health promotion on the curriculum of drama schools.'

'They put people to sleep; I wake them up'

So, how did such a varied and unusual career develop? What is Naomi's background? 'My dad was a GP, my mum a nurse. The rest of my family are anaesthetists, including my husband. They put people to sleep; I wake them up and talk to them!' Naomi completed her thesis on sleep difficulties working with the Northumbria Centre for Sleep Research. She is passionate about the benefits of CBT-I and is setting up a primary insomnia service with consultant neurologists who specialise in sleep disorders where she works.

'My grandmother was a trained singer and my father a concert-level pianist so perhaps that influenced my creativity. As a teenager I trained with the National Youth Theatre of Great Britain and was always working on plays.' Naomi's family insisted she got a degree before going to drama school, 'so I studied anthropology and archaeology at Durham University – developing my interest in people, the cultures and societies they come from'. At weekends she did an HNC in Drama since, as she says 'I like to keep busy'. After this she went to drama school in London on a one-year accredited course, 'which was very expensive so I worked alongside studying. Afterwards, I went for auditions but the rejection was difficult. I was temping – which is fine, but if you want to be acting it isn't good for your self-esteem or motivation. I was also getting into debt, so I made a decision. I applied for an MA in Dramatherapy which allowed me to use my skills and further understand how people think. After the course I worked in the NHS with clients with learning disabilities and acute mental health problems. I worked alongside art and music therapists, clinical psychologists and psychology assistants who helped to co-facilitate and evaluate the dramatherapy groups. I realised that clinical psychologists had extensive research and leadership skills and valued the fact that they could draw on many different models. The experience motivated me to do a two-year, one-day-a-week Graduate Diploma in Psychology. It was everything I hoped for. I particularly found the social psychology and cognitive work fascinating. I was also doing acting and dramatherapy at the same time.' I pointed out that Naomi has seemed to keep – to put it mildly – pretty busy. 'I sometimes think I ought to practise what I preach and get a better work–life balance, but I enjoy being busy.'

Naomi then worked as a volunteer psychology assistant one day a week for six months in older adults and immediately applied for the doctorate. 'I chose an elective in older adults because I'd really enjoyed my placement and was interested in the cognitive aspects of ageing. Three months after giving birth I started the clinical neuropsychology course via the CPD route.' Naomi is also trained in acceptance and commitment therapy, which she uses routinely in her work with stroke patients.

To say the least, Naomi has come to clinical psychology by an unusual route, following a fascinating range of interests. What does she think of the route to chartership now? 'My anxiety is that it's becoming about money. I notice that they are now offering self-funded places which could reduce diversity. There's a worrying parallel to junior doctors who are going abroad to get better-paid jobs.'

Do psychology and drama really go together? 'Yes, more so than just in the way I've started to link them. For instance, film directors contact me via LinkedIn to ask for help in understanding characters' psychology. There's a role for psychologists as consultants in the area – maybe to actors and writers as well as directors.' Why did you raise this issue now? 'A number of papers in 2015 by the government and the Mental Health Foundation have raised the importance of mindfulness and mental health promotion. Plus, I've returned to performing and it's prompted me to act… so to speak.'

'Being a human being, not an expert'

I asked Naomi if there was anything else she wanted to discuss. 'Well, I read an article in *The Psychologist* by Naoimh Fox about working as a psychologist with hearing loss. It greatly interested me since I wear two hearing aids. Being open from the outset about my disability is a good way to encourage stroke patients to, in turn, talk about their issues. It suggests you're a human being not just a psychologist, and I believe that strengthens the therapeutic relationship. Disability and diversity are important issues in our profession – as they are in acting…'

It's a tribute to Naomi's ability to communicate that this rich information on a variety of topics came across in an interview conducted via Skype on her phone while she was in her car, parked outside the venue for her next appointment. To find out more about her work see www.naomihynd.com.

Quest for identity – recovering from eating disorders

Lucia Giombini outlines her work and thinking around anorexia

'The soul needs a place.' That quote, by Greek philosopher Plotinus (204/5–270 BCE) hangs at the entrance to the inpatient eating disorder service in Todi, Italy, which I visited for the first time in 2006. The service admits both adults and young people for a few months at a time, and I recall my surprise at how little it resembled a hospital; its warm and nurturing – almost homely – atmosphere was designed to provide an appropriate environment to foster recuperation and recovery, to allow inpatients the space to be restored to physical and psychological health and to reconnect with themselves.

My experience came at the beginning of my clinical doctorate, when I went out into the field for the first time. From the lectures I understood that eating disorders lead the sufferer to reject, or abuse, one of the most elemental ingredients of our lives – food. It is difficult to conceive of a biological function more essential to sustaining life than eating. For nearly all of us, breathing is an automatic process. The same applies to sleep. Eating, instead, requires a degree of deliberate engagement in the acts of gathering, shopping or going to a restaurant. Furthermore, the act of eating mediates between nature and culture, and throughout history human beings have always attributed meaning to food to express social, psychological, political, cultural and religious beliefs.

I was also struck by how eating disorders affect the mind as well as the body, highlighting the importance of the circular connection between these two parts of our selves. It was soon clear to me that people suffering from eating disorders may die as a result of the organic complications of the illness. A general lack of awareness of the illness, in conjunction with the degree of severity that this disorder can reach, was simultaneously both extremely upsetting and fascinating from a psychological perspective.

It is one of the few mental illnesses from which, initially, a patient has little motivation to recover. The link that a patient often establishes between the condition and their sense of identity is characteristic, as is the related feeling that it somehow makes them special, or unique. One of the first steps with a patient is consequently to help them to recognise that unhelpful thoughts, revolving around the body and food, belong to an illness. Psychoeducation about these symptoms helps them to see the disadvantages of suffering from the disorder; there is a direct correlation between an increasing awareness of the condition's negative effects and the will to recover.

In Italian clinical practice I learnt that offering patients a multidisciplinary and personalised treatment programme is crucial to their recovery. This approach allocates a team of professionals to the patient, who can address every aspect of their condition – organic, nutritional, psychological and educational. Ultimately the patient needs to find his or her own personal reasons to embark on the path to recovery. After this formative experience I decided that I wanted to devote my career to understanding more about it.

Eating disorders most commonly affect adolescent girls and young adult woman, with those between the ages of 15 and 35 representing the majority who receive treatment. They can also occur in boys and men, in older women and in pre-pubertal children of both sexes. Over 725,000 men and women in the UK are affected by eating disorders. Anorexia nervosa alone affects about one in 150 of the adolescent population.

Although there may be some variation in the detail of the clinical presentation related to age and gender, the core features are consistent across the age spectrum. What is being expressed through weight and shape concerns and unhelpful eating behaviour/patterns is essentially a quest for identity, starting with this question: 'Am I good enough?' The immediate answer from loved ones is naturally 'Yes, of course'. The way in which we can reinforce this message, and for those we love to actually believe it, is through a complex personal growth process in which every one of us – parents, relatives, teachers, coaches, professionals – is involved.

The etiology of eating disorders is multifactorial. Evidence continues to emerge of the importance of social and cultural factors, which relate to body image and peer-media influence. Alongside this, there is now a substantial body of research into the neurobiological and psychological vulnerabilities and sensitivities that heighten the risk of developing a disorder.

I continued to work in other outpatient eating disorder services, and I assisted in the development of new inpatient units in Italy and Malta. During this time I had the opportunity to meet many young people, and noted the sheer quantity and range of rituals enacted on their bodies. They paint, pierce, dress up and manipulate their body in many different ways and are immersed in a mass-media culture that exalts the use of the body as a means to communicate identity, values, status, and also encourages the viewer/reader to consider the body as the basis of happiness and health.

The message and the emotions that they want to express and communicate through their bodies are another essential focus of the psychological work. They display extreme behaviour such excessive dieting, intense physical activity, and self-harm. The attention that they pay to their own bodies can consequently easily metamorphose into an obsession.

After a few years of working in the clinical field I became the Project Manager for a national research project exploring the predictive factors and psychopathological aspects of childhood and adolescent eating disorders for the Italian Ministry of Health. The experience provided me with a deeper understanding of the organisation of the services involved, and the importance of offering a continuity of care between different stages of treatment. This still represents a difficult element, which needs improvement. A smooth transition will decrease the possibility of a relapse, so it

is important to make sure this is facilitated.

The neuropsychological aspects, the process of their thoughts, is as important as their content. People with eating disorders seem to have a lack of flexibility in their thinking styles and a strong tendency to focus on details at the cost of the bigger picture. New approaches like cognitive remediation therapy (CRT) seem to help patients to developing more helpful thinking strategies. I am dedicating a part of my job in contributing to the research evaluating the effectiveness of CRT as it appears very promising.

When I moved to London over two years ago I had the honour of working with Professor Bryan Lask at Rhodes Farm, an inpatient unit for children and adolescents with eating disorders, when he was medical director. He was the one who more than 20 years ago with Dr Rachel Bryant-Waugh, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, opened the first unit in Europe for eating disorders in children and adolescents. I owe to them and their conspicuous work what I know about this disorder.

Professor Lask sadly passed away in October 2015, and his death is a significant loss to the academic world. His description of anorexia nervosa as a disorder of paradoxes has always particularly intrigued me;

> For example, pre-morbidly our patients have been conscientious and compliant but during the illness they are rebellious and resistant; they see themselves as fat when they are thin; feel well when they are ill; feel full when they are empty. They starve themselves but sometimes binge, they are obsessed with food but avoid it. They tend to be popular and successful but have low self-esteem; they appear to be in control and controlling but feel they have no control or are out of control. They look fragile but behave with extraordinary strength and determination; they perceive their tormenting and destructive illness as friend and a comfort. At times they appear to have insight but can switch instantly to a state of illness denial (anosognosia).

In a psychological session with a young girl suffering from anorexia it is crucial to 'read between the lines', as what is said is frequently contradicted by reality. An insistence that they are 'perfectly well' is common, as is an apparent unconcern with their deteriorating physical condition.

The main question I ask a patient to understand the severity of their condition is: How much time do you spend thinking about what you eat and how you look? Often the answer is: All the time, apart from when I sleep. Subsequently, the focus of the work helps them to externalise the illness. Is it you or the anorexia's voice speaking? This question is often met with hostility, even anger, as they are unable to distinguish between themselves and the disorder. Eventually, however, they will begin to adopt similar language to the practitioner when discussing their condition. The approach is always motivational: they need to feel that they are not being forced into changing, as this will usually trigger a powerful urge to resist.

Despite working in this field for many years, it remains a challenge. The results of my work are often only seen years later, when I receive letters from patients thanking me and stating that – at the time of treatment – they did not allow themselves to openly acknowledge my words, but that they were nevertheless listening. Moments like this serve to reinforce my conviction that I am on the right path.

Today we can confidently assert that great steps forward have been made in our understanding and treatment of eating disorders, but should also recognise that our knowledge is far from complete and that we have yet to identify treatments that are consistently effective. There are emerging treatments such as emotions-focused therapies, cognitive remediation therapies, and yoga and mindfulness-based therapies; early intervention, a motivational approach and multidisciplinary treatment, with the involvement of caregivers, remain the key elements of any effective treatment programme.

The government has recently announced a policy objective of expediting care and expanding services for teenagers with eating disorders. An additional £30m of funding has been specifically allocated to eating disorder services as the result of compelling evidence supporting the importance of a rapid and focused response in effectively dealing with the condition. Support will be offered much more quickly, with an increasing number of patients being seen within a month of referral, or within a week for urgent cases. This position is very encouraging, and holds real promise.

To quote Georges Bernanos, 'When the youth cool off, the whole world will chatter their teeth'. We all need to try to respond to the 'call' of young people. Parents need to be informed of the defining characteristics of their children's difficulties, and to remember that they are an essential ally in the prevention and treatment process.

I hope that progress in research and treatment will help us to raise young people who appreciate themselves and their own bodies, and treat them with respect.

I *Dr Lucia Giombini is a Chartered Psychologist and Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society. She currently works as Highly Specialist Clinical Psychologist at Rhodes Wood Hospital, Partnerships In Care, London. See www.luciagiombini.com.*

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It is anticipated therefore that candidates applying for this post will have considerable experience of working in secondary care adult mental health services delivering psychology services for a broad range of moderate to severe mental health problems. Evidence of professional leadership experience will be expected together with a demonstrated involvement in offering advice at a senior level on professional issues to managers and service planners. Previous leadership training will also be an advantage as will evidence of ability to deliver and supervise in a range of psychological therapy modalities. In addition, a proven record of involvement in significant quality improvement work and in research of publishable quality is highly desirable.

The applied psychologists within our service have a range of clinical interests reflecting a variety of theoretical and therapeutic orientations, and an emphasis is placed on good peer supervision and support. Clinical services are also delivered in primary care settings across Highland. We also offer supervision to Trainee Clinical Psychologists on the NHS Scotland Clinical Psychology (D. Clin. Psychol) Training Programme as well as to Trainee Clinical Associates in Applied Psychology.

Clinical Psychologist – Band 8a

£40428 - £48514 **Ref: IM15/16/74**

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You will be working with Adult Mental Health referrals from CMHT's, one of which you will be aligned to and following completion of the reorganisation, be line managed through. There will still be an AMH lead clinician and an overall professional lead. As stated in the advert above, close links exist with Glasgow D.Clin Psych training.

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We are looking for an additional clinical psychologist to support our expanding programme having experience in facilitating group work. The successful candidate would also require an interest in MBT although clinical experience of the model is not essential as training will be provided both in-house and via the Anna Freud Centre.

As part of your role you will be a pivotal member of the MDT and will work alongside other mental health professionals overseeing the programs that are currently in place. You will be based at Cornerstone House in Elstree, Hertfordshire.

We are looking for someone with a high level of emotional intelligence who either already has the relevant current experience or can be successfully developed into the role. You will have supervisory responsibility for two assistant psychologists.

To apply for the position please send a copy of your CV to the following email address with a covering letter:
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Short-listed applicants will be contacted by email. Please check your emails regularly, including your junk/spam folder.

Please note that Vision Mental Healthcare is an equal opportunities employer. All successful candidates with be required to provide two references and have DBS clearance.

CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS - **FRIDAY 12 AUGUST 2016**.

WORKING HOURS: **40 PER WEEK**
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Compelling despite compromise

'Sixty per cent of people put on weight after they enter a comfortable relationship' – reveals clinical psychologist Professor Tanya Byron in her TV series *Lose Weight for Love* about behaviour change in eating and exercise. It seems so obvious, so overlooked, and perhaps explains a lot about public health. As an academic health psychologist, I wondered: What is it about couplehood that promotes unhealthy eating and sedentary lifestyle? And if each partner is part of the other's weight problems, would temporary separation help?

Each episode features an overweight couple, sedentary and with poor diet. After health checks, Professor Byron separates them for 10 weeks. Apart, but with social support from friends or family, Professor Byron and her team work to change their eating and exercise behaviours. Byron's team includes Rick Shakes-Braithwaite as physiologist and personal trainer, Professor Paul Dolan as 'behavioural scientist' [see 'One on one' on p.656] and an off-camera dietician. Participants follow a personalised exercise and diet plan (with the personal trainer as kingpin), and Professor Byron works with psychological issues that lie behind the unhealthy behaviours. These often lead to eating or drinking to escape painful feelings, or involve the meaning of food in the relationship.

Lose Weight for Love
BBC One

Byron and Dolan bring experience in broadcasting and skill at describing psychological ideas for a general audience. The programme does not sensationalise obesity and shows that, sometimes, unhealthy behaviours can be a result of psychological problems or relationship issues – which health psychology sometimes ignores. I appreciated Tanya's warmth and wisdom, especially in Episodes 3 and 4. The charismatic personal trainer nearly steals the show, and also uses simple behaviour change techniques. Behaviour change is rightly shown as a team effort, with skills of cooking and exercise counting as much as determinants of behaviour, and experts in nutrition, exercise and psychology playing their part.

But long-standing psychological issues seemed improved by a short conversation with Professor Byron, or a behavioural experiment or challenge; there must have been a great deal of work off-camera. There were also times when the added value was not clear of the academics' interventions beyond those of the skilful personal trainer. Paul Dolan, known for research on happiness and bestselling book *Happiness by Design*, played a minor role and without the airtime to explain the science behind them, his behaviour-change interventions seemed gimmicky. An outstanding researcher, he appeared less comfortable working with clients; it seemed they rarely welcomed his interventions, and these sometimes struck me as regrettable.

I was hoping for more airtime on how the couple's togetherness contributed to their problems, or how separation led to more change than the other interventions alone. Even without underlying issues, health behaviour change rarely comes easily, and opportunities were missed to help the process (and educate viewers) by working with a health psychologist.

TV programmes such as *Lose Weight for Love* mix entertainment, education and inspiration, and the team achieves a compelling programme despite the necessary compromises. The core concept of separation for behaviour change is fascinating (though perhaps unrealistic except in severe cases), and the series casts light on causes of behaviour and change that the media and psychologists often ignore. I wished for more attention to its intriguing core concept, but this was a show I looked forward to each week and learned from. It is worth watching for anyone interested in living more healthily, or anyone who helps others to do so.

Reviewed by Dr Francis Quinn *who is a Lecturer in Psychology, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen*

Witty words of wisdom

Talking Sense About Medicine
Richard Asher

Talking Sense About Medicine presents a collection of writings from the renowned physician Richard Asher (1912–1969). Asher is delightfully frank in his writing style and provides advice about good writing and logical reasoning that are as relevant today as they were over 50 years ago when that very advice was written by typewriter.

This book will appeal to psychologists who are interested in organic causes underlying psychological symptoms, as Asher himself was. But that's not all it has to offer. Delving much deeper into meta-cognition, Asher provides a thought-provoking discussion of how the language we use to describe disease will alter the way we think of it, and the treatment provided.

Well ahead of his time, Asher also discusses the need for evidence-based medicine, and the therapeutic benefits of placebo, including a sense of 'salesmanship' from the physician. Some of the topics covered are dense, but Asher leads the reader through, speaking directly to us with a level of clarity to be admired.

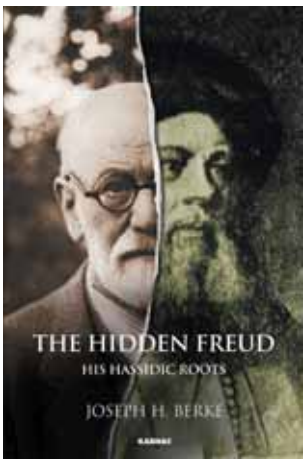
Asher is kind enough to share with us his own advice for writing, and as a PhD student in the final writing stage, I found comfort in his wonderfully satirical piece 'Aren't I lucky? I can write', which describes the painstaking processes of revising and editing a piece of writing to share an idea.

His personality really shines through in his writing, leaving you the reader with a sense of having known a truly remarkable man, full of common sense, wisdom and wit.

Psychology News Press; 2015; Hb £14.99
Reviewed by Audrey Henderson *who is a PhD student at the University of St Andrews*

Intriguing revelations

The Hidden Freud: His Hassidic Roots
Joseph H. Berke



This scholarly text explores in meticulous detail, the Jewish roots of psychoanalysis. Berke reveals a wealth of material about Freud's Jewishness, from being steeped in Kabbalah, the Jewish mystical tradition, to secretive meetings with the Lubavitcher 'Rebbe' (from the Yiddish for rabbi, but referring to prominent, dynastic leaders) Menachem Mendel Schneerson. Berke's assertion that psychoanalysis emerged from the secularisation of Kabbalah is made convincingly, based upon rigorous documentary research, citing the teachings of the Rebbes and Freud's colleagues, associates and disciplines.

Freudians and those of a non-psychoanalytic bent will be intrigued by revelations about Freud's relationships with his close family and religious leaders that explain his reputation as a 'godless Jew'. What is clear is that Freud's seeming about-turn from Jewishness was a pragmatic move, designed to smooth his transition to the prestigious psychoanalytic figure he became. His privileged prophetic position would have been hard to attain had he revealed his religiosity.

Freud became (and remains) a godlike figure, with many disciples, to the present day. With multiple rich examples, Berke demonstrates Freud's deep ties to his orthodox, pious Jewishness (or Hassidism), as if *forgetting and remembering* it, for example the inclusion of 'Yiddishisms' in his writing. This evokes the developmental journey we all take in becoming independent from, yet interdependent with, our childhood and origins. The tensions between mysticism, religion and science remained an issue all of Freud's life, providing enlightenment for us today, for example in understanding hierarchies of evidence in health care.

For a Freud fan like me the book holds many highlights. I found the chapter 'Lowness of spirit' particularly interesting and offering insights on the nature of depression in all its manifestations. Freud's conception of depression is explicated in connection to his own ill health, losses and trauma, including the deaths of his brother Julius, his daughter Sophie and grandson Heinele. Also illuminating are the connections between psychoanalysis and other sciences including quantum physics, chemistry and mathematics in the chapter 'Atonement'.

Interesting anecdotes abound, including that of the Hungarian neurologist Sándor Ferenczi, a close associate of Freud who accompanied him to the US in 1909. There psychoanalysis was introduced to an American audience and Freud lectured alongside the Nobel prize winners Ernest Rutherford, a chemist, and A.A. Michelson, a physicist. Ferenczi later wrote about a move away from reductionism towards holism in the field of human relations. His ideas were early forerunners for interdisciplinary inquiry that is now increasingly commonplace.

In discovering more about psychoanalysis and its deep roots, I am struck by its contrast to the predominance of 'fixing' in modern mental health, in particular the emphasis on CBT in Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT). For those seeking different types of intensive or longer-term therapy there are many barriers, particularly in the nebulous realm of wellbeing. Psychoanalysis refers to *soul-analysis*, a seeking for self-completion. This requires a long and deep commitment that has concomitant resource implications, a tough ask in our cash-strapped NHS. Yet for each soul analysed and repaired, the benefits radiate from the therapeutic space to the wider world, making a difference and helping others. Surely all of us, whatever our background and means should be enabled, in Freud's words, 'to love and to work' (*Lieben und Arbeiten*).

This text is highly recommended to those who seek more information on Freud the person and the origins of psychoanalysis.

Karnac Books; 2015; Pb £25.99
Reviewed by Dr Victoria Tischler *who is a Chartered Psychologist and freelance research consultant*

A homage to Freud

Genius of the Modern World
BBC Four

This was something of a homage, and historian Bettany Hughes did not seek to lock horns with Freud, as so many commentators have. Instead there was appreciation that Freud had transformed thinking about psychological illnesses and the treatment of those who are suffering from psychological disorders. Moreover, there was acknowledgement that much of Freud's thinking had permeated the modern world. Hughes herself seemed rather taken with the notion of a Freudian slip – as the famous joke has it: saying one thing when you mean your mother. Predictably, there was criticism, particularly, on Freud's thinking about sex. The philosopher A.C. Grayling was brought in to briefly and gently take on a few Freudian ideas.

Pleasant though this all was, and there was some excellent archive footage, I felt an opportunity had been missed to explore how Freudian thought has powerfully influenced neuroscience, especially in the relatively new area of neuropsychoanalysis. Understanding the psychological impact of brain damage, its disempowering effects and patients' attempts to defend against the loss of abilities, have all been fruitfully framed by Freud's thinking and model of mind. Although Hughes did recognise that Freud was a neuroscientist (one of the first), his legacy in this now so modern of research areas went unappreciated. Freud always held that one day psychology would be replaced by biology, and although I do not think he was correct in this – 'augmented' rather than 'replaced' might have been a better word – he would have been fascinated by developments in neuroimaging and our growing understanding of genetics, and cells, and how the activities of biological molecules underpin all human behaviour from conception to thought and emotion.

For something with a bit more meat on it I'd recommend Frank Sulloway's brilliant book *Freud, Biologist of Mind*.

Reviewed by Professor Martin Conway, *City University London*

A 'new direction'

Rethinking Excessive Habits and Addictive Behaviors
Tony Bevacqua

Twelve-step approaches to addiction treatment re-enforce helplessness and prolong addictive behaviours. This is the claim in *Rethinking Excessive Habits and Addictive Behaviors*. Bevacqua's book argues we have been culturally indoctrinated to believe that 12-step programmes are the only way to treat addictive behaviours. Excessive habits and addictive behaviours are normal human experiences and better understood as learning disorders on a continuum. Thus, he writes, 12-step programmes don't consider an individual's unique circumstances. The book's argument is that people with ongoing addictive behaviours fail to address underlying problems such as poor coping skills, low self-esteem, early developmental difficulties, fear or identity crisis. Themes of celebrity culture, parenting and our learned dependence on others' love and approval are explored in relation to their influence on addictive behaviours and treatment.

Bevacqua is uncompromising in his criticism of treatment within the USA, particularly 12-Step, so readers new to the field would be wise to take a wider view of the literature regarding addiction and substance misuse treatment. Bevacqua is a life coach and therapist, and the book does have the style of a self-help book rather than a serious academic text. The book's duel focus is on the criticism of the 'Establishment' and what Bevacqua refers to as a 'new direction'. Having worked in the UK substance misuse treatment sector for nearly eight years, I definitely found myself engaging more with the latter.

Roman & Littlefield; 2015; Hb £24.95
Reviewed by Malcolm Clayton *who is a third-year BSc Psychology student at the University of Derby (Distance) and Team Leader in an addictions service in the West Midlands*

You will find exclusive book extracts on our website, including one from Charles Fernyhough's book *The Voices Within: The History and Science of How We Talk to Ourselves*. In it, Fernyhough discusses the 'hidden partner' in art. Read at http://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/hidden-partner-art

To contribute to 'Reviews', contact the editor on jon.sutton@bps.org.uk or follow @psychmag on Twitter for opportunities.

Short, sharp and informative

The Sheldon Short Guide to Worry and Anxiety
Frank Tallis
The Sheldon Short Guide to Phobias and Panic
Kevin Gournay

Sheldon Press describe themselves as 'A leading publisher of self-help books on a variety of medical and psychological topics'. Their Short Guide series is a new range of pocket-sized books, and with the *Guide to Phobias and Panic* being merely 52 pages and the *Guide to Worry and Anxiety* being 58 pages, they really do live up to their descriptions. Each book is written by an expert and designed to provide an overview of the condition, an outline of treatments available and a self-help treatment plan. The self-help methodology is not dissimilar to the IAPT course approach.

Both guides – but the *Guide to Worry and Anxiety* in particular – take the refreshing and reassuring approach that the subjects they are addressing are not problems in themselves but that it is when these normal processes escalate or get out of control that they become a problem. And both authors adopt a fairly warm and friendly tone, making the books easy to read.

Due to their brevity and step-by-step approach I got the impression that these guides are aimed at the sort of person who wouldn't normally read a self-help book. With short chapters covering each step of the self-help programme they allow progression at the reader's own pace and aim to provide practical, easily implemented tools to learn to deal with these issues effectively and rapidly.

Each guide covers two related topics and focuses on dealing with the issues in a general way, but tends to focus more on one area over the other. The *Guide to Phobias and Panic* concerns itself more with the panic side and panic attacks rather than directly focusing on specific phobias. The *Guide to Worry and Anxiety* focuses more on worry and how this can lead to anxiety.

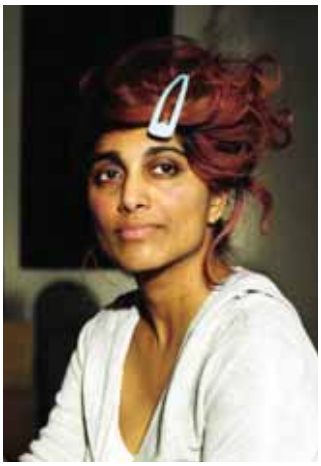
The *Guide to Phobias and Panic* aims to cover a lot of ground in its condensed page count, making it seem a little too concise in places as there is no further information section or details of where to purchase some of the items suggested, such as relaxation CDs. I was also slightly bemused to find a reference to videocassettes, suggesting that this was an update to a previous edition.

Overall these are useful little guides providing succinct, easily comprehensible and immediately applicable information in a user friendly format.

Sheldon Press; 2015; Pb £3.99 each
Reviewed by Louise Beaton *who is an Open University psychology graduate*

A bumpy but engaging ride

The Musical Mental Health Cabaret
Attenborough Arts Centre, Leicester



Priya Mistry enters the compact auditorium, shiny, glittery and colourful. It seems at first we might have fun as the she and the set are dressed up as if to party, complete with mirror balls, music, and confetti. Then, approaching the audience, in a quavering voice she introduces herself and enquires how we are feeling. Several individuals are asked to rate how they are 'on a scale of 1 to 10' as if a doctor or researcher is seeking information about symptoms of mental illness. She tells us the show is about her, and about depression and anxiety, and asks us to 'take care of each other'. The party is soon over as we find that the show focuses on the suicidal end of the depressive spectrum.

Mistry's work comes from a deeply personal space. Her voice, disembodied, is broadcast from a speaker as she dances, parades, and simulates copulation; her efforts to overcome anhedonia ultimately futile. Her headpiece changes from a Brazilian carnival-style headpiece to a large silver cloud that fits over her head like a helmet. Her voice is amplified loud and clear, sharing her thoughts on suicide methods: e.g. gun – 'I've never handled one but it would be quick'; jumping from a cliff – impractical as she's afraid of heights; drowning, followed by a shark attack – no one would find her remains. The suicidal ideation is persistent, her thoughts are coolly considered and rational, her only concern is for those who might find her dead body. When no day is enjoyable and there is no enjoyment on the horizon, suicide seems a logical decision. The darkness is lightened by Mistry, a talented dancer, choreographer and singer. The Cabaret's highlights include 'The Wheel of Misfortune' where prizes include 'two weeks of sleepless nights' and 'a lifetime of crippling self-doubt'. 'C'mon,' she encourages the contestants, 'You've got everything to lose.' We laughed, bleakly.

I empathised with her, particularly in a scene at her mirror when her negative self-talk, loudly states: 'Are you having a wobble, a cry? Why did you wear that? It doesn't look good. Neither does the other outfit. Why don't you just leave now? This is terrible.' Mistry regains her composure and sings mournfully 'It's all in your head, it's all in my head'. A large black circle, representing depression, is an omnipotent presence, Mistry noting it getting bigger, even though it doesn't seem to eat, and begging it to leave as it ruins everything. Of course, it ignores her and appears to swallow her up wherever she goes. A simple device, effectively portrayed.

Priya Mistry is a likeable and talented performer. Her work leaves a mark and is sure to evolve as she refines what is the first outing of this material.

For more information follow @whatsthebigmist on Twitter
Reviewed by Dr Victoria Tischler *who is a Chartered Psychologist and freelance research consultant*

Overcoming psychological hurt

Mr v Mrs: Call the Mediator
BBC Two

This series follows ex-couples going through family mediation after a relationship breakdown. We hear each person's side of the story, and their mediators' attempts to help them resolve their disagreements. A mediator describes the challenge: 'to reach a compromise that both sides can bear' – but they are also supposed to aim for an outcome in the children's best interests.

First we meet Sue and Peter, arguing about how to split their finances after a 28-year marriage. Peter objects to 'the morality of it' as Sue is now living with another man – his old boss. We also meet Martin and Nicola, arguing about whether and how Martin can see their young children. He feels 'It's a vendetta against me'. The third couple in episode 1, Jason and Victoria, are 'high conflict', trying to co-parent their daughter. They are attempting 'shuttle mediation' – we see the mediator, Irene, going to and fro along a corridor while they are in separate rooms.

As one of the mediators explains it: 'My job as a mediator isn't to impose a solution but to try and help them come up with one themselves.' The programme demonstrates how this is both a strength and weakness of mediation. The psychological aspect of separation and negotiation comes out strongly here, and we can see why the decisions about property, money, parenting and child contact are highly emotionally charged. We can also observe how tricky it is for the mediator to demonstrate neutrality (a core mediation value) while parties argue bitterly. Many of the participants in our study of family mediation (Barlow et al., 2014) complained that the mediator was biased to their ex-partner, and we see in these episodes how difficult this can be in practice. We also see what we have termed a lack of 'emotional readiness' – people may be hurting too much to negotiate successfully yet.

The end of the episode summarises the success, or not, of the process. In the first episode only Sue and Peter, in a dispute about money, came to an agreement. Victoria and Jason reached an agreement in court about child contact, and Martin and Nicola were still disagreeing. Episode 2 shows a similar pattern. Of the three couples, only the couple dealing with property and financial agreements agreed an outcome. The programme demonstrates how difficult it is to overcome psychological hurt and make 'rational' decisions, and in particular for the 'high conflict' couples – our study similarly found that mediation typically breaks down in these cases. However, as one mediator says: 'Success in mediation doesn't look the same for everyone. For some it's an agreement they can take to their lawyer and have made legally binding. For others, it's starting to be able to speak to each other.' The series provides a realistic picture of the family mediation experience – psychologically fraught, not always successful, but one way of attempting to communicate and resolve disputes without going to court.

Reviewed by Janet Smithson *who is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Psychology, University of Exeter*

Reference

Barlow, A., Hunter, R., Smithson, J. & Ewing, J. (2014). *Mapping paths to family justice: Briefing paper and report on key findings*. University of Exeter.

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A door to minds and emotions

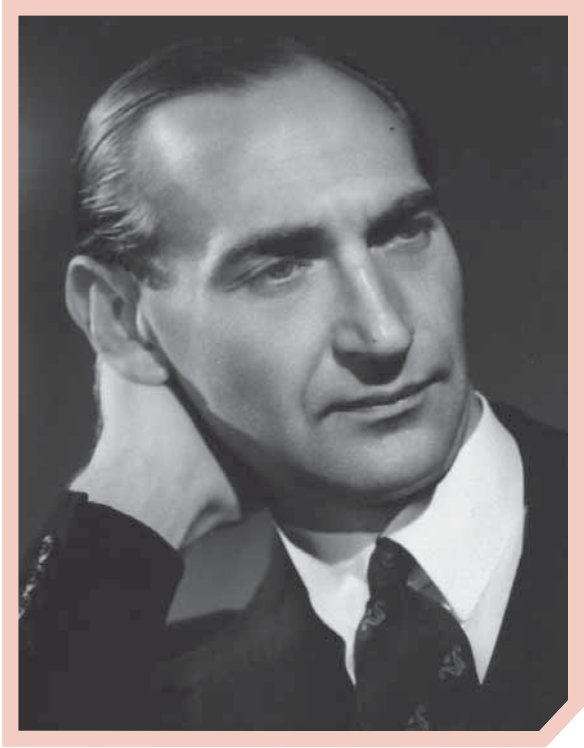
Derek Collett looks at the life and psychological novels of Nigel Balchin

'There is practically nothing in which I am not or can not be intensely interested.' — Nigel Balchin

In 1950, when he was close to the peak of his fame as a novelist, Nigel Balchin issued this statement as part of a character sketch he wrote for an American newspaper. One thing that he was intensely interested in was psychology. Balchin's daughter, the childcare expert Penelope Leach, once admitted to me that her father had effectively been a psychologist all his life. As I will show in this article, psychology made a big impact on Balchin when he was still a young man and it runs right through his fiction like the lettering inside a stick of seaside rock.

Balchin studied psychology in his final term at Cambridge. His tutor was Frederic Bartlett, Director of the Cambridge Psychological Laboratory and Reader in Experimental Psychology. Bartlett was an extremely charismatic man: his lectures were apparently 'a festive performance which nobody would have dreamed of missing', and Balchin quickly fell under his spell. According to one of his student friends, Balchin's interest in psychology was not simply theoretical. The undergraduate was also in the habit of asking 'all his friends and acquaintances about their dreams and, if they would discuss it, about their sexual thoughts and experiences'. Many years after he left Cambridge, Balchin described the impact that psychology had made on him while he was a student. He felt that, as a result of the discoveries of Freud, Jung and Adler, 'a door had been opened to the understanding of the minds and emotions of men'. Consequently, Balchin was convinced that 'there was a new heaven and a new earth just round the corner'.

From Cambridge, Balchin went not to a new heaven but to London and a job with the National Institute of Industrial Psychology. (It is quite plausible that Bartlett helped to facilitate this placement as he was a member of the NIIP's Scientific Committee in 1930, the year in which Balchin was added to the Institute's strength.) Inaugurated just nine years before Balchin joined it, the NIIP was an innovative non-governmental agency formed with the aim of using psychological principles to tackle some of the thornier problems encountered in industry. Specifically, it strove to improve the lot of the worker whilst simultaneously raising productivity. Balchin experienced great success for several years working for the NIIP as an 'industrial investigator'.



Balchin's job partly consisted of visiting factories, offices and other workplaces, examining the working practices in operation and then ascertaining where and how improvements could be made. The Cambridge graduate would probably have received only a rudimentary training and would have been obliged to lean heavily on his skill and judgement in order to solve problems. One of his fellow investigators, Clifford Frisby, who later became the Institute's Director, outlined the modus operandi of the NIIP's investigations staff:

> The Institute's investigators had no ready-prepared remedies to apply; they had in effect to make a diagnosis of the situation they found and to seek for improvements from the human point of view wherever they thought it possible to make them.

During his first few years with the NIIP, Balchin attended to 'human factor' aspects such as eliminating unnecessary movements made by factory workers, making the working day less tedious, removing obstructions in the workplace, revising factory layouts and improving transport procedures.

Although Balchin could sometimes be cynical about the value of the work he carried out for the NIIP (he once told a friend that it had mainly consisted of 'seeing a good idea in Factory A and selling it to the manager of Factory B'), the fact that his salary increased by over 50 per cent in under four years suggests that he had excelled as an industrial psychologist and that he was highly thought of by his superiors.

After a couple of years of reorganising factories, Balchin obtained his big break in 1932 when he was put in charge of a market research project run in collaboration with the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency, the eventual goal of which was to launch a new chocolate assortment on behalf of the confectioners Rowntree's.

Balchin and colleagues performed a very large consumer survey: 7000 members of the public and 2500 shopkeepers filled in questionnaires to elicit their opinions regarding what would constitute the perfect chocolate assortment. Balchin used the Hollerith punched-card system to analyse the data generated and then organised extensive tasting tests to determine the composition of the assortment. Given the name Black

Magic, the new boxes of chocolates began to rumble off the conveyor belt at the beginning of 1933 and proved to be a significant (and lasting) success for Rowntree's. Incidentally, it was Balchin who had the idea of packing the chocolates inside a plain black box. [See also https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-20/edition-9/online-only-article-consumer-research-1958 and https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-14/edition-11/charlie-and-chocolate-factory].

Despite Black Magic having triumphantly proved that chocolate manufacturers could decisively benefit from the expertise of industrial psychologists, Balchin's consumer research proved to be a dead end. George Miles, Director of the NIIP when Black Magic was launched, crystallised one line of thought regarding the Institute's foray into the world of market research:

> Some people had a rather snobbish attitude towards these investigations and looked on them as lowering to the dignity of the Institute. They were also 'commercial' and 'opportunist'.

It must also be pointed out that Cadbury's, Rowntree's principal competitor, were contributing £700 a year (about £45,000 today) throughout the 1930s. Unlike Rowntree's, they were receiving no return on their investment and so complained to the NIIP about this state of affairs. Partly as a result of this pressure, the Institute decided that market research lay outside its remit and so quietly dropped it.

Balchin left the NIIP to join Rowntree's in the wake of this decision but continued to be involved in the field of consumer research right up until the outbreak of the war. In the second half of the 1930s he performed a vast number of chocolate tasting tests, many of which involved a new Rowntree's line: the bubble-filled milk chocolate bar Aero.

Balchin was given a fresh opportunity to demonstrate his psychological acumen in 1941 when he joined the army's Directorate of Selection of Personnel (Bartlett may have been instrumental in Balchin landing this position as well). As part of a team of psychologists, Balchin devised and implemented aptitude tests to assess the calibre of aspirant soldiers. His experience with Black Magic was not wasted because he persuaded the army to adopt the Hollerith system to sift the enormous volume of data produced during the testing procedure. This new personnel selection scheme improved both the quantity – about 700,000 men were processed during the war – and quality of army recruits, and one of Balchin's departmental colleagues claimed that 'psychologists transformed morale in the British army from zero level in 1942'.

Army psychologists, including Major Nigel Balchin, also played a crucial role in the introduction of the War Office Selection Boards in the summer of 1942. This new system for selecting army officers later served as the basis for the peacetime Civil Service Selection Boards. Balchin and his fellow members of DSP devised a mixture of leaderless group tests, outdoor practical tests, indoor discussions and interviews by two officers and a psychiatrist, all with the aim of helping to identify servicemen with officer potential.

In 1961 Balchin spoke about trying to obtain another post as an industrial psychologist. That ambition came to nothing, but by then he had long since established a firm hold on his position as one of Britain's foremost purveyors of fiction with a psychological theme.

Balchin during Second World War

Balchin's psychological novels

Speaking as a layman, I suppose that all novels that concern human beings must be psychological to at least some extent. But Balchin went further than most of his contemporaries in trying to get inside the heads of his characters and work out what made them tick.

Early works

Balchin's most important written contribution to the field of industrial psychology is almost certainly *How to Run a Bassoon Factory*, an entertaining spoof of his career as an industrial investigator but one underpinned by a kernel of solid common sense. The author claimed in 1969 that the book was still 'required reading in certain business training' and it gives a flavour of the working life of a 1930s industrial psychologist.

Balchin's first novel also emerged as an obvious by-product of his time with the NIIP. Published just a few months before he left the Institute to join Rowntree's, *No Sky* (1934) was a slice of social realism about a Cambridge graduate working as a time-and-motion man in an engineering factory.

The follow-up to *No Sky*, 1935's *Simple Life*, was influenced by Balchin's Rowntree's experiences. It recounts the tale of a young advertising copywriter who quits the stresses and strains of London life and moves to Wiltshire in search of a simpler, pastoral existence. The first part of the book is set in an advertising agency (almost certainly based on J. Walter Thompson) and constitutes a richly amusing satire of Balchin's work on the Black Magic account.

The Small Back Room (1943)

Balchin's first best-seller, *The Small Back Room* was also the first of a series of novels he wrote that featured men who were 'damaged' in some way (either physically or psychologically).

Sammy Rice is a Second World War scientist specialising in the development of new weapons. He has an aluminium foot (possibly because his real one was blown off in the course of his work), a drink problem and a girlfriend whom he

loves but refuses to marry as he considers himself not good enough for her.

The Luftwaffe are dropping bombs that explode when interfered with on the ground, and several civilians are killed as a result. When an army officer is also blown to pieces whilst attempting to defuse one of the devices, Sammy is summoned to tackle another of the bombs. Despite its conventional thriller-style climax, *The Small Back Room* is really about an inadequate man battling against almost impossible odds and, in the process, trying to prove something to himself, and this was to become a popular theme for Balchin.

Mine Own Executioner (1945)

By some distance, *Mine Own Executioner* is Balchin's most obvious 'psychological' novel.

When Adam Lucian first enters the consulting room of psychoanalyst Felix Milne it is clear that he represents a tough therapeutic challenge. Lucian is a former Spitfire pilot who was shot down over Burma, captured by the Japanese and viciously tortured. He escaped and made his way back to England, only to make several attempts to kill his wife. The novel thus resolves itself into a straightforward race against time: can Felix analyse and 'cure' Lucian before the schizophrenic airman succeeds in murdering his wife?

Unusually for Balchin, *Mine Own Executioner* did not emerge from his own work experiences. Penelope Leach has informed me that her father had a 'passionate desire' to be a psychoanalyst but he never actually worked as one. Alarmingly though, given his lack of medical qualifications, Balchin once remarked that he had practised in an amateur fashion as an abnormal psychologist throughout the 1930s.

A Sort of Traitors (1949)

Very under-rated, but one of Balchin's best novels, *A Sort of Traitors* is one of two 'moral dilemma' stories that he penned in quick succession.

A team of biologists develop a new cure for epidemics. A government minister then steps in and says, 'You cannot publish this work. A nefarious foreign power might turn it on its head and use it as the basis for a biological weapon.' Two of the biologists therefore face a stark choice: should they publish and be damned (and quite possibly go to prison for treason as a result) or should they meekly comply with the gagging order and effectively condemn millions of people in the Third World to a slow and painful death?

A Way Through the Wood (1951)

Balchin's second 'moral maze' novel also formed the basis – in the guise of 2005's *Separate Lies* – for the impressive directorial debut of *Downton Abbey* creator Julian Fellowes.

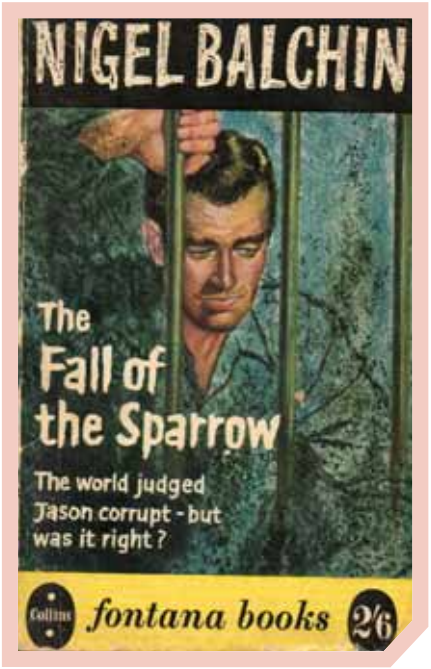
A cyclist is killed in a hit-and-run accident. Jim Manning, a local JP, has an inkling that the car responsible might have been driven by the Honourable William Bule, a near-neighbour of his with some conveniently flexible ideas about the difference between right and wrong. Manning confronts Bule but the aristocrat pleads his innocence. Manning's wife then confesses that it was Bule's car that hit the unlucky cyclist but that she was driving it at the time. Moreover, she admits that she has been having an affair with Bule for months. Manning must therefore decide between reporting his wife's misdemeanour to the police (with the attendant risk of her being put behind bars) or perverting the course of justice by saying nothing and hoping that the culprit is never found.

Sundry Creditors (1953)

Like Balchin's debut *No Sky*, this novel is set in a factory but is concerned less with the nuts and bolts of industrial psychology and more with unpicking the character of Walter Lang, megalomaniacal Managing Director of the engineering works at the heart of the novel. Lang was loosely based on George Harris, Chairman of Rowntree's between 1941 and 1952.

The Fall of the Sparrow (1955)

In 1948 Balchin had published *The Borgia Testament*. This fictionalised autobiography of Cesare Borgia, 15th-century Italian warlord, effectively took the form of a penetrating psychological examination of the motives and methods of a deranged personality. With *The Fall of the Sparrow*, Balchin revisited the same territory as the later novel also constituted a psychological case study of a disturbed individual.



Jason Pellew is a dreamer who drifts through life in a sort of daze. Except for a short spell during the Second World War when he displays both courage and resourcefulness as an army officer; he is never able to stick at anything, and his personal relationships are tantamount to a disaster. In one of his most satisfying and well-rounded novels (a blurb writer observed 'Here is Mr. Balchin in his most brilliant mood'), the author takes us right back to Jason's early childhood, examines the causes of his subsequent mental instability and shows how he ended up in the dock accused of stealing from his nearest and dearest.

Read on

The Small Back Room and *A Way Through the Wood* have recently been reissued by Weidenfeld & Nicolson. All of the other Balchin books mentioned are currently out of print but secondhand copies can usually be found on the web. I heartily recommend you make the effort.

I **Derek Collett's** *own biography of Balchin –* His Own Executioner: The Life of Nigel Balchin *– is published by SilverWood Books*
backroomboyf@talktalk.net

... with Paul Dolan

'Happiness is seen as a trivial concern'

One moment that changed the course of your career

Sitting next to Daniel Kahneman on a short bus ride at a conference in Milan in 2004. This stroke of luck resulted in me (an economist at the time) working with Danny (a Nobel Laureate in Economics but a psychologist by training) for a year at Princeton University. That year opened my eyes to happiness research and to the importance of conscious and unconscious attention on determining what we do and how we feel. A decade later, in 2014, *Happiness by Design* was published. It shows how people can better allocate their time and attention in ways that make them happier day to day.

One insight that has stuck with you

Most of what we do simply comes about rather than being thought about. Whilst most of us would like to believe that our actions are governed by conscious attention and deliberate thought, decades of research in behavioural science has shown that most actions are driven by automatic and unconscious processes. This basic insight is important for anyone who wishes to influence human behaviour and improve wellbeing.

One thing you would change

For psychologists to think more clearly about the policy implications of their research. Psychology is a discipline that describes human behaviour, but policy makers require prescriptions and predictions about how behaviour would change in response to different stimuli. Economists have models that predict changes in demand when prices change, for example, and they have been very successful in influencing public policy. One way for psychologists to influence policy is through influencing economics, and this was the route so successfully taken by Kahneman and Tversky. But psychologists could influence policy more directly themselves if they paid more attention to the normative (ought to) statements that come out of their positive (how the world is) analysis.

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One problem with psychological measures

There are two main issues. First, the lack of real incentive compatibility in experiments. I wonder how many of the biases shown in psychological experiments would remain if real money was at stake. And I don't mean real money as in the few quid used by experimental economists, but real money as in amounts that would have a significant effect on people's happiness. I'm sure some effects would be quite robust but that many others would disappear. I would suggest carrying out fewer experiments with more money at stake. Second, the scepticism that still exists around happiness measures in surveys. Sometimes happiness is seen as a trivial concern, even by psychologists, many of whom are only interested in behaviour. For policy purposes, we might want to focus instead on measures of misery, and we might want to do that in research to get them taken more seriously. You might not be interested in maximising happiness but you would most likely be pathological not to want to reduce misery.

One important misconception

That the stories we live our lives according to are conducive to our happiness. Much of our lives are lived in narratives and evaluations of the things we think ought to make us happy. These narratives are often a product of social construction and external indicators (e.g. income or relationship status). Relying on 'storytelling' to assess our lives can distract our attention from the feelings brought about by the moment-to-moment experiences of our lives. As a result, many of us make mistakes when identifying the things that really make us happy. If you are only happy in your job when you think about how great it is, but miserable the rest of the time, then you should look for alternative employment.

One thing that makes you happy

Weight training. I argue that happy lives are ones that contain a good balance of pleasure and purpose and this is one activity that, for me, is very high in both. When I am chucking heavy weights around a gym, it is about the only time that I am truly focused on what I am doing. Weight training is mindfulness.

One alternative career

Investigative journalist.

Because I am bloody good at writing. I love miscarriages of justice (not literally, but the stories surrounding them) and so I would probably have investigated cases of wrongful conviction.

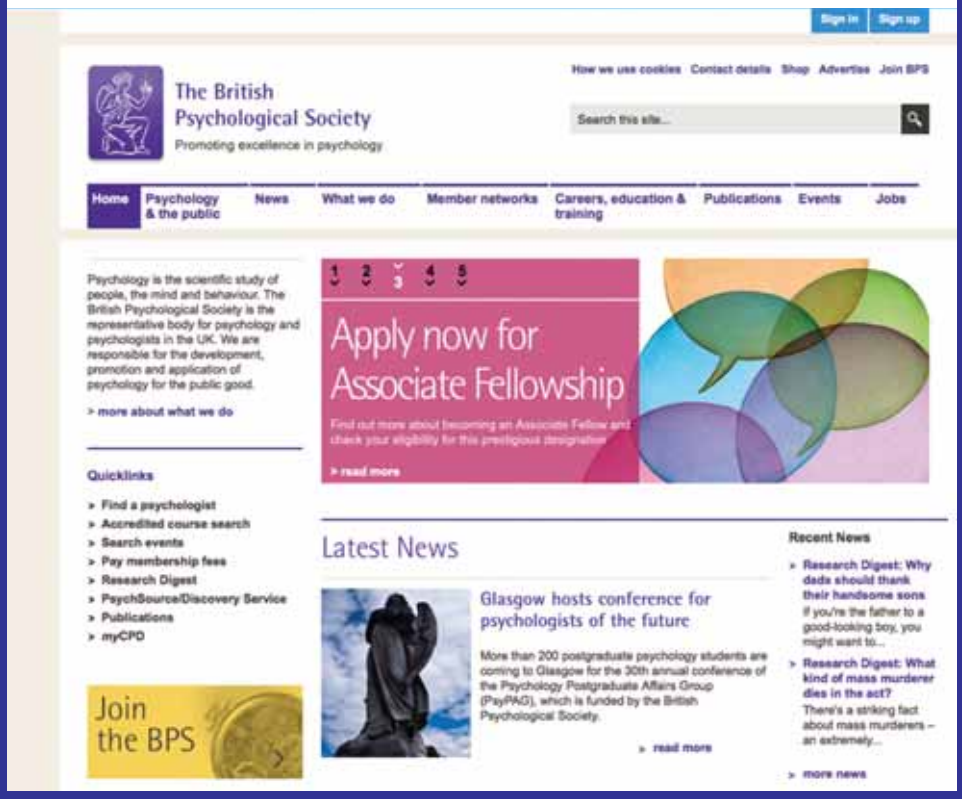
One resource

I have developed a tool that helps people reduce their tendency to be drawn towards alcohol – a nice example of how we can alter our unconscious processing of information to guide our behaviour in ways that can make us happier. Look for 'Attention Training' at http://pauldolan.co.uk.

One final thought

Try not to think too much. Organise your life in ways that make you happier without having to think about being happy.

Find out more online at... www.bps.org.uk



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- National courses delivered throughout the UK and Ireland
- DBT Training On-site – we can come to you!
- Supervision for staff to promote adherence
- 1 day consultation to help consolidate any thoughts of DBT amongst the team and assist in any implementation issues
- Continue Professional Development – Gain a Post Grad Certificate in DBT with Bangor University
- All trainers have received advanced training in the assessment of adherence in DBT by senior staff at BRTC.

UPCOMING DBT TRAINING FOR 2016 / 2017

DBT® Skills Essentials	**22—23**	**September**	**CHESTER**
DBT® Intensive Training™(10 day)	**03—07**	**October**	**LONDONDERRY**
DBT® Masterclass Problem Solving in Action	**10—11**	**November**	**DUBLIN**
DBT® Intensive Training™ (10 day)	**14—18**	**November**	**MAIDENHEAD**
DBT® for Substance Misuse	**24—25**	**November**	**LEEDS**
Adapting DBT® for Suicidal Teens	**01—02**	**December**	**CHESTER**
Basics and Principles of DBT®-PTSD An evidence based treatment for complex PTSD after childhood sexual abuse	**24—26**	**January 2017**	**LONDON**

For Information about more courses or attaining a Post Graduate Certificate, special offers or DBT Training onsite. please call one of the DBT Administrative team on **0800 056 8328** or visit our website **www.dbt-training.co.uk**

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