

BOOK REVIEWS

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Handbook of Parenting: Theory and Research for Practice

MASUD S. HOGHUGHU & NICHOLAS LONG (EDS)
LONDON: SAGE; 2004,
Hb £85.00
(ISBN 0 7619 7104 1)

REVIEWED BY **Andrea Davies**

THE range of issues covered in this volume is impressive – from parental sexuality and religion, to parents with learning disabilities and the evaluation of ‘e’ parent support programmes. Contributions come from both sides of the Atlantic, with adequate attention given to the differences in practice and policy between the UK and the US. Throughout, the social, political and individual factors impacting on parenting give the reader pause for thought; parenting is a process that we have all, in some form, experienced, a process that gets taken for granted until something goes ‘wrong’.

As a handbook, it works well; each chapter represents a stand-alone piece of work, allowing the reader to dip in and out. Each chapter is heavily dominated by research and theory, and whilst a little heavy-going at times, this does not distract from the comprehensive evaluation of the chapter’s focus. However, the clinical implication side is a little weaker.

The real strength of this compilation is the consistent message that parenting does not occur in isolation, and that to enable ‘good enough’ parenting, clinicians need to recognise the interaction between the family and society. In recognising the importance of extended families, employment opportunities and social policies, an effort has been made to move away from more pathologising accounts of parenting.

I would definitely recommend this as a useful addition to any department, not just for child and family services. Increasingly, adult services are encouraged to contextualise service users, and for many of the adults we work with, this includes recognition and support of their role as parents.

■ *Dr Andrea Davies is a clinical psychologist with Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust.*

We all eventually pay

Forgotten Lunatics of the Great War

PETER BARHAM

LONDON: YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS;
2004; Hb £19.99 (ISBN 0 300 10379 4)

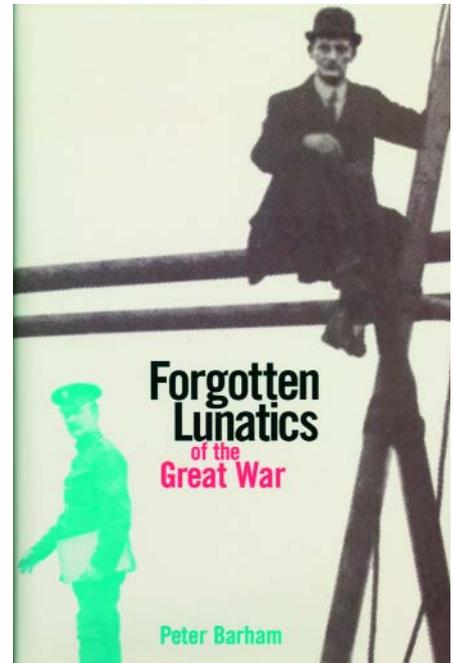
REVIEWED BY **Diana Barker**

MICHAEL Moore, you must buy this book! It’s *Fahrenheit 9/11* English-style, telling the story of a disgusting political regime run by ‘haves’ and ‘have-mores’ who con innocent, sensitive young people into fighting a totally unjust war on foreign soil. All this and First World War military costumes... I can see the Oscars now.

But before we see the screenplay, I’m afraid we need a bit of a rewrite. To quote: ‘This book is largely about... those ordinary soldiers of the Great War who experienced a prolonged mental crisis or breakdown during the action... and their subsequent struggles... to rebuild their lives and secure social justice.’ As you can tell from the number of ... author Peter Barham has a somewhat turgid writing style.

And he has missed the point, because his book isn’t largely about soldiers or wars. It’s about what happens when any established institution recruits isolated individuals into its ranks without any sense of responsibility, respect or compassion. As Mr Barham explains, First World War conscripts, having been thoroughly bamboozled by recruitment propaganda, found themselves in an environment for which they were completely unprepared, and so they were totally unable to cope mentally. Afterwards the army

Isolated without any sense of responsibility, respect or compassion



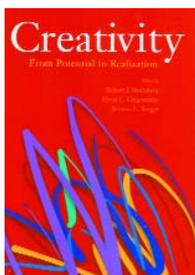
establishment felt it could wash its hands of them by labelling them ‘lunatics’ and condemning them to life in an asylum. But the same process of traumatisation could happen to a student entering a university, to a new employee in a large organisation, to a new convert to a church, even to a young bride entering a royal family...

So, this book is a must for all university and college admissions officers. It ought to become a standard reference text for all those interested in stress management. It also provides useful background material for social psychologists researching the interaction of the personal and the social selves, and for developmental psychologists interested in life transitions.

And we all need to understand the outcome of this process of traumatisation. For, as Mr Barham so poignantly shows at the end of the book, if we allow our institutions to arrogantly dismiss its hurting souls, we all eventually pay. Society itself is the victim as much as the individual.

So, all you Michael Moores out there, what about the film?

■ *Former psychology lecturer Diana Barker is a ‘forgotten lunatic’ of King’s College, Cambridge, who now quietly tends vegetables in southwest France.*



Is a creativity quotient possible?

Creativity: From Potential to Realization

RICHARD J. STERNBERG, ELENA L. GRIGORENKO & JEROME L. SINGER (Eds)
WASHINGTON, DC: AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION; 2004;
Hb £38.50 (ISBN 1 59147 120 6)

REVIEWED BY **Indrani Choudhury**

WHAT is creativity? Is there a creative general factor similar to a cognitive g? Does everyone have creative potential? What are the key components of creativity? Is there a link between creativity and personality traits? These are just some of the many questions explored by the contributors to this book.

The contributing authors differentiate between creative potential and creative performance. The attributes that lead to creativity are universal – interpretive skill, ego strength, and knowledge in the specific area. In relation to this last attribute, the authors conclude that individuals who are creative in one area may not be creative in other areas: 'It is the domain that captures an individual's interest that motivates an individual to fulfil their creative potential.'

The authors discuss the need for domain- or subject-specific programmes to enhance creative performance and suggest

that individual training programmes, based on an analysis of the individual's component skills, are more effective in developing creative potential than general programmes designed to enhance creativity. The discussion on motivations and personality relates to general creative potential. The various strands in this text are at quite a general level and are equally applicable to working with adults and children.

The style is easily accessible, and the numerous examples from a range of areas keeps the reader engaged. The content is likely to be of interest to students, researchers and, especially, applied psychologists with an interest in this area. Consultants running courses and workshops on creative thinking would find this book very useful.

■ *Indrani Choudhury is an independent educational and occupational psychologist.*

WHAT I WISH I KNEW THEN

The Unwritten Rules of PhD Research

GORDON RUGG & MARIAN PETRE
MAIDENHEAD: OPEN UNIVERSITY PRESS; 2004; Pb £17.99 (ISBN 0 335 21344 8)

REVIEWED BY **Barbara Mullan**

IT quickly becomes apparent when reading this book that the authors have considerable expertise in the role of PhD supervisor. The style is lively and engaging, the layout logical and easy to follow. For a student starting out there are many good, helpful hints and ideas. It differs from other how-to PhD books by concentrating more on the real world and less on an idealised world of academia. Sections on the system and networking are particularly apt. Most supervisors reading the book will find themselves drawn to the descriptions of bad, tolerable and good supervisors, to see where they would fit, and will probably feel some discomfort at the

descriptions of so-called tolerable supervisors.

The real impact of the book, though, lies in the chapters related to peripheral PhD activities – presentations, publications, CV writing, and so on. The authors get to the heart of the matter regarding the importance of having an idea of where the PhD is taking the student and what else is needed when they get there in terms of additional experience. Overall, a good read if you are a new PhD student or indeed a supervisor.

■ *Dr Barbara Mullan is in the School of Health Sciences, University of Birmingham.*

Right, let's write about writing

Writing Cures: An Introductory Handbook of Writing in Counselling and Therapy

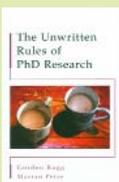
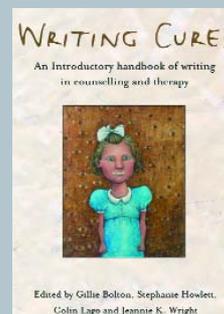
GILLIE BOLTON, STEPHANIE HOWLETT, COLIN LAGO & JEANNIE K. WRIGHT (Eds)
HOVE: BRUNNER-ROUTLEDGE; 2004; Pb £16.99
(ISBN 1 58391 912 0)

REVIEWED BY **Clare Moran**

MUCH is written about art and other forms of creativity in therapy, yet little is written about writing as a creative therapeutic tool. *Writing Cures* redresses this, giving an overview of the many ways writing can be an active part of therapy. It not only looks specifically at how writing is used in particular therapies, the obvious ones being cognitive behaviour therapy, cognitive analytic therapy and narrative therapy, but also contains many creative ideas that most of us could find a useful place for in our practice. The book is helpful not only in looking at the indicators for the use of writing (promoting self-understanding, empowerment and assimilation of feelings, or helping unblock or uncensor the unexpressed), but also in considering precautions (confidentiality, and when writing could detract from, rather than add to, therapy).

A most interesting section of the book is dedicated to online therapy and writing. These newly emerging options for therapy are often met with client enthusiasm and clinician resistance. The ethics are well debated, and I found some of my scepticism being eroded by some impressive examples in practice. Finally, readers (clinicians and clients alike) are invited to contribute to the body of knowledge by writing about their own experiences with writing!

■ *Clare Moran is a consultant clinical psychologist with Berkshire Healthcare NHS Trust.*



Family Therapy in Changing Times (2nd edn)

GILL GORELL BARNES
BASINGSTOKE: PALGRAVE
MACMILLAN; 2004; Pb £17.99
(ISBN 1 4039 0472 3)

REVIEWED BY **Helen Street**

I NITIAALLY this book was difficult to get into, the first chapter being so densely packed with theories and systemic terminology. However, over time, I found the author's style and language more appealing, and I even began to wish I'd had it to hand during my own family therapy training. The initial heavy theory was later interspersed with fascinating clinical case studies demonstrating theory in action. Extracts from clinical sessions illustrated perfectly how a family therapist would conceptualise and work. I particularly appreciated the author's self-reflection and transparent exploration of different perspectives – for me, a hallmark of systemic family therapy.

This book is in the 'Basic Texts in Counselling and Psychotherapy' series and certainly fulfils this role in introducing family therapy. I can recommend it to all budding family therapists and psychologists interested in family life and the diverse family situations in contemporary Britain. The research used throughout is current and relevant. The book covers the range of family issues commonly presenting to mental health services and other counselling and therapy organisations – loss and transitions in childhood, divorce, stepfamilies, mental illness in the family, family violence, and sexual abuse in childhood. Specific clinical issues pertinent to particular difficulties are addressed; for example, how to talk with children about sexual abuse and how to explore violence within families.

■ *Dr Helen Street is a clinical psychologist with the Dunstable Family Consultation Clinic.*

Addressing children's needs

Emotional Health and Well-being: A Practical Guide for Schools

HELEN COWIE, CHRISSEY BOARDMAN, JUDITH DAWKINS & DAWN JENNIFER
LONDON: PAUL CHAPMAN; 2004; Pb £18.99 (ISBN 0 7619 4355 2)

REVIEWED BY **Dev Sharma**

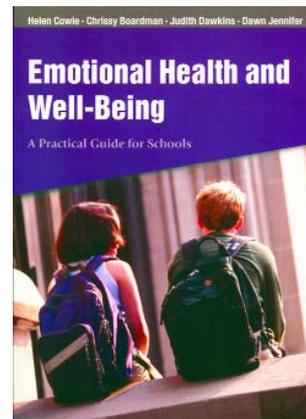
I N a document published in 1999 the Mental Health Foundation expressed serious concerns over the rising rates of psychosocial problems in general and psychiatric problems among children and young people. Schools, where children spend a substantial amount of time during their most formative years, have, therefore, an obligation to contribute to their emotional health and well-being. It is in fact in schools that many young people express their most difficult problems, usually described as emotional and behavioural difficulties or conduct disorder. The impact of such behaviour on school life can be bewildering for teachers and can adversely affect teacher morale and children's education.

Recent years have witnessed a growing interest and willingness on the part of schools to address this area of children's needs. But, apart from other constraints, teachers in mainstream schools have been handicapped by a dearth of easily accessible knowledge and skills about children's mental health needs. *Emotional Health and Well-being* by Helen Cowie *et al.* fills this gap.

This book provides a wide range of information about children's emotional and mental health needs in a convenient and easily digestible form. Each area of need is discussed in detail and illustrated with case studies drawn from authors' own experiences. Practical suggestions and ideas to address the particular needs and difficulties are presented, which

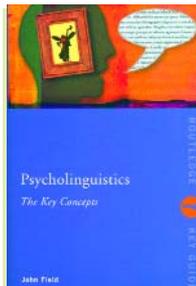
busy teachers should find very useful.

The authors argue that emotional health and well-being can be best understood and promoted in a sociocultural context, and that schools provide an ideal opportunity for this to happen. Various holistic or whole-school approaches aimed at creating a positive school ethos in which children



can emotionally flourish are discussed.

■ *Dr Dev Sharma is a senior practitioner educational psychologist with Newham Education Psychology Service.*



Psycholinguistics: The Key Concepts

JOHN FIELD
LONDON AND NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE; 2004;
Pb £14.99 (ISBN 0 415 25891 X)

REVIEWED BY **Mitzi Macgregor**

T HE key concepts referred to in the book title are arranged alphabetically and cross-referenced to related topics.

This format is a practical one for a book

intended to be a reference source for non-specialists in psycholinguistics. I found it useful for dipping into subjects I have been involved with in my roles as linguist and psychologist. There have been developments, for example, in the writing of transformational grammars, which seem to have lost the generative, and in my experience, heuristic, aspect of rewrite rules. The section on dyslexia seems dated, referring to left-handedness as a signifying characteristic. Under this heading, I would have expected some mention of the bridging role of psycholinguistics, adapting ordered phonological and grammatical rules developed by linguists to the teaching of dyslexic children.

The dilemma at the heart of this cross-disciplinary field is discussed briefly in the introduction. Linguists investigate the underlying structure of language, while psychologists focus on how it is learned and used. Their methodological approaches are different as well. These issues are crucial in the study of children's acquisition of language, but are only tangentially referred to in that section.

I found using this book enlightening and frustrating in equal measure. As a guide source, it goes some way towards meeting a need.

■ *Mitzi Macgregor is a self-employed consultant educational psychologist based in Paisley.*