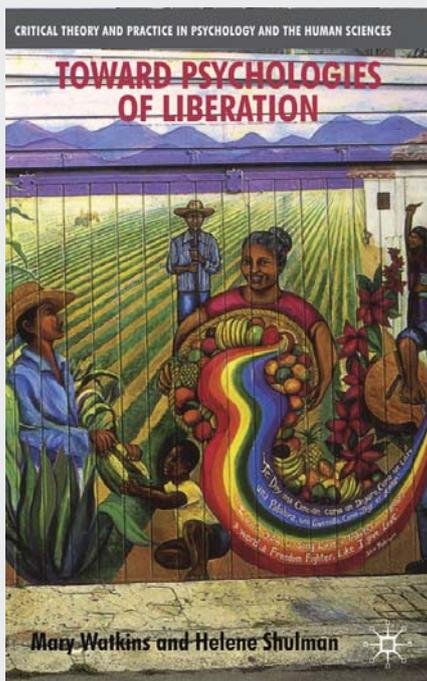


Rebuilding psychology

Watkins and Shulman believe that a new discipline and a new vision of community are emerging in a variety of settings internationally. The context is the new world that emerged after the Cold War and the subsequent deepening contradictions of neo-liberal globalisation that have made such a renaissance both possible and urgent. They take their cue from Ignacio Martín-Baró's call for a psychology of liberation (see *The Psychologist*, October 2004, pp.584–587: www.bps.org.uk/baro) as a riposte to the sterility and complicity of dominant US-Eurocentric psychology that seemed to offer little to the majority of the earth's population, with so many affected by war, tyranny and want.



Toward Psychologies of Liberation
Mary Watkins & Helen Shulman

The book starts by establishing this direction, through building an understanding of the 'psychic wounds of colonialism and globalization'. Here the authors draw on traditions of 'depth psychology', but do a reasonable job in reclaiming a non-individualistic orientation that was evident in some early European work as well as in applications to trauma in the aftermath of state terror in the Southern Cone of the Americas. Finally they arrive at what to me was the most interesting part of the book, a review of promising approaches for the new interdisciplinary of liberation psychology.

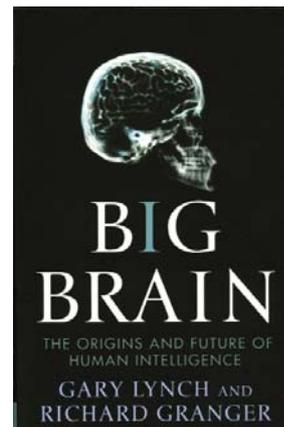
These methods emphasise dialogue in new 'interstitial' settings – that is (relatively) safe places on the edge between communities and cultures where both healing and rebuilding can take place through structured yet unpredictable communal dialogue. Some examples may be relatively familiar – Latin American developments such as uses of the Theatre of the Oppressed of Augusto Boal, or the spaces opened for intercultural encounter and solidarity by the Zapatista movement. Longer-standing examples, such as the Toynbee and Highlander centres in London and the USA, attest to the connection of current liberatory practice with older progressive traditions. Other experiences are less familiar or expected, such as where the authors describe the potential of ideologically disruptive performance arts and installations as ways of catalysing new dialogues and actions. The narrative returns to more familiar ground with a consideration of critical participatory action as a key repertoire for psychologists who would support the praxis of liberatory social movements.

While the book is something of a tour de force, successfully integrating a diverse and wide terrain, I was left with some questions about where all this activity leads. While not wanting (or able) to impose an organisational straitjacket on the multiple practices and understandings that crowd the pages, I have to ask whether the diverse, autonomist fragments will unite sufficiently to do more than shout from the sidelines at the destructive accumulation regime that drives oppression, exploitation, war, tyranny and ecological devastation. A clue to this is to be found in the index from which key words and phrases such as 'system', 'economy', 'Marx', 'climate change', 'food security' or 'military-industrial complex' are absent. Without both an analysis of the structural causes of oppression and destruction, and a political strategy to unite movements for liberation, the danger is that while offering corrections to individualism, the authors are replacing amelioration at the individual level with amelioration at the collective, rather than working on the fundamental transformation of economic and social realities that is ever more necessary. But then a book that costs £60 is not going to be accessible to many of those who might want to make use of its ideas.

Palgrave Macmillan; 2008; Hb £60.00

Reviewed by Mark Burton

who is Head of Service at Manchester Learning Disability Partnership



Big insights

Big Brain: The Origins and Future of Human Intelligence
Garry Lynch & Richard Granger

Our brain defines who we are and sets us apart from all other creatures on earth. But what is it that makes us uniquely human, how did our brains develop and what are the possibilities for this fascinating, complex and changing organ? These are some of the questions answered in this much-needed book on the importance of big brains. It covers the route of evolutionary development, from chance to natural selection and exploring the interesting possibilities for artificial intelligence.

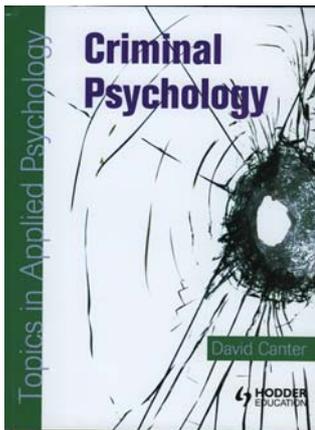
The book is extremely well written, adopting an engaging and approachable style while challenging some long-standing ideas. It is truly interdisciplinary, combining neuroscience and evolution effortlessly to provide a picture of how our mind works. The authors reintroduce the intriguing story of the Boskops and the possibility they had a brain size 25 per cent larger than ours. Comparing their brains to ours and discussing the implications of what they could have been and why they died out.

I highly recommend this book for anyone interested in brain evolution and beginners in neuroscience.

Palgrave Macmillan; 2008; Hb £14.99

Reviewed by Nicholas Todd

who is in the Centre for Research in Human Development, Lancaster University



In the know

Criminal Psychology
David Canter

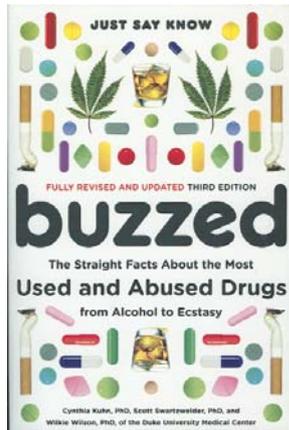
Criminal Psychology provides a clear and concise review of its title subject. It explores the reasons why people may commit crime, the process by which criminals are investigated and convicted, and then moves on to discuss issues regarding the management and treatment of offenders. It therefore provides an ideal introductory text for individuals seeking a comprehensive applied understanding of the topic.

Criminality is recognised as being part of a 'criminal process' and is therefore considered in relation to the range of agencies and institutions involved. This prompts discussion regarding different research techniques and reasons behind the discrepancy amongst research findings. A multitheoretical approach to criminal psychology, including biological, psychological and social explanations of crime, is highlighted. This allows the reader to consider all of the available evidence and achieve a more integrated perspective of 'criminality'.

I would recommend this book to undergraduate and postgraduate psychology students as a core text. But anyone interested in forensic issues, or beginning to work in this field, might also find it fascinating and invaluable for appearing 'in the know'.

© Hodder Education; 2008;
Pb £19.99

Reviewed by Claire Lewis
who is an assistant psychologist
at Rampton Hospital



Drugspotting

Buzzed: The Straight Facts About the Most Used and Abused Drugs, from Alcohol to Ecstasy
Cynthia Kuhn, Scott Swartzwelder & Wilkie Wilson

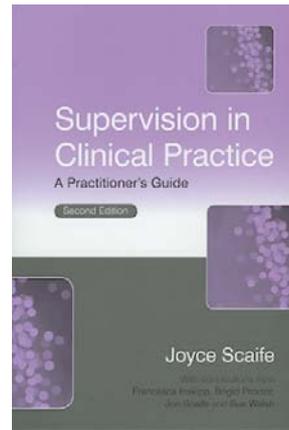
Now in its third version, *Buzzed* has been well received by a diverse range of people – doctors, pharmacists, medical students, psychologists, psychiatrists, police officers, politicians, legislators, parents, youths, users and movie directors. And yet this unclear target audience is not a flaw – it is merely representative of the accessible, informative text.

Kuhn et al.'s volume is not a 'Say no' mantra, nor is it a pharma/medical text. Rather it is a comprehensive guide to a wide range of common drugs, from legal highs such as soft drinks, ginseng and snuff, to more serious hallucinogens, opiates, sedatives and stimulants. Test your own knowledge of common drugs before delving into the text. Each chapter begins with a summary of the drug class, then details the effects, interactions and modus operandi of each drug type.

This edition has been completely revised to include recent research on all the drugs referenced. Thus, *Buzzed* remains a unique, up-to-date and useful source for all those interested in the workings of and effects of legal and illegal drugs, regardless of whether you are a concerned mother or Irvine Welsh!

© Norton; 2008; Pb £11.99

Reviewed by Fidelma Butler
who is an occupational
psychologist in training



A concise work

Supervision in Clinical Practice A Practitioner's Guide
Joyce Scaife

This is a revised edition of the previous title *Supervision in the Mental Health Professions*. It begins by relating wider psychological theory about learning and development (e.g. Vygotsky, Piaget) to the various aspects of the supervisory process, then focuses on (pretty much) everything you wanted to know about clinical supervision but did not know where to look.

There are useful summaries of the main supervision models, though no specific model is privileged over others. Instead integration seems to be the aim, in the search for matching the supervisee's needs and learning style with the responses/styles of the supervisor. If anything is advocated, it is the spirit of respectful inquiry, openness and negotiation to facilitate alliance-building without compromising ethics and other responsibilities.

Other topics covered include: group supervision; ethical dilemmas; diversity; interface

between management and clinical supervision; using technology; and outcome studies of supervision. Throughout, Scaife regularly mentions the importance of the contracting process, things to be explored and taken into account, and ways to approach it. A useful appendix includes 'tools' that may facilitate the supervisory process.

Although focused on clinical supervision, many of the ideas and principles in the book will be equally pertinent in academic/research supervisory relationships.

The book is organised such that it can be read from cover to cover or consulted on specific issues/chapters. Considering the wealth of references used and the interweaving of the author's own ideas and views with her sources, this is a concise piece of work, where every word has earned its place and demands to be read.

© Routledge; 2008; Pb £24.99

Reviewed by G. Many
Merodoulaki

who is a Chartered Counselling
Psychologist

just in

Sample titles just in:

The Science of Emotional Intelligence Gerald Matthews et al.
The Culture of Morality Elliot Turiel
Mindfulness and Acceptance-based Behavioural Therapies in Practice Elizabeth Roemer and Susan M. Orsillo
The Visual World in Memory James R. Brockmole
The Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology Susan Hallam et al.
Developmental Disorders of Language Learning and Cognition Charles Hulme and Margaret J. Snowling

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