



Utterly spellbinding



Sizwe Banzi Is Dead
Young Vic, London

'Look at me!... I'm a man' was the impassioned plea delivered at the emotional heart of this play, reminding the audience of the sad fact that... well, that we need to be reminded of our common humanity.

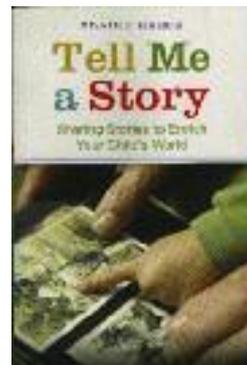
This is a play about identity, written and devised by Athol Fugard and two actor collaborators in 1972 and set in apartheid South Africa. It is about the way the notorious pass laws robbed black South Africans of personhood, allowing them no official existence beyond what their pass book described, all enforced by brutal policing. But it is the very notion of the eponymous Sizwe Banzi being no more than what his pass book says he is that eventually provides the subversive solution to his problems. He is stuck in Port Elizabeth prevented from working by an official stamp in his book, and therefore unable to provide for his family 150 miles away.

Under the direction of Matthew Xia (aka the DJ and broadcaster Excalibah), a talented young team gave us an enthralling evening. The two actors, between them playing the three characters in the play, were totally convincing. They engaged those present ('audience' seems almost too formal a word) directly from the outset, making us feel part of the narrative, and taking us on an emotional ride from the comic to the tragic and all stops between. The set was sparse, the design achieving much with little, the lighting changing according to scene, mood and time of day – sometimes so subtle and right that it could only be recalled afterwards; and everything combining to tell the compelling story of Sizwe Banzi's predicament – a microcosm of the predicament of a people.

There were some contemporary relevances too. It was hard not to think about Nelson Mandela, who in 1972 had already been imprisoned for nine years, and who was to come to lead South Africa out of its long nightmare. Nor is the issue of the reach of state power over individual lives confined to other times and other places. And an uncomfortable reference to racist behaviour was made when a banana landed on the stage as a prop for one of the characters' lunch; shortly afterwards, being no longer needed as a prop, it was quietly handed to a (white) member of the audience.

This was one of many ways that this utterly spellbinding production engaged the audience directly. But it had begun even before we entered the auditorium – a thickset uniformed man directed people, according to their skin colour, to Whites Only or Non-White seating areas roped off from each other. Being segregated in this way felt rather disconcerting, but the dramatic possibilities it afforded were made clear when Sizwe Banzi stripped himself almost naked, pointed to his skin and pleaded 'Look at me!... I'm a man', standing right in front of the Whites Only section.

I Reviewed by Peter Dillon-Hooper who is Assistant Editor of *The Psychologist*.
Sizwe Banzi Is Dead is on from 6 February to 8 March.



Stories for growth



Tell Me a Story: Sharing
Stories to Enrich Your
Child's World
Elaine Reese

This book, aimed at parents, is about the impact that family storytelling can have upon a child's social, emotional and cognitive development. It follows the themes of reading books with children of all ages and of sharing stories from personal anecdotes through to family history. It does not paint a picture of storytelling as a cosy activity with the child as a passive listener, rather as a dynamic and interactive experience that can, as the author states, 'be practised virtually any time or any place, with your toddler as well as your teenager. It's free, completely portable, and the main characters are the people you love the most.'

The author is a developmental psychologist, and she makes a compelling case for the importance of family storytelling. The book is laid out in a clear developmental sequence with a clear distinction between research-based and 'parent-tested' evidence for the strategies she presents. I wondered if the book perhaps gave so much technical information that it might be too much for most parents but not perhaps enough for professionals. It dealt well with issues about reading stories but omitted discussing telling stories in the oral tradition, as opposed to reading aloud. There are clear examples of the kinds of interactions that family storytelling facilitates, and Reese argues that the sharing of personal stories, particular about difficult and negative events, can contribute to a child's emotional maturity and resilience.

This is a book that will make you think twice about how powerful stories can be.

I Oxford University Press; 2013; Hb £19.99
Reviewed by Dr Steve Killick who is a
clinical psychologist with Cardiff & Vale NHS
Health Board



Firmly medical

Treatments that Work with Children (2nd edn)
Edward R. Christophersen & Susan L. Mortweet

Written by a child psychologist and a professor of paediatrics, this book aims to introduce doctors to the options and evidence for psychological and pharmacological 'treatments' available for childhood behaviour problems. As may be guessed from the title, it is written from a firmly medical perspective, however, the emphasis is generally on promoting behavioural interventions over long-term pharmacological dependence.

The book is organised into eight chapters, which cover various childhood problems, from depression to bedwetting. Each chapter contains an introduction to the 'disorder', its assessment and diagnosis, followed by an evidence-based evaluation of behavioural and pharmacological interventions. Whilst chapters on familiar topics sometimes felt a little basic, I found other chapters (on subjects such as soiling and paediatric pain) were useful in providing an overview of these difficulties and associated interventions.

Despite struggling with some of the more



'within-child' perspectives on behavioural problems, I found the book surprisingly readable. It provides an interesting overview of evidence regarding the effectiveness of pharmacological treatments, which may be useful for psychologists who work regularly with paediatricians. Despite the differences between America's and Britain's health systems, many of the underlying assumptions and practices described in this book may provide a foundation for understanding the thinking and systemic processes which a paediatrician may go through before referring a child for psychological assessment or intervention.

This book may be a useful reference text for psychologists who work with both children and paediatricians and could also provide a shared starting point for effective interdisciplinary working and debate.

I *American Psychological Association; 2013; Hb £34.50*

Reviewed by Emma Birch who is a trainee educational psychologist, Cardiff University



A cracking read

Cracked: Why Psychiatry Is Doing More Harm than Good
James Davies

'One in four people in the UK and US will develop a mental disorder in any given year. That's what psychiatry tells us. But many – even most – will not actually be mentally ill' states the book's blurb. *Cracked: Why Psychiatry Is Doing More Harm than Good* is a shocking revelation of the hidden secrets of the mental health industry. The author, James Davies, is a qualified psychotherapist and a senior lecturer in social anthropology and psychology. In this book, he raises the question of what is the real 'truth' of psychiatry. The author also discusses an alternative story of the profession that threatens readers' initial preconceptions by exposing something that most people are aware of but



don't have the proven evidence at hand, whereas Davies does.

The author examines a number of topics in detail, including the release of the DSM-5 and the issues associated with this, the over-medicalisation of symptoms and subsequent diagnosis, the ineffectiveness of antidepressants as compared with placebo drugs, secret unpublished drug trials, the profits incurred by pharmaceutical companies by both encouraging and coercing medical professionals as well as several other intriguing matters/issues. Davies also managed to acquire interviews with the leaders of psychiatry, American senators, presidents and ex-presidents of psychiatric associations. He also speaks

with Robert Spitzer, the modern founder of psychiatry who presents a very honest but concerning account which includes him admitting that only a handful of mental disorders in the DSM have clear biological markers and that hardly any research was conducted on disorders that were included in previous versions of the DSM.

It is a very controversial, fascinating and powerful read that is full of balanced and reasonable arguments. I would strongly urge all mental health professionals, those in the caring professions as well as anybody interested in mental health to read this book.

Icon Books, 2013; Pb £10.99

I **Reviewed by Amy Broadbent** who is a research assistant with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust and the University of Cambridge

Looking at teaching



Tough Young Teachers
BBC Three

Tough Young Teachers is a six-part BBC Three documentary, following the journeys of six new Teach First trainee teachers. The first episode depicted the successes and failures experienced by the trainees over their first weeks of teaching practice.

What sets this show apart from others such as *Educating Yorkshire* is its focus on evolving teaching practices in trainees. Unusual access is given into the thoughts of teachers after every lesson: 'What worked well? What didn't work well? Why did I sign up for this?' Teach First's experience-focused trainee scheme is evident here, with trainees confidently declaring 'I don't know what I'm doing'. The programme has a very raw and sometimes uncomfortable feel. Some trainees have little control over pupils, require support from experienced colleagues and even instigate arguments with pupils. In this early episode small successes seem at a minimum but are cherished nonetheless, evidently revitalising the trainees and their confidence.

It is easy to see why viewers not having worked in schools will find this first episode worrying. The trainees are clearly out of their depth. However, this is understandable: trainees are evidently learning just as much as the pupils themselves in these early stages. But with teachers being increasingly difficult to recruit and retain, it is vital for an honest account to continue throughout this series. This programme has the potential to portray current problems in today's education system. For the sake of the trainees, I hope their successes and continued improvements are realistically charted in the rest of the series.

I **Reviewed by Emma Norris** who is a PhD student at University College London (@EJ_Norris)



Grounding theory into practice

Understanding Abnormal Psychology: Clinical and Biological Perspectives
Pamilla Ramsden

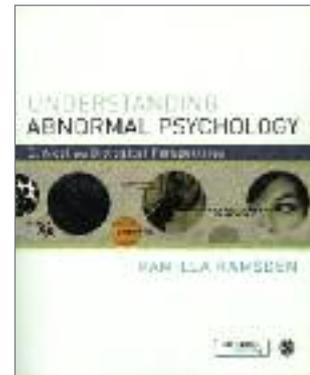
The author of the book gives the reader a comprehensive overview of the field of abnormal psychology as a whole, encompassing current and relevant research and debates. The book raises and discusses current thought on issues relevant to abnormal psychology in far more detail than most abnormal psychology texts, making this book stand out amongst others.

In the first half of the book the author focuses on the biological and psychological underpinnings of abnormal psychology, considering the historical context, relevant models and the physiology of abnormal behaviour. The second half gives the reader a comprehensive overview of a range of specific psychiatric disorders. The author, however, goes beyond a mere description of clinical disorders to give the reader an

impression of the complexities of mental illness and give the reader an appreciation for what it might feel like in real life.

Each chapter begins with a relevant case study, which encourages the reader to really ground the psychological theory into clinical practice. And each chapter ends with study guides and suggested reading lists, giving the reader scope for reflection and further enquiry into the discussed content. The author cleverly uses diagrams and illustrations throughout, which enhance and summarise key themes and information. The author has a clear writing style and has the ability to explain complex psychological theories and debates succinctly.

Overall, this is an accessible and engaging introductory text to clinical psychology. The book is also beneficial for



those looking to update their knowledge on current issues and literature in the area. A good addition to the plethora of books currently available in the area of abnormal psychology.

| Sage; 2013; Pb £32.99

Reviewed by **Holly Panting** who is an Honorary Assistant Psychologist for the Gloucester Together NHS Trust



...and the world will live as one?

Steven Pinker on The Better Angels of our Nature
The Intelligence Squared Podcast

In this podcast, Harvard psychologist and author Steven Pinker delivers a thorough overview of research suggesting violence is and has been on the decline, and that we are in the most peaceful era of our existence.

Through the use of long-term research and data he provides a detailed history of violence, through to more recent acts including terrorism and homophobic attacks. Through the identification of six main historical declines in violence he attempts to explain the motivations behind such acts. Pinker argues that these declines aren't the result of 'a change in human nature' and rejects the more simplistic notion of nature vs. nurture. To fully understand these declines, we have to understand the historical forces.

For each historical event Pinker addresses, he provides statistical analysis with supporting figures to further strengthen his argument. The first three declines focus on early civilisations and the way of life in these eras. Pinker describes the first decline as the 'pacification' process, where humans lived in anarchy and a state of nature where feuding and raiding were common. The second decline is described as the 'civilising' process, here Pinker describes that humans were living together in larger communities under one leader with commerce, methods of transportation and jurisdiction of the King. Acts of violence in these times were considered barbaric. The 'humanitarian' process introduced the movement to rid barbaric tortures and capital punishment. The last three historical declines are more recent and occurred after the Second World War where civil wars, genocide and oppression occurred.

Overall, Pinker provides an engaging and intellectual thesis and demonstrates that there has been a dramatic decrease in violence, despite attempts by sceptics to refute this. Interesting and worth a listen, particularly if you are interested in the history of crime.

| Listen to the podcast at <https://soundcloud.com/intelligence2>
Reviewed by **R. Nield** who is an undergraduate psychology student at the University of Huddersfield



Left wanting more

Essential Career Transition Coaching Skills
Caroline Talbott

This is much needed text that provides a good overview of career transition coaching and is one that I would highly recommend to anyone working in the career guidance/coaching arena.

Talbott provides practical guidance, tools and techniques with good psychological grounding, brought to life with case studies. She examines how to work with clients at various career transition points (graduates, unemployed, redeployment, moving into self-employment), psychological factors associated with change, how to support clients in their career choices and then making it happen.

I was surprised at how heavily the text is influenced by NLP methods and approaches, as this isn't referenced in the title or blurb. NLP has Marmite properties and if it's a case of

'hate it' for you, perhaps select another text. That said, I got a lot out of this book and I'm not an NLP practitioner.

My only criticism is that I thought the book could have been longer (perhaps not a bad thing to be left wanting more!).

For 'essential' I would read 'introductory', as I often felt like I was left wanting more detail around certain situations or scenarios; for example, there was only a single paragraph on retirement.

Overall a great book and I have already used the 'career drivers' exercise (charting positives and negatives from previous roles to help figure out career drivers) in my own coaching practice.



| Routledge; 2013; Pb £19.99

Reviewed by **Jane Arthur-McGuire** who is a Chartered Psychologist and coach, owner of Jam Consulting



Moving on – it’s complicated

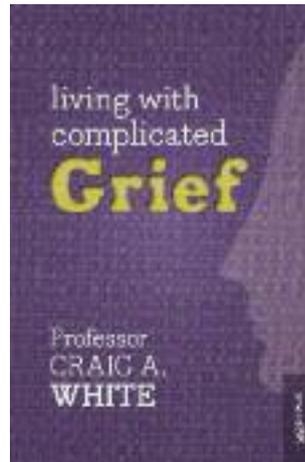
Living with Complicated Grief
Craig A. White

‘Acute, crushing grief after the loss of a loved one is normal’ starts Professor White in *Living with Complicated Grief*. It is thought that normal grief, while intensely painful and distressing, is life-changing and healing. With complicated grief, there is a lack of movement: people become stuck in unchanging grief and, months and years later, it is as if the loss has just happened.

Living with Complicated Grief is intended as a self-help manual. Drawing on recent research, Professor White considers models of grief before exploring the differences between normal and complicated grief and the overlap between the latter and conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder and

depression. His book asks questions to enable the reader to reflect whether their grief has become complicated, to process the experience of death by writing about it, and to explore the impact of bereavement on their thoughts and behaviours. Later chapters focus on integrating grief into a new normality via memories and building a lasting memorial.

As a self-help manual, the book reflects its own limitations in its sensible acceptance that grief is difficult to work through alone (an opinion also expressed in an interview by Dr Katherine Shears, on whose work much of this book is based). The experience for the reader is an uneven one. The introduction is excellent and later chapters are accessible and practical, but



chapters 1 and 2, which outline the theory behind complicated grief, are disappointingly dry.

That said, as a bereavement volunteer and mental health practitioner working with cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) models, reading the book gave me new insight into familiar models. In particular, it helped me to reconcile CBT

approaches with the role of attachment theory and the dual process model (in which normal grief is seen as a process of oscillation between loss-oriented grieving work and restoration-oriented work). By its explanation of how complicated grief overlaps with post-traumatic stress disorder, the book also offers potential therapeutic tools to work with. It is on this basis that I would commend it to those wishing to understand or work in bereavement.

I Sheldon Press; 2013; Pb 8.99
Reviewed by Lucy Fiddick
who is an assistant psychology practitioner in LIFT (the IAPT service in Bristol) and bereavement volunteer for CRUSE



Unfit for motherhood?

Blue Stockings
Globe Theatre, London

Blue Stockings, a play by Jessica Swale, is set in the late 19th century and describes the journey of female students at Cambridge University, as they campaign for their right to graduate.

It opens dramatically with a powerful diatribe from the celebrated psychiatrist Dr Henry Maudsley, who declares: ‘A woman who expends her energy exercising her brain...does so at the expense

of her vital organs...leaving her unfit for motherhood.’ This prologue quickly captures the attention of the audience; catalysing vocal denunciation at the prejudice of the male characters, and support for the spirit and courage of the female protagonists.

The play focuses on the activities of four female students at Girton College in their determination to prove they are the equal and in some cases the superiors of their male peers. At the time, women were ungenerously permitted to attend lectures, as their contributions were discouraged. One of the more spirited female students, Tess, was thrown out of a Maudsley lecture as she questioned the validity of his ‘wandering womb’ theory of hysteria. Her animated objections were then held up as a direct illustration of the female inability to regulate emotion and therefore be appropriate for an academic environment. With the support of their college tutors, the girls campaigned for academic equality and a debate in the Senate ensued. Concomitant street demonstrations took place and an effigy of a female student (sitting astride) a bicycle was burnt in retaliation. The story continues to describe the complicated conflicts the students have between their feminine and maternal identities, romantic inclinations and pursuit of academia.

This was no doubt a feminist piece, but instead of falling into the trap of being saturated with patent outrage at the endemic misogyny of the time, Swale weaves her message neatly with well-delivered performances from the cast. *Blue Stockings* seemed to conclude that academia and love are far from dichotomous, instead asserting what we all know to be true: women really can have it all. Sadly, this was not a societal shift of the time, and women did not receive the right to graduate from Cambridge University until 1948.

I Reviewed by Camilla Sanger *who is a trainee clinical psychologist at the Oxford Institute of Clinical Psychology Training*