

You will weep... Eichmann didn't

Watch *The Eichmann Show*. Watch it if only for the original footage of the witnesses telling their stories of deportation and the camps. A man telling his tale. Reliving how he unloaded the corpses of those who had been gassed. Finding his wife and two children. Laying himself down beside them. Only wanting to be shot himself.

If you have tears, then as you watch, you will weep. Eichmann didn't weep. The grainy old pictures show him watching. An occasional twitch. A smile? Certainly not a tear.



The Eichmann Show
BBC Two

In 1961 people around the world watched this footage. It was the first global televisual event. It irrevocably changed how we saw the Holocaust, understood Israel, explained evil. And *The Eichmann Show* is less about the Holocaust itself and Eichmann himself than about how the trial was televised. It is about the nature of representation and the struggles that surround it.

The Eichmann trial involved many such struggles on many levels. For Ben Gurion, the Israeli Prime Minister who sanctioned the filming of the trial, the primary aim was to reshape the relationship between the Holocaust, the State of Israel and world Jewry.

For the first time the victims were given a global stage on which to tell their stories. Hitherto, inside Israel as well as outside, they had been ignored and even silenced. A proud, young,

martial state did not want to hear about Jews as victims. What is more there was always the suspicion that anyone who had survived must have done something disreputable for this to be possible. The victim always had a taint of the perpetrator.

But the trial, itself theatrical, held in a theatre and then filmed for the world, was to obliterate these equivocations. Victims became witnesses, pointing to a Nazi criminal in court. The fact that the trial was in Jerusalem, and Eichmann was being tried by the Israeli State, constituted the Holocaust as primarily a crime against Jews. It legitimated the Israeli state as a haven for Jews. But more than that, it showed Israelis, Jews and the world, that Israel could protect its people and punish those who attack Jews, wherever they may do it.

This, in large part, explains the fury directed at Hannah Arendt for her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, which is, perhaps, the conduit through which the trial became so well known across the ensuing half century. This fury was less to do with what Arendt had to say about Eichmann himself than with what she had to say about the Judenrat – the Jewish Councils under the Nazis. These, Arendt argued, were complicit with Eichmann and his kind. In effect, Arendt challenged the core representational politics of the trial. She portrayed the Zionist establishment as the oppressor rather than the saviour of Jews. Her words threatened to unravel everything that the television pictures were designed to achieve.

But, of course, that's not why we remember Arendt now – especially 'we' as psychologists. We remember her precisely for what she did say about Eichmann. We remember her dismay at Eichmann coming into the courtroom. Not a striking, sadistic monster governed by exceptional passions. Rather, an insignificant,

ordinary man governed by mundane concerns. We remember her phrase 'the banality of evil', which then fused with the work of Stanley Milgram and overturned our understanding of how human beings are capable of inflicting great harm on their fellow humans. We retain the idea that the insignificant bureaucrat becomes a mass murderer by concentrating so much on the details of the job, that he or she overlooks the consequences.

But this view, too, is bound up with film and image and representation. At the start of *The Eichmann Show* we see a photo of Eichmann in his SS uniform: confident and arrogant and powerful. Looking straight into the lens, a sardonic smile on his lips. That is the picture on the cover of David Cesarani's 2004 biography, which explodes the myth of Eichmann as mere pen-pusher. The prosecutors understood the power of imagery well, and for a while considered forcing Eichmann to wear his uniform. But Eichmann and his lawyer were equally conversant with the politics of representation and made a deliberate decision to adopt a mild and unassertive persona in the way he looked, in the way he stood, in the way he spoke. It is argued that Arendt bought his act. She left early in the trial, well before the witnesses gave their testimony. Had she stayed perhaps she would have painted a very different picture of him and of the human capacity for evil.

The Eichmann Show points to all these levels of representation, and to others besides. Is the narrative of the trial to concentrate on the victim's experience or on Eichmann's (in)humanity? What does that mean in terms of which, from the various cameras covering the trial, is to be broadcast? What does it mean in terms of how the shot is framed, how close we zoom in? In part, these are technical questions of film production. But they are equally critical questions in the creation of any narrative and hence our understanding of ourselves and the world we live in.

At one point in the programme, we watch as the television crew cover Eichmann's reaction in the courtroom as images of the death camps are played. In other words, we are seeing a film about people filming a man's reaction to film: a representation of a representation of the observation of a representation. Where is the real story in all this? There is none, except for the labours of each editor and each level to constrain our attention, construct our understanding and hence create our reaction.

There is one final issue to which *The Eichmann Show* alerts us. That is, we often think that science and scientific understanding proceeds through our academic outputs, our books, papers and chapters. But the forms of representation that dominate popular culture – particularly film – are equally important.

Our understanding of the Holocaust (which, as Baumann argues, hangs over all subsequent social science) was critically informed by the filming of the Eichmann trial. More specifically, our understanding of the role of obedience in atrocity was informed as much by Milgram's 1965 film *Obedience* than by his studies in themselves. We should learn the lesson. We need to bridge the divide between 'science' and 'culture'. If psychology is to thrive we need to find our own ways or re-visioning that which matters to us. Compelling science depends upon us becoming better story tellers. It depends upon us becoming more open to the various modalities through which stories are told.

So watch *The Eichmann Show*. It will be painful. But it will be worth it.

Reviewed by Professor Steve Reicher who is at the University of St Andrews



Intangible forces

Invisibilia
NPR

Invisibilia is a radio show about psychology without claiming to be about psychology. It's about the invisible things that move and motivate our actions, and it makes visible the power that our inner experiences seem to have over us.

In the first episode, with a warm and self-deprecating style, *This American Life's* Alix Spiegel and Radiolab's Lulu Miller guides the listener through different theoretical and clinical approaches to 'thinking'. If you think that sounds a little dry, then notice that thought of yours and hear this: the tales of a 'secret revolution' in thought science will excite even if you dare to think you know it all already.

The first episode begins with an image designed to startle: a man who began to have intrusive thoughts about brutally harming his wife. The show does not shy away from the violence of these thoughts, and yet by interviewing the man in such a sincere and curious manner they duck any accusations of sensationalism. This entertaining and educative style continues as Spiegel... or was it Miller... (they admit their voices sound the same to comic effect) talk us through the changes in theory about thoughts across the last century; moving from the Freudians interpreting the unconscious meaning in our phantasies,

to the 'nothing is either good or bad but thinking makes it so' philosophy of cognitive behavioural therapy. I've often thought that criticism of CBT often ignores the constructivist stance of the approach, and the breezy interview with Aaron T. Beck featured in the programme gently challenges the stereotypes we may hold of psychotherapy's most ubiquitous orientation.

We're then presented with the so-called modern, which can equally be described as the ancient. An elegant explanation of mindfulness and third-wave therapies shows how they are drawing on Eastern traditions to teach us to turn into our thoughts and to allow space for them in our mind. Staring at thoughts and seeing them as the 'invisibilia' that they are, helps take away the power they have over us.

This academic approach to cognition in the show's first half is then put through the wringer by a story that manages to move, shock and inspire. To share this story in a review would fail to do it justice, however suffice to say that the story of 12-year-old Martin Pistorius and his mysterious coma will change both the way you think about thoughts... and the way you think about Barney the Dinosaur. Working as a clinical psychologist across oncology and palliative care settings, I found this story offers hope

whilst acknowledging the difficult psychological places visited through the experience of physical illness.

Spiegel and Miller are careful not to give us any answers about what works, though I fear they rather mischaracterise the Freudians and Beckites as arguing the toss over how meaningful thoughts are. However, their main point stands: that when you walk through a therapist's door it is not possible to know everything about their approach.

This first programme in the series leaves the mental health professions with questions about how we can best explain to those we meet about what to expect in therapy. Irvin Yalom, in *Existential Psychotherapy*, suggests that the key ingredient in therapy – the therapeutic relationship – is much like the hidden extras thrown in to the pudding mix in your mother's cooking. Can and should we try to make these 'invisibilia' visible?

The radio series *Invisibilia* continues on NPR and each show, covering more 'invisible things' from ideas and emotions, to beliefs, assumptions and desires is available for download as a podcast.

I Reviewed by Dr Nick Hartley who is a clinical psychologist working in Newcastle upon Tyne



A rounded introduction

Foreign Accent Syndromes: The Stories People Have to Tell
Jack Ryalls & Nick Miller

What does it feel like to wake one day with a foreign accent of a country you've never visited? Foreign accent syndrome (FAS) is arguably commonly misrepresented in both the media and public opinion as a 'twilight zone'-type transformation. The two expert authors of this book seek to demystify this complex disorder via two approaches.

The first third of the book serves as a scientific overview of the aetiology, diversity and treatment research into the condition. Although FAS can be most simply described as the use of an accent sounding different to the one an individual previously, habitually used, it is evidently far more complex than

this. Causes, diagnosis and severity are shown to all vary dramatically between cases, making it extremely difficult to treat. Interestingly, cases are almost entirely restricted to women, with the authors considering both reporting bias and differences in brain anatomy as potential factors.

The diversity of FAS is captured brilliantly by the second, larger section devoted to vignettes from FAS sufferers and family. Monographs, diaries, poems and art from around the globe show a central theme. Accent is central to an individual's identity, and the swift, dramatic changes to it in FAS clearly leave profound effects on individuals and those

close to them. Strained personal and professional relationships are shown during adjustment to this new identity. However, these changes are also shown to motivate, with those affected describing fitness and artistic achievements following diagnosis. A lack of understanding of the disorder in health professionals and confusions in diagnosis are commonly reported, showing an evident need for awareness in texts such as this. Although insightful, I think this section would have benefited from some concluding comments by the



authors: identifying themes in experiences and areas for future research.

Reading this as someone with an interest but little prior knowledge in the area, I found this

a rounded introduction to research and experiences of FAS. Diagnosed individuals and affected families, as well as psychologists and speech and language workers will gain much from the tales and concise research described.

I Psychology Press; 2014;
Pb £28.99

Reviewed by Emma Norris who is a PhD student at University College London and Associate Editor (Reviews)

Finding the golden thread of consciousness



The Hard Problem
Tom Stoppard

In the first scene of Tom Stoppard's new play *The Hard Problem*, the charming but arrogant neuroscientist is arguing with Hilary, a psychology student about evolutionary biology. 'Altruism is always self-interest,' says Spike, 'it just needs a little working out.' In a single line, Spike captures the issue at the centre of Stoppard's latest work: whether pure altruism really exists and what we can

understand about human nature in its light.

This thread glitters through the centre of the work and is the source of much of the dramatic tension, not least as Hilary, in this National Theatre production, is brilliantly portrayed by Olivia Vinall, whose confident uncomplicated performance stands out amid a consistently strong cast. The sharp setting and candid performances are certainly enjoyable but the golden thread is often lost amid layers of sometimes tangential and ultimately unnecessary neuroscience.

We meet Hilary as a student, but most of the action happens when she is a postdoctoral researcher at the Krohl Institute for Brain Science – a privately funded vanity institution built by the condescending hedge-fund guru Jerry Krohl. The setting is key, and Stoppard has clearly amassed an impressively wide knowledge of both the practice and findings of modern cognitive science, but it's also clear he never fully got to grips with its significance and, consequently, the play is somewhat awkward to the trained ear.

This is a typical and often pedantic criticism of plays about technical subjects, but in Stoppard's case the work is primarily about what defines us as human, in light of the science of human nature, and because of this the material often comes off as clunky. It's not that the descriptions are inaccurate – allusions to optogenetics, Gödel and the computability of consciousness, game theory, and cortisol studies of risk in poker players, are all in context – but Stoppard doesn't really understand what implications these concepts have either for each other or for his main contention. Questions about mind and body, consciousness and morality are confused at times, and it's not clear that Stoppard really understands the true implications of the 'hard



problem' of consciousness.

But more frustrating is how the problem of human nature is pitched. The self-important Spike says anything non-scientific is 'gibberish', and argues we're just biology and therefore fundamentally self-centred. The good-hearted Hilary questions evolution, doubts the scientific study of human nature, and thinks that not being able to explain consciousness is evidence for the existence of God.

Underneath the scientific-sounding fireworks in the dialogue is a fundamentally pre-Enlightenment view of human nature that equates mystery with moral virtue and suggests morality is necessarily mysterious. As a result, the cognitive science turns out to be a distraction, where misplaced talk of neuroscience actually obscures the central meaning. In this sense, the play is a lost opportunity to push ethical questions about human conduct up against the genuinely profound questions about the self raised by modern brain research.

The one metaphor of the play that does work brilliantly is the Prisoner's Dilemma – the classic paradigm in game theory where two criminals are caught and know that if they both keep quiet they'll each get away with a light punishment, but if one rats and one stays silent, the rat goes free and the other goes down for a long stretch. Self-interest says you rat – you can't risk trying to help another if it could send you into the abyss.

Hilary baulks at the concept – not at the choices, but the assumptions. 'You've left out everything about Bob and me except we're out for ourselves and we've got two buttons to

push.' 'Actually,' she says sardonically, 'Bob loves me.' 'I'm confessing... I'm going to give Bob a chance to go straight.' Hilary's reframing strikes at the core of how scientific models can sometimes simplify human nature into numerical dust and this is really where the play really hits its mark.

At the end of the play, Hilary finds herself in her own version of the Prisoner's Dilemma when a research assistant admits falsifying data for a study on morality that has both their names on it. The assistant declares she is motivated by love and wanted to impress. Hilary unmoved but compassionate, takes responsibility to save her junior, and loses her post. She saves a fraud in the hope of a better future. Her final act of humanity concerns her lost daughter; another important and touching story arc, but, if you'll allow me my own moment of altruism, I won't give it all away, for your own good, of course.

There's probably a brilliant play to be written about brain research, the *Copenhagen* of cognitive science perhaps, but Stoppard hasn't managed it with *The Hard Problem*. He has, however, written an enjoyable work of theatre and he can always revise his ideas, we hope, based on the results of future experiments.

I Reviewed Dr Vaughan Bell who is a Senior Clinical Lecturer at UCL, a clinical psychologist with South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, and blogger with Mind Hacks. The play is currently running at the National Theatre, and will be broadcast to cinemas UK and worldwide (see www.ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk).

Managing your anxiety



The SAM App
University of the
West of England
(Developer)

The Self-Help for Anxiety Management (SAM for short) app aims to 'help you understand and manage anxiety'. From the perspective of someone with experience of mental health apps and websites through my research I believe this is one of the better ones. The usability aspect is often overlooked in favour of replicating an established intervention. This can often lead to low levels of adherence, especially when there is minimal therapist contact. The app is easy to use and intuitive, moving the user from information about using the app to information about their anxiety. The self-help aspect is clear, with the toolkit allowing tailoring of preferred techniques, and the concept of tracking anxiety useful. My only concern is there needs to be more clarity about the function and use of the 'Social Cloud' for users, especially emphasising that it is an unmoderated peer-to-peer network.

<http://sam-app.org.uk>
Reviewed by Aislinn Bergin who is a postgraduate research student in the Centre for Psychological Therapies in Primary Care, University of Chester

Highly stimulating

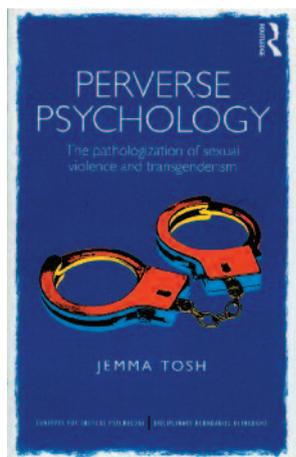


Perverse Psychology: The Pathologization of Sexual Violence and Transgenderism
Jemma Tosh

Perverse Psychology provides rare insights into a hugely underresearched area; yet these are all issues that clinicians may be presented with in a day's work. Human sexuality, gender identity, and sexual violence towards divergent sexual populations are discussed from a psychological perspective, allowing readers to fully immerse in the complexity of this area.

Some of the case studies presented may be so unusual that clinicians may have never encountered anything similar previously; however, this book provides valuable and necessary insight to the complex nature of human sexual relationships and atypical sexual arousal. Particularly thought-provoking are the discussions relating to sexual fantasy, including rape and murder role-play, bondage, discipline and sado-masochism relationships.

Tosh's discussion of the contemporary problem of the role of the internet in relation to these areas and the devastating effects of



cyber-bullying and distress caused by 'trolls' is particularly provocative and leads readers to consider the novel nature of grooming and abuse that the internet now all too

easily provides. Readers are invited to consider the role of family therapy in supporting transgender children in contemporary discussions. This book is almost ahead of its time, pushing readers to think outside of the box and hauling them into the 21st century.

At last, a book that speaks about the unspoken, discusses topics that society would rather brush under the carpet and makes sense of the disorganised evidence-

base. This book serves to instigate discussion and contemplation. Well written, well referenced – a highly stimulating read.

| Routledge; 2014; Pb 25.99

Reviewed by Kirsten Nokling who is a trainee clinical psychologist for South Wales and Vale NHS Trust, Cardiff University



A practical and open message

The Small Big: Small Changes That Spark Big Influence
Steve J. Martin, Noah J. Goldstein & Robert Cialdini

The Small BIG outlines how deceptively small changes can produce big results when influencing others. Social influence is introduced as the way in which individuals are shaped by the perception and actions of others. The title takes a practical perspective, distilling decades of research in persuasion science into easily digested chapters centring on a single factor of influence. The experience of the three authors, all prominent in the field, brings a critical and supportive presence to the bear on the title.

Though the individual 'small BIG changes' discussed are highly diverse, loosely these follow Cialdini's six weapons of influence (authority, reciprocity, scarcity, liking, consistency and social proof). Real-world examples are drawn, both from the writers' personal experiences and further afield, including: changes that lower tax avoidance rates; developing resilience in the face of failure; and building confident and effective communication skills.

The Small BIG presents a very engaging and accessible read, providing practical insight in a well-supported yet succinct manner. Whilst some may grumble that the book lacks academic detail, this is insignificant criticism in comparison to the overall practical and open message conveyed and fulfilling reading experience.

| Profile Books; 2014; Pb £11.99

Reviewed by Rory McDonald who is a writer and researcher at the University of Central Lancashire



A most enjoyable route

Happy Maps (TED talk)
Daniele Quercia

Daniele Quercia paints a familiar picture in his TED talk, Happy Maps. So many of us take the same route to work every day, possibly using maps on our smartphones, without really stopping to think whether a better route exists, a more beautiful route, even a happier route. Quercia points out that with his background as a scientist and engineer his focus has so often been on finding efficiency just as mapping apps give us one simple, short route to our destination.

But after taking a detour on his bicycle one day Quercia found a beautiful, quiet route that only took him a minute or two longer than his usual, busy, grey route. At the TED event in Berlin Quercia said that after this experience he became fascinated with the ways in which people can enjoy a city and started to use computer science tools to replicate social science. He says: 'I became captivated by the beauty and genius of traditional social science experiments done by Jane Jacobs, Stanley Milgram, Kevin Lynch. The result of that research has been the creation of new maps, maps where you don't only find the shortest path... but also the most enjoyable path.'

To create these maps Quercia created a crowdsourcing platform game and presented thousands of online participants with two contrasting urban scenes and asked them to choose which one was more quiet, beautiful or happy. Quercia later started working for Yahoo Labs and speaks about the development of these Happy Maps, with the potential to create a mapping tool that would return the most enjoyable routes based not only on aesthetics but also based on smell, sound, and memories.

Quercia ends his talk by challenging the audience to confront some of their daily habits, concluding: 'If you think that adventure is dangerous, try routine. It's deadly.'

| View at tinyurl.com/my69okk

Reviewed by Ella Rhodes who is The Psychologist's staff journalist



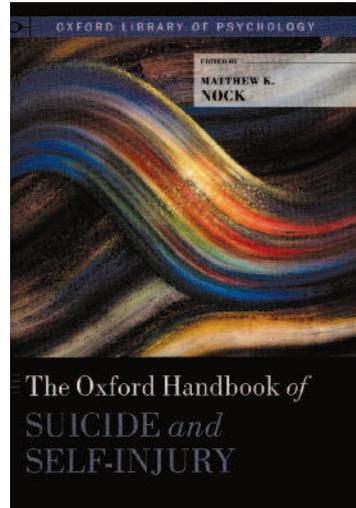
Clear text on difficult issues

The Oxford Handbook of Suicide and Self-Injury
Matthew K. Nock

The Oxford Handbook of Suicide and Self-Injury is a well-structured and comprehensive commentary on this important topic. It contains detailed chapters on systems for defining and classifying suicide and self-injury, with interesting commentary on the origins and development of current methods of classification. This section is followed by some excellent chapters outlining research detailing how these issues affect different sociodemographic groups across the lifespan. One of the highlights of the book is the collection of chapters describing different theoretical approaches to understanding suicide and self-injury. The

biopsychosocial structuring of this section and the variety of different theories explored results in an informative and comprehensive read. Particular areas of interest are chapters on information processing and psychodynamic approaches to suicide.

From a clinical perspective, later sections on assessment and prevention of suicide and self-injury, were very interesting. These drew on the information and research presented in previous sections and provided detailed assessment frameworks for use



in clinical practice. However, as the book is heavily based on US research studies and guidelines, the utility for clinicians practising in the UK should be considered. Much of the

information may be relevant to clinical groups both in the UK and US; however, other sections is more pertinent to US populations, such as the impact of particular socio-cultural contexts and the nature of access to certain means of self-harm. It would therefore be necessary to take into account UK guidance, legislation and research in order to match the framework to a UK population. But overall, this book is a good, clear text on the difficult issue of suicide and self-harm.

I Oxford University Press; 2014; Hb £115.00
Reviewed by Dr Liane Hubbins
who is a clinical psychologist



Sensory trickery in the kitchen

Synaesthesia
Kitchen Theory

Bringing the synaesthetic experience to the dinner table is no mean feat, but that is what modernist culinary creatives Kitchen Theory have aimed to do with their series of seven-course meals which set out to enhance and fool the senses. Synaesthesia, a sensory condition that can cause sound to have colour and words to have flavours, is mind-boggling to those of us who don't have it [see last month's issue] – but can such an experience really be recreated through food?

The setting for chef Jozef Youssef's experimental meal is the Food Incubator, Maida Hill Place, London, a space designed for food entrepreneurs who want to try out their ideas. Guests are seated at a long table and given menus in enticing black envelopes but told not to look at them until after the second course – enhancing the air of mystery around this unique dining experience.

Without giving too much of the menu's content away, each course aimed to illustrate some of our preconceived ideas about food, taste, texture and even sounds we hear while eating. Among other things the courses illustrate our relationship with colour and taste, the effect of speech sounds on our perception of food shape and the potential relationship between tactile

sensations and food textures and tastes. Every course was given an intriguing name such as Night Owl's Eastbourne Grotto or Believe Nothing of What you Hear – each one became a sensory act in its own right.

Each course was accompanied by atomisers, sounds, even a cube covered with different textures that could be played with while eating to examine the effect on taste. Not only were the flavour combinations and sensory trickery fascinating, diners were also treated to some education on the topic of synaesthesia with the help of Professor Charles Spence of Oxford University's Cross Modal Department, who has helped to design the menu.

Spence, along with Sean Day, President of American Synaesthesia Association, and Richard E. Cytowic, MD MFA, Neurologist and author of *Wednesday is Indigo Blue*, have helped Youssef combine some of the



research into this neurological phenomenon into his menu. Youssef has worked at Helene Darroze at the Connaught, The Dorchester Hotel and the Fat Duck, and is the author of *Molecular Gastronomy at Home*.

I Reviewed by Ella Rhodes who is *The Psychologist's* staff journalist. The events are being held Thursday to Saturday every fortnight from now through to June 2015 at Food Incubator, Maida Hill Place. For more information and to book visit tinyurl.com/nuzb2d5



Every contact leaves a trace

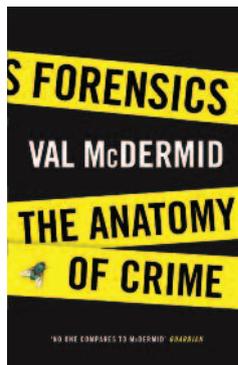
Forensics: The Anatomy of Crime
Val McDermid

Since her heroine P.D. James passed away in November 2014, Val McDermid seems destined to be crowned Dame of Crime Fiction. However, her latest book is non-fiction. *Forensics: The Anatomy of Crime* tells the fascinating, and sometimes gory, story of the development of a wide range of forensic techniques. Every major criminal forensic discipline is covered, including fire-scene investigation, pathology, toxicology, fingerprinting, forensic anthropology, blood spatter and DNA analysis, and, of course, forensic psychology.

McDermid has researched each area extensively, both in terms of its scientific development, as well as how individual cases (and individuals) have contributed. Perhaps due to her high profile, she has also obtained interviews with many of the top scientists in each field.

Some chapters shed light on the historic development of a discipline, such as the origin of facial reconstruction in 'Lombrosia', the long-discredited concept that types of criminal face could be identified and categorised (used in court cases in the 19th century). Other chapters give facts that require a strong stomach: some might feel the need to look away from parts of the forensic entomology chapter, which throngs with the maggots and blowflies used to identify time of death.

It's no surprise that the chapter on forensic psychology is the longest. To date, McDermid has written eight books featuring Tony



Hill (aka Robson Green), who is variously described as a clinical psychologist or a psychological profiler. McDermid notes that the forensic psychologist offers 'the perfect fantasy figure...someone who gets to look at people with an analytical and empathetic eye, but who also gets to be the hero'.

McDermid identifies the first offender profile as likely to have been that made for Jack the Ripper; its more modern incarnation started in the post-war hunt for Nazi war criminals. But reliance on any one forensic technique can be problematic, and the murder of Rachel Nickell on Wimbledon Common in 1992 was a low point in offender profiling in the UK. The psychologist Paul Britton created a profile of the murderer that led directly to the identification of Colin Stagg as the prime suspect, and contributed to the 'honeytrap' strategy used against him. The case was dismissed at court and Stagg received over £700,000 in compensation. Ultimately it was a different forensic technique – improved DNA analysis – that led to the conviction of the murderer, Robert Napper.

By the end of this book I'd learnt a lot about forensic science: and McDermid's skill as a storyteller makes this an easily digestible, if sometimes gruesome, read. For anyone at all interested in the conjunction of science and crime, this is essential reading.

| *Profile; 2014; Pb £18.99*

Reviewed by **Kate Johnstone** who is a postgraduate student at UCL



Learning from the patient's perspective

The Body Keeps the Score: Mind, Brain and Body in the Transformation of Trauma
Bessel van der Kolk

Dr van der Kolk's epigraph 'To my patients, who kept the score and were the textbook' is almost a mission

statement for a career spent learning from both his patients and experts outside his own field who can offer ways to help those affected by traumatic events. This is a

fascinating and comprehensive look both at what causes trauma and what its effects can be, not just to the survivor, but those around and involved with them.

It isn't always a comfortable read – the statistics quoted on experiences of trauma are, frankly, terrifying – and the cases discussed are a painful necessity to illustrate relevant points. However the writing is compelling and pitched both at

survivors (at the expert patient level) and those working with them.

The book is split into five parts and uses the device of following van der Kolk's career as a timeline to weave the history of trauma treatment and development of the field together.

The use of neuroimaging techniques to examine what happens in the brain during flashbacks is intriguing and contributes to our understanding of both why and how people are affected differently by the same events. The final, and largest, part of the book focuses on the treatment of trauma. This section is again explored through van der Kolk's encounters with each method. Because of the groundwork in the earlier sections and depth of coverage in learning to understand trauma, when each technique is raised and



considered the reader is prepared to be more open-minded towards less familiar and potentially less mainstream approaches. A key point of this book is this approach; for example, for the patient user the discussion of mindfulness adds another dimension to the self-help type information currently available.

While Dr van der Kolk's experiences, and the list of additional resources, reflect that

he is based in the USA, this does not lessen the book's relevance. This book deserves to be widely read not just for the overview it provides of our understanding of trauma, or for the outline of one man's career, but for the insight it provides into the patient's perspective.

| *Allen Lane; 2014; Hb £25.00*

Reviewed by **Louise Beaton** who is an Open University psychology graduate

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