

Ambiguities, illusions and word-play

Richard Gregory delights in word-play and puns, and the title of his book is deliberately ambiguous. 'Seeing through illusions' could announce a study of vision, using illusions as demonstrations, or it could promise a volume that will get to the bottom of what causes them. Gregory attempts to do both of these things in this highly readable survey of the field of vision to which he has contributed so much.

In this extended essay, he reflects on some of the history of vision science, and the evolution of eye and brain, before tackling the daunting task of describing and cataloguing visual illusions in the major part of the text. 'Illusion' is defined rather broadly to cover any mismatch between the subjective visual world and the objective world, that which is 'really' there. Gregory avoids tricky philosophical issues in his treatise and implicitly adopts a realist stance, though a million miles away from the naive realism of J.J. Gibson. For Gregory, illusions demonstrate the physiological and psychological processes that mediate our perception of the world, but without in any way implying that the world itself is illusory.

Gregory offers an organisational framework for illusions, in which he suggests that there are seven basic kinds of illusion, and shows how examples of each kind can be explained in terms of problems arising from reception, perception or conception. For example, his first category of illusion is 'blindness' which can (fairly obviously) be caused by damage or temporary problems in the sensory system itself, but into which type he also places some kinds of agnosia, and change blindness, which arise from faulty 'top-down' processing. The punster labels his organisational framework 'The Periodic Table', but I forgave him for that.

I enjoyed reading the book – it is written in an accessible style with details relegated to notes at the end of each chapter so as not to interrupt the flow. As a perceptual psychologist myself, I found Richard Gregory's overview of what has been so much of his life's work rather a treat to read. I could hear his voice speaking the words of the text and enjoy his imagined giggles. There are scattered autobiographical anecdotes throughout the book – for example in a footnote we learn that Hick's law was based on reaction time data from Gregory himself. There are a few scholarly rough edges that could have done with a harsh editing. Nevertheless, I would recommend it as supplementary reading to fairly advanced students to broaden their understanding and appreciation of their subject matter.

Seeing Through Illusions
Richard L. Gregory

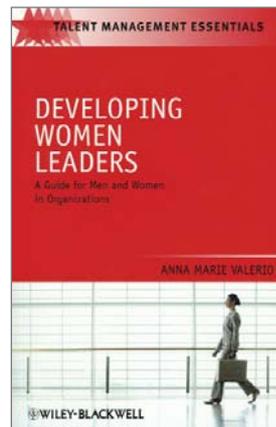
Gregory's engaging style and delight in his subject matter could really make this a book of wide appeal for the general reader. With them in mind, though, it's a shame it wasn't produced in a more glossy format. The illustrations were a bit of a disappointment. Most were black-and-white and, particularly the occasional monochrome reproductions of artwork, make the book look 'duller' than its subject matter. Some figures needed more elaboration in the legend or text than we got. There are only four pages of colour plates inserted centrally, and while these were good, not all were explicitly referred to from the text. Some topics really needed diagrams – for example, the mirror discussion, which I found really difficult to get my head round (ironically enough, since getting your head round seems to be at the core of the explanation).

These are quibbles, though. It has been an enormous pleasure to have had to read Richard Gregory's treatise from cover to cover for this review.

Oxford University Press; 2009; Hb £16.99

Reviewed by Vicki Bruce

who is Professor of Psychology at Newcastle University



Balanced, practical and multifunctional

Developing Women Leaders:
A Guide for Men and Women
in Organizations
Anna Marie Valerio

For years leadership researchers and practitioners have debated why it is that women are still under-represented in senior positions. This text avoids revisiting many of those arguments and instead focuses on offering practical advice for managers, both male and female, on how to increase the opportunities for women in the workplace.

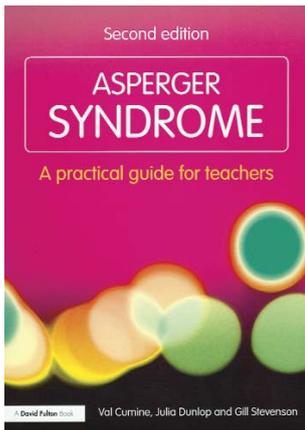
With women now making up 48 per cent of the workforce (full- and part-time) and equal pay claims making headline news, this issue is still prevalent today. Valerio presents a refreshingly balanced approach. She discusses the differences and the similarities between male and female leaders and considers the need for all managers to display a combination of both masculine and feminine traits. The text takes a realistic view of what organisations and managers can do to support women and considers the realities of dual career couples and the impact this has on careers.

The key success of this text is, for me, Valerio's presentation of years of leadership research in a 'friendly, vernacular voice' suitable for a wide-ranging audience.

Wiley-Blackwell; 2009; Pb £16.99

Reviewed by Catherine Steele

who is an occupational psychologist, University of Worcester



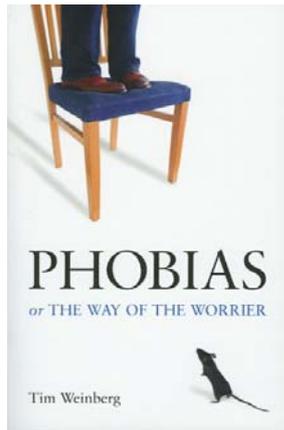
Useful new edition

Asperger Syndrome: A Practical Guide for Teachers
Val Cumine, Julia Dunlop & Gill Stevenson (Eds.)

Having referred my students to the first edition of this book on many occasions, I was interested to see what revisions have been made to this second edition. This fully revised version provides a more up-to-date perspective on the latest developments in the field. While including Every Child Matters, the Disability Equality Duty and Access Inclusion Panning, it is pleasing to see that the authors have still maintained their practical approach, providing the reader with a range of educational and behavioural strategies.

This is a useful and very practical book, which will be informative to staff working in any school, special or mainstream, involved in the education of children with Asperger's syndrome or wider autism spectrum disorders. While clearly targeted at teachers and assistants supporting children within educational settings, the book is also a welcome resource for parents, carers and other professionals supporting the social and behavioural progress of students with Asperger's syndrome.

I *Routledge; 2010; Pb £19.99*
Reviewed by Ruth Hewston
who is a Senior Lecturer in Education Studies at the University of Worcester



From the common to the unusual

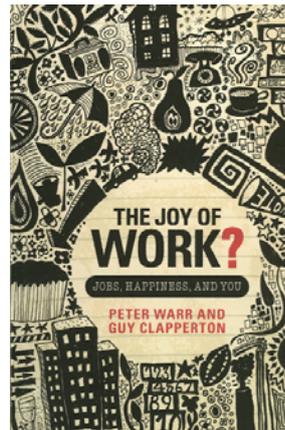
Phobias: or The Way of the Worrier
Tim Weinberg

In just 180 pages, Weinberg examines phobia at 360 degrees – from the common fear of spiders to the unusual fear of poetry, from acarophobia to zeusophobia, to yet unnamed irrational fears. The author also draws from his own experience with his fear of heights.

Each chapter has two sections. The first is an episode of the author's attempts and struggles to overcome his phobia, the second tackles one category of phobias, such as situations or animals, and breaks it down, taking a look at individual fears, with an A-Z table of names and definitions.

Two characteristics of this publication are worth mentioning. The first is Weinberg's holistic approach to the topic. He does not simply review the latest literature but examines phobias from different perspectives: their perception in history, films portraying them, scientific research, anecdotes. The second striking feature is humour. Using an informal, first-person account, Weinberg informs and engages the reader combining authoritative sources and web links with a healthy dose of phobia-related jokes and cartoons. An amusing read around a topic otherwise uncomfortable for many of us.

I *Marshall Cavendish; 2009; Pb £8.99*
Reviewed by Tania Heap
who is an Associate Lecturer at the Open University



Thorough and rigorous

The Joy of Work? Jobs, Happiness, and You
Peter Warr & Guy Clapperton

Peter Warr and Guy Clapperton have produced a book to give advice on how to improve your job, change jobs and/or alter the way you view your job in order to increase feelings of happiness. The authors address the features of jobs that have been shown to contribute to happiness (based on Peter Warr's 1987 Vitamin model, with the addition of three more elements). They also consider the impact of personality and how we interpret and process information, quite rightly pointing out that these will also impact on whether we enjoy our jobs.

Towards the end of the book, there is guidance on how to use all this information, along with some more advice on ways to increase happiness (e.g. from CBT and positive psychology research). Throughout the book there are also a number of

questionnaires (also available on the web) designed to help assess feelings about the various aspects of jobs, and to help focus on areas to address.

Warr and Clapperton successfully weave together the many and varied theories and approaches in this area to produce a guide which should be helpful for occupational psychologists, HR professionals and managers within organisations. I would suggest however that although written in a chatty style, it may lose less dedicated readers, especially those looking for a 'self-help' guide – the downside of a thorough and rigorous summary of research and theory is that it can be repetitive and that some of the real nuggets get lost in the sheer quantity of information.

I *Routledge; 2009; Pb £8.99*
Reviewed by Emily Hutchinson
who is a Chartered Occupational Psychologist, Consultant and Senior Lecturer

just in

Sample titles just in:

Introduction to Political Psychology Martha Cottam et al.
Mindsight: Change Your Brain and Your Life Daniel Siegel
Michelangelo's Finger: An Exploration of Everyday Transcendence Raymond Tallis
The Perception of Speech Brian Moore, Lorraine Tyler & William Marslen-Wilson
50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology Scott Lilienfeld
The Time Paradox Philip Zimbardo & John Boyd
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