

A frustrating watch

The BBC is to be commended for the intention of its two-week strand of mental health programming, *In the Mind*: to 'help raise public awareness and understanding of issues relating to mental health'. So it's unfortunate that the opening programme, *The Not So Secret Life of the Manic Depressive: Ten Years On*, was a curate's egg that has attracted attention for the wrong reasons.

Stephen Fry's original Emmy award-winning documentary a decade ago was enlightening for many, and is credited with creating a positive public dialogue about bipolar disorder. Revisiting the same terrain should have been fruitful. The questions asked at the top of the programme were, 'Do we understand bipolar better?', 'Is treatment for bipolar better?' and 'Is it easier for young people to admit they have bipolar?'.

We were first reminded of Cordelia, who had featured 10 years ago and had been diagnosed at the age of 22. The question posed was 'Is early diagnosis beneficial?'. In short shrift the answer in this case was 'No'. Cordelia had apparently not improved at all since then. She was in a depressive state, living a very restricted life. However, we were given no sense of what treatment or clinical support she'd had in the intervening years. Worse, she'd been diagnosed two years ago with breast cancer. After a hospital scan, she flatly announced her terminal illness to camera, her stunned mother beside her. Yet it was unclear whether this was her diagnosis or her depressed state talking (although who might not be depressed in her position?). In either case, it felt voyeuristic and told us little about either the understanding of bipolar disorder or its treatment.

The programme became further confused when it featured Alika, a young man who had experienced online bullying. A stranger filmed a manic episode Alika had had on the tube: Alika was singing along, loudly, and not especially tunefully, to the music in his headphones. The clip had gone viral, and inevitably, amongst the thousands of comments, were many vicious and offensive ones. But from what we were shown, these were about his singing, along the lines of 'who does he

think he is?'. Whilst Alika clearly felt the comments reflected on his manic state, objectively they didn't seem to be about his mental health. As an illustration of whether it is easier for young people to say they have bipolar disorder, therefore, it was either poorly chosen or badly explained. We did briefly see an interesting discussion between Alika and a group of teenagers about how young people perceive mental illness; the programme should have devoted more time to this.

Segments that featured Stephen Fry himself were not much better, with a tonal inconsistency that detracted from the subject matter. At one point Stephen discussed his recent state of mind with his psychiatrist, describing a schedule that involved a flight from London to LA (where he spent a day), then immediately back to London, then straight on to India. An animated graphic and jaunty music popped up to illustrate each leg of this ill-advised journey. What a lark! Except his psychiatrist was pointing out the need for reduced stress, regular sleep and exercise, and to avoid situations and behaviour that might act as triggers.

The programme did make some more coherent points, especially when showing a married man who worked as a chef. His ordinariness was refreshing, and his challenges seemed likely to be more relevant: How do I hold down a job? How does my condition affect my family? The programme also tried to finish on a positive note by featuring Rachel, a young woman who (despite becoming paralysed during a psychotic episode) seemed to be living well with a bipolar disorder diagnosis.

Overall, this was a frustrating watch on its own terms. It did not directly answer any of the three questions it posed itself, in particular, the crucial ones about understanding and treating bipolar disorder. This failure makes it less surprising that there has been significant criticism of the programme for talking a purely biomedical approach, which it seemed to do by default. Viewers were surely left none the wiser about the range of support and treatments that must be out there, why many resist being medicalised (as Stephen himself had in the original documentary) or why some manage their condition better than others.



The Not So Secret Life of the Manic Depressive: Ten Years On
BBC One

Worth re-reading



Applied Leadership Development
Al Bolea
& Leanne Atwater

I spend a lot of my time coaching senior leaders within organisations and I am currently involved in designing a leadership development programme, so was eager to find out what I could learn from Bolea and Atwater's book on leadership development.

The short answer is quite a lot. This book is packed with a useful mix of theory, case study examples and practical advice. It is structured around a 'J-Curve' Leadership Model – nine elements that the authors consider leaders need to learn to be effective: both what leaders need to do, and how they need to lead.

I read the book thinking of client organisations that I have worked with and found the concepts easy to relate to. All the theories and models that I would expect to be included were (e.g. positive psychology, neuroscience, Brene Brown's research on vulnerability), but there were also some that were new to me. It is strongly evidence-based and thorough academically with extensive referencing.

The fact that it goes into practical areas such as strategy and performance management, as well as the qualities needed as a leader, means that I think that this book would appeal to quite a wide audience – leaders at all levels, and those supporting their development. There are even a few formulas, which I know would appeal to a lot of my clients (engineers!).

There aren't that many books that I feel that I want to go back and re-read – but this is one of them. Or if time doesn't allow, I will at least check through all my multiple underlinings and notes in the margins.

Routledge; 2016; Pb £26.99

Reviewed by Emily Hutchinson who is Director, ejh consulting ltd

¹ The Not So Secret Life of the Manic Depressive was first broadcast on BBC One on 15 February 2016

Reviewed by Kate Johnstone who is Associate Editor for 'Reviews'

For Richard Bentall's open letter to Fry, see <https://blogs.canterbury.ac.uk/discursive/all-in-the-brain/>

For an open letter to the BBC from Society President Elect Peter Kinderman, see

<http://peterkinderman.blogspot.co.uk/2016/02/open-letter-about-bbc-coverage-of.html>

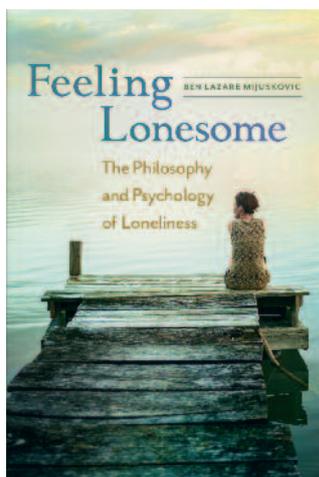
Incurable but not untreatable



Feeling Lonesome: The Philosophy and Psychology of Loneliness
Ben Lazare Mijuskovic

This book ardently rejects the materialist and behaviourist view of loneliness as merely produced by biological mechanisms of the brain or caused by external conditions, and therefore as temporary, avoidable and curable. This characterisation fails to provide for Mijuskovic an adequate theory of consciousness that he sees as vital to accounting for how our mental activities interact with our brain and physical body. Instead, he contends it is our self-aware and reflexive nature that is the active source of our unhappiness. Universally doomed to a world of our own making, our loneliness is innate, incurable and inherently unpleasant.

The philosophical discussion of self-consciousness is thus explored early on in the book and deals with the cognitive roots of loneliness. Equally engaging is the chapter presenting the psychological roots of how loneliness is 'birthed' through our three primary traumatic separations: birth itself, the realisation of a separate 'self', and the separation from the primary caregiver. Mijuskovic goes on to suggest that the opposing poles



of loneliness are intimacy and friendship. He champions insight treatments that focus on 'reviving and reliving the past' and the intrapsychic dynamics of intentionality that are essential to our ability to connect with others.

The themes of this book are exciting and will be of interest to most psychologists, even if some see its conception of loneliness as too broad and its depiction of the human condition as overly dreary. Clinicians of all persuasions will gain much insight from the therapeutic measures and strategies gathered in the final chapter that can alleviate and console us against the inescapable drag of our existence.

I Praeger; 2015; Hb £38.00
Reviewed by Alan Flynn who is a counselling psychologist in training, University of East London



Cutting through conspiracy

The X-Files
Channel 5

Following my adolescence being spent enthralled by repeated watching of Arthur C. Clarke's *Mysterious World* in the 1980s, avidly reading classic M.R. James ghost stories, and being an excitable teenager watching *Ghostbusters*, I had turned an enthusiastic interest in the paranormal into an academic pursuit in the USA and begun an undergraduate psychology thesis exploring all manner of paranormal experiences and beliefs. As I was starting my final year at a US university in 1993, a television series began that mirrored both my boyhood paranormal fascination and my enduring scientific scepticism. *The X-Files* presented us with two FBI agents, Fox 'Spooky' Mulder and Dr Dana Scully. Mulder actively pursued relatively uncritical investigations of all manner of supernatural cases from alien abduction and UFOs to voodoo, vampires and the Bermuda Triangle. Dr Scully accompanied him, providing a rational perspective, a sceptical antidote which was pushed to its limit as they uncovered a government conspiracy to hide, and cooperate with, the existence of extraterrestrials on Earth (what fans called the 'mytharc'). Over the course of the TV series and two major films, *The X-Files* achieved a worldwide mass cult audience, concluding in 2002 after nine series.

Aside from taking great glee in earning the nickname 'Spooky' in the mid-1990s whilst conducting research in an investigative psychology unit, and later meeting and working with Jane Goldman (the author of my dog-eared copy of the two-volume set, *X-Files Book of the Unexplained*), there has been little in the paranormal world to match the youthful excitement I felt when I first watched *The X-Files* over a decade ago. In March 2015, that excitement returned as the show's original creator, Chris Carter, confirmed that Fox (the US TV channel) would be airing a mini-series consisting of six episodes. The wait was excruciating but on 13 February the first episode was shown on Channel 5 in the UK.

As I sat down to watch it, I hoped it would continue the same opposing battles between the two main protagonists. The opening credits took me right back to 1993, placing Mulder and Scully in 2016 but throwing us back into the old X-Files 'mytharc'. The enigmatic protagonists still enthralled with their contrary investigative perspectives and resulting tense relationship (partly due to a history involving having a child together who turns out to be a telekinetic alien mutation: seriously). But my initial concerns for a series swamped with UFOs and alien abductions were partly realised, although an animated diatribe towards the end of the episode revealed that all alien abductions since Roswell were actually a smokescreen created to hide a conspiracy involving a 'multinational group of elites that will cold kill and subjugate' using recovered alien technology!

There was a crumb of comfort, though, at the end of an opening episode that would stretch the most Google-addicted conspiracy theorist. Dr Scully stood up and uttered a response to Mulder worthy of repeating in any social setting where you are confronted with your own version of Tim Minchin's 'Storm'. She cuts through all the post-9/11 internet-fuelled conspiracies by describing it as 'fear mongering claptrap techno isolationist paranoia'. On hearing this delightful sceptical retort, I smiled and knew that regardless of its initial weaknesses my *X-Files* addiction would be well served, at least for the remaining five episodes.

I Reviewed by Dr Ciarán O'Keeffe who is Academic Head of Department at Buckinghamshire New University



just in

Sample titles just in:
Psychology of Fear, Crime, and the Media Derek Chadee
The Psychology of Radicalization and Terrorism Willem Koomen & Joop Van Der Pligt
The Preservation of Memory Davide Bruno (Ed.)

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Squandered opportunity

The Man Without a Shadow
Joyce Carol Oates



Joyce Carol Oates' new novel is a big ragbag of ideas, some widely explored, others gently hinted at, all them pertinent to psychologists, applied and experimental alike. These include the treatment of female scientists, the thought processes of the amnesiac patient, and the symbiotic relationship between researcher and subject. Her narrative focus too, is immediately of interest: a male patient with partial retrograde and total anterograde amnesia whose stoical, decades-long involvement in research forms the foundation of our understanding of memory function and organisation in the brain. Oates has changed many of the biographical details of his case, but there are no prizes for guessing who this book is based on.

Amnesia is a condition rich in opportunities for metaphor, and Oates takes full advantage as she charts the course of 'Patient EH's' life as a research subject. Early on she evokes her protagonist's dilemma as he converses with researchers: 'His is the eagerness of a drowning person, hoping to be rescued by someone, anyone, with no idea what rescue might be, or from what.' She returns frequently to the idea that Eli Hoopes lives in 'an indefinable present-tense' (an echo of Suzanne Corkin's account of her work with HM, *Permanent Present Tense*), and the man himself reflects 'without a memory is like being without a shadow'. Sometimes Oates writes dangerously close to cliché: I didn't feel that the image of Eli as 'a brave man who stands alone, as on a brink of the abyss' helped my understanding of him very much. Elsewhere she grasps at an almost poetic style that gives the novel a dream-like quality, as when

the researcher Margot suggests that her precarious status in Eli's mind makes her 'like a moon in a lunar eclipse'.

Oates is at her best when she writes about the courteous, charismatic Eli, and the few sections written in his voice are startling in their empathy (much like Emma Healey's exploration of dementia in the novel *Elizabeth is Missing*). His hypersensitivity to others' reactions allows him to safely navigate conversations and interactions: 'it is imperative, he knows, not to acknowledge any surprise or confusion'. Anxiety is ever-present for Eli, the simplest questions trigger panic and he must face the daily puzzle of the lab: 'Always there are smiling strangers, happy to see him.' In moments he tumbles into paranoia: how does Margot know about his sketchbook 'unless she has been spying' on him? Oates's imaginative evocation of the amnesiac patient's inner life is speculative, but it is warm and poignant, especially when she recounts Eli's sense that he must be gracious and diplomatic to the now ageing stranger, Margot, who has spent 30 years with him.

Unfortunately, Margot is the weak point in this book. Initially I found her characterisation rather heartening. Introduced as a 24-year-old grad student assigned to a major neurological project, she ponders: '...will my life begin at last? My true life.' and debates the fact that 'catastrophe in one life... precipitates hope and anticipation in others'. This, it seemed, was a real portrait of a scientist as a human being. It quickly becomes clear, however, that Margot is, ethically, not much of a scientist and, with her total immersion in her subject, her eccentricities of hairstyle and clothing and failure to form meaningful relationships, she is still a bit of a cliché.

Focused entirely on Eli and her work, Margot develops a 'passionate, doomed and deranged love' that leads her seriously astray by the book's end. All the while she wonders whether her behaviour qualifies as scientific misconduct, generally managing to dismiss this as unnecessary worrying.

The novel poses interesting questions: What if a research scientist falls in love with her patient? What if the link between your career and your emotional life is just too close? But Oates doesn't give a satisfactory answer, fashioning instead a modern gothic tale about delusion and loneliness. She adds a persistent memory of childhood trauma to Eli's suffering, but never quite resolves the mystery. In a similar vein she makes Margot an anorexic with alcohol dependency, without exploring the impact of either condition. It struck me that this book was a fascinating opportunity, badly squandered.

Oates has researched her novel thoroughly, with many references to findings on HM (such as the distinction between declarative and procedural memory). I even wondered if the initialled name EH was a sly reference to founding father of memory research, Hermann Ebbinghaus. And it has been broadly well received in the mainstream press. But I found it impossible to suspend the disbelief that Oates's surreal depiction of Margot's *amour fou* requires. Instead I found myself yelping in alarm every time the irksome Margot broke another ethical code. For all its empathy with the amnesiac patient, this is a novel I would rather forget.

| *Fourth Estate, 2016, Pb £12.99*

Reviewed by Sarah A. Smith who is a Graduate Member of the British Psychological Society.

Practical exercises – photocopyable(ish)



The Therapist's Notebook for Families: Solution-Oriented Exercises for Working with Parents, Children, and Adolescents (2nd edn)
Bob Bertolino

Here we have, just as described, a no-nonsense series of solution-oriented exercises for working with families. It is suited for the practising clinician with knowledge of the approach as there is neither provision of theoretical background nor exploration of skills needed to incorporate it in therapeutic practice.

Each of the practical exercises comes with a clear succinct explanation, with the majority taking the form of a handout with questions for family members to complete and reflect on. And with 72 exercises there is plenty to draw from.

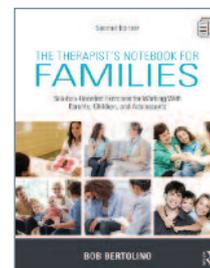
For a second edition of a photocopyable book (a selling point emblazoned on the cover), I was frustrated with the layout, which, like the face of a celebrity with one too many plastic surgery

procedures, does not fit together as well as it could. Exercise forms cross pages, have limited space for writing, and include the rationale for the therapist. I could not help but think Arggh! maybe the typesetter would benefit from some solution-oriented practice.

Minor gripe aside, a great resource for the practising clinician and one I will continue using – but probably not photocopying!

| *Routledge, 2016; £29.99*

Reviewed by Matthew Selman who is with Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust





Of blackbirds and woodpeckers

Changing Minds
Southbank Centre, London

Sam Chaplin, famed director of *The Choir With No Name*, has a passion for using the power of music and song as pathways to recovery for people with a history of mental health issues. For the last three years, he has worked with London hostels, recruiting people with homelessness to form vibrant, eclectic choirs. In the spacious setting of the Clore Ballroom at London's Southbank Centre, and using only a grand piano and pianist (to keep us in tune), a makeshift stage and song sheets, Sam's 'States of Singing' set out to transform the large audience that had gathered into a mass choir complete with sopranos, altos and tenors.

The 'choir' transitioned from Thomas Ravenscroft's 'Ah, Poor Bird, Take Thy Flight', a mournful ode in a minor key to a tuneful 'mash-up' of Lennon and McCartney's 'Blackbird' complete with sustained notation, canon and a developing appreciation for musical syntax. But none of this could have been achieved without a physical and vocal workout beforehand to flex both muscle and larynx in a coordinated fashion in preparation for an extended rehearsal. We were also asked to take stock of our mood before and after the 'intervention'.

For the more musically aware, there was always going to be some discomfort at seeing lyrics on paper with no notation in sight and plenty of 'doo-doo-doo's'. Instead, we were encouraged to be fully present in the moment and activity, setting aside our preconceptions and expectations. By the end of the session, we were calling for our own encore with rapturous applause following a harmonious rendition of 'I Can See Clearly Now', a song popularised by Johnny Nash in the 1970s.

Singing induces a state of freedom; and group singing, corporate freedom. Sam's core

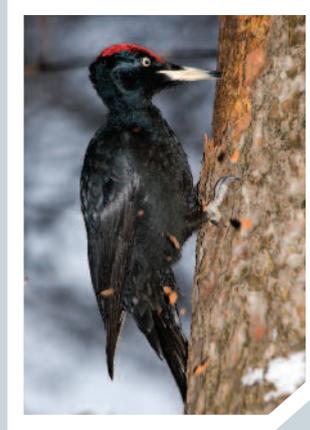
message to his audience is that each of us is a unique musical instrument comprising a power source (lungs), sound source (vocal chords) and resonating cavity (one's whole being).

By the end of the session and judging by the sounds of laughter, smiling faces and conversations bouncing between friends and strangers alike, we had all experienced this 'state of freedom'. I can't claim to be able to sing as well as Johnny Nash, but I can see clearly now that there are benefits to mood and wellbeing from these kinds of musical interventions.

Later that day, I was at the Royal Festival Hall to find out what woodpeckers have in common with Mozart's Symphony No. 40 in G minor. According to a collaboration between Ed Cooke and Nicholas Collon, Principal Conductor for the dynamic Aurora Orchestra – everything. And, as the audience took their seats on the platform centre-stage with the orchestra, we were about to find out.

Ed Cooke, Grand Master of Memory, put the audience through a rigorous experience of music memorisation using chunking, imagery, mnemonics and a version of Craik and Lockhart's method of loci. Musicians memorise huge amounts of notation but, on performance, are usually aided by sheet music on stands. But, for this performance, 33 musicians had to learn and perform Mozart's entire 40th Symphony from memory (see also their performance at the BBC Proms). This time, thanks to Ed's imaginative techniques, the audience was fully engaged using a combination of memorised key phrases to follow an imagery-laden score during the full performance.

Ed, who is the co-founder of Memrise (a language learning platform) trained himself in memory recall almost as a competitive sport, learning 2300



binary numbers. He drew the analogy between learning a musical score and binary numbers, demonstrating to the audience his ability to recall – forwards and backwards – a long series of numbers and letters generated at random by a young member of the audience. Chunking is essential to this process: make things 'bite-sized', assign imagery and create a backstory for those chunks.

The process was ably demonstrated when Ed got the audience to learn a word list using association. It was amazing to hear the audience-constructed story that followed using a series of connections that included such disparate items as a purse, pizza, a dog, a wolf, a fisherman and Arsène Wenger. He followed with examples of musical connections: for example, a purse = Purcell, a dog = Bach, a fisherman... wait for it... Beethoven, with the emphasis on 'bait'. We were now armed with creative tools for memorisation. The opportunity soon came to try out this technique by combining our knowledge of key phrases in the symphony with imagery, showing the power of the human mind for making association through visual representations, structure, spatiality and rhythm.

Nicholas broke down sonata form in Mozart's symphony, which also applies to a huge range of classical music and is key to understanding the

structural architecture for organising music: (1) exposition – introducing the protagonists (woodpeckers); (2) development; (3) recapitulation, and (4) coda. Mozart, it appears, used a similar methodology to thriller writers, focusing on the central character (the woodpecker, played by violins and violas) who spirals out of control, leading to an aggressive exchange (sword-fighting woodpeckers, played by bassists and cellos) with lots of contrasting layers in-between (romantic woodpeckers, played by flutes and clarinets). Subtle merging of these sections leads to extended transitions and eventually, the coda (concluding passage). To execute this form, the musician uses 'muscle' memory that comes from being so well practised that performance almost seems to bypass memory.

Briefly, the orchestra left the stage, regrouped and re-entered to perform the whole symphony while standing and without a piece of sheet music in sight, ably conducted by Nicholas. For the encore, the musicians dispersed among the audience, playing a section of the symphony from various parts of the tiered platform. The thrill of experiencing one of the oboists playing right next to me was, indeed, pure theatre.

The aim of the performance was to demonstrate to the audience how to appreciate symphonic music in richer detail, and in more memorable ways. But there was an added bonus: we left, I am sure, with a much greater appreciation for the power of a woodpecker!

Both events were part of Changing Minds: A Weekend Festival about Mental Health and the Arts, with talks, debates, music, performances and free events

Reviewed by Deborah Husbands who is a Lecturer at the University of Westminster



Deep love and impact

My Baby, Psychosis and Me
BBC One

This programme followed two women admitted to Winchester Mother and Baby Unit with a diagnosis of postpartum psychosis (PP). Hannah, a nurse, was admitted on a section with her baby Esther 12 weeks after she was born. Hannah was experiencing suicidal thoughts and delusions that she was God. Jenny, an artist, was admitted with six-week-old baby Libby. She had a previous diagnosis of bipolar disorder and had carefully planned her psychiatric treatment in case of a relapse. She came in voluntarily. She has a son Reuben (now two years old) and became unwell after his birth, but this was managed by an increase in medication and community psychiatric care. Jenny was experiencing mania, with racing thoughts and difficulty sleeping.

Both women had pre-existing bipolar disorder. Although it is still not clear what causes PP, this programme reflects the prevailing view that in many cases it is related to bipolar disorder, which begins with, or is triggered into a serious episode by, the rapid drop in hormones following the birth of the baby. The chances of women experiencing PP if they have bipolar disorder or a previous postpartum psychosis is high: one in every two women. The risk is elevated if there is a close female relative such as mother or sister with bipolar disorder or PP, suggesting a genetic link.

The care from the perinatal mental health team reflected the level of skill, training and experience needed to care for a seriously ill woman alongside her baby. What wasn't shown was that there would also have been a number of other ill women and their babies all requiring the same level of care and compassion evident in the programme. The programme highlighted the

fact that 80 per cent of women across the country do not have access to such care.

Both women experienced serious deteriorations in their illness after initial improvements. This was devastating to watch; witnessing the dashing of hope, the fear in their families, and the puzzlement of Dr Alain Gregoire, Lead Consultant Psychiatrist. Jenny eventually had to be admitted to a high-secure intensive care unit 100 miles away without her baby. Hannah began experiencing 'dark thoughts', which led her to cut her neck and wrist.

As Dr Gregoire said, it is utterly 'gruesome' to watch people experiencing such levels of suffering. Hannah was eventually given a course of ECT. Both women recovered following these intensive treatments; however, it is unusual for women with postpartum psychosis to experience such severe relapses, and most are well into recovery after about six weeks.

What shone through in the programme was that despite the severity of their illness, both women maintained a strong focus on their baby. Their deep love and connection to their baby was evident. Their care was tender and sensitive, no matter what was going on in their mind at that moment. This was demonstrated in the video clip taken of Jenny interacting with Libby, powerfully countering her own pessimistic prediction of her mothering. This highlighted how crucial it is to keep mother and baby together unless, as in Jenny's case, it becomes temporarily impossible to do.

Jenny's move to the secure unit without

her baby brought a real focus on another dimension of this illness; the impact on the family. Both women had very loving and supportive partners. Their desperation in watching the women they love become so ill was palpable. Although each woman could

be admitted with her baby, it left her partner without the new child, a toddler without his mother and baby sister, and partners without their 'rock' and 'soul-mates'.

The programme ended at the point when both women recovered sufficiently to be discharged. It could not show, therefore, the sometimes long and difficult journey of recovery.

Women often feel exhausted, lose self-confidence in parenting, and describe a sense of being 'shell-shocked'. They are sometimes embarrassed and ashamed about behaviour and thoughts experienced during the manic phase that are so out of character for them. Many will still require the support of their partner and family when they may worry they have 'had enough'. As the woman recovers her partner may 'crash'. This is where a community team steps in to provide the support needed to keep recovery robust. Sadly, many women will not have access to such support.

I My Baby, Psychosis and Me was first shown on BBC One on 16 February 2016

Reviewed by Michelle Cree who is Consultant Clinical Psychologist at the Beeches Perinatal Mental Health Team, Derby, and author of *The Compassionate Mind Approach to Postnatal Depression: Using Compassion Focused Therapy to Enhance Mood, Confidence and Bonding*



Introducing embodied cognition

How the Body Knows Its Mind: The Surprising Power of the Physical Environment to Influence How You Think and Feel
Sian Beilock

What is the relationship between mind and body? This book tackles the age old philosophical debate by taking the road less travelled, from body to brain. How does the way we move and use our bodies influence the way we think? From laughter yoga and action therapy, to math dance and power poses, this book explores the connection in a way that is informative and accessible.

How the Body Knows Its Mind professes to contain advice to help individuals become 'happier, safer and more successful'. This is a debateable statement; however, any advice is grounded in scientific evidence: classic psychology studies such as Milgram and Harlow are presented alongside more recent groundbreaking research in embodied cognition. The book reads as a collection of

evidence supporting a key argument – body influences mind.

Beilock is an engaging and passionate author who attempts to introduce the exciting field of embodied cognition to a more mainstream audience. The book provides a good layperson's account of scientific research but despite there being some interesting examples of research in embodied cognition,

it doesn't reveal any new information and Beilock can be repetitive in terms of delivering her key message. It is, however, a very readable book, which presents scientific research in a non-challenging way.

I *Robinson; 2015; Pp £12.99*

Reviewed by Charlotte Jewell who is an Assistant Psychologist at Community Lives Consortium, Swansea

An important contribution

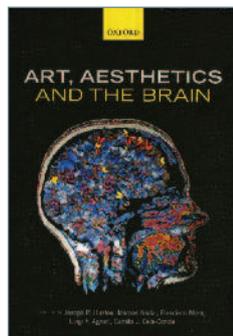


Art, Aesthetics, and the Brain

Joseph P. Huston, Marcos Nadal, Francisco Mora, Luigi F. Agnati & Camilo José Cela-Conde (Eds.)

The psychology of art has been at the margins of the discipline even though aesthetics was a specialism of Fechner, a founding father of the empirical approach to the study of the mind. You might find this surprising given the huge audiences for visual art, music and dance – the three art forms that are the focus of this volume – with their long history, their presence across cultures, their interest to other scholarly disciplines. Following Fechner, a behaviourist approach that sought correlations between artistic ‘stimuli’ and audience ‘responses’ held sway for many years; but as experimental psychology took cognitive and neuroscientific turns, these paradigms have embraced aesthetic phenomena so that we now see the emerging fields of neuroculture, neuroaesthetics and the neuropsychology and cognitive neuroscience of art. These developments were encouraged by seminal studies that identified activation in specific brain areas during aesthetic appreciation and production tasks. The volume edited by Huston and his colleagues effectively serves as a handbook for a substantial body of this theory and research and in doing so represents an important contribution to these fields.

It is a large, appropriately well-designed and illustrated volume of 545 pages, comprising 25 chapters presenting original contributions by international researchers from a range of disciplines including art history, biology, cognitive science, computer science, electronic engineering, neuroscience, psychiatry and psychology. It provides a valuable resource for specialists in the



psychology of visual art, music and dance, for teachers and students in other disciplines who take an interest in these art forms (although it would be challenging for readers who lack technical knowledge of brain research and its terminology and will send many who have some knowledge back

to our textbooks) and for cognitive scientists interested in applications of their field. I don't imagine it being widely used as a course textbook since there are, to my knowledge, regrettably few courses on the psychology of art. Yet the book outlines fascinating research that deserves to be better known, including, to take only a few examples, the effects of brain injury upon artists' work; dementia and creativity; neuroimaging studies of creativity; eye movements in the perception of paintings; hemispheric specialisation; individual differences in preferences for music genres; the co-evolution of art and brain.

Perhaps books of this quality this will influence university courses in cognitive science and neuroscience to extend their sights to include the study of products of the human mind that have such cultural significance.

! Oxford University Press; 2015; Hb £95.00

Reviewed by **Raymond Crozier** who is Honorary Professor, School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University

Could you breathe life into our Book Reviews?

In academia, book reviews can be an intellectually stimulating platform for discussion and debate. In the pages of *The Psychologist*, some of our most talked about moments have been book reviews – Simon Baron-Cohen on Cordelia Fine's *Delusions of Gender*, or Phil Banyard on Zimbardo. But too often, book reviews feel like a token effort... quite simply, we struggle to get the right people to review the right books on a regular basis.

So we are looking for somebody to help us out. A new **Associate Editor for Book Reviews** would liaise with publishers to ensure we got to hear about major new books, and then contact and advise prospective reviewers.

Do you love book publishing? Are you well-connected and respected within psychology? Above all, are you persuasive – could you get respected academics and practitioners within psychology to provide timely reviews, in the face of all their other commitments?

A stipend will be arranged with the successful candidate, to compensate time.

The term would be for an initial three-month trial period, followed by a renewable annual agreement.

For more information and to express an interest, email the Managing Editor Dr Jon Sutton on jon.sutton@bps.org.uk. Closing date 9 May 2016.

