

LETTERS

Letters should be marked clearly 'Letter for publication in *The Psychologist*' and addressed to the editor at the Society office in Leicester. Please send by e-mail if possible: psychologist@bps.org.uk (include a postal address). Letters over 500 words are less likely to be published. The editor reserves the right to edit, shorten or publish extracts from letters. If major editing is necessary, this will be indicated. Space does not permit the publication of every letter received. Letters to the editor are not normally acknowledged.

Psychology in the media

READ with interest the article 'Pop tarts or psychology pioneers?' by Hayward Godwin (Students page, April 2004). I thought it raised a number of issues around psychology and the media that many undergraduates may not be aware of.

Hayward says: 'I understand that much of the academic community dislikes the way that psychology is presented in the media.' Quite so, but the reasons for this may be unclear to undergraduates. What most academics dislike is that psychology is presented in the media by non-psychologists using outmoded studies and ideas (Robert Winston is a prime example).

Their other major bugbear is not how psychology is represented in the media, but how some psychologists misrepresent the discipline. Although only a minority, there are several psychologists working on TV and in the press who break all the BPS media guidelines. They speak outside their area, they pass judgements on celebrities, and they make claims that are often closer to gossipology than psychology. Many are not adequately trained but speak in terms of clinical diagnoses, or again employ outmoded theories to support their views.

This leads to a vicious circle of problems. The media want experienced psychologists to talk to them. Many are too busy or are put off talking to the press for fear of being misquoted or because they see

JOHN HARRIS (REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK)

Are they focusing on the right people?

'rent a quote' psychologists already there, and don't want to be associated with them. So the experienced expert refuses to take part, and the journalist or TV producer has to find someone else. They often end up with those who aren't as skilled as they should be, or who perhaps want to be famous. Since journalists tend to work with those they've already used, the more qualified psychologist is not likely to be called again, and equally unlikely to want to be contacted since they see 'amateurs' filling their spaces. Of course, this is for academics to sort out amongst themselves, but it explains what's going on behind the scenes that undergraduates don't see.

Hayward also points out that from the survey of undergraduates used in the article the general feeling was that students 'do not mind the way that psychology is presented in the media, and are keen to explore the opportunities that the media can offer'. Again, this may be due to their having an interest in psychology, but not yet having formed a specialised interest in the discipline. Those at postgraduate or higher level have problems with the way their specialism is often distorted, misrepresented, or even ignored, by the press.

Petra M. Boynton
University College London

Training educational psychologists

I AM grateful to Douglas Conochie for his comments (Letters, June 2004) about my article 'Educational psychology: In an age of

uncertainty' (March 2004). I agree with him very much about the critical role of training. Indeed, as course director of the MSc

programme for educational psychologists at the University of East London, and member of the government group on future training, I am totally committed to the need for change and believe that new extended training, once implemented, will provide the profession with a historic opportunity for vitalisation and progress.

With regard to the Scottish experience, we do have much to learn, as Douglas says, but there are important differences in England. In particular, the sheer number of courses and services

in England has resulted in different organisational proposals; furthermore, the decision to go for three-year doctoral level courses in England, consistent with clinical and other routes has been preferred. That said, I would personally hope that courses in England, Scotland, Wales and N. Ireland continue, and that they extend opportunities to share ideas, collaborate in research and indeed learn from each other.

Irvine S. Gersch
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University of East London*

MISSING REFERENCES

In Charles Crook's 'Personal space' article 'Ripe for a virtual revolution' published in April 2003, the reference list supplied by the author was inadvertently omitted. We apologise for this. Here are the missing references:

- Crook, C.K. (2002). Deferring to resources: Student collaborative talk mediated by computer-based versus traditional notes. *Journal of Computer-Assisted Learning*, 18, 64-76.
- Crook, C.K. & Barrowcliff, D. (2002). Ubiquitous computing on campus: Patterns of engagement by university students. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 13, 245-258.
- Crook, C.K. & Light, P.H. (2002). Virtual society and the cultural practice of study. In S. Woolgar (Ed.) *Virtual society?* (pp.153-175). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

JEFFREY ALAN GRAY 1934–2004

JEFFREY Gray, Emeritus Professor of Psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry, died on 30 April at the age of 69. An Essex boy, he excelled in languages and learned Russian during his National Service in 1952–54, adding fluency in that language to his French, Spanish, Italian and Persian. It was not unusual for him to receive a phone call during an informal meeting and then to conduct a detailed conversation in French or Russian. These skills stood him in good stead in his productive international collaborations.

After National Service, he went to Oxford on a scholarship to read law, switched to modern languages and then took a second BA in psychology and philosophy in 1959. He obtained a distinction in the Diploma in Psychology (Section D: Abnormal), which was the qualification in clinical psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry, Maudsley Hospital, run by Monte Shapiro. Then followed his doctoral studies in the same department – or rather at the animal lab at Bethlem Hospital – supervised by Hans Eysenck.

His doctoral work began a lifelong interest in behavioural genetics, utilising animal experimentation, but also included an erudite translation and commentary on then inaccessible Russian work which he had translated himself. From 1965 to 1983 he had a very productive time in Oxford, and returned to the chair in psychology in the Institute in 1983 when Eysenck retired.

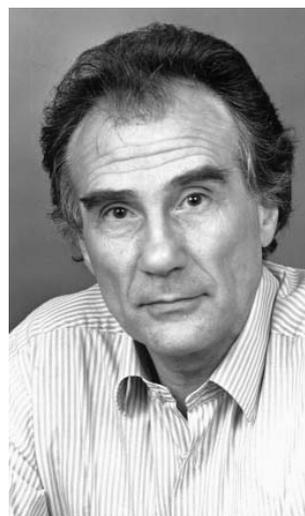
His output was phenomenal, and he capitalised on the varied talents by creating very productive collaborations in many fields. He continued his work on personality and anxiety (turning Eysenck's model through 90 degrees); his knowledge of brain behaviour pathways illuminated work in schizophrenia; he saw the need for psychologists to get involved in the new functional resonance imaging to explore the workings of the brain more directly; he

pioneered stem cell replacement therapy, setting up Reneuron as a company to exploit the work; another company, Psychology at Work, provided expert psychological advice as an employee

assistance programme; he was heavily involved in developing *Beating the Blues*, a CD-ROM to deliver cognitive behaviour therapy to depressed adults.

He received the President's Award from the Society in 1983.

Despite his extravert, gregarious approach to his work, Jeffrey remained a very private person. His family were most important to him, and rather than disrupt his children's education he became a weekly commuter to Oxford during his tenure in London. He was very active in his retirement with new ideas and new collaborations blurring the difference between employment



and retirement. Sadly, but typically, he did not share the news of his prostate cancer with colleagues, who were therefore devastated at the news of his death. Our condolences go to his wife, Venus, and his children, Ramin, Babak, Leila and Afsaneh.

William Yule
Institute of Psychiatry

SYLVIA SHIMMIN 1925–2004

IGOT to know Sylvia while studying for a master's research degree in organisational psychology at the University of Lancaster in the early 1970s. I quickly developed a high regard for her as an extremely pleasant, intelligent and articulate individual, and a most helpful mentor.

There were three distinct phases in her professional development, representing a progression from general social psychology through industrial/occupational to work organisational psychology and organisational behaviour. First she taught psychology to undergraduates at Bedford College, University of London, during the 1940s; then she conducted full-time research in

occupational psychology as a member of an MRC unit; and in 1969 she became Foundation Professor of Behaviour in Organisations at the University of Lancaster, where she remained until 1989.

She was head of the Department of Behaviour in Organisations from 1969 to 1980. The lively and forward-looking atmosphere of her department is still fondly regarded by her ex-colleagues and students alike, and those responsible for some of the most innovative developments in the fields of organisation theory and organisational behaviour in recent decades are proud to trace their roots back to the Department of Behaviour in Organisations. She

described her time at Lancaster as the most challenging and satisfying period of her career, which was at times like 'climbing Everest', and the most rewarding, particularly in terms of the growth and success of students and colleagues in Britain and abroad. Sylvia greatly valued the friendship of those who stayed in touch.

In the 1970s and 1980s she was active in many external bodies. In the BPS she was Chair of the Professional Affairs Board, and Chair of the Division of Occupational Psychology. After retiring from her post at Lancaster University, Sylvia spent three years as a Visiting Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Leeds.

Sylvia was primarily a 'people person' who greatly enjoyed working with others and always professed to getting her best insights in debate and discussion. Many of her publications were with co-authors for this reason. During the latter phase of her career Sylvia's main interest was in the history and development of occupational and organisational psychology. Out of this work came a BPS publication *Fifty Years of Occupational Psychology* (with D. Wallis), which appeared in the mid-1990s.

She was a tower of strength as an educator and human being and will be sadly missed.

Eugene McKenna
*Elverton Street
London SW1*

INFORMATION

■ HAVING graduated in 2003 with a 2:1 in psychology, I have since worked both as a volunteer and paid employee with mental health patients and learning disabilities. I am now looking for **voluntary work, full- or part-time, in a clinical NHS setting** to gain the experience I need to study to become a clinical psychologist. I would be grateful for any such work in the **Greater London or Hertfordshire** areas.

Louise Stephens

Edgware

E-mail: Goonerfan100@hotmail.com

■ I AM a clinical psychologist from Italy. I had my GBR but I need to complete my equivalence through some other placements for me to be able to practise in the UK. I'm keen to get more voluntary work. I'm urgently searching for a **clinical psychologist who could follow me as my tutor** in this process, in the **Oxfordshire** area.

Silvia Otuniyi

Tel: 01235 555875;

e-mail: silvyetta2000@yahoo.it

■ I AM a psychology graduate with a PGCE currently teaching KS2 in a moderate learning difficulties school. I am hoping to apply for the MSc in educational psychology in September 2005 and am seeking some relevant **voluntary work experience in educational psychology** this summer. **Midlands** area preferable.

Linsey Share

E-mail: linseyjshare@hotmail.com;

tel: 0797 186 7057

■ I AM a third-year psychology student at Leicester University wishing to pursue a career in clinical psychology. I am looking for some **voluntary clinical experience in the Midlands** area from July 2004.

Zoe Self

Nuneaton

E-mail: zoe_self@yahoo.com

■ I AM a final-year psychology undergraduate at Cardiff University and am keen to pursue a career in psychology. I am seeking **voluntary work experience in a clinical or forensic setting** in either **Somerset or South Wales**. I have experience assisting on a research project into the genetics of

Alzheimer's disease and working with children.

Victoria Parsons

E-mail: Phonic2001@hotmail.com;

tel: 0779 010 6720

■ I AM interested in hearing from any qualified **counsellors who have experienced psychic energy** whilst counselling a client or from anyone who has been a client and experienced the presence of psychic energy. This research is attempting to build more understanding of psychic phenomena and counselling via the 'bridge' of energy.

Marie Wardle

E-mail: mariewardle@btinternet.com;

tel: 0174 327 1679

■ I AM a second-year undergraduate at the University of Sheffield. I plan to take the doctorate in **clinical psychology** at Sheffield on completion of my degree. I am looking for any relevant **voluntary work experience in Rotherham** and the surrounding areas.

Emma Lambley

E-mail: pca02ell@sheffield.ac.uk;

0170 951 9779/0794 928 5981

■ I AM a mature student in the final year of BSc psychology and hope to graduate with either a first or second class honours degree. I would appreciate any offers of **voluntary assistant psychologist work in the London area**.

I currently work as a volunteer on a mental health helpline – Sane.

I have experience of working with young people, the elderly and people with mental health problems in a secure unit.

Fiona Mullen

London SE14

Tel: 0797 997 7364;

e-mail: ps101fm@gold.ac.uk

■ I AM undertaking research about **infants taken into care from maternity wards**. I would be grateful to hear from any colleagues who share this interest. I am particularly interested in possible differences between ethnic groups.

Brian Osman

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Boxted

Colchester CO4 5HT

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Cyril Burt and the 11+

STÉPHANE Duckett (Letters, May 2004) says of Cyril Burt that 'the same establishment that knighted him provided us with the 11+, which branded children as

uneducable and denied them access to further education.' This seems to imply some link between the two.

The Education Act of 1944, which gave rise to the 11+,

PSYCHOLOGIST POLICY COMMITTEE STATEMENT

At its meeting on 14 May the Psychologist Policy Committee considered the publication of the John Jacob Lyons letter in October 2003, the policy issues arising from the decision to publish and subsequent correspondence with the Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section and the Mortimer Market Centre psychologists.

The committee felt that the editor had taken appropriate actions, by consulting with a senior member of staff and a member of the Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section before making a decision. The committee wholeheartedly supported the editor's actions. The letter itself was not viewed as offensive and the committee thought that it did not breach current guidelines, which state that 'robust direct comment is acceptable but this should not spill over into personal attacks'.

On the broader issue of formal consultation with subsystem chairs over 'controversial' issues, it was unanimously agreed that imposing a formal process would be unhelpful and may cause excessive delay in the publication of letters. It would be difficult to clearly define the conditions that would trigger the process. There was support for the current policy, namely that whenever the editor feels the need for some expert guidance it should be sought. It was acknowledged that the relevant subsystem chair would often be the appropriate person to consult. But this process has to remain an informal one within the editor's professional judgement, and subsystem chairs cannot expect to delay the process or have a final say. The letters pages of subsequent issues are open to them in just the same way as they are open to others.

The committee also welcomed the fact that a special issue on sexualities is now being proposed. This is a timely reminder that there are several routes through which *The Psychologist* serves as a forum for discussion and debate that, over time, represents a balance of as many views as possible.

Dr Paul Redford, Chair, Psychologist Policy Committee

provided for the first time for secondary education for all children. The tripartite system of grammar, modern and technical schools, for which the 11+ selected, derived from the report of the Norwood Committee in 1943.

The Norwood Committee explicitly rejected psychological evidence, relying instead on an intuitive division of children (actually 'boys' was the word used) into three 'types', who required three sorts of education. Burt promptly published a rebuttal

of this approach (Burt, 1943), but without effect.

Burt was knighted in 1946. In 1959, he published a defence of the selective system, but much had changed by then (Radford, 2002).

John Radford

University of East London

References

- Burt, C. (1943) The education of the young adolescent: The psychological implications of the Norwood Report. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 13, 126–140.
- Radford, J. (2002). Cyril Burt and the Eleven Plus. *History and Philosophy of Psychology*, 4, 23–30.



student pool that research staff used, as long as they had completed a certain amount of hours as a participant in their first two years. So, participation was not a hard-and-fast requirement, but was driven by the need for participants in one's future studies rather than pure interest in the research process.

My experience of participation was varied: after a while one got used to avoiding those rather dull projects where

one was required to remember numbers (I actually nodded off a couple of times in one of those!). The most outstanding experience for me as a participant was a fascinating EEG study where, during debriefing, the researcher explained the study's aim and showed me the computer images of my brain activity across the different conditions I had participated in.

So was it coercion? I think university departments have a responsibility to make it clear whether and how much participation will be required in its promotional material, or risk having recruited a group of disgruntled participants. Who knows, perhaps participating in research where there is a guaranteed opportunity for a genuinely interesting debrief in which the student gets a feel for

Using students in research

READE your article on student participation in research ('The use and abuse of student participants', May 2004) with interest, having

graduated from my psychology degree in 2002. At the time of studying, the department I attended allowed final-year undergraduates to use the

the research process will become an attractive proposition for prospective students, leading to departments eagerly competing

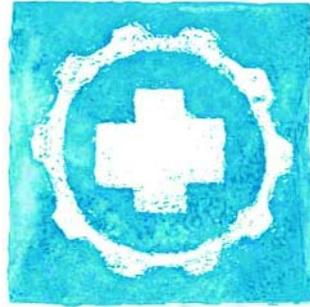
to promote their research?

Miriam Dauvin
 8 Alfriston Gardens
 Sholing
 Southampton

Lacan and Slovenia

THE report on psychology in Slovenia (May 2004) was interesting, but there is another even more interesting story to be told here as well.

First, with respect to psychoanalysis, one of the striking characteristics of the opposition movement in Slovenia during the 1980s was that it drew heavily on Lacanian psychoanalysis, and the popularity of Lacan is still evident inside Slovenia. Outside the country the most well-known Slovenian is the philosopher and psychoanalytic theorist Slavoj Žižek, and



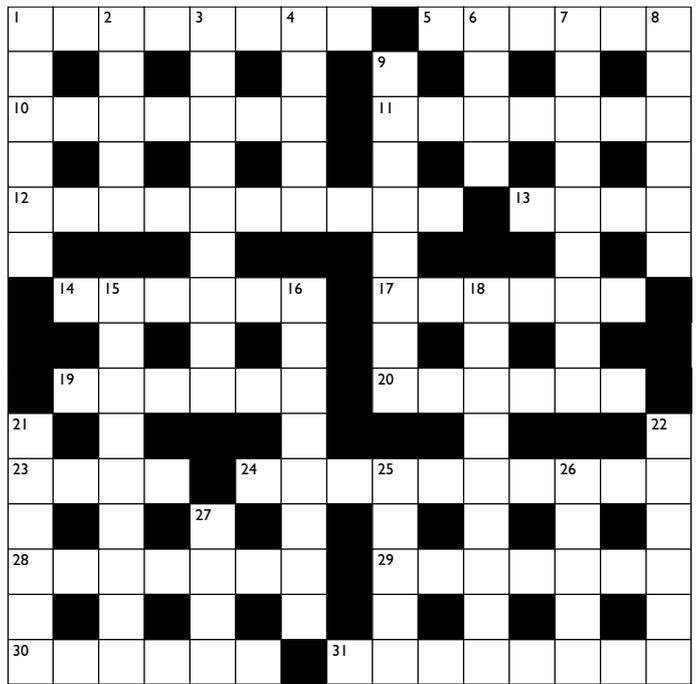
although there is some attention to his work inside British psychology most of the interest has been from within the field of cultural and political theory (Parker, 2004).
 Second, with respect to the

motif of 'identity', the opposition movement combined Lacanian psychoanalytic ideas with punk, and one of the most innovative strands of that movement explicitly refused to subscribe to any kind of identity. The Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK) movement (www.nskstate.com), for example, set up its own 'state' (NSK State in Time) in 1991 as a response to the declaration of Slovenian independence, and now has its own embassies, consulates and passports. Anyone, anywhere in the world can obtain a passport.

Ian Parker
 Manchester Metropolitan
 University

Reference
 Parker, I. (2004). *Slavoj Žižek: A critical introduction*. London: Pluto Press.

PRIZE CROSSWORD No.16



Across

- 1 Enlightening information making noise in amplifier? (8)
- 5 Enthusiasm carries a sound from brass band (6)
- 10 Being very big, I am leading soldiers to Kent (7)
- 11 Monotonous droning made by percussion instrument (7)
- 12 Military posting the subject of Bowlby's theory? (10)
- 13 Through university in the country (4)
- 14 Sommelier Marcel La Rue in here, or vice versa? (6)
- 17 Asian rejected assistance in watering hole (6)
- 19 Sleuth knocking back port aboard vessel (6)
- 20 Gathers energy with bad slang (6)
- 23 Reportedly find employment for some of the flock (4)
- 24 Driver's physical talent? (5,5)
- 28 State article using flowery rhetoric initially (7)
- 29 Any number – a great number making pasta (7)
- 30 Unprincipled person using reticular activating system on short visit (6)
- 31 Chinese criminals smuggling racket back on island (8)

Down

- 1 Drive in to fight for 24 hours (6)
- 2 Small space encountered by visitor to Cornwall (5)
- 3 Shortened optical instrument for both eyes (9)
- 4 Best of the engineers needed in river (5)
- 6 Units that may appear on envelope? (4)
- 7 Ceramic with some damage is replica? No (9)
- 8 Something funny appearing in bodily fluid (6)
- 9 Conscious cognitions made by insubstantial ruler (8)
- 15 Former partner has single attempt to topple America using external events (9)
- 16 Anal, or it's mistaken with good reason (8)
- 18 Carpet will appear less smart if you do this (5,4)
- 21 Drug-taker would want this smoking jacket (6)
- 22 Questions can be brought to conclusion (6)
- 25 One having a depressant going missing initially (5)
- 26 I had gone ahead and got the engine ticking over (5)
- 27 Mail sorted in the city (4)

Solution to Prize Crossword No.15

Across: 1 Pain principle, 8 Shingle, 9 Clarion, 11 Abstinent, 12 Exult, 13 Bravest, 14 Express, 16 Robotic, 19 Vertigo, 21 Uvula, 23 Extortion, 24 Holster, 25 Royalty, 26 Psychoanalyst.

Down: 2 Adipsia, 3 Negligent, 4 Reelect, 5 Necktie, 6 Image, 7 Leisure, 8 Scarborough, 10 Notts County, 15 Portrayal, 17 Baubles, 18 Cheerio, 19 Veteran, 20 Icicles, 22 Antic.

Winner: Gordon Booth, Edinburgh

Send entries (photocopies accepted) to: Prize Crossword, The Psychologist, St Andrews House, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester LE1 7DR. Deadline for entries is 30 July 2004. A £25 book token goes to the winner, drawn at random from all correct entries.

Name.....

Address.....

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