

Do we eclipse other sciences?

Phil Banyard ('Where is our non-stick frying pan?', Letters, September 2015) bemoans what he perceives to be a lack of useful discoveries in psychology. Does any of what we do as psychologists amount to more than 'a hill of beans', in contrast to the glorious achievements of other sciences? In a fit of physics envy, Banyard declares Einstein's general theory of relativity 'spectacularly tested' during the 1919 solar eclipse, when light was shown to be bent 'to the amount predicted'.

However, Banyard 'spectacularly' misfires with this example. There are several errors worthy of discussion in such retellings of the myth of the 1919 eclipse 'proof' of general relativity, not least an enormous misunderstanding of how science actually works. Remember the 'discovery' of cold fusion? Genuine scientific discovery is not like an election or a football match, a one-off contest (Newton 0; Einstein 1); rather, it must survive many rigorous validations through replication and triangulation of results.

However, given the central argument of Phil Banyard's letter – that physics trumps psychology – I wish to concentrate on the particular irony of deploying the eclipse myth here: what really happened in 1919 tells us much less about physics, and much more

about psychology, than is popularly supposed.

Sir Arthur Eddington, scientific leader of the expedition and huge advocate of Einstein's theory, felt enormous pressure to gain the 'correct' result. A devout Quaker, Eddington had noted that the heavens on 29 May 1919 (the day of the eclipse) had seen fit to deliver a particularly favourable alignment of celestial bodies for 'weighing light', as he put it (see Eddington, 1920). However, the technology of the time was simply not up to delivering the precision required (accurate testing of general relativity had to wait another 40 years and more). Interpretation of the fuzzy results was influenced by knowing what



TINA SANDERS

A few years ago I treated a 66-year-old woman. She had suffered with psychological distress from age 16 and in that time had been in and out of mental hospitals and had experienced the full range of psychotropic medicines plus several bouts of ECT. When I met her she was pretty much housebound and socially isolated, she was alienated from her children and she lived a life of constant misery and anxiety due to her extreme OCD. This was largely manifest

by intrusive thoughts of becoming violent towards other people.

I am not a particularly expert therapist

but within three months of a straightforward application of exposure and response prevention, a technique that

contribute

THE PSYCHOLOGIST NEEDS YOU!

Letters

These pages are central to The Psychologist's role as a forum for communication, discussion and controversy among all members of the Society, and we welcome your contributions.

Send e-mails marked 'Letter for publication' to psychologist@bps.org.uk; or write to the Leicester office.



Letters over 500 words are less likely to be published. The editor reserves the right to edit or publish extracts from letters. Letters to the editor are not normally acknowledged, and space does not permit the publication of every letter received.

...and much more

We rely on your submissions throughout the publication, and in return we help you to get your message across to a large and diverse audience.

'Reach the largest, most diverse audience of psychologists in the UK (as well as many others around the world); work with a wonderfully supportive editorial team; submit thought pieces, reviews, interviews, analytic work, and a whole lot more. Start writing for The Psychologist now before you think of something else infinitely less important to do!'
Robert Sternberg, Oklahoma State University

For details of all the available options, plus our policies and what to do if you feel these have not been followed, see www.thepsychologist.org.uk/contribute

experimental data would precisely fit the theory.

'[L]ater examination of the photographs taken on that expedition showed the errors were as great as the effect they were trying to measure. Their measurement had been sheer luck, or a case of knowing the result they wanted to get, a not uncommon occurrence in science' (Hawking, 1988). Psychologists have a name for this: it is confirmation bias: 'the seeking or interpreting of evidence in ways that are partial to existing beliefs, expectations, or a hypothesis in hand' (Nickerson, 1998).

Note that the Stephen Hawking quotation I have given above is from *A Brief History of Time*, a book Banyard may well have heard of, or even own. So I suspect he would not have had to look far to refute the stuff of his own argument, had he really wished to do so. Thus his claim itself evidences just how widespread and pernicious is confirmation bias: Phil Banyard seized on the 1919 eclipse myth uncritically, because it 'confirmed' his bias towards spectacular physics. His letter, far from making the case that psychology amounts only to an undersized mountain of beans, illustrates how much we need psychological theory to inform our understanding of other sciences and ourselves.

Mike Kelly

Senior Specialist Educational Psychologist (Autism Spectrum)
Essex County Council

References

- Eddington, A. (1920). *Space, time and gravitation: An outline of the general relativity theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hawking, S.W. (1988). *A brief history of time*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Nickerson, R.S. (1998). Confirmation bias: A ubiquitous phenomenon in many guises. *Review of General Psychology*, 2(2), 175–220.

psychology (and psychiatry) can rightly claim to have invented, this woman was showing clinically significant improvement. Eighteen months later her life was totally changed. She was able to go out by herself and shop in a nearby large town. She was back in contact with her two daughters. She had nursed her husband through his terminal illness and was coping well with her bereavement. She was planning to take her first ever holiday abroad. The intrusive thoughts still came occasionally and she knew how to deal with them.

Phil Banyard may not think this is 'impressive', but I did and so did she. She had been in contact with mental health services for 50 years yet it was only when she was put in contact with a (very ordinary, jobbing) clinical psychology service that she received effective treatment. Of course it won't always be like this, and I agree that psychologists have a lot to be modest about, but let's hear it for the treatments that work and the hope they bring.

Paul Whitby CPsychol, AFBPsS

Wiltshire Specialist Therapies Team, Green Lane Hospital, Devizes

THE ALIENS ARE COMING!

To celebrate our 'Out of this world' issue, we would like you to visit our website to discuss the following question:

If we had credible warning of an imminent alien invasion, how would humanity – and psychologists – react?

<https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/aliens-are-coming-look-busy>

Dr Jon Sutton, Managing Editor, The Psychologist

Five greats

A recent, despondent letter entitled called for information on the greatest scientific inventions in psychology. Please permit me here to mention just a few great ones: (1) Watson's behaviourism based on Pavlov's classical conditioning, (2) The Skinner Box; (3) Thorndike's 'law of

effect' plus operant conditioning, (4) Harlow's surrogate mother monkeys plus 'The nature of love', (5) the doorbell at a psychotherapist's office.

Donald F. Smith

Retired Research Psychologist,
Psychiatric Hospital of Aarhus
University

Intelligent concept

The most useful item developed by psychological science is the concept of intelligence. For more than a century this sturdy understanding has been tweaked from pure *g* to multiples, from fixed to malleable, admired and despised. Although around the world it may be somewhat differently interpreted, there is a basic understanding that individual intelligence is to do with the ability to deal with one's world. Measures of intelligence are reliable and regularly improved to serve their purpose of predicting intellectual achievement, mostly in school. It's an infinitely more valuable tool than a non-stick pan.

Professor Joan Freeman FBPsS

Middlesex University

The Big Five

My candidate for psychology's answer to the non-stick frying pan or chemistry's periodic table of elements is the Big Five model of personality (see e.g. Goldberg, 1981). This has proved to be extractable from the lexicons of many languages and is increasingly supported by the findings of neuroscience (DeYoung et al., 2010). The Big Five dimensions, and their various circumplex combinations (see e.g. Hofstee et al., 1992), have a wide range of convenience. They have been empirically related to an impressive number of psychological phenomena and, with their facet scales, are beginning to bring sense to the confusing taxonomy of overlapping personality disorders (Skodol et al., 2011) in the DSM-5.

Hugh McCredie

Vice Chair, *The Psychometrics Forum*

References

- DeYoung, C.G., Hirsh, J.B., Shane, M.S. et al. (2010). Testing predictions from personality neuroscience: Brain structure and the Big Five. *Psychological Science*, 21, 820–828.
- Goldberg, L.R. (1981). Language and individual differences: The search for universals in personality lexicons. In L. Wheeler (Ed.) *Review of personality and social psychology* (Vol. 2, pp.141–165). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Hofstee, W.K.B., de Raad, B. & Goldberg, L.R. (1992). Integration of the Big Five and circumplex approaches to trait structure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63(1), 146–163.
- Skodol, A.E., Clark, L.A., Bender, D.S. et al. (2011). Proposed changes in personality and personality disorder assessment and diagnosis for DSM-5 Part I: Description and rationale. *Journal of Personality Disorders*, 2, 4–22.

A place for confidence intervals

In response to van der Linden and Chryst's letter ('Why the "new statistics" isn't new', August 2015), their assertion that confidence intervals (CIs) are based on null hypothesis significance testing (NHST) is clearly mistaken, as evidenced by the history of their development and by the information provided by each approach.

The history of the development of CIs and NHST makes clear that they are not equivalent, although both were developed as alternatives to applying Bayesian arguments in the absence of a *priori* expectations. These alternatives were developed at roughly the same time, by different people in different places: Fisher for NHST (1930, 1933, 1935, England) and Neyman for CIs (1934, 1941, Poland; see also Pytkowski, 1932). Neyman

(1934) initially viewed Fisher's fiducial limits as essentially the same as his confidence intervals, but later (1941), following careful examination of Fisher's work and discussions with Fisher, both Neyman (1941) and Fisher (1935) determined that they were fundamentally different.

CIs and NHST provide very different information, although they sometimes rely on the same statistical information. With NHST, the significance value is the probability of obtaining these data, or more extreme data, *if the null hypothesis is true*. NHST does not provide any information about the likelihood of the data if the null hypothesis is not true. CIs, on the other hand, straightforwardly provide a range of plausible values for a statistic (in future samples) or a parameter

without reference to a null hypothesis.

Catherine O. Fritz

Psychology Division, University of Northampton

References

- Fisher, R.A. (1930). Inverse probability. *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philosophical Society*, 26, 528–535.
- Fisher, R.A. (1933). The concepts of inverse probability and fiducial probability referring to unknown parameters. *Proc of the Royal Soc, A*, 139, 343–348.
- Fisher, R.A. (1935). The fiducial argument in statistical inference. *Annals of Eugenics*, 6, 391–398.
- Neyman, J. (1934). On the two different aspects of the representative method. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 97, 558–625.
- Neyman, J. (1941). Fiducial argument and the theory of confidence intervals. *Biometrika*, 32, 128–150.
- Pytkowski, W. (1932). *The dependence of small farms upon their area, the outlay and the capital invested in cows*. Warsaw: Series Biblioteka Pulawaka.

We were puzzled by van der Linden and Chryst's claim that confidence intervals (CIs) are based on null hypothesis significance testing (NHST). Their argument seems to be that both CIs and NHSTs can make use of the same statistical tools in their calculations – in their example, standard errors and Z-scores. You might, however, argue similarly that, for example, a grave and a flower bed are the same because they both involve the use of the same tool, in this case, a spade.

The thrust of our argument in our article on building confidence in confidence intervals (June 2015) was that CIs, combined with effect sizes (ESs), provide researchers with much more useful information than NHST tests. We acknowledge that some researchers, shaped by the NHST world, will use CIs to draw conclusions about the likelihood of their results occurring by chance, and will probably be encouraged to do so by journal editors. We do not believe that this is a bad thing, because all researchers have the practical decision to take on whether they will or will not continue with that particular line of research, and at least the decision concerns the probable distribution of the effect, rather than a usually irrelevant null hypothesis. However, we hope that the researchers go much farther in using CIs.

Of course, CIs cannot give certainty over the population parameter – but they can give a great deal more information than the point estimates that are all that are usually reported. Also, it is not surprising that, as Hoekstra et al. (2014) reported, many psychologists misinterpret CIs. Most psychologists are unfamiliar with them and their use. Perhaps more depressing are the misinterpretations of NHSTs that occur, despite researchers' familiarity with them.

It is wrong for van der Linden and Chryst to claim that one has no idea whether or not a CI contains the population value. That conclusion would be true only if one accepts the strict frequentist interpretation of CIs that they set out. But the interpretation is hotly debated among statisticians. Instead we hold, as does Cumming (2012), that it is logical to believe that values within a CI are relatively plausible potential population values and therefore CIs are much more intuitive than van der Linden and Chryst suggest.

We would not want the casual reader to believe that van der Linden and Chryst have successfully defended current statistical

practice from the arguments we presented. They are no fans of NHST, but instead want psychologists to adopt a third approach, Bayesian statistics. We have sympathy with Bayesian approaches, but we do not recommend a wholesale and enforced conversion of psychological data analysis to Bayesian methods for two main reasons. The challenge of persuading all psychologists to retrain in the sophisticated Bayesian techniques seems beyond what could be accomplished at the moment. We have found that even getting psychologists to think about effect sizes, rather than merely reporting them from statistical package output, is a challenging task. Secondly, moving to a Bayesian approach will not eliminate problems and disputes. Most Bayesian methods (but not all; see Wagenmakers et al., 2011) require the choosing of prior probabilities on which the calculations develop. Such priors are often contentious. As one recent example, Wagenmakers et al. argue that the prior probability for analysing a study on precognition should be .00000000000000000001. Not surprisingly, this makes finding supporting evidence for precognition very difficult! Others who are more sympathetic to the possibility of precognition would argue for a much more generous prior probability, leading to a greater likelihood of positive results.

We believe that the calculation of CIs and ESs are well within the skills of all psychologists, and that, if they explore this approach, they will find that they have more insight into their data and are able to communicate more useful information to their readers.

Peter E. Morris

Graham D. Smith

Psychology Division, University of Northampton

References

- Cumming, G. (2012). *Understanding the new statistics: Effect sizes, confidence intervals, and meta-analysis*. New York: Routledge.
- Hoekstra, R., Morey, R.D., Rouder, J.N. & Wagenmakers, E.J. (2014). Robust misinterpretation of confidence intervals. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 21, 1157–1164.
- Wagenmakers, E.J., Wetzels, R., Borsboom, D. & van der Maas, H.L.J. (2011). Why psychologists must change the way they analyse their data. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 100, 426–432.

ADHD – recognising the signs

Ellie van Staden's letter ('Recognising ADHD in school', August 2015) expressed very effectively my own thoughts and feelings whenever I arrive at a diagnosis of ADHD for an undergraduate. Almost inevitably such students have been referred to me because of late submission of work and under-achievement in exams and coursework. Very frequently there is also a history of mental health issues, especially bouts of depression. My feelings of exasperation are further heightened when a student has had a previous diagnostic assessment for a learning difficulty that has failed to recognise that ADHD is present and is a significant contributory factor to the academic problems being encountered.

One of the key reasons for the generalised failure to recognise that an individual has ADHD may well be negative stereotyping. This was captured in the comment by one trainee primary school teacher that she had not thought she could have ADHD 'because ADHD is all about eight-year-old boys throwing chairs about in the classroom'. ADHD takes different forms, and for about 50 per cent of the individuals I see hyperactivity/impulsivity is not an issue. In such instances the diagnosis is one of ADHD (Inattentive presentation). It is also worth pointing out that I diagnose as many females as males. ADHD is not predominantly a male-specific learning difficulty.

Ellie asks what psychologists are doing to raise awareness. A major step forward was taken in May 2013 when a SASC (SpLD Assessment Standards Committee)-convened group, drawn from many different disciplines and chaired by



Philip Asherson, Professor in Molecular Psychiatry at King's College London, arrived at the consensus that practitioner psychologists and specialist teacher assessors, could, with relevant training, undertake ADHD assessments and make appropriate recommendations for support in further and higher education. It is vital to note that such an assessment is for ADHD as a specific learning difficulty rather than being a medical diagnosis. (This consensus outcome can be found at www.sasc.org.uk.)

Since then I have made freely available an ADHD diagnosis protocol guide (hosted on the Patoss (www.patoss-dyslexia.org) and ADSHE (www.adshe.org.uk) websites. I am also currently collaborating with a study skills tutor on a letter to be sent to schools that will provide some guidance on key facts about ADHD and a shortlist of characteristic ADHD behaviours: procrastination, distractibility, uneven educational performance, propensity to make simple/careless errors, disorganisation, and being fidgety.

Educational psychologists are well positioned to help educate schools about how to recognise signs of ADHD and to provide advice on support. Following the outcome of the ADHD consensus meeting there can be no excuse for not doing so.

Dr David W Grant CPsychol, AFBPsS

*Independent educational psychologist
London W7*

FORUM THE REAL WORLD

Can a single picture change the course of history? Will the image of three-year-old Aylan Kurdi's dead body on a Turkish beach change the way we respond to those fleeing economic and political turmoil?

In the ensuing weeks there have been a spate of events we may have thought we would never see. Cheering crowds welcoming refugees at Munich station. Hundreds of thousands petitioning Parliament. Convoys of aid to the Calais camps massively over-subscribed. Impromptu acts of solidarity across the country.

But exactly what has changed is unclear. It could be that no one has actually changed their minds, but suddenly those who abhorred the demonisation of migrants have realised that they were not alone. This would fit with a fascinating literature which suggests that the media doesn't so much influence what people think, but what those people think others think (meta-representations rather than representations). But this still matters because it affects what we are prepared to do. Once we feel that we are not alone, that ours is part of a collective voice, we are much more willing to act in public.

That is important, but it isn't all that is going on. In a recent article on the BBC website, the Home Editor, Mark Easton, struggled to accept that Aylan's picture could have made a difference. It 'may have pricked our conscience,' he concluded, 'but I doubt it has changed our mind.' Easton's perplexity was premised on the assumption that we are of one mind. We must either be for opening our borders to more people, or for keeping them shut. We can't be both. And the evidence is overwhelming as to where we stand. British social attitudes surveys consistently tell us that some 10 times as many people want the number of migrants to be reduced as want it to be increased – and the level of rejection continues to grow.

Yet consider the questions that are asked: Do you want more migrants (or refugees, or asylum seekers) in the country? Already people have been labelled. Not only are they 'not us', they belong to a particularly pathologised category. The word 'bogus' always haunts these terms and was again invoked by Cameron when, after Aylan, he insisted that Britain is open to genuine refugees and asylum seekers. The term is associated with notions of invasion, pollution, exploitation. Asking 'Do you want more migrants?' it is not far from asking 'Do you want alien hordes who threaten much of what you hold near and dear?'

Aylan's image led us to recategorise the subject of the question. Aylan became a little boy rather than a migrant. Abdullah Kurdi became a father to that boy rather than a migrant. And through them others began to be recategorised as less alien, less toxic, and indeed members of the same groups as ourselves. It is not that we have changed our minds about the same question, it is that the question has changed.

These issues of language and categorisation have long been understood by those at the sharp end. We have investigated the way Bulgarians were successfully mobilised to stop the Nazis deporting Jews to the death camps, and more recently, Caoimhe Ryan, at the University of St Andrews, has completed a three-year study of anti-deportation campaigns in the UK, showing that appeals based on common categorisation ('being one of us') actually work. They mobilise compassion and support – even more than describing those in need simply as 'people'. Language is critical to our responses.

As long as we talk of a 'migrant crisis' we perpetuate rather than address the issues. And certainly, a migrant is not a migrant by any other name. Or when endowed with a name. Aylan.

Steve Reicher is at the University of St Andrews. **Alex Haslam** is at the University of Queensland. Share your views on this and other 'real world' psychological issues – e-mail psychologist@bps.org.uk. An archive of columns can be found at www.bbcprisonstudy.org.

Demanding greater rigour

As a child I remember leafing through *Sense and Nonsense in Psychology* by Hans Eysenck. It seems that A-level Psychology is at risk of promoting a new version of nonsense. I was prompted to write this letter after reading the Research Digest article 'What the textbooks don't tell you about psychology's most famous case study' (August 2015) about misrepresenting research in textbooks, no doubt a result of a form of Chinese whispers where knowledge is distorted by serial reproduction without reference to the original. This is evidently the case in some textbooks written for students. The article reminded me of a recent experience of my own.

Students at A-level are expected to

know about demand characteristics. However, as I discovered when I spent a few months teaching A-level again, there was a misunderstanding that arose from use of language. It transpired that they learnt stock phrases such as 'participants might show demand characteristics'. The expression is to be found in some textbooks. Their understanding was vague but they guessed it might be something to do with the characteristics of the participants. They took some convincing, to say the least, that the characteristics were cues, particularly in experiments, that prompt participants to work out what is expected of them. As Orne said: 'The cues which govern his [sic] perception – which communicate what is expected of

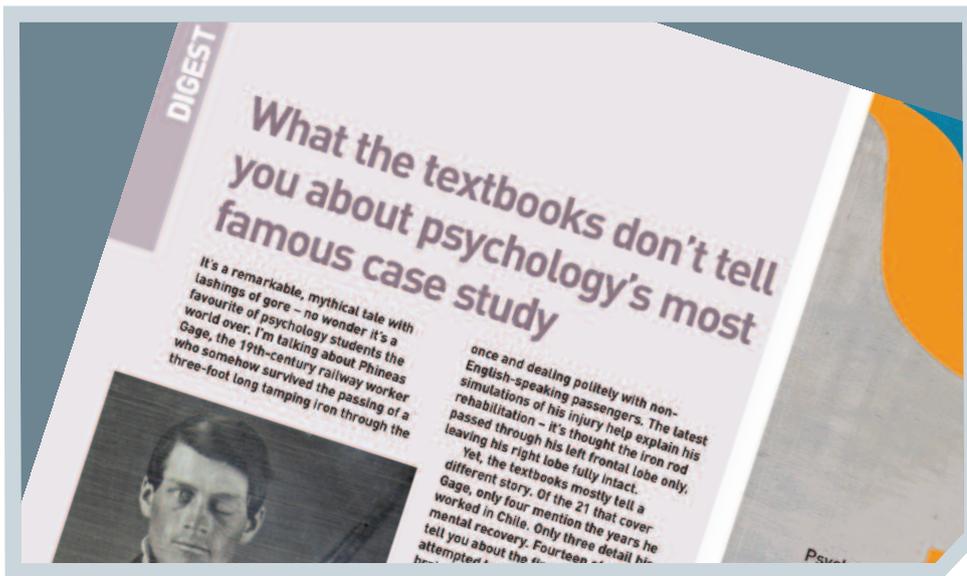
him and what the experimenter hopes to find – can therefore be crucial variables. Some time ago I proposed that these cues be called the "demand characteristics of an experiment"' (Orne, 1969. p.146).

Having finally accepted, if doubtfully, that it was not the participants' characteristics that were being referred to, students duly sat their exam. One of the questions on the paper, to my despair, asked students to explain how the participants in the Strange Situation might show demand characteristics. I contacted the chief examiner, but suffice to say that the exam question was considered to be adequate. I know that one of my students crossed out the question in the answer booklet and wrote 'participants cannot show demand characteristics'. The student was able to answer as expected, however, and would have gained the marks. However, no doubt many of the students thought I had had no idea what I was talking about, now justified by the question in front of them.

The gripe might seem insignificant but is representative of a situation that Richard Griggs highlighted in his analysis of textbooks, covered by the Research Digest. It is the tip of a rather messy iceberg. The A-level syllabus is very broad, and it can be hard to track down original sources. However, an associated difficulty is that academic rigour runs the risk of falling foul of exam papers, mark schemes and the knowledge of markers. Teaching psychology, it seems, requires knowledge of these as much as an accurate knowledge of psychology.

Dr Hilary McQueen

Lewes



Fossil fuel divestment and the BPS

As Francis Vergunst and Bergljot Gjelsvik point out in their letter on fossil fuel divestment (August 2015), 'climate change poses an unacceptably high risk to human health and wellbeing and necessitates urgent action'. They go on to ask the BPS to clarify its position on fossil fuel investments and to divest for good. The disappointing and complacent-sounding response from Honorary

Treasurer Ray Miller effectively tells us that we don't need to worry because the BPS Board of Trustees will continue to monitor investments closely. This is not good enough.

The request was to clarify what investments the BPS has in the fossil fuel industry and to make a commitment, like a number of other leading universities, pension funds and NGOs, to divest from this sector. Note the words 'urgent

action' in the above quotation. We therefore call on the BPS to publish a list of its investments with a breakdown by sector, to describe how the Trustees make decisions on investment ethics, clarifying if they make these decisions themselves or outsource them to fund managers, and to initiate a programme that immediately freezes fossil fuel investments and then, over a five-year period, divests, reinvesting in

assets that prioritise community wellbeing while delivering adequate returns.

Mark Burton

Carolyn Kagan

Manchester Metropolitan University

Editor's note: This issue was due to be discussed by the Board of Trustees as we went to print. We will seek an update in due course.

obituary

Dr Trevor Butt (1947–2015)

We were extremely sad, this year, to lose our dear friend and colleague Dr Trevor Butt. He was diagnosed with cancer last autumn and died in April. His death is a great loss both for psychology and for the many close friends and family who he left behind.

Trevor was originally a clinical psychologist who worked in a psychiatric unit in Bradford in the 1970s, but he soon realised that clinical work wasn't for him and shifted into academic psychology as a teacher and researcher at what later became the University of Huddersfield. He remained at Huddersfield until his

retirement as Emeritus Reader in 2007, whereupon he took on a role as Visiting Fellow at City University. It was at Huddersfield that he produced an impressive body of work and cultivated many great friendships with people with whom he also wrote and researched, including Viv Burr, Jeff Hearn, Nigel King and Darren Langdridge. Trevor was Chair of the Psychotherapy Section of the BPS (2000–2001) and was centrally involved in the History & Philosophy of Psychology Section, as Secretary from 2005 to 2008 and organising a number of their annual conferences.

Trevor's great theoretical fascination was with personal construct psychology (PCP). He wrote many books and papers on PCP as well as organising the 2003 annual conference, and was co-editor of the journal *Personal Construct Theory and Practice*. Meg John recalls picking up Viv Burr and Trevor's book *Invitation to Personal Construct Psychology* in the late 1990s and finding it a life-changing introduction to constructionist and constructivist perspectives. Not only was the book an accessible introduction to these theoretical perspectives in – and on – psychology, but it was also a call to live differently by questioning the taken-for-granted assumptions that structure our self-perceptions, our understandings of the world, and our relationships. This was an approach that continued throughout Trevor's immensely engaging and entertaining teaching, in the revision of this book in 2004 and in his own *Understanding People* (2004) and *George Kelly and the Psychology of Personal Constructs* (2008).

Beyond the theoretical interest in personal construct theory, Trevor focused a great deal of his academic attention on researching and writing about sexualities. It was through this work, alongside a shared interest in phenomenology, that the relationship with Darren Langdridge was forged. Trevor was a passionate advocate of sexual equality and fought against the pathologisation of minority sexualities. He was also passionately opposed to corporal punishment and was centrally involved in the STOPP campaign group that sought the abolition of corporal punishment in schools. Both of these themes were represented in his research, with his writing about the sexualisation of corporal punishment and the construction of consensual sadomasochistic practice (e.g. Butt & Hearn, 1998; Langdridge & Butt, 2004).



And though Darren and Trevor never agreed on theory, they found a common interest in social justice more than enough to bring them together as academic collaborators and wonderful friends.

At his funeral back in April one of his closest friends read out a short piece that Trevor had written for the occasion, for, as he himself said, 'he couldn't resist a lecture, even from the grave'. In this, he told us that in the last few months of his life he had come to know a deeper intimacy than ever previously with his wife, June, and daughter, Claire. It was typical of Trevor that he was thinking about human experience right up until the end, and that he wanted to share that hopeful knowledge

with the rest of us. He will be very sorely missed.

Dr Meg John Barker
Professor Darren Langdridge
The Open University

You can read a longer piece about Meg John's memories of Trevor and his work on: <http://rewritingtherules.wordpress.com/2015/04/26/in-memory-of-trevor-but>

obituary

Svetlana Boym
(1959–2015)

Svetlana Boym, Professor of Slavic Literature and Languages and of Comparative Literature at Harvard, will not be known to many students of our discipline.

Hopefully in the years to come that will change. Her works on nostalgia and freedom are indispensable guides to understanding the longings and belongings that characterise the human condition in the modern age. Her examination of these through the twists and turns of aesthetics, politics, history, art and philosophy defy conventional academic boundaries and mix personal narrative and incisive analysis with an unrivalled poetic flair.

Svetlana was, by some distance, the most brilliant original and witty thinker I have ever encountered. She was also one of the warmest. We became friends following an unlikely though fortuitous chain of events. Her untimely passing at the age of 56 following a struggle with cancer leaves the world a poorer, less vibrant and colourful place. The academic world will miss her daring originality. For those who knew her personally and whose lives she enriched it is an incalculable loss.

Dr Ron Roberts CPsychol, AFBPsS
Kingston University

