



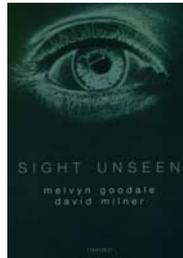
BOOK REVIEWS

If you would like to review a book for *The Psychologist*, contact Mike Thompson on mictho@bps.org.uk. Publishers should send advance title information and books for possible review to *The Psychologist* at the Leicester address.

A dramatic academic adventure

THE cooperation over more than 20 years between David Milner and Melvyn Goodale sets an enviable standard that few friendly colleagues can hope to attain. Starting from an acute clinical observation, with a working concept and a range of experiments, they have developed a theory relating behaviour to perception. Their theory has clinical implications, while more generally throwing light on the evolution of the brain. The central idea is that there are two cortical systems for vision: a primitive dorsal cortical stream giving simple rapid behaviour though without conscious awareness, and a ventral system providing full-blown perception for planning, with consciousness. This concept, with its history, evidence and implications, was set out in detail in their earlier book, *The Visual Brain in Action* (1995). This new book *Sight Unseen* covers the same ground, but is written to be accessible for the public and students, and brings the story up to date. It is a dramatic academic adventure ending with a grand theory. What more could scientists wish for?

The new book adds important observations on what happened to the



Sight Unseen: An Exploration of Conscious and Unconscious Vision

MELVYN GOODALE & DAVID MILNER

OXFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS; 2005; Pb £14.99 (ISBN 0 19 856807 X)

REVIEWED BY **Richard Gregory**

original research participant (DF) in the 15 or so years following brain damage from carbon monoxide poisoning. The original clinical finding of 'blindsight' – that DF could orient a card to 'post' it in a slot, though she could not see or report on shapes or forms – has gradually eroded over the years since the first book, since DF now has some conscious awareness of what she is seeing.

This might have weakened the sight unseen, or blindsight case – but no – for it turned out that she learnt to monitor the unconscious response of small hand movements, orienting the card (for example) so the unconscious dorsal stream response became available to consciousness indirectly. This is just one example of the

acute observations and subtle interpretations of this study.

The 'two streams' concept ties up with comparative brain neurology, and is supported by magnetic resonance brain imaging. It is a sensible story for the evolution of perception: from responding quite directly to stimuli, to creating representations of the object world in order to plan complex behaviour with knowledge derived from the past. The new details of this study are important, while further cases are much to be desired. The broad picture is an intellectually satisfying paradigm for physiological psychology.

■ *Emeritus Professor Richard Gregory is at the University of Bristol.*

Literacy and child development

THIS book describes a five-year longitudinal study tracing children's literacy development from the age of four through to nine years. The scope of the project allows for a comprehensive approach that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore many facets of literacy appropriation, which include an awareness of the motivational and affective dimensions of literacy experiences, and a consideration of home literacy experiences alongside those experienced in the context of school.



Becoming Literate in the City: The Baltimore Early Childhood Project

ROBERT SERPELL, LINDA BAKER & SUSAN SONNENSCHIN

CAMBRIDGE: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS; 2005; Pb £17.99 (ISBN 0 521 77677 5)

REVIEWED BY **Kelly Burgoyne**

The authors convincingly argue the need to consider children's individual and unique literacy environments, and demonstrate the importance of evaluating the appropriation of literacy skills that serve a social function (e.g. writing birthday cards, filling in forms) alongside

more conventional indices of literacy such as decoding and comprehension.

The book is accessible to anyone with an interest in literacy development; the authors avoid complicated terminology and use quotes from participating families to

illustrate some of the more complex ideas. Emphasis is on description and evaluation over the reporting of statistical methods and values, which makes for an easier read, and references to academic papers are made explicit for those interested in reading further. Thus, for many readers the book provides an informative consideration of many factors related to literacy development, and is an equally good place to start for many others.

■ *Kelly Burgoyne is a PhD student at the University of Central Lancashire.*

Helping the parents

Parent Management Training: Treatment for Oppositional, Aggressive, and Antisocial Behavior in Children and Adolescents

ALAN E. KAZDIN

OXFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS; 2005; Hb £32.99 (ISBN 0 19 515429 0)

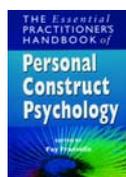
REVIEWED BY **Matt Woolgar**

THIS magnificent book aims to bridge the gap between scholarly reviews of the extensive evidence base for parent management training (PMT) and a practical, generalisable treatment programme for clinicians. The manual part occupies the final third of the book, prior to which is a thorough discussion of the theory behind the treatment and an extensive review of the evidence base, including reviews of well-known varieties of PMT, as well as interventions for use in schools and for older children. A thorough grounding in how the treatment works equips the therapist with the tools to troubleshoot those familiar situations where clients' problems require you to go a little off the beaten track, confident in using well-established theory to guide the way.

As you would expect from Kazdin, the treatment manual is well-written and very useable, but what really makes this book stand out are the comprehensive descriptions of basic operant terms (e.g. extinction or reinforcement) and, most importantly, their translation between the detailed technical understanding the clinician needs to deliver treatment effectively into parent-friendly examples for use with clients. The metaphors and real-life examples alone make this an essential book for a busy clinician and anyone working with young people or their carers.

■ *Dr Matt Woolgar is with the Conduct Problems Clinic, at the Maudsley Hospital, London.*

A refreshing experience



The Essential Practitioner's Handbook of Personal Construct Psychology

FAY FRANSELLA (ED)

CHICHESTER: WILEY; 2005; Pb £26.99 (ISBN 0 470 01323 0)

REVIEWED BY **Alison C. McKeown**

THIS book certainly lived up to its title as 'essential handbook'. It covers the use of personal construct psychology in many settings, providing practical examples for understanding how the theory can be applied – for example, the use of self-description grids to enable children to explore how they think others see them and how they see themselves; and the use of drawings to look at bipolar constructs in children.

Most of the contributors quoted extracts

from Kelly's famous theory, which I found useful for understanding the scope of his original work. As a relatively new student of this area, I found the inclusion of a reading list really helpful.

In short, this book was very readable on a recreational level, yet challenging and thought-provoking on a professional level. – a refreshing experience.

■ *Alison McKeown is with the Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham.*

Treatment of Child Abuse: Common Ground for Mental Health, Medical, and Legal Practitioners

ROBERT M. REECE (ED)

BALTIMORE, MD: JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS; 2005; Pb £11.50 (ISBN 0 8018 8182 X)

REVIEWED BY **Clare Marriott**

A GAINST a background of a growing awareness that child abuse can result in lasting psychological distress, this book aims to give comprehensive guidelines for how practitioners in the medical, mental health and legal fields should undertake the task of diagnosis and intervention with both the victims of child abuse and the offenders.

Through contributions made by various professionals in the field, this book sets out to inform practitioners about what happens between diagnosis of abuse and outcome, by bringing together descriptions of legal processes, medical interventions and psychological approaches. Its scope is wide, as in addition to physical, sexual and psychological abuse, neglect and Munchausen by proxy are comprehensively addressed. Chapters on multiple traumatisation and child maltreatment within a social context are also presented.

With this being an American book, some of the terms and medical and legal practices described will be unfamiliar to British readers. However, many of the key principles described are transferable, with the minutiae of medical and court proceedings kept to a minimum. Only six of the 37 contributors are actually from a legal background, but their chapters are exceedingly informative.

Indeed, throughout, this book is extremely thought-provoking, accessible and well organised. All of the research literature is presented in short summaries, often supported by case studies and best practice guidelines. In addition to treatment goals, this book addresses both culture and diversity. The examination of the wider ramifications of abuse upon the child and their family was particularly interesting. As a result, I feel that this book is an excellent resource, particularly for medical and psychological practitioners.

■ *Clare Marriott is a trainee clinical psychologist at the University of Birmingham.*