

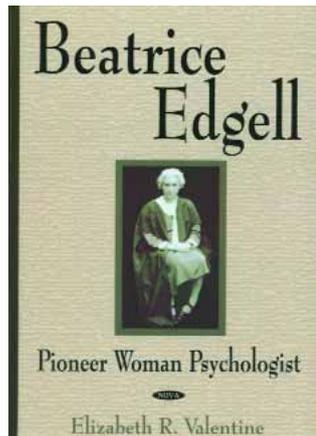
## BOOK REVIEWS

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

# Less about the woman – more of her contribution to psychology

I HAD not heard of Beatrice Edgell, the first woman professor of psychology, before reading this book. It presents a mixture of her biography and the history of the period before and between the World Wars, in which psychology transformed from a branch of philosophy to a science.

The writer describes Edgell as a pioneer playing a leading role in the scientification of psychology – her laboratory at Bedford College being only the third in the country – particularly through her work on memory and her inspiring role teaching many subsequent (female) psychologists. Three chapters cover Edgell's teaching, laboratory and published research, but only after describing in detail her early life and several male psychologists of the time. To



one more interested in the psychology than the sex of the scientist this order was rather frustrating, but it is probably important to note how late some universities permitted women to take degrees – 1923, Cambridge – and which were the first to award them – 1880, London. Valentine also provides

### *Beatrice Edgell: Pioneer Woman Psychologist*

ELIZABETH R. VALENTINE

NEW YORK: NOVA SCIENCE PUBLISHERS; 2006; Hb £55.99

(ISBN 1 59454 389 5)

REVIEWED BY Jennifer Poole

short histories of other female psychologists and scientists of the time which, apart for Susan Isaacs, were equally unknown to me. Strangely, Chapter 5, covering Edgell's theoretical and empirical research (four books, over 30 papers) appeared too brief, ignoring her exploration of the then – as now – crucial reductionist versus vitalist issue, underpinning the biology v philosophy conflict within psychology.

Overall, this book provides an important contribution. Being allowed to not only sit,

but be awarded my degree, I would have preferred Edgell's psychology to be given more priority than her history. But in that I knew nothing of this important psychologist prior to reading the book, and that it left me feeling I still knew little about aspects of that period and work, the book clearly served its purpose.

■ *Jennifer Poole has just completed her PhD – The Orientation Theory of Dyslexia: An ecological theory – at Exeter University.*

## AVOID THE SALESPERSON AT ALL COSTS

WRITTEN in a jovial style not just for the psychology reader, Levine depicts the almost tragic way in which we are hit by persuasion tactics that appear to be around us all the time. Levine tells the story of how persuasion can be harmless yet costly, giving real-life examples of having been 'tricked' by a seemingly charming salesperson knocking at the door. He then contrasts this with the more sinister way in which persuasion techniques can have disastrous and serious consequences, giving examples such as mass obedience resulting in almost a thousand deaths in Jonestown.

Levine details, in an easy-to-understand manner, what criteria is necessary for someone to make a good persuader, and draws on his own direct 'field research' whereby he attempted to see how effective his own persuasion tactics

### *The Power of Persuasion*

ROBERT LEVINE

OXFORD: ONEWORLD PUBLICATIONS; 2006;

Pb £10.99 (ISBN 1 85168 464 6)

REVIEWED BY Natasha Chadwick

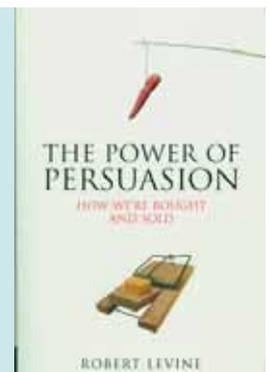
could be. Using examples of his teaching and students' research, Levine's style of writing makes the reader feel as though they are in the story with him, often feeling 'cheated' themselves when he tells of yet another incident when his or his student's naivete was tested by a good persuader.

Finally, Levine offers his words of wisdom for how to resist persuasion techniques, from the blindingly obvious tactics used in everyday life, to the more subtle tactics used by people without

others realising it. To draw one final point from the text, it screams – avoid the salesperson at all costs!

An excellent read and well-recommended to those particularly interested in advertising, group dynamics, and occupational psychology.

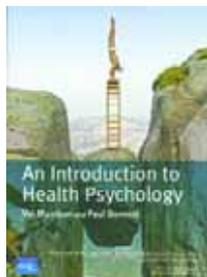
■ *Natasha Chadwick is studying for an MSc in Occupational Psychology at the University of Nottingham.*



## How society can make you sick

**R**EVIEWING this book from both the perspective of a research-active postgraduate within this field, and as a teaching assistant seeking relevant texts to direct eager and knowledge-thirsty students to, I found this book surprisingly refreshing in its aims and accomplishments.

It is structured somewhat differently to other health psychology texts written of late in that it seeks to consider health psychology via psychological theory and constructs as opposed to addressing specific behaviours or illnesses (such as 'smoking', 'alcohol use', 'stress', 'pain' etc.). In the authors' own words: 'illnesses may vary, but psychologically speaking, they share many things in common – for example, potential for life or behaviour change, distress, challenges to coping, potential for recovery, involvement in



### *An Introduction to Health Psychology*

VAL MORRISON & PAUL BENNETT

HARLOW: PEARSON; 2006;

Pb £27.99 (ISBN 0 13099 408 1)

REVIEWED BY **Adam Bourne**

healthcare and involvement with health professionals'. The contents have been grouped effectively and easily offer themselves for week by week seminar consideration.

Particularly worthy of mention, is the authors' attempts to engage with the critical health psychologist perspective: a belief that health psychology has been too individualistic and fails to sufficiently take account of social processes. In response to this criticism, embedded throughout the book is a strong emphasis on how societal

pressures and problems can impact both on the maintenance of healthy behaviours and on the progression or outcome of illness. I was pleased to see an entire chapter dedicated to the consideration of health inequalities, acknowledging that, sometimes, creed, colour, age, gender, or even postcode can have a far more significant impact upon health than any measurable personality trait, perception of risk, or outcome expectancy.

The final chapter considers the successes of health psychology to date but also

raises some challenging questions about how the discipline can develop. For those following, or wishing to follow, a chartered health psychology career it offers some useful advice on how to incorporate research evidence into practice, as well as highlighting to undergraduates how psychology research can actually be of relevance in the real world!

In summary, this is an easy to read, although still academically rigorous, general text which is ideal for any health related course or individual, wishing to examine human and societal processes in the maintenance and/or progression of healthy or unhealthy behaviours. Thoroughly recommended.

■ *Adam Bourne is a PhD student in the School of Psychology at Keele University.*

## Assessing and supporting children with NLD

**N**ONVERBAL learning difficulties (NLD) is the term used to describe a developmental disorder which can impair a person's ability to understand or express nonverbal (i.e. non-linguistic messages), which other researchers have suggested may reflect a right hemisphere dysfunction.

Palombo initially describes in some detail (using a series of case examples to aid clarity) the profile of children with NLD, which can include difficulties with motor functions, executive functions, organisational skills, problem-solving and episodic memory, as well as social, communicative and emotional functioning.

Finally, Palombo offers some helpful suggestions to

### *Nonverbal Learning Disabilities:*

#### *A Clinical Perspective*

JOSEPH PALOMBO

NEW YORK: W.W. NORTON AND CO; 2006

Hb £15.00 (ISBN 0 39370 478 5)

REVIEWED BY **Peter Parkhouse**

support young people with NLD, which include preparing for new situations, enhancing problem-solving capacities, teaching social skills, managing anxiety and encouraging a sense of humour.

For me the highlight of this book, though, is the chapter which attempts to distinguish between the features seen in the population of children with

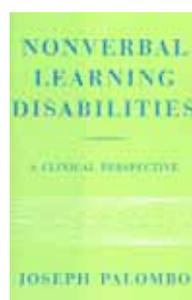
NLD and those with Asperger's syndrome. Whilst acknowledging the similarities between the NLD and Asperger syndrome, Palombo argues that children with NLD are more likely to be capable of sustaining meaningful dialogues and appreciating another person's perspective.

Thus Palombo argues that 'children with Asperger have

many of the features of NLD but also have autistic features that children with NLD do not have', and he concludes that 'NLD is distinct from Asperger's Syndrome and does not belong in the autistic spectrum'.

This is an intellectually stimulating book which made me reflect upon my daily practice of assessing complex children who are often 'in the mix' of many overlapping difficulties. Clearly, there is a debate to be had regarding the distinction between Asperger's syndrome and NLD and this book has provided a helpful contribution to this.

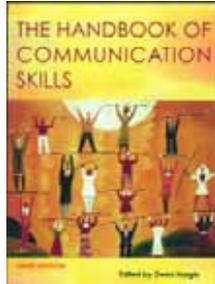
■ *Peter Parkhouse is an independent Chartered Educational Psychologist.*



## Conceptualisation of 'what comes naturally'

**H**APPIER! More resistant to stress! What do people with these qualities often have in common? Well according to the evidence base, one common factor is competent social skills. Working in clinical environments, I am often responsible for raising awareness of the importance and benefits of interacting with others effectively. Therefore, I was interested in reading this particular book which attempts to understand the processes involved in the development of these skills.

The *Handbook of Communication Skills* is in its third edition and continues to be described as a core text within this field. As the title suggests, this text acts as a resource of reference for those who have an interest in the



study of effective communication. The book offers comprehensive coverage of the literature within the field, considering theory-practice links and core communication skills such as reflection, humour and persuasion. It is fascinating to read about the perspectives and mechanisms that potentially underpin this naturally considered behaviour.

Although each topic area is outlined separately to promote analytical and evaluative

### *The Handbook of Communication Skills*

OWEN HARGIE (ED.)

NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE; 2006;  
Pb £19.99 (0415 35911 2)

REVIEWED BY **Helena Young**

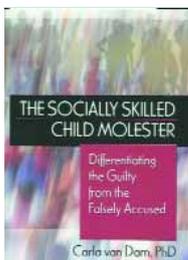
understanding for the reader, the authors do acknowledge the interdependence of these concepts in practice. They consider the impact of internal and external contextual issues that contribute to the outcomes of social interactions. This helps the text to remain colourful and realistic. Thus, the existence of this human asset is recognised outside of a 'social vacuum'.

This book can be described as 'thoughtful' as it takes into account theoretical, conceptual, functional and empirical perspectives when describing the literature base. The text

links historical origins of each topic, with contemporary perspectives, without exhaustion. Therefore, the audience can easily orientate themselves with each topic discussed. An abundance of scientific research studies are cited within the book and the dissemination and relevance of their results thoroughly justified and explained.

This book enjoys specialist contributions from leading experts within the field, whose academic and practical diversity, add strength to the text. The authors offer a variety of disciplinary knowledge, including psychological, communicative, nursing, and business. Thus, it will naturally appeal to and capture the attention of a wide audience.

■ *Helena Young is an assistant psychologist at St Andrew's Hospital, Northampton.*



### *The Socially Skilled Child Molester: Differentiating the Guilty from the Falsely Accused*

CARLA VAN DAM

NEW YORK: HAWORTH PRESS; 2006;  
Pb £13.00 (ISBN 0 7890 2806 9)

REVIEWED BY **Nadia Wager**

**T**HIS is a 'must read' for all involved in child welfare and/or offender management. Carla van Dam takes a courageous perspective on the issue of child sexual assault and largely ignores discussion of aetiology and treatment, and focuses instead on risk reduction. Rather than offer convoluted theoretical explanations she suggests that child molestation is best thought of as an addiction. She offers insight into behaviours and reactions that serve as early warning indicators and suggests that these should be acted upon in order to restrict the opportunities available for offending behaviour.

The author has adopted a hypnotic writing style that is easily accessible and which encourages continued reading. In particular, the use of repetition, examples and analogies ensure that the most pertinent points become memorable. However, as an academic I was left with a hunger for greater details of van Dam's methodology and her strategy in the construction the typologies.

■ *Dr Nadia Wager is Senior Lecturer at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College.*

## A needed and well-received insight

### *Touch and Go Joe: An Adolescent's Experience of OCD*

JOE WELLS

LONDON: JESSICA KINGSLEY PUBLISHERS; 2006; Pb £9.99  
(ISBN 1 84310 391 5)

REVIEWED BY **Mary Keeling**

**R**APPORT is built instantly with Joe as he takes you through his experience of OCD, creating empathy and warmth with his use of light humour. As a novice in the area, I gained a greater understanding of the world of the OCD sufferer. The book gives an insight that a text book or journal article could never do. It raises prominent issues of media negativity and societal stigma to diagnosis, and the

effect on individuals. This book will be a useful tool for professionals, families, and most importantly anyone with OCD. This book is so useful that I'm now using it as a therapeutic intervention with a patient to help normalise and lift the stigma that they feel.

■ *Mary Keeling is an assistant psychologist at St Andrew's Hospital, Northampton.*