

What it's like to be a toddler

It takes special skill to capture how evidence from formal research in developmental psychology can inform and even transform commonsense understanding of infants and toddlers. With literary dexterity and imaginative flair, and drawing upon ample resources of personal sensitivity and self-deprecating humour, Fernyhough displays a rare level of this skill in offering observations and interpretations of the early development of one specific, charming little girl, his daughter Athena.

This fresh, original, and delightful book offers a thoroughly engaging narrative of the first three years of Athena's life.

This is not a work intended for academic psychologists who are seeking to update their files on the latest developmental research (though I found plenty of things from cognitive neuroscience that were novel to me, and new depths in much that was familiar). It's a book written for people who are intrigued by the mental life of their own or others' very young children, whether or not they are people trained or training as psychologists. Fernyhough has read and sifted the relevant literature (as testified by academic reviews he has published elsewhere), and now he shares what this has led him to believe – or as he acknowledges, to imaginatively project – about his daughter's experience. He wants to capture (as best he can) *what it is like to be an infant or toddler*.

Yet even here, the author's aim is not merely to document and interpret what his daughter's behaviour reveals and expresses, or sometimes what he and his (fellow psychologist) wife Lizzie elicit through homespun versions of classic experimental procedures, such as tests of object permanence, mirror self-recognition or theory of mind. As befits Fernyhough's professional identity as a novelist as well as developmental psychologist, his mission is to excite readers' wonder as he recounts his daughter's engagement with the places, people and events she encounters in her earliest years. In so doing, he gives vivid expression to some of the best developmental research and theorising

in the context of a personal and moving story of a child's emergence as a thinking being. Here is one brief excerpt to illustrate Fernyhough's prose:

Later in childhood, showing has an ice-breaking function that can get all kinds of new intimacies off the ground. In the most satisfying way possible, it extends the hand of friendship at the same time as emphasizing the facts of possession. 'Do you want to have a look at my toys?' she asks me one morning, after she has spent a heavy-breathing five minutes stuffing the pockets of her dressing gown with wooden farm animals. How many other times could she only be encouraged to make a new social foray if she had a favourite toy to take with her, a pocketful of cash in the currency of things?

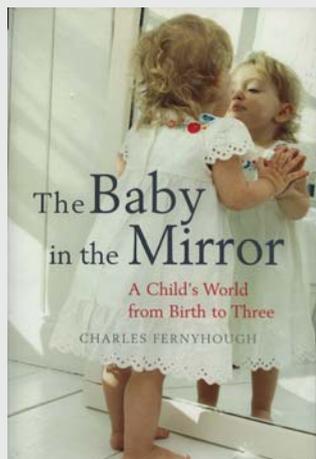
Notwithstanding all these strengths, I would also say that the book reminded me of some limitations inherent in the kinds of cognitive-developmental tradition on which its author draws. For instance, Fernyhough gives weight to the idea that there might be constitutionally determined principles for structuring an infant's growing understanding of objects and language, but the principles that he cites for the social domain (such as sensitivity to biological motion, or even innate sensitivity to goal-directed actions) appear to be schematic and located at the perceptual end of experience. More may be needed if we are to explore how a range of interpersonal passions from the mundane (envy, acquisitiveness, jealousy, and so on) to the disturbed (such as persecutory states) might prove to be deeply embedded in self-other human relatedness from very early in life. Or when Fernyhough stresses that adults *give* meaning to young children's communications, he may be underestimating how far propensities to structure social-emotional experience lead infants to clothe interactions with meanings, even (perhaps especially) when sensitive input is lacking.

Yet these concerns are not criticisms of *The Baby in the Mirror*. Here the important thing is that in an accessible and intimate act of storytelling like no other that I know, Fernyhough asks and then responds to the daunting question 'What is it like to be an infant or toddler?' with perspicacity, intelligence and style.

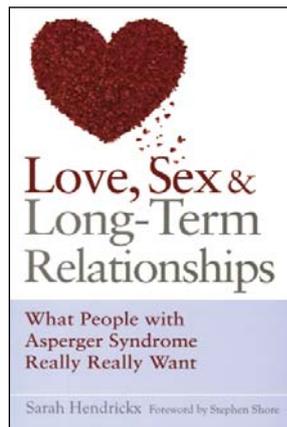
| Granta Books; 2008; Pb £12.99

Reviewed by Peter Hobson

who is Tavistock Professor of Developmental Psychopathology, University of London, based at the Tavistock Clinic and the Institute of Child Health



The Baby in the Mirror
Charles Fernyhough



Neuro-atypical sex

Love, Sex and Long-term Relationships: What People with Asperger Syndrome Really Really Want
Sarah Hendrickx

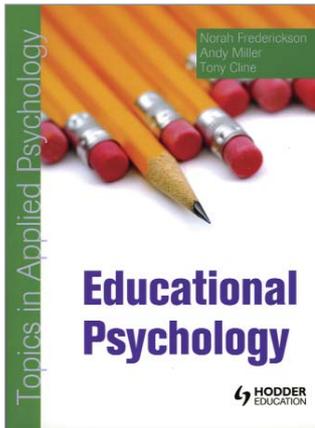
Sex is not often openly talked about, even less so when in relation to autistic spectrum disorder. This book is accessible, informative for psychologists and serves as a self-help guide for people on the autistic spectrum and their partners. The text addresses the issues often faced while in, or searching for, a committed sexual relationship. It gives clear and tangible advice about ways to improve communication in this context.

The chapter topics range from differences in sensory perception, to sexual orientation and gender issues, and to what might constitute inappropriate sexual expression and behaviour. Both a limitation and strength of the book is the extensive use of personal quotes from 'Aspies' and their 'Neuro-Typical' partners. While there appear to be strong commonalities in the sexual experiences, behaviours and feelings of individuals on the autistic spectrum, ultimately Hendrickx's survey shows that their sexual behaviour and motivations can be as varied as for unaffected people.

The frankness of this book is refreshing. Self-help books examining neuro-typical sex would benefit from taking such a straightforward, uninhibited approach.

| Jessica Kingsley; 2008;
Pb £13.99

Reviewed by Lara Eschler



Fresh and hopeful

Topics in Applied Psychology: Educational Psychology
Norah Frederickson, Andy Miller & Tony Cline

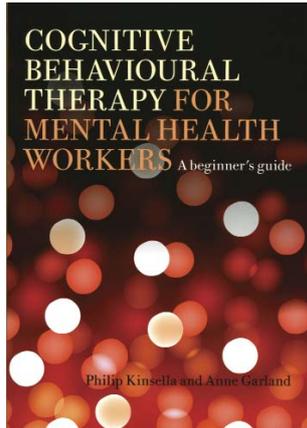
The first chapter 'What do educational psychologists do?' immediately captured my interest. Despite being over a year and into my professional training, I am still seeking answers to this question. I hoped for enlightenment, and was not disappointed.

There was something fresh and hopeful about this book that I just can't quite put my finger on. It seemed more generally systemic somehow, moving away from merely exploring how children learn, to such things as the impacts of school ethos, effective communication and modern methods of teaching. Though the book focuses mainly on educational psychology in schools, the authors acknowledge that family and community contexts are also extremely relevant.

Particularly refreshing was the way the book challenges the reader to think, drawing you in with chapter titles in the shape of attention-grabbing questions like 'Why does mathematics make so many people fearful?'. Throughout, the authors succeed in showing how psychology may be applied to educational contexts.

The targeted readership is advanced-level undergraduates, but I would heartily recommend this book to those pursuing professional training or with an interest in the psychology of education.

! Hodder Education; 2008;
Pb £19.99
Reviewed by Ian Smillie



Accessible and practical

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Mental Health Workers: A Beginner's Guide
Philip Kinsella & Anne Garland

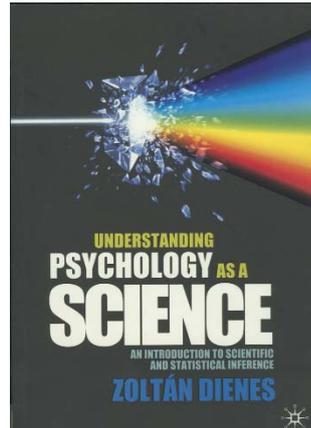
This book seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the core concepts underlying CBT in clinical practice and its use and efficacy for practitioners in various fields.

The authors explain concepts in an extremely accessible format, providing vast amounts of material that can be used as templates to aid therapists in their implementation of the principle. Moreover there are many tips in conducting interventions (e.g. the duration and frequency of sessions depending on the severity of the problem). Conversely, before getting carried away with the practical undertones of the text, the authors stipulate the importance of clinician competency and supervision by trained CBT therapists, plus the types of mental health issues where CBT would be inappropriate.

The collaborative relationship between clinician and client is extremely appealing and the book provides many excerpts of dialogue that give a genuine essence of the points they are describing. References are provided for fuller accounts where the content being described goes beyond the remit of the book.

It is indeed worth recommending as a beginner's guide.

! Routledge; 2008; Pb £19.99
Reviewed by Kate Tilbury



Exceptional overview

Understanding Psychology as a Science: An Introduction to Scientific and Statistical Inference
Zoltán Dienes

My first task as a psychology undergraduate was a short essay entitled 'Is psychology a science? Discuss'. My dismal mark of 58 per cent was (I was told) to be expected for a first attempt at university-level writing; but had this book been available to me then, I would have been quietly confident of bumping that mark up.

The way in which Dienes presents the conceptual debates and psychological principles in succinct, brief and coherent pieces allows the information to be digested in a much simpler manner than I remember through my own experience; and the cartoon-style portraits of Popper and Kuhn among others offer a reinvention of the usual style in which such thinkers are portrayed to students. This,

along with the straightforward wording, allows the complex issues of philosophical principles, scientific inference, statistical testing and argument to be presented in a clear and accessible manner.

The book excels in providing the reader with a substantial understanding of how theories emerge and are tested. Furthermore, the nature in which Dienes examines the logic, assumptions and inferences of the most frequently used statistical tests allows us as researchers to ensure that we are employing the most rigorous of approaches within our own research.

Overall this is an exceptional overview of the scientific principles that underpin the discipline, and should be welcomed by teacher, researcher and undergraduate psychology student alike.

! Palgrave Macmillan; 2008;
Pb £14.99
Reviewed by Helen Henshaw

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- Theory of Mind** Martin J. Doherty
- Framework for Practice in Educational Psychology** Kelly et al. (Eds.)
- Women at the Top** Diane F. Halpern & Fanny M. Cheung
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- This book has issues: Adventures in popular psychology** Christian Jarrett & Joannah Ginsburg
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