

Evolutionary appeal and erotic fiction

A COUPLE of years ago when I first began teaching evolutionary psychology, my students had access to a single textbook that was several years old and not much good. Nowadays there is a plethora of texts devoted to this increasingly trendy branch of psychology, many of them confusingly titled *Evolutionary Psychology*. Just to confuse things further Alan Clamp has produced another addition to the well-stocked stable called... guess what? The difference though is that this new kid on the block is aimed squarely at A-level and AS-level (undergraduates would find the content too easy) and is thus a welcome addition to this end of the market.

Fifteen concise chapters cover a broad range of evolutionary psychology that includes the standard stuff – Darwinian theory, mating behaviours, altruism, aggression, intelligence – alongside material not often covered in other texts – infectious diseases, anxiety, anorexia, schizophrenia, and so on. Each chapter is liberally sprinkled with diagrams, illustrations and easy-to-follow examples, and a summary at the end of each section neatly encapsulates the material covered. To his credit Clamp also raises a critical voice to address those topics that are more controversial (e.g. rape as an adaptive trait).

An excellent starter pack for budding

Evolutionary Psychology

ALAN CLAMP

LONDON: HODDER & STOUGHTON; Pb £12.99 (ISBN 0 340 72072 7)

Warrior Lovers: Erotic Fiction, Evolution and Female Sexuality

CATHERINE SALMON & DONALD SYMONS

LONDON: WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON; 2001; Hb £7.99 (ISBN 0 297 64701 6)

REVIEWED BY Nick Neave

evolutionary psychologists, pitched just right for A-level students. Unfortunately, the market may not be there since the topic does not yet form a large chunk of the A-level syllabus. Should it do so in the future, then this book is as good an introduction as any I have seen.

If you saw the term 'slash fiction', what image would that conjure up? I thought it would entail cheap, lurid, unsavoury novels about serial killers and stalkers, with the pages dripping with viscera and nudity. The authors of *Warrior Lovers: Erotic Fiction, Evolution and Female Sexuality* from the 'Darwinism Today' stable (a series of short books by leading figures in evolutionary theory) soon put me right. Slash fiction is a type of romance novel, written by and for women, in which the 'lovers' are an established fictional same-sex, usually male, duo – for example Captain Kirk/Mr Spock, Starsky/Hutch – the slash referring to the oblique between the names.

So where's the evolutionary link then? In several short chapters covering adaptationism, evolutionary psychology, mate selection, and sex differences in mating preferences, the authors convincingly and concisely make their case. They argue that the features of this form of romance novel provide valuable information about female (and, by association, male) psychological adaptations for mating.

The vastly differing world of porn movies and romance novels are investigated, and valid points made as to why males prefer the former and females the latter. Romance novels aimed at women essentially cover the same theme – the problem in finding, winning and keeping a decent bloke. While 'slash' novels at first glance don't quite appear to fit this theme – the lovers are both male, and the stories often contain explicit sex scenes – the authors are able to show just how these offbeat novels can sit alongside more traditional Mills & Boon efforts (though presumably on a higher shelf).

A fascinating and superbly written look at erotic fiction from an original viewpoint. If only larger text books on evolutionary psychology could be written with the same brevity and erudition.

■ Dr Nick Neave is at the Division of Psychology, University of Northumbria.

The joy of statistics

SPSS for Psychologists: A Guide to Data Analysis Using SPSS for Windows

NICOLA BRACE, RICHARD KEMP & ROSEMARY SNELGAR

BASINGSTOKE: PALGRAVE; 2000; Pb £13.99 (ISBN 0333 73471 8)

REVIEWED BY Carol Ireland

WHEN the terms *SPSS* or *statistics* are mentioned, feelings of anxiety tend to follow, in some people at least. The challenge of books addressing this anxiety-ridden area is really one of making the content easy to follow and understand. Brace, Kemp and Snelgar have achieved this, with a book that explains data analysis simply and clearly, with a friendly and chatty style.

It begins by leading the reader gently into data analysis, starting from the basic to the more advanced. Readers will find it easy to teach themselves SPSS with this book. This is with the help of excellent pictorial demonstrations, simple

explanations and a lots of interesting examples to work through.

One of the most useful parts of the book are the 'tips' sections. Here, Brace *et al.* look at the common pitfalls that researchers may encounter. Equally useful is the chapter on how to handle your SPSS data (how to sort your file, etc.), a section sometimes neglected by other books in this area.

In summary, a well-presented book that will prove very useful for those completely new to SPSS and those of us who are a bit rusty when it comes to data analysis.

■ Carol Ireland is at HMP Wymott and at the University of Central Lancashire.

Pooh Bear essentials

Pooh and the Psychologists

JOHN TYERMAN WILLIAMS

LONDON: METHUEN; 2000;

Hb £10.00 (ISBN 0 416 19817 1)

REVIEWED BY **Halla Beloff**

LIKE the other great psychotherapists, from Freud to Kelley, Winnie the Pooh now has a corpus of commentaries. Those who found him embarrassing or associate him and his like only with a middle-class childhood may not want to hear more about him now. But joining the prestigious Methuen list of the 'Wisdom of Pooh' (ranging from *Winnie the Pooh on Management* to *The Tao of Pooh*) comes a third John Tyerman Williams volume that persuades us with rich arguments that Pooh, far from being 'of little brain', is in fact an empathic psychologist-counsellor who uses the techniques of positive intervention to therapeutic triumph with the various perturbations of his community. Knowledgeable readers will be exhilarated as they recognise each figure and each conception from Bishop Butler to R.D. Laing.

The *tour de force* is the careful management of Eeyore's clinical depression where the symptomatology of specific negative labelling in the Gloomy Place is turned to the upbeat final comment, 'Well, anyhow – it didn't rain'. The cognitive therapy's interpretative argument starts from Titchener's 46,708 elementary sensations and ends with fine fortification of Eeyore's self-esteem via the Milnean emphasis on his covert successes in altruism and the Poohstick contests.

The narrative includes a sensitive account of parenting practices for Kanga and Roo, which involves not only Bowlby and Winnicott, but Margaret Donaldson's subtle arguments against Chomsky's LADs. This must be recommended reading for all students and practitioners in the helping *métier* and will be invaluable to all who may feel overwhelmed by the wave of computer modelling.

■ *Halla Beloff is a social psychologist living in Edinburgh.*

Opening the window

Spirituality and Mental Health Care: Rediscovering a 'Forgotten' Dimension

JOHN SWINTON

LONDON: JESSICA KINGSLEY PUBLISHERS; 2001;

Pb £15.95 (ISBN 1 85302 804 5)

REVIEWED BY **Angels Ferrer-Duch**

You don't have to believe what I believe to give me spiritual care, but you have to have empathy and the understanding that this person requires this... (p.135)

THIS book is targeted at all professionals working within a mental health context, or more broadly working within any care setting.

Basing his argument on empirical evidence, Swinton presents spirituality as a need in human beings, something that is fundamentally different from institutionalised religion. The issues of hope, meaning and purpose as part of this spiritual dimension are considered in the book as something other than the more psychological concepts that include emotions or feelings.

The first four chapters explore the spiritual dimension of mental health care, and the final chapter, perhaps the most useful, presents the practical implications of this approach in a multidisciplinary context.

I enjoyed reading the book and almost felt like I had opened a window to this 'forgotten dimension', and allowed some of this new air to be mixed with the theoretical framework that I use in my everyday practice. The book introduces the reader to the implications of this dimension and highlights the need for more research and integration of this dimension into professional practice. Even though this subject is not in the mainstream therapeutic portfolio of mental health professionals, I think that it is time to put our prejudices aside and consider spirituality as another facet of human development and processing.

■ *Angels Ferrer-Duch is a postgraduate student at the Psychology Department, Ashworth Hospital Authority and at the School of Psychology, Leeds Family Therapy & Research Centre, University of Leeds.*

Career opportunities

Counselling in Careers Guidance

MIGEL JAYASINGHE

BUCKINGHAM: OPEN UNIVERSITY PRESS; 2001;

Pb £16.99 (ISBN 0 335 20396 5)

REVIEWED BY **Jim Goudie**

THE 20-minute lifetime' is how I remember the typical careers guidance interview in Britain being described by some critics over a quarter of a century ago. For most school leavers the careers officer would normally on a one-off basis collect brief academic and personal details and provide matched occupational recommendations and related information. Counselling as part of the careers interview was at best an unacknowledged activity.

In the meantime such factors as high unemployment, technological development, and equal opportunity issues have changed the employment scene radically, creating the need for counselling to figure prominently in a wider perspective of the meaning of 'career'. But has careers guidance risen to the challenge?

The main thrust of Migel Jayasinghe's book is that organisations and practitioners alike have all too often ignored and sometimes strongly resisted the essential contribution counselling can offer in the individual's career development. Adopting a historical perspective on the evolution of careers guidance theory and practice, the author convincingly develops the arguments about why and how this dismissal of counselling must change. This book is therefore recommended to all advisers and trainees who have an interest in the future provision and enhancement of counselling in careers guidance.

■ *Jim Goudie is a senior lecturer in psychology at the University of Northumbria.*

BOOK AWARD 2002

The Scientific Affairs Board invites nominations

Award — £500 annual award. The cheque and commemorative certificate will normally be presented at the Annual Conference at which the winner(s) will be invited to deliver a lecture.

Eligibility — Books published after 1 January 1998 that make a significant contribution to the advancement of psychology may be nominated, and the author or at least one co-author should be resident in the UK. Edited collections of papers are not eligible, nor are books published by the Society.

Nominations — Nominations should include:

- a letter giving the title of the book, name(s) of the author(s), publisher and date of publication
- a short statement (not more than one side of A4) explaining why the author(s) should receive the award
- copies of at least two **published** reviews of the book
- supporting statements by up to three additional referees with expertise in that field
- a copy of the book, whenever possible

Nominators may be individuals, authors, publishers or their agents.

Nominations should be sent to the Chair of the Scientific Affairs Board at the Society's office, to arrive no later than **Thursday 20 December 2001**.

Further details from Lisa Morrison at the Society's Leicester office (e-mail: lismor@bps.org.uk).

VACATION SCHOLARSHIP AWARD 2002

The Standing Advisory Committee on the Welfare of Animals in Psychology invites proposals for psychology projects to enhance animal welfare

The Scientific Affairs Board's Standing Advisory Committee on the Welfare of Animals in Psychology was established in October 1979. A primary responsibility of the Committee is to advance the welfare of animals in psychology. In furtherance of this aim, the Committee has established a Vacation Scholarship Award.

Aim — to encourage students to consider the issues surrounding animal welfare in psychology and to provide them with the opportunity to conduct relevant research.

Award — the winner will receive £125 subsistence and £20 department expenses per week for up to a maximum of eight weeks (£1160). He or she may be requested to give a poster presentation at the Society's London Conference at the discretion of the Standing Conference Committee.

Eligibility — applications are welcome from undergraduates in psychology who are registered at a UK higher education institution. Projects should normally be conducted during the summer vacation (including that following the students' completion of their degree) and last for between four and eight weeks. Projects do not have to be carried out in the UK. However, no extra money is available for travel overseas.

Applications — proposed research projects must have a clear relevance to improving the well-being of farm, laboratory, companion, wild or zoo animals, and must be above and beyond any work which would normally be carried out as part of a student's course (although extensions of coursework are acceptable).

The design of the project proposal should be carried out by the student, but under the guidance of tutors and heads of departments to ensure that appropriate scientific methodology is used and that all of the necessary facilities and supervision will be available.

Applications should take the form of a research proposal (of no more than 1000 words) giving a concise outline of the work and, where applicable, reference to scientific papers or other work relevant to the investigation. Details must be provided of the number and type of animals to be studied, the experimental method (e.g. type of behavioural observation, statistical tests) and of whether the project is to be carried out under a Home Office licence.

A statement of support from the supervisor and head of department is required and, if the project is to be conducted at an external establishment (e.g. zoo or research institute), written permission from the appropriate person (e.g. curator or director) must also be provided.

An end of project report must be submitted to the Committee for information, no later than six months after the start of the award.

Applications should be sent for the attention of the Chair of the Committee, c/o Lisa Morrison at the Leicester office, by 31 January 2002.