

Time and motion

AS I write this I find it difficult to believe that it is only 12 months since the very first of the events in the 2001 centenary year, and less than 12 months since the Glasgow Annual Conference. Yet, while all those events seem very securely located in my psychologically dim and distant past, there is also a somewhat paradoxical sense in which the time since last year has seemed to fly by. Here I am, already drafting my last President's column. The psychological effect of busyness appears to be that busy periods seem longer than they are, but somehow go by more quickly. Any notion that there might be some originality in this psychological insight was swiftly dashed when a survey of the literature immediately revealed (thanks to Glicksohn, J., 2001, *Consciousness and Cognition*, 10, 1–25) that as early as 1890 William James, as always, had got there first:

In general, a time filled with varied and interesting experiences seems short in passing, but long as we look back. On the other hand, a tract of time empty of experiences seems long in passing, but in retrospect short.

Glicksohn and others have constructed some fancy models of cognitive time estimation to address such phenomena, though temporal experience as a topic seems sadly detached from other aspects of cognition – ripe for integration, I suggest.

Annual report

The same sense of 'event-filled-ness' is gained when reading the *Annual Report* for 2001, which members will have just received. While my sights last year were focused mainly on the centenary, I found it quite astonishing when writing my review of the Council year to note the large variety of other significant activities that were initiated or completed last year. These include the review of our book publishing activities and the establishment of a new partnership with Blackwell, the further revision of our Charter and Statutes (for which we are still awaiting Privy Council approval), the reorganisation of the Boards, the initiation of a review of Branches and the establishment of regional offices in

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and the revitalisation of our parliamentary activities.

Because some of our administrative procedures are still rather cumbersome (and are themselves in the process of revision) I think we sometimes give the impression to our members and others that the Society moves rather slowly. I think this impression

'...would people find it as easy to stand for President if a longer term were the norm?'

is based on a very partial sample of our activities as a Society; and while there are no grounds at all for complacency, on the whole I think our members and staff together achieve a great deal, and quite rapidly, at least some of the time.

On my bike, on with the cycle

One of the things we do quickly is change Presidents! This rapid turnover, however, is something that must prove tricky for the staff. No sooner had Barry Brooking got used to Tommy MacKay's extraordinary capacity for burning the candle at both ends and juggling myriad tasks simultaneously, than he had abruptly to adapt to my more leisurely style of working, and my own particular brand of control freakery. And now I'm off, and he'll have to adapt to Graham Davey, and so it goes on...

We have from time to time wondered if our one-year presidential terms are really a bit too short. With Presidents in post so briefly, do they really have the opportunity to influence policy, and is the rapid turnover good for our tireless staff? On the other hand, would people find it as easy to stand for President if a longer term were the norm?

I know in my own case that it was possible to clear many decks for a single year – but it would have been much less feasible, and for my part, less attractive, to play the role for any longer. No, my view is that with the three-year cycle in which President has a lengthy one-year introduction to the business, followed by the Presidential term itself, and then a

further year as Vice President, we have probably got it about right.

Stirling work

I have thanked many members and all our staff in previous columns and in the *Annual Report* for all their efforts for the Society this year. These thanks bear repetition, but louder! I'd also like to thank in addition many long-suffering colleagues in the Psychology Department in Stirling, who have ended up doing large numbers of additional teaching and other duties for me while I have been President, with no (audible) complaints.

Vicki Bruce

Contact address:

Department of Psychology, University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA. E-mail: vicki.bruce@stir.ac.uk

Press Committee

Media Training Days 2002

Wednesday 13 March

Monday 16 September

Monday 9 December

Media Training Days will be held at the Society's London office on 16 September and 9 December, and on 13 March in Blackpool (pre Annual Conference).

The days will include:

- news writing
- snapshots of the media
- media releases
- interview techniques

For a registration form and further details contact:

Dawn Schubert
The British Psychological Society
St Andrews House
48 Princess Road East
Leicester LE1 7DR
Tel: 0116 252 9581

SCIENCE TV ONLINE

A NEW version of the Vega Science Trust website has been announced at which the Trust's science programmes are available free to watch online, making it more an internet science TV channel. There is a wide selection of lectures, discussions, masterclasses, and so on, covering a broad spectrum of science and engineering subjects, and archive footage of many leading scientists. Many programmes have previously been broadcast on terrestrial television, although there is also a lot of new material.

□ Visit the site at www.vega.org.uk.

TELEMEDICINE

PEOPLE with psychiatric problems in remote rural areas in the Australian Outback are being offered treatment by 'telemedicine'. Dr Russell D'Souza, from the Centre of Excellence in Remote and Rural Psychological Medicine at the University of Sydney, has developed a network of units in small hospitals in the Outback, each with a television and a camera, connected through a dedicated ISDN line, so he is able to see and talk to a patient.

NEW JAPANESE NAME FOR SCHIZOPHRENIA

THE Japanese Society of Psychiatry and Neurology has decided to recommend the adoption of a new term for schizophrenia. In Japanese the condition is called *seishin bunretsu byo*, which translates literally as 'split-mind disease'. Although *schizophrenia* is itself from the Greek for 'split mind', it was felt that the Japanese vernacular label can be humiliating to those affected and their families, and that it was misleading about the nature of the condition. The recommendation is for the term *togo shicho sho* to be used, which means 'integration disorder'.

Stress on the employee

EMPLOYEES seeking compensation for workplace stress will be required to prove they did not 'suffer in silence', following a ruling by the Court of Appeal in February.

Overtaking damages awards made to three workers, Lady Justice Hale said it should not be the responsibility of employers to make exhaustive investigations into the mental health of employees, and they could not be held liable if an employee failed to complain about adverse effects of workplace stress.

In one of the cases the court found that the worker was particularly susceptible to the

effects of stress in a job that was not in itself over-demanding. The judgment said that if there was no alternative solution, the onus was on the stressed worker to either leave the job or carry on working and accept the risk of a mental breakdown.

The guidance also stated that any employer who offers a

confidential counselling service is unlikely to be found in breach of duty by the courts. Dr Frank Bond (City University) said: 'I find this part of the ruling, if upheld, to be the most damaging for employees and the organisation for which they work. I see it as bordering on a 'blame the victim' approach to work stress prevention, because it could have the effect of absolving organisations from the need to identify, much less change, any work practices that are known to lead to stress, such as having low job control or conflicting roles.'

Dr Bond believes employers should recognise the benefits that occupational psychology research can bring. 'Companies should realise that job designs that decrease stress can also improve productivity; so, by putting a little thought into management and workplace design, everyone can win.'

Dr Rob Briner (Birkbeck College) cautiously welcomed the ruling that there are no occupations that should be regarded as intrinsically dangerous to mental health. 'In some ways I think this is helpful. The stress movement has slowly shifted people's thinking – we now believe that almost any job is potentially seriously harmful to mental health. In fact, compared with being unemployed, work generally has positive effects on mental health.'

Dr Briner believes rulings that attempt to clarify are to be welcomed in a confusing area. 'In a sense, stress claims are being pushed out of courtrooms and back into organisations, which is probably where they should be dealt with – well before they get to court.'

According to a report from the TUC, work-related stress cases increased 12-fold over the last year, with 6428 new cases reported compared with 516 the year before.

APA award

THE American Psychological Association's Distinguished Scientific Award for Application of Psychology 2002 has been awarded to Professor Robert Rosenthal of the University of California, Riverside (UCR). He will formally accept the award, which is the highest honour possible from the APA, at the national meeting of the APA to be held in Chicago in August.

Rosenthal has spent his career finding out what comes of expectations. 'The Rosenthal Effect' has entered the language as shorthand for a fascinating phenomenon. Teachers who hold high expectations for students actually influence the performance of those students;

judges influence verdicts by how they read jury instructions; and doctors, through body language, influence the patient's health.

'Bob has made so many stellar contributions, and this truly outstanding and significant award stands as a public declaration of his scientific achievement in psychology', said John Ashe, Chair of the UCR Department of Psychology. 'His influence is exceptionally broad because he combines keen theoretical insights with unique methodological approaches to solve important problems in the field.'

Rosenthal now works alongside faculty colleagues who were his graduate students at Harvard, where he spent 37 years as a professor before arriving at UCR in 1999.

He said this latest award is especially exciting because it comes from his colleagues. 'These are people I admire and respect', he said. 'It's very exciting that your colleagues think well of you.'

ERRORS OF JUDGEMENT

Two corrections from last month's special issue on judgement and decision making: David Hardman's e-mail is dhardman@igu.ac.uk, and your chances of winning the lottery are $6/49 \times 5/48 \times 4/47 \times 3/46 \times 2/45 \times 1/44$, or 1 in 13,983,816.

Stanford revisited

THE controversy surrounding the involvement of psychologists in 'reality-TV' shows no sign of abating, with the publication of guidelines and the screening of a TV series and a film based on Zimbardo's prison simulation.

As a response to calls from members who have been involved with or watched reality-TV shows, the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) has produced ethical guidelines for production companies. Spokesman Phillip Hodson said: 'These aim to provide a framework that promotes good entertainment while guarding the integrity of those who take part. Following a successful pilot project the BACP is also launching a Media Consultancy Service providing advice, information and guidance to production companies and their staff for all stages of the production process including ways of supporting individuals once programmes have ceased. This service also provides guidance and support to BACP members and can act as a mediating body if necessary.' (For more information contact Phillip Hodson on 020 7794 2838 or philliphodson.co.uk.)

The BPS is also developing a set of guidelines. 'The Society's Ethics and Press Committees have established a working group to review the guidance available for members working on media activities', reports Andy Burman (Membership and Qualifications Directorate Manager). 'The guidance is expected to address the ethical dimensions that members need to consider, bearing in mind the attention given to high-profile psychological involvement in TV series such as *Big Brother*. Any guidance is not expected to be prescriptive but will provide a framework for psychologists to

exercise professional judgement in determining whether ethical dimensions have been addressed and whether the Code of Conduct, or any other Society guidelines, are likely to be breached. We will keep you in touch with the working group's activity via *The Psychologist*.'

A real-life example of psychologists' involvement with television companies should arrive on your screens in April. *The Experiment* is a major study of intergroup relations that builds upon several classic studies – notably Zimbardo's prison experiment. It will be shown as a series of programmes on BBC2. Dr Stephen Reicher (University of St Andrews) and Professor Alex Haslam (University of Exeter) will be discussing their findings and the ethical

perspective in a symposium at the Society's Annual Conference in Blackpool this month. Dr Reicher said: 'We spent nine months working on the ethical and scientific aspects of the project and feel that those efforts paid off. We believe that *The Experiment* demonstrated that it is possible to conduct extended studies of complex and potentially troubled human interactions in a way that is ethical and indeed beneficial for participants. Moreover, our understanding of important social phenomena such as tyranny and resistance can be enriched by the data we collected.'

Finally there is a German-language film, also called *The Experiment*, released on 22 March, primarily in London initially but then touring the country.

COMMENT FROM PROFESSOR PHILIP ZIMBARDO:

I am amazed by the current popularity of this old study (more than 30 years old), not only in the various media, but also in the many and increasing number of hits on my Stanford prison experiment website (www.prisonexp.org).

In part it is because of the public's interest in observing human behaviour that has been stimulated by reality-TV programmes of various kinds, in part because the study was so dramatic in its formulation and conclusions, and in part because no such studies can be conducted today – except apparently in Britain. It harks back to another era where behavioural researchers could study human behaviour 'online' and not just participants reporting on how they imagine they might behave in a given situation.

So I welcome reality TV in general for creating an appetite for psychology, but I loathe the forms it is taking. *Candid Camera* revealed the beauty of human behaviour in special circumstances with its appealingly simple view of ordinary people coping with extraordinary situations; but just as its current TV descendants have pulled human nature down into the muck of sensationalism by making people look dumb, insensitive and uncaring, so too does much current reality TV demean people for the sake of titillating viewers to get ratings.

It is vital to remember that these made-for-TV experiments can never be valid as studies of hypothesis testing as are those in scientific laboratories. All generalisations from them are constrained by the fact the 'subjects' are acting for the camera, volunteering to become celebrities, to be seen by their friends and family and public, changes how they act. We do learn about behaviour under these special circumstances, but we must be cautious about the applicability of any findings beyond this television setting.

The London Lectures

The Society's first 'London Lectures' event was held at Westminster Central Hall on 17 December. Six hundred sixth-form and undergraduate students and tutors attended the event. During the day six eminent professors presented 'state-of-the-art' lectures. Over the next four pages we present some of the highlights, along with the students' perspective.

The one-day event was hailed a success and the second London Lectures will take place this December; it is hoped that a roadshow of the event will tour the UK in the near future.

The undergraduate perspective

AMY MILSOM (King Alfred's College, Winchester) reports.

NOT only were all the talks of interest to me for my current studies as a psychology undergraduate, but they evoked ideas for future studies and, more importantly, final-year projects! The lectures offered a wide variety of different subject areas and gave me an insight into the world of research. The day also incorporated a room of stands where different universities, companies and the BPS offered information for A-level and undergraduate students. In addition to this, one company even offered a test to discover what kind of career would be suitable for your personality type, and identified your strengths and weaknesses and how these correlate with how others see you – very interesting.

The day made a lasting impact on me: it has encouraged me to attend more extracurricular activities that I would have normally dismissed as boring. It also enlightened me on the world of psychology. I would recommend the day to all students – I even had time to squeeze in a London shopping trip afterwards.

The view from the sixth form

Sixth-formers MARC BROWNRIGG and MARTIN ARMSTRONG (Ullswater Community College, Penrith) reflect on their day at the London Lectures.

ON starting our Psychology A-level course in September we were immediately interested in the subject and were eager to find out more; so when we were told about the London Lectures, we were happy to attend.

Despite the early start, many people turned out to listen to six of the UK's most prominent psychologists. Faced with an audience at the very beginning of their psychology career, each speaker had a unique style of presenting their lecture, and this greatly affected the way the information was communicated.

Morris presented on perhaps the most interesting topic from our point of view. First, he spoke about how the use of animals in experiments is still relevant to both psychology and biomedical science. He went on to explain his research with mice and its implications for our understanding of human memory and Alzheimer's disease, inspiring us to take psychology further and attempt to make a difference.

After Diane Berry's lecture on the assessment of risk in taking medicines, the final talk before the lunch break was delivered by Paul Gilbert on the

psychology of shame. By this time we were feeling the effects of fatigue due to the enormous amount of information that we had to take in, and the uncomfortable chairs! But Paul's lively style of lecturing, which included video-clips, got us through to the break.

After lunch we returned with lighter wallets and fuller stomachs ready for the final three lectures. First, Terezinha Nunes demonstrated that logic is the basis for learning in children. Doug Carroll followed with a discussion of the impact of traumatic events on health and illness. The final lecture of the day was by Miles Hewstone. Although we felt that he avoided the answers to many of the questions that he posed, we both agree that it rounded off the day's proceedings very well before the ensuing questions asked by those who stayed behind. This was an ideal opportunity for us to get more specific information from the lecturers.

Overall, the day was well worth the long trip down from Cumbria and we were very glad that we had the opportunity to attend.

The social glue of shame

Professor Paul Gilbert (University of Derby) explored the misunderstood emotion of shame. KATE CAVANAGH reports.

TO gain and maintain social rank and status we are offered two routes: aggression and attraction. Social empowerment might be gained through threat and coercion, or through demonstrations of talent, competence and affiliation. The flow of signals between friends and lovers is most often characterised by the latter.

Our basic needs to be attractive and to belong are demonstrated in children as young as two. From this early age children demonstrate self-conscious competencies, recognising themselves as an 'object for others'. By three or four both negative and positive self-conscious emotions and behaviours are observed. Beaming with pride a child will show a drawing to mummy; after breaking a sibling's toy they may show guilt or shame.

Gilbert explored the role of the self-conscious emotions in psychopathology. People who are vulnerable to depression often have trouble with generating positive self-conscious affects, such as pride. Intense internally focused shame can also be

extremely disabling. In video-clips Gilbert's clients described the experience of living with shame as like 'writing the CV of my life as I live it – caring what people think about me all the time'. Recounting moments of overpowering shame, clients described 'wanting the ground to open up and swallow them' – an intensely negative experience quite different from the humour and transitory experience of normal embarrassment. Where embarrassment says 'I wish I hadn't done that', shame says 'I'm a person I don't want to be'.

Specific psychological disorders are characterised by specific focuses for shame. Shame of the body is typical in the eating disorders – shame associated with achievement failure is common in depression. Gilbert concluded that all social relationships use shame as a means of social cohesion and control, with shame as a social glue that empowers and disempowers according to social rules. Future research needs to further explore the shared features and psychological processes underlying cultural variations in the self-conscious emotions.

Learning by numbers

Professor Terezinha Nunes (Oxford Brookes University) addressed how children and adults learn the logic of systems. JON SUTTON reports.

ANY parent shamed by their child's faultless command of the video timer function will tell you that children are pretty good learners in a technological society. We often need some form of knowledge to use the objects that surround us; but do children learn about each item by itself, or the overall logic of the system?

To demonstrate the logic of systems, Nunes had us speaking Japanese in no time. Japanese counting, like English, uses a base-10 system, whereby *ju* is 10. Discover that *ku* is 9 and look at a few other examples, and we can soon work out that *kujuku* is

99. Nunes assesses children's understanding of such logical moves at different ages.

Several videos of test situations then demonstrated that children find sharing tasks (e.g. money) easier when they can identify the 'ones' within a unit of a higher value. Only a few five-year-olds succeed in sharing 1p and 2p coins fairly. Nunes also showed how four- and five-year-olds, not due to learn about multiplication until the age of seven or eight, can nevertheless solve multiplication problems by using 'correspondence' (drawing three dogs next to each of five houses and then adding them up).

Nunes then showed this application of logic to real-world problems through videos of Brazilian street-children using the technique when selling lemons, even though they could not solve written multiplication problems. Schools must make sure they invest in children's reasoning so the children relate their own way of thinking to what they are being taught. As for adults, we might also be using more complex mathematical reasoning than we realise.

□ For the full talk, see www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/social/psych/staff/nunes.html

Around the conferences

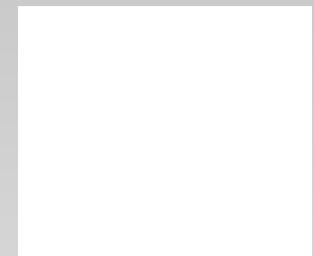
2002 Occupational Psychology Conference

Extravert GPs

General practitioners may be more likely to be successful if they embrace life with enthusiasm, are highly receptive to cues from their environment, and have a natural affinity for complexity and ambiguity. The research team, led by Dr Fiona Patterson and Tim Norfolk of the Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield, used a panel of experienced GPs to assess the job performance of 127 doctors. They suggest that the research could push GP recruitment into line with practices more widely seen in the commercial setting.

Monopoly emotions

In low-choice, monopolistic organisations such as rail companies customers have more marked emotional experiences of the services. Dr Jo Silvester and Kath Timmins (City University,



London) found that compared with high-choice sectors such as retail, customers expressed greater happiness and relief when the service was good, and greater anger and resentment when the service was poor. The researchers explain the positive effect due to the low baseline of customer expectations.

Can animals 'time travel'?

Professor Richard Morris (University of Edinburgh) discussed animal models of human memory impairment.

JON SUTTON reports.

WHEN I taught A-level psychology, animal research was one topic sure to raise the temperature in the classroom. Heated debates centred on Harlow's unfortunate monkeys, clinging to wire mothers: surely that was unethical, and taught us little about human behaviour? So I expected Morris to have his work cut out convincing this audience of the value of animal models in memory research.

Possibly anticipating this scepticism, Morris started out by distancing himself from some of the grander claims of the past, including Hull's view that almost everything of significance to humans could be learnt from studying rats. He pointed out the analytical and therapeutic precision afforded by animal experimentation, along with the many non-invasive ways of obtaining information about anatomical and physiological substrates of cognitive function in humans.

Morris moved on to the question of whether other vertebrates have episodic memory: a sense of what, where and when, enabling 'mental time travel'. Morris

described paired associate learning tests rewarding animals for responding to an object when it was located appropriately in its associated setting. Innovative designs and apparatus led to some interesting

findings. Scrub jays, who learn that mealworms degrade over time, appear to be able to think 'Hmm – it's a couple of days since I was here, better go for peanuts instead'. After just one trial of encoding, rats given a sniff of pina colada flavour rat food are successful above chance at going to the correct paired location. And they're not cheating by sniffing it out – they dig more in the correct location even if there's nothing buried there. Using this research paradigm, Morris showed how drugs enabling him to temporarily 'switch off' the hippocampus can demonstrate its central role in memory.

Bringing his talk back to the human consequence of memory loss, Morris concluded with promising research using his famous 'water maze' to investigate vaccines for Alzheimer's. Successful safety studies of the vaccines with human patients have paved the way for phase 2 trials bringing us closer to an intervention that even the fiercest critic of animal research would surely find difficult to dismiss.

I remember when it used to be all tower blocks round here

Is 15 per cent 'very common'?

Professor Dianne Berry (University of Reading) addressed the topic of risk communication and medicine taking.

PAUL REDFORD reports.

WHEN that inevitable cold breaks out each winter, I reach for the medicine to give me some relief. The small print states that possible side-effects of this medicine include headaches, increased heart rate and, in rare cases, liver failure. But what does this actually mean, and should I still take it?

Dianne Berry (University of Reading) examined our understanding of medical risk communication. Medicine relies on the premise of informed consent, where patients are given details such as diagnosis, likely prognosis, options for treatment and the probability of their success. To make an informed decision, Berry argued, patients need to truly understand the information given. However, there are huge variations in our interpretation of risk information.

In the case of deciding whether to pop another flu remedy, guidance comes in the form of verbal labels indicating side-effect risk accompanying all medicines. Currently an EU directive demands that patient information leaflets carry side-effect information categorising risk in five bands of probability: very common, common, uncommon, rare and very rare. But what does 'common' actually mean?

Berry's research has demonstrated gross discrepancies between the verbal labels of risk and the public's perceptions of them. When told a side-effect is 'common', the average probability estimate of Berry's study sample was 44 per cent likelihood of occurrence. This contrasts with the communicative intent of the EU directive, where 'common' describes a

probability of side-effects between 1 and 10 per cent.

Moreover, when verbal as opposed to numerical labels (e.g. 10 per cent chance) are used, side-effects are judged as more severe, more likely and more risky to health. The consequence of this bias is that individuals are less likely to take medicines. As Berry highlighted, this is especially problematic in elderly patients where the negative impact of not taking medicine may be more detrimental. However, this overestimation is not the only problem in risk perception. Berry left the audience with a question: How can we reconcile average or population risk with individual risk? As one patient remarked: 'What do you mean a 15 per cent likelihood? Either I get it or I don't.'

How we can be caught cold by stress

Professor Doug Carroll (University of Birmingham) explored the relationship between psychology and physiology. AMY MILSOM reports.

AS many students (and lecturers) know, essay deadlines seem to bring with them an awful lot of ill students. Although many would suggest that this is a good excuse for not getting the essay in on time, Doug Carroll suggested that the link might not just be illusory. He explored how psychological processes can effect our physiological well-being.

Can an earthquake trigger a heart attack? Well, there certainly seems to be an increase in the local rate of cardiac arrests following earthquakes. However, as Carroll suggested, it may not

be the events themselves (the earthquake) that are responsible for the physiological response (the heart attack), but that emotional turmoil associated with events may affect our physical well-being.

Carroll described the results from a year-long study conducted at the Common Cold Unit in Salisbury. They found that the more stressful the year had been for participants the more likely they were to develop a cold. Carroll also demonstrated from his own research how mental processes affect our physical health. His research

team found that medical students with a prior history of stress needed a booster hepatitis-B vaccine to produce enough antibodies to fight off the disease, whereas the less-stressed medical students did not need the booster.

Carroll warned that those of us who are stressed by everyday life may be damaging our immune system, leaving us less able to produce antibodies and more susceptible to disease. This whirlwind tour illuminated this fascinating relationship between psychological process, health and illness.

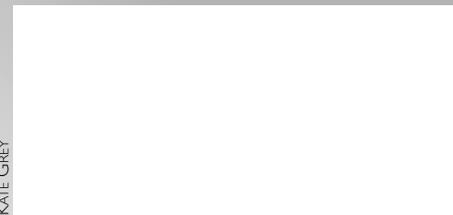
Why do 'we' hate 'them'?

Professor Miles Hewstone (University of Oxford) explored the causes, correlates and cures of intergroup bias. PAUL REDFORD reports.

GROUP membership elicits many biases in judgement. The most common is ingroup favouritism, where individuals judge their ingroup more favourably than they do an outgroup. This bias is even demonstrated in perception tasks where words unknowingly paired with the words 'we' and 'us' are judged more positively than words paired with 'they' and 'them' (although these do not trigger negative reactions).

But when does ingroup love become outgroup hate? Hewstone argued that when the outgroup is perceived as a threat they may evoke strong negative emotions. When these instances of ingroup bias go unchecked or uncontrolled they can result in extreme negative behaviours, such as 'ethnic cleansing' and massacres. Can social psychology help?

Hewstone said that religious segregation in Northern Ireland is one possible contributor to intergroup hostility there. His research has explored the idea that increased intergroup contact may be an avenue for reducing negative attitudes towards outgroups. Presenting the results from two of his Northern Ireland studies, Hewstone asked what type of contact is most effective, how



KATE GREY

When does love turn to hate?

it works, and when it works best. The results demonstrated that both direct and indirect contact (where friends of friends have contact with members of the outgroup) reduce intergroup hostility. Moreover, both also reduce negative emotional reactions, such as anxiety towards the outgroup. Interestingly, in order for contact to be successful in reducing prejudice the group membership must be acknowledged rather than glossed over.

Psychology needs to be involved in community contact programmes, argued Hewstone, as most intergroup conflicts have an identifiable social psychological component. However, although social psychology knows something about the causes of conflict, neither the underlying problems nor the solutions are simple.

Around the conferences

Division of Educational and Child Psychology 2002 Conference

Language delay

Three-year-olds in socio-economically disadvantaged areas are entering nursery with delayed language, and in many cases their language two years later either has not improved or is more delayed. Anne Locke and Dr Jane Ginsborg (University of Sheffield) argue 'that the premature focus in the foundation years on literacy at the expense of oracy has a deleterious effect on the spoken language, and therefore the subsequent academic progress, of children who are far from ready to begin reading and writing'.

Sampling performance

Professor Diane Montgomery (Middlesex University) has developed a 'special sampling frame' to assess teachers' performance. The instrument is based on over 1200 lesson observations, feedback from school staff and documentary evidence. When feedback was used, in only two sessions teachers' performances improved markedly, and this in turn contributed significantly to school improvement.

Children's books

Children's fiction of the sort found in high-street bookshops is better for teaching youngsters how to read than the reading schemes used by primary schools, according to Jonathan Solity (Warwick University) and colleagues.