The more alien we become, the more human we remain

'Earth is the cradle of humanity, but one cannot live in a cradle forever.' – Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, 1911

Featuring prominently in the Science Museum 'Cosmonauts', that quote, from the Russian physicist and theoretical father of rocketry, captures the sense of escape and maturation found throughout this exploration of the Soviet space race. It's not a psychological exhibition, nor would you expect it to be. But in amongst the hardware, art and design there are trajectories forged by fuel but truly made in the mind.

'Cosmonauts' is, for example, the story arc from dreams to reality; from the first dogs in space (anthropomorphically described here as 'brave') to men and women; from solo missions to the cooperation of the International Space Station and Mars 500 project, learning to battle with technical difficulties and not with each other.

It's also the story of how the 'race for space', and the individuals running it, could shape an entire nation. Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space, was a remarkable individual who apparently stood out due to his positive nature and sense of humour, but in fact his working-class upbringing and photogenic smile were just as vital in what was a hugely symbolic and political choice. The strategy worked, with the media going 'Ga-Ga' over their first cosmonaut. Several triumphalist, chest-thrusting, fist-aloft statues are to be found in the exhibition, bringing to mind modern masculinities and a certain Vladimir Putin [http://digest.bps.org.uk/2014/03/male-fantasies-triumphalism-and-peace.html]. Similar statues of female astronauts are notable by their absence, but to their credit the Soviets were pioneers in equality. Valentina Tereshkova deserves a whole exhibition to herself, and I would love to have seen more about her hopes and fears on becoming the first woman in space.

On the surface, this exhibition is all landing modules, control panels and cooling trousers, sophisticated modern technology that somehow looks disconcertingly primitive. Yet in reaching out to alien worlds, our humanity remains core. Mission control is all about managing human experience, mediating everything from crucial instructions to sentimental messages from family. The ISS has been an ongoing experiment in cooperation between once-hostile nations. And if we are to truly colonise our solar system and beyond we will need to call on psychology even more, as shown in Oleg Vukolov's 1981 painting of the Sevastianov family found towards the end of the exhibition: the cosmonaut's apparent readiness for a Mars mission contrasting with the lost, lonely look of those left behind.

Recognising the importance of the space race for the psychology of an entire nation, the US threw huge amounts of money and expertise into it and grabbed the initiative with the moon landing. But 'Cosmonauts' is a reminder that it was the Russian space programme that launched us into a new era of human experience. The next era, leaving the cradle far behind as we launch on to alien outposts, will remain grounded in what makes us uniquely human.

Cosmonauts
Science
Museum,
London

I *Cosmonauts runs at the Science Museum in London until 13 March 2016, and costs £14 (concessions available). For much more on the psychology of space travel, alien contact and more, see our October 'Out of this world' issue at https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-28/october-2015/out-world.*
Reviewed by Dr Jon Sutton *who is Managing Editor of The Psychologist*

Learning in a digital context

iPads in the Early Years
Michael Dezuanni, Karen Dooley, Sandra Gattenhof & Linda Knight

This book is very topical given the accessibility of technology for children and its growing use within different settings (e.g. schools and homes). Based on research in Australia, the authors have pulled together engaging and informative chapters transferable to wider settings that will appeal to teachers, parents, students and academics.

Each chapter looks at a different method of using iPads within teaching from story making/storytelling to literacy and digital culture. Those using other tablet devices should not dismiss the book but think about the similarities and the transferability of the areas discussed. One of the central aims of using the iPads in the research discussed was ensuring they became embedded in teaching and were not just gimmicks. The book documents well how schools, teachers and children reacted to using the iPads as part of lessons, and how they were also able to help with engaging the home through the use of a school loan system.

Underlying the writing is reference to theory and pedagogical approaches. The authors present an honest account of the challenges of the research, discussing how adaptations to teaching were made/needed but also reporting the opportunities it created, which would not have been as accessible or possible without the use of iPads. The book concludes with five 'digital basics' to help people design learning for children. Overall there are many strengths to this book, but the price tag may impact the accessibility.

I *Routledge; 2015; Hb £95.00*
Reviewed by Dr Anna Mary Cooper, *University of Salford*

Facing facts

Forensic Facial Identification: Theory and Practice of Identification from Eyewitnesses, Composites and CCTV
Tim Valentine & Josh P. Davis (Eds.)

Although eye-witness testimony is highly prized in criminal/legal settings, anyone with a passing interest in the field will know we have a problem: we are not generally very good at remembering and identifying unfamiliar faces, and it is not that much better with familiar ones. This is partly because encoding a face is a highly imperfect and error-prone process. It is also because the techniques used to elicit witness descriptions or identify a suspect can make matters worse. This has significant implications for the lives and liberties of those involved, but it is not easily resolved.

Forensic Facial Identification is part of Wiley's book series addressing the psychology of crime, law and policing. This text is focused on contemporary forensic face research and its implications for theory, practice and implementation. It is edited by respected British psychologists Tim Valentine and Josh Davis, who draw together a good range of topics that include interviewing witnesses, problems and performance in line-ups, mug-shots and composite face construction, identification from CCTV by humans and computer systems, craniofacial analysis (which I loved) and the implications for psychology, law and government. Each chapter is a manageable size, informative and clear. There are handy examples, legal case studies and summary conclusions. I would have liked to see a bit more colour (all monochrome figures and images), but that is a minor issue, and the text is never dry.

Forensic Facial Identification is an ideal source of reference for anyone interested in the field and would be an excellent primary text on an advanced course reading list.

I *Wiley-Blackwell; 2015; Pb £34.00*
Reviewed by Dr Andrew K. Dunn, *Nottingham Trent University*
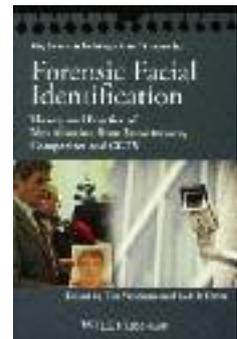
Are Video Games Really That Bad?
BBC Two (Horizon series)

Are video games really that bad? Over the years I have come to see this seemingly simple question as the discipline of psychology in microcosm. People want to know the answer. There have been 30-odd years of research into it, with the brightest minds in the business using a huge range of methods. Yet, as the redundant reminders come throughout this programme, 'human behaviour is very complicated', and the area 'may always divide scientific opinion'. It's little wonder that the media choose to make up their own mind, cherry-picking from the research for their scare stories.

Horizon promised to look 'behind the hype and the headlines', and as you would expect for a programme with first-class psychologist and blogger Dr Pete Etchells (Bath Spa University) as Programme Consultant it served up plenty of serious science. Yet I was left unsatisfied by the staple *Horizon* diet – foreboding warning versus by contrary evidence, the 'which part of the brain lights up?' bit, the feel-good and future-oriented conclusion.

The starter in that three-course meal pitted the research of Professors Craig Anderson (Iowa State University) and Brad Bushman (Ohio State University) – broadly speaking, 'You can't zone out when you play a video game, you're directly tied to a violent character', and this leads to small but measurable increases in real-life aggression – against Professor Chris Ferguson (Stetson University, see also tinyurl.com/oxpkjff) and a 'growing group of academics' who argue that if anything the rise in gaming has led to a decline in youth violence. Ferguson's 'routine activities theory' certainly makes intuitive sense: if you take a group who are already prone to aggression and give them something else to do, it takes them away from scenarios where they are likely to engage in bullying and aggression out in the real world.

The programme noted that this division in the academic community is rarely mentioned in the media, and scare stories continue to dominate. Am I being naive in hoping for one side of this debate to win out? An APA report (tinyurl.com/pl37a9u) recently supported the link between gaming and increased aggression and not criminality, so perhaps that's the key distinction. Or perhaps the changing nature of gaming – myriad styles for all sections of society – means we need a more nuanced approach to the question, or simply to move on to richer and more positive possibilities.

That's pretty much what the programme did, with a series of contributions from academics looking deeper at the gaming–aggression link, before diving into the potential of virtual worlds. Dr Andrew Przybylski, a Research Fellow at the University of Oxford, used the wonderfully named 'Bastet' (also known as 'bastard Tetris') to look at the impact of frustration on aggression. Professor Rene Weber (University of California, Santa Barbara) showed that even looking inside the brain at the moment of playing a violent game is not providing us with answers. (Apparently the anterior cingulate cortex suppresses the amygdala's normal response to violence, but that's just a normal modulation of emotional response.) Then there's a brief diversion into 'problem gaming', with Professor Mark Griffiths (Nottingham Trent University) warning 'we should not confuse excess with addiction'.

Also normalising the pastime were the video game journalists interviewed, with Leigh Alexander pondering: 'Play is fundamental to who we are, and we're just doing it through technology now.' There seems little doubt that gaming is changing (see tinyurl.com/oq7rfv7) and in amongst the shoot-'em-ups you've got virtual worlds that can train surgeons (Henk ten Cate Hoedemaker's 'Underground') and combat mental decline as we age (Professor Adam Gazzaley demonstrated 'Neuroracer'). We may not be able to play our way to a better world, but gaming may at least improve visual tracking and attention shifts (see the work of Professor Daphne Bavelier http://mosaicscience.com/story/lazy-eye).

In the end, no doubt my frustration is not with the programme but with the nature of psychology and even the scientific process in general. No doubt playing video games could be good for us, but can't we get some kind of decent answer to the first question? What is 'proof', and if it's never really 'game over' for any particular body of research is it any surprise that the media write their own ending?

I **Reviewed by Dr Jon Sutton** *who is Managing Editor of The Psychologist*
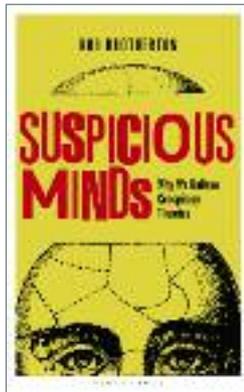
The plot thickens...

Suspicious Minds:
Why We Believe in Conspiracy Theories
Rob Brotherton

Former Goldsmiths lecturer Rob Brotherton's *Suspicious Minds* presents a textured and often surprising look into the fascinating world of conspiracy theories. A world so often described as dark and shady is shown to be much closer to home than we could have first imagined.

From the history of conspiracy theories in ancient Rome to the archetypal narratives of good and evil that are often at the heart of modern theories, the book takes one on a journey of understanding. We come to realise that the conspiracy-minded are not so different to us after all.

Brotherton also goes on, with fascinating examples of research and theories throughout, to outline the innate cognitive processes and biases that affect us all, but that also can play a role in cementing beliefs in such theories. We come away with the realisation that every one of us could benefit from the knowledge that we are useless at understanding why we believe what we do.

With potential links to violent extremism (though evidence for this is patchy) and their central role in the anti-vaccination movement, conspiracy theories themselves are not always the work of harmless kooks. Brotherton looks into what makes a person conspiracy-minded and outlines six factors to help define what a conspiracy theory is.

Looking into the narratives within conspiracy theories, Brotherton traces many back to classic stories of good overcoming evil. So many also include a central underdog, for example renegade scientists who claim vaccines cause autism or argue against the seriousness of HIV. These narratives, Brotherton says, resonate with us all.

In perhaps the most fascinating section of the book Brotherton points to innate cognitive processes that, while helping us understand the world around us, can distort our picture of reality. From our inherent desire to see patterns in a chaotic world, to attributing non-existent intentions to actors in our worlds, it becomes clear we can all be susceptible to (albeit necessary) cognitive shortcuts that can colour our personal world view.

Cognitive biases, too, are put under Brotherton's microscope. He outlines research into the proportionality bias, where people expect big causes for big events, perhaps making official explanations for world events somehow unsatisfactory. Confirmation bias also has a probable role, making us only look to evidence that backs up our existing world view.

This excellently in-depth yet accessible book would be fascinating to psychologists and the general public alike. Looking at conspiracy theories, and those who believe them, reveals much about the workings of the human mind, as Brotherton puts it: 'Conspiracy-thinking is ubiquitous, because it's a product, in part, of how all of our minds are working all the time.'

I *Bloomsbury; 2015; Hb £16.99*
Reviewed by Ella Rhodes *who is staff journalist on The Psychologist*

Drawn to the nectars of negativity

Dismaland
Banksy

The West Country – home to The Wurzels, Wallace and Gromit, Glastonbury... and for a limited time only, Dismaland.

Unafraid, provocative street artist 'Banksy' has flaunted his audacious art works globally – from the wall of the Palestinian West Bank to the Louvre in Paris, to Timbuktu and beyond – ostensibly promoting freedom of speech through potent, anti-establishment and political messages. Now, he and his international compatriots have created a new phenomenon – the Bemusement Park – a fusion of art, sculpture and fairground attractions conceptualised on negativity and set to dishearten and demoralise with underlying potent significance. The irony of this temporary, cheerless, pop-up installation is enhanced still further when one considers its previous incarnation – a lido, which by definition was brimming with fun and merriment – a wholly biophilous British seaside experience.

The installation considers those thorny, often unspoken, disconcerting issues which have the power to entice the masses in a response to perceived injustice and evil. One of the stated intentions of Banksy's rationale is to educate a new generation in the breadth of depressing world realities while shattering any residual hopes of denial or avoidance through fairytale escapism. Much like the Victorian freak shows at the end of the pier, the darkness of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or movies featuring the undead, mutilation and destruction, Dismaland delivers a cacophony of all things anarchistic and nihilistic. In contrast to the mawkish bogus fantasy world of its opposite namesake, what awaits the surging crowds is a combination of the unalive, the largely inanimate and an expression of societal discontent and global self-destruction.

The motivation for the stampede toward this attraction and the exhibits within appear in part inextricably linked to a necessity to be part of something fashionable and trendy. This jumping on the bandwagon and social conformity (Asch, 1955) is illustrated by the frenzied clamour for the limited online ticket availability – at times seemingly like the odds of obtaining a golden ticket to Dahl's

chocolate factory. This further parallels the recent zeitgeist-driven mindset resulting in the climax of Corbyn-mania with the variously welcomed or otherwise lurch or despair-filled moves to the political left of the Labour movement (see Bikhchandani, et al. 1992).

The entire process and experience of the Dismaland journey is imbued with layered 'cognitive dissonance' (Festinger, 1957) for the punters so they remain con-vinced (sic) they are attending of their own volition despite all the obstacles placed in their way. Whether they be in the initial procurement of online tickets, the bogus ticket availability following the weekly 'sold out' status, the winding cattle market queues for the ticketed and ticketless, the unaccommodating behaviour of the Mickey Mouse-eared staff, the acquisition of the 'happy face' programme from a burnt out ice-cream van, or the demand for the obligatory 'I'm an imbecile' black helium balloons – an impression of contempt is ever present.

Necrophilous in theme, Dismaland unapologetically displays its wares, and the fervent public consumption is as much a voyeuristic appeal drawing us toward all things deathly as it is a celebration of rebellious creativity and the right to protest. In considering Von Hentig's (1964) and Fromm's (1973) work on the necrophilous personality in understanding human destructiveness and Freud's (1930/1961) theory of 'Thanatos' – the death drive/instinct, it is possible to identify the psychological mechanisms in play.

To the extent it is known at all, the popular interpretation of necrophilous interest is of a paraphilia, that is, a sexual acting out with corpses often by those with opportunity (e.g. morticians and murderers). However the benign sexual/non-sexual aspects permeate society and are more prevalent than is often acknowledged and understood. This refers to a broader passion toward the destruction of life and an attraction to all that is dead, decayed/ing, putrid and sickly and the purely mechanical (Fromm, 1973; Von Hentig, 1964), whether inanimate objects, body parts, internal organs or skeletal remains.

Those who are drawn to such negativity, particularly in the context of necrophilous personality, psychologically retreat to a non-threatening place with safety and certainty where there can be no risk and only total control (Boon, 2016), effectively from the womb to the tomb (Cooper & Epperson, 2008). Hence such individuals can find comfort, indulgence and satiation in an involvement in and/or exposure to a breadth of darker interests. These may comprise music resembling 'nothingness' (e.g. death/doom metal), movies portraying deathly themes and detailing explicit 'point of death' scenarios (e.g. *ABCs of Death*, *Hostel*, *Kill Bill* and *Perfume*), fashion designs or artwork containing overt references to death or decay. Such persons often exhibit a penchant for scatological language, dark humour and in-kind accoutrements – tattoos, clothing, cars, leathered furniture, etc. – displaying their underlying disposition.

The thematic content of the rusting, dilapidated attractions and art at Dismaland illuminate necrophilous content across various planes. Although somewhat disguised within a humorous ambiance, what is revealed include a large painting of a disembowelled man entitled 'Grey', the Grim Reaper doing the 'dance of death' driving a fairground dodgem car spinning to 'Stayin' Alive', the demise of Cinderella observed by the predatory paparazzi, a unicorn in formaldehyde, a woman being attacked by seagulls and a toilet escaping killer whale diving into the sanctuary of a paddling pool. Further are anonymous seaside portraits devoid of human identity, merry-go-round horses turned into lasagne or intimately skeletonised, a beach ball precariously suspended in air over a sea of razor-sharp kitchen knives entitled 'The fragility of love' and a portrait resembling Chaplin showing the demolition of the individual via destruction, literally clawing the face and eviscerating its life blood.

Further gloom and hopelessness can be reaped from the political messages and anti-capitalist/anarchistic themes. These reference variously ongoing global conflicts, terrorism, the plight of refugees migrating to Europe, environmental crises including climate change, genetic animal mutation experimentation, nuclear weapons, the control of the surveillance/police state along with a Soviet-style 'Comrades Advice Bureau'.

In toto, the craze of Dismaland provides Banksy et al.'s followers with an acceptable outlet for the thought-provoking consumption and expression of negativity, together with the warm and fuzzy comfort derived from the equal sharing of misery.

I **Reviewed by Lynsey Gozna** *who is a forensic psychologist at the University of Lincoln and the University of Nottingham and* **Julian Boon** *who is a forensic psychologist at the University of Leicester*

References

Asch, S.E. (1955). Opinions and social pressure. *Scientific American, 193*(5), 31–35.

Bikhchandani, S., Hirshleifer, D. & Welch, I. (1992). A theory of fads, fashion, custom, and cultural change as informational cascades. *Journal of Political Economy, 100*, 992–1026

Boon, J.C.W. (2016). The aetiology and nature of necrophiliac offending. In E. Hickey, A. Aggrawal & L. Mellor (Eds.) *Necrophilia: A global anthology*. San Diego, CA: Cognella.

Cooper, T.D. & Epperson, C.K. (2008). *Evil: Satan, sin and psychology*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Freud, S. (1961). *Civilization and its discontents* (J. Strachey, Trans. and Ed.). New York: W.W. Norton. (Original work published 1930)

Fromm, E. (1973). *The anatomy of human destructiveness*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Von Hentig, H. (1964). *Der nekrotrope Mensch* [The necrophile man]: *Vom Totenglauben zur morbiden Totennähe*. Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke.

Gallows humour

Hangmen
Royal Court Theatre

Martin McDonagh has spent the last 10 years writing screenplays, notably the acerbic and foul-mouthed *In Bruges* (2008), and *Seven Psychopaths* (2012). Now he returns to where he started, with a new play, *Hangmen*.

The action mainly takes place in 1965, on the eve of the abolition of hanging. Harry Wade (David Morrisey) has been forced to retire from a career in execution, where he was less than ably assisted by Syd (Reece Shearsmith). To Harry's chagrin, he is now running a grubby pub in Oldham. Commanding yet pompous in his dickie-bow, he is master of this significantly reduced domain, with a coterie of hangers-on who are only there for the beer. Into this backwater strides Mooney (Johnny Flynn), a cocky cockney who unbelievably wants to rent a room above the pub. He's up to something, but what?

It's a delight to watch what unfolds. The one-liners come thick and fast – Harry lecturing about why hanging is the best form of execution ('The guillotine's messy, and French') and characters are swiftly developed (Mooney's insistence that he is only 'vaguely menacing'). But as the action becomes darker, the laughing becomes more horrified. The second act is pure Joe Orton: there's an authentic 1960s vibe, pivotal roles for domestic props (a chair and a curtain feature heavily), and a deeply unpleasant undertone which could lead anywhere.

It's perhaps this anticipation of where we might be going that leads to the loudest laughs when the truth is revealed – an example of the evolutionary perspective on humour developed by Hurley, Dennett and Adams in their 2011 book *Inside Jokes* (see the special edition on laughter for this and more http://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-26/edition-4). If humour is your area of interest, *Hangmen* offers a great opportunity for some field work. For the rest of us, it's just a brilliant night out.

I *Royal Court Theatre, London until October 2015, and then Wyndham's Theatre, London from 1 December 2015 to 5 March 2016* **Reviewed by Kate Johnstone** *who is Associate Editor (Reviews)*

Daggers of the Mind

Macbeth
Justin Kurzel (Director)

I am in two minds about the new film version of *Macbeth*, directed by Justin Kurzel. Did I like it? I certainly enjoyed it, if that is the right term for spending 90 minutes watching scenes of battle and murder, with no shortage of blood and untrustworthiness. There is good acting, camera work (the wobbly hand of the modern cameraman is effective), and the dark and brooding scenes of moorland and mountain provide an appropriate backdrop. There is also a coherent storyline – perhaps a little too coherent – and complex trauma is well represented in both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

Film-makers should alter storylines, but I am not sure that introducing a dead baby for the Macbeth family works. It gave the film an explicitness that the play doesn't have (explicitness being a problem of modernity). The start shows the Macbeths distraught at the funeral of their young – and only – child. There is then a battle scene, with close-ups of frightened and traumatised faces, strong men and young boys, long swords and lots of hacking the enemy to pieces.

So within a few minutes of the start of the film we have a good reason for (a) both Macbeths to be traumatised through the loss of their child and (b) Macbeth to be traumatised and brutalised by war.

Accept the rationale for the introduction of the baby and the film works. When Macbeth meets Duncan we see the trauma of recent battle on his face. When the possibility of the succession to the throne arises we see Lady Macbeth in her usual role as originator and Macbeth as perpetrator of the death of Duncan. We see the decline of Macbeth's mental health as he fights between doing what his wife wants and trying to control himself.

Macbeth's trauma is evident. He is represented as strong, weak, decisive, indecisive – i.e. normal. He has flashbacks and intrusive thoughts – common symptoms of our modern disorder, PTSD. He has visions (of witches, of people he has killed), he makes murder look easy in the killing of Duncan, though that presumably derives from being brutalised. Without his wife's influence he might have continued to be a loyal subject of Duncan, and this debate is evident throughout.

I remain undecided regarding the baby. I was unconvinced by Macbeth's village being placed on an evident wooden platform on a moor, in a place that would not sustain human life, there being no room for animals or crops (the city person's fallacy, not realising that food is grown). I was also unconvinced by the ending (don't worry, I won't give it away), which is rather drawn out. Why do our film heroes always take so long to die? (Sorry, I gave it away)

This Macbeth demonstrates the complexity of problems faced by traumatised people. Trauma is not about a single isolated incident. It is an interaction between things that happen to people, interactions with people, the social world generally and the culture in which we live. This is well represented in the film.

I **Reviewed by Dr Nigel Hunt** *who is Associate Professor, Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences, University of Nottingham. He will be speaking at a British Psychological Society event on Wednesday 18 November to commemorate the centenary of C.S. Myers' shell shock article in* The Lancet. *For more information and to book, see www.bps.org.uk/news/cambridge-event-mark-centenary-'shell-shock'*

It's not you'

Invisible Chains: Overcoming Coercive Control In Your Intimate Relationship
Lisa Aronson Fontes

'Invisible chains' tether us to family, jobs and home. This well-structured book describes how coercive control creates 'invisible chains' within intimate relationships. It defines coercive control via behaviours, such as degrading, micromanaging, abusing, punishing, stalking and isolating. It then uses a formulatory approach to highlight the life-long factors that might lead to the application or acceptance of coercive control.

The book's outstanding feature is its nurturing of the reader through a journey of understanding, encouraging them to consider how perhaps seemingly innocuous strands of (an)other's behaviour creates a rope binding them into a coerced existence. Readers' experiences are validated through relevant sections and examples, so victims can identify that 'it's not me', generally an implausible hypothesis when embroiled in an abusive relationship. The journey then extends into ending or remaining within the relationship, setting realistic targets for recovery and accepting future challenges – that is, responding within a new relationship.

It is expertly inclusive, with sections for LGBT and teenagers and uses empowering jargon-free language to aid victims to regain perspective. These strengths support its aim as a validating, informative self-help guide. The author's broad clinical (and personal) experiences of coercive control within intimate relationships no doubt contribute to the readable style and the inclusion of a chapter on helping others, with pertinent questions for therapists to pose to themselves and patients.

The main drawback for me was the lack of academic referencing, but this is acceptable for a self-help guide. Beyond this, however, it lacked definition. Given that it mentions US laws against coercive control and there are similar pending UK law reforms, which have no doubt influenced the timing of this book, it could easily have incorporated some case law or more detailed case studies. These were frustratingly lacking.

Having said that, I found the book a fantastic starting point in preparation for these changes and would definitely recommend it to those dealing with domestic abuse and conflict – victims, friends, therapists, police and lawyers.

I *Guilford Press; 2015; Pb £9.99*
Reviewed by Dr Lorraine Childs *who is Consultant Clinical Psychologist at St Andrew's Hospital, Northampton*

Tackling trauma

The Therapeutic 'Aha!' 10 Strategies for Getting Your Clients Unstuck
Courtney Armstrong

At first glance the book seems light-hearted, with its title promising an easy-to-read quick reference'. However, on closer examination there is much research evidence provided, based in neuropsychology and its links to understanding how traumatised clients could struggle. The writer aims to offer strategies not only to reach the client effectively and build a secure attachment relationship, but also to move the client to a position where the trauma is resolved.

We are guided through the emotional brain and its seven primary emotional systems (drawn from Panksepp & Biven, 2012), said to lie at the basis of all primary reactions, which often override conscious thinking. By learning to understand which emotional systems were in play, the therapist was said to be better able to understand the client's motivations as related to traumatic events. The writer also encourages a sensitive and collaborative therapy style and the use of meaningful goals within therapy (akin to value-based exploration as used in acceptance and commitment therapy).

Clients are said to be stuck in behaviours that at an earlier time had a protective function but at present could be maladaptive and blocking. The therapist's role is to access and explore these root memories in order to bring about the favoured behaviour change. The writer proposes a method of recalling and reconsolidating traumatic memories in a simple five-step plan. However, use of these five steps seems to belie the necessary study and experience required to safely work with traumatised individuals.

The writer also offers ideas for replacing traumatic images with a compassionate image, and calls on the use of music, metaphor and mindfulness to support clients through emotional change. Information regarding these additional strategies, however useful, remained limited, though extra work sheets and 'how to' guides are available via an internet link provided in the book.

A must-read for anyone contemplating working with trauma but equally users of the methods proposed could benefit from extensive further reading to fully grasp all detail and skills required.

I *Norton; 2015; Hb £18.99*
Reviewed by Dr Levina Smook *who is Principal Counselling Psychologist, Clinical Health Psychology, Dudley*

For more reviews, including *The Secret Footballer: Access All Areas* (with exclusive extract), see thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/reviews