

THE UNIVERSITY of York

PsychOut

# The Psychology of Colour: Can colour really affect our mood?

## PLUS:

Psychistory  
Hollywood Fauxmance  
Carl Jung  
Evolutionary Psychology  
An Interview with Julian Oldmeadow

May 2009  
Issue 1



## Features:

Psychistory:- A brief introduction to what psychology was and is now becoming	4
Alcohol and the Brain	6
The Psychology of Colour	7
Darwin's 'Blind Date': How evolution has shaped our sexual strategies	9
Educational Psychology	10

## Classical Psychology:

Carl Jung and Modern Psychology	11
---------------------------------	----

## Pop Psychology:

Hollywood Fauxmance	13
---------------------	----

## Psych Soc:

Meet the New Psych Soc	15
Is Psychology a Science	16

## Interview:

Julian Oldmeadow	17
------------------	----

## **Editors Letter:**

*Welcome! To the first issue of PsychOut, the brand new magazine that is written for students by students! The aim of this magazine is simply to allow Psychology students to explore their areas of interest in an informal and interesting way! If you would like to get involved or have any comments (positive or negative!) or if there is anything you would like to see in here that isn't currently, then drop me an email on [gr523@york.ac.uk](mailto:gr523@york.ac.uk)*

*Also any references cited in this issue can be found at [www.yusu.org/psychsoc/psychout!!](http://www.yusu.org/psychsoc/psychout!!)*

*Enjoy!*

*The PsychOut Team*

# Meet the Team

**I'd like to introduce you to our amazing team of writers for this issue and also to thank them for all their hard work!!  
If you'd like to get involved in the next issue of PsychOut and see your name (and face) up in lights then drop me a email at [gr523@york.ac.uk](mailto:gr523@york.ac.uk) or search for our Facebook group!!**



Robert Stuart, Year 2. Interested in Social Psychology, especially the more culturally relevant aspects such as Body Image Perception and Relationships.



Hi, I'm Adele and I'm in my second year. As well as other areas of psychology, I am interested in cognitive neuroscience especially the effects brain damage has on particular cognitive functions.



Hi, my name is Jo Hartley and I'm currently in my second year! My main interests are within the neuroscience and biological areas, along with psychopathology and social psychology.



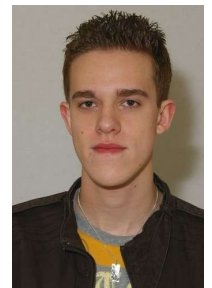
Hi! I'm Hannah Belcher, I'm in my second year of study and my main interest areas within Psychology are: Evolutionary and Comparative Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Psychology of Music and Freud! I also produced all the graphics for this issue!!



Hey, I'm Angela Kirby, I'm currently in my first year and I'm particularly interested in Social Psychology.



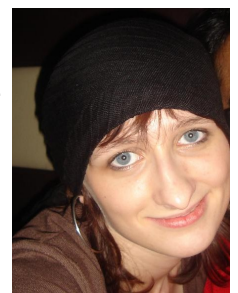
Hello, I'm Ivan Alvarez, and I'm a second year student. My interests are in neuroscience and neuropsychology, especially in brain imaging techniques



Hi, I'm Matt, a second year psych student with a particular interest in developmental psychology and educational psychology hence I'm hoping to become an educational psychologist after graduation.



Hi I'm Grace! I'm a first year with particular interests in perception on cognitive neuroscience!



Klaudia Mitura- I am a second year psychology student who besides having deep love in psychology is also devoted to painting and writing. In the future I hope to become an occupational psychologist.





# Features

***This is our features section; where large topics in Psychology will be discussed! If you'd like to see a topic in here which isn't let us know either by a message on the Facebook page or by emailing; gr523@york.ac.uk***

## **Psychistory:- A brief introduction to what psychology was and is now becoming.**

By Matthew Jenkinson

The science and understanding of the mind, more commonly known as psychology. Has been a point of interest arguably from the early Greeks with Aristotle documenting different versions of personality and consequent effects in "*The Nicomachean Ethics*" as well as providing pleasure and courage definitions (cited in Larsen and Buss, 2008). However much psychological work was based in the field of philosophy, as seen in the work of René Descartes within the 17<sup>th</sup> century who first regarded the mind and brain as separate and created the popular phrase, "I think, therefore I am," indicating the brain was the centre of what humans do and are (cited in Carlson et al, 2007).

Although humans seem to have always grasped certain aspects of the basic psychological principles such as logic and animism. Modern psychology and the inclusion of scientific thought, became prominent in the late 1800's with Wilhelm Wundt setting up the first scientific laboratory and publishing the first psychological textbook in 1874; known as the "*Principles of Physiological Psychology*".

This made way for structuralism (structure of the mind built from sensations and consciousness) with the influence of Ed-

ward Tichener, a student of Wundt's. However with the disadvantage of introspection (looking within) this theory failed. Although by this point, psychology had already advanced from German groundings into America and the rest of Europe and the creation of functionalism (concerned with conscious activity i.e. perceptions) and direct observation by William James had begun.

The one major downfall of introspection was that it had no basis in private internal thoughts and relied solely on external actions. Regardless functionalism has had a major influence on modern psychology, as psychologists such as Thorndike, Watson and Nobel Peace Prize winner Pavlov helped to form the basis of behaviourism.

Behaviourism has two basic principles based on the law of effect (consequences of a behaviour effect our likelihood of repetition) in the form of classical conditioning



**A selection of famous psychologists**

(stimulus-response theories directly influencing involuntary behaviours and expectations) and operant conditioning (the effects of positive and negative reinforcement on voluntary behaviours).

Contemporary research into social aspects of psychology still uses these concepts to research and indeed treat disorders. Sometimes controversially. One such example of this is aversion treatment of alcoholism, homosexuality and developmental disorders such as aggression.



**Tools used in lobotomies**

This technique uses punishment against the behaviour through electric shocks (usually used in homosexuality) and vomit-inducing medications in alcoholic drinks for alcoholism. This technique is used less nowadays as legal and moral controversies have arisen, most prominently whether or not the rewards outweigh the costs of treatment as effects of treatment have been seen to decline after treatment (cited in Gleitman et al, 1999).

However, psychological treatments have become more humane over time. As seen with the once frequent use of lobotomies, a form of psychosurgery, within the 1930s to the 1950s used for disorders such as schizophrenia and even depression. The decline in recent years is mainly due to the great risks and sometimes poor effects.

Modern psychology is more humane because of the technological revolution, which has created structural and functional imaging techniques including fMRI and MEG. These have made understanding the brain much more efficient than previous lesioning techniques.

Furthermore, modern psychology as we

know it does not, in general, have much time for probably one of the most popular culture psychologists, Sigmund Freud. Whose theory incorporated repression and unconscious processes still has a major impact on modern psychiatry; in contrast to the more accepted contemporary view of biological processes such as genetics, evolution and drugs. Freud believed in instinctual properties of personality hence treatment of disorders lie in situations pushed into the subconscious by defence mechanisms and fixations at different stages of life yet this theory cannot be falsified hence with modern psychology recently being classified officially as a science such theories have been left sidelined.



**In future years neuroimaging techniques will allow us to examine the functions of brain areas**

So where are we today? As mentioned, psychology was once a much narrowed topic based mainly in philosophy yet today psychology has many branches and can arguably be said to have an influence in every part of life. Behaviourist and cognitive psychologists are now generally seen to be the largest cited theorists (cited in Carlson et al, 2008) however as mentioned Freud's theory still remains to be one of the most well known psychologists of the twentieth century.

Finally with the recent addition of cognitive neuroscience techniques, psychology seems to be advancing further into the biological domain than ever before with the understanding of the structure and functions of the brain becoming more detailed than ever before.

# Alcohol and the brain

By Adele Goman

Alcohol plays a large role in many social situations across the globe, however many people abuse alcohol which, among other effects, can have detrimental consequences on the structure and function of the brain.

## Alcohol and brain structure

During adolescence the brain is still developing therefore, certain areas may be more vulnerable to the effects of alcohol. Indeed De Bellis, Clark, Beers, Soloff, Boring, Hall et al (2000) compared the brain structure of adolescents with **adolescent-onset alcohol use disorder** with healthy matched controls. They found that both left and right hippocampi were significantly smaller in the adolescents who abused alcohol (Figure 1). However it is important to consider the possibility that those who abused alcohol may have had smaller hippocampi beforehand, although a positive correlation between age of onset and size of hippocampi was found, whereby individuals with younger onset ages had smaller hippocampi.

Furthermore, Pfefferbaum, Sullivan, Rosenbloom, Mathalon and Lim (1998) analysed the brain structure in non-alcoholic controls and alcoholic men while undergoing treatment and again approximately five years later in order to assess the impact of alcohol while controlling for normal aging. They found that grey matter in the anterior superior temporal cortex decreased significantly faster in alcoholic patients compared with the controls. It was also possible to predict the total amount of grey matter loss from the amount of alcohol consumed, especially for the prefrontal and frontal regions.

This finding supports the notion that alcohol can influence the structure of the brain.



Figure 1. Differences in hippocampal size in participants with adolescent-onset alcohol use disorder and control subjects found by De Bellis et al (2000).

## Alcohol, gender and the brain

It has been found that the detrimental effects alcohol has on the body can occur more rapidly in women than men (Ashley, Olin, le Riche, Kornaczewski, Schmidt & Rankin, 1977). The effect alcohol has on the brains of both males and females has been investigated by Hommer, Momenan, Kaiser and Rawlings (2003) who compared differences in brain volume between male and female **alcohol dependent** and control individuals. It was found that although the alcohol dependent individuals had smaller grey and white matter than same sex controls, brain volume differences between alcoholic women and non-alcoholic women were significantly greater than the differences found between alcoholic and non-alcoholic men. Therefore suggesting that female brains are more vulnerable to the detrimental effects of alcohol.

## Alcohol and memory

Due to the impact alcohol has on the structures of the brain, it can only be expected that some of the functions served by those areas are going to be affected. One cognitive function affected by alcohol is memory.

Although many people would consider alcohol to impair memory performance, alcohol has in fact been shown to aid memory of material learnt prior to consumption in a post trial recall task (Moulton, Petros, Apostol Park, Ronning, King et al, 2005). One explanation for this is due to reduced interference (Mueller, Lisman & Spear, 1983, cited in Moulton et al, 2005). This theory suggests that fewer memories are stored during the intoxication period therefore there is less to interfere with the previously stored memory.

However, chronic alcohol abuse can sometimes lead to **Korsakoff's syndrome** resulting in profound anterograde amnesia with some retrograde amnesia (Kopelman, Guerrini & Marshall, 2009) with some alcohol abusers being genetically predisposed to develop this syndrome (Guerrini, Thomson, Cook, McQuillin, Sharma, Kopelman et al, 2005, cited

in Kopelman et al, 2009). Although several areas are damaged in Korsakoff patients, the precise areas of the brain critical to the profound memory loss exhibited is debated (see Kopelman et al, 2009).

### Definitions:

**Korsakoff's syndrome:** Anterograde amnesia caused from thiamine deficiency associated with excessive alcohol abuse.

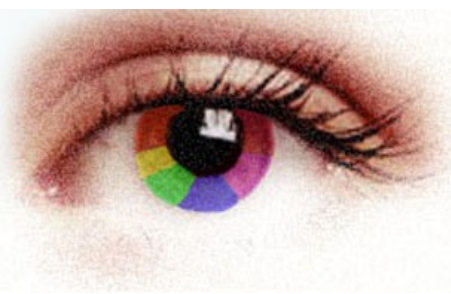
**Alcohol dependence:** Is diagnosed using the DSM-IV-TR

**Adolescent-onset alcohol use disorder:** Alcohol dependence or abuse beginning during adolescence.

## The Psychology of Colour

By Jo Hartley

Colour is largely an abstract concept that we individually perceive in very different ways; one person may associate yellow with happiness and another with sorrow in accordance with our experiences. However, it is fair to say we are all subject to certain prejudices. One example of this is the distinction between blue



**Colour perception is a subjective concept**

and pink, pink being seen as feminine and blue being more masculine. Further, is the learnt association that red means stop and green means go, a universal association that in driving becomes part of our sub-conscious. However, is it true to say that colour can affect us

psychologically? Is the idea that certain colours induce certain moods valid and can ranges of the spectrum affect our mental states in different ways?

Wexner (1954) explored the idea of the effect of colour inducing mood, stating that different wavelengths affect us in different ways. He argued that red is a stimulating and exciting colour, while blue is soothing and comforting and orange disturbing. Throughout history, many people have used such associations of colour to their own advantage. For example, the belief that the colour pink can actively suppress anger through its tranquilising nature, preventing the heart from beating fast. This was thus used in the oppositions changing rooms within football grounds to make players more passive and also on the cell walls of particularly aggressive inmates.



A common area of interest for colour psychologists is the biological effect of the colour red. It is widely believed that red increases arousal and brain activity, an idea that was tested by Wolfson (2000) on the use of computer games, either using a blue or a red background.



**The colour red is an interesting research area for some psychologists**

Wolfson found that when a red background was used, performance on the game rapidly peaked but then quickly deteriorated.

This pattern was also found in the player's heart rate, with the colour affecting the state of arousal throughout the game. A further study by Wilson (1966) examined the galvanic skin responses to red and green, finding that red induces higher levels of arousal. Such research led to the suggestion that increased arousal in relation to colour can lead to increased gambling, the reason behind why many companies adopt red lighting and décor within their arcades.

When discussing the psychology of colour, a brief mention has to be made to the extreme cases in which disorders of colour perception exist, one of the most interesting being synaesthesia. Synaesthesia is a condition most common in females with a rising precedence, probably due to an increase in understanding of the disorder. Often referred to as 'the mixing of senses' the disorder causes senses to be experienced together and in association, rather than as separate entities.

The most common form being 'colour-graphemic synaesthesia' explains how a sufferer experiences colour in response to different letters of the alphabet, commonly the letter 'A' being the colour red. Recent research

has found that lower case forms of letters are seen in the same colour but are perceived as being shinier (Ramachandran and Hubbard, 2000). Interestingly, it has been found that synaesthetic sufferers experience the same colour for each time for the same letter and so the pairings are not simply arbitrary.

However, pairings are not common to all sufferers. The issue of what causes synaesthesia is hotly debated with such beliefs as it being the effect of several genes interacting and also due to irregularities in the fusiform gyrus, with correlations being found between the intensity of the experience and the degree of connectivity of the white matter in this area.

A specific explanation is held for the colour-graphemic type, being arguably due to the proximity of the region used in letter processing and area V4 used in colour perception, with cross-activation occurring. Also, there is the proposed idea of disinhibited feedback, in which the later stages of processing affect earlier stages, thus explaining why users of the drug LSD experience the effects of synaesthesia while on a trip.

Whatever the reason may be for the synaesthetic experiences, it is clear the great impact that colour can have on psychology, whether it affects our mood, mental state or ability to learn words and remember musical chords in a sequence. The common beliefs and associations held by many, which may have started off as associations and have become a sub-conscious part of our everyday life, such as the example of the traffic lights, have become an increasingly important in our well-being, as shown when associations are reversed and the colour green comes to indicate stop, being shown to cause a dramatic increase in accidents, and thus indicating the importance of colour perception in relation to psychology.



# Darwin's 'Blind Date': How evolution has shaped our sexual strategies

By Hannah Belcher

Think Blind Date, three single contestants competing to win the affections of one quite arrogant fellow singleton of the opposite sex. Add a bit of Cilla Black having a "lorra lorra laughs" at their expense, and you have a perfect analogy of almost every living creature's mating strategy. Evolutionary Psychologists attempt to explain how our sexual habits and



**Is this the modern form of natural selection?**

mating strategies are a result of our evolutionary past. In Darwinian terms these can be explained as part of natural selection, whereby favourable heritable traits are increased in successive generations, or sexual selection, whereby certain traits improve an organism's reproductive opportunities. With some reluctance the time has come to wave goodbye to Freud's Oedipus complex and Penis Envy and embrace our inner monkey.

The problems faced by men and women are very different, and this is reflected in their sexual strategies. Women have less chances of reproducing and must nurture and care for their offspring. Men don't have this concern prior to the child's birth, but they do suffer from a lack of paternity confidence, i.e. is the child actually theirs? With this in mind leading psychologist David Buss put forth several hypotheses on the strategies of human mating, supported by a wide range of cross cultural research. Firstly he explains that as females must tackle the problem of ensuring her offspring are provided for, they tend to choose males who can provide resources and thus favour slightly older men with higher socio-economic statuses. Men on the other hand are

highly talented when it comes to spotting the most fertile females, and thus tend to go for younger women.

Although it should be noted that women make this job a lot easier for them. In Miller's book "The Mating Mind" (2001) it was found that strippers earned twice as much during ovulation compared to menstruation, a result of different hormones sent off during ovulation to entice a male 'victim' during the females most fertile period.

Secondly Buss explains how short term mating is more important for men, with males surprisingly enjoying more "one night stands" than women. When participants were confronted with a member of the opposite sex asking them "would you have sex with me", 75% of men said yes compared to 0% of women. Long term mating is far more important to women, as they require the resources of the male to support their offspring. The roles are completely



reversed in sea **Mating roles reversed!** horses, as the female transfers her unfertilized eggs to the male to develop and deliver, she can afford to be far more promiscuous than the males. Long term mating does have some benefits to the male though, and this is to ensure 100% paternity confidence; sadly Jeremy Kyle was not on hand with DNA tests for our ancestors.

But what about all those sexual behaviours which seem to defy the human mating strategy, such as rape or homosexuality? In his book "Evolution and the Big Questions" (2008), Stamos muses on several

possible innate explanations. In regards to rape some scientists believe it to be a by-product of the male's need for power, whilst others believe it to be a male short term mating strategy to increase reproductive success. Homosexuality on the other hand has a 0% of reproductive success, yet it is common among all animals. Research found that homosexuality in men was 50% due to genes; scientists even uncovered a "gay gene" among these males. Female lesbianism on the other hand appeared to have no genetic link and appeared to be en-

tirely down to the environment.

When it comes to our mating strategies it would seem that we are all just victims to our hormones and genes; there's nothing like a bit of science to kill the romance! But with modern life and technology pushing us further away from the life once known by our ancestors, will these natural instincts become redundant or will they simply adapt? Only time will tell.

## Educational Psychology

By Angela Kirby

Educational Psychology aims to help the development of individuals in social, emotional and academic situations. It involves working with children, carers and centres (especially schools) to give support, as well as continuous research.

Educational Psychologists identify and help people who need extra support, with a focus on children in school settings. They are often employed by local authorities. Individuals with special requirements, such as dyslexia or social difficulties, also need to be identified before they can access this help. For example, access to special training could reduce some difficulties caused by dyslexia. Another example is children with disruptive behaviour, who may benefit from schemes set up by Educational Psychologists, which can involve individual children or large groups. Also, negotiations with parents, teachers and carers may be useful in supporting children.

Some funding is available for postgraduate courses, but this varies. Courses are usually a mix of practical and theoretical learning. For a route into Educational Psychology, it's useful to:

- Obtain a 2:1 or above in a BPS accredited course or conversion course (to check, see the BPS website). In some cases a 2:2 may suf-

fice, but this depends on circumstances as courses can be competitive.

- Normally live in the UK, and be able to live in the UK for two years following graduation from the course

### What about work experience?

Any experience working with people, especially children, could be beneficial. Schools tend to be very appreciative of classroom volunteers. York Students In Schools (YSIS), is a great place to register, as they can arrange ten-week (or longer) placements at various schools in the area. Hundreds of students at York have completed placements in this way, and the consensus is that the work is enjoyable and rewarding. Alternatively, you could arrange a placement independently of YSIS, perhaps during holiday periods.

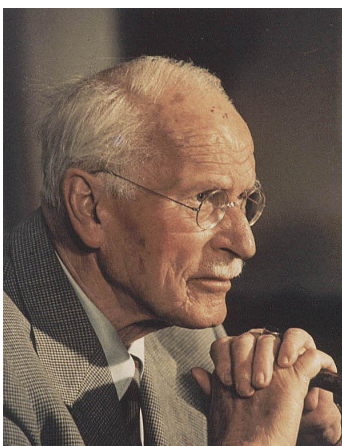
Work in almost any community setting is valuable, and there are countless volunteer projects and organisations to choose from. Some of these organisations ask for payments-it is not necessary to pay in order to gain experience, and there is plenty available. This kind of experience is likely to be useful in future careers which may seem unrelated even to Psychology, as it suggests to future employers that you are committed, organised and trustworthy.



**Welcome to our Classical Psychology section; in this section early theorists and practices within Psychology will be discussed because we don't want to forget where it all began!!**

## Carl Jung and Modern Psychology

By Ivan Alvarez



**Carl Jung (1875 – 1961)**

Carl G. Jung, founder of the school of analytical psychology is a man often associated with psychoanalysis and dubious claims at times bordering mysticism. Yet his work shows remarkable relevance for today's psychology, even if Jung himself did not fancy this idea: *"Anyone who wants to know the human psyche will learn next to nothing from experimental psychology"* (Jung, 1972, p. 409) is a harsh statement but it illustrates clearly that analytical psychology had a radically different objective from the behavioral approach of his time. Jung's primary concern was with the internal processes of the mind, the psyche. Ultimately, the objective was to identify the components of the psyche and explain how they interact – this is something modern day psychologists can easily relate to.

A key concept in Jung is the archetype, which can be described as a "innate universal psychic predisposition" (Stevens, 1990). In a nutshell, it is a series of mental blueprints

shared by all humankind that manifests in particular ways in different individuals. This might seem farfetched given that not only do they represent complex levels of information but also they must transmit through heredity in order to be present in all humans. Yet homologous positions are taken in modern psychology suggesting that the fear of snakes is inborn to us (Öhman & Mineka, 2001; Öhman & Mineka, 2003) and that we possess a universal module that allows us to acquire any language (Lidz & Gleitman, 2004).

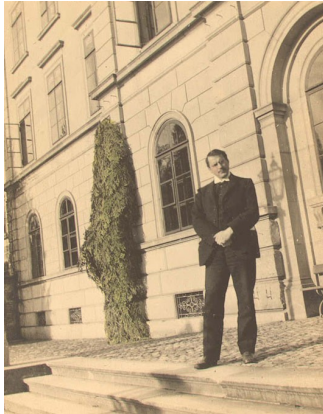
The later, is a particularly useful example: an archetype is a general mould, here the ability to acquire language, that is actualized in a given individual given his particularities, learning the grammar of Serbian for such is the fate of our exemplary Balkan dweller. It is the realization of archetypes that links Jung to modern psychology; even if the specificity was incorrect the concept of an inborn behavioural pattern that manifests depending on each individuals characteristics was revolutionary in its time. And



**Philemon— a wise spirit guide in Jung's theory**



we see it in other animals too, instinctive behavior such as feeding and reproduction carried out independent of experience. This can be seen as the activation of an intrinsic code of behavior, a shared archetype.

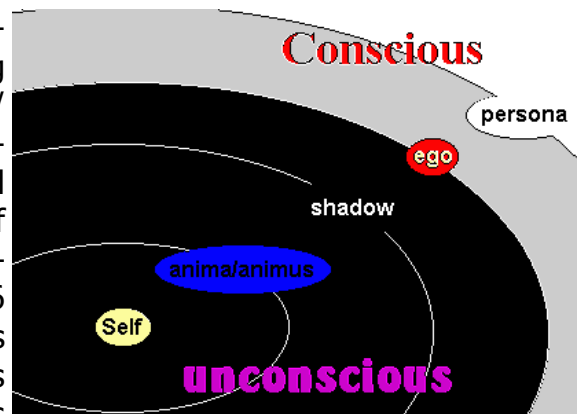


**Carl Jung in 1910**

Jung is perhaps most well known for his writings on psychological types. The resemblance to modern personality theory is noticeable. Jung proposes four function types: sensation, thinking, feeling and intuition which are modulated by an attitude to reality:

extroverted or introverted (Bastable, 2005). The methods used to derive the types are far removed from scientific endeavor: he used a collection of personal and patient's experiences as well as literary analysis and others. But surprisingly not only did Jung coin the extroverted/introverted terms, this dimension has been adopted by many current models of personality: Eysenck's three-factor model, Cattell's 16 factors model, Thurstone's big five and many others (Kline, 2000). Whatever this concept taps seems to be a defining feature in our personalities.

By the mysteries of the mind he always assumed that a logical, rational explanation underlined all he encountered. It is because of this flexible, rational view that Jung developed ideas that are tempting to dismiss as products of an unsupported, unscientific approach and yet they hold relevance in modern psychology. As the man himself said: *"If one does not understand a person, one tends to regard him as a fool"* (Jung, 1977, p. 125).



**Jung's theory of the mind**

There is extensive criticism regarding the methodology, validity and actual content of many of Jung's works. Most of his pivotal concepts were created out of individual inspiration and he seldom worried about supporting evidence (Fordham, 2002). Curiously, he also had a liking for activities falling outside his discipline of psychiatry like astrology, alchemy, tarot, eastern mysticism and the paranormal (Stevens, 1990). Yet as a thinker, a man capti-



**Pop Psychology refers to the culturally relevant aspects of psychology which serve to promote a healthier lifestyle and give people scientific insight into aspects of their everyday life.**

## Hollywood Fauxmance

By Robert Stuart

Robert Stuart investigates how Hollywood faux-mance has skewed our perceptions of romantic relationships.

First dates, generally uncomfortable social experiences, can plunge new depths of inadequacy when, adhering to the standard date formula of film-watching, an epic Hollywood romance or the newest sickly sweet rom-com is added to the equation, every inferiority heightened by the contrast between what's happening on screen and what's happening between two near strangers in a dank, dark cinema. Similarly in long term relationships, where the initial 'spark' has faded to a mere glow, the promise of never ending romantic fireworks in relationships that Hollywood propagates may act as a kick whilst you're down.

So, why is Hollywood to blame for our skewed perceptions? Thibaut and Kelly's interdependence theory of relationships states that each of us has an idiosyncratic comparison level which acts as our 'yardstick' of relationship satisfaction; it states what reward to cost ratio we expect in our relationships. This com-

parison level is mainly affected by previous relationships; however it can also be altered vicariously and this is where Hollywood may be to blame. It's adjusted our comparison level in a detrimental way. It's set the bar too high.



**Not all relationships have fairy tale endings!**

Hollywood makes love look easy and as a result we expect relationships to be of little 'cost' to us. Moreover Hollywood, and celebrity culture, has skewed our views on what constitute rewards. As celebrities have enough money to invest in marriage-related assets (e.g. perfect homes, perfect holidays) it makes their relationships easier, thus it has also affected our views of what conventional rewards are in relationships.

The Hollywood style of marriage where couples form on the basis of choice and after falling in love is actually a relatively new concept that is only fully prevalent in Western cultures. Gupta and Singh (1982) conducted a ten year study which compared arranged marriages with marriages borne out of choice. Surprisingly, when rating marital happiness, the arranged marriage couples shared a steady

increase in love, whereas most of the non-arranged couples experienced a decrease in romantic feelings and marital happiness. Furthermore, just to add salt to the wound, couples who divorced during the ten years weren't included in the data (just think about their marital satisfaction ratings!). So as sad as it sounds, perhaps Elizabeth Bennet would have been happier with Mr Collins rather than Darcy.

The problem is that normal relationships do not make good entertainment. Sternberg's theory of love suggests that it is a triangle formed of passion, intimacy and commitment. Passion is the drive that leads to romantic attachment but in most relationships it starts to wane, leaving behind only commitment and intimacy which do form a solid relationship but one that is more akin to friendship.

It is often argued that the 'love drug', amphetaminephenylethylamine (PEA), is the biological underpinning of passionate love; it is released in the first stage of relationship formation and can make you feel euphoric and 'drugged'. However the brain tends to habituate to its effects after about 6-18 months and the driving force behind passion dissipates. During this 'doped up' period, relationship bonds are known as romantic love. Hollywood (and any other outlet of fantasy) perpetuates the myth that if you're not in 'romantic love', your relationship is failing. However, it is actually a natural progression for 'romantic love' to become 'companionate love'.



**Could it be possible to create 'love' using drugs?**

The biology behind relationships helps to explain why divorcing couples often feel a pro-

found sadness at leaving their partner; the spark may be gone, but their intimacy and commitment to each other is hard to walk away from.



**Not all relationships end well...**

In days of yore relationships simply served to persuade couples to stay together long enough to give their children a good shot at making it to adulthood. Now partners are expected to be lovers, friends, sex machines and part time therapists and the marriage bond represents the deepest, most intimate and perfect relationship two people can share. Add a sprinkle of Hollywood glamour to that mix and there's no surprise that many of us come up short. The best thing we could do for our relationships is to appreciate them for what they really are and disassociate them from that shiny, one-and-a-half hour Hollywood veneer.





***Welcome to the Psych Soc section, here you will find everything that is going on within the best society at York! From academic talks to the latest in a long line of nights out!!***

## **New Year, new Psych Soc!**

We thought we'd introduce you to the brand new Psych Soc committee members from the elections in Term 2.

However, not all the spots were filled so another election will be being held in Term 3 to fill the following spots:

- Chair
- Secretary
- Welfare Officer
- Treasurer

So why not come along and run for a position and have your say about what happens within the department?!



### **Social Secs:**

Elliot Smith and Cindy Prescott  
Meet the masterminds behind the brilliant events which were held at the end of Term 2!

### **Academic Officer:**

Marion Wong  
Who recently organised the tour of YNiC



**Press and  
Publicity:**  
Sally Ngo



### **Ordinary Members:**

Grace Rice and Robert Stuart



# Is Psychology a Science?

By Grace Rice

Last term the Psych Soc hosted one of their many academic events in the form of a debate aiming to answer the question: Is Psychology a Science?

Hosted by Dr. Julian Oldmeadow (who appears in our very first interview on Page 17). Here is a round up of the main points which were raised...

1. What **IS** science? Do we use the definition of having a falsifiable hypothesis? Or is science simply a way of explaining something scientifically as opposed to philosophically?
2. The definition of what science is was seen to be different between different people. This could be because of what we have been conditioned to believe science is from an early age and being brought up learning about biology, chemistry and physics.
3. Once this was overcome the differences between the different types of science was discussed and the point of some having more prestige than others was raised.
4. This led to the discussion of the differences in prestige taken by certain branches of Psychology; for example neuroscience is seen to be more scientific compared to social psychology because of the use of neuroimaging techniques
5. The idea of science being defined as the type of degree being studied (BA or BSc) was quickly disregarded!!
6. The question whether Psychology actually fit into this scientific model was raised and a brief discussion was held on



**Is this what science is all about?**

the merits of the scientific model in measuring certain aspects of human behaviour

7. The idea of using the scientific model within Psychology was then discussed. The idea of being able to find the causes and consequences of all types of human behaviour was brought up– this then led to the question: should this be the true aim of Psychology? Or by doing this would it take out the importance of such human emotions such as love or religion or art? Would we want to live in a world where every single behaviour could be accounted for by certain chemicals within the brain? And would this be ethically correct?

Considering the above points, do you believe that Psychology is a science because of the scientific approach of testing a falsifiable hypothesis? And should the true aim of Psychology be to reduce all human behaviours to certain chemical reactions??

Let us know your thoughts on this debate and you may get your responses published in the next issue of PsychOut!!

Remember to keep a look out for any upcoming academic and social events held by the PsychSoc in Term 3. Do this by checking the PsychSoc Facebook group for regular updates or check their YUSU website at: [www.yusu.org/psychsoc](http://www.yusu.org/psychsoc)





***Would you like to know more about our staff in Psychology Department than their e-mail address and psychology field? If yes, then become a regular reader of our INTERVIEW section! In each issue, we will interview a guest who will tell us about their attitude towards psychology, current research and provide students with success tips.***

In this issue, our resident interviewer, Klaudia Mitura meets Dr Julian Oldmeadow, a social psychologist who became a lecturer and researcher at the University of York in 2008.

### **For me psychology is.....**

A challenge, a reward, exciting, boring, depressing, hopeful. Like anything, it is full of ups and downs. Of course, psychology for me is a career, but it blends with the rest of one's life in ways that many other careers don't, even if it feels at times to be preoccupied with rats and reaction times.



### **Why did you choose psychology as a career?**

When I was doing my A-level equivalent in Australia, those of us wanting to on to university had to fill in a form listing courses and unis we wanted. I couldn't think of any. One day I passed a table that had a psychology textbook on it, and I flipped it open to a random page. I read a paragraph about Freud's defense mechanisms and thought "that sounds interesting". So I put psychology at La Trobe as my first choice, and left the rest blank. Luckily I got in, and the next year I began my undergraduate degree.

Throughout the first four years I was mainly interested in the more 'natural science' side of psychology—neuropsychology and abnormal psychology. At the same time I worked as a research assistant at a medical lab doing research on diabetes. I continued on this track up to and including my Masters,. But by the end of that I was fed up and disheartened with this type of research, particularly the way animals were treated. So I quit my job and approached a professor to ask if I could do a PhD in social psychology. I wanted psychology to be more humanly meaningful, and if I was going to do experiments, they would be on people not rats.



## **How did you develop your career in psychology?**

My first real break was landing a post doctoral position at the University of Exeter. I moved over to the UK in 2004 and spent two and half years working in the psychology department. Post docs are great because they allow you to focus on research without being bogged down in teaching, and this is critical for getting a secure position in a good department. Another important element was establishing collaborations with well-known researchers. I've learned a lot from working with excellent senior academics.

## **Tell us about your research area...**

I'm a social psychologist, which means I'm interested in questions about how the self, identity, and relationships are shaped by and help to shape broader social contexts such as groups, society, and culture. More specifically, I'm an experimental social psychologist which means I try to answer, or at least explore, these questions through scientific experimentation. My main research at the moment looks at how stereotypes form, what functions they serve, and how they affect our perceptions, identities and behavior.

## **How did you become lecturer and researcher at University of York?**

As my post doctoral position at Exeter was coming to an end, I faced a tough decision whether to return to Australia. I had been offered a good job at the Australian National University working with one of my main influences and a highly respected social psychologist. At the same time I was enjoying life in the UK. I got a temporary lectureship at Cambridge so moved there for two years. It was a great experience working in such a historic university, but inevitably my contract ended and I needed to move on again. I was fortunate that York advertised a position just when I started looking.

## **What do you like best in University of York?**

It's a great department on many levels. Its obviously got a good reputation, but its also a well-organized, well-structured, research-active group. I've found the department to be very inclusive and supportive. The social psychology group is small relative to others, but this brings opportunities to be creative and develop with relatively few constraints.

I also like York itself. I loved living in Exeter, with its access to beaches, surf, rock climbing, mountain biking, and all the outdoors things I like to do. Cambridge was a bit impoverished in this regard, so its great to be back in a beautiful city that has all those things close by. Someone on Facebook commented the other day that I have a knack of finding jobs in beautiful English towns. I must admit I've been lucky on that front.

## **What advice would give to undergraduate students that are working to reach their goals?**

If you have goals, that's half the battle. In terms of psychology, one of the most important things is to read. Read as much as you can, but try to keep a distance and trust your own opinions and judgments. Psychology isn't rocket science. Also, be interested and get involved with things. Ask questions, join groups, team up. And of course, have fun.



# References

## **Psychistory: - A brief introduction into what psychology was and is now becoming, page 4**

- Bernstein, D. A., & Roy, E. J., & Srull, T. K., & Wickens, C. D. (1988). *Psychology*. Boston, MA: Houghton.
- Franzoi, S. L. (2006). *Social psychology: Fourth edition*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Gleitman, H., & Fridlund, A. J., & Reisberg, D. (1998). *Psychology: Fifth Edition*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Larsen, R. J., & Buss, D. M. (2008). *Personality psychology: Domains of knowledge about human nature..* New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

## **Alcohol and the Brain, page 6**

Ashley, M.J., Olin, J.S., le Riche, W.H., Kornaczewski, A., Schmidt, W., & Rankin, J.G. (1977). Morbidity in alcoholics. Evidence for accelerated development of physical disease in women. *Archives of internal medicine, 137*, 883-887

De Bellis, M.D., Clark, D. B., Beers, S. R., Soloff, P.H., Boring, A.M., Hall, J., Kersh, A, & Keshavan, M.S. (2000). Hippocampal Volume in Adolescent-Onset Alcohol Use Disorders. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 157*, 737-744.

Hommer, D. W., Momenan, R., Kaiser, E., & Rawlings, R.R. (2003). Evidence for a Gender-Related Effect of Alcoholism on Brain Volumes. *Focus, 1*, 171-178

Moulton, Petros, Apostal Park, Ronning, King et al, 2005).

Kopelman, M. D., Thomson, A. D., Guerrini, I., & Marshall, E. J. (2009). The Korsakoff Syndrome: Clinical Aspects, Psychology and Treatment. *Alcohol and Alcoholism, 44*, 148- 154.

Moulton, P. L., Petros, T. V., Apostal, K. J., Park, R. V., Ronning, E. A., King, B.M., & Penland, J. G. (2005). Alcohol-induced impairment and enhancement of memory: A test of the interference theory. *Physiology & Behavior, 85*, 240-245.

Pfefferbaum, A., Sullivan, S.V., Rosenbloom, M.J., Mathalon, D.H. & Lim, K.O. (1998). A Controlled Study of Cortical Gray Matter and Ventricular Changes in Alcoholic Men Over a 5-Year Interval. *Archives of general psychiatry, 55*, 905-912

## **The Psychology of Colour, page 7**

Ramachandran, V.S. & Hubbard, E.M. (2003). The phenomenology of Synaesthesia. *Journal of Consciousness studies*. 10 (8), 49-57.

Wilson, G. D. (1966). Arousal properties of red versus green. *Perceptual and motor skills*. 23, 947-949.

Wolfson, S. (2000). The effects of sound and colour on responses to a computer game. *Interacting with computers*. 13 (2).

## **Darwin's 'Blind date': How evolution has shaped our sexual strategies, page 9:**

Buss, D.M. (2003). *The Evolution of Desire: Strategies of human mating*. Basic Books. New York.

Stamos, D.N. (2008). *Evolution and the Big Questions: Sex, Race, Religion, and other Matters*. Blackwell Publishing. Oxford.

Miller, G. (2001). *The Mating Mind*. Vintage. New York.

## **Educational Psychology, page 10**

[www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk)

[www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/educational-psychology](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/educational-psychology)

## **Carl Jung and Modern Psychology, page 11**

Bastable, S. B. (2005). *Essentials of patient education*. Sudbury: Jones & Bartlett Publishers.

Fordham, F. (2002). *Introduction to Jung's psychology*. Retrieved from [http://www.cgjungpage.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=852&Itemid=41](http://www.cgjungpage.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=852&Itemid=41)

Jung, C. G. (1972). Two essays on analytical psychology. In G. Adler & R.F.C. Hull (Eds., Trans.), *Collected works of C.G. Jung volume 7*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jung, C. G. (1977). Mysterium Coniunctionis. In G. Adler & R.F.C. Hull (Eds.), *Collected works of C.G. Jung volume 14* (pp. 125). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kline, P. (2000). *A psychometrics primer*. London: Free Association Press.

Lidz, J., & Gleitman, L. R. (2004). Yes, we still need universal grammar. *Cognition*, 94(1), 85-93.

Öhman, A., & Mineka, S. (2001). Fears, phobias and preparedness: Towards an evolved module of fear and fear learning. *Psychological Review*, 108(3), 483-522.

Öhman, A., & Mineka, S. (2003). The malicious serpent: Snakes as a prototypical stimulus for an evolved module of fear. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 12(1), 5-9.

Stevens, A. (1990). *On Jung*. London: Taylor & Francis.

## **Hollywood Fauxmance, page 13**

Argyle, M. (1998). *Social relationships*. West Sussex: Wiley.

# Pictures:

## Meet The Team, Page 3

Adele Goman, <http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/psych/www/gfx/mugshots/ug07/ag561.jpg>, 28.04.09

Matthew Jenkinson, <http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/psych/www/gfx/mugshots/ug07/maj507.jpg>, 28.04.09

## Psychistory:- a brief introduction to what psychology was and is now becoming, page 4

Psychologists, <http://www.usq.edu.au/users/senior/images/faces2nr.gif>, 28.04.09

Tools, [www.sos.mo.gov/.../quest/images/tools.jpg](http://www.sos.mo.gov/.../quest/images/tools.jpg), 23.04.09

Brain, [http://www.copingskills4kids.net/images/brain\\_glow.jpg](http://www.copingskills4kids.net/images/brain_glow.jpg), 26.04.09

## The Psychology of Colour, page 7

Casino, [www.allposters.co.uk](http://www.allposters.co.uk), 23.04.09

Eye, [www.syn.sussex.ac.uk/x2005.html](http://www.syn.sussex.ac.uk/x2005.html), 29.04.09

## Darwin's 'Blind Date': How evolution has shaped our sexual strategies, page 9

Blind Date, [www.tvscoop.tv/2008/07/blind\\_date\\_why.html](http://www.tvscoop.tv/2008/07/blind_date_why.html), 28.04.09

Sea Horses Mating. [http://www.divegallery.com/seahorse\\_page18.htm](http://www.divegallery.com/seahorse_page18.htm). 18/04/09

## Hollywood Fauxmance, page 13

Divorce, [www.drlou.net/.../images/divorce.4854333.jpg](http://www.drlou.net/.../images/divorce.4854333.jpg), 29.04.09

## Psych Soc, page 16

Cindy Prescott, <http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/psych/www/gfx/mugshots/ug08/cjp505.jpg>, 28.04.09

Elliot Smith, <http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/psych/www/gfx/mugshots/ug08/ejs507.jpg>, 28.04.09

## Is Psychology a Science? Page 17

Test tubes, <http://www.grants.nih.gov/grants/partners/0108Nexus.htm>, 28.04.09



## **Interview, Page 18**

Julian Oldmeadow, <http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/psych/www/gfx/mugshots/psyc/jao501.jpg>, 28.04.09