

to hope for the best. We should anticipate the worst, make contingency plans, and attempt to manage, not ignore, risk.

A criticism of this book was that only one paragraph addressed issues related to violence and risk in women. Although Maden states this was 'beyond the scope of his book', and I recognise that much can be applied to risk management in women, we are still severely lacking in addressing the deficits in this area. This book is worth a read by novices in the risk arena but might not be as enlightening to those who are highly experienced in this field. However, it's written in an engaging way, and worth a read.

The second book, *Violence in Mental Health Settings*, is aimed at educating the reader in research into violence in mental health settings and does so very well. Perhaps more of a reference-style book to dip in and out of, but it is crammed with research and case studies. It includes brief but critical reviews of theoretical explanations of violence and places an important emphasis on the interpersonal interactions and environments that can lead to violence, emphasising that violence is not something that comes solely from the patient – something we all often forget.

I like the fact that the book considers perspectives from both service users and healthcare providers, and considers issues that we all currently face, such as 'security versus care'. It includes suggestions for improvement in recording violence and general problems with this, NICE guidelines on seclusion and restraint, pharmacological management, organisational management, and the effects of violence. It includes practical recommendations and will be useful to anyone working in an inpatient setting. It takes a critical stance on what we are still lacking in order to make our mental health services a safer place for staff and service users.

Some, if not, all of this book will be relevant to your work. To ease you in gently, start with Professor Maden's book. If you read both, you will get a good overall view of where to start in dealing with violence and managing future risk of violence. Now let's get back to those HCR-20s!

■ *Dr Sarah Gladden is a Specialist Clinical Psychologist at Three Bridges, Regional Secure Unit, part of West London Mental Health NHS Trust.*

Personality theory – A dramatic switch in mindset

I LOVED Judith Harris's *The Nurture Assumption* – and if you loved it too, then you will certainly want this one. In the previous book Harris launched a radical new theory of personality development that argued that the extent to which parents resemble their children is explained entirely by their genetic overlap. In so doing, she deliberately flew in the face of all the received wisdom of the influence of child-rearing.

This book follows up what she acknowledges was a gap in the logic of her previous argument. She proposed that it was (mainly peer) socialisation that provided the source of the non-genetic variance in children's personality. But as she points out socialisation is largely a process that makes children similar, and her attempt to account for the differences – differentiation within the peer group – was 'vague and unconvincing'. In attempting to track down the source of this non-genetic variance on outcomes she pulls off a dramatic switch in mindset. Instead of working from the by now acknowledged (by all but the deranged) genetic cause of much of the variance in personality, she asked the complementary question – why are monozygotic twins different at all? I think this represents a stunning manoeuvre.

The result is a journey through evolutionary psychology, and to a lesser extent a consideration of the modularity of mind, to arrive at a new theory of the non-genetic sources of variation in children's outcomes. Baldly put, the theory claims there are three modular systems that underlie a child's social development and his or her sense of self – the relationship system, the socialisation system and the status system – and each of these systems is typified by different goals, motivations, emotions, inputs, typical behaviours and

No Two Alike: Human Nature and Human Individuality

JUDITH RICH HARRIS

NEW YORK: W.W. NORTON; 2006; Hb £16.99 (ISBN 0 393 05948 0)

REVIEWED BY Mike Anderson

developmental trajectory.

The argument is detailed and complex but clearly explained. I for one am a big fan of modularity, but I am sceptical of its application here. I am also sceptical about how much work these putative modular systems can do to drag them free of the genetic influences that make identical twins alike. For example, it is hard to believe that a system that monitors 'status' is not going to be overwhelmed by the genetic differences in abilities, attitude, appearance, and so on – leaving precious little room for individuation. For me, too much hinges on chance happenings to make this a satisfying thesis. Nevertheless, it is challenging and just about the best new idea out there.

For fear that you might get the impression that this is a bit of a stuffy theoretical tome, I cannot fail to mention that the book has caused a storm in academic circles. There are passages where the author gets pretty close to accusing highly regarded researchers of fudging data or at least embellishing reports of data to substantiate preconceived ideas at odds with her own. She harries them remorselessly in this book. While I might change my mind were I to be the butt of this attention, I found this to be spirited stuff and very entertaining – not least because the book is peppered with some great one-liners (e.g. 'Wouldn't you think that Woody Allen, of all people, would have heard of Ernst and Angst?') – and at the end of the day something that conveys the excitement of discovering that, despite what everyone else says, you just might be right.

■ *Professor Mike Anderson is Director of the Neurocognitive Development Unit at the University of Western Australia.*

