BOOK REVIEWS

Terrorists, Victims, and Society: Psychological Perspectives on Terrorism and Its Consequences
Andrew Silke (Ed.). Chichester, UK: Wiley & Sons (www.wiley.com). 2003, 300 pp., $100.00 (hardcover), $55.00 (softcover).

The book entitled Terrorists, Victims, and Society: Psychological Perspectives on Terrorism and Its Consequences is part of the Wiley Series in the Psychology of Crime, Policing and Law. The purpose of this series is to present research findings in a clear and readable form as well as to highlight their implications for both practice and policy. In light of the events in the United States on September 11, 2001, it is not surprising that this book was published as part of this series. However, this volume is not meant to be either a definitive or comprehensive explanation of the individuals, circumstances, explanations, or causes of these types of events, a prophylactic for future acts of terrorism, or a panacea for recovering and healing during the aftermath. It is intended to provide a “comprehensive appraisal from a psychological perspective of the motivations and origins of terrorists, the impact of their acts on victims, and ways of combating terrorism” (p. xiii). The book does just that.

This volume of 13 chapters is divided into three major sections: the terrorists, victims of terrorism, and responding to terrorism. Ten well-known clinicians and researchers contributed to the book. Collectively, they offer a diverse sample of experiences and hypotheses as to the causes and cures of terrorism and the limits of our forecasting and preventing future acts of terrorist violence.

One of the more provocative aspects of the book is that it underscores the notion that terrorism is in the eye of the beholder. In the first part of the book the contributing authors present current research findings on what characteristics define the “terrorist personality.” The authors review the social, biological, developmental, and cultural factors that contribute to someone becoming a terrorist and explore the psychological issues and sequelae of hostage taking, cyber-terrorism, suicidal terrorism, and ultimately deciding to leave a terrorist organization.

As I read this section of the book, I wondered, for instance, whether the early Americans who planned and executed the Boston Tea Party in 1773, a sentinel event leading to the American Revolution, might not be considered terrorists by individuals outside our culture, who may have a very different perspective on this event. As John Horgan and Andrew Silke both point out in their respective chapters, there is no such thing as a terrorist personality or a set of psychological or psychopathological factors that defines a terrorist, nor is there a specific formula for becoming a terrorist. In the mind of the majority of Americans today the colonists who dumped the tea into Boston Harbor are “heroes” and “freedom fighters,” but I suspect that the owners of the ships and tea, not to mention the British government, would have described them quite differently. Perhaps they would have made assumptions about their moral character and soundness of mind, as we are doing.

As the contributing authors discuss in the second section of the book, “terrorism is meant to be traumatizing” (p. 135), and this can be accomplished in a variety of ways. These include
threat or extraordinary use of violence, goal-directed, intentional behavior to harm, the intention to psychologically disorganize and horrify not only the immediate victims but also those around them, and choosing victims for their symbolic value, even their innocence (Waugh, 2001). The various authors discuss the impact of isolated acts of terrorism, protracted campaigns of terrorism and political violence, the impact of terrorism on children, and the role of media and terrorism. The chapter on the role of media and terrorism, written by Betty Pfefferbaum, MD, JD, a general and child psychiatrist at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine, was particularly stimulating. In this chapter she describes factors that influence media coverage of such events, the role and responsibility of media in reporting terrorists acts, and the relationship of media to victims. This is one of the shorter chapters in the book, which was disappointing in that this seems to be an area where the behavior of media may be beneficial in ameliorating some of the adverse direct and indirect consequences of terrorism beyond the event itself.

The final section of the book discusses the implications of retaliating against terrorism, the psychological sequelae of imprisonment, and ways in which we can work towards deterring terrorist activity. The chapter on imprisonment is based on the experience of the prolonged campaign of terrorism in Northern Ireland, and discusses the impact on both staff and prisoners. A theme across this section is that retaliation and retribution are often deemed justifiable and are highly popular. However, these actions do have consequences, potentially even more harmful and detrimental to safety and peace, that extend beyond the acute sense of fairness and satisfaction that may prompt retaliatory acts.

As previously noted, this volume is not a “how to” manual for working through the multifaceted issues of terrorism, its perpetrators, or victims. The book is a thorough summary of years of research in a highly fluid field. It both informs the reader and engenders questions and hypotheses as to where we need to go in terms of understanding this phenomenon and translating the findings into prevention and practice.

This volume is appropriate for experienced clinicians, graduate students, and researchers interested in understanding, exploring, and studying terrorism. The chapters stand well on their own, but when presented as a unified body of work provide a good resource for anyone interested in this field of research, policy, and practice.

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**Catherine A. Forneris, PhD, ABPP**

*University of North Carolina*

*Chapel Hill, NC*

**The Illusion of Conscious Will**

Daniel M. Wegner. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (http://mitpress.mit.edu). 2002, 419 pp., $37.00 (hardcover), $18.95 (softcover).

This interesting and scholarly volume competently highlights many of the studies that have focused on human agency. The organization of the chapters is as follows: (1) The Illusion; (2) Brain and Body; (3) The Experience of Will; (4) An Analysis of Automatism; (5) Protecting the Illusion; (6) Action Projection; (7) Virtual Agency; (8) Hypnosis and Will; (9) The Mind’s Compass.

Each of these chapter titles includes, on the Contents page, a short evaluative summary of the topic. For example, for Chapter 1 (The Illusion), the summary is as follows: “It usually seems that we consciously will our voluntary actions, but this is an illusion.” These statements allow at
the outset an overview of the entire text, and they reveal the author’s philosophical perspective and conclusions.

The author’s viewpoint is explicitly mechanistic: “The real causal sequence underlying human behavior involves a massively complicated set of mechanisms . . . we inhabit an extraordinarily complicated machine” (p. 27). By contrast, other psychologists have advanced interactive (environment-outcome) philosophies, in which the person (self) is assumed to provide some degree of control (Skinner, 1971, p. 205). Others have suggested that the activation of the metacognitive system, the sum total of all variables of which the person is aware, may acquire a type of causal status in itself (Alford, Richards, & Hanych, 1995; cf. White, 1990).

The book provides an excellent list of references with both author and subject indexes, making it easy to determine strengths and weaknesses of the coverage of a particular point of view. For example, one can quickly find that the work of John Searle is noted but once in the text, on page 19, in a section distinguishing “prior intention” and “intention in action” (Searle, 1983). Wegner states that one important category of thought—relevant to conscious will—is plans. Following Searle’s distinction, he differentiates prior intentions (plans) from immediate ones (intention in action).

He states that plans are generally perceived to have a different causal status compared to immediate intentions. Plans can go awry, he says. One must smile as he then comments, “. . . it is reassuring to know in this regard that there is a large research literature showing that people often do what they plan” (p. 19).

Wegner’s point here is too obvious. There is no need to cite research to confirm observations that are apparent to everyone. Does anyone (other than a radical anti-free-will advocate) need reassurance on this? For example, what would we make of a “large research literature” that purportedly concluded that people never do what they plan? Everyone knows that some people usually do what they plan, others often do, still others rarely do what they plan, and a few almost never do (e.g., certain DSM-IV conditions are identified in part by an absence of volitional control [American Psychiatric Association, 2000]).

To argue with Wegner’s extensive research reviews would be as counterproductive as taking issue with the replicated data set in Skinner’s Cumulative Record (1961). The data are not in dispute, but the interpretation is. Wegner’s interpretation is contained in his title. He thinks that conscious will is an illusion.

Incidentally, the title might more accurately have been changed to The Illusion of a Scientific Definition of Conscious Will. The theoretical and operational meaning of conscious will has been left to our imagination (although the various studies do define it in differing ways). The concept of cause (cf. White, 1990) is likewise neglected, except for the assertion that the conscious will is not one.

From an empirical point of view, Wegner’s review of the various studies, taken as relevant to conscious will, is incomplete. For example, Schultz (1999) summarizes recent experiments to identify possible physiological confirmation of “voluntary control,” conceptually similar (identical?) to conscious will. Before behavioral execution occurs, single neuron activations have been identified in the striatum (caudate nucleus putamen and ventral striatum)—independent of external signals—that could be interpreted to reflect evaluations of outcome. Specifically, he reviews studies that show reward-dependent activity in striatal neurons that are activated in preparation and execution of goal-directed behavior only in trials in which reward versus auditory reinforcement is predicted (Schultz, 1999, p. 44). Numerous other studies could also have been considered (e.g., see “The Volitional Brain,” 1999).

Overall, a notable limitation of this volume is that it is permeated by a mechanistic analogy and anti-phenomenological position that leads to premature, counterintuitive conclusions. Wegner’s position is revealed cogently in his concluding remarks (p. 342) borrowed from Albert
Einstein, as follows:

If the moon, in the act of completing its eternal way around the earth, were gifted with self-consciousness, it would feel thoroughly convinced that it was traveling its way of its own accord. . . .

So would a Being, endowed with higher insight and more perfect intelligence, watching man and his doings, smile about man’s illusion that he was acting according to his own free will.

In this analogy, an anthropomorphized moon imagines its course around the earth to be self-determined, rather than controlled by variables of mass, speed, and gravitational attraction. Consider a more complete analogy. Already given a self-conscious moon, imagine it is as well as an “educated” one. A truly self-conscious, erudite moon—like an astronaut—would know the basic physics and recognize the controlling variables. Indeed, by modifying one of them (speed), the astronaut is able to survive, by calculating the return to earth. It is the astronaut who has consciously willed himself to this achievement in accord with the environment. The conscious moon, as it were, having no interest in oxygen, would remain free to continue its way around the earth, predicting its course by information on mass, speed, and gravitational attraction. The moon, too, may smile at its course.

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Origins of Phobias and Anxiety Disorders: Why More Women than Men?
Michelle G. Craske. Kidlington, Oxon, UK: Elsevier (www.elsevier.com). 2003, 312 pp., $85.00 (hardcover).

Michelle Craske writes succinctly and clearly in Origins of Phobias and Anxiety Disorders: Why More Women than Men? This book covers a broad array of studies and related topics and is deceptively slim. Deceptive because it is packed with information, statistics, research reviews, and theory development related to the topic. The author states her goals and then systematically and comprehensively proceeds to review the relevant literature in accomplishing them. The approach
is matter-of-fact, with minimal interpretation or embellishment. Her goals were to provide an overarching review of factors contributing to high levels of fear and anxiety disorders and to explore the factors responsible for why more women experience these disorders than men. Throughout the text, Craske confidently and methodically builds her arguments, showing a thorough grasp not only of the extensive literature on fear and anxiety disorders, but also of child development, covariation between anxiety and mood disorders, gender differences, and so on. Ultimately, she reaches a convincing conclusion by a reasoned theoretical approach to explain the gender disparity.

In the first chapter, which covers features of fear and anxiety, Craske engages the topic immediately and without ceremony. She has a great deal to say. The chapter is replete with statistics on sex differences in “normal” fear as well as anxiety disorders, associated forms of distress, and avoidance behavior across the lifespan. There are many interesting findings reviewed—for example, in youths, anxiety precedes not only depression, but also anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and substance abuse in the majority of cases. Once anxiety develops, males and females have been shown to be equally likely to develop a depressive disorder. She argues that covariation between anxiety and mood disorders may have a common vulnerability factor, of which anxiety may occur earlier in the developmental process. Furthermore, it may not be anxiety per se that leads to gender differences, but the reaction to it, most notably avoidance. At the end of this chapter, she describes the Origins Model and the structure of the book.

Chapter 2 teases apart the nature and function of fear and anxiety. As others have argued, she takes the position that fear and anxiety are different states, with fear being a consequence of a detected threat leading to increased autonomic reactivity and inhibition of some cognitive processes and anxiety being a consequence of undetected threats leading to worry. Increased verbal processes tend to result in anxious worry whereas increased imagery tends to lead to fear. Chapters 3 and 4 provide a review of broad-based vulnerabilities to anxiety—notably negative affectivity and its consequences. She reviewed the available empirical support for links between underlying temperament as a vulnerability factor for anxiety, including negative affectivity, behavioral inhibition, and genetic influences. She moves to a detailed analysis of the developmental literature on infants and children, particularly of the interactions among different factors, such as parenting style, temperament, self-regulation, and the risk of anxiety disorders. One of the conclusions is that the parents of anxious children reinforce avoidant coping as a solution, leading to development of more anxiety. Chapter 5 provides a review of the experimental literature on anxious processing of information. Anxious processing is generally characterized by biases towards detection of potential threat for attention, judgments, and memory. She takes these results and combines them with literature on different patterns of avoidance of threat. Chapter 6 addresses the topic of stimulus salience and threat value. She covers the different ways in which fears are acquired and are influenced by learning history, maturational factors, and biological factors. In Chapter 7, Craske covers all the anxiety disorders and explains why some individuals may be more prone, given their biology, early learning history, and other variables, to develop one over another. There are stronger arguments for some of the disorders compared to others. For a clinician who works with anxious clients, this chapter is of particular interest, coming after the comprehensive literature review on information processing and learning in the earlier chapters. She concludes that there are many processes in common in the anxiety disorders, such as threat-related beliefs and avoidant behaviors. They tend to be distinguished by the particular stimulus to which these processes become connected to as well as the input from the vulnerability factors. The outstanding strength of Craske’s volume emerges in Chapter 8, which directly addresses sex differences. Although she alluded to these early in the book, they are not addressed again until this second-to-last chapter. One assumes that the reason was to review all of the other origins literature first. The similarities and differences between men and women are carefully traced from infancy onward. She makes the point that women are ultimately more likely to develop anxiety.
disorders not because of increased levels of fear, but in reactions to fear. She concludes that whereas females start off less emotionally reactive than males, they become more inhibited by around 2 years of age. Women’s innate tendency to “tend and befriend” in response to threat as opposed to one of “fight or flight” is similar to an avoidant style of coping, rendering them less likely than men to develop self-efficacy or to learn effective ways to deal directly with threat in the environment. These tendencies increase socialization, support a proneness to worry, and increase avoidant behavior. The final chapter is brief, summarizing the text and the conclusions reached.

This book belongs on every anxiety researcher and theorist’s bookshelf alongside Barlow’s (2002) classic text. Notwithstanding Craske’s neglect to review the treatment literature, clinicians are likely to find the work useful in helping them to conceptualize the origins of anxiety problems in their case formulations. I would have liked to have seen Craske discuss the application of the origins model to treatment—but that must remain for another book. There is very little to criticize in this book. It is densely written, so some may find it difficult to peruse and, consequently, not complete it. That would be a mistake. It’s well worth the effort to read it thoroughly. In retrospect, my only criticism, such as it is, is that the title itself is somewhat misleading because the volume addresses far more than gender differences. Simply calling it Origins of Phobias and Anxiety Disorders would have been sufficient.

**REFERENCE**

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**DEBORAH DOBSON, PhD**

*Outpatient Mental Health Program*

*Calgary Health Region & University of Calgary*

*Calgary, AB, Canada*

**Phobic and Anxiety Disorders in Children and Adolescents: A Clinician’s Guide to Effective Psychosocial and Pharmacological Interventions**

Thomas H. Ollendick and John S. March (Eds.). New York: Oxford University Press (www.oup.com/us). 2004, 592 pp., $69.50 (hardcover).

*Phobic and Anxiety Disorders in Children and Adolescents: A Clinician’s Guide to Effective Psychosocial and Pharmacological Interventions* represents an outstanding addition to the growing literature on the assessment and treatment of anxiety disorders in youth. The text has numerous strengths, including its comprehensive coverage of assessment techniques, its cross-disciplinary approach towards outlining psychosocial and psychopharmacological interventions, and its rich description of the empirical support for the treatment modalities outlined.

The text commences with thorough coverage of issues pertinent to the foundation of understanding anxiety disorders in youth including chapters on diagnosis, epidemiology, etiology, and comorbidity. Topics are approached with an open mind and a critical eye, careful attention being paid to discussing thoroughly unresolved and controversial issues in the field as well as the clinical implications and practical significance of empirical findings. Several chapters are especially noteworthy. For example, the chapter on diagnostic issues covers debate surrounding both the positive and problematic aspects of diagnostic systems, the difficulty discriminating among various internalizing disorders in youth (i.e., the problem of comorbidity), and limitations of available child- and parent-report measures (i.e., including the often low level of agreement between parent and child reports). The authors highlight the need for future research to take a more
developmentally sensitive approach towards understanding such issues by considering the impact of children’s varying levels of cognitive, social, and emotional development on the assessment and diagnosis of anxiety disorders. The chapter on developmental issues provides an integrative review of the empirical literature examining the sequence and timing of the emergence of both normative fears/anxiety and anxiety disorders, highlighting potential pathways (i.e., temperament and attachment) through which normal development may go awry for some children and lead them to develop anxiety disordered symptomatology. The authors advocate the importance of taking a developmental psychopathological approach towards understanding the emergence of anxiety disorders in which both child and environment actively contribute to the ultimate developmental outcome through a series of dynamic, reciprocal transactions occurring over time. Finally, the chapter on integrating psychosocial and psychopharmacological interventions is likely to be of particular interest to practitioners as a result of the great attention it pays to practical issues. The authors outline a stages-of-treatment model for implementing interventions, provide a rich and informative discussion of how to evaluate the usefulness of treatment outcome studies, and share with the reader many important “lessons learned in the clinic” pertaining to combining drug and psychosocial interventions in treating anxiety disordered youth.

The second section of the text focuses on the assessment and treatment of specific anxiety disorders in children and adolescents including chapters on specific phobias, social anxiety disorder, school refusal, separation anxiety disorder, childhood-onset panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, and selective mutism. Four common threads flow through each of these chapters. First, the chapters are all co-authored by a combination of psychologists and physicians, leading to the blending of expertise in diverse fields of clinical training, research, and practice. Such a cross-disciplinary approach is a unique aspect of the text and one that is likely to make it of great appeal to a wide audience. Second, the chapters uniformly pay exquisite attention to the assessment process, advocating the use of assessment trees to arrive at diagnoses that will assist both the planning of interventions and the evaluation of treatment efficacy. The authors provide comprehensive reviews of available assessment tools (e.g., self-report, parent-report, semi-structured interviews, etc.) as well as critically discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of such tools and their clinical/treatment utility. Third, the chapters present the implementation of psychological and psychopharmacological interventions within a stages-of-treatment framework, paying careful attention to the decision-making processes underlying the timing and sequencing of the various interventions described. On account of the great breadth of disorders and treatment modalities covered, the chapters focus on providing an overview of interventions rather than a detailed description of their precise implementation. At the same time, the level of thoroughness and depth reached by the several authors is impressive. Finally, the chapters provide a comprehensive review of the empirical support for the treatment modalities presented with a bias for interventions that have demonstrated efficacy in randomized clinical trials. Generally speaking, the reviews of the treatment literature are exhaustive, current, and clearly presented.

In sum, *Phobic and Anxiety Disorders in Children and Adolescents: A Clinician’s Guide to Effective Psychosocial and Pharmacological Interventions* is outstanding in every respect. In addition, its cross-disciplinary approach is unique and highly informative. This text is at the top of my list of recommendations for students and colleagues who want to strengthen their knowledge base concerning all aspects of anxiety disorders in children and adolescents including diagnosis, epidemiology, etiology, assessment, treatment, and prevention.

**John R. Z. Abela, PhD**  
*McGill University*  
*Montreal, QC, Canada*