

## Addiction Treatment: a personal journey in 18 books and 2 papers

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**Scientific method: empiricism - we observe swans are white**



# Scientific method: verification



# Scientific method: verification



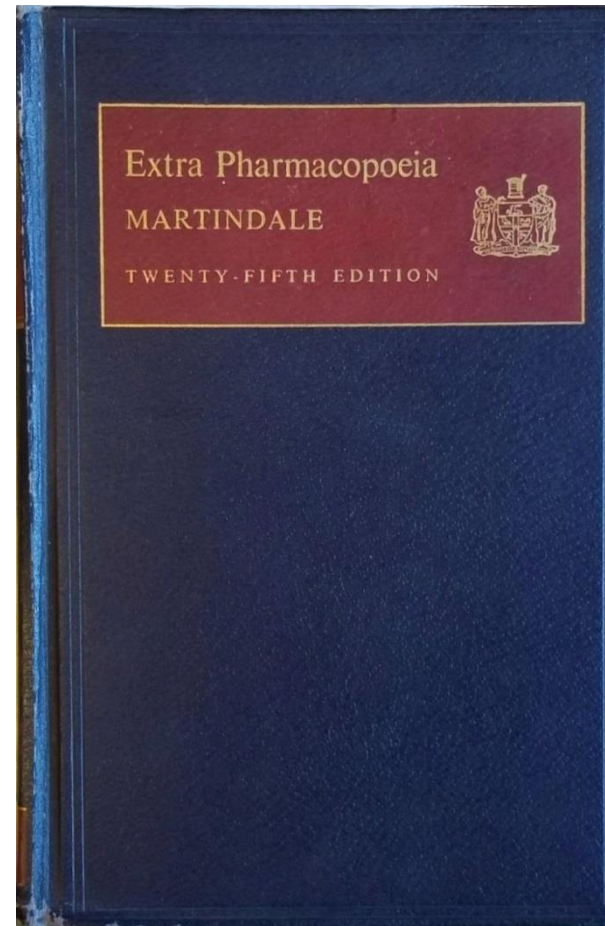
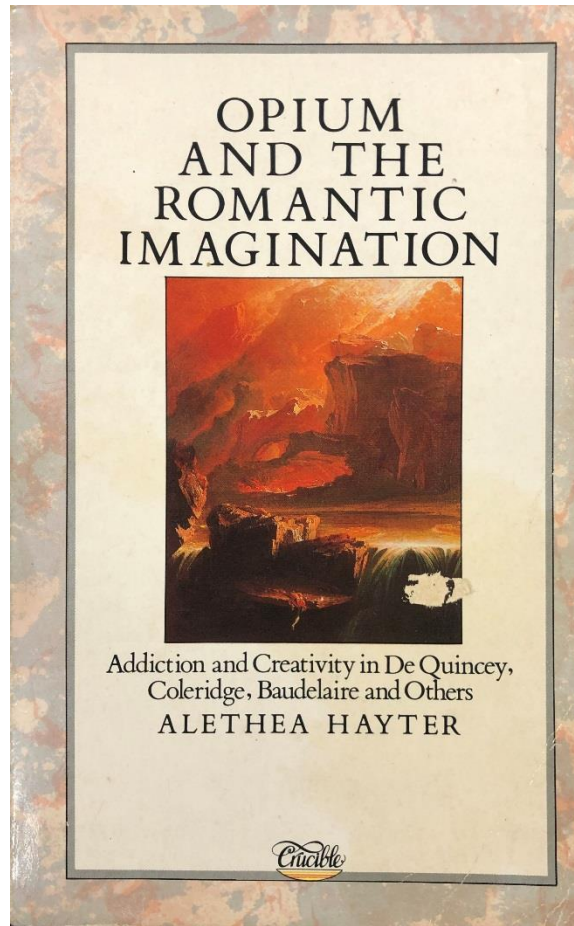
# Scientific method: verification



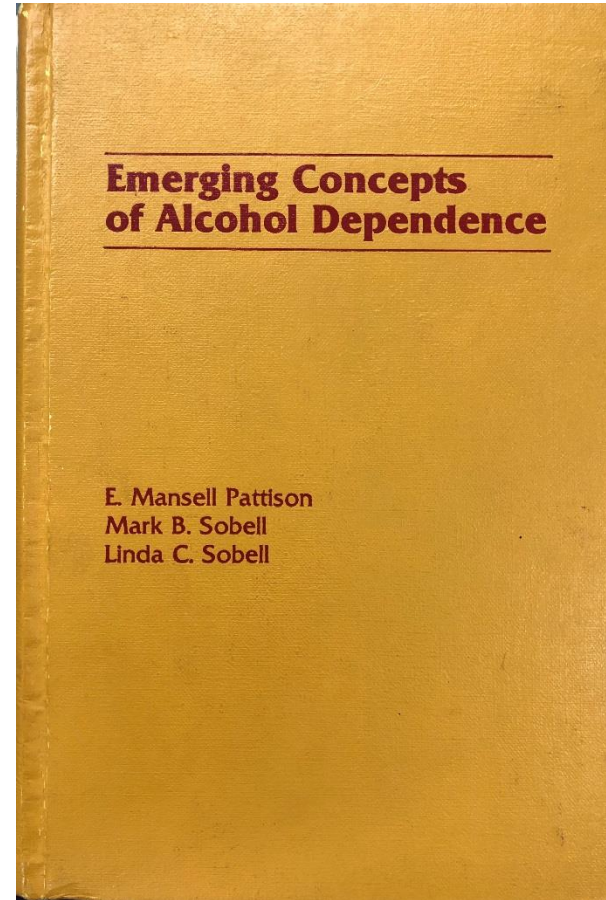
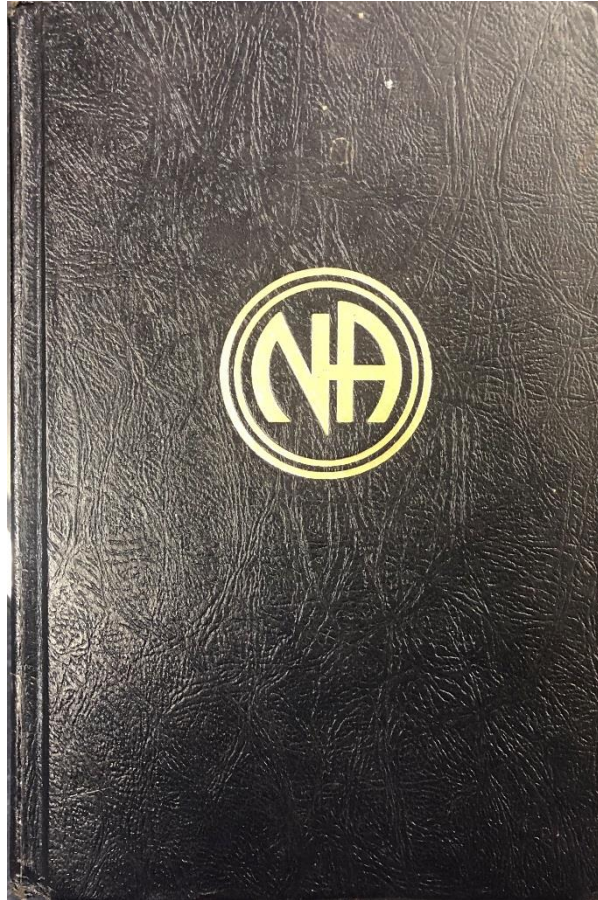
# Scientific method: falsification



# Expert by experience

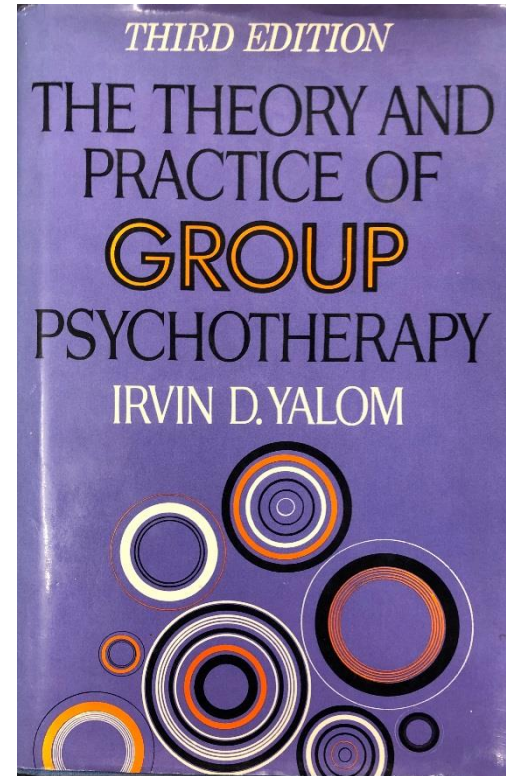
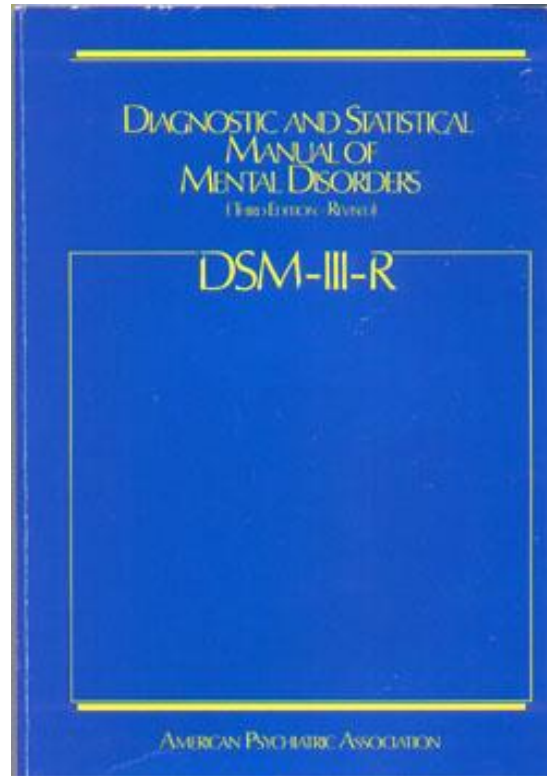


## Expert by experience

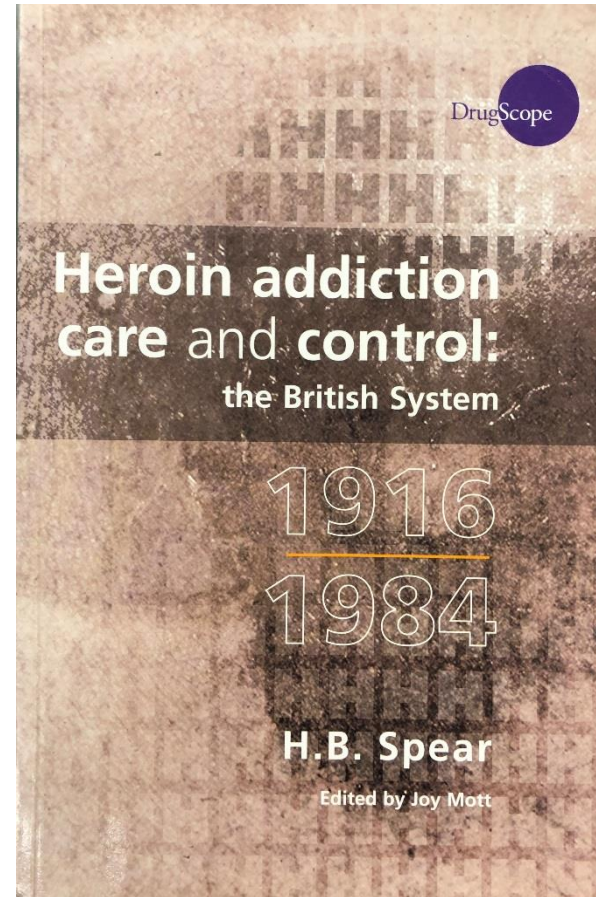
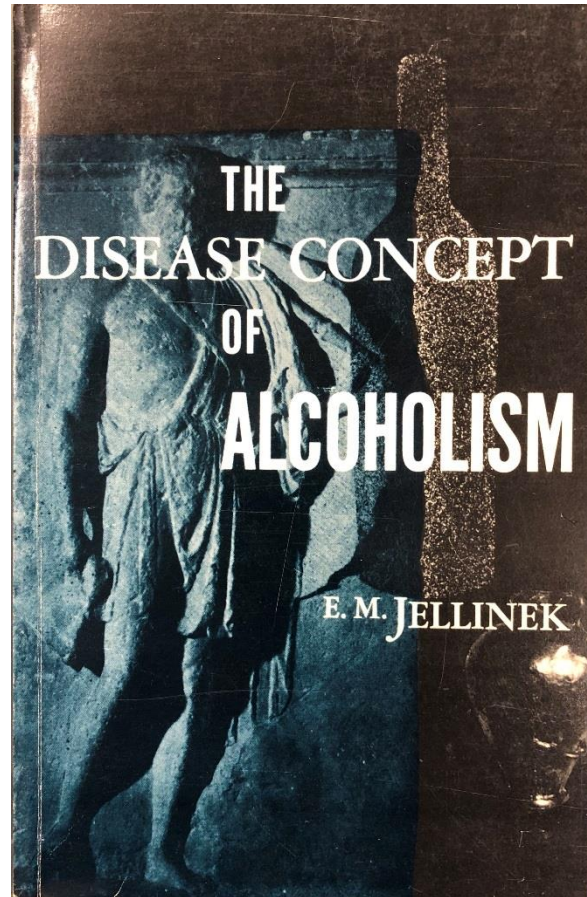




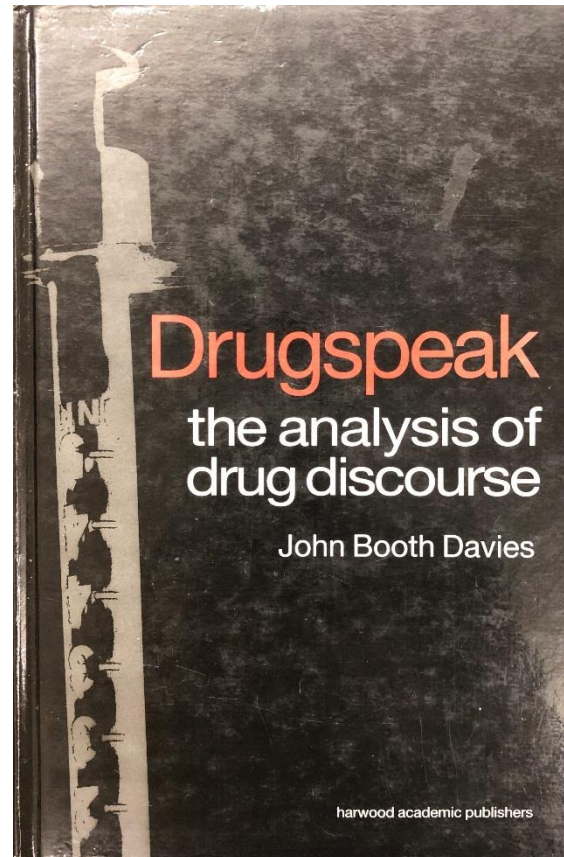
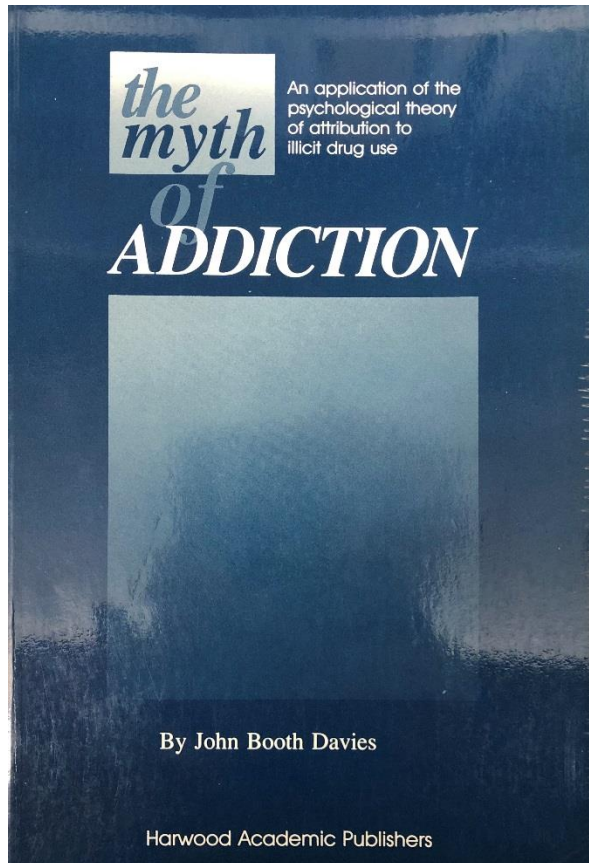
# Becoming a professional



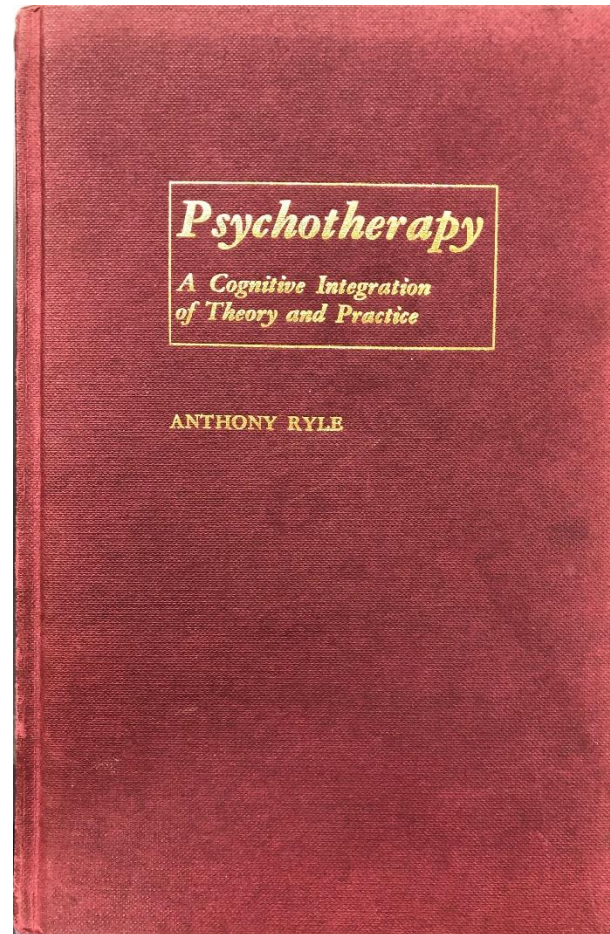
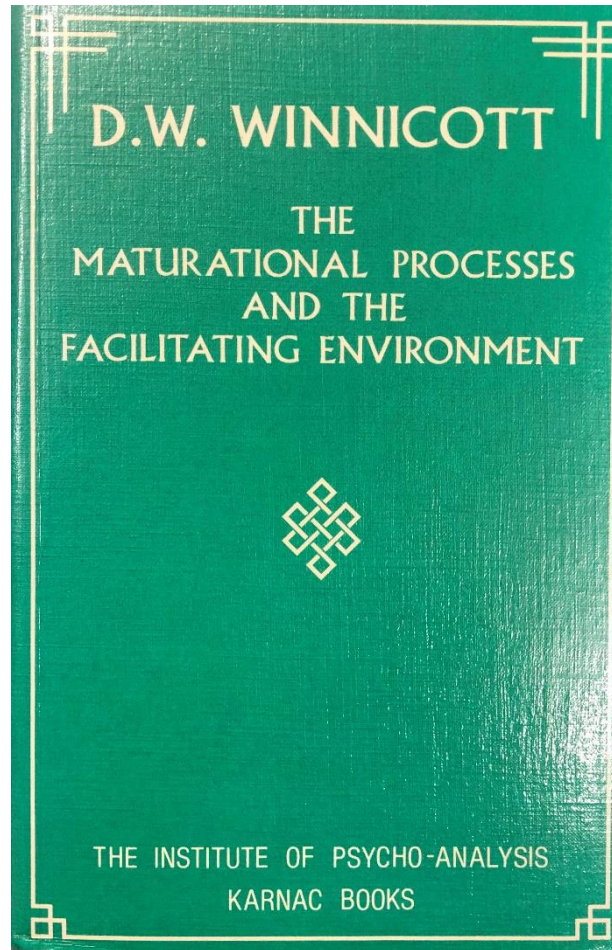
## A historical context



# What is addiction, anyway?

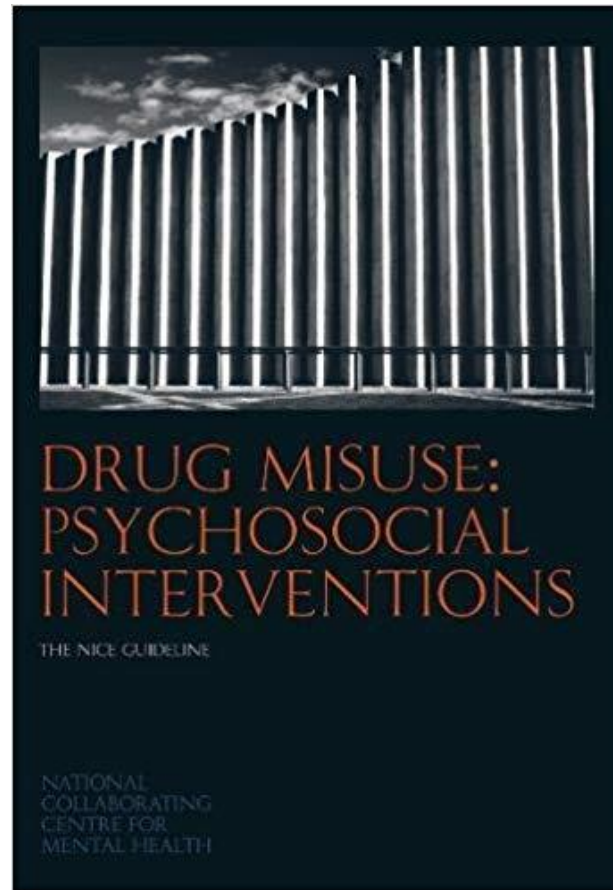
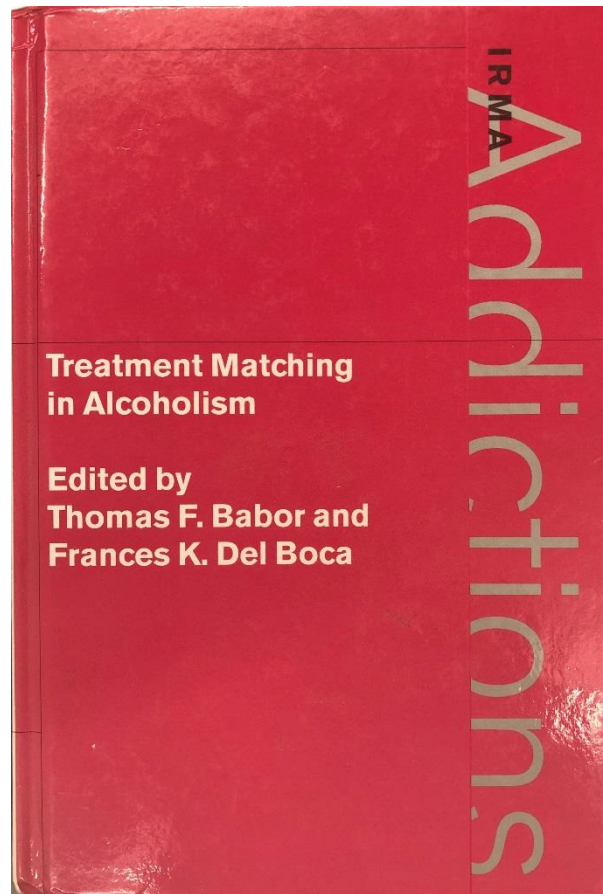


# psychotherapy



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# evidence



Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology  
1978, Vol. 46, 806-834.

#113

## Theoretical Risks and Tabular Asterisks: Sir Karl, Sir Ronald, and the Slow Progress of Soft Psychology

Paul E. Meehl  
University of Minnesota

Theories in “soft” areas of psychology lack the cumulative character of scientific knowledge. They tend neither to be refuted nor corroborated, but instead merely fade away as people lose interest. Even though intrinsic subject matter difficulties (20 listed) contribute to this, the excessive reliance on significance testing is partly responsible, being a poor way of doing science. Karl Popper’s approach, with modifications, would be prophylactic. Since the null hypothesis is quasi-always false, tables summarizing research in terms of patterns of “significant differences” are little more than complex, causally uninterpretable outcomes of statistical power functions. Multiple paths to estimating numerical point values (“consistency tests”) are better, even if approximate with rough tolerances; and lacking this, ranges, orderings, second-order differences, curve peaks and valleys, and function forms should be used. Such methods are usual in developed sciences that seldom report statistical significance. Consistency tests of a conjectural taxometric model yielded 94% success with zero false negatives.

## Asking the right questions in the right way: the need for a shift in research on psychological treatments for addiction

Jim Orford

Alcohol, Drugs, Gambling and Addiction Research Group, School of Psychology, University of Birmingham and Substance Misuse Services, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Trust, Birmingham, UK

### ABSTRACT

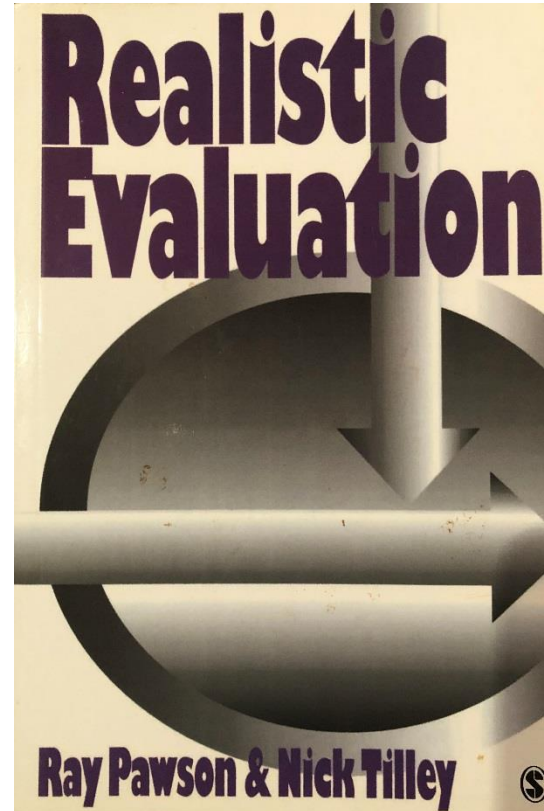
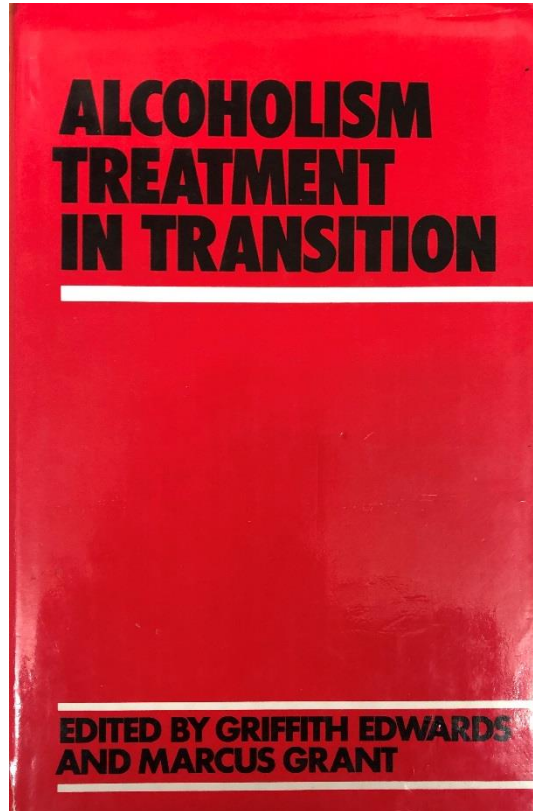
**Aim** To identify possible reasons for the disappointingly negative results of methodologically rigorous controlled trials of psychological treatments in the addictions field. **Method** A selective overview of the literature on addictive behaviour change. **Findings** Eight failings of existing research are described: failing to account for the outcome equivalence paradox; neglecting relationships in favour of techniques; failing to integrate treatment research and research on unaided change; imposing an inappropriate time-scale on the change process; failing to take a systems or social network view; ignoring therapists’ tacit theories; not including the patient’s view; and displaying an ignorance of modern developments in the philosophy of science. **Conclusion** Treatment research has been asking the wrong questions in the wrong way. Three necessary shifts in ways of conducting research are proposed: (i) the field should stop studying named techniques and focus instead on change processes; (ii) change processes should be studied within the broader, longer-acting systems of which treatment is part; and (iii) science in the field should be brought up to date by acknowledging a variety of sources of useful knowledge.

**Keywords** Addiction, psychological treatment, research design.

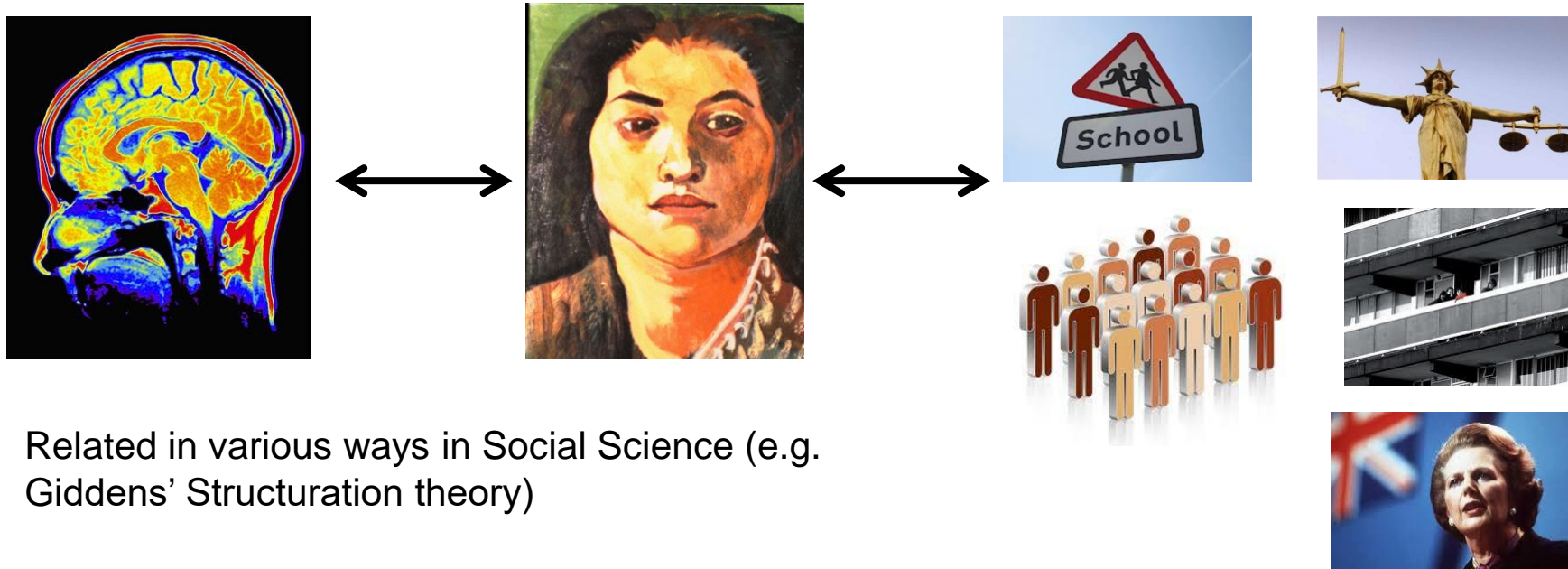


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## Evidence-based practice?



# Agency and Structure



Related in various ways in Social Science (e.g. Giddens' Structuration theory)

Conflation and Reduction abound! (e.g. 'Brainism', Rational Choice Theory, class reductionism of (some) Marxism)

Critical Realism attempts to engage with "the complexity, openness, and ambiguity of social action."



# Brainism

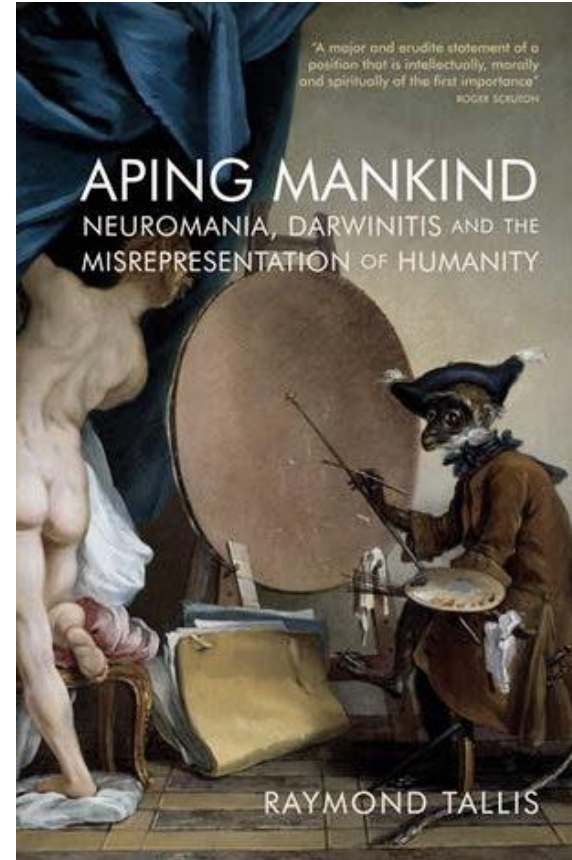
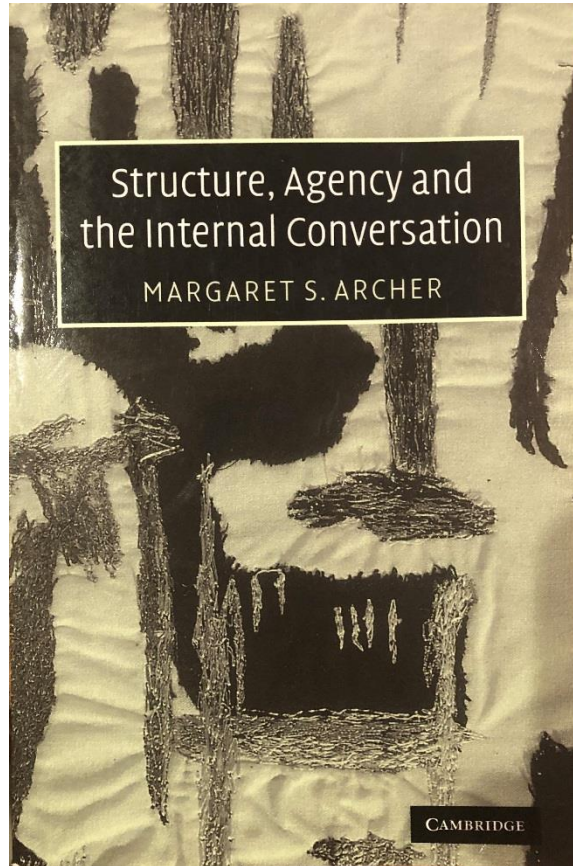
Why the revolution in epistemological sentiment? Biological psychiatry helped spark a wondrous neuroscience revolution that is perhaps the most thrilling focus of twenty first century biological science. But the findings have revealed a remarkably complex brain unwilling to yield any simple answers. There is thus far almost no translation from the glory of basic science discovery to the hard slog of understanding the etiology and pathogenesis of the 'mental disorders'. These no longer seem at all reducible to simple diseases, but rather are better understood as no more than currently convenient constructs or heuristics that allow us to communicate with one another as we conduct our clinical, research, educational, forensic, and administrative work.

Those who were hunting (and reporting) the gene or genes for schizophrenia, bipolar, and other disorders have been forced repeatedly to retract and eat humble pie. Initial findings never achieved replication for what became the obvious reason that there is no 'disease' of schizophrenia- that instead schizophrenia is better understood as just a construct (albeit it a very useful one) with hundreds of different 'causes'.

Allen Frances, 2012



# Brainism



## Against totalising explanation

- ~~All~~ **some of** addiction ~~is~~ **may be** explained by a disease model
- ~~All~~ **some of** addiction ~~is~~ **may be** explained by the brain disease model
- ~~All~~ **some of** addiction ~~is~~ **may be** explained by socio-cultural factors
- ~~All~~ **some of** addiction ~~is~~ **may be** explained by a genetic vulnerability, or epigenetic inheritance
- ~~All~~ **some of** addiction ~~is~~ **may be** explained by a bio-psycho-social model
- ~~All~~ **some** addiction ~~is~~ **may be** caused by childhood trauma
- ~~All~~ **some** addiction ~~is~~ **may be** caused by underlying psychopathology
- ~~All~~ **some** addiction ~~is~~ **may be** explained by behavioural economics
- ~~All~~ **some** addiction requires treatment to recover from
- ~~All~~ **some** addiction requires abstinence to recover from

Etc.

# People

