

* *Heidegger. An Introduction* Richard Polt. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999. xi + 197 pp. Cloth, \$39.95; Paperback, \$18.95.

At a recent conference on existential psychotherapy held early this year at Wagner College, in New York, I had occasion to recall some of the figures in the distant and near background of existential analysis. One such figure is indispensable to an appreciation of the entire movement against and away from traditional medical psychology and psychoanalysis, and that is Martin Heidegger. In the past five years, at least four brief introductions to Heidegger's philosophical work and life have appeared in English. Among them, Richard Polt's is perhaps the best for beginning students, since for the most part it faithfully represents Heidegger's thought while remaining free of excessive reference to German terminology. Polt familiarises readers with the standard translations of Heidegger's basic words. This will make first-time readers' excursions in the basic writings a friendlier affair. At the same time, he sometimes offers fresh versions of key terms that shed light on Heidegger's thought in ways that will stimulate specialists; for example, 'minding' for *Sorge* (p. 57) (which is usually rendered as 'care') and 'facing up [to]' for *Vorlaufen* (p. 87) (which is usually given as 'anticipation'). In these and other cases, we gain a better sense of Heidegger's thought about human be-ing. The author understands the questions that readers have about Heidegger's philosophy and addresses them with welcome economy of speech. He has a knack for making difficult concepts seem familiar and relating them to the web of Heidegger's conceptual structure

Like most introductory texts, the present volume concentrates on the early Heidegger, especially *Being and Time* (pp. 23-112), but relying on recent scholarship by Theodore Kisiel, John van Buren and others, Polt also discusses many of Heidegger's earliest lecture courses. He deals with the relevance of Heidegger's thought to logic, language, and works of art, as well as to Heidegger's political stance during the period of dominance of National Socialism in Germany. Unfortunately, Polt provides only "an initial orientation to [Heidegger's] concerns" (p. 130) as they appear in his later works. Always in the air is Heidegger's philosophical fascination with the question about why there is anything at all, rather than nothing, and how this is related to human be-ing or existence (*Dasein*).

The clarity of the author's synopsis of the structure and major themes of *Being and Time* is exceptional. He stresses correctly that, although the question about the sense of *Sein* (Be-ing) is always in the forefront of Heidegger's questioning, the underlying theme of

Heidegger's best known work, and perhaps of his entire thought, is *time*. After all, "time provides the context that gives meaning to all modes of Being" (p. 82), including the Be[-ing] of existence (*Dasein*). In at least one respect, Heidegger is like Kierkegaard, since for both, "time is not just a medium in which we watch things pass by... time is at the heart of human existence" (p. 109). This is because "Dasein itself is . . . temporal" (p. 133) and, conversely, temporality is "the 'ultimate' basis for understanding Dasein" (p. 95). In short, temporality "is the key to understanding ourselves as we truly are" (p. 36). Heidegger's work remains fundamental for understanding existential analysis. In it psychotherapists will find a philosophical anthropology that is more faithful to our experience than the account given by natural science, including medicine and psychiatry. In Heidegger's notion of leaping ahead (p. 61) we find a way of understanding the peculiar nature of therapeutic relating which frees up the client-partner without taking away her most basic freedom, to decide who she can be. Finally, in Heidegger's analysis of existence, the therapist finds a view of human be-ing that for the first time gives to our co-existence with others (*Mitdasein*) fundamental ontological meaning, along with the other equally basic elements of the structure of human be-ing.

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* *Complaints and Grievances in Psychotherapy: A Handbook of Ethical Practice* Fiona Palmer Barnes, Routledge 1998, 195pp

The title of this book provides a clear description of the content. In this regard, I had a number of responses to this book and it is these that I will now outline. Firstly it seems to me that this is a comprehensive book that is long overdue. The issue of ethics is crucial to all trainings and at all stages of training/practice and I am sure that ethics is something that most practitioners would see as central to Psychotherapeutic practice.

My second response is that this book is very useful as a reference text and as such should be on the reading list of the Psychotherapeutic trainings for use by trainees, therapists and trainers alike. I anticipate using this text in my teaching from now on. For the trainee or the beginning therapist, the chapter on contracts is particularly useful as it discusses the ethical negotiation of boundaries, fees and other aspects of the therapeutic 'frame'. For the organisers of trainings and managers of Psychotherapeutic services the collection of ethical guidelines of almost all of the relevant therapeutic organisations (British Association for Counselling, The United