

reflection on our actual experience. How mental symptoms become physicalised is unknown and remains a mystery.

On a more critical note I wondered about the overall structure and resulting flow of the book. I would have preferred the first three chapters, which are essentially introductory to both psychoanalytic theory and existential-phenomenological thinking, to be pulled together as a springboard for the following chapters. As a mainly theoretical chapter, 'The Question of the Unconscious' might also have been included therein. The chapter on groups, 'Existential-phenomenological Dimensions of Groups', though of interest and not written about by existentially oriented writers, I felt to be an insertion which interrupted the flow of my more clinical gaze on commonly met client experiences and distress. I, however, know this area to be of particular interest to the author and wonder if he agrees that this theme could well stand as a book to itself?

All psychoanalytic writing has itself to take a stand either in agreement or in disagreement with Freud and I started this review perspecting psychoanalytic theory as being 'in transition'. But in transition to what? Existential phenomenology? Perhaps Hans Cohn has introduced that thought and provided a startpoint. I learned when reading this book and was challenged to place myself in my own practice which still contains residues of psychoanalytic thinking. As there are many ways of doing phenomenology and many ways of being an existentialist, this book also recognises this and sets out to be a startpoint, an introduction, to which others can respond forthwith. I recently read that a sophisticated primer should be an introduction to a field and encompass it in a way that is enlightening to the experienced as well as the beginner. This book, I think, meets that request.

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References

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- Stolorow, R., Brandschaft, B. & Atwood, G. (1987) *Psychoanalytic Treatment: An Intersubjective Approach* Hillsdale, NJ The Analytic Press.

* **Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint, Franz Brentano** (edited by Linda McAlister; translated by Antos C. Rancurello, D.B. Terrell and Linda L. McAlister). 1885 London: Routledge, pbk 1995 London: Routledge, pbk.

We have no right... to believe that the objects of so-called external

perception really exist as they appear to us. Indeed, they demonstrably do not exist outside of us. In contrast to that which really and truly exists, they are mere phenomena... Defining psychology as the science of mental phenomena in order to make natural science and mental science resemble each other in this respect... has no reasonable justification.

The above quote appears in the opening chapter of Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* and sets the tone, purpose and general argument of the text as a whole. It was, and to a large extent still remains, a revolutionary stance to take. How different psychology would be today if more had been willing to give it its proper consideration.

Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint was first published in 1874, the same year that Wilhelm Wundt's *Physiological Psychology* first appeared. Together, these texts virtually created modern psychology as a discipline in its own right. Perhaps more pertinently to readers of this Journal, Brentano's work', deeply stimulated and influenced two young students at the University Vienna - Sigmund Freud and Edmund Husserl - who, by their own accounts, sat enthralled week after week listening to Brentano's lectures. While Brentano's impact is obvious with regard to Husserl's subsequent writings, reading this book reveals numerous and pertinent influences that serve as under-currents to Freud's developing theory.

Brentano's *Psychology* was intended to be the first of five related texts which would lead to a final, sixth account that would focus upon the mind-body problem. Unfortunately only two books were completed and one can only speculate from various subsequent monographs (which reveal significant alterations in Brentano's thought which were critical of Husserl's early work) just what Brentano's attempted solution to psychology's still-central dilemma might be.

This English edition consists of a translation of the second (1924) edition,) of *Psychology as an Empirical Science* minus some appended essays. Linda McAlister, who translated the work, has succeeded in providing English speaking readers with a clear, highly accessible account that is a pleasure to read. Similarly, Peter Simons *Introduction* manages in a few pages to convey the principal themes and arguments that preoccupied Brentano throughout his academic life thereby providing an indispensable context with which to read and appreciate the text.

Brentano's central argument rests upon his conviction that psychology could only be a unified science in its own right by taking mental phenomena as its subject matter. He sought to distinguish mental phenomena from the physical phenomena of the natural sciences while retaining the non-metaphysical attitude of the natural sciences - hence, the word 'empirical' in the title.

Brentano asserted that *every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself* (p 88). Here then, lies the genesis to Husserl's *intentionality* and, possibly, to significant features of Freud's abandoned *Project*. While Brentano himself, together with most of his followers, would subsequently reject this assertion in part, nevertheless it remains a brilliant argument, carefully and critically expounded and, once again, in its style, a likely influence upon Freud's splendid way of advancing the arguments presented in his own Lectures on psycho-analysis.

Indeed, Brentano's work reads very much as a series of carefully paced lectures and gives the modern reader a sense of just how beguiling and illuminating it must have been to have been in his presence as a student.

Having read about this book for many years, I approached its reading with some degree of apprehension, worried that I would be faced with a dense and difficult time. Happily, I can report that, while remaining unquestionably difficult, I found it to be a real pleasure to read. Now that it is once again available to us, I hope that many more readers will take a 'leap of faith' and engage with it.

Ernesto Spinelli

*** Levinas. An Introduction by Colin Davis. Cambridge: Polity Press 1996.168 pp.**

It has been said that Emmanuel Levinas, the Jewish thinker from Lithuania, has done more than anyone to introduce phenomenology into French philosophy. He was born in Kaunas in 1906 to orthodox parents. His father owned a bookshop, and the future creator of an ethics of relation and commentator of the Talmud was early on a passionate reader of the great Russian novelists and the Bible.

In 1923 Levinas went to France to study philosophy in Strassburg. His interest in phenomenology took him to Freiburg University for a short spell of studying with Husserl and Heidegger. His first book was devoted to an exploration of Husserlian phenomenology, and it was this book, published in 1930, that inspired Sartre to spend a year in Berlin to study the work of Husserl.