

to her work as a therapist really brings his philosophy and her client work to life. John Mackessy looks at Schopenhauer. He explores this philosophy to stress the importance of really facing up to the suffering as a reality of existing in the world. Schopenhauer reminds Mackessy of how therapists can never fully appreciate the suffering of our clients. It also reminds me of the profound respect that suffering deserves and the fundamental part it plays in our client's lives. Jeff Harrison writes about Wittgenstein, Buddhism and psychotherapy and the book concludes with Devang Vaidya speaking about suffering to become the person you are. It's refreshing to read about Buddhism also being a way in to understanding the wholeness of human beings.

What is refreshing about this book is that it talks about therapy and what it means to be human without claiming to be an expert. There is a respect for humanity and a healthy scepticism for adhering to assumptions about what it means to be human that threads right through the book. Despite the lack of the word existential in the book, this book would be extremely useful for anyone studying existential psychotherapy. I couldn't help but feel disappointed at the lack of female philosophers and the overuse of white male philosophers. Wouldn't a chapter on Simone de Beauvoir be fitting as she was part of the counter-tradition? However, this is made up for a bit by the female writers in the book. *Therapy and the Counter-Tradition: The Edge of Philosophy* claims to be of interest to mental health professionals, practitioners, counselling and psychotherapy trainees and trainers, as well as academics tutoring or studying psychology. I believe that this book will certainly be of great interest and greatly informing to this group. I believe it is important for those working in this arena to be aware of the implications of the tradition and counter tradition. I hope this book inspires more writing in this vein.

Cristalle Hayes

The Child In The World: Embodiment, time, and language in early childhood

Eva M. Simms (2008). Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

At what point do you become an adult? This may be a hard question for many of us to answer. Many cultures have ritual ceremonies marking this important transition, but typically these events have become more symbolic in their relevance and no longer retain a strong psychological power in shaping our identity. Rarely however, do we stop and think of what it means to actually be an adult or a child, and where these differing concepts come from. Like the demarcation of east and west on a map, we simply take such significant decisions for granted presuming they have always been thus.

In her excellent book Simms not only sketches out a framework for an existential-phenomenological development from the womb, through infancy and onwards to the developing child, but also addresses such questions head on, posing some interesting ideas about the construction of childhood itself as a modern concept.

The first chapters guide the reader gently through the post-natal infant's journey of discovery into the world, drawing on the more familiar writings of Merleau-Ponty and Erikson, but also introduce us to new perspectives from Langeveld and Minkowski.

These early chapters feature moving descriptions of the emergence of the newborn infant into the world: the growth of the infant reaching out into a new sequence of experiences of being-in-the-world. The infant learns to separate from but always remaining in relation to, its mother. One of Simms' central themes throughout the book is to question the predominance of individualising models of development, and to ask if too much emphasis has been placed historically on subject-object relations when observing infants.

Woven throughout the text is discussion of the developing infant's view of the world with a sense of being which is encountered as a collective experience. Simms alludes to a hermeneutic interpretation of experience which goes beyond the immediacy of the simple task at hand to include the mood and atmosphere of the shared environment.

The author contrasts a traditional view of chronologically sequenced, developmental milestones (as shown in the observations and experiments of the developmental psychologist, Piaget), with a perspective which examines the developing infant's susceptibility to variance in mood. A hermeneutic understanding is used to explain an infant's reaction or distress for example, to an object being hidden by an experimenter. We learn how the child's whole environment and experience from which such experiments are conducted, including the ontological experience of being-with, must be considered as well as solely the object itself. The author then shows us how the child's relational Being is every bit as important to the infant as a lack of cognitive maturity. From such a position this existential view places a new emphasis on the emergent child's perspective of space and time.

We are reminded as existentially informed practitioners that as young infants find their place in the world they have not yet been indoctrinated into a worldview of an introspective 'self' residing in a world of distinct others. They experience their being as a collective, intersubjective existence in which the mood and feelings they experience of themselves and others do not neatly separate apart or from their environment. This is a powerful reminder to existentially informed counsellors, therapists and psychologists that it is not inherent in the human condition to live as distinct, stand-alone entities, and as such we must always consider our own relatedness when

with our clients, whether they are five or fifty-five years old.

The author informs us that the idea of a 'person,' comes from the Latin word '*persona*' meaning, a mask. This suggests not a given, predetermined, authentic identity but a constructed idea of how we wish to represent ourselves; constructed that is, by our relatedness to others.

Later the book highlights the background to this perspective, grounded in a cultural and existential shift during medieval times which laid the foundations for the arrival of childhood as a new distinct and identifiable passage of life. She argues this was created as much by changes in adulthood (with adults becoming distinct from past 'childish' behaviours and world views) as by the creation itself of the concept of the child.

Simms quotes Illich who references Hugh St Victor, an 11th Century theologian and prominent catalyst in the growth of learning in medieval times. It is suggested that by the expansion of libraries and a revolution in the growth of literature as a tool, there was also a revolution in the development of the notion of 'self.' This shift to introspection was also illustrated as individuals began the practice of reading to themselves, in their heads, as opposed to 'out loud' as a collective act. Collective reading had previously kept people explicitly connected to their immediate environment as reading had not been perceived as an individual act escaping the present. With individual reading however, for the first time, people became able to transcend their place in the world. This point in time has been seen by some (e.g. Postman) as a reflection of the start of an 'inner world' distinct from an idea of being, linking existence to Being-in-the-world.

This change, which Simms relates to an increased level of literacy and education in the general population, encouraged the arrival of introspection, at a moment when the 'act of confession' became compulsory in the western world for the first time. The Lateran council from Rome decreed that everyone should atone for their sins by attending confession once a year. This very act by the Catholic Church forced everyday people to reflect on their individual decisions and choices, their being and their experiences and, it is argued this shift became a powerful influence in the development of an introspective world for the first time. The introduction of confession, carried out initially once a year as a solitary religious act of reflection and obligation, legitimised the need for personal responsibility and selfhood. The author indicates this was the real turning point for individualised being and for the birth of an introspective lens through which the world could be experienced.

This shift away from collective experience, and from living more phenomenologically through being-in-the-world and being-with-others, has subsequently dominated with philosophical and psychological conceptions of a pluralistic 'self' at the centre of experience.

The strength of this book is to remind existential practitioners that many of the dualistic traditions now accepted as givens in so much psychological literature, were not always the predominating force they are today. And that every one of us started our journey through life, helpless and reliant on others, but also completely embodying the notion of being-in-the-world.

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Chris Scalzo

The I of the Other: Mindfulness-Based Diagnosis and the Question of Sanity

G. Kenneth Bradford (2013). St. Paul, Minnesota, USA: Paragon House.

For those of a phenomenological leaning who are critical of the pathologising of psychological distress, and for whom mindfulness is important, this book is a must.

Amid the debate on the future direction of counselling and psychotherapy there is a great deal of criticism of the *DSM* from many sources – not least existential therapists, and this book critiques the epistemological (as well as ethical) foundations of it. However, it goes further and Bradford proposes an alternative way of diagnosis, a phenomenological-mindfulness contemplative approach, based on an understanding of sanity that recognises psychological distress as existential rather than pathological and madness as being often primarily a social construct.

While neither *DSM* nor the criticism of it is new, there is a contemporary relevance to the debate, given the questions about the role of counselling and psychotherapy, potential regulation of the profession, NICE guidelines and preferential treatment for certain modalities, the government's policies regarding mental health provision, the wellbeing agenda and the deeper philosophical implications of the medical model and 'economicisation' (not a term used in the book but one that I believe conveys his point) i.e.