


## Book Reviews

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Tim Grimwood, *Key debates in social work and philosophy*, New York: Routledge, 2016; 194 pp. \$42.36. ISBN: 978-0-415-74454-6.

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*Key Debates in Social Work and Philosophy*, discusses the manner in which social work, social work education, and social work ethics are based in philosophical thought. Grimwood states the book is not a philosophy of social work directly, but a book about intersections and resonances between the two disciplines. The introduction sets the stage by introducing the intersectionality between philosophy, interpretation, and social work. Grimwood argues generalist social work skills, such as assessing, active listening, and adherence to the code of ethics, are grounded in philosophical concepts, questions and discussions regarding “how meaning is created, what self is, why agency is important, and the nature of good” (p. 2).

Chapter 1 focuses on social work and hermeneutics. Grimwood highlights Gray and Webb’s definition of interpretation and views social worker in a position of privilege as social workers are “responsible for making sense of human reality” (p. 17) by recovering the meaning of client’s actions through interpretation. Grimwood uses the philosophical works of Gadamer (the hermeneutics of trust, hermeneutic circle of knowledge and reflection) and Habermas (the hermeneutics of suspicion) to clarify interpretive acts in an effort to assist the reader in answering the questions: What is interpretation? What is meaning? and What is understanding? This chapter is useful to generalist practitioners, field instructors, generalist educators and social work supervisors as it is an opportunity to take a deep dive in discussing interpretation, meaning making and understanding as it pertains to listening, assessing a client’s narrative as well as self -reflection.

In chapter 2, there is a focus on community or the missing community. Grimwood examines dominant philosophical claims in order to define community as shaped by liberal and communitarian viewpoints. The author highlights philosophical perspectives of community, society, and modernity with a focus on the literary works of Hegel and Schelling, Ferdinand Tönnies (gemeinschaft and gesellschaft) (p.38), as well as John Rawls’ liberal view of community as it relates to

justice at the level of societal organization. This chapter concludes with Grimwood aligning community social work values with the philosophy of Jean-Luc Nancy and the in-operative society and the interdependent and holistic worldview of community. With Nancy’s view of community in mind, interpretation of meaning is important as it relates to understanding the narratives/storytelling/folklore of community traditions especially within instances of cultural and geographical differences.

Chapter 3 focuses on identity. Here Grimwood points out the ways in which identity is central to the practice of social work, with a focus on advocating for the less fortunate and marginalized. The author discussed paradoxes with inclusion and the narratives of marginalized communities as told from the service user perspective, which can be opposite from that of the narrative of the marginalized. Grimwood uses the philosophical work of the Nietzsche’s challenge: resentment (profound feelings of inferiority that is scapegoated onto the perceived source of feelings) and reactive power to focus on perspectivism and the political nature of values as a juxtaposition to inclusion, specifically Price and Simpson’s critique of the United Kingdom’s Valuing People Policy. Social work should diversify its expectation of inclusion as the author indicates.

In Chapter 4, Grimwood suggests social work should focus more on the philosophical undertaking and create the profession’s own philosophy and principles. The author sees that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is westernized and does not relate to all people, especially those who religious or adhere to cultural concepts that are in opposition to these rules, for all people and all nations. He questioned social works’ participation in policy, in the formation of UDHR, and if the profession should involve itself, in such matters. The profession of social work standards composes of a westernized undertone that removes the acculturation of community to assimilation of practice, where culture is often lost. The profession of social work is reliant on serving individuals, groups, families, communities, and organizations; therefore, the profession of social work does have a place in recognizing and intervening to assist people in their development and needs on all levels, including policy. The profession of social work can apply more culturally competent policies, theories, and competencies for all people and less westernized concepts, yet stay true to the dignity and respect for all.

Grimwood in chapter 5 reviews the purposes of documentation and the intertwining of text (the writing of research

and case notes), practice and “that the philosophical problem of how text and action relate remains pertinent to both” (107). He explores the importance of paperwork and the ways it could create, protest or “maintain power relations within the world” (p.109). Grimwood uses the works of Judith Butler, and Jacques Derrida (metaphysics of presence) to expound on his ideas of interpellation, identity, bureaucracy and the differences between text and action.

The use of self is discussed by the author in chapter 6. From a philosophical viewpoint, reflection of self is always needed, and changes over time as the world and our issues change. As social workers are agents of change, the evaluation of self is imperative. Grimwood provides an historical overview of the use of self in social work and the tension of “what kind of self” (p. 130) is imbedded in social work education. The author posits the modern philosophical viewpoints of Taylor (malaises of identity, naturalistic vs narrative identity) to expand the evaluation of self. The notion of self is ever evolving and is always in need of reevaluation.

In chapter 7, Grimwood says the more culture is recognized as individualistic, the less communal and inclusive culture is. The author suggests cultural competency should take on a hermeneutical perspective that involves interpretation, meaning, and understanding, not just westernized horizon. In chapter 8, the author brings to a close the ways that philosophy is echoed in

social work discourses. Grimwood also discusses the notion of locus of expertise in social work practice and answering the where, and how, of knowledge as relates to answering “what kind of expertise should have, on what basis, they hold expertise, how this expertise is demonstrated and how it might be challenged” (p. 172)? Strengthening the knowledge perspective in the profession wholistically will strengthen the epistemological practice of the profession.

Overall Grimwood, uses social work conceptual material and limited empirical data to support his claims of the utility of philosophical application to the ideologies of the profession of social work. The author also uses reflective questioning to aid the profession of social work to apply concepts discussed by practical examples through his reflective practice-related incorporated questions in each chapter. Clear and compelling applications for direct practice specifically, reflective listening, person in environment, reflective practice and interpretation are in chapters 1 and 7. This book is especially appropriate for doctoral studies, and advanced practice classes that focus on the philosophical perspective of social work and policy.

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M. S. Kelly, C. R. Massat, & R. Constable. (2022). *School social work: Practice, policy, and research*. New York, NY: Oxford. 649 pp, ISBN 9780197530382

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Over the last few years, public education has been an epicenter topic for some of the most recent and highly contested elections in the U.S., not to mention navigating public education throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. People have protested masks for students, for not allowing critical race theory taught in the public schools, and have seen the implementation of active shooter drills. 2020 not only proved to be an extemporaneously challenging year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but our nation saw a boiling over with the tragic murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and the protests that ensued. These tragedies have brought up complex issues such as the part that racism plays in our public schools, trying to better understand and implement anti-oppressive approaches to social work, and for this review, specifically school social work.

Kelly, Massat, and Constable (2021) have published the ninth edition of *School Social Work: Practice, Policy, and Research*. This ninth edition attempts to reflect how school social work practice affects students' academic, behavioral, and social outcomes and the communities they serve. The authors

have divided the 30 chapters into five sections: history and general perspectives in school social work, the policy context for school social work practice, assessment and service delivery development in school social work, policy practice, and multitiered interventions. Since the last edition published in 2016, the editors have added nine new chapters and 12 new scholars and social work practitioners to discuss important issues that have added increasing pressure for schools and practice advancements for school social workers. One of the main strengths of this book is the clarity it brings and how easy it is to grasp the concepts laid out in each chapter.

The first section of history and general perspectives in school social work sets the stage for what school social work is, its history, and as a specialization within our field. In chapter one, Kelly narrates school social work's history and features three significant developments the editors asked the authors to incorporate for this edition: using evidence-informed practice, trauma-informed care, anti-racist school social work practice, and the role of the school social worker. Kelly will describe in greater detail evidence-informed practice in chapter three and trauma-informed care in chapter 30. Phillip opens up chapter two by using an analogy from *Alice in Wonderland*, of Alice falling down the rabbit hole and school social workers moving through the wild and new wonders in the school setting. The chapter grounds itself in organizational and ecosystemic perspectives, and encourages the school social worker to recon and gather information,