Emotion, Space and Society xxx (2013) 1–7

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Emotion, Space and Society

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/emospa

Intimacy and the face of the other: A philosophical study of infant institutionalization and deprivation

Eva-Maria Simms*

Psychology Department, Duquesne University, 6000 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15282, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 4 June 2013
Received in revised form
18 November 2013
Accepted 20 November 2013

Keywords:
Romanian orphans
Attachment
Merleau-Ponty
Chiasm
Deprivation
Neglect

ABSTRACT

The orphans of Romania were participants in what is sometimes called "the forbidden experiment": depriving human infants of intimacy, affection, and human contact is an inhuman practice. It is an experiment which no ethical researcher would set out to do. This paper examines historical data, case histories, and research findings which deal with early deprivation and performs a phenomenological analysis of deprivation phenomena as they impact emotional and physical development. A key element of deprivation is the absence of intimate relationships with other human beings. However, the absence of intimacy impacts not only the social/emotional abilities of infants, but their very ability to perceive the world. Philosophically and from a radically Merleau-Pontean perspective, the intimate face of the other appears to be a world opening event for the child. Its absence has a profound impact on the child's experience of embodiment, coexistence, spatiality, temporality, and language. When seen through early deprivation, intimacy appears as a necessary foundation for establishing the transcendence of the world beyond perceptual presence, and it provides the possibility for language, culture, and history.

> Mother, you made him small, it was you who began him; he was new to you, you bent over his new eyes the friendly world, and held off the hostile.
>
> Rilke, 3rd Duino Elegy

1. The psychology of deprivation and intimacy

1.1. Attachment: cultural practices, scientific data, philosophical concepts

In 1915 Henry Chapin, a New York physician, investigated ten foundling homes across the country. In a report to the American Pediatric Association he stated that in all but one of the homes, every child admitted was dead by the age of two. Other pediatricians from across the country made similar reports: many foundling homes had mortality rates of 100% for infants under one year of age (Blum, 2002: 149).

These shocking statistics are part of the history of childhood and how we think about the relationship between children and adults: do infants need hygiene, food, and a disciplined institutional structure, or do they need physical contact, engaged social interactions, and attachment from the adults in their lives? In the wake of Ainsworth et al. (1978), Bowlby (1969), Harlow and Harlow (1986) and Spitz (1949) developmental psychology has answered that question in favor of attachment. US culture has answered it by abolishing orphanages almost completely across the country and by replacing them with the foster care system.

The following study is an attempt to explore the deeper, existential structure of attachment by approaching it through a number of perspectives. We will give a brief sketch of the history of the institutionalization of infants and show how attachment and its absence plays out in the cultural landscape; we will lay out some of the contemporary concepts and data about deprivation from neuroscience and occupational therapy and bring them together with a phenomenological analysis of a case-history from a Romanian orphanage, which reveals the intersection of attachment/intimacy and perceptual/neurological development on the personal level, but also in the larger population; finally we will conclude with a philosophical analysis of the absence and presence of the face of the other and what it means for the trajectory of a human life.

At the heart of this philosophical and psychological inquiry lies the disturbing observation that deprivation in infancy not only leads to disturbances in interpersonal and attachment relationships, but that it restructures the perceptual and cognitive

* Tel.: +1 412 396 6515.
E-mail address: simms@duq.edu.

1755-4586/$ – see front matter © 2013 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2013.11.008

functions of the body as well as the child's relationship to its meaningful world. Inspired by the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty (1942, 1962, 1968) this paper applies what I call a *chiasmic psychology*, which allows us to disentangle some of the complex phenomena of early deprivation. It borrows three hermeneutic procedures from his work:

1. A descriptive phenomenological study of a particular human experience that shows some of the deeper and complex structures of human existence.
2. A critical discussion of concepts in psychology and an attempt to put them to the test and widen their scope in interchange with case material and other qualitative, experiential data. Integrating experiential data with the population data from the scientific research literature gives us a double view because it brings together the deep structures of an individual existence with the general perspectives of data and concepts in the sciences – and hopefully agitates both and pushes the inquiry further.
3. A philosophical inquiry into the complex existential web of embodiment, space, time, and others in the formation of personal identity. Following Merleau-Ponty's ontology (1968), this leads to a perspective that tries to think the subject of psychology from a radically non-dualistic, *chiasmic* perspective.

1.2. A Brief historical excursion

Henry Chapin's report from 1915 was a snapshot of the deplorable practices in the treatment of institutionalized children that have continued in one place or another through much of the 20th century. Forward to the 1930's: the trend in medicine was to isolate infants in sterile environments to protect them from the "germs" that could kill them, and from the people who would carry those germs. Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago had now a mortality rate of only 30%, as reported by staff physician Dr. Brennan. Progress, you say? The 30% rate describes mostly the youngest children, the infants in their first year of life.

> They were coming in to those spotless hygienic rooms and inexplicably fading away. At children's Memorial, babies were dying seven times faster than the older children; they accounted for much of that stubborn 30 percent mortality. Brennan also noted that babies who did best in the hospital were those who were 'the nurses' pets, those who enjoyed a little extra cuddling despite hospital rules. Sometimes the hospital could turn an illness around, he said, by asking a nurse to "mother" a child, just a little.
>
> Blum, 2002: 44

Forward another decade: in 1947 René Spitz and Katherine Wolf compared infants raised in a foundling home with others who were institutionalized at birth, but still attended by their mothers. In both institutions the children were well housed and well fed. Their documentary film of the foundling home, *Grief: A Peril in Infancy* made the rounds of medical society meetings and shocked fellow doctors. It has since then become a classic in psychology. Spitz found that the infants in the "Nursery", who were attended by their mothers, thrived like normal infants. The "Foundlinghome" group, however, did not fare so well. During a twelve-month period all children slid in developmental norms to 45% of normal functioning in mastery of perception, bodily functions, social relations, memory and imitation, manipulative ability, and of intelligence. Spitz remarks on a startling factor:

> In a five years' observation period during which we observed a total of 239 children, each for one year or more, "Nursery" did not lose a single child through death. In "Foundlinghome" on the other hand, 37 per cent of the children died during a two years' observation period. The high mortality is but the most extreme consequence of the general decline, both physical and psychological, which is shown by children completely starved of emotional interchange.
>
> Spitz, 1949: 149

Forward to 1990. The ABC news show 20/20 broadcast the first images from Romanian orphanages. The shocking footage showed malnourished infants housed in cribs, naked children housed in cages, rocking teenagers sitting on a ledge or tied up on urine soaked floors. By 1989 170,000 children lived in Romanian orphanages, many under inhuman conditions (Zeanah et al., 2003). Between 1990 and 1993 US families adopted ca. 2800 Romanian orphans, and many more came to live with British and Canadian parents (Groze and Ileana, 1996; Gunnar et al., 2000). Well-meaning, warm-hearted Western parents believed that love would be enough to raise these children and integrate them into their families and societies. Many of them were in for a rough awakening: children institutionalized for more than eight months have physical, cognitive, and emotional problems which *generally do not resolve themselves* but require prolonged therapeutic intervention (Ruggiero and Johnson, 2009). The longer children are institutionalized, the more severe and resistant to treatment these impairments become.

This brief historical sketch about the institutionalization of children mirrors 20th century cultural practices and ideas about what child rearing is and how to frame the relationship between parents and children. From early ideas about the importance of distance and discipline in Chapin's time and the belief that infants in the first years of life are impervious to outside influence, to the urgency for distance and germ control in Brennan's time, to the appearance of attachment to the mother in Spitz' time and finally the recognition of cognitive and behavioral deficits in Romanian orphans, child care institutions reflect the ideology and the power discourse of their time and culture (Foucault, 1978). Amassing this information and putting it in a timeline, however, has another effect: it is disturbing to see how long it took to understand and acknowledge the impact of institutionalized spaces and institutionalized human relationships on young human children.

1.3. Deprivation and the senses

Henry Chapin's institutionalized babies, Renee Spitz' foundling home group, and the orphans of Romania were participants in what researchers who work with children call "the forbidden experiment" (Shattuck, 1980): no ethical researcher today would intentionally set out to prevent the formation of attachment in human infants because it is a cruel practice and has detrimental effects on the child's future development. It is forbidden to place infants in environments where they experience deprivation that causes long-term developmental impairments. But many adoptive families today live with the results of the "forbidden experiment" and researchers from a number of disciplines have worked with adopted Romanian orphans to understand the effects of early deprivation and to devise treatment methods. Perhaps we can learn something from the plight of the Romanian orphans and their terrible situation: no institutionalized child in the future should have to suffer such a fate.

Please cite this article in press as: Simms, E.-M., Intimacy and the face of the other: A philosophical study of infant institutionalization and deprivation, Emotion, Space and Society (2013), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2013.11.008

One of the current trends in conceptualizing the effects of early deprivation is to understand its impact on brain development, and particularly on the development of the sensory system (Cermak and Groza, 1998; Lin et al., 2005; Ruggiero and Johnson, 2009). This shift in discourse has implications for therapeutic practice: attachment therapies alone, which have been practiced among child psychotherapists since the 1960's, are not effective in dealing with the neurological problems of neglected children. Occupational therapists, in the wake of Ayres' (1978) work on sensory integration, have devised therapeutic methods that deal with the disintegration of the sensory capacities, which is one of the core symptoms of early institutionalization and neglect. Sensory integration disorder (SID) or, more recently, sensory processing disorder (SPD) is a cluster of symptoms often shown by children who suffer neglect in their first years of life. SID encompasses a number of sensory malfunctions such as over or under-sensitivity to touch, textures, sounds, foods; self-stimulating behaviors such as rocking, head-banging, or whirling; inability to maintain balance or to perceive spatial depth; unawareness of body position; unresponsiveness to pain or extreme temperature; poor fine motor control; difficulty processing language; difficulty processing thought; inability to anticipate results of actions; resistance to change (Ayres, 1979; Cermak and Groza, 1998). In the last decade, neuroscientists have verified the observations of occupational therapists and shown a clear connection between early sensory experience and brain development (Johnson, 2001; Stein et al., 2009; Wallace, 2004). They have also confirmed the detrimental effects of institutionalization on developing neurological processes (Lin et al., 2005).

1.4. The absence of intimacy: what the world looks like

Imagine an infant warehoused in a sub standard Romanian orphanage. From video footage and first person accounts we can get a pretty clear picture. The baby, let's call him Rudy, is living behind the bars of a white crib, which is part of a row of other cribs which house other infants lying on their backs rocking side to side or flicking their fingers before their eyes. A guinea pig feeding bottle is tied to the stiles of his crib, and once in a while someone passes by to add more water. Baby formula is fed from a bottle propped up against the rails. He is never picked up for longer than the few seconds it takes to change his diaper. He gazes through his cage at the whitewashed walls on which light and shadows play and indicate the time of day. He hears the wash of noise around him, and sometimes he is woken up in the darkness by the wondrous rumbling and singing of the pipes in the heating system (which only rarely gives of any heat).

Organisms are very good at adapting to their particular environments. Bodies have very efficient ways of measuring and adjusting their actions to fit into a milieu, a process that the gestalt psychologists called "equilibrium" (Merleau-Ponty, 1942/1983). Rudy's milieu has a specific experiential texture, marked by the passages of light over a grey wall and the ebb and tide of sounds that indicate the coming of food or the surprising music of the night. His hands can only touch each other or tug at his feet or hair, or sometimes pull him across the mattress toward the feeding bottle. His shoulders and hips can rock from side to side, which makes the ceiling move or the stiles play with each other. If he closes his eyes he feels the rocking everywhere and it is good and soothing. His developmental trajectory is to fit into this sensory world and to be responsive to it, i.e. to be in equilibrium or balance with the perceived world around him.

Rudy's brain, as all infant brains, is in the process of 'exuberant synaptogenesis', which means it is making more synaptic connections between neurons than are actually needed and pruning away pathways that do not get stimulated. It is ready to receive input from the environment and adapt its neuron patterns to what is useful within that particular experiential milieu. Rudy is finding his equilibrium and is becoming very good at living in this particular world. His brain says: motor cortex? We don't need much of that since we don't move through space. Don't need much depth perception, either, and since we don't walk, who cares about balance. Fingers don't get much use, so forget about them. It is enough mostly to wave them around. But let's commit some neurons to the perception of those lovely shades of grey, and let's pay attention to the spectrum of sounds and the swell of their intensity. Those of us who can only imagine Rudy's perceptual world have no idea what other sensory dimensions this infant is attuned to. Unable to process language, perhaps he is a Mozart of the everyday soundscape; unable to perceive depth, he might nevertheless be a Cézanne of the volumes of light. Does he rock because he is attuned to his heartbeat and his breath and how it syncopates with the swish of his diaper over the mattress? Does he vary luminous or musical forms in his imagination in order to amuse himself? We do not know.

We only know that when Rudy is adopted at 18 months by an American family he cannot sit up or walk, does not speak for another 2 years, shows very little affect and no interest in others, does not maintain eye contact with anyone, and hates to be touched. When Rudy is evaluated at the age of three years and two months, he is easily overloaded by sensations and has trouble focusing; he shows tactile defensiveness and squirms away when his parents touch him; he drops things all the time and cannot discriminate shapes and textures with his fingers; he constantly crashes into things, even big things like chairs and cars because he does not know where they are in relation to his body and where his body is in space (proprioception), and because he easily loses his balance; he perks up when he hears noises in the plumbing system or sees the twinkling of Christmas lights, but he has trouble processing and articulating spoken language and to filter out of the flow of speech what is important. I know this because I have read Rudy's evaluation reports and supervised a dissertation which is a case study written by Rudy's American therapist (McParlane, 2001). The time before the adoption is veiled in Rudy's memory, and we can only reconstruct his existence in the orphanage from the context of other Romanian orphan's situations reported by eyewitnesses, and perhaps also from the traces that environment has carved into his body.

1.5. Primary structures of intimacy

Rudy's story presents us, like a cutout silhouette, with the outline of intimacy in its very absence. The relationship between mother and infant, as I have shown elsewhere (Simms, 2001), is an intimate chiasmic form on the level of the body as organism, as well as the level of the body as a world-open and significative structure. Milk belongs to mother and infant together, and the senses of the newborn already anticipate the shape and contrast of the breast and the texture of milk. Because we are born from a female body and are designed to be nourished by it, the infant body already has a particular thrust toward the other, a desire that is blind *and* intentional. Even in primates the desire for the other is not only for feeding and satisfying the hunger instinct, as Harlow and Harlow (1986) have shown, but also for comforting touch. The first intimacy mammals — including humans — experience is a constellation of scents, sounds, sights and touches which we call mother. Infants are born to desire this maternal form because it guarantees survival — and it feels good. Only human beings can take the structure of this primary relationship and modify it following the rules of technological inventions: isolate an activity from its context

Please cite this article in press as: Simms, E.-M., Intimacy and the face of the other: A philosophical study of infant institutionalization and deprivation, Emotion, Space and Society (2013), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2013.11.008

and intensify it through a technological implement (Simms, 2010). The breast of the mother can be abstracted into a feeding mechanism: the plastic bottle can be held by anyone, the cradling arms can be replaced by a bouncy chair, the soothing voice by a musical mobile. If non-human species do not feed and touch their young, the young will die. Human infants, on the other hand, have great resilience and accept a good deal of modification.

The foundling homes and the Romanian orphanages were such a modification that was pushed to and often beyond the limits of the infant's resilience. They reduced human existence to its most basic conditions: the need for food and shelter. But as we have seen, food and shelter are not enough, because most infants did not survive the first year, and those who did were severely damaged. Removing the intimate relationship with caring others from an infants' life has severe consequences for the infants' willingness to live and their sense of intentionality: neglected infants become depressed and prone to die of otherwise minor infections, as Bowlby (1969) has shown. It also damages their perceptual system and their cognitive and emotional capacities, as we saw in Rudy's case. If we eliminate the co-existential dimension from a beginning human life, we not only destroy a child's emotional and social well being, but this absence is also inscribed in the infants' perceptual abilities, bodily awareness, spatial sense, and symbolic capacities.

2. The philosophy of intimacy and deprivation

2.1. Infant consciousness: a chiasmic perspective

Previously we looked at the institutionalized infant from a socio-historical, discursive perspective, tried to imaginatively reconstruct Rudy's personal experience, and supplemented this by more general findings from research with children like him. But to find our way into the structures of infant experience calls for a *phenomenological* move. Phenomenology describes and analyzes human *experience* as it is lived in particular situations. Merleau-Ponty's late philosophical ontology (1968) moved the concerns of philosophy beyond the perspective of the subject and its constituting consciousness. A psychology which follows Merleau-Ponty's ontology sees consciousness and the subject no longer as self enclosed entities, but as particular phenomena in a larger, impersonal (or 'transcendent') field of being, 'Experience' is not an outward expression of an interior subject, but "an absolute flux of singular *Erlebnisse*; there are fields and a field of fields, with a style and a typicality" (1968, p.171). A phenomenological analysis inspired by Merleau-Ponty's ontology aims for the relationship between the field of perception and the "field of fields", which is the *whole* sensorial and ideal field, which he sometimes calls "world", sometimes "totality", and sometimes "Being". *Experience* is no longer the property of a reflecting consciousness, but an embodied and situated event arising out of a larger, impersonal constituting field. As Merleau-Ponty said: "he who sees is of it and is in it" (1968, p. 100).

Following Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, all lived experience is embodied, spatial, temporal, and social, and any individual situation can be interpreted as a complex and singular manifestation of these fundamental structures. Because of developmental processes, children have a continuously changing relationship to the world, which is different than that of adults: they have a different 'equilibrium' (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 2010), i.e. a way of perceiving and responding to what has meaning in its bio-psychological environment. This has to be taken into account when we try to understand the development of intimacy and deprivation in early childhood.

Merleau-Ponty, who held a chair in child psychology at the Sorbonne, took the Piagetian description of the young child's magical conception of the world seriously. The child's assumes that his/her perspective on the world is shared by all (egocentrism), that there is no "inner" life but that thought is with and among things (realism), and that all things and beings have their own life and intentionality and are related to each other and to the child (participation) (Piaget, 1929/51). Perceptional intelligence precedes symbolic logical cognition, there is no reflective distance and little self-awareness, and the young child does not clearly distinguish inside and outside or self and other, but "forming with them, as it were, one block of common life wherein the perspectives of each are not yet distinguished" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: p. 12).[1] At the beginning of human existence we find a naïve certitude of the world, a perceptual faith, a carnal, affective response to the invitation of things and people, and a form of thinking which is prethetic, pre-dualistic and keyed into the physiognomy of things: *la pensée sauvage*, "wild thought", *l'Etre sauvage,* "wild Being" (VI 12–13).

If we place ourselves into the middle of the infant's world and attempt to truly think existence in a *chiasmic* way "entirely outside of the philosophy of the subject and the object" (VI 207), the perceptual world appears as a system of corresponding entities that follow gestalt principles. The light playing with the purples and grays on Rudy's wall is a figure on the ground of visibility. The light and shadow on the wall captivate Rudy's attentive gaze. They appeal to him because, by seeing, *he is of them*. His seeing has been "premeditated in counterpoint in embryonic development: through labor upon itself the visible body provides for the hollow whence a vision will come, inaugurates the long maturation at whose term it suddenly will see..." (VI 147). Despite his narrow circumstances, Rudy lives an openness to *his* particular world, a desire to perceive which is completed by the play of color on the wall. Rudy's body as a visible among visibles, is one aspect of a general manner of being, a specific modulation of the world, *flesh*. The light on the wall is chiasmically twined into his seeing and the very structure of his organism. Merleau-Ponty's notion of flesh describes the intimate encroachment of body and world, their "coiling over", which differentiates the seer and makes him be and be more than what he was before the seeing. The following passage captures the depth of a chiasmic visual experience and I invite you, as you read it, to picture Rudy's world as he commits his body and focuses on the visibility of the shadow play on the window and the wall:

> This concentration of the visible about one of them, or this bursting forth of the mass of the body toward things, which makes a vibration of my skin become the sleek and the rough, makes me *follow with my eyes* the movements and contours of the things themselves, this magical relation, this pact between them and me according to which I lend them my body in order that they inscribe upon it and give me their resemblance, this fold, this central cavity of the visible which is my vision, these two mirror arrangements of the seeing and the visible, the touching and the touched, form a close-bound system that I count on, define a vision in general and a certain style of visibility from which I cannot detach myself. (…) The flesh (of the world or my own) is not contingency, chaos, but a texture that returns to itself and conforms to itself (VI 146).

To think infant existence from the perspective of the flesh is to grasp the profound reversibility between perceiver and perceived, seer and world and the "magical" relation and "pact" between them

[1] References to Merleau-Ponty's *The Visible and the Invisible* (Merleau-Ponty, 1968) are abbreviated in the text as VI.

Please cite this article in press as: Simms, E.-M., Intimacy and the face of the other: A philosophical study of infant institutionalization and deprivation, Emotion, Space and Society (2013), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2013.11.008

that forms a close-bound system, a *gestalt*. Out of the generality and anonymity of the sensible, which is the flesh, Being manifests itself in particular forms, "pivots" or "hinges" around which signification is gathered. The play of light is always more than what is right there: it toys with shadow, it glances off the wood of the windowsill, it illuminates the crack in the ceiling, and it moves across the planes in predictable, but also sometimes unexpected ways. The light throws some parts of the room into shadow and highlights others. It suffers things and exists because of them. It suffers Rudy's eyes and exists because of them. It teaches Rudy's eyes and Rudy's brain how to see and how to be.

Through the notion of the flesh Merleau-Ponty articulates an intimacy between body and world that is more primary than the intimacy between human beings. Perceptual faith bespeaks a primary adherence of the body to Being and beings on the level of the organism, expressed through the words "chiasm", "intertwining", and "*entrelacs*". These words name an original intimacy between organism and world, a fundamental adherence, knowing, and wanting which lie at the heart of animate matter. Deprivation, from this perspective, leads not to the failure of perception, but to a particular adherence to, and knowing and wanting of a narrowed world and its significative structure. The word "chiasm" creates a concept for thinking intimacy beyond the human, interpersonal dimension and allows us to understand how the absence of human intimacy impacts the very structure of the organism itself. It also brings into relief what it is that the human other adds to the life of the infant organism.

2.2. The intimate other: a style of presence

As we saw above, Rudy's insertion into his *particular* perceptual world is still intact (though restricted), and within its parameters he adapts and functions well. However, his world, as shaped and installed by the Romanian political system, is narrowed, solipsistic, and closed off. The most glaring lack is the absence of interaction with caring adults. The intimate other is a human being who takes an interest in Rudy, touches him, talks to him, and spends time with him in consistent and predictable ways. It is interesting to note that in Brennan's report about the hospitalized infants from the 1930's the "nurses' pets", those who were "mothered", were the only ones who survived the institutions more or less intact (Blum, 2002: 44), as were 100% of the infants in Spitz's caring "nursery group" (Spitz, 1949).

From a chiasmic perspective, how do we think the intimate other who appears in the infant's world – or failed to appear for Rudy as he or she walked indifferently past his crib? A Merleau-Pontean, phenomenological framework allows us to think the intimate other in pre-thetic, preverbal ways, i.e. not as an epistemological concept or internal representation, not as an ego, not as a bound subject, but as an experienced *field* of signification, a gestalt or form, a *style of presence*. The intimate other is not so much an individual person or identity for the infant, but a certain modulation of the world, a meaningful physiognomy (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) which is entwined with the infants' reflexes, senses, and gestures. If we think the mother as a *gestalt* in Merleau-Ponty's sense, she appears as a field being, "a pivot of a system of equivalencies", the "*Etwas* of which the fragmentary phenomena will be the manifestation" (VI 205).[2] She is always *more* than what appears and is visible. Merleau-Ponty would call this her *transcendence* and *invisibility*.

In Merleau-Ponty's philosophy the word transcendence refers to the dynamic interplay of presence and absence in perceptual experience. Objects, for example, present themselves always in profiles, which means that they are never completely present in perception. However, the sides we do not see and perceive are still active in their "non-sense" or absence. And so is the rest of the perceptual field, which forms the ground on which the perception of a particular thing as a figure is possible. Vision, Merleau-Ponty (1962: p. 389) says, "fulfills more than it promises, which constantly outruns its premises and is inwardly prepared only by my primordial opening upon a field of transcendence." It is marked by constant surpassings: by a "more" which makes appearances "pregnant" with significations, by a relational field which gives every phenomenon its ground and background, by a world with shifting horizons which allows meaning to emerge, "by an *ek-stase*" (389) by which the subject constantly is with and in things and surpasses and transcends itself.

The mother as a transcendent being is chiasmically entwined with the infant, and his being turns to her in desire. She will lean over his crib and he will see his own being in the smile of her face (Winnicott, 1971); she will pick him up and he will lean his head into her shoulder and he will know his head and chest along her contours and his arms and legs because she touches them (Harlow and Harlow, 1986); she will leave and return, and he will anticipate the future by the rhythms that her coming sets (Piaget, 1970); she will speak to him and he will come to know a second world of significations which only lives in language and which promises him a culture and a history (Luria, 1981). The intimate other brings with her a transcendent world in which the new human being is a figure and an actor, however small.

The newborn's dependency requires intense attention and protection from an adult. The world is opened up to the infant when the adult carries him around and shows him what is in the next room and outside the window. His skin comes to awareness under her caress, and he finds the soles of his feet and his center of gravity as she lifts him up and places his feet on the ground. She mirrors his voice, facial expressions, gestures, and he knows himself through her face and her body. She approves or disapproves of his actions, and he learns to know the taboos of her culture and will have internalized her moral emotions by the time he is two years old (Kagan and Lamb, 1990).

However, the above named affordances which the intimate other provides are still in the order of perception and not so different from what other mammals do with their infants: they touch and feed, encourage and reprimand, and teach and guide them into the dog, chimpanzee, or whale worlds. They are tied to the here and now of the perceiving body and the circle of visible, tangible, audible, scented things. We know, for example, that children raised by wolves can survive and function in the wolf world (even though they remain "puppies" in the wolf pack for many years), and are affectionate and protective of their den mates (Candland, 1995). But with the face and the body of the human other something new breaks into the infant's world. A call and a challenge are issued, and the perceptual world is slowly transformed.

2.3. The face of the other: a Merleau-Pontean reading

Winnicot asked what the baby sees when he or she looks at the mother's face. His answer was, that "ordinarily, what the baby sees is himself or herself. In other words the mother is looking at the baby and *what she looks like is related to what she sees there*" (Winnicott, 1971: 112).

[2] Since Rudy is male, I have chosen to assign female pronouns to his intimate other in order to keep the text readable. The discussion of the bond between infant and mother goes back to my earlier discussion about the philosophy of breastfeeding (Simms, 2001). However, fathers and other human beings in the infant's attachment ensemble can become the primary attachment persons for an infant.

Please cite this article in press as: Simms, E.-M., Intimacy and the face of the other: A philosophical study of infant institutionalization and deprivation, Emotion, Space and Society (2013), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2013.11.008

As a chiasmic form, infant and mother's seeing are two sides of the same seeing. Her gaze sees him as a *transcendent* being: his newness and fragility calls upon her protectiveness, his "babyness" makes her smile, his facial responsiveness and smile is an invitation to speak to him and to engage in synchronous play (Stern, 1985). There is more here than meets the eye, and it is *this transcendent dimension of the baby which she sees in him* and expresses with a smile and a modulation in her voice. His presence has changed her life irrevocably and is woven into her daily tasks. The remembrance of his past lives in her body, and his presence in her daily life is continually new and surprising; she has hopes for his future, when he will be a bigger boy and she will see more clearly who he is. In turn, he sees in her face not a configuration of facial parts, but her whole expression. *What he sees there is his own transcendence, the more that he can be, his own surpassing, his becoming.*

Tronick et al. (1978) and others have shown the close match in gesture and voice in facial interactions between babies and the people in their attachment ensemble, and how upset a baby becomes when the other does not respond but goes "still face". The still face of the parent is a refusal of the chiasmic form, a retreat into solipsism, a denial of the invitation of the other and the transcendence of the world. Every infant who has had a good rapport with her or his parents responds with distress to the still face experiment. Erikson (1950/63) has shown that infant trust is established in the first year of life, and that it has three dimensions: trust in the other, who is predictable; trust in oneself and that one is loveable and worthy; and trust in the world as a good place. Other, self, and world are an insoluble psychological configuration at the beginning of human life. The unresponsive or absent adult threatens an infants' self-worth and identity as well as his or her openness and capacity to perceive and venture into the human world with confidence and curiosity.

While Rudy is inserted into and functions in a non-human, purely perceptual world, he is never called to see himself in what he sees. The light and shadows are indifferent to him. Something is missing even as the light evokes the pleasure of seeing and claims his rapt attention by illuminating some things and hiding others in an endless game of peek-a-boo. *The light does not look at him with pleasure, does not touch him in desire. It does not modify itself in order to interact with him*. The world is a panorama spread out before him and does not break though the wall of his solipsism. It does not reveal to him his own transcendence but only his insertion into the flow of perceptual events. He is, in Merleau-Ponty's terms, a creature who shows "vital behavior" and adaptability to its particular milieu but not "symbolic" or "human behavior" (Merleau-Ponty, 1942/1983). Rudy is caught up in a world before symbolism and language, caught up in the flow of significations and the "coherent deformations" which the sensory impressions produce in his body, caught up in the tacit meaning on the surface of the world. He is exhausting himself "as animal 'intelligence' does in kaleidoscopically producing new landscapes for action" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 81) without ever having any real distance from them. He is completely submerged in his familiar perceptual world. He is held hostage by the very fact that we are perceptual beings. He can only distance himself from what he perceives by shutting down his sense organs in the autistic repetitions of head-banging and finger-flicking.

If someone in Rudy's orphanage had taken an interest in him and stopped by every day to pick him up and talk to him, his world would have been rearranged. Again, because this is the future that did not happen to Rudy, we can only imagine such a scenario and compare it with what we know from healthy infant environments. The presence of the intimate other changes the infant's world and the other's otherness calls him out of his solipsism. He sees her coming toward his crib, waves his hands, calls to her, and smiles in anticipation of her greeting and her smile. She walks upright, and though he cannot walk he sees a human body walking. He looks at the other and finds himself become visible. This passage from Merleau-Ponty's *The Visible and the Invisible* describes the experience of true inter-subjectivity, and we picture Rudy one more time as if this even had happened to him and someone is truly looking at him:

> For the first time, the seeing that I am is for me really visible; for the first time I appear to myself completely turned inside out under my own eyes. For the first time also, my movements no longer proceed unto the things to be seen, to be touched, or unto my own body occupied in seeing and in touching them, but they address themselves to the body in general and for itself (whether it be my own or that of another), because for the first time, through the other body, I see that, in its coupling with the flesh of the world, the body contributes more than it receives, adding to the world that I see the treasure necessary for what the other body sees. For the first time, the body no longer couples itself up with the world, it clasps another body, applying itself to it carefully with its whole extension, forming tirelessly with its hands the strange statue which in its turn gives everything it receives; the body is lost outside of the world and its goals, fascinated by the unique occupation of floating in being with another life, of making itself the outside of its inside and the inside of its outside. And henceforth movement, touch, vision, applying themselves to the other and to themselves, return toward their source and, in the patient and silent labor of desire, begin the paradox of expression (VI 144).

The body becomes aware of itself under the gaze of the other and lets the pure perceptual world fade into the background. But Rudy's body also sees the other in this reversibility between seeing and being seen. Rudy's and his mother's "silent labor of desire" is reaching for the "more" of transcendence: his is for the plenitude he sees in her eyes and hers for the surplus he adds to her life. Her desire anticipates the "more" in him, and constitutes him as a partner in an equal exchange, first in terms of facial play and gradually in the turn taking of language. She leaves a gap, an *écart* in her address to him, which he can fill with his answering smile or a turning of his head, which she then picks up and the conversation moves into a new direction. He discovers his agency in affecting her response. The paradox of expression is that he does not express a preformed, essentialist identity: *Rudy can express only what has been called forth by her*. He can be and be human only when the intimate other's human presence allows him to express himself as something surprising and new in her eyes and as someone who is on the way to language and culture. Without the intimate other Rudy will not walk upright, will not acquire language, and will not be able to say "I".

References

Ainsworth, M.D., Blehar, M.C., et al., 1978. Patterns of Attachment: A Psychological Study of the Strange Situation. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, NJ.
Ayres, A.J., 1979. Sensory Integration and the Child. Western Psychological Services, Los Angeles.
Blum, D., 2002. Love at Goon Park. Harry Harlow and the Science of Affection. Berkeley Books, New York.
Bowlby, J., 1969. Attachment. Basic Books, New York.
Candland, D.K., 1995. Feral Children and Clever Animals: Reflections on Human Nature. Oxford University Press, New York.
Cermak, S., Groza, V., 1998. Sensory processing problems in post-institutionalized children: implications for social work. Child Adolesc. Social Work J. 15 (1), 5–37.
Erikson, E.H., 1950/63. Childhood and Society. W. W. Norton & Co, New York.
Foucault, M., 1978. Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison (A. Sheridan, Trans.). Pantheon, New York.

Please cite this article in press as: Simms, E.-M., Intimacy and the face of the other: A philosophical study of infant institutionalization and deprivation, Emotion, Space and Society (2013), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2013.11.008

Groze, V., Ileana, D., 1996. A follow-up study of adopted children from Romania. Child Adolesc. Social Work J. 13 (6), 541–565.
Gunnar, M.R., et al., 2000. International adoption of institutionally reared children: research and policy. Develop. Psychopathol. 12 (04), 677–693.
Harlow, H.F., Harlow, C.M. (Eds.), 1986. Learning to Love: The Selected Papers of H.F. Harlow. Praeger, New York.
Johnson, M.H., 2001. Functional brain development in humans. Nat. Rev. Neurosci. 2 (7), 475–483.
Kagan, J., Lamb, S., 1990. The Emergence of Morality in Young Children. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
Lin, S.H., et al., 2005. The relation between length of institutionalization and sensory integration in children adopted from Eastern Europe. Am. J. Occup. Ther. 59 (2), 139.
Luria, A.R., 1981. Language and Cognition. Wiley, New York.
McParlane, J., 2001. Attachment Formation and Sensory Development: A Theoretical Heuristic Case Study. Unpublished Dissertation. Duquesne University Pittsburgh.
Merleau-Ponty, M., 1942/1983. The Structure of Behavior (A. L. Fisher, Trans.). Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh.
Merleau-Ponty, M., 1962. Phenomenology of Perception (C. Smith, Trans.). Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London.
Merleau-Ponty, M., 1964. Signs (R. McCleary, Trans.). Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Il.
Merleau-Ponty, M., 1968. The Visible and the Invisible (A. Lingis, Trans.). Northwestern University Press, Evanston.
Merleau-Ponty, M., 2010. Child Psychology and Pedagogy. The Sorbonne Lectures 1949–1952 (T. Welsh, Trans.). Northwestern University Press, Evanston, IL.
Piaget, J., 1929/51. The Child's Conception of the World (J. Tomlison, and Tomlinson, A., Trans.). Littlefield Adams, Savage, MD.
Piaget, J., 1970. The Child's Conception of Time (A. J. Pomerans, Trans.). Basic Books, Inc., New York.
Ruggiero, J.A., Johnson, K., 2009. Implications of recent research on Eastern European adoptees for social work practice. Child Adolesc. Social Work J. 26 (6), 485–504.
Shattuck, R., 1980. The Forbidden Experiment: The Story of the Wild Boy of Aveyron. Farrar Straus Giroux, New York.
Simms, E.M., 2001. Milk and flesh: a phenomenological reflection on infancy and coexistence. J. Phenomenol. Psychol. 33 (1), 22–40.
Simms, E.M., 2010. Questioning the value of literacy: a phenomenology of speaking and reading in children. In: Coats, K. (Ed.), Handbook of Children's and Young Adult Literature. Routledge, London/New York.
Spitz, R.A., 1949. The role of ecological factors in emotional development in infancy. Child Develop. 20 (3), 145–155.
Stein, B.E., et al., 2009. Postnatal experiences influence how the brain integrates information from different senses. Front. Integr. Neurosci. 3.
Stern, D.N., 1985. The Interpersonal World of the Infant: A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology. Basic Books, Inc., New York.
Tronick, E., Als, H., et al., 1978. The infant's response to intrapment between contradictory messages in face-to-face interaction. J. Child Psychiatr. 17, 1–13.
Wallace, M., 2004. The development of multisensory processes. Cognit. Process. 5 (2), 69–83.
Winnicott, D.W., 1971. Playing and Reality. Tavistock Publications, London and New York.
Zeanah, C.H., et al., 2003. Designing research to study the effects of institutionalization on brain and behavioral development: the Bucharest Early Intervention Project. Develop. Psychopathol. 15 (04), 885–907.

Please cite this article in press as: Simms, E.-M., Intimacy and the face of the other: A philosophical study of infant institutionalization and deprivation, Emotion, Space and Society (2013), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2013.11.008