

Jan Wiener reviews *Individuation for Adult Replacement Children* by Kristina Schellinski in the

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Excerpt:

"I was fortunate to be present when Kristina Schellinski launched her book in London, at the Society of Analytical Psychology (SAP), and I was struck by the significance of her main thesis that some adult patients who discover that they are what she calls 'replacement children', often identified with a previous child who has died or who is missing. This condition presents with some recognizable symptoms that may delay personal development and hinder the capacity for these adults to feel that they are fully alive and can live a creative life...Schellinski's ideas are relevant to a broader range of patients than her title would suggest..."

She defines the replacement child as follows:

- 1 Conceived/born to replace a child or other family member who has died
- 2 Born shortly after a death, stillbirth, miscarriage or abortion
- 3 Born as a surviving twin or multiple
- 4 Replaced a sibling or other family member later, due to death or disability
- 5 An adopted child who is replacing or replaced by a conceived child
- 6 Assigned the role to replace a missing person

Schellinski makes the point: 'I view understanding the condition as central for healing and recovery. It is not a pathology per se but elements of it can condition life' (p. 23)... the book is successful in showing us through theory and clinical examples the specific patterns for the replacement child. In Schellinski's words: 'The challenge for a replacement child is to choose life

while becoming and remaining conscious of the initially destructive influences. I consider this the hallmark of the replacement child's search for the rediscovery of the reconnection with its true source of life (the self).'
(p. 196)

This is a book that needs to be read, and I recommend it highly... the condition Schellinski calls 'the replacement child', including its symptoms and treatment suggestions, should be recognized as a significant psychological phenomenon. ...

It is well written, accessible but also scholarly, drawing on relevant research material and the ideas of other authors. The many clinical examples bring the condition to life in a unique way for each of her patients and help the reader to understand the condition, its symptoms, defences, and the considerable suffering experienced.

...This book deserves a place on every real or virtual bookshelf... Schellinski (writes) about working through her own experiences as a replacement child and her 'coming into being': "When I let go of my previously unconscious, then half-conscious fantasy that I owed my existence to his (her brother's) disappearance, and when I acknowledged my loss – and my gain – I became freer to be myself."

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