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Abstract
In his book What about me?: The struggle for identity in a market-based society, clinical psychologist and psychotherapist Paul Verhaeghe tries to elucidate the link between neo-liberal society, identity, and mental health. Verhaeghe starts from the observation that our identity is shaped by the norms and rules of the society we live in; in short, "our self is...of external origin" (page 22). What kind of identity do people acquire in modern western society? According to Verhaeghe, a competitive, meritocratic society that is focused on maximizing material consumption confers the ideal of individual success and perfection on people, combined with an individual responsibility to achieve these goals. In his view, this combination is toxic for mental health. The rat races that we are exposed to from the earliest school days and throughout our work lives have only a few winners, but many losers. Moreover, individualized notions of responsibility for success and perfection put the burden of failure firmly on the individual. In the past, people might have been worse off in many ways, but expectations and interpretations of success in terms of individual effort lead to novel “disorders,” often directly defined in terms of failure to perform according to standards of success (e.g., ‘attention deficit’). Subsequently, as Verhaeghe argues, current ideology attempts to lift this burden by falsely interpreting many of these disorders in genetic or biological terms. In contrast, Verhaeghe claims that these disorders display abnormality only from the vantage point of neo-liberal norms of success and responsibility, which he describes as the new “Social Darwinism in economic guise” (page 119).

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Dive into the research topics of '[Review of the book What about me? The struggle for identity in a market-based society, Paul Verhaeghe, 2014]'. Together they form a unique fingerprint.

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The Struggle For Identity In A Market-Based Society" (Scribe, 2014) and 1,049 more episodes by New Books In Sociology, free! No signup or install needed. Steven M. Ortiz, "The Sport Marriage: Women Who Make It Work" (U Illinois Press, 2020). You might even be relieved, argues Verhaeghe, to be diagnosed with an illness — and to incorporate it into your identity in order to excuse your inability to measure up. With so few options and so much pressure to fill the very limited number of slots designated for "winners," having a neurologically determined ailment often feels better than being a failure. Using a psychiatric disorder as a shield from guilt is not malingering since the pervasiveness of neoliberal logic really has made you sick! Says Who?: the struggle for authority in a market-based society by Paul Verhaeghe Paperback £11.34. Only 2 left in stock (more on the way). Sent from and sold by Amazon. ‘Paul Verhaeghe brilliantly captures the long-term impact that living in a profit-obsessed society has had on our psychology. An excellent book.’ Author: Hanif Kureishi. '[An] intriguing study of modern identity.' Source: Canberra Times. 14 October 2014. Format: Kindle EditionVerified Purchase. More depth than the title would suggest, as it's not just about identity, but the financialisation of everything, including the way we think. Masterfully written and extremely accessible. Required reading for anyone who wants to understand how the current order operates. In What about Me?, Paul Verhaeghe's main concern is how social change has led to this psychic crisis and altered the way we think about ourselves. He investigates the effects of thirty years' acceptance of neo-liberalism, free-market forces, and privatisation, and the resulting relationship between our engineered society and individual identity. It turns out that who we are is, as always, determined by the context in which we live. From his clinical experience as a psychotherapist, Verhaeghe shows the profound impact that social change is having on mental health, even to the extent of affecting