



From Instinct to Self: Selected Papers of W.R.D. Fairbairn (The Library of Object Relations)

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Ronald Fairbairn's theory of object relations, first published in the 1940's, revolutionized psychoanalysis.

Counteracting Freud's view that the developmental drive emerged almost solely from within an individual, Fairbairn argued that each person's fundamental need for relationships organizes development and its vicissitudes. In the ensuing years, frequently without attribution to Fairbairn, object relations theory became central to psychoanalytic thinking, and a source for modern infant research, relational theory, the study of dissociation and multiple personality, psychoanalytic family therapy, and the techniques of psychoanalytic therapy.

Fairbairn's theory drew on his own wide-ranging experience, unusual for his time, which included degrees both in philosophy and medicine at Edinburgh University, where he later taught philosophy and medical psychology from 1927-1935. His thorough reading of Freud and his clinical experience with abused children, sexual offenders, and war neuroses as well as neurotic adults, provided the basis for reorienting psychoanalysis to the study of relationships.

At the center of Fairbairn's theory is the concept of dynamic internal relations between the self and its objects that give meaning to experience. Fairbairn thought that infants deal with frustration, rejection, and trauma through introjection and splitting of the object. The resulting matrix of dynamic internal relationships, part of every human being's make-up, profoundly influences behavior and interpersonal interactions in the outer world.

Volume I of this two-volume set contains Fairbairn's previously uncollected major papers, which are characterized by flexibility and depth in the application of object relations theory to the clinical situation. The papers on theory and scientific methodology show rigorous logic in the exploration of the scientific underpinnings of psychoanalysis and of the issues posed by the substitution of an object relations view for Freud's classical theory.

Volume II consists of early un

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