

# From Instincts to Self (Vol. 1), by W. R. D. Fairbairn

## a. Quotes:

▪ .

## b. General Notes:

- Chapter 1 - The Nature of Hysterical States (pg. 13)
  - "...I have formulated a revised theory of repression, the nature of which may perhaps best be indicated by the following summary of the general views which I have come to adopt regarding the development and differentiation of the personality: (1) The pristine personality of the child consists of a unitary dynamic ego. (2) The first defence adopted by the original ego to deal with an unsatisfying personal relationship is mental internalization, or introjection, of the unsatisfying object. (3) The unsatisfying object has two disturbing aspects, viz. an exciting aspect and a rejecting aspect. (4) The second defence adopted by the ego is to reject and split off from the internalized object two elements - one representing its exciting aspect, and one representing its rejecting aspect. (5) The internalized object is thus split into three objects, viz. 'the exciting' object, 'the rejecting' object, and the nucleus which remains after the exciting and rejecting elements have been split off from it. (6) This residual nucleus represents the relatively satisfying, or at any rate tolerable, aspect of the internalized object, and is therefore not rejected by the ego, but remains actively cathected by it under conditions which render the term ideal object, appropriate for its description. (7) The rejection and splitting-off of the exciting and rejecting objects constitute an act of 'direct and primary repression' on the part of the ego. (8) Since the exciting and rejecting objects remain cathected while in process of being repressed, their repression involves a splitting-off, from the substance of the ego, of two portions representing the respective cathexes of the two repressed objects. (9) The splitting-off of these two portions of the ego from its remaining central portion represents an act of 'direct and secondary repression' on the part of the latter. (10) The resulting endopsychic situation is one in which we find a central ego cathecting the ideal object as an acceptable internal object, and two split-off and repressed ego-structures each cathecting a repressed internal object. (11) The terms libidinal ego' and 'antilibidinal ego' have been adopted to describe respectively the repressed ego-structure cathecting the exciting object and that cathecting the rejecting object. (12) The term 'antilibidinal ego' has been adopted on the grounds that the repressed ego-structure so designated, being in alliance with the rejecting object, has aims inherently hostile to those of the libidinal ego in its alliance with the exciting object. (13) Being a dynamic structure, the antilibidinal ego implements its hostility to the aims of the libidinal ego by subjecting the latter to a sustained aggressive and persecutory attack which supports the repression already exercised against it by the central ego, and which it thus seems appropriate to describe as a process of 'indirect repression'. (14) Although direct and indirect repression of the libidinal ego are two processes of a very different nature, they are both included under the single term 'repression' as understood by Freud; but it is to be noted that Freud took no account of direct repression of the antilibidinal ego by the central ego, except in such incidental references as are contained in the passages in The Ego and the Id (Freud 1923b, pp. 52-53, 74-75) in which he raised the questions why the superego is unconscious, and whether, in the case of the hysterical personality at any rate, this instigator of repression is not itself subject to repression — questions to which the exigencies of his own theory did not permit of a satisfactory answer. (15) Although the antilibidinal ego, the rejecting object and the ideal object are all independent structures playing different roles in the economy of the psyche, they are all included by Freud in the comprehensive concept of 'the superego; and this source of confusion may be obviated by recognition of their independent character. (16) The endopsychic situation resulting from the twin processes of repression and splitting, which have just been described, is one which, in its general outlines, inevitably becomes established in the child at an early age, and in this sense may be regarded as 'normal; but, especially in its dynamic aspect, it contains within it the potentialities of all psychopathological developments in later life. (17) The conception of this basic endopsychic situation provides an alternative, couched in terms of personal relationships and dynamic ego-structure, to Freud's description of the psyche in terms of id, ego and superego, based as this is upon a Helmholtzian divorce of energy from structure no longer accepted in physics, and combined as it is, albeit at the expense of no little inconsistency, with a non-personal psychology conceived in terms of biological instincts and erotogenic zones." (pg. 15-17)
- Chapter 2 - the Schreber Case (pg. 41)
  - See text
- Chapter 3 - Psychoanalysis and Mental Health (pg. 61)
  - See text
- Chapter 4 - On the Nature of Psychoanalytic Treatment (pg. 74)
  - See text
- Chapter 5 - Experimental Aspects of Psychoanalysis (pg. 103)
  - See text
- Chapter 6 - In Defence of Object Relations Theory (pg. 111)
  - See text
- Chapter 7 - Reevaluating Some Basic Concepts (pg. 128)
  - **"The libido-theory as conceived by Freud is essentially hedonistic;** for he described libido as primarily pleasure-seeking. In view of the supreme importance which he attaches to the Oedipus situation alone it would, of course, be quite untrue to say that he is oblivious of the importance of object-relations. At the same time, it is implicit in the libido-theory that the object only becomes significant in so far as it is found to provide a means of forwarding the pleasure-seeking aim. In conformity with this conception, Freud described the first stage in the process of libido-development as 'auto-erotic; and he considered that it was only after passing through an intermediate 'narcissistic' stage of self-love that the individual finally reached the 'allo-erotic stage of object-love. The essential process involved in this transition was also described by Freud in another reference as the substitution of the reality principle for the pleasure principle as a determinant of behaviour. It is a further feature of the libido theory that pleasure-seeking is conceived as the expression of a need to relieve bodily tension accumulating in the erotogenic zones as the result of physiological changes, and thus to restore the equilibrium disturbed by these changes. This conception, it will be noted, involves a mixing of psychological and physiological principles of explanation, which is methodologically questionable. To continue, however - the restoration of equilibrium is regarded as being effected through the discharge of impulses which express themselves in behaviour; and it is thus that the psychology of behaviour arising out of the libido-theory is essentially a psychology of impulse. It was on the basis of this psychology of impulse that Freud developed his dualistic theory of instincts which, in its final version, assumed the form of a dualism of 'the life instincts' and 'the death instincts'. Such a classification of instincts differs from most classifications in that it is not conceived in terms of outward behaviour, but in terms of states ('life' and 'death') representing the goals of inner strivings; but this is, of course, in complete conformity with the hedonistic nature of Freud's libido-theory." (pg. 131)
  - "Further, it would appear that the instinctive behaviour of animals, in view of its high degree of specificity and adaptation to environmental conditions, is determined by the reality principle rather than by the pleasure principle, however limited the appreciation of reality involved may be; and indeed it would seem on this account actually to involve a hereditarily transmitted internalisation of outer reality. The formation of the superego in the human child may be regarded as an analogous, but acquired, internalisation of outer reality, and thus in itself quite a realistic procedure. Be this as it may, it seems a reasonable assumption that an analogy may legitimately be drawn between the behaviour of animals and the basic behaviour of human

beings; and, on this assumption alone, it seems justifiable to infer both that man is by nature object-seeking rather than pleasure-seeking, and that his basic behaviour is determined, as in the case of animals, by the reality principle rather than by the pleasure principle. Such a conclusion by no means involves an abandonment of the concept of the pleasure principle, but only a re-interpretation of it in the sense that it represents a deterioration of behaviour involving failure of adaptation to conditions in outer reality. It must be recognised, of course, that the instinctive behaviour of animals may become completely unrealistic in face of a change in the environmental conditions to which they have become adapted; and similarly human behaviour characteristically becomes determined by the pleasure principle instead of by the reality principle in proportion as environmental conditions become too difficult for the individual concerned, as for example in psychopathological cases. Similarly, whilst behaviour influenced by the superego as an internalised parent-figure may be quite realistic in the child, it may become completely unrealistic under the altered conditions of adult life." (pg. 132)

- "The id is conceived by Freud as the source of instinctive impulses; and the impression conveyed by his description is that it consists, not of organised instinctive tendencies, but of inchoate impulses seeking discharge. It is the human psyche, of course, that Freud is considering. But it is difficult to believe that man differs fundamentally from the animal world where the more primitive aspects of his mentality are concerned; and Freud's description of the id as the source of instinctive impulses seems singularly out of keeping with the instinctive endowment of animals, which, as we have seen, is highly specific and highly orientated towards outer reality. According to Freud (1923b, pp. 28-30), the id is indifferent to outer reality, and the adaptation of impulses to outer reality only becomes possible through the differentiation of the ego from the surface of the id. The ego is, of course, conceived by Freud as a structure; but the id is described in a manner which implies that it is essentially structureless and is merely a reservoir of instinctive energy. The function ascribed to the ego is that of selecting and regulating id-impulses in such a manner as to render behaviour adapted to outer conditions. It thus performs a function which in the case of animals is performed by the instinctive endowment itself. From this point of view, the concept of a separate ego might appear to be superfluous. It is impossible, however, to dismiss Freud's distinction between the ego and the id so lightly-its justification being that it arises out of an attempt to explain mental conflict, which is such a distinctive feature of human psychology. According to Freud, mental conflict is essentially a conflict between the ego and id-impulses, albeit this conflict is regarded as mainly due to the pressure exerted by the superego upon the ego. Freud's conception of mental conflict may, therefore, be described in general terms as a conflict between mental structure (the ego) and mental energy (id-impulse). Stated in this form, the conception presents somewhat of an anomaly; for it is difficult to see how a structure can participate in conflict unless it is endowed with energy, or how it can be in conflict with energy unless this energy is embodied in a structure. It is owing to such considerations that the writer has been led to formulate the concept of 'dynamic structure' (Fairbairn 1952b, pp. 148-150), and, once the concept of dynamic structure has been adopted, it becomes impossible to remain content with Freud's formulations of 'the id' and 'the ego'." (pg. 133-134)

c. Further Readings:

- .