

CP-002-F&G

CONCENTRATION – Sharon Bedard

Fairbairn and Guntrip

Ronald Fairbairn was both a deconstructionist and an integrationist. He extracted from the seminal writings of Freud a sense of the power of unconscious process and from the writing of Melanie Klein the power of an inner object world. Out of these two influences he developed a clinically rich theory that re-centred the actual relationship of the child with his or her early caregivers. His theory moved away from the internal and instinctual basis of the infant's relations to caregivers as pleasure seeking and towards a model that saw libido as object seeking.

From these modifications Fairbairn developed a model of mind as a relational construct and developed a theory of the individual's endopsychic structure that is comprised of a process of identification, internalization, splitting, repression and dissociation with respect to self states; in other words a dynamically interacting system of internalized objects and aspects of self in relationship to those internal objects. These internal configurations of self and self-with-other enhances the clinician's capacity to track the various transference and counter-transference configurations in a more nuanced way.

Harry Guntrip was also an integrationist. Through his experience of both Fairbairn and Winnicott, Guntrip elaborated a more experience near understanding of Fairbairn's complex theories. Guntrip's clinical writings flesh out the therapeutic encounter as Fairbairn described it. He provides the clinician with a better picture of the operations of Fairbairn's basic endopsychic structure as it informs the therapeutic dialogue.

Guntrip's major and original contribution is his addition of a third and final split leading to the "passive regressed ego". This configuration is clinically relevant to understanding those client's whose psychic and emotional retreat leads a schizoid withdrawal. This is characterized by a desperate need for safety so extreme that it threatens the overall personality.

We will be reading seminal papers by both Fairbairn and Guntrip, as well as papers by more contemporary thinkers as they elucidate and make fresh these original contributions. In addition, where relevant, we will also be using film to bring these theories to life.

CAPT members are welcome and will be invited to speak with me about their own clinical experience in order to determine whether or not they will benefit from this seminar.

Readings are supplied prior to the seminar and the first reading will be available during the summer.

Dates and Times : the days will be Saturdays 10:30 – 2:00, approximately once a month, specific dates will be sent.

Location: Depending on the size – my home. 78 Bertmount Ave., Toronto.

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