



Object Relations Theories and Psychopathology: A Comprehensive Text

Frank Summers

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In *Object Relations Theories and Psychopathology: A Comprehensive Text*, Frank Summers provides thorough, lucid, and critically informed accounts of the work of major object relations theorists: Fairbairn, Guntrip, Klein, Winnicott, Kernberg, and Kohut. His expositions achieve distinction on two counts. First, the work of each object relations theorist is presented as a comprehensive whole, with separate sections expounding the theorist's ideas and assumptions about metapsychology, development, psychopathology, and treatment, with a critical evaluation of the strengths and limitations of the theory in question. Second, the emphasis in each chapter is on issues of clinical understanding and technique. Making extensive use of case material provided by each of the theorists, he shows how each object relations theory yields specific clinical approaches to a variety of syndromes, and how these approaches entail specific modifications in clinical technique.

Beyond his detailed attention to the theoretical and technical differences among object relations theories, Summers' penultimate chapter discusses the similarities and differences of object relations and interpersonal theories. And his concluding chapter outlines a pragmatic object relations approach to development, psychopathology, and technique that combines elements of all object relations theories without opting for any single theory.

Object Relations Theories and Psychopathology is that rare event in psychoanalytic publishing: a substantial, readable text that surveys a broad expanse of theoretical and clinical landscape with erudition, sympathy, and critical perspective. It will be essential reading for all analysts, psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers who wish to familiarize themselves with object relations theories in general, sharpen their understanding of the work of specific object relations theorists, or enhance their ability to employ these theories in their clinical work.

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