Applying Fairbairn's object relations theory to the dynamics of the battered woman

Fairbairn's secular object relations model of the development of the human personality emphasizes the power of the environment to form inner ego structures and the ensuing tragic results for all human infants who are faced with an unnurturing environ. The consequence of severely compromised ego structures is repetition compulsion in adulthood, as illustrated by the battered-woman syndrome. Each of the engorged and unrealistic part-ego structures seeks out external objects to re-enact the original relationship that created them. The consequence of a severely rejecting childhood can be endless abuse or death.

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