Abstract

This paper addresses the relationship between the ego, id, and internal objects. While ego psychology views the ego as autonomous of the drives, a less well-known alternative position views the ego as constituted by the drives. Based on Freud’s ego-instinct account, this position has developed into a school of thought which postulates that the drives act as knowers. Given that there are multiple drives, this position proposes that personality is constituted by multiple knowers. Following on from Freud, the ego is viewed as a composite sub-set of the instinctual drives (ego-drives), whereas those drives cut off from expression form the id. The nature of the “self” is developed in terms of identification and the possibility of multiple personalities is also established. This account is then extended to object-relations and the explanatory value of the ego-drive account is discussed in terms of the addressing the nature of ego-structures and the dynamic nature of internal objects. Finally, the impact of psychological conflict and the significance of repression for understanding the nature of splits within the psyche are also discussed.