



# **On Freud's "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" (The International Psychoanalytical Association Contemporary Freud: Turning Points and Critical Issues Series)**

*Gabriela Legorreta*

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This book is a collection of papers by leading contemporary psychoanalysts who comment on the continuing important relevance of Freud's (1911) paper, Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning. The contributors gathered here represent current European, Latin American, and North American perspectives that elaborate the continuing value of Two Principles for present-day psychoanalytic thinking. Each author examines Freud's paper through a personal lens that is coloured by the psychoanalytic culture from which he or she comes. In each instance, the writers' chapters demonstrate the heuristic value of Two Principles for twenty-first century psychoanalytic theory and technique. A common thread that runs through all the chapters is the view that this brief paper by Freud, which he humbly introduced by stating, "The deficiencies of this short paper, which is preparatory rather than expository ...", is a masterpiece that contains within it the seeds of much of his later writing. The distinction he draws between the pleasure principle and the reality principle are profound and raise questions that still preoccupy analysis today. A central concern of many of this book's papers has to do with those factors that account for the emergence of the reality principle in early mental life. Freud only pays lip service to the role of the infant's object relations, especially to its mother, in the evolution of the capacity to know and tolerate reality, which represents a vital adaptation yet paradoxically also exposes the individual to the painful emotional realities that are part of the human condition.

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