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Contents & abstracts

Theory and Technique

Gritti A. **A Psychoanalytical Model of Autism and the Neurosciences: Reflections on the Points of Convergence.** *Richard & Piggie*, 27, 1, 2019, 1-11.

The author presents and discusses the points where studies on infantile autism with a psychoanalytical stance converge with those produced by the neurosciences, particularly those focussing on the area of sensory integration. The method of comparing data from heterogeneous sources is adopted in various fields of research because consistency in results makes the interpretation of a complex phenomenon more reliable. The article reviews the results of research projects undertaken in the fields of neuroscience, cognitive science and psychoanalysis. It identifies a convergence in the hypothesis that the autistic condition implies the psychic apparatus's vulnerability to stimuli and a difficulty in accessing a more integrated level of mental functioning.

Focus

Rethinking the Oedipus Complex with Ronald Britton: the Third Position

Cantone D. and Pascale Langer F. **Introduction** *Richard & Piggie*, 27, 1, 2019, 12-17.

Buongiovanni M., Candido M., Cantone D., D'Amato G.M., Messeca S., Pascale Langer F. **Difficulties in Accessing the Third Position.** *Richard & Piggie*, 27, 1, 2019, 18-25.

The authors take up some of the concepts treated by R. Britton in his main works. Taking as their starting point the Oedipus complex's centrality to psychic development as described by the author, they note, above all, the aspect concerning the recognition of parental sexuality. They dwell on the concepts of *triangular space* and *third position*, which are linked to the spatial metaphor of the *other room*. They show the clarity with which Britton describes the interweaving of the *depressive position* with the *Oedipus complex*. They then highlight those links between concepts formulated by Bion, Rosenfeld and Steiner that allowed the author to arrive at his description of cycles of development and regression in the growth process. Lastly, they describe the problem that, according to Britton, underpins the narcissistic structures, touching upon the phantasy of the *combined object* understood as an *object that misunderstands* or *malign object*, as opposed to an *object that understands*.



Buongiovanni M. **“Am I Putting on a Little Girl’s Voice?” An Eight-year-old Girl’s Difficulties in Achieving Triangulation.** *Richard & Piggie*, 27, 1, 2019, 26-37.

The article describes the difficulties that an eight-year-old girl and her parents had in remaining, respectively, in their own rooms at night. The little girl was gripped by confusion and unspeakable fears. The therapist only seemed to make a connection with her if she pitched her voice a tone higher than the little girl’s. This otherness generated a highly persecutory attitude, however, and the little girl’s aggressive attacks severely tested the therapist’s resources: she only re-found her “third” position thanks to discussion with her colleagues in the group studying Britton. Analysis of the counter-transference allowed her to avoid colluding with the parents’ unexpressed desire to flee therapy and escape into an undifferentiated state. It also bolstered her ability to provide containment and set limits that helped the girl to leave her parents’ “room”.

In Dialogue with R. Britton. *Richard & Piggie*, 27, 1, 2019, 38-48.

Ronald Britton discusses his entry into psychoanalysis, the psychoanalytical landscape at that time, back in 1970, and his training at the Tavistock Clinic and the Institute of Psychoanalysis. He also discusses the combination of art and science in psychoanalysis, redundant theories and the repetitiveness of nature. Britton takes questions from an audience on whether the different theoretical models in psychoanalysis can influence the outcome of treatment. He also talks about the psychoanalyst’s attitude and modes of working.

D’Amato G.M. **“The Other Room”. Dreaming and Imagination in a Story by Alice Munro.** *Richard & Piggie*, 27, 1, 2019, 49-55.

“My Mother’s Dream”, a story by the writer Alice Munro, is re-read in the light of Britton’s thinking on the concept of triangulation as a mental space in which reflective thinking (i.e. the ability to observe the other, oneself and the Self relating with the other) becomes possible. In the story, the dream that gives the tale its title intervenes in a moment of deep crisis between a young mother and her tiny baby girl, becoming the driving force that transforms a psychic reality that had settled into primitive modes of functioning. Indeed, the dream triggers a working-through of highly persecutory, archaic feelings (previously split and projected) with the result that, in a situation that could have developed into a serious post-partum depression drifting towards madness, the beginning of the object relationship is, in fact, brought about. Applying the thinking of Bion (who equates dreaming with an alpha-function activity), the article traces the function of dreaming and imagination to Britton’s “other room”, a place where the imagination can develop and a triangular space where the ability to think is born.

Clinical Reflections

Russo L. **A Families Group on the Inside: a Particular, Multi-family Psychoanalytical Approach with Parents of Children and Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder.** *Richard & Piggie*, 27, 1, 2019, 56-69.

Special work with families allowed them to take action in their neighbourhood's schools to help the process of their children's inclusion. This by emphasizing their children's differences and asking all their classmates, in addition to the teachers, to collaborate. In this way, it was possible to create a School and Social Adoption Project ("PASS" - *Progetto di adozione scolastica e sociale*) within the schools and neighbourhood, with shopkeepers also helping to create an "Adaptable City". The group work took place in the transitional space, the place where psychic hustle and bustle meets the environmental changes that are possible. The themes that emerged were: the difficulty in tolerating autistic children's stereotyped forms of behaviour; the difficulty in listening to their silences, which frequently results in attempts to do the talking for the other person as well and the use of the body in a mirroringly autistic manner in order to communicate with them.

Picariello S., Moro D. **Drawing as a Way of Expressing Fraternal Relations and Working Them Through in Psychotherapy.** *Richard & Piggle*, 27, 1, 2019, 70-86.

The authors briefly present two clinical cases in order to state their thesis that graphic expression during sessions can significantly aid both access to and the development and working through of conflictual feelings in the fraternal relationship. They maintain that experiences and dynamics allowing a patient to express the fraternal complex and work it through are stirred in the therapist's room, even when such complex has been subjected to heavy repression or splitting and therefore appears to be inaccessible. In this sense, in the transitional space of the sitting, drawing emerges as one of the tools that best allow a patient to give a form and a name to sometimes violent and frightening feelings.

Readings

Fusilli A. **Catch Them. The Psychoanalysis of Breakdown (C. Bollas).** *Richard & Piggle*, 27, 1, 2019, 87-94.

The Enchanting Screen

Vantaggio A. **Lady Bird.** *Richard & Piggle*, 27, 1, 2019, 95-98.

Reviews

Recommended Reading
