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Contents & abstracts

Theory and Technique

Carbone Tirelli L. **The 'identities' tower of babel. Forms of identity confusion and group dynamics.** *Richard & Piggie*, 32, 1, 1-15.

The author repropose the psychoanalytical understanding of every individual's need, at the onset of adolescence, to integrate a sexed body into the image of Self and once again work through the oedipal dimension and bisexuality, structuring functions already present from the start that enrich the relationship between physicality and the nascent mind as it relates to its various objects of reference. Such assumptions are compared to the theories that are spreading across the globe and, most particularly, the one proposing gender fluidity throughout a person's lifetime. This theory leads to an abandoning of the binary dimension in favour of an individual being perpetually able to choose identities. The psychoanalytical journey undertaken by so many adolescents with personality disorders who state that they have embraced such solutions, the dynamics driving the groups sharing and implementing them to which those adolescents belong, but also the therapeutic communities and other institutions that are treating them, all invite reflection and some form of active engagement. The author discusses some clinical material in this connection.

Focus

Forms of the sexual between puberty and adolescence

Balducci P. **Introduction.** *Richard & Piggie*, 32, 1, 16-21.

In her reconstruction of the theme uniting the articles in the Focus section, the author outlines how forms of sexual behaviour – which are a constitutive element of identity – involve the experiences of an inner world made up of phantasies, affects and representations that cannot simply be reduced to the spheres of biology and genetics. The article demonstrates how belonging to a biological sex is built through the experience of a body relating to other bodies, with which it constructs ties of desire. This in a continuous dialogue with the cultural products of the surrounding environment. The author emphasizes how the development of child and adolescent sexuality – a multifaceted subject – has, in the last few years, been subjected to major transformations: transformations that constitute an open challenge to psychoanalytical knowledge, to its methodology and, probably, to some of its assumptions.



De Marino F. **Forms of pubertal transition in the digital era. Journey to the centre of the body.** *Richard & Piggle*, 32, 1, 22-37.

The article seeks to examine the complex forms of interaction occurring between sexuality and media influences. This with a focus on pubertal transformations. Particular care is taken over analysing the contradictions and kinds of conflict stemming from such interaction, as it can interfere with an individual's relational ties but also contribute to defining them. Using the theoretical framework developed by Berenstein and Puget, the article examines how the unconscious finds expression in these forms of interaction, influencing subjectivity at the intra-psychic, inter-subjective and trans-objective levels. In order to illustrate these concepts, the author explores Emma's experience of therapy: a case in which an intricate, kaleidoscopic virtual identity emerges, along with a constant effort to work out a slippery reality crowded out by digital ghosts and a difficult experience of working through mourning. One of the central elements of this analysis was the extension of psychoanalytical listening in order to understand the edges of representation, whilst recognizing the important psycho-corporeal foundation of what can be integrated into the mental sphere.

Cano M, Frangipane C, Michetti M, Tinari L. **Moments of passage and trasformation during puberty. Two-way signification between children and parents.** *Richard & Piggle*, 32, 1, 38-50.

This article is the fruit of discussions held within the "South Rome" branch of the Clinical Centre run by the Italian Association of Child Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy (AIPPI) in Rome. The possibility of following the problems of an individual from a group perspective right from the assessment stage confirmed that psychoanalytical work cannot fail to consider the continual interfacing of a parent's emotional experience with that of his/her child. More specifically, the group was able to observe how, in a situation of change and passage such as puberty, the identity-related resonances are particularly strong. In this sense, the process of transformation personally experienced by the young person leads to a reactivation in his/her parent of experiences and emotions that are linked to their own sexuality, in addition to those linked to the overall change in the relationship with their child.

Working with parents and children in parallel and comparing the experiences of therapy as it unfolded led the group to reflect on the influence that such experiences have had precisely on the young persons' development and perception of themselves and their changing body. The clinical examples demonstrate how sexuality that is "coerced" or "acted out" during the onset of puberty may be the repercussion of what has been passed down at a transgenerational level.

Mazzoncini GM. **Some notes on the origins of sexuality and the parental contribution to children's mental and sexual growth.** *Richard & Piggle*, 32, 1, 51-56.

The author considers the birth of sexuality, taking as her starting point primary relational experiences and child sexuality, which is founded in sensuality and psycho-corporeal experience (with the mother *in primis*). Referring to the thinking of various authors, she emphasizes the importance of the pre-oedipal experience, which is closely tied to the need for exploration and knowledge. For Freud, sexuality (especially oedipal sexuality) is a deep-rooted,

drive-related experience. Melanie Klein emphasizes the quality of the primary relationships, phantasies and unconscious representations, whereas Bion refers, above all, to an experience of knowing that is based on the epistemophilic instinct, the bridge between the internal and the external, unconscious phantasy and the external world. The article also explores the quality of parental relations and sexuality. Indeed, great importance is to be attached to those aspects that do not foster a child's mental and sexual growth: chaotic, narcissistic, abandoning or rigid families that are lacking in intimacy, the confiding of experiences and a building of good relations.

Falanga S. Disinvestment in the body and obstacles to the construction of sexual and gender identity: "neither vagina, nor penis". *Richard & Piggle*, 32, 1, 57-72.

The construction of gender identity is the result of a complex process that begins during the antenatal period and manifests as an expression of a web of biological, mental, relational and environmental factors. Perception of the body is essential for the consolidation of an individual's identity; it is through the body that the sense both of continuity over time and of relations that are established over time is also perceived. Partly through the presentation of clinical material, the author offers a reflection on some of the problems relating to perceptions of the body as alien and the emotional malaise felt in relation to gender, sexuality and the difficulties of investing in the body and tackling both the identification processes and their possible relationship with aspects of anxiety and depression.

The author further notes that working with patients suffering from such difficulties spurs therapists to reflect on their relationship with the physical contours of their own body. The new or unknown mobilizes intense reactions in our minds and theories can be re-structured on the basis of experiences of therapy with people who live and express their sexuality and gender identity in all its complexity.

Fiorelli F. Genealogy, gender and sexuality: transformations of the psyche?. *Richard & Piggle*, 32, 1, 73-83.

In this article, the author seeks to present and discuss certain transformations linked to the present that he considers may be important for psychoanalysis and for possible changes in the psyche's structure, in particular. Thus, he analyses the concepts of genealogy, what is sexual and what is virtual and their implications for ways of theorizing and working in a clinical context. Are these changes in line with what is already known about the psyche or are they forcing that to be revised? This is the open question that the author poses.

Clinical reflections

Nicolò AM, Accetti L. Adolescence and boredom: depressive flight or developmental waiting? *Richard & Piggle*, 32, 1, 84-94.

Feeling bored during adolescence is often experienced as a negative state: the "moments of emptiness" can be degrading and poorly tolerated, and can push the adolescent towards acting out and ephemeral forms of gratification that resolve nothing. It can nevertheless be helpful to assess these situations carefully in order to explore the different meanings that may be



hiding behind the phenomenon of boredom. Indeed, a good assessment can make it possible to differentiate the cases in which boredom is the symptom of an 'encysted' depressive condition requiring treatment from those in which it assumes a more development-oriented valence of 'waiting' that is the prelude to moments of passage and new vital drives.

Reviews

Recommended reading
