



Volume 28, Number 4, October-December 2020

Contents & abstracts

Focus

Child and Adolescent Psychoanalysis in the Time of the Pandemic

Carbone Tirelli L. **Introduction** *Richard & Piggie*, 28, 4, 2020, 353-359.

The fourth issue of *Richard and Piggie* for 2020 opens a reflection on the events that have so dramatically involved us during the course of this long, traumatic pandemic. Its articles outline certain trends for study and in-depth analysis that will be taken further in subsequent issues. In our opinion, children and adolescents have been particularly penalised over the last year and their neglected condition is socially alarming. Describing their recourse to necessary changes to setting but also the complex experiences that have resulted from working during an emergency, some of this issue's authors examine how difficult it is, for us psychotherapists, to provide containment and responses to the anxieties emerging in young patients with their growing fears both of loss and of the breakdown of relational ties. Other articles emphasise the pandemic's psycho-social dimension, opening up an area for observation on how societal dynamics are impacting the experiences and anxieties of individuals. Such an analysis leads us to hypothesize that the collapse of containing structures (family, school and university) during this period of health and economic crisis may be the underlying cause of the growing increase in symptoms and pathological behaviour in children and adolescents.

Rustin M. **The coronavirus pandemic and its meanings.** *Richard & Piggie*, 28, 4, 2020, 360-372.

This article examines the meanings of the Coronavirus Pandemic from a perspective which is both socio-political and psychoanalytic. It suggests that the concept of "combined and uneven development" is relevant to understanding the events which are now taking place. This is because the pandemic has brought together the genesis of a new disease in conditions where the interface between society and the natural world is unregulated, but also where modern forms of communication have enabled an unprecedentedly rapid spread of the disease to take place, across the entire globe. Multiple lines of social division are being exposed by the crisis; contrasting priorities, ideological in origin, are being revealed in governments' response to the virus, in the commitment they give to the preservation of lives compared with other material interests. Psycho-social dimensions of the crisis are explored. A psychoanalytical perspective focuses on anxieties as these are generated by the extreme disruption and risks posed by the crisis. It is suggested that these are not only conscious but also unconscious, giving rise to destructive kinds of psychological splitting and denial. Loss of "contain-



ing” mental and social structures is now having damaging effects, and their repair may be the precondition for constructive resolutions of a general social crisis.

Ricciardi D., Terzani G. **Adolescents in lockdown: both opportunities and risks of regression.** *Richard & Piggle*, 28, 4, 2020, 373-385.

This contribution offers a reflection on the effect that the condition of lockdown and social isolation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has had on two adolescent patients. It describes such condition’s impact both at the level of external reality and in relation to the adolescents’ interior world and the developmental and identity-related processes that were maturing. The group appears to enjoy a crucial importance during adolescence, emerging as it does as an extended psychic space in which various parts of the self may be deposited. The article illustrates how social isolation and being unable to have recourse to the groups to which the two patients belonged activated different responses in them: in one case, the patient appeared to respond with a greater introspection that paved the way to a wide-ranging reflection on developing elements of her identity; in the other, the lockdown led to a withdrawal into the family world that reactivated persecution phantasies about the adolescent group.

Garms V. **Intimacy in the therapeutic relationship in the era of social distancing.** *Richard & Piggle*, 28, 4, 2020, 386-397.

This article seeks to look into the profound psychic repercussions linked to the multiple, real changes both in setting and in therapists’ corporeal engagement that have been dictated by the social distancing measures imposed in response to the threatening spread of the Coronavirus. It outlines the risk that patients could, during therapy, re-live something that was traumatic during their very early years. Patients could adhere to the distorted self-image that is reflected back at them and see themselves as something dangerous. They might feel obliged to amputate parts of the self, should they feel the therapist is withdrawing from the intimacy of the encounter. They could incorporate ego-alien content or become mentally hyperactive to compensate for deficiencies in the therapist’s holding. All this to the detriment not only of the possibility of patients being in touch with their own inner world, feeling real and experiencing a living link between psyche and body but also of the possibility of trusting the therapist and ‘creating’ and ‘using’ him/her in the Winnicottian sense. The work therefore emphasizes the need for the therapist to ‘survive’ by restoring his/her reliability, naturalness and pleasure in being with a patient and by creating continuity despite all the numerous interruptions, deprivations and invasions caused by this historic moment.

Ferrigno M.P., Molinari G. **Remote working’s rainbow: how to move during the storm.** *Richard & Piggle*, 28, 4, 2020, 398-415.

The work proposes to look at the experience of electronic-means-based clinical practice during the period of the pandemic and a situation that has brusquely cut short “in-person” therapy. Supported by the thinking of Melanie Klein and post-Kleinian writers, the authors use material from their clinical work with children and adolescents to dwell on the forms of adaptation required in order to be able to guarantee the therapeutic bond’s continuity. Particular attention is paid to the quality of the transference-countertransference interweavings. The experience observed suggests that electronic contact has been able to guaran-

tee continuity in the therapeutic bond. This continuity seems to have combated an anxiety-ridden immersion in the solitude of a motionless time stuck between a 'before' that is no longer possible and an 'after' that is still hard to imagine.

Janin B. Technology's influence on subjectivity-building: new languages for children and adolescents. *Richard & Piggle*, 28, 4, 2020, 416-426.

Every era brings new languages with it. Nowadays, with their prevalence of visual elements and their elimination of various kinds of distance, the new technologies are also affecting the way subjectivity develops. Children and adolescents are immersed in a culture in which an "everything and immediately" attitude, multiple stimuli and constant on-line connection are the order of the day. That offers various opportunities but also creates difficulties in relationships with peers as well as in the acquisition and use of verbal language.

Cordero di Montezemolo C., Corsi C., Di Febbo M., Lucarelli D., Lugones M., Mancinelli S., Spacca F., Ronconi S., Vacchini F. The uses and functions of virtual reality in clinical practice: reflections in the light of on-line work. *Richard & Piggle*, 28, 4, 2020, 427-440.

The article opens with a theoretical and clinical reflection on the arrival of virtual reality in the analysis room with patients of a developmental age: how is it used? What function does it have in that precise moment? Accommodating virtual reality during psychotherapy means turning it into interpretable material, whilst taking the patient's psychic functioning, his/her personal history and the quality of the transference relationship into consideration. With the lockdown imposed by the COVID-19 emergency, further reflection on these themes has become necessary: the psychotherapeutic setting, too, has become virtual and this has given rise to new scenarios, imposing limits but also offering new opportunities.

Readings

Pierri M. M. Conci. Freud, Sullivan, Mitchell, Bion, and the Multiple Voices of International Psychoanalysis. *Richard & Piggle*, 28, 4, 2020, 441-445.

The Enchanting Screen

Silvestri M. Caterina in the Big City (Caterina va in città). *Richard & Piggle*, 28, 4, 2020, 446-448.

di Liberto C. Easy! (Scialla!). *Richard & Piggle*, 28, 4, 2020, 449-451.

Reviews

Bookmark

Recommended Reading

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