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Contents & abstracts

Focus

The Psychic Retreats of Our Times

Della Ratta F, Vecchione F, Caprioli R. **Introduction.** *Richard & Piggie*, 30, 3, 2022, 237-243.

Zullo E. **Psychic Retreats During Childhood: Pathological Organization and Early Psychic Functioning.** *Richard & Piggie*, 30, 3, 2022, 244-254.

Drawing on D. Meltzer's theory of the "claustrum" and J. Steiner's regarding "pathological organization", as well as the reflections Bion set out in his last works regarding the importance of the birth caesura as a 'source of thinking', this article offers a reflection on the different, observable configurations that retreat can assume during infancy. These various forms of retreat can be used in various ways. In children who present a need for strong, rigid defences, they can assume the structure of complex pathological organizations capable of subjugating the child's mind and thus seriously compromising development and blocking psychotherapy. In other children, conversely, the forms of retreat seem to lead the therapist to pre-natal mnemonic traces and developments that are "too early/premature to be tolerable".

Vitiello L. **In Retreating, I Meet Myself: the Complexities of the Mind in Action.** *Richard & Piggie*, 30, 3, 2022, 255-264.

This work presents clinical and oneiric material relating to an adolescent in order to describe a form of retreat into the body in which some of the manifestations appear to be attempts to tackle content that the mind has not digested. The work seeks to see the psychic retreat as a State of Self and to consider it as a necessary stopping-point along the subjectivization journey. It argues that processes of working-through are carried out in every State of Self and that the functioning of each of these is comparable to the mind's functioning as a whole. Life's events and choices are read as an opportunity to digest the unresolved matters that are always present. The Winnicottian concept of primary maternal preoccupation, in particular, is used to look at maternity as a moment that redefines the self.

Gentile A. **Psychic Retreats During Identity Building Matt's Case.** *Richard & Piggle*, 30, 3, 2022, 264-272.

The clinical story of an eleven-year-old patient provides an opportunity to reflect on preadolescents' use of virtual platforms in today's world. Taking John Steiner's work on psychic retreats as her starting point, the author ponders the very concept of retreat and its possible mental dimensions.

Chianese G., Bove M., Cappuccio F., Di Matola S., Fiorito L., Scognamiglio V., Scandurra C. **Retreats Into the Body and Retreats from the Body: a Reflection on Identities in the Context of the Pandemic.** *Richard & Piggle*, 30, 3, 2022, 273-282.

Availing itself of theoretical reflections and clinical vignettes, this article seeks to explore three new varieties of psychic retreat that have been observed during the Covid-19 pandemic: extreme sports, gender fluidity and a defensive use of lockdown. These varieties are read through the lens of Kaës's theorizations on contemporary malaise and the processes of subjectivization. The authors highlight both the functional and the dysfunctional aspects of each one of the three, showing their temporary function of self-containment and, at the same time, of flight from depressive fears through the denial of painful realities.

Aragiusto R. **A Question of False Closeness. The Possibilities and Limitations of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy with an Adolescent.** *Richard & Piggle*, 30, 3, 2022, 283-292.

The article presents the clinical case of an adolescent whose feeling of being trapped in a female body becomes a rejection of the body itself and a desire to get rid of it. Here there is little room for a relationship becoming representable: a pervading lack of depth and a two-dimensionality prevent any deep contact with an emotional dimension. The impression is that there is no possibility of thinking: as if the patient had retreated in order to escape a reality that was unbearable because so anxiety-ridden. The article raises questions about the role of the psychoanalyst confronted by an adolescent who is thinking of adapting her biological sex to the one experienced and thus forcing said analyst to deal with an urgent request for surgery that checkmates the possibilities of thinking and representability.

Clinical Reflections

De Marino F. **SCP (Secure, Contain, Protect): Contemporary Narratives about Preadolescence and the Body's Metamorphoses.** *Richard & Piggle*, 30, 3, 2022, 293-307.

The article examines some contemporary narratives that are developing in the virtual world and appear to be instances of myth-making linked to preadolescence. They signal a particular interest in the body as the basis for transformations in identity, the result of a metamorphosis of suffering in which the whole process of change is rooted in the metabolization of pain. These are stories that, always playing on ambiguity, fuel fear and a sense of persecution, a state of permanent alert without rules and a flood of primordial affects that re-challenge the boundaries between what is organic and what is inorganic: a problem that the common sense of our times seems to be perceiving with an increasing degree of urgency.



Branco M., Castelnovo A., Gangi S. **Are the Symptoms in Adolescent Bodies Challenging the Virtual World?** *Richard & Piggie*, 30, 3, 2022, 308-317.

This article dwells on what social distancing and the forced suspension of intimacy caused by the pandemic may have meant for adolescents. In addition, it investigates the effects that a lack of physicality - that primary source both of communication and of transformation of the self and relations - may have had on the process of adolescent development. The authors believe that the fact of eliminating the body from the relationship with another person has produced a splitting of the mind from the body in young people who were already fragile. Remote relationships have sometimes confused people, created misunderstandings and prevented them from managing instances of conflict in a constructive manner. The authors use two clinical cases to describe how the restrictions - and the social distancing, in particular - have produced a collapse in psychic representability that has translated into bodily acting out.

Clinical Diary

Gonella V. **Francesco, a Computer and 'Psycho-Fantasy' Tales.** *Richard & Piggie*, 30, 3, 2022, 318-329.

In this article, the author seeks to describe the lengthy clinical work undertaken with a child diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, absorbed in his phantasies and presenting with stereotyped, obsessive behaviour. He dwells, in particular, on the way in which a long therapeutic impasse was resolved: after the first years of work (characterized by a counter-transference full of impotence and devitalization), the discovery of an old computer - an instrument permitted in recognition of the importance of elasticity in psychoanalytic technique - was to allow this child to write fantastical tales in which he could talk about himself and abandon his autistic defences.

The Enchanting Screen

Gentile A. **Petite Fille ("Little Girl", 2019).** *Richard & Piggie*, 30, 3, 2022, 330-334.

Reviews

Recommended Reading

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