



Eating Disorders during Early Childhood Notes on Anxiety Theory in Freud and Klein

Contents & abstracts

Editorial

Theory and technique

Petrelli D. **Notes on Anxiety Theory in S. Freud and M. Klein.** *Richard & Piggie*, 33, 3, 2025, 227-241.

The author proposes an historico-critical comparison of Freud's second anxiety theory with M. Klein's earliest formulations regarding anxiety. She highlights the significance that anxiety is accorded within the two authors' metapsychology and emphasizes not only the continuity between M. Klein's initial anxiety theory and that of Freud but also how the former constitutes a development of the concept of working through anxiety. In this sense, anxiety assumes a central role in mental functioning in that it influences not only the structuring of the Ego but also the quality of object relations both inside and outside the subject i.e., the whole of his or her relationship with the world. A re-reading of the clinical case concerning little Dick (Klein, 1930) further highlights these themes.

Focus

Eating Disorders during Early Childhood

Carbone Tirelli L. **Introduction.** *Richard & Piggie*, 33, 3, 2025, 242-247.

Eating disorders during early childhood are to be considered a significant risk factor, since they are indicators of grave or less grave obstacles to the journey in developmental growth and harmonious development of the newborn's Self in his or her relationship with objects.

What clearly emerges from the Focus section is that if the obstacles to and difficulties in relations between the newborn and his or her parents are not worked through and the relations reconfigured, said obstacles and difficulties may become evident in graver symptomatologies during subsequent phases of growth. This edition's review of theoretico-clinical publications reveals the importance of open dialogue between developmental research, observation experiences and the psychoanalytic approach. This with the objective of being able to study in ever greater depth the role of early exchanges and the tuning of clinical interventions with a psychoanalytic matrix for the mother-child couple or for the whole nuclear family.

Carbone Tirelli L, Micanzi Ravagli B. **Joint Psychotherapy in Cases of Eating Disorders during Early Childhood.** *Richard & Piggie*, 33, 3, 2025, 248-262.

The authors propose a model of intervention with a psychoanalytic structuring that makes explicit reference both to Kleinian theorization and to models of assessment and short, joint psychotherapeutic treatment of the child with its parents. In a brief excursus, they recall the history and importance of the methodological and theoretical discoveries that clinical practice has contributed in the area of children's interaction with their parents; this with interesting repercussions for the body of psychoanalytic theory. Of the many possible cases, the authors have chosen the assessment and short psychotherapy undertaken with little 17-month-old Marta and her parents. In their opinion, this material lent itself to a reflection on and discussion of an important form of clinical practice having both a preventive and a curative value: one that is still not sufficiently known or widespread in contexts involving the treatment of infants.

De Intinis G. **Mario and the Dolphin. An Eating Disorder During Early Childhood.** *Richard & Piggie*, 33, 3, 2025, 263-274.

The article covers the psychotherapy undertaken with a three-year-old boy with an eating disorder involving the rejection of solid foods.

The psychotherapy took place twice a week and was accompanied by regular consultations with the parents. Through the material produced during the psychotherapy sessions with the child and consultations with the parents, it became clear that there had been an incident during which fears of death had appeared in the mother-child relationship. These had wedged themselves in the child's emotional and imaginative development, thereby generating a traumatic area in their relationship. The author focuses on certain moments of passage during which this problem emerged and was tackled during sessions with the child and in the work with his parents. Working through this incident allowed the little boy to recommence his growth journey.

Carboni M. **The Story of Arianna, "A Fragile Tyrant".** *Richard & Piggie*, 33, 3, 2025, 275-292.

This article considers the case of a little girl aged four and a half who presented with a complex psychopathological profile originally characterized by an eating disorder and a co-morbidity involving obsessive functioning and incapacitating phobias. Intense therapy (lasting three years) benefited from the little girl's creative capacities. Through the production of drawings,



craftwork using materials from the box and the enactment of stories with soft toy animals, this creativity set off the narration of a story during which unconscious phantasies and fears but also processes of development achieved over time gradually acquired a form. Analysis of this precious material made it clear that at the root of the eating disorder lay the newborn baby girl's encounter with her mother's depression: this had inhibited her development and use of her introjective processes, thereby structuring a psychotic form of mental functioning.

Fondi E. **Breastfeeding Experiences during Mother-Infant Observation: Instances of Disharmony and Signs of Malaise during the Development of the Feeding Function.** *Richard & Piggle*, 33, 3, 2025, 293-308.

The author explores the development of the feeding function within the dynamic of primary relationships, making use of the newborn infant observation methodology as she does so. The feeding function that develops with breastfeeding constitutes a significant marker both of the degree of reciprocal adaptation present in the dyad and of the maternal capacity for tuning, in particular: a frequently problematic area, insofar as it is permeated with ambivalence. The observations reported by the author demonstrate different structurings of the relationships and also of the meanings that are built around the experience of feeding and being fed, thereby evidencing their evolution and the critical elements that can emerge during the first year of life.

Bevilacqua F, Cerchiari A. **The Development of Eating Skills during the First Years of Life: Between Physiology, Relationship and Early Vulnerability.** *Richard & Piggle*, 33, 3, 2025, 309-314.

The first thousand days of life are fundamental for neuro-functional, affective and relational development. During this time, the eating experience evolves from instinctive reflexes to complex skills tied to pleasure and relationship. Situations such as premature birth or admission to Neonatal Intensive Care can interrupt this journey, making it necessary to adopt a treatment approach that offers integrated support for both the feeding function and the relationship between the newborn baby and his or her parents.

Cimino S. **Child Feeding and Journeys Fostering Development or Maladjustment: a Psychodynamic Reading of Emotion Regulation between Psychoanalysis and Infant Research.** *Richard & Piggle*, 33, 3, 2025, 315-329.

In this theoretico-clinical contribution, the author reports on some aspects of the main approaches in the intersubjective field that seek to marry the intuitions born of developmental research with the classical contributions deriving from psychodynamic and psychoanalytic clinical practice. These are approaches that emphasize the importance of the early adult-child relationship as a key factor for understanding the psychological bases that can lead to the structuring of a pathology in the area of eating. What emerges is the fruitful dialogue between the various disciplines involved, which all highlight the need to study in greater depth how the human mind is born and develops within the first intersubjective contexts. Oriented towards recognizing the complexity of the phenomena involved, such an integrative perspective

brings to the fore the need to think about early interventions that can take account of the interconnection between the empirical evidence born of research and the by now consolidated intuitions contributed by psychodynamic and psychoanalytic clinical practice.

The enchanting screen

De Marino F. **The Florida Project** (2017). Directed by Sean Baker *Richard & Piggie*, 33, 3, 2025, 330-334.

Gangi S. **Vakhim** (2024). Directed by Francesca Pirani. *Richard & Piggie*, 33, 3, 2025, 335-337.

Reviews

Recommended reading

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