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Illusion in Winnicott Adolescents and the Body

Contents & abstracts

Editorial

Theory and technique

Caldwell L. **Reflecting Further in Illusion in Winnicott.** *Richard & Piggie*, 34, 1, 2026, 1-13.

The text analyses the central role that Winnicott's thinking attributes to illusion – understood as a primary experience allowing the child to move between internal and external reality. Unlike Freud, who links it primarily to the satisfaction of desire and to that which is not real, Winnicott emphasizes its creative and structuring function and how it underpins the transitional space, playing and cultural life. Thus, illusion becomes a permanent dimension of human experience and also a fundamental one in transference. The author uses references to art to show how illusion supports the capacity to be isolated without being insulated: this by blending creativity, relationship and the sense of self.

Tabanelli L. **Illusion and Illusoriness. Notes on the Article 'Reflecting Further on Illusion in Winnicott'.** *Richard & Piggie*, 34, 1, 2026, 14-20.

Focus

Adolescents and the Body. Trauma and Attacks on the Body during Adolescence



Parisi G. **Introduction. Adolescents and the Body. Traumata, Attempts at Integration and the Construction of an Identity.** *Richard & Piggle*, 34, 1, 2026, 21-29.

This introduction to the Focus section presents the complex theme of the relationship between an adolescent and his/her body. The declensions of this relationship are shown as seen from various viewpoints and in the light of some works presented in the context of the Scientific Programme for 2025 adopted by AIPPI's local, Rome branch. The themes analysed concern the experience of intimacy and loneliness during adolescence; trauma and its effects on the body during adolescence and the inter-weavings between an ill body and adolescence. In addition to the rich and highly interesting theoretico-clinical works, the author also refers to some literary contributions that, through the force of their narrative, take us directly to the heart of the themes involved in the dialogue between an adolescent and his/her body.

Martin Cabré LJ. **Intimacy during Adolescence: between a 'Feeling of Loneliness' and a 'Capacity to be Alone'.** *Richard & Piggle*, 34, 1, 2026, 30-37.

The article begins by reflecting on Klein's "sense of loneliness" and Winnicott's "capacity to be alone" and comparing the two authors' theories. This theme is then linked to and interwoven with an in-depth analysis both of the feelings of intimacy and loneliness during adolescence and of how the development of a sense of intimacy is characterized in both sexes. The two sexes' different journeys in identity-building are then emphasized. Lastly, the author describes the adolescent psyche's complex work of grappling with a desire for autonomy, separation and distance from the object: dynamics in which the adolescent finds him/herself oscillating between a tendency towards fusion and a tendency to distance the object.

Carboni M. **"Why Dost Thou Rend My Bones?/Breathes There No Pity in Thy Breast At All?/We That Are Turned To Trees Were Human Once". Debridement as a Process of Re-texturing Trauma through the Body.** *Richard & Piggle*, 34, 1, 2026, 38-47.

Taking the Thirteenth Canto of The Divine Comedy's *Hell* as its starting point and a dialogue between theoretical aspects and rough clinical sketches as its vehicle, the article seeks to present a work on the early traumatic experiences that become encysted in the bodies of adolescents. By de-structuring the introjective processes, trauma inhibits the psychic apparatus's metabolic function and obstructs the organization of good internal objects, something essential for the development and cohesion of the Self. The traumatic precipitate is therefore perceived as a sensation of having something intrusive and alien inside oneself, from which it is impossible to free oneself. In this sense, the phantasy of debridement is a somato-psychic attempt to eradicate such object when the already mobilized mental processes cannot manage to reach the heart of the trauma, experienced as a bodily collapse.

Imparato G. **“It’s Like Suffocating a Cry”. Attacking the Body to Alleviate the Mental Pain.** *Richard & Piggle*, 34, 1, 2026, 48-57.

During the first decade of the third millennium, self-harming forms of behaviour had already become fairly widespread in the context of symptomatic expressions of adolescent malaise. However, the incidence of this condition often associated with other expressions, such as depression and eating disorders, has increased further during the course of the last few years. The article considers the motivations that push many adolescents to resort to this type of behaviour that is a “somatic marker” of mental pain. Forms of self-harm are not only the means by which mental suffering can be transformed into physical pain and an elementary instrument of emotional self-regulation: through self-cutting and the painful sensations that this produces, they also constitute an attempt to fight a condition of disorientation and fragmentation of the self. This in order to feel alive and real, despite everything.

Baronio F. **“Let Me In!” The Story of a Deprived Child Who Made His Claim from the Body of an Adolescent.** *Richard & Piggle*, 34, 1, 2026, 58-65.

This article reports the experience of the first year of psychotherapy with an adolescent called Carlos. It highlights the close connection between the body during adolescence and the ramifications of early traumatic experiences, including abandonment and deprivation. What emerged was how certain unrepresentable and unnarratable elements of the trauma were inscribed in the child’s mind, so as to subsequently speak out through the soma once he entered into adolescence. The body, acting out and anti-social tendencies all become an instrument for communicating and making claims. In the clinical context, the possibility of tuning oneself in – through a sense-based listening – to the patient’s somatic modes of expression can be of great value. This in order to grasp primitive elements of his/her mental life that would otherwise be untraceable and thus be able to begin weaving a meaning.

Michetti M. **“A Treacherous Body”. Adolescence and Illness.** *Richard & Piggle*, 34, 1, 2026, 66-75.

The article offers some reflections on the relationship between an adolescent and a sick body, making use of the clinical material relating to two adolescent patients who were both affected by chronic organic disorders. Adolescence and organic illness are represented as two very closely interwoven experiences that both involve profound bodily transformations and a re-organization of the identity. The author additionally dwells on the role that illness plays both within family dynamics and in the therapeutic relationship. The work highlights how both illness and the passage into adolescence place the therapist – just like the whole significant adult world – in a condition of being intensely ‘there’ and, above all, flexible and receptive with regard to young people’s experience and pain.



Clinical reflections

Della Ratta F. **Identity's Vicissitudes and the Analyst's Counter-Transference Oneiric Function. Suspended Forms of Subjectivity: Neither Alive nor Dead.** *Richard & Piggie*, 34, 1, 2026, 76-88.

The author seeks to explore the transference-counter transference dynamics that emerged in clinical work with an adolescent presenting a serious and wide-ranging symptomatology. She pays particular attention to the appearance of perceptive-sensorial traces of early environmental knocks and the activation of defences. The article explores the analyst's mental and corporeal position and the setting offered, the latter being seen as an invaluable vehicle for treatment, containment and working with the psyche. The use of a counter-transference dream (which was useful for therapeutic purposes), like the presence, during analytic sessions, of the adolescent's dog (the catalyst of an important transformative movement) opens up a space for questions regarding technique and the possibility of creating a time and a potential space for development. This at the service of an authentic process of subjectivization.

The enchanting screen

Conversano EM. **Scrapper (2023). Directed by Charlotte Regan.** *Richard & Piggie*, 34, 1, 2026, 89-92.

Reviews

Recommended reading

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