

The thirteenth edition of the Annual of the Rivista di Psicoanalisi presents a selection of ten of the most significant articles from our journal, those which lend themselves most easily to interesting our foreign colleagues, stimulating dialogue about theoretical and clinical topics, and at the same time offering a panoramic view of our Society's varied psychoanalytic identity.

The volume opens with Stefano Bolognini's article about the complexity of analytic training, the impact which psychoanalytic theories can have on the psychic reality of the session, and the difficult interplay between the analyst's formative theories and the inevitable uniqueness of each patient. The author starts from his experience in the Theoretical Working Party of the European Psychoanalytic Federation which showed him how little the «theoretical Ego» is master in its own house, how often there is some incoherence between conscious theoretical assumptions and those that are unconscious and implicit. It is clinical material which allows the emergence of individual analysts' transference to the Authors of the schools which trained them, revealing the differences between genuine development of their identity and a Self formed by various imitative or substitutive incorporations. Bolognini stresses the difference between superficial eclecticism and genuine theoretical pluralism, proposing as a solution that analysts adopt a dialectical, open and suspended disposition in which, by means of an introjective identification of partial elements, each of us constructs or co-constructs with the patient the model of psychic reality which best represents what is happening within the analyst himself, in the patient, or in the field constructed by them. An English translation of the article has been published in the «Dialogues» section of the Spiweb site with comments by Nicola Abel-Hirsch, Leopoldo Bleger, and Fred Busch.

The 2018 focus is dedicated to the topic of research and consists of three articles presented at the «Research Day» held in Rome on 20 January and chaired by Marianne Leuziger Bohleber.

Anna Nicolò, President of the Italian Psychoanalytic Society, addresses the topic of research in psychoanalysis in the light of the scientific transformations of recent decades. Psychoanalysis finds itself confronting the difficulty of defining its status: whether to locate itself in the hard sciences, among the humanities, or as a science with a special status. In conceptual terms, being empirical but above all clinical, research has the function of keeping psychoanalysis in step with the evolution of the scientific community and maintaining the stance which keeps questioning its own theoretical assumptions and clinical tools. In this respect, it becomes a model for the functioning of the mind which activates transformative processes on various levels by means of curiosity and the urge to seek the truth. The widening applicability of psycho-

analytic treatment leads us to include psychotic and borderline states in our studies, and sees psychoanalysts being employed in a variety of institutions and groups. This in turn leads us to continually question the validity of our method and reminds us of the need to widen the effectiveness of our theories and our knowledge of them, without forgetting the patient's irreducible uniqueness. The purpose of setting up research projects is to create a working culture of equals with no hierarchical implications, a culture which may find its way into training activities. The Executive's proposal to set up research based on the Three Level Model is currently engaging more than 200 Members and Candidates of the Italian Society.

Ferdinando Riolo describes the importance of research into theories and concepts in order to avoid a lack of clarity in the communications between analysts and an excessive eclecticism in practice. The psychoanalytic method consists of two interlocking procedures: the first is observational, allowing the unconscious to be observed through its conscious derivatives; the second is axiomatic and deductive, and seeks to build the theory of the unconscious in its relations with consciousness. The two procedures move along different lines of development: the first makes use of associative thinking unconstrained by logical connections while the other tries to abstract general laws from the particular by means of logically oriented thought. Riolo identifies four points of interest: work on theory, work on observation, work of falsification, and research. The starting point of the working group which he coordinates has been the writings of Freud and the axioms he formulated, and the same procedure has been adopted by authors representing the principal schools of thought present in the IPA. The aim is to isolate incompatible propositions and possible convergences between different schools.

In his article, Massimo Vigna Taglianti describes the method of the Three Level Model for Observing Patient's Transformations, devised by the IPA's Project Group for Clinical Observation. The method is intended to enable systematic clinical observations of the transformations which occur during analytic treatments. The author describes the method's theoretical presuppositions and modes of application, a gradual process with the aim of detecting the lowest common denominator of the various theories which underpin a concept. The method allows us to observe blind spots, idealizations of models, and the arbitrary use of concepts. The initial presupposition is that the complete case study may be the most refined and effective form of research in the field of psychoanalysis, to which is added the fundamental tool of elaboration in groups. The aim of the group is to identify distinctive ways and means, using accurate clinical observation, of improving our answers to questions about what changes during the analytic process and how to promote a culture of comparison and respect.

Two articles are devoted to important aspects of the feminine, the theme of the forthcoming IPA Congress.

Caterina Meotti and Valeria Pezzani address the topic of the analyst's pregnancy and the impact which its bodily, affective, and relational transformations have on the analytic couple, both modifying the analyst's mental disposition and encouraging the emergence of specific themes in patients. The analytic device requires that real, constraining elements concerning the analyst do not take up space in the setting, so that the patient is left free to use the setting for her or his own projections and cathexes. However, beyond the impact which any particularly substantial event in the analyst's life may have, pregnancy, with its features of bodily transformation, constitutes a sort of «obligatory self-disclosure». Pregnancy inevitably brings back into the foreground the vicissitudes of every woman in relation to her primary objects, and different stages of life intersect: the past and her role as a daughter, her pregnancy in the present, and her future as a mother. The authors offer a delicate unveiling in search of a bridge between the analyst's vulnerability and the specific sensitivities of each patient. The article is illustrated with rich clinical material which exemplifies the movements occurring in the consulting room.

In her contribution, Daniela Nobili addresses the dramatic situations occasioned by destructive maternal behaviour, including filicide. These are situations in which childhood traumas suffered by the mother play an important role, especially through primitive death-anxieties and alienating, pathogenic identifications. The traumas have left an inadequate scar tissue which can easily be torn open. The past returns in her relations with a child, especially if it is evoked by the child's crying, and the killing seems to have the aim of preserving unity in the face of a looming and persecutory internal chaos or else is the starting point of a psychotic disintegration. Women who have suffered grave affective deprivations see in the birth of a child the possibility of reconstructing a symbiotic union, but this easily becomes the receptacle for introjected bad objects. The author reports her experience of work in a Psychiatric Hospital with two mothers who killed their child. The psychoanalyst's work will be the slow and steady recomposition of relational scenarios, acknowledging the defensive and aggressive distortions in present relationships, and obviously also in the transference dimension. The countertransference will help to recognize and defuse the explosions of aggression.

Lastly come four essays that are both theoretical and clinical.

Gabriele Cassullo develops two fundamental themes. On the one hand, he very carefully reconstructs the difficult relationship between Freud and Janet, showing the differences and similarities in the concepts they elaborated, so as to address Janet's contribution to the topic of the relationship between trauma and dissociation, and the vicissitudes of identity as a result of traumas. Cassullo also emphasizes the influence of his thinking on other important psychoanalysts: Winnicott, in relation to the interest of analysis in the process of integration, personalisation, and the development of the sense of reality; Fairbairn, who uses Janet's dissociation to elaborate his own theories about schizoid processes; and Bromberg in his clinical use of dissociation.

In her article, referring to Winnicott's thought, Anna Ferruta stresses the dynamism and complexity of the work done to know psychic reality, which enables the infant to grow and be transformed, not in a linear fashion but in a continual succession of mourning and new acquisitions. Winnicott demonstrates the importance of the analyst simultaneously having in mind the relationship of the subject to the object and with the environment; being an affectively invested object in order to provide responses which may help the patient to develop a feeling of vitality, a meeting with an Other capable of enabling the development of creative and original areas. The author recalls Ogden's assertion that Winnicott's language consists predominantly of verbs, something which makes one think of how he chose to emphasize the processes of transformation, thinking in terms of an analyst able to let himself be used by the patient in the construction of his own Self and also of functioning as a live object who opens the way to the new.

Luisa Masina puts passion at the centre of her reflection on being a psychoanalyst, passion being etymologically a fusion of Eros and Thanatos which, besides being an important tool for maintaining the analyst's mind, also makes possible the integration of split-off areas of the Self. This is especially the case with patients who tend towards mental withdrawal and who also identify the consulting room as a place where this uncomfortable state of mind may find a refuge. Bion too considered passion the fundamental bearer of the object's affective quality, being intrinsically intersubjective, a true vector of psychoanalytic action. The author shows passion in action in clinical situations dominated by retreats, encapsulations, withdrawals. The analyst's position begins with presenting herself as «almost inanimate», meaning by this that she puts a capacity for identifying with deeply suffering states of mind together with the possibility of inserting «quanta» of vitality into the relationship, in appropriately measured doses so as to avoid transforming the therapeutic factor into poison.

In his article, Giuseppe Riefolo sees the search for beauty as one of the goals of a psychoanalytic process, a search with dynamic characteristics. He describes two levels of the process of beauty: the first concerns the discovery of live elements with objects that have been libidinally disinvested or never invested, while a further level entails the creation of new and absolutely original relational configurations. He reminds us of Meltzer and Harris Williams' theory of aesthetic conflict in order to describe what leads us to strive towards the other through the perception of the difference between what is observed and what is intuited. The first level of the search for beauty is concerned with the re-establishment of the aesthetic object linked to sensory experiences connected to primary maternal care, while the other has to do with the emergence of new objects, new relational configurations of mental coupling which can be achieved if trust (in the Bionian sense) prevails in the analytic method. Beauty is understood as something shared and unique which the patient feels contains traces of the unique and unrepeatable mental coupling with that analyst.

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