



# Ottawa Psychoanalytic Society Société psychanalytique d'Ottawa

## Scientific Meeting Saturday, March 17 2018

10:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Ottawa Psychoanalytic Society, 223 Main Street (St Paul University), LaFramboise building room **L133 Salon Gervais**, Ottawa.

### « Is My Therapist an Invader or an Immigrant? Aspects of Psychotherapy with an Asperger's Adolescent. »

This is a case presentation of an adolescent who is on the autism spectrum and who came to me diagnosed with Asperger's Disorder. The presentation consists of limited vignettes organized thematically. Several themes are specifically highlighted. One major theme is the nature of Jack's transference and how it has slowly shifted over time. Other aspects are also thematized. One is the autistic-like defenses employed by Jack and how these have played out in respect to both the transference and countertransference. Specifically, Jack has been able to quite clearly articulate his need for walls, barriers, and protective fortifications. My attempts as his therapist to respect these needs and to be able to talk about them with Jack seems to have been an important factor in allowing his therapy to proceed. Jack aspires to become an architect and the drawings he has made are detailed and skilled in nature and will be discussed. We have also talked about the walls he needs to set up, including a very thick wall between him and me. We have talked about his smart phone and how he uses it to play computer games during our sessions. I initially experienced his phone use as an annoying barrier and an emotional wall, as well as being an irritating example of adolescent entitlement. Jack was able in response to tell me how it facilitates his participation in our sessions and how much he needs to use it. Theoretically, I suggest that two central defenses with Asperger's children involve splitting of the self into victim and bully aspects, and projective identification into remote objects. In his drawings, Jack has drawn many different split off aspects of his internal geography, and has attempted to show me in his drawings how he feels these different aspects are related to one another.

## Dr. Robin Holloway Toronto Psychoanalytic Society

### **Learning Objectives**

1. To appreciate the rapid shifts in "self-states" and the fragility of these self-states for adolescents with Asperger's disorder;
2. As well as to appreciate the split-off (or dissociated) sectors of self (self-states) typical of Asperger's from both the patient's and the therapist's points of view;
3. To identify the autistic defenses (walls, barriers, fortifications, encapsulations, cocoons, psychic retreats) often used by Asperger's children;
4. To gain some appreciation of aspects of the unfolding of the transference/countertransference dialectic with Asperger's adolescents;

"This event is a self-approved group learning activity (Section 1) as defined by the Maintenance of Certification program of The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada."

Confidential material will be presented and discussed.

### **Scientific Program Chair**

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