

Think in a Rectal Container

Arlene Joffe

Abstract

When the container-contained process between mother and infant is compromised, a parasitic !" relationship is internalised with the establishment of a 'projective-identification-rejecting' internal object. One of the forms this may take is a rectal container, which Meltzer terms a 'claustrum', a concrete version of a container which operates by transforming the contained into faeces, fit only for evacuation. This involves a premature development from oral to anal, with a denial of the need for the breast mother. The psychotherapy of a five year old boy is presented to assist in thinking through these ideas, with a focus on the dynamics of the !" manifesting in the transference-countertransference. It is suggested that omnipotent projective identifications may be made realistic by their being understood and thus contained, resulting in a growth in the concept of a container.