

THE SOCIAL WITHIN: PICHON RIVIERE, VINCULO, & THE SPIRAL PROCESS

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MARCO ANTONIO ROMERO GARCIA

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APPROVED:

Louis Sass, PhD

Karen Slean, PsyD

DEAN:

Denise Hien, PhD, ABPP

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ABSTRACT

Psychoanalytic scholarship from the Latin American region is not well represented in the broader psychoanalytic discourse in the United States. The purpose of this dissertation is to research the contributions of notable psychoanalyst Enrique Pichon Rivière [1907-1977], a pioneer from Argentina who influenced the first generation of psychoanalysts from the Río de la Plata region of Latin America and the broader South American psychoanalytic community. Pichon Rivière's theoretical corpus is an innovative attempt toward a relational and group-based conception of subjectivity. It attempts to integrate the socio-cultural realm in conceptions of the psyche and clinical intervention. Pichon Rivière was the teacher of notable psychoanalysts from the Río de la Plata region, Willy & Madeleine Baranger, who conceptualized the psychoanalytic situation as intersubjective. Recent trends towards relationality and intersubjectivity in American psychoanalytic psychotherapy suggest Pichon Rivière's theoretical corpus is highly relevant to current practice and deserves an in-depth review. The present study attempts to explain Pichon Rivière's theoretical corpus, connect Pichon Rivière's teachings to the theoretical developments of Willy and Madeleine Baranger, establish links between Pichon Rivière's theory and American interpersonal and relational psychoanalysis, and explore parallels between Pichon Rivière's upbringing and his writings.

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“¡Bienaventurados los que sueñan, porque de ellos será el reino de la creación!” / “Blessed are those who dream, because they will inherit the kingdom of creation!”

— Rogelio Sinán, Plenilunio

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Introduction

“As beautiful as the chance encounter on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella”

–Les Chants de Maldoror, Comte de Lautréamont

Pichon Rivière

The purpose of this dissertation is to research the contributions of notable psychoanalyst Enrique Pichon Rivière, a pioneer who contributed widely to psychoanalysis in Latin America between 1940-1977. Recent trends in the English-speaking psychoanalytic community suggest an increased effort to understand the scholarship of psychoanalysts from the Latin American region (Arbiser, 2017; Bernardi, & De León De Bernardi, 2012; Berenstein, 2012; Brown, 2011; Corel, 2013; Greenberg, 2017; Gonzáles, 2020; Hinshelwood, 2012; Katz, 2017; Lewkowitz & Flechner S., 2005; Lisman-Pieczanski et al., 2015; Losso et al., 2017; Stern, 2015; Tubert-Oklander & Hernández de Tubert, 2004). Despite valiant efforts and impressive scholarship, psychoanalytic contributions from the Latin American region are not well represented in the broader psychoanalytic discourse in the United States, as efforts to study Latin American contributions are recent in the context of the history of the field. Inadequate representation is likely even more pronounced in American clinical psychology programs where psychoanalysis has lost influence (Levy & Anderson, 2013).

Possible reasons for inadequate representation are varied, such as linguistic barriers that prevented the translation of Spanish and Portuguese psychoanalytic scholarship (Etchegoyen & Zysman, 2005); the attitude of contempt towards Latin Americans held by Freud and his early followers (Plotkin, 2019); few attempts by Latin American psychoanalysts to write on the history of the movement (Plotkin, 2001), and difficulties comprehending translated material due to different writing styles between North American and Latin American scholars (Tylin, 1996). The

inadequate representation of Latin American contributions is unfortunate given the rich history of psychoanalysis in the Latin American region (Plotkin & Honorato, 2018).

Despite the barriers, some Latin American contributions to psychoanalysis are widely studied internationally and better represented in the United States. This would include the Río de la Plata school of psychoanalysis (Argentina and Uruguay) with its innovative contributions on process and technique; especially the groundbreaking work of Heinrich Racker, who advocated for the utility of countertransference in clinical work (Racker, 1953, 1957, 2007), and the contributions of the Barangers (Baranger et al., 1983; Baranger & Baranger, 1961-62/2008), who studied the intersubjective and co-constructed nature of the analytic field.

Racker and the Barangers have gained recent attention in the American psychoanalytic community due to increased interest in the analyst's subjectivity, the utility of countertransference, and the co-constructed nature of the analytic situation. A few examples include Hoffman (1991), who discussed Racker's contributions in the context of integrating the interpersonal and intrapsychic realms, Aron (1992), who explored Racker's challenge of the healthy and mature analyst, Brown (2011), who studied the Barangers' contributions to notions of intersubjectivity, Stern (2015) who provided a comparative study between the Barangers' field theory and interpersonal and relational field theory, and finally Katz (2017), who studied the Barangers' field model and other models of the psychoanalytic field in the United States and Europe.

It is not a coincidence that interest in Racker and the Barangers comes from analysts such as Donnel Stern and Irwin Hoffman, who represent a trend in American psychoanalysis towards interpersonal and relational concerns. As ego psychology lost dominance in the United States, the relational and interpersonal perspective slowly became more influential, gaining influence after Greenberg and Mitchell coined the term relational in 1983 to differentiate between theories

emphasizing relationality rather than drives (Aron & Lechich, 2012). By 1988, the interpersonal and relational perspective was well-established in respected psychoanalytic institutes and became the dominant perspective in the United States—especially in Division 39 of the American Psychological Association (Aron & Lechich, 2012).

With the interpersonal and relational perspective came an increased interest in the analyst's subjectivity, an expansion of the study of the utility of countertransference, and a focus on co-construction and intersubjectivity in the analytic encounter (Aron & Lechich, 2012). Traditional conceptions of transference and countertransference as pure distortion and notions of analytic neutrality were challenged (Aron & Lechich, 2012). In this intellectual climate of relationality and co-construction, American analysts became interested in the scholarship of psychoanalysts from Río de la Plata who argued similar ideas at earlier points in history (Baranger et al., 1983; Baranger & Baranger, 1961-62/2008; Racker, 1953, 1957, 2007).

Lost within the interest in analysts such as the Barangers and Racker is the cultural context in which their ideas developed, including renowned analysts of the Río de la Plata region who influenced Racker and the Barangers. Out of the many notable, Enrique Pichon Rivière stands out as an illustrious figure, universally regarded by analysts in the region as a true master (Etchegoyen & Zysman; 2005; Ungar, 2017), yet mostly unknown in the English-speaking world. Pichon Rivière—the training analyst of Willy Baranger—significantly influenced the Barangers' notions of the intersubjective field via his concept of the dialectic spiral (Baranger, 1979; Brown 2011).

Who was Pichon Rivière? This is a question that will be asked multiples times in this study and whether it is answered is up to the reader. Pichon Rivière, who I will refer to as "*Pichon*" as he is colloquially known in Latin America, is considered by the eminent French historian of psychoanalysis, Élisabeth Roudinesco, to be the most prominent psychoanalyst in Argentine

history and one of the most eminent psychoanalysts of the Latin American tradition (Roudinesco, 1998). According to Isaac Tylim (1996), an Argentinean-American analyst in New York, Pichon, along with colleagues, founded the first psychoanalytic institute in Latin America, the Argentinian Psychoanalytic Association, and has a number of other accomplishments as well. Pichon introduced psychodynamic psychotherapy to public health settings in Argentina, defined mental health providers as critics of the establishment and agents for social change, deemphasized the drives, and integrated psychoanalysis with a Marxist social psychology capable of understanding the relationships between social structures and the unconscious (pg., 719). The Argentine psychoanalyst Virginia Ungar (2017), current president of the International Psychoanalytic Association, notes that Pichon trained some of the most well-regarded analysts in Argentina. For this reason, Jay Greenberg (2017), a prominent analyst from the William Alanson White Institute, states “*it is impossible to understand the work of any Latin American analyst, from his contemporaries and his first-generation followers such as Willy and Madeleine Baranger and Jose Bleger to contemporary authors, without taking Pichon’s views into account*” (pg., 187, my emphasis).

As it should be clear to the reader, Pichon cannot be ignored if one wishes to develop a comprehensive understanding of Latin American psychoanalysis. Moreover, in the description by Tylim, there are many aspects of Pichon that are of interest to contemporary psychoanalysts, particularly interpersonal and relational sensibilities. For example, Tylim speaks of Pichon’s deemphasis on the drives and focus on the social aspects of the unconscious. These are areas of interest of current relational and interpersonal analysts, some of whom exclusively call our attention to the connections between the social sphere and the unconscious (Altman, 2010; Layton, 2020). Furthermore, psychoanalysts working in Spanish-speaking countries have already noted the

similarities between Pichon and American interpersonal and relational psychoanalysis (Ávila Espada, 2013; Tubert-Oklander, 2015); thus, a comprehensive review of Pichon's theoretical corpus and its link to relational and interpersonal perspectives must be undertaken.

Thankfully, the present work will stand on an already burgeoning literature, as recent trends suggest parts of Pichon's theoretical corpus are finally available to the English-speaking psychoanalytic community. For example, psychoanalysts from Mexico Tubert-Oklander & Hernández de Tubert (2004) published a book on Pichon's operative group technique for the English-speaking audience. A search through Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing (PEP), the foremost comprehensive database on psychoanalysis in the English-speaking community, reveals several publications in English on Pichon's concepts written by various analysts from the Río de la Plata region. These include papers by Arbiser (2017) on Pichon's conception of reality, by Berenstein (2012) on Pichon's concept of *vínculo* (link), by Bernardi, R., & De León De Bernardi, B. (2012) on Pichon's concept of *vínculo* and the dialectic spiral, and by Losso (2017) focusing on Pichon's concept of *vínculo* and the connection between the intrapsychic and external worlds.

Works on Pichon's theory written in the English language have also been published by analysts from Europe, some of whom come from Argentinian origin. For instance, Eiguer (2017) explored Pichon's concept of the third structure, Kaes (2017), explored various Pichonian ideas and Pichon's social conception of the psyche, Jaitin (2017) explored a variety of Pichon's concepts and her professional relationship with Pichon. A few American analysts have also joined, including Gabbard (2012), who explored the concept of *vínculo*, Scharff (2017), who compared Pichon with object relations theorists; Greenberg (2017), who studied Pichon's paper on the Three D.'s and compared it with Harry Stack Sullivan's work, and González (2020), who explored the utility of Pichon's work in understanding the social conceptions of the psyche.

A significant barrier in comprehending Pichon's work used to be the unavailability of translated material; Gabbard (2012), for example, noted he tried his best to understand Pichon with the help of his Spanish language tutor (pg. 580). Fortunately, newly translated material is available and has helped the exploration of Pichon's ideas. For instance, the work by Greenberg (2017) had access to translated material. Moreover, in 2017, the book *The Linked Self in Psychoanalysis*—edited by Losso, Setton, and Scharff—was published, which contains a collection of some of Pichon's most important papers translated into English. The book also includes a compilation of papers that comment on Pichon's work and a handy glossary on many of Pichon's concepts.

The Linked Self in Psychoanalysis is a monumental achievement in disseminating the work of Pichon Rivière. My dissertation will build on the book as well as many other sources. However, despite the burgeoning literature on Pichon Rivière, there are still many challenges to disseminate Pichon's work in the broader psychoanalytic discourse in the United States. Pichon's writings are not always easy to grasp because his writing style fails to follow a linear progression, contains contradictions, and is densely theoretical. The previous has been noted by various authors who are experts on his theoretical corpus (Adamson, 2018; Kaes, 2017). Moreover, Pichon's theory is intensely interdisciplinary. Kaes (2017), for instance, notes the presence of several influences such as G.H. Mead, Kurt Lewin, Sartre, among others.

Unfortunately, Pichon's written work does not include sufficient in-depth exploration of his interdisciplinary influences. It is often assumed the reader is widely familiar with the social sciences and humanities. Experts on his work note Pichon was not an avid writer, preferring an oral transmission of his ideas, and indeed, many of his works come from student transcriptions of his lectures (Adamson, 2018; Kaes, 2017). It must also be noted that Pichon was writing for a different audience in Argentina in the 1960s & 70s. There are significant differences between Latin

American and American psychoanalytic cultures. In the United States, psychoanalysis developed within medicine, often in isolation from the humanities. My observations of the literature gave me the stark impression that Latin American psychoanalysis contains significant influences from the humanities and social sciences, making it difficult to grasp for readers without a review of such fields.

The current English-speaking psychoanalytic literature on Pichon, in my opinion, does not contain sufficient development of the links between Pichon's theory and the interdisciplinary influences that allowed Pichon to innovate. For instance, the works from Gabbard (2012), Arbiser (2017), Losso (2017), Kaes (2017), Scharff (2017), and Greenberg (2017) mention his interdisciplinary influences in passing but do not sufficiently explain the connection. The present work will provide a more comprehensive explanation of Pichon's interdisciplinary influences, particularly the ones mentioned in his translated writings, such as G.H. Mead, Kurt Lewin, dialectic philosophy, genetic structuralism, communication theory, and Gestalt theory. The aim is to make Pichon's writings more understandable by connecting Pichon's theory with the interdisciplinary influences he integrated, and to show how Pichon used the humanities and social sciences to go beyond the psychoanalytic teachings of his time to innovate in his conception of subjectivity, health & illness, intersubjectivity, and clinical contributions.

Another area of development in the English-speaking psychoanalytic literature on Pichon is the absence of a broad explanation of Pichon's theoretical corpus. Most of the current works explain only a few of Pichon's concepts, making it difficult for the reader to develop a holistic understanding of Pichon's theory unless the reader has consulted the original writings extensively. For instance, Tubert-Oklander & Hernández de Tubert (2004) focus mostly on Pichon's group work, Berenstein (2012) on Pichon's concept of vínculo, Eiguer (2017) on Pichon's concept of the

third structure, and Gabbard (2012) on Pichon's concept of vínculo. The absence of scholarship representing Pichon's broad theoretical corpus is a barrier to comprehending Pichon as many of his theoretical concepts build on each other—making the exploration of a few concepts, without the context of the broader theoretical corpus, a confusing endeavor.

The present study will aim to develop a broader understanding of Pichon's theoretical corpus by explaining various aspects of Pichon's theoretical work. The explanation will develop Pichon's conception of subjectivity, his integration of the social sphere into the psyche, his ideas on health and illness, and his clinical work. The aim is to offer a comprehensive initial synopsis of Pichon's theoretical corpus.

The third area of improvement in the literature is a further exploration of the connection between the work of Pichon and that of his influential students, especially the Barangers' field theory—a theory that influenced contemporary psychoanalytic models of co-construction and intersubjectivity. The connection between Pichon and the Barangers is important to explore to comprehend how Pichon's concepts have influenced the broader international psychoanalytic community. Recent literature has started to develop this connection, particularly the work of Arbiser (2017) and Bernardi, R., & De León De Bernardi, B. (2012). The present work will contribute to this burgeoning literature by providing a brief explanation of the Baranger's field theory, followed by an exploration of parallels between Pichon and Barangers' theory, with a focus on how the Barangers extended some of Pichon's teachings.

The fourth area of improvement in the literature is the lack of comparisons between Pichon's theoretical corpus and American interpersonal and relational perspectives. This is of particular importance given the current interest in interpersonal and relational perspectives in the United States and the influence of Pichon in contemporary Latin American relational perspectives

(Losso et al., 2021). Comparative work on Pichon's theoretical corpus has already started with the work of a few American writers. For instance, Scharff (2017) wrote a comprehensive comparison and contrast of Pichon's work with object-relational thinkers. Scharff does mention similarities with contemporary American intersubjective and relational thinkers but does so briefly, given his focus rests on comparing Pichon to object relations thinkers. Another example is the work of Greenberg (2017), who provided an intriguing comparison of Pichon and Harry Stack Sullivan, but only of a small portion of Pichon's work. The present work will add to the burgeoning comparative literature by linking Pichon's work to interpersonal and relational thinkers.

Finally, the English-speaking literature can be expanded by work connecting Pichon's upbringing to the development of his theory. As the reader will come to comprehend, Pichon had an interesting upbringing, marked in many ways by his contact with native Indigenous cultures. Comparisons have been made between his upbringing and his theorizing (Álvarez, 2014), but these connections are mostly in the Spanish-speaking academic literature. Therefore, the present work will contain a biographical section and introduce parallels between Pichon's upbringing and his writings.

In summary, the present study aims to add to the English-speaking psychoanalytic literature on Pichon's work by (1) offering a broad explanation of Pichon's theoretical corpus, (2) giving the reader an understanding of Pichon's use of interdisciplinary fields in his theoretical innovations, (3) connecting Pichon's teachings to the theoretical developments of the Barangers, (4) connecting Pichon to current interpersonal and relational perspectives in the United States, and (5) establishing parallels between Pichon's upbringing and his writings.

The dissertation is structured as follows: the introduction after the present section will continue to a brief section on history to situate the historical context prior to explaining Pichon's

theoretical corpus. Thus, the section will start with a history of Freud and his relationships with the Spanish language, particularly Freud's readings of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, and will follow with a brief history of psychoanalysis in Latin America, ending in the historical period of Pichon's theoretical corpus, which is the founding of the Argentine Psychoanalytic Association (APA).

Chapter I will focus on the biographic details of Pichon's life, starting with his upbringing and contact with native Indigenous cultures, followed by encounters with psychoanalysis in his youth, and ending with his career trajectory and an introduction to Pichon's theoretical corpus. Chapter II will focus on a deep exploration of Pichon's theories and clinical contributions. For purposes of clarity and order, Chapter II will be divided first into a theoretical section that flows naturally into a clinical section. The reader is advised to read in order as concepts build on each other. The theoretical section will start with Pichon's conceptions of the subject and his integration of dialectic philosophy and G.H. Mead to extend Kleinian theory, followed by an explanation of Pichon's concept of the third structure, and Pichon's use of Gestalt theory and G.H. Mead to develop a relational and group-based conception of subjectivity.

Chapter II will explain Pichon's use of genetic structuralism and dialectic philosophy to develop his views on health, and his integration of Freud, Klein, and the humanities to develop his model of psychopathology as a closed structure. Chapter II will then follow into a clinically focused section that will review Pichon's use of dialectic philosophy in the development of his concept of the dialectic spiral, followed by a section on interpretation and conceptions of the interdependency of the analytic situation via integration of Gestalt theory and Kurt Lewin. The section will then proceed with an exploration of Pichon's views on countertransference and his

well-known theory of the Three D's, ending with an exploration of Pichon's views on family and group therapy.

Chapter III will explore the impact of Pichon's theories in the Latin American region, particularly his influence on Argentine psychoanalysis. It will follow with an exploration of his most well-known students, the Barangers, who are internationally known analysts due to their study of the analytical situation as a bipersonal field. The section will explain some of the Barangers most well-known concepts and draw parallels with Pichon's concepts.

Chapter IV will aim to link Pichon's theoretical corpus to interpersonal and relational psychoanalysis in the United States. The chapter will start by connecting Pichon with interpersonal psychoanalysis by finding commonalities between Pichon and interpersonal thinkers such as Harry Stack Sullivan and Eric Fromm. A section on Pichon and the relational school will follow by finding commonalities between Pichon and some relational thinkers, notably Stephen Mitchell, Lewis Aron, and Jessica Benjamin. Commonalities will be explored in the de-emphasis of the primacy of the drives, intersubjectivity, internal working models, and countertransference utility.

The conclusion section will evaluate Pichon's work and argue his theoretical corpus is better placed within psychoanalytic thinkers who argued for a social psychoanalysis that better incorporates the social sphere in conceptions of subjectivity, the unconscious, and treatment. A brief exploration of potential future directions in scholarship will be provided. The last section, *ECROs in a Cloud*, will draw parallels between Pichon's upbringing and his theoretical developments, with particular attention paid to the influence of native Indigenous cultures.

I am indebted to the work of all the mentioned writers in the English-speaking literature, particularly to Pichon's translated writings in the book *the Linked Self in Psychoanalysis* (2017),

edited by Losso, Setton, and Scharff. I am also indebted to the scholarship of Spanish-speaking writers, many of whom are Pichon's disciples, as these writings have been crucial in my comprehension of Pichon's teachings. Particularly, the work of Quiroga (1986): *Enfoques y Perspectivas en Psicología Social* [Focus and Perspectives in Social Psychology], the work of Adamson (2018): *La Psicología Social de Enrique Pichon Rivière* [The Social Psychology of Enrique Pichon Rivière], the work of Moffat (1988): *Psicoterapia del Oprimido* [Psychotherapy of the Oppressed], the work of the various authors who contributed to the compilation by Fabris (2014): *Pichon Rivière Como Autor Latino Americano* [Pichon Riviere as a Latin American Author], the *Diccionario del Psicoanálisis Argentino Vol. I y II* [The Dictionary of Argentine Psychoanalysis Vol. I & II] published by the Argentine Psychoanalytic Association; the work of Ávila Espada (2013): *La Tradición Interpersonal* [The Interpersonal Tradition], and the work of Vicente Zito Lema: *Conversaciones con Enrique Pichon Rivière sobre el Arte y la Locura* [Conversations with Enrique Pichon Rivière about Art and Madness].

Freud and Cervantes

“Cipión.—Speak until dawn, or until let's be felt; I will listen to you in good spirits without interrupting until I believe necessary.” Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1613/2003, pg. 853, personal translation for present study)

Before discussing the history of psychoanalysis in Latin America, I will explore the important, yet relatively unknown, relationship between Freud and Hispanic culture. A relationship that played an important role in the dissemination of psychoanalysis in Latin America as it helped foster communication between Freud and Latin American intellectuals. Freud could read and write in Castilian Spanish, yet few knew of his ability to comprehend the language (Gallo, 2010). Freud learned autodidactically at the age of fifteen while in the company of his childhood

friend, Edward Silberstein (Gallo, 2010). Freud and Silberstein were fascinated with the work of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, forming a secret society named *Academia Española* (Spanish Academy), where they aimed to learn Castilian Spanish autodidactically (Gallo, 2010). Silberstein eventually left Vienna for Leipzig, yet the two kept the society alive by exchanging letters written in Spanish until their mid-twenties (Gallo, 2010).

Freud's Spanish fluency is unknown, as Freud kept his use of Spanish private, making his written and reading fluency known to scholars only through examination of letters between Freud and Edward Silberstein (Gallo, 2010). The letters are written in a playful style, often containing neologisms and mistakes common in beginners, yet demonstrate significant comprehension of complex Hispanic literature (Gallo, 2010). In the letters, Freud and Silberstein did not use their real names but referred to themselves as canine characters from *El Coloquio de Los Perros* (The Colloquy of the Dogs)—a short story from one of Cervantes publications (Gallo, 2010). The Colloquy of the Dogs tells the story of two dogs who met in a Hospital in Valladolid, Spain, where they spend the night conversing with each other after acquiring the gift of speech (Gallo, 2010). One of the dogs, Cipión, listens and asks leading questions while the other dog, Berganza, narrates his traumas (Gallo, 2010). In the letters exchanged with Silberstein, Freud identified himself as Cipión (i.e., the analyst) and would start his letters greeting Silberstein as *Querido Berganza* (Dear Berganza). Both would sign their letters as Cipión and Berganza, sometimes followed by the initials p.e.h.d.s. to shorten *perro en el hospital de Sevilla* (dog in the hospital of Seville).

Scholars have remarked how the Cervantine novel paralleled Freud's later psychoanalytic method as the story involves a listener and a storyteller playing similar roles to a therapist and a patient. Freud identified himself as Cipión, a character who plays a role similar to an analyst (Gallo, 2010). On the other hand, Silberstein identified as Berganza, a character who played the

role of the patient. The Cervantine novel foreshadowed many of the themes of Freud's psychoanalytic theories. Berganza recounts the ubiquitous cruelty, selfishness, and corruption of humans regardless of race, gender, class, and nationality; thus, foreshadowing Freud's exploration of the darker side of humanity (Gallo, 2010). Moreover, the novel negatively portrays female characters and female sexuality and touches on the confusion between fantasy and reality—both aspects central to Freud's psychoanalysis (Gallo, 2010).

While Freud's admiration and interest for Cervantes is a fascinating window into his adolescent psyche, equally impressive is the role of the Spanish language throughout his life. Freud knew many languages—German, French, English, Latin, and Greek. Yet, few knew of Freud's adeptness with the Spanish language (Gallo, 2010). Freud only used the Castilian language to communicate with Silberstein. He did not use it professionally as he did English, French, Latin, and Greek (Gallo, 2010). Freud used English to analyze many patients, French to attend lectures with Charcot, and Latin and Greek terms in his theories (Gallo, 2010). Yet, Freud did not use Spanish in his books nor read scientific literature in Spanish (Gallo, 2010). However, Freud never forgot Spanish, as evidenced by his communications with Spanish-speaking intellectuals.

In 1919 when the Peruvian psychiatrist Honorio Delgado wrote to Freud about his interest in psychoanalysis, Freud informed Delgado he knew Spanish and encouraged the Peruvian to write in Spanish (Gallo, 2010). After Delgado wrote to Freud in Spanish, Freud replied by recounting his adolescent flirtation with the language and professed joy in reading Delgado's letter without a dictionary (Gallo, 2010). Then, on the command of *Ortega y Gasset*—Freud's German books were first translated to Spanish, before any other language, by the Spaniard Luis Lopez Ballesteros (Gallo, 2010). After Ballesteros sent Freud Spanish translations of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* and *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud wrote to Ballesteros recounting

his adolescent adventure with the language and remarking—with a hint of pride—he was able to read Ballesteros's Spanish translations and confirmed the accuracy of Ballesteros understanding, noting his surprise in Ballesteros's accurate translation given his lack of training in psychoanalysis (Gallo, 2010).

While Freud professed his prowess with the Cervantine language to Ballesteros and Delgado, he did not write to either in Spanish, keeping the language private (Gallo, 2010). Ruben Gallo (2010), in his work, *Freud's Mexico*, speculates Freud's use of the Spanish language is tied to Freud's exclusive relationship to Edward Silberstein and Freud's adolescent emotional life. Via the exchange of missives, Freud and Silberstein maintained a passionate friendship that scholars have noted resembled a romantic relationship. The letters contained intimate narrations of their personal lives, fantasy, and romantic and career interests. Both friends expressed their anxiety and fears regarding their identity, career choices, and romantic interests.

Given the nature of the topics discussed in the exchange of missives in Spanish, Gallo (2010) speculates that Spanish occupied in Freud's psyche the role of play, fantasy, uncertainty, and the pleasure principle—something Freud later theorized needed to be kept repressed and given up in favor of the reality principle. Perhaps, the dominance of the reality principle for Freud meant the loss of the Spanish language in favor of languages he used academically, as well as the loss of adolescent bisexuality in favor of heterosexuality, and of uncertainty regarding his identity and career in favor of a secure identity as a man of medicine and science (Gallo, 2010).

Spanish never left Freud as he threw in a phrase here and there—often when communicating with personal friends via missives. One such phrase, *¿Quién Sabe?* (*Who knows?*) seemed to be used repeatedly throughout his life (Gallo, 2010). Freud used the phrase when he was asked to interpret Nietzsche's personality. He declined as he believed an interpretation could

not be offered given the enigma of the philosopher's sexuality—Freud responded *¿Quién Sabe?* He used the phrase again when the Nazis occupied Austria, and he was uncertain of his safety, and when he wondered if his cancer and the political situation would kill him before he could finish *Moses and Monotheism* (Gallo, 2010).

It seems Freud suppressed the Spanish language, yet it came to him in moments of uncertainty, anxiety, or play—paralleling an earlier time in his life where he delighted in fantasy and uncertainty about his identity, career, and sexuality. Interestingly, Freud's repression of the Spanish language parallels the position of Latin American psychoanalysis in psychoanalytic history. A region of the field that remains unrecognized in mainstream psychoanalysis yet has played an important role in the development of the movement, as evidenced by the numerous training institutes and practitioners in the region, and the significant theoretical and clinical contributions by Latin American practitioners. Why do we speculate about the role of Shakespeare in Freud's theoretical development but not the role of Cipión and Berganza? *¿Quién Sabe?*

Psychoanalysis in Latin America

“Comparing the relative stagnation of psychoanalysis in the United States with its strong development in Europe and Latin America, we have attempted to console ourselves by assuming that their standards are lower, that what they are doing is probably not true psychoanalysis, and that they are simply going through a phase that American psychoanalysis experienced in the 1950's and 1960's. Such ideas, I believe, are more reassuring than factual.” (Otto Kernberg, 1993, pg. 61)

The history of psychoanalysis in Latin America started with the dissemination of Freud's theories by interested intellectuals and continued with Latin Americans who trained abroad and Europeans who migrated to Latin American countries due to political persecution and civil wars (Etchegoyen & Zysman, 2005). The first recorded use of psychoanalytic theory and treatment was by well-regarded Afro-Brazilian psychiatrist Juliano Moreira in 1899 (Gaztambide, 2019; Plotkin

& Honorato, 2017), followed by various Latin American authors such as Germán Grave-Schlegel, W.F. Waugh, and Honorio Delgado-Espino (Etchegoyen & Zysman, 2005). In 1910, Grave Schlegel, a German-trained Chilean physician specializing in nervous disorders, presented a paper at a scientific meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina (Etchegoyen & Zysman, 2005). Grave-Schlegel presented *Sobre Psicología y Psicoterapia de Ciertos Estados Angustiosos* [About Psychology and Psychotherapy of Certain Anxious States], a paper discussing Freud's theories and encouraging Freud's methods in the treatment of nervous disorders (Etchegoyen & Zysman, 2005). In 1912, Argentine physician W.F. Waugh published a commentary *Aplicación de Teorías Freudianas* [Application of Freudian Theories], applying psychoanalytic theory to a case of murder motivated by jealousy.

In 1915, Peruvian psychiatrist Honorio Delgado Espino published a summary of psychoanalytic terms and concepts (Leon, 2018). Honorio Delgado is considered one of the most important of the first Latin Americans to discuss psychoanalysis in the region, as he was highly regarded by Freud (Gallo, 2010). Delgado was a self-taught reader of German and an arduous intellectual. He was an avid reader of the international scientific literature in psychiatry and was familiar with Freud, Jung, and Adler's theories. He published the first doctoral dissertation on psychoanalysis in Latin America (Leon, 2018) and later expanded his thesis into a book.

In 1919, Delgado's psychoanalytic scholarship received the attention of mainstream figures in the field (Castro, 2016). The same year Delgado began exchanging letters with William Alanson White and received a letter from Sigmund Freud (Castro, 2016). Freud and Delgado exchanged letters for many years, mainly discussing the dissemination of psychoanalysis in Latin America. Delgado's writings were published in mainstream psychoanalytic publications (Castro,

2016), and he, along with Grave Schlegel, was mentioned by Freud in his publication *The History of the Psychoanalytic Movement* (Etchegoyen & Zysman, 2005).

The first psychoanalytic societies were established in Argentina, Chile, and Brazil. In Buenos Aires, the Argentine Psychoanalytic Association (APA) became the first to be recognized by the IPA in the Zurich congress of 1949 after forming in 1942 (Etchegoyen & Zysman, 2005). The society came about due to the formation of study groups integrated by European psychoanalysts who migrated to Argentina due to political persecution and civil wars and local intellectuals interested in the topic. In Chile, the Psychoanalytic Association of Chile became the second society to be recognized by the IPA in 1949 after forming a study group in 1944 (Etchegoyen & Zysman, 2005). The Chilean society was formed mainly by physicians who trained in psychoanalysis in Europe and returned to Chile to teach and analyze other interested physicians.

In Brazil, the Brazilian Psychoanalytic Society of Sao Paulo became recognized as a component society of the IPA in 1951. Unlike Argentina and Chile, Brazil did not have trained psychoanalysts immigrating to the region or local physicians returning from Europe with psychoanalytic training. In Brazil, study groups were formed as early as the 1920s by local physicians who became self-taught readers of Freud's theories (Etchegoyen & Zysman, 2005). Subsequently, the Brazilian physicians formally petitioned the IPA to send psychoanalysts from Europe for training purposes and were granted their petition in 1936 (Etchegoyen & Zysman, 2005). Many other Latin American countries formed psychoanalytic societies in later years—notably Mexico, Uruguay, Colombia, and Venezuela. (Etchegoyen & Zysman, 2005).

Psychoanalysis in Argentina

“Many foreign visitors are amazed at the centrality of psychoanalysis in today’s age in some big Latin American cities.... But without a doubt it is Buenos Aires, considered by many as the international capital of psychoanalysis, where this phenomenon is put in evidence with greater force.” (Plotkin & Honorato, 2017, pg. 9, personal translation for present study)

Argentina developed the first psychoanalytic society and has been a country where psychoanalysis is deeply integrated into popular culture, politics, and the mental health field (Plotkin, 2001). Argentina also served as a place of training for analysts from other Latin American countries (Plotkin, 2001). Many influential psychoanalysts in countries such as Mexico and Brazil received their training in Argentina. Argentine immigrants are credited with the spread of psychoanalysis in Spanish-speaking countries such as Mexico, Uruguay, and Spain (Plotkin, 2001).

Psychoanalysis was first discussed in Argentina by Chilean physician Grave Schlegel in 1910 (Plotkin, 2001). Grave Schlegel attempted to compare Freud’s theory on the etiology of neuroses to that of the esteemed French psychologist Pierre Janet (Plotkin, 2001). In Argentina, psychoanalysis initially became exclusively known as a medical theory. It was compared unfavorably to other medical theories of neurosis because Argentine psychiatry developed under the influence of schools critical of Freud, such as positivism and the French and Italian schools of psychiatry (Plotkin, 2001).

Psychoanalysis was discussed favorably in Argentina, primarily by foreign physicians who lectured in Argentina in the 1920s, such as the notable Honorio Delgado (Plotkin, 2001). However, in the 1930s, psychoanalysis began to gain popularity as the influence of positivism declined (Plotkin, 2001). At the time, psychiatry, with the advent of electroshock and chemical therapies, finally had something else to offer other than the classification of mental disorders (Plotkin, 2001).

However, psychiatry lacked a theory to anchor its new therapies, and progressive physicians turned to psychoanalysis for an explanation (Plotkin, 2001).

In the 1940's Argentina entered a new era in its psychoanalytic history. In 1938, Dr. Angel Garma, a psychoanalyst trained under the auspices of the IPA, migrated to Buenos Aires (Plotkin, 2001). Garma was a Spanish psychiatrist of Basque descent who trained in the famous Berlin institute and underwent a training analysis with Theodore Reik—one of Freud's most esteemed disciples (Plotkin, 2001). After his training, Garma returned to Spain but decided to flee to France to avoid fighting in the Spanish Civil War. In France, he became acquainted with the psychoanalytic community in Paris, where he met Dr. Celeste Cárcamo, an Argentine physician who was completing his psychoanalytic training in Paris (Plotkin, 2001). Given Spain's political situation, Garma decided to migrate to Buenos Aires as he had family in the area and was encouraged to emigrate by Cárcamo, who returned to Buenos Aires in 1939.

Garma and Cárcamo were received warmly by the psychiatric establishment as both were the only IPA-trained psychoanalyst in Argentina (Plotkin, 2001). They quickly became established and published widely in the most prestigious local psychiatric and psychotherapy journals (Plotkin, 2001). Both IPA analysts joined well-respected Argentine physicians Arnaldo Rascovsky and Enrique Pichon Rivière in forming a psychoanalytic study group (Etchegoyen & Zysman, 2005). In 1942, they were joined by Marie (Mimi) Langer, a physician who had some psychoanalytic training in Vienna and immigrated to Buenos Aires to flee Nazi persecution (Borensztein et al., 2015). Together, Garma & Cárcamo, along with Pichon Rivière, Rascovsky, Langer, and other local intellectuals, formed the *Asociación Psicoanalítica Argentina* (APA) [Etchegoyen & Zysman, 2005]. Garma and Cárcamo served as training analysts for the other members, including

Rascovsky and Pichon Rivière. The APA was accepted into the IPA in 1949, becoming the first psychoanalytic institute in Latin America.

Chapter I

Conversaciones

Biographical: *An Enigmatic Figure*

In conversation with Zito Lema, Pichon remarks:

“I anticipate you; I have always been surrounded by strange happenings.” (Zito Lema 1976/2014, pg. 15/ personal translation for present study)

Enrique Pichon Rivière (1907-1977) was born in Geneva, Switzerland, yet lived in Argentina most of his life, immigrating with his family at the young age of three. He is as Argentine as Tango, as French as Lacan, and as Latin American as *lo selvático* (the jungle). In Argentine psychoanalytic lore, he is a legend, often the subject of countless books and documentaries. Some would say more of the archetypal wise old man or a Zen master than an analyst (Kohan, 2016). He is regarded as a master by numerous well-known Argentine mental health professionals. In pictures, his penetrating look, along with his tobacco pipe, appears to peek into the soul.

Pichon is an enigmatic figure; some think of him as a group theorist, others a Kleinian analyst, and others a social psychologist. His life is surrounded by myth, often proving it difficult for historians to distinguish fact from fiction (Plotkin, 2001). Some recount, Like Borges, Pichon preferred a good story as opposed to straight facts (Plotkin, 2001). Who was Pichon Rivière? The present work will not answer this question; instead, I will provide a reconstructed review of his life, with happenings in his upbringing, encounters with psychoanalysis, and his career trajectory. The purpose is to give the reader a glimpse of Pichon’s life, the lore surrounding him, and his revolutionary spirit.

I will start with his parents, Pichon was born to Afonso Pichon and Josefina de la Rivière in 1907 (Losso et. al., 2017). His parents belonged to the educated French bourgeoisie. They were admirers of progressive ideals and the accursed poets Arthur Rimbaud and Charles Baudelaire, whose poems conveyed experiences of death, guilt, and meaninglessness (Kaplan, 1978; Adamson et al., 2013). Pichon's mother, Josefina, came from an affluent family in Lyon, France. She was a skilled teacher, singer, piano player, and a progressive woman for her time. Before immigrating to Argentina, she used to take Pichon to play in a plaza frequented by Lenin, the Marxist revolutionary, who Pichon in his later years would fantasize of meeting (Adamson et al., 2013).

Pichon's father, Alfonso, studied in a French military academy during his youth but was expelled due to political leanings of radical socialism and his affiliations with socialist leaders in France (Losso et al., 2017). After his expulsion, Alfonso studied textile manufacturing in Manchester, England, subsequently immigrating with his wife and children to Argentina to work in farming cotton, an experience that will fail because of natural pests and weather conditions, leading Alfonso to renounce farming and shift his work to Math and English tutoring and bookkeeping (Losso et al., 2017).

The Pichon Rivière family, including Pichon's five siblings, immigrated to Argentina due to the country's high prosperity and upward social mobility (Arbiser, 2015). They moved to the province of *El Chaco* in the northeastern region of Argentina to pursue a government land concession to grow cotton (Arbiser, 2015; Losso et al., 2017). El Chaco was a rainforest region with little European influence. A place where nature prevailed and different cultures coexisted, the most important being the Guaraní native Indigenous tribe—a tribe of hunters, farmers, and producers of ceramic arts and crafts. (Losso et al., 2017). Pichon was fond of the Guaraní natives;

he learned the Guaraní language even before learning Spanish. He remarked it was a language of extreme beauty (Zito Lema, 1976/2014).

El Chaco was a place of magic and horror for Pichon—a place where Pichon was immersed in legends of undiscovered native Indigenous tribes, stories of the horrors of a native Indigenous tribe of raiders (the *Malones*), the Guaraní's culture of magic, guilt, death, grief, and madness, and the beauty and danger of nature (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). Pichon recounts a perfect example of this paradox, an encounter in his youth in which, in the darkest of nights, he woke up in a panic at the glowing eyes of a puma, an experience he recalls as simultaneously horrifying and beautiful, as the eyes of the puma left him in terror and awe (Zito Lema, 1976/2014).

Pichon's family was also a mysterious one. His father had married Pichon's mother after his first wife died. His first wife was Pichon's aunt—his mother's sister. Initially, Pichon was unaware his five siblings were indeed his half-siblings whose mother was his deceased aunt. He was informed of the family secret at the young age of seven, an event that would later influence his professional interest in studying family mysteries (Losso et al., 2017; Noble, 2015).

Pichon Rivière's upbringing in the Chaco region was one of contrast. Pichon would use horses as a method of transportation to attend school; he learned to hunt and fish and swam in a lake frequented by alligators—reptiles he learned to tame due to his father's teachings (Losso et al., 2017). Nevertheless, his family life was markedly French, wearing European clothes in the home, speaking French at the dinner table, and practicing Spanish in day-to-day living to assimilate in Argentine *criollo* culture (Losso et al., 2017; Zito Lema 1976/2014). The family's stay in the Chaco region lasted only four years, as devastating floods decimated the family's attempt to grow cotton (Arbiser, 2015; Losso et al., 2017). The family eventually moved to Goya, a small city near the Chaco region, where Pichon would reside during most of his youth.

Biographical: Encounters with Loss, Madness, and Sexuality

In conversation with Zito Lema, Pichon remarks:

“I stumbled upon drawers behind the stage. It was full of magazines, almost all scientific; I looked and stumbled, for the first time, with Freud; there he gave me my first lesson. I felt he asked me to read what was there: it was three works of the first, about sexual life. My reading imposed upon me the discovery of psychoanalysis. I had found what I wished for since my childhood: to discover what is behind the spoken word.” (Zito Lema, 1976/2014, pg. 69/ personal translation for present study)

A multiplicity of factors influenced Pichon Rivière’s gravitation toward a career in psychiatry—ever-present are experiences with loss and sadness, encounters with death, and exposure to madness. His encounters with psychoanalysis happened by chance and are intimately tied to the complexities and mysteries of sexuality (Zito Lema, 1976/2014).

Pichon’s youth and adulthood were marked by loss and sadness. Pichon remembers having a sense of grief and loss early in his childhood when he observed his parents struggle to adapt to life as immigrants in Argentina (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). In his adolescence, Pichon lost his father and close friends, and as an adult, he lost his partner to suicide (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). In an interview in his later years, Pichon commented on a felt sense of sadness accompanying him throughout his life and remarked how tragedy seemed to always find its way into his life (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). Pichon’s tragic life fueled his passion for understanding sadness and suffering and likely predisposed him to a career in psychiatry.

Pichon’s friendships with the non-traditional members of society would influence his interest in psychiatry. Notably, his childhood friendship with the Indigenous Guaraní tribe. Pichon observed the Guaraní’s integrated, rather than segregated, the mentally ill members of their community—an experience that would later influence Pichon’s advocacy against the segregation of the severely mentally ill in hospital settings (Losso et al., 2017; Zito Lema, 1976/2014).

Moreover, Pichon remarked his interest in group psychotherapy was influenced by the value of group and community present in the Guaraní culture.

It was Pichon's friendship with an eccentric character that led him to discover psychoanalysis. In his adolescence, Pichon developed a friendship with a man named Canoi, who worked as the doorman for the local "quilombo," a term in Argentine Spanish that can have various meanings depending on the context. In its origins, the term was used to describe a settlement of runaway slaves; later, it was assimilated in Argentine Spanish to signify mess, disorder, troublemaker, and brothel. Pichon used the word to mean brothel (Zito Lema, 1976/2014).

Pichon's first encounter with the brothel's doorman, Canoi, happened in his adolescence. The brothel was located far away from the main town. Pichon remembered he first saw Canoi when he escorted sex workers to the town's main streets (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). The sex workers were permitted to visit the town on Mondays for errands. The locals knew the sex workers would visit on Mondays and would await to show their disapproval (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). When Canoi and the sex workers arrived, Pichon remarked he could hear doors and windows shutting aggressively to communicate disapproval; yet, shortly after the banging doors, he could see the locals peeking out of curiosity (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). Pichon was perplexed by this contradiction.

Pichon and his friends were curious about the mystery of sexuality; they befriended Canoi and convinced the doorman to recount the ins and outs of the brothel's happenings (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). The brothel also served as a platform for Pichon's interests in socialism, where he founded the socialist party of Goya and held monthly meetings, often at the disdain of the Madame, who was a member of the conservative party, yet let the young men explore socialist ideals, as she considered such to be "*cosa de muchachos*" (*a thing of youth*) [Zito Lema, 1976/2014, pg. 40, my

emphasis]. Later in life, Pichon would remark the crucial role of the quilombos in marking his professional trajectory, noting the quilombos played a significant role in introducing him to Freud and making him aware of the importance of sexuality in society and the human psyche (Zito Lema, 1976/2014).

Pichon's relationship with Canoi deepened, he invited Canoi to join a soccer club with his friends (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). Canoi introduced Pichon to the work of Freud (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). Canoi's knowledge of Freud's work came from his collection of Argentine magazines called *Caras y Caretas*, which covered topics of interest in popular culture such as hypnosis and sexuality (Zito Lema 1976/2014, pg. 69). While Pichon was intrigued by Canoi's explanation of Freud's work, he did not immediately pursue Freud's writings in any significant depth. A few years after Pichon's conversation with Canoi, Pichon stumbled upon a collection of books and magazines while rehearsing for a play at his school. In this collection, Pichon found Freud's writings, including Freud's writings on sexuality and Freud's essay on Jensen's *Gradiva* (Losso, Setton, & Scharff, 2017; Zito Lema, 1976/2014). Pichon became fascinated with Freud's work as it explored the hidden meanings behind the spoken work (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). Pichon eventually read Freud's works in its entirety (Zito Lema, 1976/2014)

Biographical: A Revolutionary Spirit

In conversation with Zito Lema, Pichon remarks:

“In trying to make conscious the unconscious, I started as an orthodox psychoanalyst. Subsequently, I developed a social psychoanalysis and there my difficulties with the Argentine Psychoanalytic Association (APA) started, to the degree that, for a certain amount of time, I have been distanced from the association. However, I must clarify, I am currently a member of the APA.” (Zito Lema, 1976/2014, pg. 91/ personal translation for present study)

Pichon left his hometown at the age of eighteen to study medicine in Rosario, Argentina. Pichon had in mind a career in psychiatry but was unable to finish studying medicine. In Rosario, he lived a Bohemian life, staying in a student pension and immersing himself in the accursed poetry or *poésie maudite* of Rimbaud (Adamson et al., 2013). By chance, a Frenchman staying at the pension offered him a job at a luxurious brothel where Pichon accepted employment teaching sex workers French and decorum, an experience he remarked reinforced his interest in Freud and the problem of sexuality in society (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). Pichon's Bohemian life in Rosario would only last six months, as he returned to Goya sick from pneumonia (Adamson et al., 2013).

After recuperating from his illness, Pichon departed to Buenos Aires to pursue a career in psychiatry (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). In Buenos Aires, he stayed at a pension called *La Pension del Frances* [the pension of the Frenchman], a lodging where he continued living a bohemian life in constant conversation with eccentric characters he met at the pension—artist, poets, writers, veterans of war, and characters with traumatic histories (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). He found himself in a deep friendship with Roberto Arlt, a novelist he met at the pension, who would teach Pichon about Russian literary culture (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). Pichon recounted sleepless nights in conversation with Arlt (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). Pichon would enjoy watching Arlt write, particularly his novel *Los Siete Locos* (the seven madmen), a novel that aimed to place madness at the forefront of artistic creation (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). Pichon remarked Arlt, like Canoi and the Guaraní, would become one of his teachers in learning about the human psyche (Zito Lema, 1976/2014).

Pichon found himself in a paradox at the pension, his bohemian life contrasted with the strict and rigorous study of medicine (Adamson et al., 2013). For this reason, he took a long time to graduate medicine, often distracted by the sleepless night of coffee in conversation with the

eccentric characters of the pension. Pichon even ventured into writing about art and culture for the local newspaper, all while immersed in a deep self-study of psychiatry, psychoanalysis, the humanities, and literature (Zito Lema, 1976/2014).

Before graduating from medicine, Pichon was already working in the psychiatric field, seeking every opportunity to learn the happenings of the mind. As a student, he worked at the Asilo de Torres [Torres Asylum], a hospital for those suffering from mental disabilities, and later in a sanatorium for psychiatric patients (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). During his time as a medical student, Pichon published his first written work titled *Dos Problemas Psicológicos* [Two Psychological Problems], an article in a magazine where Pichon commented on Freud and Adler (Adamson, 2018). Pichon eventually graduated from medical school in 1936 and started to work at a psychiatric hospital named La Mercedes Hospice (Losso et al., 2017).

Pichon's work at La Mercedes Hospice was a foundational experience where he worked for fifteen years. His work centered on pioneering training groups for nurses and therapy groups for patients (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). In the training group for nurses, Pichon focused on helping nurses understand mental illness. At the time, the nursing staff did not possess appropriate training to work with severe mental illness, often leading to patients' maltreatment (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). Pichon's training groups were highly successful yet insufficient as the hospital was understaffed. Thus, Pichon decided to form training groups for the better-adjusted patients, who volunteered as peer therapists for their more severely mentally ill peers (Zito Lema, 1976/2014).

Having patients act as peer therapists was a practice unthinkable at the time, yet Pichon reasoned having healthier patients care for more severely ill patients fulfilled an institutional need, helped care for the more severely ill patients, and provided therapeutic benefits for the healthier patients by allowing the healthier patients to experience themselves as useful and connected (Zito

Lema, 1976/2014). Pichon noted his group work successfully helped the patients-turned-therapists improve their mental health (Zito Lema, 1976/2014).

Pichon's group work at the Mercedes Hospice began in 1938 before the group work of pioneering psychoanalytically minded group therapists Wilfred Bion and Siegmund Heinrich Foulkes, who developed their group psychotherapy approaches in the 1940s, making Pichon a true pioneer in the therapeutic use of groups (Tubert-Oklander & Hernández de Tubert, 2004). Moreover, Pichon's group work at the Mercedes Hospice served as a foundational experience for the later development of Pichon's group psychotherapy approach, named "operative groups," an approach still used today and recognized as one of the first schools of group psychotherapy worldwide (Tubert-Oklander & Hernández de Tubert, 2004). Pichon's approach to group psychotherapy developed independently from the work of Bion and Foulkes. While some of Pichon's group work is compatible with Bion and Foulkes' work, Pichon's group work is distinct (Tubert-Oklander & Hernández de Tubert, 2004). More detail on Pichon's group work will be provided in later sections of the present study (see section *Clinical: The Outer Field—The Family, The Group, and The Spokesperson*).

While working at the Mercedes Hospice, Pichon became known as an avid proponent of using psychoanalysis with psychotic patients and formed well-attended psychoanalytic study groups at the hospital (Adamson et al., 2013). During his time at the hospice, Pichon was also involved in forming the Argentine Psychoanalytic Association in 1942 along with colleagues (Avenburg, 2014). Pichon eventually qualified as a psychoanalyst after finishing his didactic analysis with Angel Garma (Noble, 2015). Pichon became an important figure in Argentine psychoanalysis, opening a private practice that doubled as a training clinic (Adamson et al., 2013). At the clinic, Pichon made sure to hire receptionists who suffered from psychosis as a way to

empower the severe mentally ill (Adamson et al., 2013). The clinic became known informally as *La clínica de la calle Copérnico* (the clinic at Copernico street), a famous clinic known for training Argentina's most well-known analysts, illustrious figures such as David Liberman, Willy, and Madeleine Baranger, Horacio Etchegoyen, among others (Adamson et al., 2013; Ungar, 2017).

During his time at the hospice, Pichon met another eccentric character, a patient named Edmundo Montague, who was suffering from a severe depression (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). Most of the conversations between Rivière and Montague centered around the literary work of *The Songs of Maldoror* by Isidore Ducasse, a Franco-Uruguayan poet known as The Count of Lautréamont (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). The Count of Lautréamont wrote an accursed poetry or *poésie maudite* that evoked the sinister, horrific, and uncanny elements of experience (Pichon Rivière, 1992/1946). Lautréamont's poetry, the *Songs of Maldoror*, was a controversial work of poetry, called by some a piece of satanism while being revered by a generation of poets and credited as an inspiration for the surrealist movement (Rivière, 1992/1946).

There was a superstitious legend associated with Lautréamont, often referred to as *la leyenda negra* or the black legend of Lautréamont. The legend suggested misfortune would befall on those who identified with Lautréamont's work. Lautréamont's misfortunes partly fueled the legend. He died at a young age for unknown reasons, and his family was struck with misfortunes such as suicide and severe mental illness (Rivière, 1992/1947). The superstitious legend was also influenced by critics of importance, such as the esteemed Nicaraguan poet *Rubén Darío*, who called Lautréamont's work dangerous and warned readers against reading the work. Darío argued reading Lautréamont's work could cause the reader to contract the same misfortunes

as the poet (Rivière, 1992/1947). Later a poet named Leopoldo Lugones wrote a poem influenced by Ducasse's work and died by suicide, thus fueling the legend surrounding Lautréamont (Rivière, 1992/1947).

Pichon was superstitious of the black legend as one of his patients at the hospital, Montague, was fascinated by Lautréamont and died by suicide. Pichon, impacted by Montague's death, embarked on a psychoanalytic study of Lautréamont. Pichon's research on Lautréamont earned him a reputation for expertise on the poet's work, leading to an invitation by the Uruguayan Government to lecture on Lautréamont's as a tribute to the deceased poet's one hundred birthday (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). The lectures eventually led Pichon to write a book analyzing Lautréamont's *Chants of Maldoror* from the perspective of Freud's (1919) work on the uncanny. Believing the black legend, Pichon refrained from publishing his book on Lautréamont (M. Pichon Rivière, 1992). It was Pichon's son, Marcelo, who published the book after Pichon's death (M. Pichon Rivière, 1992). Nonetheless, Pichon's interest in Lautréamont would prove important as it would feature in his theorizing and connect him to Uruguayan psychoanalysis, where he was involved in the training of analysts and formation of the Uruguayan Psychoanalytic Society (Baranger, 1979).

By the 1950's, Pichon was a well-respected analyst in Argentina. His interest in psychosis led to papers on working psychoanalytically with psychotic patients (Adamson et al., 2013). He was invited to London in 1951 to present a psychoanalytic paper on his work with psychosis (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). At the time, Pichon was married to Arminda Aberastury—a distinguished Argentine child analyst. In his travels to Europe, both Arminda and Pichon received supervision from Melanie Klein in child analysis—an interest Pichon never abandoned as he continued to treat children and adolescents throughout his career (Zito Lema, 1976/2014).

During his travels to Europe, Pichon was invited to a psychoanalytic conference in France, where he presented a paper on working with psychosis (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). Pichon's interest in surrealism and Lautréamont were known in France, leading to an invitation to meet with surrealist poets such as Andre Breton and Tristan Tzara to discuss Lautréamont (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). During this time, Pichon met Jacques Lacan, who shared Pichon's interest in Lautréamont and psychoanalytic theory (Zito Lema, 1976/2014).

After his return from Europe, Pichon and his wife, Arminda Aberastury, disseminated Melanie Klein's work in Argentina (Avenburg, 2014). Klein became a staple in Argentine psychoanalytic culture, the APA becoming the new home for the Kleinian tradition. Pichon also kept a connection with Lacan and owned Lacan's written work. According to the lore, Lacan sent Pichon his written works with personal dedications (APdeBA et al., 2007). Pichon, however, did not disseminate Lacan's work in Argentina as he diverged from Lacan's conception of subjectivity. Pichon viewed Lacanian theory as idealizing the problem of desire and underemphasizing the role of real social relations (Losso, 2017). Nonetheless, Pichon was indirectly involved in introducing Lacanian thinking in Argentina by introducing Lacan's work to his close friend Oscar Massota, a key figure in disseminating Lacanian thinking in Argentina (APdeBA et al., 2007).

The 1950s became an era in which Pichon started to deviate from the psychoanalytic orthodoxy of the APA, consisting mainly of the Kleinian conceptions of psychopathology he introduced. Pichon, being a man with interests broader than psychoanalysis, such as the humanities and leftist politics, wanted to democratize psychoanalysis (Adamson et al., 2013). Pichon's interests led to the creation of an institute separate from the APA. Along with his colleagues Jose Bleger and David Liberman, Pichon created the IADES or *Instituto Argentino de Estudios Sociales* (Argentinian Institute of Social Studies). At the IADES, Pichon and his colleagues sought to

explore the application of psychoanalysis to groups, culture, and social organizations (Adamson et al., 2013).

Within the IADES, Pichon, Bleger, and Liberman founded a school known as *La Escuela de la Psiquiatria Dinamica* (The School of Dynamic Psychiatry). At the school of psychiatry, Pichon and his colleagues trained mental health professionals to intervene in groups, communities, and organizations (Adamson, 2018). The formation of the school of psychiatry was also due to pressures from Argentina's Peronist government to prohibit the psychoanalytic training of non-MD's, likely due to fear of a communist revolution (Adamson et al., 2013). To place the foundation of this school in a historical context, it must be understood in the 1950's Argentina did not have psychologists or mental health professionals other than psychiatrists and psychoanalysts (Adamson, 2018). Thus, the school provided a space for training mental health professionals who could help in the move to democratize psychoanalysis by training psychotherapists to provide group psychoanalysis to underserved communities. (Adamson et al., 2013).

Pichon became a charismatic leader, a psychoanalyst who had *calle* (street smarts) and could apply psychoanalytic knowledge broadly to help the community (Plotkin, 2001). His interests in the social sphere of the psyche and democratizing psychoanalysis led him to be seen as an outsider in the institution he founded, the APA. However, association with Pichon was still prestigious, as he was a founding member of the APA and the mentor of several celebratory figures in Argentine psychoanalysis. He was sought after by students who wished to maintain a connection with the legitimacy of the APA while also being connected to a broader ethos of social revolution and rebellion (Plotkin, 2001). He became a symbol of modernity within the psychoanalytic community, attracting artists and those on the far left of the political spectrum (Plotkin, 2001).

Pichon's School of Dynamic Psychiatry eventually changed its name to The School of Social Psychology, reflecting a shift in Pichon's growing interest in social psychology, particularly his interest in the field theory of Kurt Lewin, and the role theory of George Herbert Mead (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). During this time, 1956/57, Pichon delivered his famous lectures on *La Teoria del Vínculo* [Theory of the Link] (Adamson, 2018). The series of lectures were recorded by Pichon's students and published in 1979, two years after Pichon's death (Adamson, 2018). In the lectures, Pichon developed a new conception of the analytic field, psychoanalytic process, and working with transference and countertransference through the integration of Kurt Lewin, G.H. Mead, Gestalt Psychology, dialectic philosophy, communication theory, and Kleinian thinking.

Pichon and his students developed a reputation for innovation. In 1958, Pichon's school conducted the famous *experiencia de Rosario* [the Rosario experience]. The Rosario experience was a social experiment in the widest of scales. Pichon and his colleagues sought to test their formulations on group intervention, known as operative groups, in the industrial City of Rosario by conducting a large-scale group research (Vezzetti, H., 2003). With the cooperation of a variety of institutions, mostly academic departments within the University of Rosario, Pichon, and around twenty analysts conducted group research with students and members of the community (Adamson et al., 2013). The group research consisted of grouping members of the community from diverse backgrounds (students, professors, athletes, homemakers, truck drivers, sex workers, etc.) into various discussion groups under the pretense of discussing topics important to the City of Rosario (Vezzetti, H., 2003). The researchers observed group dynamics and intervened to foster group learning (Vezzetti, H., 2003). The research helped Pichon develop his group psychotherapy approach.

Pichon and three of his disciples (Bleger, Liberman, and Ulloa) eventually published a paper explaining the group research conducted in Rosario, Argentina. (Vezzetti, 2003). The group research became part of the mythology surrounding Pichon because Pichon's paper detailed the research was conducted with 135 participants, yet other psychotherapists who participated in the study claimed the number was closer to 300, and others stated it was 1000 participants (Vezzetti, 2003; Fiasché, 2014). The exact number of participants is unknown, but in the Argentine psychoanalytic lore, the Rosario experience is idealized as the time when Pichon provided group psychoanalysis to 1000 people (Adamson et al., 2013).

By the 1960s and beyond, Pichon's deviation from the psychoanalytic orthodoxy was cemented by Pichon's new social psychoanalysis, which he called social psychology. Pichon's break with the APA was uncomfortable for him as he had previously admired Freud and Klein. He experienced a sense of loss (Adamson, 2018; Quiroga, 2017). Moreover, his break from the APA also meant distancing himself from some of his most well-known students (Baranger, 1979).

Some argue Pichon's sense of loss resulted in a hesitancy to publish his theoretical innovations and led to an oral transmission of his teachings (Quiroga, 2017). Other factors include preference. He was a man of interaction, preferring the spoken word to the written one; in this respect, his students compared him to Lacan (Plotkin, 2001). In the 1970s, Pichon finally published a three-volume compendium of his writings named *Del Psicoanálisis a la Psicología Social* [From Psychoanalysis to Social Psychology], articulating his progression from an intrapsychic conception of the human psyche to a social formulation of subjectivity—a theoretical work that aimed to integrate psychoanalysis with a more social and group-oriented conception of the subject.

Pichon's social psychology was politically relevant, as it mobilized groups, often students, in political protests (Adamson et al., 2013). Consequently, Pichon was a target of the right-wing

dictatorship of the '70s (Adamson et al., 2013). Many of his colleagues and students made the list of *La Triple A* (the anticommunist alliance), a death squad that abducted leftist leaders for torture and murder (Adamson et al., 2013). Pichon kept his training institutes open, and he managed to prevent being sequestered by avoiding working late into the night (Adamson et al., 2013). After Pichon died in 1977, his school maintained an open-policy admission, allowing anyone interested, without regard to educational status, to learn psychoanalysis and his so-called social psychology (Plotkin, 2001).

Introduction to Pichon's Theoretical Work: Towards a New Gestalt

As evident from Pichon's career trajectory, his writings are vast and interdisciplinary, expanding the scope of his practice beyond individual therapy into family, group, and community intervention. The present work focuses on Pichon's contributions to notions of relationality, intersubjectivity, group subjectivity, views on psychopathology, and the clinical innovations that followed. I will reference Pichon's broad theoretical corpus with a particular focus on Pichon's translated writings (Losso et al., 2017) and the untranslated work of some of his well-known disciples, such as the work of Ana Quiroga (1986) and Gladys Adamson (2018). Moreover, I will provide figures of Pichon's various concepts such as the third subject (*Figure 1.*), the internal group (*Figure 2.*), the horizontal & vertical axis (*Figure 3.*), the closed structure (*Figure 4.*), the dialectic spiral (*Figure 5.*), and resuming the dialectic (*Figure 6.*). These figures are of my creation and are based on the text. While some are inspired by models of Pichon's concepts available in the original writings, these figures—to my knowledge—are among the first figures of Pichon's concepts in the English translated literature.

The writings that follow will start with Pichon's conception of social subjectivity, followed by his views on health and illness, and ending with Pichon's clinical formulations, including his

conceptualization of the analytic field, transference, countertransference, and a brief exploration of his group and family work. I will pay attention to Pichon's interdisciplinary thinking, particularly his use of the humanities to extend and reformulate his psychoanalytic framework. Pichon's interdisciplinary thinking is broad as he was known for vast amounts of theoretical knowledge in the humanities, philosophy, and social sciences. To keep the work empirical, I will mainly focus on the interdisciplinary thinkers cited in Pichon's translated writings. I believe this is enough for the reader to grasp how Pichon integrated the humanities to develop a socio-relational conception of subjectivity.

I must let the reader know that, although I keep my exposition of Pichon's work as close to his written text as possible, my reading of his work is a socio-relational one, and therefore, my interpretation. Moreover, as explained previously, Pichon is an enigmatic figure, claimed by multiple schools with competing interests; some highlight his innovations in Kleinian thinking, and others his social conceptions of subjectivity and group work. My exposition brings together all the mentioned perspectives and my desire for a social and relational reading to provide *A New Gestalt* of Pichon for the reader.

Chapter II

Vínculo

Theoretical: A *Subject of Need and Dialectic Philosophy*

Pichon emphasized the socio-relational aspects of human psychology. He believed the libido and Thanatos posited by Freud (1920) were not biological drives that determine the human psyche, but rather *experiences* of frustration and gratification determined by the social-relational world (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a). For Pichon Rivière, the human subject is not the Freudian subject of biological drives but a *subject of need*. In an interview with Vicente Zito Lema, one of Pichon's closet friends and his last collaborator before his death, Pichon remarked:

“For us the human individual is a being of needs that are only satisfied socially, in relationships that determine the person.” (Zito Lema, 1976/2014, pg. 107/ personal translation for present study)

Pichon argues the human being is born in a state of total helplessness—a state of *needs* that require satisfaction for survival (1971/2017a). Pichon (1971/2017b) describes the needs as early bodily needs: love, contact, protection, warmth, nutrition, etc. (Losso, 2017). He argues the human being is born in an experience state of dichotomy that consists of two opposite polarities: need—satisfaction (Quiroga, 1986). In a written interview where Pichon commented on the difference between his thinking and Lacan's theorizing, he remarked:

“For me, foundational, is the interplay need—satisfaction. Interplay that is intertwined in the development of social relationships, and is, in the now, determined and ruled by social relationships.” (Pichon Rivière, 1975, Question I/ personal translation for present study)

The opposite poles (need—satisfaction) represent a polarity that must be resolved for the person to survive (Quiroga, 1986). The experience state of polarity is resolved when the person

satisfies its need in synthesis with the external world. At first, this process of synthesis happens in relationship to another human being (*an object*) fulfilling a maternal function for the infant. The transformation of the experience of dichotomy (*need—satisfaction*) to the experience of synthesis (*satisfaction-with-other*) transforms the need itself from a purely biological entity to an entity determined by the social-relational world (Quiroga, 1986). Therefore, the Freudian drives are better described as social experiences that emerge from states of need:

“As you can see, in my view, the life and death instincts are already experiences in the form of behavior that include a social component.” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 10)

According to Pichon, the extent to which the infant’s states of need transforms into social experiences that resemble sexual and aggressive drives depends on the infant’s needs being satisfied or frustrated:

“Splitting occurs at birth, and every gratifying link leads the baby to view the object as good. This is what Freud (incorrectly, in my opinion) calls the life instinct (Eros). The other part of the primary link and its object, in turn, become a bad object based on frustrating experiences—a persecutory link that Freud once again considers instinctual. In this case it is Thanatos, the death, aggressiveness, or destructiveness instinct.” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 10)

Why a dichotomy of need—satisfaction? Pichon Rivière’s theoretical corpus is heavily influenced by dialectic philosophy. Pichon Rivière starts his paper, *New Problems Facing Psychiatry*, stating the following:

“The history of psychiatry has been marked at different times by researchers’ speculations concerning the possibility of a kinship among all mental illnesses based on a universal core. Yet, these speculations, plagued by an organicist conception of the origin of illnesses exclude from mental pathology the dialectic dimension, where quantity becomes quality through successive leaps.” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 3)

Dialectic philosophy originates from 19th-century German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (Maybee, 2020). Hegel challenged conceptions of reality as conglomerations of

things or substances independent of each other by arguing things or substances are interdependent (Adamson, 2018). For Hegel, a thing or being is only itself if it defines itself against its negative (what it is not); therefore, it is inherently related to its negative (Adamson, 2018). Eventually, Hegel argues, there will be a movement towards recognizing a relationship with the negative (a negation of negation), which will carry a new affirmation that contains parts of both the thing and its negative (Adamson, 2018).

The Hegelian process of affirmation/negation—negation of negation is often described using the philosophical concepts of thesis/antithesis—synthesis developed by German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte (Breazeale, 2018). The new synthesis (the negation of negation) leads to a more complex logic and grasp of reality because it understands the interrelation of past thesis/affirmation—antithesis/negation. Once the polarity of thesis—antithesis is superseded in a synthesis, the synthesis becomes a new thesis with its own negative from which it forms its existence (Adamson, 2018). The dialectic process will continue in successive leaps of thesis/antithesis—synthesis, gradually moving towards a more complex logic and grasp of reality (Adamson, 2018). Hegelian dialectics, and its material application by Marx and Engels, play an important role in Pichon's theoretical corpus as the dialectic method permeates many of Pichon's concepts, notably, Pichon's concept of *vínculo* (Adamson, 2018). In his theory of *vínculo*, Pichon replaces Freud's emphasis on sexual and aggressive drives with a thesis (need)—antithesis (satisfaction) and a synthesis (*vínculo*).

Theoretical: *Vínculo* & The Dialectic-Relational Subject

Vínculo (link) in the Spanish language connotes connection. It could be translated to link, bond, or tie. English translations of the term refer to *vínculo* as bond (Tubert-Oklander & Hernández de Tubert, 2004) and link (Abiser, 2017; Losso et al., 2017). Pichon's translated

psychoanalytic work uses the term link (Losso et al., 2017). I will follow authors who use the term in its original language: *vínculo* (Berenstein, 2012; Bernardi & De León De Bernardi, 2012; Gabbard, 2012; Greenberg, 2017; Gonzalez, 2020). I believe this highlights the originality of the concept and facilitates communication between linguistically varied psychoanalytic communities, as *vínculo* is a recognized term in many Latin American psychoanalytic communities. However, I note a caveat; the term “link” is also a good one; my choice is to make a point of originality and due to my stylistic preferences.

Pichon theorized human beings' primal need is to establish a connection with another person to survive. Survival depends on resolving the opposite poles of need—satisfaction by achieving synthesis in the external world via a *vínculo* (a link) with another person (Quiroga, 1986). *Vínculo* is initially a relational structure in the external world that the person later internalizes as a psychic structure inherent in the person's sense of self and mental health (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017).

To understand Pichon Rivière's concept of *vínculo*, it is important to grasp Melanie Klein's work. While Pichon cites Freud, Klein, and Fairbairn as his main psychoanalytic influences, in my opinion, Klein is his most important rival and teacher (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a). Pichon's theory of *vínculo* starts by reformulating Kleinian object relations theory. Traditional psychoanalytic notions of objects were first developed by Freud in the *three essays* (1905) and later expanded by Klein's notions of object relations (1975ab). Klein believed the child identifies with internal objects that are introjected parental figures distorted by the infant's unconscious phantasies (Segal, 1979). For Klein, the word phantasy replaces the word fantasy to denote an unconscious process that differs from a conscious fantasy (Mitchell, 1986). Klein argues unconscious phantasies are the mental representations of life and death drives and unconscious

defenses (Segal, 1979). Thus, unconscious phantasy emanates from inside the infant, helping the infant navigate the external world by connecting drives, feelings, and defenses to objects (Mitchell, 1986). Klein's theory became known as object relations because the child introjects the internal object (parental figure) and relates to the object through identificatory processes or disavowal via the defense mechanism of projection (Segal, 1979). The person's sense of self derives from unconscious contents filled with internal objects introjected primarily from parental figures (Segal, 1979).

Klein focuses most of her theory on the infant's relationship to the maternal object. Klein argues the child's initial introjection of the maternal object is incongruent with external reality because it is highly distorted by the infants' attempts to manage life and death drives (Segal, 1979). At this stage, Klein argues the infant, learning to manage the death drive, becomes anxious because the death drive gives rise to basic fears of annihilation (Segal, 1979). The infant manages the fear of annihilation by projecting it outward toward the mother. However, this creates a different problem: the infant fears being annihilated by the phantasy of an aggressive mother that results from the projection of its hostility, resulting in persecutory anxiety (Segal, 1979). To protect from this fear, the infant splits the parent into good and bad part objects (Segal, 1979). The child perceives two separate persons—a good mother that is loving and a bad mother that is hateful and hostile (Segal, 1979). The bad mother harbors the infant's death drive, and the good mother represents the infant's life drive, which the infant chooses as an identification object (Segal, 1979).

The initial distorted view of the maternal object is named by Klein, the paranoid-schizoid position. Klein uses the term position as opposed to stage to emphasize the position—that is, the point of view from which the infant perceives the mother (Segal, 1979). Klein's use of the term paranoid is due to the infants' persecutory anxiety, and her use of schizoid is borrowed from

Fairbairn's (1941) use of the term to describe split states (Segal, 1979). Klein argues through maturation processes of the ego, the infant will eventually perceive the good and bad mother from a different position—as being the same person (Segal, 1979). Klein named this integration process the depressive position—the word depressive is used to highlight the feelings of loss and the fear of loss that permeate the new point of view (Segal, 1979). Once the infant's split-off feelings of love and hate are directed towards the whole mother, the infant's death drive can be directed towards other objects. However, a new set of psychological difficulties emerge for the infant; the infant's fear of annihilation is now directed towards a potential loss of the good mother to the perceived dangers of the external world, resulting in an inner world populated by fear of loss of the mother (Segal, 1979). Moreover, since the infant both loves and hates the same person, ambivalence emerges, and guilt becomes commonplace as the infant's hate can destroy the object it loves (Segal, 1979). In this position, the infant constantly identifies with the mother and simultaneously destroys her in phantasy, leading to an inner world ruled by loss and sadness—a depressive position (Segal, 1979).

Pichon uses Kleinian metapsychology but modifies it in several ways. For example, Pichon rejects the primacy of drives. For Pichon, the drives described by Freud—and later endorsed by Klein—are “*experiencias precocísimas*” or experiences too nascent to be considered full-fledged drives (Pichon Rivière, 1971/1983, pg. 42). Pichon prefers the concept of needs to denote the incipient quality of the experiences Freud conceptualized as drives. For Pichon, the human is born in a state of total helplessness that requires relationships for survival. The infant seeks relationships with the maternal object to satisfy its needs, yet some needs are left unsatisfied, resulting in experiences of significant frustration (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a). The infant splits the maternal object into a good and bad mother to protect the relationship with the good mother from its

frustration, thereby avoiding a sense of complete helplessness (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a). For Pichon, the splitting of the object and the persecutory anxiety that follows are not products of managing an innate death drive as argued by Klein; instead, the splitting results from an attempt to protect the relationship with the maternal object from the infant's frustration—a frustration that is itself a product of unsatisfied needs in the maternal relationship (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a).

Moreover, for Pichon, the split-off objects also carry a social function by initiating the infant into learning about social roles. Pichon writes:

“As you can see, in my view, the life and death instincts are already experiences in the form of behavior that include a social component through gratifying or frustrating moments. That is how children's incorporation into the social world takes place. Frustration and gratification facilitate children's ability to discriminate among several types of experiences as an initial manifestation of thought. Such discrimination allows them to develop a first set of values. The splitting of the total object is motivated by the need to prevent its destruction. Splitting it into a good and a bad object gives shape to two primary behaviors tied to loving and being loved and hating and being hated. These two social behaviors define the start of children's socialization process; children are assigned a role and a status within the primary or family group.” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a pg. 10)

Pichon's conceptualization of the drives as relational and social is influenced by Fairbairn's emphasis on internalized relationships and his view of libido as object seeking (Losso et al., 2017; Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a). However, Pichon expands Fairbairn—and Klein—by applying a two-fold representation to object relations theory via integration of social theory (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). Pichon's expansion of object relations theory is central to his theory of vínculo, yet to understand why Pichon finds it necessary to conceptualize two-fold representations via social theory, we must comprehend another of Pichon's criticisms of Klein.

Pichon was critical of Klein's focus on the child's phantasy. For Klein, the focus on object relations is exclusively intrapsychic. The Kleinian infant is focused on managing drives, and its internalized objects result primarily from unconscious phantasy. According to Pichon, the mother's

real response to the child is not a focus of Kleinian theory—a narrow focus Pichon considers deficient because it points exclusively to a linear relationship that does not sufficiently account for the real external relationship with the mother (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). Pichon developed the theory of vínculo to conceptualize a multilinear relationship that accounts for internal objects that contain introjected parts of the real relationship with the other (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). Thus, Pichon's term of vínculo "replaces the Freudian term object relation" (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 5) by accounting for an internalized representation containing real interactions between the mother and the infant, thereby conceptualizing a multilinear object relation containing elements of both intrapsychic phenomena and interactions in the external world. Pichon states:

"Psychoanalytic object-relations theory is deficient compared to the theory of the link. The former points only in one direction, while the latter points to multiple relations." (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 102)

Vínculo is a term Pichon uses to replace the concept of object relations and differentiate himself from Klein. The concept of vínculo emphasizes the interaction between subject and object and contains structural elements. Pichon states: "*We define the link as a complex structure that includes the subject, the object, and their interaction*" (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017c, pg. 61, my emphasis). The inclusion of the interaction implies the object's response is internalized in the relational structure as a real person—a subject—instead of being internalized exclusively due to the child's phantasy. Pichon stated:

"The concept of link is operational. It constitutes an interpersonal relational structure that includes, as mentioned above, a subject, an object, the relationship of the subject toward the object, and the relationship of the object toward the subject." (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 101)

Pichon's concept of vínculo was innovative for its time and certainly helped him expand object relations theory; nonetheless, it must be noted that Pichon's emphasis on multilinear

relationships is indebted to the work of George Herbert Mead (1863–1931)—an American philosopher influential in classical American pragmatism, the study of the self, role theory, and intersubjectivity (Aboulafia, 2020). Pichon Rivière explicitly cites the contribution of Mead in his work (1979/2017):

“Mead’s theory is one of the most important contributions to the theory of the link, object-relations theory, and role theory. Mead (1934) explains many aspects of social life through the study of roles, especially everything related to social ties and interpersonal relations. According to this author, we assume both our own and others’ roles in our minds. Thus, we have a twofold representation of what is happening around us—one outside and one inside.” (pg. 102)

Pichon's views on psychic development followed Klein's on the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions while integrating Mead's work by adding a twofold representation to object relations. As the infant looks to form a relationship with a maternal object and splits the mother into good and bad part-objects of love and hate, the infant internalizes the mother’s actual response to the infant’s love and hate—the interaction (Pichon Rivière , 1971/2017a).

The process starts as the infant splits the maternal object into two separate part objects—a gratifying vínculo with a good maternal object that satisfies needs and a frustrating vínculo with a bad maternal object that frustrates needs (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). The gratifying vínculo contains internal representations of loving the maternal object (internal) and real moments of being loved by the maternal object (external). Likewise, the frustrating vínculo contains internal representations of hating the maternal object (internal) and being hated by the maternal object (external). Therefore, by adding a twofold representation, Pichon can shift the focus of object relations from a linear relationship focused on the child's phantasy to a multilinear relationship containing both internal parts of the child's experience and external aspects of the real relationship.

Following Klein, Pichon argues maturation processes allow the infant to integrate frustrating and gratifying part vínculos (links) into one total vínculo, thus, entering the depressive position (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). In the depressive position, the infant establishes a vínculo with the whole object containing 4-way internal representations: (1) experiences of loving the object, (2) being loved by the object, (3) experiences of hating the object, and (4) being hated by the object (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). In the depressive position, ambivalence becomes a prevalent feeling as the whole object can harm and love. In addition, guilt emerges as the child has both love and hate for the same object, thus can destroy what is loves (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017ab). Pichon follows Klein by explaining the primary anxiety in the depressive position is the loss of the object (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017ab).

In summary, Pichon Rivière's integration of Mead's social theory allowed Pichon to bridge the gap between internalized relationships and external relationships, thereby expanding Klein's object relations theory to a multilinear conceptualization. Pichon agrees with the traditional Kleinian formulation of the child's sense of self emerging out of internalized objects through identificatory processes. However, the Kleinian subject is inherently intrapsychic as Kleinian internal objects are based on the internal world of the infant being subjected to drives, defenses, and affects that find representation in unconscious phantasy (Segal, 1979). Contrastingly, Pichon's conception of the subject—borrowing from G.H. Mead—emerges from the two realms of internal and external experience. Pichon's conceptualization of internalized objects (i.e., vínculos) cannot be separated from the real external relationship—it is inherently an internalized representation of the intra and inter subjective interaction between two subjects.

Theoretical: *The Third & The Social Within*

As explained previously, Pichon Rivière's concept of vínculo modifies Kleinian object relations theory by (1) rejecting the primacy of drives and (2) integrating the internal and external worlds. A third modification is the addition of a concept Pichon called the third party. The third party is a concept that extends the dominant focus on dyadic relationships characteristic of Kleinian thought by arguing every vínculo in a relationship of two is a relationship of three because a third party always modifies the two-person interaction. Pichon writes "*as an interaction mechanism; every link should be defined as a Gestalt that is simultaneously bicorporal and tripersonal*" (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 5, my emphasis). Bicorporal indicates the vínculo presents in pairs between a subject (e.g., infant) and object (e.g., mother), and tripersonal alludes to the presence of a third party—either evident or hidden—influencing the interaction between the subject and object (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a). The presence of a third party is characteristic of every vínculo; thus, it makes every vínculo a triangular situation (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a).

It is important to highlight Pichon's use of the word *Gestalt*. A Gestalt is a German word without direct translation alluding to configuration, form, and organization of parts (Muñoz Polit, 2008). Gestalt refers to images which people take of each other and their surroundings, including the structure and details of the images (Ruesch & Bateson, 1951). A Gestalt has a figure-ground configuration; the totality of the Gestalt is the figure, and the context in the foreground is the ground (Muñoz Polit, 2008). A Gestalt is more than the sum of its parts. For example, an image of a bicycle in its totality is a figure, yet it is more than the sum of its parts (e.g., seat, frame, wheels, etc.). Similarly, a vínculo is an internalized representation in its totality (Gestalt) with an organization that is more than the sum of its parts (e.g., subject, object, interaction, and the third party).

Pichon does not cite a particular theorist when discussing his integration of Gestalt in the theory of vínculo. Yet, he cites various theorists throughout his work who likely contributed to his use of the concept. In his *Theory of the Link*, Pichon mentions Kurt Lewin, who used Gestalt theory in field theory and group work (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). In his article *Neurosis and Psychosis*, Pichon cites Lagache (1953), who described behavior as a totalizing structure in meaningful permanent interaction, Susan Issacs (Klein et al., 1952), who described transference as a situation functioning in totality, and Sartre (Sartre, 1991[1960]) who described human beings as totalizing wholes (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). Although not cited in his translated works, Pichon was also known to be an admirer of Gregory Bateson, who used Gestalt theory in his work (Losso, 2017).

Pichon used the concept Gestalt interchangeably with structure and integrated the concept with Freud's Oedipus complex to develop his theory of the third party. Pichon writes:

"The Oedipus complex as described by Freud, with its negative and positive variants, can be explained in a much more meaningful way if we resort to a spatial representation in the shape of a triangle. In this representation, the son is in the upper angle, the mother in the lower left, and the father in the lower right angle. Following the direction of each side of the triangle, we obtain a representation of four links. For example, on a first level, the child loves and feels loved by its mother, while on an underlying level it hates and feels hated by her. On the opposite side is the child's relationship with its father, where on a first level it hates and feels hated and on a second level it loves and feels loved. This real jungle of links forms a totalizing totality or Gestalt where the modification of one parameter causes change in the whole." (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 20)

The representation can be observed in the figure below (*Figure 1*):

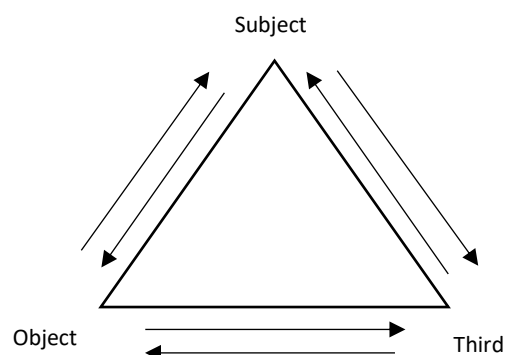


Figure 1. The Triangular Situation

In *Figure 1*, we can observe Pichon's point of view, as the third party (e.g., father) can influence the interaction between the subject (e.g., infant) and object (e.g., mother) via a vínculo with either party. Pichon argues the Oedipal situation (triangulation) is the basic unit of relational life as it is evident from the first vínculo established with the maternal object (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a). Pichon writes:

"What is seldom remembered is a component that operates since prenatal life. I am referring here to the link structure between mother and father, in which each loves and feels loved by, or hates and feels hated by, the other." (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg.20)

It is important to clarify that Pichon's theory of vínculo refers to external relational structures that are internalized; therefore, when Pichon alludes to the importance of the father (third), he does not refer exclusively to the father's external relationship with the mother, but to the third presence (e.g., father) internalized in the mother's mind by way of a vínculo influencing the mother-infant dyad (Losso et al., 2017). For this reason, Pichon writes a vínculo has two bodies but three persons:

"Eighty percent of the literature on children and their links refers to their relationship with the mother; the father appears as a hidden figure, but operative and dangerous for that very reason. It is the notion of the third party that finally leads us to define this bipolar relationship as bicorporal but tripersonal." (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 20)

Pichon Rivière's conceptualization of the third brings about a new challenge: If there is a third influencing the mother—infant dyad, why is the third the father and not another vínculo in the mother's mind (e.g., the mother's parents)? Pichon argues the third is simply a structure that could be the father or something else. However, it is always in-between the two-person relationship. The inclusion of a third party is vital in Pichon's theory because it conceptualizes a two-person object relationship (vínculo) that includes the social context in which the two-person relationship occurred (i.e., the third in the mother's mind influencing the relationship with the

infant). Unfortunately, Pichon did not develop in writing an in-depth conceptualization of the third structure. Pichon was known to prefer an oral transmission of his teachings as opposed to written communication.

Nonetheless, Pichon's disciples stated Pichon considered culture and society to be a *Great Third* structure that is always present in every vínculo, even in the first vínculo with the mother, as the mother's relational history occurs in a cultural context (Adamson, 2018). If culture and society are a *Great Third* structure present in every vínculo, in my opinion, Pichon's theory of the third structure lends itself to argue for an indirect internalization of culture and society by way of culture being a third presence in every two-person interaction. The child internalizes the interaction with the mother and indirectly internalizes the mother's relational history and the *Great Third*; that is, the cultural context in which the relational history occurred. *The Great Third* (e.g., culture and society) is a *social within* continually modifying, even if so indirectly, every interpersonal interaction that is later internalized. In an interview with Zito Lema, Pichon alluded to the possibility of a *social within*. Pichon stated:

"Psychiatry today is a social psychiatry in the sense that one cannot think of a distinction between individual and society. It's an abstraction, a reductionism we cannot accept because we carry society inside." (Pichon Rivière, 1979, pg. 57/personal translation for present work)

Theoretical: *Internal Groups, The Gestalt- Gestaltung, & The Subject-Tied*

A fundamental concept proposed by Pichon is the concept of the internal group, a concept Pichon developed via clinical work with psychotic patients and by integrating his theory of vínculo with concepts from George Herbert Mead. Pichon argued the internal group develops after the child integrates split vínculos of frustration and gratification and achieves differentiation from the maternal object via the depressive position (Adamson, 2018). The child then explores his

tridimensional space and forms vínculos with others outside his relationship with the mother, including the father and other subjects in the immediate environment (Adamson, 2018). The internalization of other vínculos forms the child's internal group—an internalized representation of the external group. Pichon argues the internal group is a Gestalt composed of interacting vínculos, meaning the internal group is an interdependent structure (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a). Furthermore, Pichon argues the internal group interacts within the mind and has conscious and unconscious elements. Pichon writes:

“The field of infrastructure holds motivations, needs, and aspirations. It is the unconscious with its fantasies (motivations), which result from the internal group member's interrelations (the internal group as an immediate and mediated internalized group). This phenomenon may be studied in the content of hallucinatory activity. During this activity, patients hear the voice of the leader of an unconscious conspiracy in dialogue with the self, which they control and observe, as it is a projected part of themselves.” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 6)

It must also be noted that for Pichon, the internal group, and by extension vínculos, are not an exact internal representation of the external group, but a fantasied reconstruction of the external group, composed of the real interactions with the external group but also significant distortions due to the needs that motivate the subject to forms relationships (Losso, 2017). The needs are “love, contact, protection, warmth, and nutrition” (Losso, 2017, pg. 152). Although Pichon does not explicitly reference the philosophical concepts of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in his mention of the internal group, he does mention the dialectic dimension in his conceptualization of the blending of internal and external realms; thus, in my opinion, the internal group could be conceptualized as a synthesis between the internal (thesis) and external (antithesis).

Pichon argues the internal group is inherent in helping the child form a sense of self by fulfilling the role of the generalized other from which subjectivity emerges. To understand how

the internal group constitutes subjectivity, it is essential to comprehend the work of George Herbert Mead; Pichon writes:

“The concept of role was developed and introduced into social psychology by G. H. Mead, the pioneer of this discipline. Mead based his theoretical development on the notion of roles and their inter - action, and on the concepts of self and generalized other. The latter represents the internal group as the product of subjects’ internalization of others.” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 18)

For Mead, the self develops in interaction by assuming and assigning roles—roles are groups of behaviors that respond to the behaviors of others (Aboulafia, 2020). Assuming and assigning roles can be observed in role-playing, where a person must imagine another's perspective to play a role (Aboulafia, 2020). For instance, to enact a student role requires the person to anticipate the professor's expectations and behaviors and vice versa. For Mead, the self develops by playing roles in groups (Aboulafia, 2020). Mead used the analogy of games to explain his concept (Aboulafia, 2020). In a game, the person internalizes others' behaviors in the field to play successfully and comes to perceive themselves in the context of the organized actions of the game as a whole (Aboulafia, 2020). One could replace the game for society, community, political parties, clubs, corporations, social classes, etc., and understand how *self-consciousness* develops in relation to the interactions with the various generalized others in the individual's life (Aboulafia, 2020).

Mead conceptualizes the various groups that constitute the self as the generalized other from which the self emerges (Aboulafia, 2020). Mead also makes a distinction between the "Me" and the "I" (Aboulafia, 2020). The "Me" refers to the self and arises in the context of the generalized other (Aboulafia, 2020). The "Me" results retrospectively from a reflection of the person in the group's context as a whole. A person thinks about "myself" in relation to the group (Aboulafia, 2020). The "I" is separate from the "Me" as the I refers to reactions that are

spontaneous as opposed to introspective; thus, the "I" is not part of the self (Aboulafia, 2020). The "I," nonetheless, is responsible for the innovation that eventually transforms into habitual reactions that become the "Me" that makes up the self (Aboulafia, 2020). Therefore, changes to the group as a whole will result in altered roles that will be part of the "I" and, through habituation, will become part of the "Me" (Aboulafia, 2020).

Mead's theory is crucial to understand Pichon's concept of the internal group as Pichon states the internal group is akin to Mead's generalized other, thus, constitutes the self. The self begins to be formed by the various assumptions and assignment of roles in the child's family context. As stated earlier, the child starts this process by assigning roles (i.e., loving and hating) to the maternal object based on need and internalizing the roles assumed by the object in interaction (i.e., the mothers actual love and hate towards the infant) and continues assigning and assuming roles throughout development based on needs with others in the immediate context (e.g., father, siblings, etc.) .

The self, however, is more than the initial group internalized in the family context, as the child—and later adult—moves on to form vínculos in other group contexts (school, friends, work, political), thereby altering the internal group. Through interaction in various group contexts, the internal group formed in the family environment is changed similar to how the “Me” in Herbert Mead’s theory is altered by the interactions of the “I.” The internal group produces a sense of self that interacts with the external group and is modified by the various vínculos established throughout life across multiple group contexts (Tubert-Oklander, 2014).

Pichon, being a lover of soccer, used the metaphor of the soccer field to explain his concept of the internal group in interaction (Tubert-Oklander, 2014). Pichon argued there are two “psychological fields” to the internal group analogous to a soccer field—an “inner field” where

the internal group plays and an “outer field” where the external group plays (Tubert-Oklander, 2014, pg. 97). Pichon argues a vínculo—as well as the internal group—is originally external, then internalized in the inner field, and later *in interaction* externalized in the outer field, and subsequently internalized again continuing successive internalizations and externalizations in *permanent interaction* (Tubert-Oklander, 2014, pg. 97, my emphasis).

By proposing an *inner field* where the internal group plays, Pichon argues for the interaction of vínculos occurring within the mind and operating unconsciously and separately from the external environment. The interactions of vínculos within the mind contain representations of outside groups (i.e., internal groups), are interdependent, and can influence and modify each other within the mind. Nonetheless, these representations are still interacting with the outside environment—consciously and unconsciously—and are altered in interaction with external groups.

Pichon writes:

“The internal world is formed through the progressive internalization of objects and links. Interaction is constantly occurring within the internal world as well as between it and the external world. By differentiating these worlds, subjects acquire identity and autonomy (a feeling of selfness, or sense of self).” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017c, pg. 60)

By proposing an outer field, Pichon argues the structure of the vínculo (self, object, their interaction, and the third) is also present in the outside interactions between groups; therefore, groups can form a vínculo with other groups in a similar fashion that individuals form vínculos with other individuals. Pichon writes:

“This link is ideological and conditions in these individuals, the development of a total structure that begins to operate as a group with a certain ideology and a specific way of functioning. This group, in turn, will create links with other social groups. We can, therefore, talk about individual links and group links. For instance, the Gómez family establishes a link with the Pérez family, or

an expression group with a certain political outlook makes contact with a group with a different political position.” (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 101)

Pichon’s proposition implies the basic structure of vínculo (self, object, their interaction, and the third) is present in vínculo’s between groups. It can encompass an entire nation and vínculos between countries (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). Pichon explains:

“Thus, we go from the individual to the group link, which can be extended to encompass an entire nation. In this way, the infra-group of a nation, structured on the basis of a particular link with another country, will determine the development of certain characteristics in the two nations. The group link between two nations can undergo exactly the same vicissitudes as the individual link between two people. The frustrations or aggressions of a group or nation may trigger frustrations and aggressions in the other group or nation. These groups, linked in a particular way, also tend to play specific roles, so that different groups have different roles and links. The concept of individual role can be extended to group roles.” (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 101)

Although Pichon does not develop in his writings the idea of a subject internalizing vínculos between groups (for instance, between two nations), in my opinion, this can be deduced from Pichon’s formulations. For example, if a subject belongs to nation “A,” throughout the lifespan, the subject will form vínculos in nation “A” that are internalized into an internal group. Therefore, it can be deduced that the subject can also internalize the vicissitudes of the vínculo between Nation “A” (the nation of the subject) and Nation “B” (the other), as well as the multiple complications and variations of such internalizations.

In summary, for Pichon, the mind, and by extension, the unconscious, is a group capable of adding new members throughout development. Pichon’s conceptualization of the group mind and the interaction between internal and external realms of experience borrows from a few interdisciplinary fields. First, he adds a dialectic dimension to the relationship between internal and external. Pichon states:

“We introduce the notion of mutual transformation—of intrasystemic and intersystemic relations (within the internal world of the subject and between this world and the external world, respectively)—as a concept of *dialectic* interaction.” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 24, my emphasis)

A second added element to Pichon’s concept of the group mind comes from Gestalt psychology. Pichon argues the internal group is a Gestalt or an interrelated structure that is an open structure always being remodified in interaction. Given the modification in interaction, Pichon renames the Gestalt as a *Structure-Structurand* or *Gestalt-Gestaltung* (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a). He argues the self emerges from the internal group, thus also from the *Gestalt-Gestaltung*.

Pichon used his conception of the group mind as a *Gestalt-Gestaltung* to hypothesize cognitive and affective functions. He proposes the individual’s apparatus to grasp and interpret reality, including thoughts and affects, emerges from the *Gestalt-Gestaltung* and internal group. Pichon called the interpretive apparatus the referential schema (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a). His theorization of the referential schema implies our mechanisms to apprehend reality emerge from the dialectic interaction between our internal and external group interactions and relationships, making reality socially determined by the group context.

Pichon’s concept of the internal group, *Gestalt-Gestaltung*, and referential schema, draw heavily on Herbert Mead’s concept of the generalized other. However, Pichon perceived a limitation in Herbert Mead’s concept, as he argued Mead failed to adequately conceptualize the importance of the ecological context in the subject’s sense of self. Pichon believed this to be an important limitation to rectify, given his clinical experience with rural migrants indicated many of his patients internalized their ecological environment when forming their sense of self (Kohan, 2016). To correct this issue, Pichon theorized the notion of ecological internalization. Pichon stated:

“Nonetheless, this theory has a limitation that we have overcome by incorporating so-called ecological internalization into the idea of subjects’ internal group or internal world. We consider that the other is not internalized as an abstract or isolated “other.” Internalization includes inanimate objects, that is, the entire surrounding habitat, which greatly contributes to the construction of the body image. I define this image as the four-dimensional representation of oneself developed by each person in the shape of a Gestalt–Gestaltung whose pathology encompasses the temporal– spatial structure of the personality.” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 18)

Pichon argued the entire habitat in which the vínculos are formed becomes part of the internal group from which the self emerges. Objects, nature, language, music, art, architecture, etc., are part of the mirror in which the subject finds itself in recognition (Adamson, 2018). Pichon believed the phenomena of immigration elucidated the importance of the internalized habitat in subjectivity. His clinical experience with migrants led him to conceptualize immigration as a profound loss that goes beyond the relationships lost, arguing the loss is deep due to the physical environment that was left behind. Pichon believed the importance of the internalized environment led communities of migrants to recreate their habitat of origin to assuage the loss, oftentimes preventing immigrants from assuming new roles in their new environment (Adamson, 2018). Pichon wrote:

“The popular notion of native land or hometown goes far beyond the people residing there. Its actual meaning may be grasped through people’s reactions to migration. Fear of loss prevents migrant rural workers from assuming urban roles, thus causing their marginalization.” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 18)

In summary, Pichon argued for a group approach to the mind, sense of self, and the unconscious. He integrated from various sources, including his clinical experience, dialectic philosophy, Gestalt psychology, and the work of Herbert Mead. Moreover, he extended Herbert Mead’s work by using his clinical experience with immigrants to conceptualize the importance of ecological internalization. My interpretation of Pichon’s group conceptualization of the mind can be observed in *Figure 2* (below).

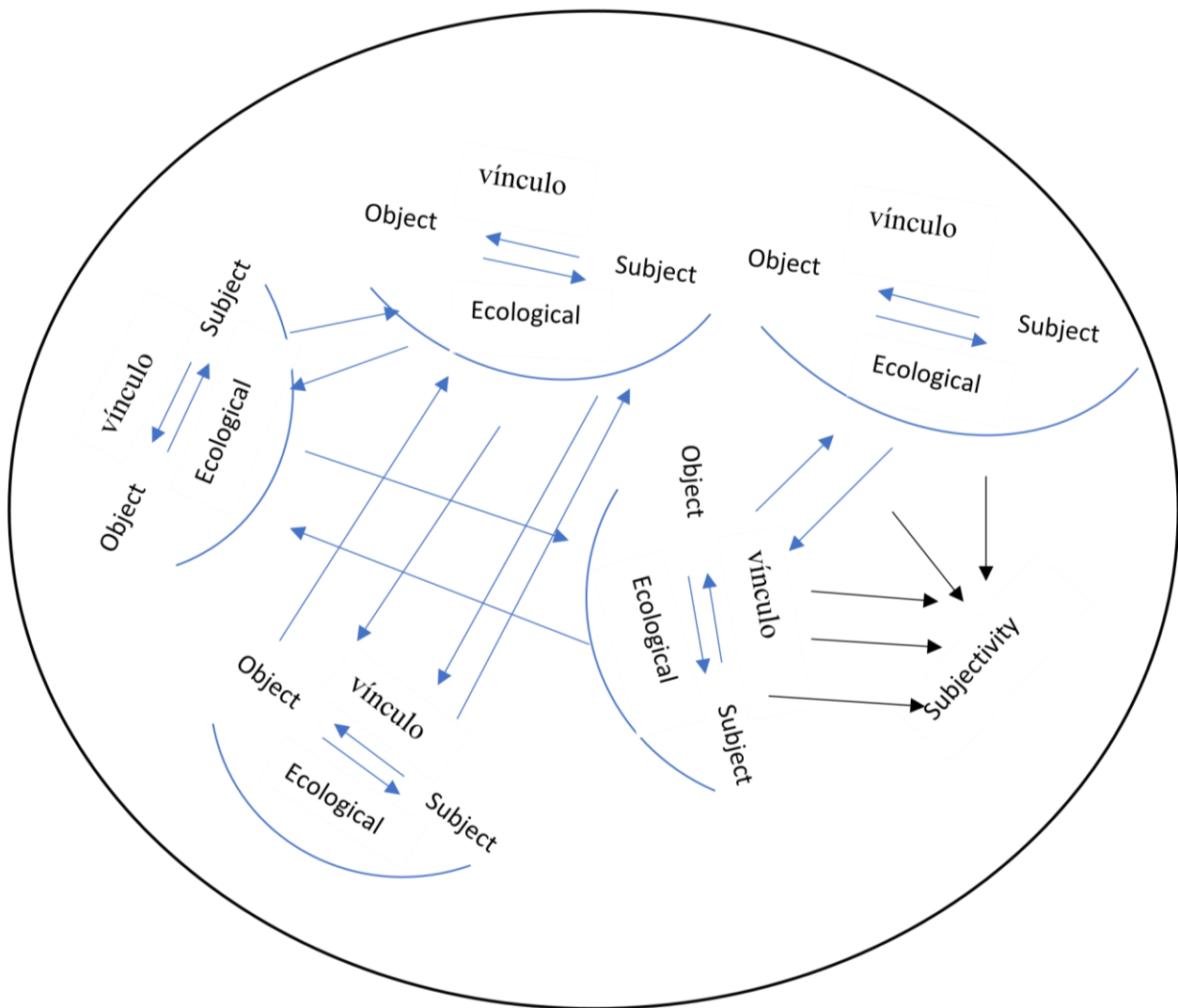


Figure 2. The Internal Group

In addition to his group conception of the mind, Pichon further expanded his theory by conceptualizing two axes to vínculos and internal groups—a vertical axis and a horizontal axis (Scharff, 2017). In the vertical axis, the subject is tied in transgenerational vínculos to parents, ancestors, children, and the history of society. In the horizontal axis, the subject is linked to

contemporaries such as partners, extended family, community, society, and culture (Scharff, 2017). Pichon stated:

“In this way, the double dimension of behavior, verticality and horizontality, becomes understandable for a dynamic, historical, and structural psychology that is far removed from traditional psychiatry (which works only in the descriptive, phenomenal field)...This conception coincides with the depiction of the socioeconomic sphere developed by some philosophers, economist, and sociologist.” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 7)

Pichon's introduction of the vertical and horizontal axes adds complexity to his relational and group conception of the subject. It adds a temporal and transgenerational dimension to the theory by linking vínculos in past, present, and future axes. The horizontal and vertical conceptualization, in my opinion, extends the subject beyond relational and group-based conceptions of subjectivity, as the linking of vínculos and groups in time makes Pichon's conception of the subject relational, sociocultural, temporal, and historical. Pichon's introduction of the vertical and horizontal vínculos (see *Figure 3.* below) presents the subject as always chained to links in family, community, society, and history; thus, makes the subject a relational, historical, and sociocultural "*sujeto—sujetado*" or *subject—tied* (Quiroga, 1986, pg. 80).

Pichon does not sufficiently develop, at least in his translated writings, how the transgenerational aspect of the vertical axis occurs. In my opinion, the verticality (transgenerational ties) of the vínculo/internal group can be understood via Pichon's concept of the third party. As I argued in the previous section, the third operating in the mother's mind links the child to the mother's relational history and the cultural context in which the history took place. Similarly, the third operating in every vínculo, and in turn, in the inner field of the internal group and the outer field of the external group, could link the subject to vínculos across generations.

Therefore, the third party could serve as a potential framework to comprehend the vertical transmission of links that constitute *the social within* from which the subject emerges.

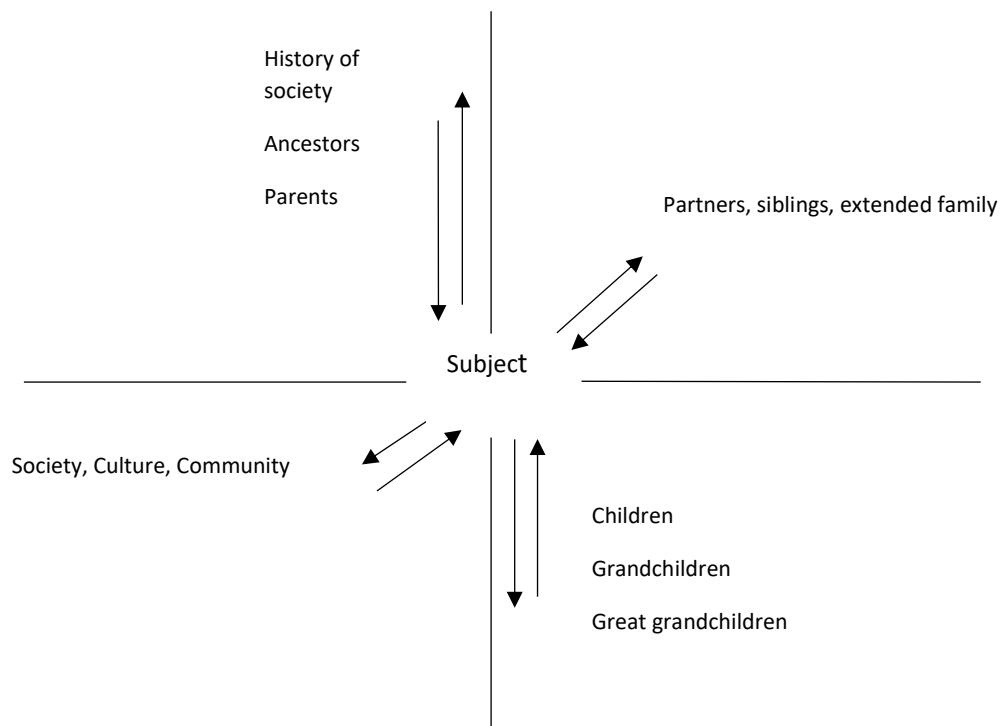


Figure 3. Subject-Tied: Vertical and Horizontal Axis

Theoretical: *The Inner Field, Illness—Health & Communication*

In a true dialectic fashion, Pichon's views on psychopathology cannot be understood without relating to its opposite—health. Pichon writes:

“From the vertex of psychiatry, we speak of normal and pathological behavior, thus incorporating another conceptual pair, health and illness, which we define as subjects’ active or passive adaptation to reality. The term adaptation refers to the appropriateness or inappropriateness, coherence or incoherence of subjects’ responses to environmental demands and to their operative or inoperative connection with reality.” (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017b, pg. 24)

Pichon argued health is related to the subjects' adaptation to their environmental demands; therefore, he conceptualized mental health and illness as intertwined with the subjects' social environment. Pichon wrote:

"The criteria of health and illness, normality and abnormality are, hence, not absolute but situational and relative. Having defined behavior from the viewpoint of genetic structuralism as an "attempt at a coherent and meaningful answer," we can now state the basic postulate of our theory of mental health: every "inadequate" answer, every "deviant" behavior is the result of a distorted or impoverished reading of reality." (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017b, pg. 24)

In the quoted paragraph, Pichon defines behavior—in line with genetic structuralism—as a coherent and meaningful answer to environmental demands. Therefore, mental illness would be its opposite, a structure or a Gestalt, that is not coherent in response to the environment. Before proceeding, I will introduce *genetic structuralism* to highlight Pichon's innovative integration of the humanities in his conception of mental health and illness. I must highlight, however, that my explanation of genetic structuralism is introductory and for the sole purpose of understanding Pichon's conception of health and illness. When Pichon speaks of genetic structuralism he refers to the work of French philosopher Lucien Goldmann. Goldmann's theory is influenced by structuralism & Marxism's focus on the totality of the whole and its structural properties; yet Goldmann focuses on the acting subject's role in relation to the totality (Mayrl, 1978). Goldmann believed the structuralism seen in the works of luminaries such as Claude Levi-Strauss & Louis Althusser removed the subject by overlooking the function of the totality in relation to the subject (Mayrl, 1978).

For Goldmann, societal and cultural structures (i.e., the totality) should be understood by the functional contributions to the subject who acts on the structure—the acting subject (Mayrl, 1978). Thus, Goldmann argues the living being is a subject who transforms the structure in relation

to needs and desires (Mayrl, 1978). Goldmann incorporates dialectics from Marx and Hegel to explain the process of the acting subject transforming the structure (Mayrl, 1978). The acting subject would be a thesis looking to act on the structure that resists transformation (antithesis); when the acting subject can transform the structure to accord with its needs, the acting subject modifies itself and the structure in the process, thereby creating a new synthesis (Mayrl, 1978). Following Hegel's dialectic, the new synthesis gives rise to new structures (thesis) that will require further modification (antithesis) in a true dialectic fashion (Mayrl, 1978). Consequently, for Goldmann, the subject is a living being who modifies the environment (structure) to accord with its needs and transforms itself in the process (Mayrl, 1978).

Accounting for the insights of genetic structuralism, we can now understand why Pichon defined health as the following:

“From this point of view, we understand that subjects are healthy when they grasp reality from an integrative perspective in successive totalizing attempts, and are able to transform this reality and, in turn, modify themselves. Subjects are healthy insofar as they engage in dialectic interplay with their environment rather than in a passive rigid, stereotyped relationship with it. As we have stated before, mental health consists in learning about reality by confronting, managing, and finding an integrative solution to conflicts. We might also claim that it is a relationship, or, we should say, a synthesizing, totalizing aptitude to reconcile antinomies that arise from subjects' interaction with reality.” (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017b, pg. 24)

Pichon argues to have mental health, subjects need to be in active adaptation to the environment by way of a dialectic interplay to fulfill needs and be able to learn about reality by finding integrative solutions to conflicts (i.e., thesis—antithesis). A subject who is unable to learn about reality and engage in dialectic interplay with the environment will suffer from mental illness, making the Pichonian conception of mental illness akin to a learning disability and a deficit in communication. Pichon states:

“We can now state the basic postulate of our theory of mental health: every “inadequate” answer, every “deviant” behavior is the result of a distorted or impoverished reading of reality. Illness implies a disturbance of the process of learning about reality and a deficit in the communication circuit, and these two processes, learning and communication, feed into each other.” (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017b, pg. 24)

At this point, I would like to introduce another set of thinkers important to comprehending Pichon's conception of mental illness—the work on communication by Jurgen Ruesch and Gregory Bateson (1951). While these theorists are not cited by Pichon in his newly translated works, it is known he was influenced by their work on communication (Losso, 2017). Ruesch and Bateson conceptualize psychopathology as a disturbance in communication. They argued conditions such as depression and schizophrenia are described by symptoms that imply distorted perception or transmission of information (1951). Consequently, for these theorists, pillars of the structure of communication such as a transmitter, message, receptor, and noise become paramount to comprehend psychiatric illness.

Pichon borrows from Ruesch and Bateson as he conceptualized psychopathology as a disturbance in communication that halts the dialectic interplay with the environment. Pichon stated these disturbances in communication originated from disruptions to transmitter and receiver networks that prevented the subject from correctly apprehending the environment and modifying it to fulfill its needs. Pichon's conceptualization of psychopathology as a disruption in communication is intrinsically tied to his theory of vínculo as the instrument to apprehend reality—the referential schema—emerges from the Gestalt-Gestaltung that represents the totality of the conscious and unconscious vínculos that constitutes the subject's internal group. Therefore, a mental illness emerges from communication disturbances that refer to the vínculos internalized in the subject's relational history. Pichon stated the following:

“The right instrument to apprehend the reality of objects emerges from this Gestalt. Links configure a complex structure that includes a transmitter-receptor system, a message, a channel, signs, symbols, and noise. An intrasystemic and intersystemic analysis reveals that, to attain instrumental effectiveness, the conceptual, referential, and operational frameworks or schema of transmitter and receiver must be similar. When this is not the case, misunderstanding arises.” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 5)

Theoretical: *The Inner Field—Closed Structures & The Four Principles*

Having understood mental illness as a disturbance in communication emerging from the *Gestalt-Gestaltung* that represents the totality of the person’s relational history, we can delve deeper into Pichon’s ideas of psychopathology as disturbances in the person’s relational development.

The disturbances that occur in a person’s development result from stagnation in the dialectic process—a developmental arrest where a person cannot resolve a thesis/antithesis in a dialectic fashion (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). The subject is prevented from continuing the dialectic process of transforming the environment to meet biopsychosocial needs and be transformed in the process. Often in the stagnation of the dialectic process, there are unmet relational needs that prevented the person from coherently integrating a thesis—antithesis. When a vínculo is internalized, the multiplicity of unmet relational needs can distort the vínculo and internal group, thereby further hampering the person’s ability to apprehend reality in a coherent manner (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017b). Therefore, the internal group, while being composed of real internalized interactions, has an aspect of fantasied reconstruction by way of unmet relational needs that can distort reality and stagnate the dialectic process of active adaptation (Quiroga, 1986).

Pichon argues a combination of biological and environmental factors can result in unmet relational needs that stagnate the person’s ability to apprehend reality in an integrative manner. He

introduced the notion of *the principle of multicausality* to refer to the multiplicity of factors that influence the development of every pathological structure (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). Pichon highlights the basic thesis—antithesis as one of need—satisfaction and later synthesis through vínculo (relationship). However, to gain the satisfaction of biopsychosocial needs in relationships, there is an inescapable antithesis of environmental demands—an if we consider genetic structuralism—the structure always resists transformation by the acting subject (Mayrl, 1978); thus, there is always an antimony of need—environment present in human existence (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). To put it simply, the environment can be an obstacle for the subject to fulfill its needs. When the environment is becoming an obstacle for the subject to fulfill relational needs, anxiety will emerge.

Pichon pays particular attention to anxiety in his conception of pathology likely due to his Kleinian legacy where paranoid-schizoid and depressive anxiety play a significant role. When Pichon speaks of anxiety, he refers to either depressive anxiety (loss of relationship) or paranoid schizoid anxiety (fear of being attacked from the outside). Both types of anxiety relate to a state of being helpless and without the protection of relational life. Pichon argued anxiety is present to communicate—like an alarm bell—a signal that the subject is unable to satisfy needs in relationships and groups (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). If the conflict of need—environmental demands cannot be solved by an integrative solution (synthesis), anxiety will increase and lead to defensive techniques to evade the conflict (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017).

Pichon called the increase in anxiety and the formation of excessive defensive techniques a *disposition point* where learning and communication stagnated. He argued his concept was analogous to Freud's description of the libido's fixation (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). Pichon believed the dispositional points could happen at various stages in a person's development and

remain latent in the unconscious, thereby can be retriggered by a current conflict. When triggered, the defensive techniques used to manage anxiety will resurface in a manner akin to a return of the repressed, resulting in the use of archaic defense mechanisms to manage the current conflict. The defensive techniques will result in a pattern of behaving, thinking, and feeling that is stereotyped, rigid, and inoperative, thereby preventing the person from engaging in the dialectic interplay with the environment (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017).

Pichon argued the stereotyped behavioral pattern would become a structure that halts the communication networks with the external world, preventing the subject from incorporating the new learning necessary to engage in a mutually transformative relationship with the outer world (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). Pichon compared the stereotyped pattern to a closed circle, as the rigid behavioral pattern keeps the subject stuck in a cycle of repetitive and circular pathological behavior (see figure 4). Pichon states:

“In this sense, we could describe neurosis as a disturbance of learning, a behavior that starts to become stereotyped and creates a closed circle.” (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg.83)

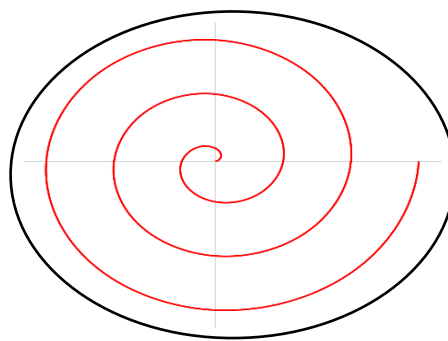


Figure 4. Pathological Structure

As seen in *Figure 4*, psychopathology, either neurosis or psychosis, is a closed structure where a behavioral pattern by way of defensive techniques prevents the person from incorporating

information from the external environment. Pichon stated the following regarding psychopathology:

“Every disturbance of development, neurosis or psychosis, results precisely from the stagnation of a closed process.” (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 81)...“Neurosis, for instance, is a closed system. If subjects always focus on repeating the same behavior, we are dealing with a closed system. If they are able to switch from one behavior to another, integrate reality, and enrich their thinking and actions, we are dealing with an open system.” (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 98)

Pichon argued the development of the stereotyped structure was context-dependent, as he learned from his clinical experience with psychotic patients, whose psychotic symptoms he noted heavily fluctuated based on the social context (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). For instance, he noted psychotic symptoms tended to appear when the patient was interacting with psychiatrists but remained relatively absent when the patients interacted with each other (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). Thus, Pichon argued every pathological structure is governed by a *principle of structural mobility*, whereby the development of symptoms is highly dependent on the here and now of the social context (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017).

As stated previously, Pichon believed psychopathology resulted from defense mechanisms closing the subject’s relation to external reality to protect against the anxiety of unmet relational needs. Thus, the anxiety is either of being attacked (paranoid-schizoid) or anxiety about loss of relationships (depressive anxiety). Out of the two anxieties (paranoid-schizoid and depressive), Pichon believed depressive anxiety (loss of relationship) was the primary anxiety in every psychopathological structure, and he proposed stereotyped structures resulted from situations of depression, loss, and hardships by formulating the notion of a *single pathogenic core of a depressive nature*. A proposition where Pichon argued loss was at the origin of all mental illness (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017b, pg. 29, my emphasis). Pichon’s notion of a single pathogenic core of a depressive nature developed into a theory he referred to as the Theory of Single Illness (*Teoria*

de la Enfermedad Unica) or *TEU*. Pichon's formulation of *TEU* is an integration of concepts from German and French psychiatry and Kleinian theory, as he used the notion of a single illness derived from his psychiatric training and the emphasis on loss from his Kleinian legacy (Etchegoyen, 2014).

Integrating the notion described earlier of dispositional points, Pichon's *TEU* argued depression and loss are always a disposition point in every subject's psychic development (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017) and follow a *principle of genetic and functional continuity*, where the subject undergoes various genetic stages of depression and loss (i.e., proto depression & the depressive position), as well as functional depressive stages for the purpose of healing and managing psychopathology (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). Pichon's *TEU* hypothesized a *proto depression* at birth when the infant separates from the mother's womb and breast (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). At this stage, the infant forms a vínculo with the mother to protect against the total helplessness resulting from the maternal separation at birth. The infant then goes through the processes outlined by Klein of splitting in the paranoid-schizoid position and integration via the depressive position, which Pichon conceptualized as a necessary *developmental depression* (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017).

The depressive position or developmental depression is a terribly uncomfortable and chaotic moment in the infant's life because the defensive mechanism of splitting is not present to protect the infant from the basic anxiety of loss (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). Moreover, as the infant learns it can destroy the object it loves, the infant lives in a world of loss, loneliness, guilt, and ambivalence. Pichon argued during developmental depression, the only defense mechanism available to the infant to manage the fear of loss is psychomotor inhibition, a defense mechanism observed in clinical depression. However, Pichon argued psychomotor inhibition is insufficient to

manage the fear of loss and leads to excessive anxiety and rigid defense mechanisms, resulting in a stereotyped defensive structure (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017).

While Pichon does not conceptualize a thesis—antithesis related to loss, it can be interpreted from his writings—and his conceptualization of need/satisfaction—that he refers to an antimony or conflict of fear of loss—relatedness/protection. The conflict of loss is never resolved in the depressive position and remains a universal basic developmental dispositional point in every subject (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). Every person, therefore, has an unresolved latent depression related to the achievement of the depressive position, which ultimately ends up in excessive and rigid defensive techniques to manage the loss of the vínculo.

Pichon argued that throughout the subject's psychosocial development, there would be situations of deprivation of needs, loss, and hardship (in reality or fantasy) that can trigger a regression to the dispositional point of latent depression (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). Pichon called this phenomenon *triggering depression* and identified it as the starting point of mental illness (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a). The triggering depression is followed by a *regressive depression* or regression to the latent developmental depression/depressive position to *functionally* manage loss through the archaic defense mechanisms used during the developmental depression. However, the functional regression may or may not work in managing the loss, as Pichon argued the only defense mechanism available at this stage is significant amounts of psychomotor inhibition (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017).

If the loss is too overwhelming, the defense mechanism of psychomotor inhibition will fail to manage the loss, leading to excessive use of psychomotor inhibition, resulting in a classic clinical depression. Furthermore, suppose the increase in inhibition is not enough to assuage the anxiety of loss. In that case, a reactivation of paranoid-schizoid splitting mechanisms occurs,

leading to various clinical configurations (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). The reemergence of the splitting mechanisms is functional as it maintains the separation of good and bad objects, thereby assuaging depressive anxiety, albeit via pathological means (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). After pathology is formed, if the subject resorts to treatment, Pichon argued the subject would go through a process of *iatrogenic depression*, referring to a depression induced by the analyst for the functional purposes of helping the subject heal pathological splitting. Iatrogenic depression will be explained in more detail in the next section; however, it must be noted that the stages of depression mentioned in this section (proto depression, developmental depression, triggering depression, regressive depression, and iatrogenic depression) are well-known in the literature as the theory of the five depressions or *las cinco depresiones*—a theory developed by Pichon to explain the importance of loss and depression in the process of falling ill and healing.

When loss is overwhelming and splitting is involved, Pichon argued multiple clinical configurations result from the splitting. The type of psychopathology configured depends on the splitting in what Pichon referred to as phenomenal areas (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). The previous refers to Pichon's last principle—the *principle of phenomenal plurality* (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017), which argued subjects have three phenomenal areas where they can experience and place internal objects (i.e., vínculos) that are split and projected to manage the loss. The areas involved are the following: Area One: mind; Area Two: body; and Area Three: the external world (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017).

Drawing from Kleinian conceptions of splitting in the paranoid-schizoid position, Pichon argued projection mechanisms always involved a good object (good vínculo) split from a bad object (bad vínculo) to prevent the bad from destroying the good, thereby assuaging depressive anxiety. The clinical configurations that result from the splitting will depend on the phenomenal

areas involved (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). For example, phobias would involve the subject projecting the bad vínculo in the external world (Area Three), leading the subject to avoid aspects of Area Three (external world) that cause anxiety (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017).

Paranoid schizophrenia would involve projecting the bad vínculo in Area Three (external world) and the good vínculo be deposited in Area One (the mind), thereby leading the subject to feel persecuted from the outside (bad vínculo) and withdraw into an autistic, omnipotent, and narcissistic seclusion by identifying the good vínculo in Area One/mind (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017). In hysteria, the good object is projected in Area Three (external world), and the bad object is deposited in Area Two (the body). In obsessional neurosis, both good and bad vínculos are projected in the mind—Area One (Losso, & Setton, 2017). In psychosomatic pathologies, such as hypochondria, the bad object is projected into the body, and the good object into the mind or external world; for this reason, hypochondriacs feel persecuted from the inside (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). Pichon extended this line of thinking to the therapeutic task, arguing, for instance, that the healing process of hypochondriacs would entail going through a period of paranoia in therapy, as the hypochondriac projects the bad object outside instead of inside (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017).

Clinical: *The Inner Field—Psychoanalysis & The Dialectic Spiral Process*

The following section will review Pichon's theories and clinical recommendations on the therapeutic process. I have named the section the Inner Field to refer broadly to the field of psychoanalytic process with a single patient, and to differentiate Pichon's contributions to individual treatment from his contributions to group and family therapy—a section I named the Outer Field. Nevertheless, it must be noted that to my knowledge Pichon did not use the term inner field to refer to the therapeutic process between analyst and analysand.

Pichon's description of the therapeutic process and clinical recommendations are inherently tied to his theoretical corpus. Drawing upon Saussure's semiotics, Pichon believed the stereotype patterns of splitting seen in various clinical configurations always refer—in a manner akin to signifier and signified—to the subject's vínculos, and consequently, their perception of reality and mode of adaptation (Losso, & Setton, 2017). Therefore, the therapeutic operation involves an “*iatrogenic depression*” where the analyst helps the patient integrate the split-off good and bad part-vínculos, leading to a reworking of the depressive position by way of integration of part-vínculos; thus, resulting in a repair of the analysand's communication networks (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 17). Doing so, Pichon argues, will allow the analysand to acquire the insight, symbolization, and abstract thought necessary to reengage in a dialectic interplay with the external world, which constitutes health (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017).

While interpreting split-off vínculos is an important part of Pichon's psychoanalytic approach, Pichon's descriptions of the psychoanalytic process as a *dialectic spiral* best captures his theoretical and clinical innovations. Pichon argues to “cure” the closed and rigid mental structures of psychopathology; the analyst must engage the patient in a psychoanalytic process that resembles a *dialectic spiral* in which the split-off vínculos would be analogous to antinomies in the dialectic of thesis—antithesis. The therapist's task is to facilitate the synthesis of splitting represented in the psyche's fragmentation. Pichon states:

“According to dialectic logic, terms are not excluded but establish a genetic continuity based on successive syntheses. The corrective or therapeutic operation is conducted by following the path of a nonlinear link that develops as a continuous spiral. Through this spiral, contradictions between the different parts of a subject may be resolved.” (1971/2017a, pg. 4)

For Pichon, the spiral is a natural, universal, and continuous process of active adaptation that represents mental health. The subject who follows the path of the dialectic spiral can learn and

integrate information from the outside world in a coherent manner and engage in an adaptive relationship to the external world where biopsychosocial needs can be satisfied, thereby allowing the subject to transform itself in an evolutive process that responds to the context in which the subject is embedded. This spiral's dialectic relationship embodies the presence of health in all relationships, including relationships between two persons, between the individual and his group, between groups—and more broadly, it is the universal ideal structure because it helps integrate the contradictions present in human existence, such as body/mind, individual/society, subject/object, internal/external, and theory/practice (Tubert-Oklander, 2015). Pichon writes:

“We have already defined the concept of link as a complex structure of interaction, not linear but spiraling, that constitutes the foundation of operational dialogue. Each turn of the spiral implies ego feedback and a better understanding of the world. When this structure stagnates due to the intensity of basic fears, communication and learning are halted. We are now in the presence of a static rather than dynamic structure, blocking patients’ active adaptation to reality.”(1971/2017a, pg. 18)

Pichon's reference to psychoanalysis as a dialectic spiral process characterizes Pichon as an innovative psychoanalytic thinker and a true pioneer. He is one of the first psychoanalysts to apply dialectic logic to the psychotherapy process. Dialectic philosophy involves processes of thesis—antithesis—synthesis—thesis that continues in successive leaps transforming from quantity to quality in an increasing expansion of consciousness that is ever more complex, sophisticated, and integrative (Adamson, 2018). The analyst's task is to make the implicit, explicit, thereby expanding the analysands' consciousness by making it more complex and integrated, thereby allowing insight to reengage the analysand in a dialectic spiral process with the environment. It must be noted that the dialectic method while originating with Hegel, was later used—and revised—by Karl Marx for the study of society (Adamson, 2018). Pichon was also highly influenced by Marx, particularly Marx’s application of Hegel’s dialectics to the material

world; thus, Pichon's use of the dialectic method comes from a broad reading of multiple authors (Adamson, 2018).

Why a spiral? For centuries the spiral, with few exceptions, has been a symbol of life and evolution, seen in patterns embedded in living beings such as plants, mollusks, and even human dances (Tubert-Oklander, 2015). For instance, the whirling spiral dances (Derviches) of the mystical branch of Islam (Tubert-Oklander, 2015). Pichon was fascinated by the pattern since an early age, likely due to its presence in the surrealist poetry of the Count of Lautréamont (Pichon Rivière, 1992/1946), as well as its use by Hegel to denote cyclical and evolutive thinking (Tubert-Oklander, 2015). According to Pichon's student, Willy Baranger, Pichon's idea of the spiral in the analytic process was borrowed from Freud, who discussed the idea in a letter with Fleiss; nonetheless, Pichon further developed the concept with the dialectic in mind (Baranger & Baranger, 1961-62/2015; Baranger, 1979/2018).

Pichon described the spiral as an inverted cone, ever-expanding in a spiraling fashion, from closed to open circles (see *Figure 5.*), symbolizing the cyclical, evolutive, and expanding relationship of active adaptation to the external world (Pichon Rivière, 1977/2017b). As stated previously, the analyst's task is to engage the analysand in a spiral relationship by making the implicit explicit, thereby expanding the analysand's consciousness. Pichon states:

"The dialectical viewpoint sees no contradiction between closed and open situations. From this perspective, situations are transitorily closed or open, or successively closed and open, following a spiral path." (Pichon Rivière, E. (1979/2017, pg. 81)

"Psychoanalysis is the transformation of a situation of implicitness into a situation of explicitness and communication. What is implicit must constantly be made explicit by analyst and grasped by patients in a movement of permanent spiral evolution." (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 84)

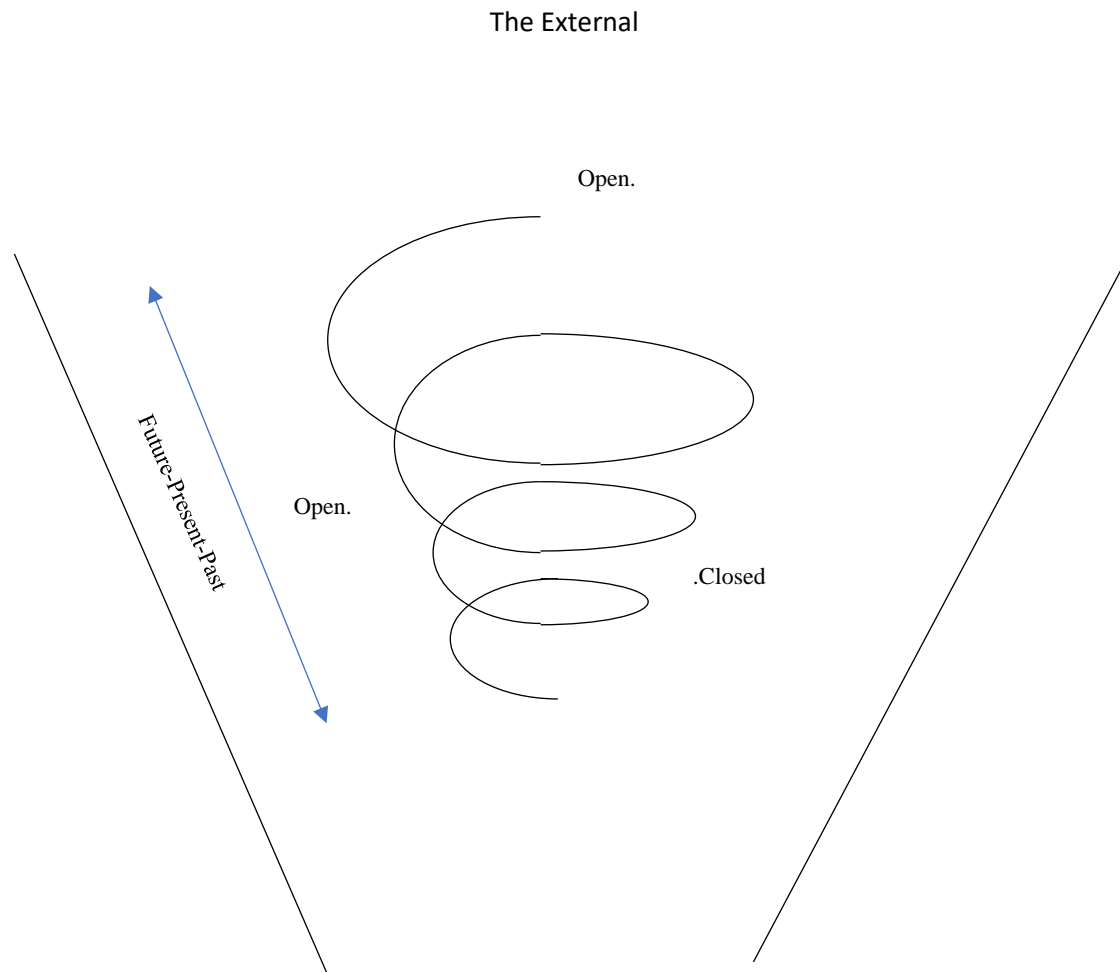


Figure 5. The Dialectic Spiral of Time

As seen in *Figure 5.*, the dialectic spiral is ever-expanding and opens the subject's communication with the external world. If we recall Pichon's formulation of psychopathology as a stereotyped structure resembling a vicious closed circle, the analyst task involves establishing a spiral process with the analysand to break or open the rigid closed structure that keeps the analysand in a repetitive cycle of psychopathology, a process I refer to as *resuming the dialectic* (see *Figure 6*). Pichon writes:

“We should recall here the notion of the closed and open phases of the dialectic spiral. In terms of learning, we could say that the therapeutic process consists essentially in breaking the vicious circle so as to facilitate subjects’ opening to the external world.” (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 82)

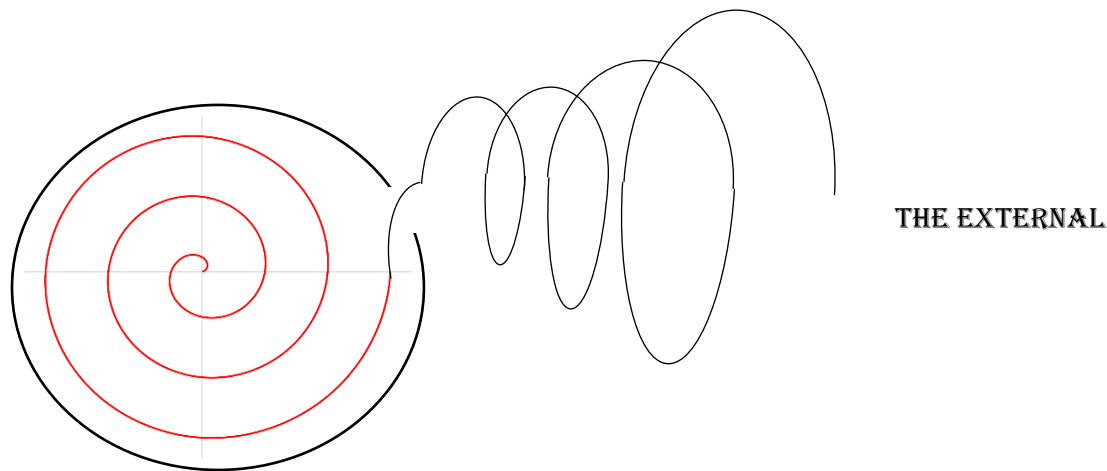


Figure 6. Resuming the Dialectic

Clinical: *The Inner Field—Ariadne's Thread, Interpretation Vectors, & The Field*

“....psychotherapist must show enough plasticity to assume the role assigned (transference) without acting it (therapist’s acting in). Rather, they should retranslate it (interpretation) in terms of a conceptualization, hypothesis, or fantasy concerning patient’s unconscious process while remaining alert to the patient’s response (emergent). Then analysts must take on this response again in a continuum that resembles a spiraling of Ariadne’s thread.” (Pichon Rivière 1971/2017a, pg. 16)

Pichon uses the Greek myth of Ariadne’s thread to provide a metaphor for the therapeutic process. He states the analyst must interpret the transference and take on the patient’s response to the interpretation (emergent) in a continuum that resembles a spiraling of Ariadne’s thread. Ariadne’s thread refers to a Greek myth involving a hero, Theseus, who embarks on a journey to slay a minotaur residing in a labyrinth located on the island of Minos. Ariadne, a Cretan princess, helps the hero by providing Theseus with a thread to take along his journey to facilitate his return from the labyrinth once he slays the minotaur. Pichon’s use of Ariadne’s thread highlights the

complexity of the therapeutic process. The thread stands for the spiral process that guides the analysand (Theseus) out of the stereotype structure (labyrinth) of psychopathology. The minotaur stands for the various aspects of the psyche that need to be interpreted (slain) to overcome the pathological structure.

Pichon's treatment of psychopathology, echoing Klein, relies heavily on interpretations. Nonetheless, Pichon's conceptualization of interpretation differs from traditional notions of psychoanalytic interpretations by way of Pichon's integration of dialectic philosophy. Pichon described interpretations as part of a process that engages patients in a dialectic spiral process of thesis-antithesis-synthesis-thesis via psychoanalytic interpretation. Pichon renames the dialectic process of thesis-antithesis-synthesis in his own terms of existent-interpretation-emergent (Tubert-Oklander, 2015). Pichon states:

"The work unit comprises three elements representing the fine tuning of the operation, namely, *existent-interpretation-emergent*." (1971/2017, pg. 16, my emphasis)

The *existent* is any manifestation of thought, emotions, or behavior the patient brings into the session (Tubert-Oklander, 2015). The analyst's task is to receive the patient's experience, process it intellectually and emotionally, and return it in the form of an interpretation. The purpose of the interpretation is to allow the patient to receive their experience in a more integrated form—a form with less splitting where the analysand can integrate the negative (antithesis) coherently to resume the dialectic spiral that stagnated due to excessive defense use and the formation of a stereotyped structure. The patient's response to the analyst's interpretation is an *emergent*, a new existent (thesis) that will restart the thesis-antithesis-synthesis in a dialectic spiral process resembling Ariadne's thread (Tubert-Oklander, 2015).

One distinction to note regarding Pichon's framework of existent-interpretation-emergent is to recognize the framework is not directly interchangeable to the dialectic method of thesis-antithesis-synthesis; rather, it is an interpretation of such process. For instance, the existent cannot be directly comparable to a thesis as the existent can be thesis and antithesis together because any manifestation of behavior, thought, and emotion can be embedded with splitting (thesis—antithesis). Moreover, given Pichon argues the interpretation helps the person integrate the negative, it cannot be an antithesis; instead, it is more akin to a synthesis. Nonetheless, Pichon's conceptualization of the existent-interpretation-emergent serves as a basic framework to approach interpretation.

In Pichon's interpretative framework, the analyst can interpret to *break* the rigid stereotype structure, thereby allowing the subject to engage in a dialectic relationship with their environment, in which the subject can transform the environment to meet biopsychosocial needs and be transformed in the process. Pichon's written recommendations on the clinical process come mostly from the work of *The Theory of The Link* (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017), which is a transcription of lectures he gave between 1956/57. In his lectures, Pichon focused on different areas of clinical interpretation. Pichon called these areas interpretation vectors (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017).

For Pichon, communication is one of the most important interpretation vectors. As explained in previous sections, Pichon conceptualizes psychopathology as a rigid stereotype structure that halts the communication networks; therefore, it is no surprise that attempting to interpret what the analysand attempts to communicate is a target of clinical intervention. Pichon believed human's most primal need was to communicate with others and be understood (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). He went as far as theorizing dreams are inventions of the mind to avoid feeling a lack of communication when sleeping (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). Contrastingly,

nightmares, according to Pichon, are dreams where the person cannot communicate, thereby feeling utter loneliness and helplessness (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017).

Pichon believed neurosis and psychosis involved pathologies where the patient's faced significant obstacles to communication. Schizophrenia, for instance, is an extreme example where the patient's fear of not being understood increases already present inabilities to communicate; observed, for instance, in the symptom of a word salad (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). Pichon heavily criticized the depiction of psychosis of his time as patients who are disconnected, autistic, and not seeking connection (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). For Pichon, analysands are "permanently seeking communication," including the most severe psychopathologies (1979/2017, pg. 99), who Pichon conceptualized as patients who "endlessly repeat their stereotypy" in search of someone capable of understanding their message (1979/2017, pg. 100). Pichon argued the stereotype is present even in the most severe forms of catatonia; for example, when the patient does something, whether it is a hand gesture or body movement, to signal an attempt to communicate, even if such attempt is unconscious (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). Pichon's focus on communication as a target of clinical formulation draws heavily from communication theory, as he argued the stereotype is a "transmitter" sending a message in "private morse code (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 100).

Pichon also draws upon Gestalt theory and Sartre's notion of totality to conceptualize the importance of communication in clinical intervention. He argues that even the smallest hand gestures in severe catatonic states represent the entire "psyche and personality", as he states he does not subscribe to the partial view of symbolism, instead believes the stereotype represents the "totality of mental life" being communicated as morse code for someone to receive the message and grant the sender the human need of communication, connection, and understanding (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 100). The interpretative guideline Pichon provides is to receive the

communication, grasp its meaning, and interpret the message in the relationship with the analyst to help the patient re-establish communication. He states:

“In this way, a behavioral pattern is organized that represents their entire mental life. Therapist must grasp this message, understand it, and interpret it in the context of the transference, the here-and-now. Although this stereotype has been functioning for say, twenty years, when patient’s approach us and repeat this behavior including us in it, we must interpret the message in the here-and-now with us. There is a technique to learn about reality by way of trial and error and to search for relationships. This interpretation vector, communication, is what has made therapy more accessible to psychotic patients.” (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 100)

Naturally, a crucial interpretation vector for Pichon is the vínculo & internal group. The interpretation vector of vínculo is related to communication, as breaks in communication happen when the vínculo is split into part-vínculos. If we recall Pichon’s conceptualization of mental illness, the splitting of the vínculo into good and bad vínculos happens in infant development to conserve the relationship with the maternal object, thereby sheltering the infant from helplessness, loss of communication, and loss of connection. Once the infant matures into the depressive position, splitting is not available to manage the anxiety of unrelatedness; thus, the fear of loss of relationship is never worked through in its entirety and remains a latent vulnerability for psychopathology. Mental illness develops when a fantasized or real loss triggers a regression into splitting to manage the loss of vínculos (both internal and external vínculos). Its projection into the three phenomenal areas of expression (mind, body, and external reality) leads to various clinical configurations.

With Pichon’s formulation of mental illness in mind, the interpretation vector of vínculo carries, embedded within it, splitting and fear of loss as interpretation vectors. Pichon advocates for interpretations to contain a “good object” in the phenomenal areas of mind, body, and external reality, and a “bad object” in the remaining phenomenal areas of mind, body, and external reality

(Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 93). The interpretative process will induce an iatrogenic depression—a regression to a latent depression—as the interpretations reduce the splitting, thereby allowing the emotions of loss to become conscious. The regression functions to help the patient process the loss, reduce the need for excessive splitting, and restore coherence (i.e., synthesis) to the self for the analysand to reengage in the dialectic spiral process.

Inherent in the interpretation of splitting lies another interpretation vector—the role. If we recall Pichon’s definition of the vínculo as an external relational structure that is later internalized and contains the subject, the object who is also a subject, and their interaction (the subject’s relationship towards the object and vice versa); the role is inherent in the conceptualization. Pichon stated in a vínculo the subject and object “perform a certain function,” meaning both subject and object perform a role (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg.101). Pichon described roles as “specific functions patients try to assign the other” and argued assigning roles is a normative process in relational life (1979/2017, pg.101). Pichon conceptualizes the vínculo as a synthesis of the assignation and assumptions of roles (i.e., their interaction) in two-person relationships and argued the role (behavioral pattern of interaction) is an important interpretation vector (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017).

When the splitting of vínculos forms a pathological structure, the roles the person assigns and assumes in intrapsychic and relational life also suffer a split. Pichon speaks of an “*unconscious irrational splitting of roles*” where a person can play more than one role at a single time by assigning and assuming a role and simultaneously rejecting the role (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 104, my emphasis). Pichon highlighted splitting can happen in the internal field of the link, for instance, when the internalized role splits from the rest of the self and functions autonomously, thereby resulting in psychosis. (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). Furthermore, splitting can also

happen in the external field of the link (see section The Outer Field—The Family, The Group, and The Spokesperson) where a person can assign a role with a negative valence and simultaneously reject the role, thereby depositing negative parts in the other, resulting in rigid pathological structures in interpersonal relationships (Pichon Rivi re, 1971/2017b). Pichon acknowledges relational life involves playing different roles depending on context (e.g., doctor, student, parent, etc.); he advocates for the analyst to interpret the various splits in roles in relational life for the person to integrate the self and play “a single role” at a given time depending on context. He argues mental health consists of an “existential core” that shows consistency and internal order of roles (Pichon Rivi re, 1979/2017, pg. 81). In analysis, the therapist helps the patient integrate the split roles and develop insight into the roles they assign and assume, thereby helping the patient resume their capacity to engage in a dialectic spiral process with the environment.

As the analyst interprets various vectors (communication, v nculo, splitting, loss, roles), the analysand will respond to the interpretation by developing a transference that is considered by Pichon to be a new emergent (thesis) that will eventually need to be interpreted to continue the dialectic spiral process. Pichon believed the transference is a crucial interpretation vector as it allows the therapist and patient to learn how the patient’s external v nculo (i.e., transference relationship with the analyst) is “configured” by the “relational history” of the internal v nculo (Pichon Rivi re, 1979/2017, pg. 109). For Pichon, the relational history is the accumulation of v nculo’s throughout the lifespan that configures the internal group, which is an interacting Gestalt-Gestaltung within the mind and outside in real relationships. Thus, Pichon’s conception of transference is more expansive than traditional psychoanalytic notions of transference of maternal and paternal objects, as Pichon considered the analysand’s transference could refer to the various characters that conform the patient’s internal group.

Pichon believes the emergent in the transference is intersubjective and contextual, as it is not only configured by the analysand's relational history (intrapsychic), but by the subjectivity of the analyst and the context in which the analytic encounter occurs (interpsychic). Pichon referred to analysts as participant observers—not merely detached observers but participants playing a role in structuring the analytic encounter and transference relationship (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017).

Pichon's use of the term participant observer is interesting, as it was used previously by the well-known American interpersonal psychoanalyst Harry Stack Sullivan (1953). Pichon could have borrowed the term from Sullivan, as Pichon was familiar with Sullivan's work (1979/2017). However, Pichon could also have borrowed the term from his familiarity with anthropology and social psychology. The term participant observation was introduced by anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1927) in the context of ethnographic research with diverse cultures. Pichon was familiar with the work of Malinowski and cites his work in his writings on family therapy (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017c). Moreover, Pichon was also familiar with the use of participant observation in experimental social psychology research. Thus, I believe Pichon took the term from his knowledge of anthropology and social psychology research, as he cites the research paradigm when introducing the term to his psychoanalytic work. Pichon states:

“Our goal is to transform the operational field of psychoanalysis into a field of scientific research.....Nowadays, thanks to the methodology incorporated by Lewin, we are able to conduct studies in experimental psychology or in psychiatry. According to this methodology, the object of observation in a given field can be one, two, or three people, or a specific group..... A thorough study of any type of situation will lead to the conclusion that observers are always participant observers. Observer's status has been a frequent topic of debate, especially concerning the way in which they participate in and how they modify the field of observation. In reality, observers' characteristics utterly change the nature of the study, for example, if the research is a man or a woman, Japanese or Italian, a leftist or a rightist. For patients, these traits represent a Rorschach inkblot.....In other words, everything must be considered on the basis of the relationship unit between subject and object.” (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pgs. 77-78)

Pichon integrated the participant observation framework of research into the analytic situation. He believed the analytic situation's essential aspect is one of “permanent interaction” (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 85). Every behavior by the analyst and the context affects the analysand, even if words remain unspoken. Pichon remarked:

“Analysts’ every movement and behavior affects patients’ unconscious and produced modification in the field.” (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg 79)

Another metaphor Pichon uses to describe the analytic relationship and the transference as intersubjective and contextual is borrowed from Gestalt theory. Pichon theorizes the analytic field is a broad Gestalt-Gestaltung (a Gestalt undergoing structuring always in the process of formation and transformation) that affects both analyst and patient, where the patient’s existent (what the patient brings to session), and his emergent (the transference) is conditioned by the context of the encounter and the analyst as a subject (i.e., his actual attitude). Pichon states:

“When analyst and patient interact in the work field, the result is a Gestalt that encompasses both of them, that is the emergent of both. What appears in the patient at that moment is also conditioned by the analyst attitude, by the room where he works, by his previous interpretation, and so on.” (1979/2017, pg. 88)

For Pichon, the interaction in the field will modify the analysand’s unconscious, and therefore, the transference and the emergent, while simultaneously interacting with the analysand’s unconscious internal group. For this reason, Pichon advocates for the analyst to consider the “phenomenology” of the “here-and-now with me” and how it relates to interaction with the analysand’s internal group—the “underlying here-and-now with me” (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 87), or as Pichon’s told his students, “*the here and now with me, just as there, before, with others*” (Baranger et. al., 1983/2015, pg. 78, my emphasis). Furthermore, Pichon advocates for the

interpretation of transference to include the analysands' future relationships, resulting in an interpretative process that considers the full temporal dimension of past, present, and future.

“In relation to the characteristic of interpretations, we have pointed out that the ideal interpretation starts from the analysis of the current relationship in the here-and-now with me, expands into the analysis of relationships that were forged previously with other characters, and ends by looking at the nature of subject's future relationships with other objects.” (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 109)

The interpretive process, including that of the analysand's transference relationship with the analyst and how the analysand's transference relationship connects to their internal group, allows the analysand to develop a “new Gestalt,” of their internal group, that is “reassembled” via interaction with the same parts the analysands brings to the session, but in a new image that allows the analysand to fix distortions in their sense of self and view of relationships, thereby resuming the dialectic spiral process of mutual transformation with the environment (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 107).

Moreover, Pichon's interpretative process allows the analysand to regain a sense of temporality. An aspect of interpretation presents in Klein's “*hic et nunc et mecum*” (here and now with me) but often ignored due to incorrect translations (Baranger, 1979). Pichon's spiral process places interpretations *in time* (see *Figure 5.*) by first introducing the present of the “*hic et nunc et mecum*” (here and now with the analyst), followed by the past (the then and there with others) and finally the future and somewhere else (Baranger, 1979). Pichon adds an element of temporality to the interpretative process because he believes the stereotype structure contains elements of being stuck in time. Interpreting in temporality (present, past, and future) can help the analysand reestablish its dialectic relationship with time and the environment. Moreover, Pichon was cognizant the future of the analysand is shaped in the relationship of the here-and-now with me, a

future the patient and analyst carry unconsciously, therefore must be interpreted in the analytic encounter to allow the analysand a prospective future without the repetition compulsion of the stereotype—a spiral process without a predetermined ending, except for death (Baranger, 1979; Scharff, 2017).

The final interpretation vector I will explore is the third party. Pichon believes that “thinking,” “loving,” and “hating” never take place between two people, as the triangular situation is the basic unit of relational life—always present as a third in the mother’s mind by way of the father, the mother’s internalized relational history, and internalized society. The third is always modifying the interaction between infant and mother, and in turn, is present in the analytic relationship, modifying the encounter with the analyst. Thus, Pichon considers the third another interpretation vector, as he states the analyst must always think in terms of “threes” by attempting to find the third party and its influences in the analytic encounter. Pichon writes:

“The third party in the triangular situation, transforms the dialectic spiral of learning about reality into a closed circle or stereotype that functions as a pathogenic structure.” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg.4)

“One of the vectors of interpretation is the analysis of the triangular situation. This situation is a scene that unfolds inside at first and is placed outside later. There are three main characters in it. The analytic situation encompasses two participants, but analyst’s basic goal is to discover the third party and learn its location and functions.” (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 90)

In Pichon’s writings, he speaks of the third that influences the analytic pair and is “inside at first” and then externalized in the analytic relationship” and he advocates for the analyst to find out how the patient is looking to “protect,” “escape,” or wants the analyst to “oppose” the third party (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 90). I consider the third party a crucial concept, as it could serve as a bridge to include culture and society as interpretation vectors. While Pichon does not explicitly advocate for culture and society as interpretation vectors, in my opinion, it is implied in

his work for a variety of reasons, including Pichon's formulation of the self as constituted by the internalized ecological environment, his argument of cultural context as always influencing the interaction between the mother and the infant, and his conceptualization of subjects as carrying society inside. Moreover, one of Pichon's students, Adamson, stated Pichon considered culture an internalized third (2018, pg.101-102). Therefore, I believe it is implied in Pichon's work that culture and society influence the analysand's inability to reengage in the dialectic spiral process; thus, they must be considered potential interpretation vectors.

In regard to the timing of interpretations, Pichon advocated for interpretations occurring at an urgency point, a term he borrowed from Klein, who used the term to advocate for the analyst to interpret at the signal of paranoid-schizoid and depressive anxiety latent in the analysands' expressions (Baranger, 1979). Pichon used the term differently to advocate for clinicians to interpret at the urgency point of the emergence of a past situation in the present—a situation that, if not interpreted, prevents the analysand from reengaging in the open spiral (Baranger, 1979). It is important to recognize Pichon's innovation in focusing on the interpretation of the situation rather than the drives; at the historical time Pichon practiced, most psychoanalyst focused on interpreting drives and defenses.

A final note on interpretation, Pichon theorized the interpretive process results in the analysand internalizing the analyst (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). The internalization of the analytic relationship is a vínculo that is at first external and later internalized (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). As such, the internalized vínculo with the analyst interacts in the analysand's internal group (i.e., the unconscious) independently [Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017]. The innovative aspect of Pichon's conceptualization is his belief that the interaction continues after the patient leaves the session, thereby creating a space for self-analysis (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). A space where

psychoanalysis occurs in-between sessions by way of the internalized analyst, thus aids in the curative process of restoring the analysand's dialectic relationship with the environment (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). Pichon writes:

“When analysands leave the session, they start an introspective movement; they internalize their analyst and begin an internal dialogue with him. An internal link is established that last far beyond the hour of clinical analysis and provides a space for the development of self-analysis. In other words, hetero-analysis and self-analysis are two alternating processes that coexist in the analytic session.” (1979/2017, pg. 88)

Clinical: *The Inner Field— The Three D.'s & Countertransference*

Pichon's writings on countertransference are mainly formulated from a transcription of his 1956/1957 lectures on the theory of the vínculo (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). A subsection of the lectures references a theory named the Three D's (depositant, depositary, and deposited). Building on the hypothesis that all patients are permanently attempting to communicate to gain understanding, the theory expands on how the process of unconscious communication takes place in the analytic session. Pichon argues analysands need to “deposit parts of themselves in the other” (1979/2017, pg. 99, my emphasis) to communicate. Analysands are depositants who require the analyst to perform the role of the “good depositary” (1979/2017, pg. 103) by adopting an attitude that is “unscrupulous” and “open to everything and anything” (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017, pg. 99). When the analyst is able to be a depositary, communication is established. Pichon writes:

“If analysands assign a role to the analyst and analyst take on that role, as key phenomenon occurs that lies at the core of the analytic situation—communication. When analyst do not accept the role assigned by patients, communication fails.” (1979/2017, pg. 98)

For example, very anxious patients may state their need for protection and shelter from the very first session and may ascribe to the analyst, whether male or female, a maternal role. If they feel rejected, they will experience a high degree of frustration because of the repetition of a significant primal situation, namely, the mother—child relationship.” (1979/2017, pg. 99)

Pichon's explains failures in communication are possible, he provides an example of "gender reversals" (i.e., a patient assigns a male analyst a female role and vice versa), as situations that commonly lead to negative countertransferences, as the analyst "refuses to participate in the relational game" (1979/2017, pg. 99), thereby impeding communication. Thus, Pichon argues patients experience a "*mistrust of the depositant*" (1979/2017, pg. 99, my emphasis), as patients are not sure if their analyst will receive what they unconsciously wish to deposit.

When Pichon is alluding to the need for analysts to receive the roles assigned by the patient, he is referring to the analysand's internalized relational history (i.e., vínculo). Receiving the analysand's vínculos lets the patient know, at least unconsciously, that communication (i.e., relatedness) is possible and they can be understood. An interesting aspect of this part of Pichon's work is his suggestion that for roles to be received by the analyst, the analyst must *play* or enact part of the role (i.e., analysands relational history). However, he does not use the word enactment, he suggests the analyst must assume the role by "participating" in the "relational game" (1979/2017, pg. 98).

While Pichon is vague in what he means by participating in the relational game, in his example of the patient seeking a maternal analyst, it appears to me he is suggesting the analyst must *play* the role with the patient in some capacity to establish unconscious communication with the analysand. Playing the role would be to behave in a manner that resembles what is deposited in the analyst. For example, if a patient deposits a maternal role in the analyst and the analyst plays the role by behaving maternally. Playing would be different from interpreting, as interpreting would not include the analyst acting consistently with the patient's deposits; instead, the analyst verbally interprets the patients' unconscious.

If the analyst does not play the role, at least at the start, the analysand will feel rejected and lose hope for communication. If viewed from Pichon's past conceptualization of the self as emergent from vínculos and his use of Sartre's concept of totality, it could be deduced that when a role is deposited in the analyst, it contains the totality of the self and its relational history; thus, if not enacted or *played* in some capacity the analysand will feel the self is rejected. With the latter in mind, we can understand why the patient will feel frustrated; as Pichon remarked, such rejection could lead to a repetition of the frustrating part of the primal mother—child relationship, thereby making communication difficult.

It must be observed that my interpretation of Pichon as suggesting the analyst must *play the role* is at odds with some of Pichon's other formulations where he explicitly states the therapist must "assume the role without acting in" (Pichon Rivière 1971/2017a, pg. 16). Moreover, Pichon considers the interpretation of the deposited to be crucial for the analysand to integrate the splitting and for the analyst to avoid getting "sick" from the patients pathological deposition (Zito Lema 1976/2014, pg. 118). These formulations are contradictory; how it is possible for the patient to know communication is possible if the analyst does not play—instead, interprets the role assigned?

Contradictions in this aspect of Pichon's writings have been noted by contemporary analyst attempting to grasp Pichon's work (Greenberg, 2017). Perhaps a way to understand the contradiction is to use Pichon's theorization of the dialectic spiral process. With dialectic philosophy in mind, a formulation of an antimony of enactment—interpretation or role play—interpretation can provide a hope for a synthesis. Perhaps, a good psychoanalysis contains a combination or both, a dance, where *playing the role* allows for communication, facilitates

interpretation, and helps analysands understand how the roles they assume and assign can impede communication with external reality.

With a dialectic reading of Pichon in mind, enactment (i.e., play)—interpretation would represent a dialect in which both sides (synthesis) play a part in analysis; thus, the clinician must enact or play the role and interpret. An anecdote of Pichon's clinical work by one of Pichon's most celebrated students, Alfredo Moffat (1988), might help illuminate my assertion that both enactment and interpretation play a role in a Pichonian analysis. Moffat recounts Pichon was seeing a psychotic patient in analysis who was lying on the couch and hallucinating he was on a railway about to be run over by a train. The patient grew more anxious as he was hallucinating the train was approaching. Pichon lay next to the patient, hugged him, and yelled, "let's get out, or we will get crushed!". Moffat suggested Pichon was attempting to introduce himself into the patient's phenomenology to decrease the felt sense of isolation before attempting any interpretative process (Moffat, 1988).

Having explored Pichon's Three D.'s (depositant, depositary, deposited), we can advance to explore Pichon's views on countertransference. Integral to the analytic process of interpretation and the role of the good depositary, is the analyst's countertransference. Pichon considered countertransference something akin to a double-edged sword. Countertransference can impede the process of the dialectic spiral if not used appropriately. Pichon alludes to this when he discusses how "gender reversals" can lead to a "negative countertransference" in the analyst, thereby impeding communication if the analysts resists accepting the unconscious parts of the psyche the analysands attempts to deposit (1979/2017, pg. 87). However, countertransference is not something to get rid of but a tool the analyst uses after undergoing training psychoanalysis (Losso

et al., 2017). Pichon considered it impossible for analysts to understand the patient without relying on their subjective experience (i.e., internal emergent), including countertransference. He writes:

“Students of psychoanalysis must realize that every interpretation about the other is determined by their knowledge about themselves. The more spontaneously analyst accept their internal emergent when they formulate interpretations the more operational these interpretations will be.....Analytic work should be as spontaneous as possible. The creation of hypothesis through this type of fantasy constitutes therapists’ basic task. Analysts’ work is performed on the basis of the construction of fantasies about the other’s psychic life. Psychological knowledge is primary based on analogy.” (1979/201ab, pg. 106)

“While they are analyzing someone else, analyst must be aware that they are also analyzing themselves and that they are using the tools, internal objects and fantasies that are their own and not others.” (1979/2017, pg. 92)

“For this reason, we need to analyze analyst’ fantasies, their situation in the operational field, and their perceptual difficulties. Countertransference will then begin to make sense.” (1979/2017, pg. 80).

Pichon’s suggestion of spontaneously accepting internal emergents to formulate interpretations implies he is advocating for the usefulness of the analyst’s subjectivity to grasp the patient’s unconscious, as emergents for Pichon could be a thought, emotion, or behavior—the totality of the analyst’s experience. In framing countertransference as an emergent, Pichon also implies the subjectivities of the analyst and patient are tied, as emergents are a result of the dialectic interaction process. If we recall Pichon’s formulation of the existent-interpretation-emergent, the emergent is not simply what is there (the existent), but it refers to what emerges in interaction. Pichon also states therapists “notice” the emergents inside themselves as they “*received the messages transmitted by their patient*” (1979/2017, pg. 107, my emphasis). Moreover, he alludes to the therapeutic relationship as one where “*the patient acts on the therapist and the therapist on the patient,*” leading to “*both*” experiencing “*modifications*” (1979/2017, pg. 79, my emphasis). Therefore, it appears to me, Pichon is attempting to frame countertransference and the therapeutic encounter as intersubjective, although he does not use the term in this context.

In advocating for the integral role of the analyst's subjectivity in the psychoanalysis of patients, Pichon departed from classical conceptions of countertransference. In classical conceptions, countertransference was a mistake that suggested the analyst's treatment was incomplete (Mitchell & Black, 2016). For Pichon, countertransference is the opposite, a necessity to work analytically, analogous to the brush for the painter, the instrument for the musician, or the tools for the sculptor. In his formulation of countertransference and the usefulness of the analyst subjectivity, Pichon also departs from classical conceptions of therapeutic neutrality, as he suggests analyst's interpretations of others are also about themselves. Thus, it is impossible for the analyst to be objective, as the subjective is needed for the work to even take place.

It is hard to pinpoint a specific intellectual contributor for Pichon's countertransference reformulations, as there is no citation of a specific theorist in his translated writings. One could draw analogies to Pichon's use of Mead's dual internal representation of roles, his use of the dialectic, or the Gestalt. Moreover, it should be recognized that Pichon worked closely with Heinrich Racker, a Kleinian analyst in Argentina who, from 1948 onwards, reformulated countertransference as a useful tool in analytic work (Ávila Espada, 2013). Moreover, Pichon also studied the work of one of Klein's closest collaborators, Paula Heiman, who in the 1950s, in parallel with Racker, reformulated the concept of countertransference as a useful tool in the analytic process (Ávila Espada, 2013; Baranger, 1979). Likely, Pichon was influenced by the multiplicity of perspectives he was exposed to in Kleinian psychoanalysis, social and gestalt psychology, and philosophy.

In Pichon's advocacy for the analyst to use his own subjectivity as a tool, also lies the double edge sword of countertransference, as the analyst needs to assimilate the patients' deposits into their experience to be able to draw analogies to the experience of patients (1979/2017, pg.

106). Pichon points out the experience can be very distressing for analysts, particularly around pathologies such as psychosis, as the analyst needs to assimilate the psychotic situation into their own, yet this proves difficult for fear of being absorbed in the patient's madness, a "*Folie à deux*" (1979/2017, pg. 108, my emphasis). For this reason, the analyst's own treatment is essential in giving the analyst the tools to work freely with their countertransference and subjective experience.

Clinical: *The Outer Field—The Family, The Group, and The Spokesperson*

Pichon's focus on studying external relational structures that are internalized (i.e., vínculo) as opposed to exclusively focusing on intrapsychic phenomena, allowed him to bridge the gap to work psychoanalytically in groups and families. His conceptualization of psychopathology as a closed structure and the analytic process as the opening of such structures, naturally lends itself to intervene in systemic structures. Moreover, group and family work were deeply personal for Pichon, who was a socio-relational thinker and believed the most detrimental human condition is of isolation and total helplessness, a condition seen at its worst in psychosis and extreme poverty (Moffat, 1988). For this reason, Pichon believed in group work, especially in marginalized communities, and in the power of assigning patients a group task to "do with others" and "be with others" (Moffat, 1988). Moreover, he is one of the first clinicians worldwide to intervene systemically in groups, families, and organizations, yet remains unacknowledged in this area (Losso et. al.). It was his efforts to democratize psychoanalysis that led to his use of group psychoanalysis, later known as operative group and a reformulation of his version of psychoanalysis as a social psychology.

However, Pichon's group work is extensive, and a complete review is beyond the scope of this work. The present section will only be a cursory review of Pichon's group and family work.

Pichon's group work has recently been extensively studied in the English language. For further reading, consult *Operative groups: The Latin-American Approach to Group Analysis* by Tubert-Oklander, & Hernández de Tubert, R. (2004). The present section is focused on some of Pichon's group and family formulations and their relevance to the analytic process.

Pichon argues similar pathologies of splitting of the vínculo and mechanisms of rigidity and stereotyped structures are observed at the collective level of the group, and therefore, the family who he considers the basic group and conceptualized as a structure undergoing structuring or a "Gestalt-Gestaltung" (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017c, pg. 64). In a healthy family, the structure is open, and communication is multidirectional, configuring a "*spiral of feedbacks*" (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017c, pg. 64, my emphasis). In a healthy family, each member performs roles that are complementary and there is a plasticity of roles; ideally, different family members would be able to take on a variety of roles depending on needs (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017b). The group has open communication and succeeds in its task of having a dialectic relationship with the environment, where the group can transform the environment to satisfy needs and be transformed in the process; Pichon referred to this configuration of the group as an *operative group* (1971/2017c, pg. 65, my emphasis).

When a group is inoperative, communication networks have been halted, leading to the formation of a closed stereotype structure that is not in a dialectic relationship with its environment (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017b). Not unlike individual pathologies, Pichon argues group pathologies form stereotypes due to massive splitting of depressive anxiety (fear of loss of object) and paranoid-schizoid anxiety (fear of attack). Communication is impeded, and secrets or "family mysteries" come to be common in the group (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017c, pg. 63). Similar to individual pathology, the family pathology forms due to a single pathogenic core of a depressive

nature that results from splitting as a result of failure to work through real or fantasied losses (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017b). Once the stereotyped group structure forms and family mysteries are common, the group members, unconsciously, and sometimes consciously, will seek to preserve the pathological structure to manage the depressive and paranoid-schizoid anxieties, thereby enacting a “*conspiracy of silence*” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017c, pg. 63, my emphasis).

The formation of the pathological group structure depends on the rigidity of the roles assigned and roles assumed; thus, the theory of the three D.’s is highly relevant (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017b). For the pathological group structure to form, the family members must find a “scapegoat,” a person that performs the role of the unscrupulous depositary by receiving the massive depositions of the family’s bad parts (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017c, pg. 63). The family or group member that performs the role of the scapegoat helps the structure manage the depressive and paranoid-schizoid anxieties, but eventually, the scapegoat falls ill, as the member absorbs the pathological situation into the self by way of fantasied reconstructions of pathological projections (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017b). Once the scapegoat falls ill, the family members segregate the scapegoat, as the ill member reminds the family of their bad parts; thus, segregation supports the family’s unconscious fantasy of anxiety disappearing along with the scapegoat (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017b). For this reason, Pichon asks an interesting question:

“Is the person who falls ill the strongest or the weakest member of the family group? We may ask the same questions of psychosomatic illness. The localization of the disturbance in an organ makes us wonder whether this organ had been strong in the past but its long-standing role in working through anxieties led to fatigue and a state of chronic stress produced by conflict.” 1971/2017c, pg. 63)

Pichon believed the scapegoated member is the strongest member in the family, as this member has the capacity to manage the massive deposits of bad parts by the group members. The

scapegoat is a “spokesperson” or speaker for the family illness—the strongest member of the family presenting to treatment to work through the family illness that she carries (1971/2017c, pg. 63). Pichon’s formulation carries clinical implications for family, group, and individual work. For family and group work, the therapist, through interpretation, should aim to break the stereotype structure to allow the family to process anxiety as a group—a more flexible assignment and assumption of roles—rather than a rigid depositing of anxiety in a specific member. For individual treatment, patients who present to treatment should be viewed as the strongest member of the family whose unconscious or conscious aim is to work through the family illness—they are the speakers of the family pathology. These patient’s pathology is composed of fantasied reconstructions of the pathological group structure, as they carry the burden of being the depository for the group’s paranoid and depressive anxieties.

Chapter III

Social Psychoanalysis

ECRO, Latin America, Art & Madness

Pichon Rivi re named his entire theoretical body ECRO. A signifier for concepts such as v nculo, internal group, the third, the theory of the single illness, closed structures, the dialectic spiral, the spokesperson, operative groups, among others (Adamson, 2018). ECRO stands for Esquema Conceptual Referencial Operativo (ECRO). *Esquema* (schema) refers to a theoretical body serving to orient perception, thinking, feeling, and action (Hern ndez de Tubert, 2015). *Conceptual* (conceptual) refers to the interrelation of theoretical concepts, and *referencial* (referential) to the field or context the theory acts upon, making the ECRO unintelligible outside of its clinical context (Hern ndez de Tubert, 2015). *Operativo* (operative) refers to the action-based nature of the theory as constantly seeking to operate, to act, by modifying the field (Adamson, 2018). The operative nature of the theory, always happening in praxis (action), a concept Pichon borrowed from Marx, is what defines Pichon as a Latin American thinker, seeking to ensure theory is not relegated to museums, but always in the field, la calle (street), in groups, etc. (Adamson, 2018).

ECRO has been translated to CROS (conceptual referential, operative, schema) in the English language (Losso et al., 2017; Tubert-Oklander & Hern ndez de Tubert, 2004). However, I will use the original term, ECRO, as the term, not unlike v nculo, is widely recognized in the R o de la Plata region of Latin America. For Pichon, the concept of ECRO was of paramount importance as he considered failures in analytic work resulted partly due to the analyst's lack of a holistic theoretical body. Pichon writes:

“Generally speaking, we can say that many analysts work without having a clear theory of illness and its cure. Consequently, they gather things without a clear-cut frame of reference. They gather a patchwork of frameworks deriving from Freud, Klein, Sullivan, Rank, Adler without integrating them dynamically or historically.....We could say that many of the shortcomings of psychoanalytic work lie in the analysts’ lacking a coherent theory of psychoanalysis that works as a whole.” (1979/2017, pg. 110)

Aside from allowing for a coherent theoretical integration, Pichon’s concept of ECRO permitted theoretical rectification. Pichon considered his ECRO’s validity in the context it sought to operate—the field of the link (vínculo) in individuals, groups, families, and communities. If his ECRO could not operate effectively in the field, it needed to be modified (Hernández de Tubert, 2015). In this manner, Pichon’s ECRO approximated Kurt Lewin’s action research (Pichon Rivière et. al., 1971/2017d). ECRO, akin to Pichon’s views on mental health, is a theoretical corpus that should be an open system in a dialectic relationship with its clinical field, modifying and being modified in interaction (Hernández de Tubert, 2015). If a theory becomes a closed structure, it will become ineffective. Consequently, Pichon considered therapists should analyze their “fantasies about psychoanalysis at all times” to develop an “analytic mind” capable of analyzing the theories they use to operate (1979/2017, pg. 110).

Pichon’s ECRO was distributed throughout Latin America, making it one of the most important theoretical corpora in Latin American psychoanalysis (J. Pichon Rivière, 2014). For instance, Pichon’s theory is translated into Portuguese. It is widely studied in Brazil (San Pablo, Porto Alegre, Brasilia, and Bahia) at training institutes that carry Pichon’s name (J. Pichon Rivière, 2014). In Colombia, Pichon’s work is studied and applied. For example, his operative group technique was used to treat child soldiers who deserted the revolutionary army (FARC) [J. Pichon Rivière, 2014]. In San Salvador, his work can be found in universities teaching the liberation psychology of Ignacio Martín-Baró (J. Pichon Rivière, 2014). Moreover, Pichon’s work traveled

the borders of Latin America to France and Italy, where his translated works are studied (J. Pichon Rivière, 2014). In Spain, Pichon's theoretical corpus was brought by psychoanalysts who immigrated from Argentina and is studied alongside American interpersonal and relational theory as analysts in Spain consider Pichon's theory to belong to the broader relational movement (Ávila Espada, 2013).

In 1977, Pichon died of cancer fifteen days after his birthday. For his last birthday, students, colleagues, and cultural figures gathered to celebrate his work—a lively gathering with tango, celebratory speeches, and readings of Maldoror (Losso et al., 2017). Perhaps the most important work on his life was written shortly before his death by his student Vicente Zito Lema, an artist who engaged in a series of interviews with Pichon, most of which are transcribed in a classic book called *Conversaciones con Pichon Rivière Sobre el Arte y la Locura* (1974/2014) [Conversations about Art and Madness]. In Zito Lema's work, cited heavily throughout the present study, we get a glimpse of Pichon's thoughts before his death—an illuminating book unfortunately only available in the Spanish language, yet monumental in exploring Pichon's life and his social conception of the psyche (1974/2014).

The Rioplatense School of Social Psychoanalysis

Pichon's work resonates throughout the Latin American region, but perhaps, it is Pichon's influence in his native Argentina that is most impressive. Pichon's ECRO is taught in many Argentine universities operating today, including a few training institutes focused exclusively on teaching his theory (Klappenbach, 2014). Pichon's thinking influenced Argentina's first and second generation of psychoanalysts, many of whom became prominent internationally and include well-known analysts such as Willy and Madeleine Baranger, Heinrich Racker, Jose Bleger, David Liberman, Fernando Ulloa, Angel Fiasche, Horacio Ethchegoyen, among others

(Etchegoyen, 2014). These analysts developed ideas proposed by Pichon in their unique manner (Etchegoyen, 2014). For example, Etchegoyen's writings on technique and object relations were inspired by Pichon's teachings, Pichon's emphasis on dialectics is present in the work of Bleger and the Barangers ; Racker took up the theory of a single illness, and the concept of communication was developed by Liberman (Etchegoyen, 2014).

Despite being a well-respected clinician, theoretician, and teacher, Pichon was not dogmatic. His ideas were an open spiral, inciting students to take the ideas in their unique path. For this, he is considered a "*true master*," one who inspires and awakes learning (Ungar, 2017, pg. xxiii, my emphasis). Etchegoyen, one of Pichon's students and the first Argentine to serve as IPA president, described him the following way:

"Enrique, like I said before and it is true, was a sower, he had ideas that he planted and let them grow, sometimes in himself and sometimes in us. My ideas on psychoanalytic technique could have been written by Enrique, it would had been best if he wrote them, but I wrote them. The theory of communication was written by David Liberman, but it belongs to Pichon Rivière... The ideas of Enrique grew in all of us." (2014, pg. 75-76/personal translation for present study)

The theoretical developments of Pichon and the prominent analysts influenced by his work have been referenced in the Spanish-speaking literature as the psychosocial perspective in Argentine psychoanalysis (Leone, 2003). An astute distinction given the diversity of other dominant perspectives in Argentine psychoanalysis, such as the Kleinian and Lacanian traditions (Plotkin, 2001). I will refer to this strand of Argentine psychoanalysis as the Rioplatense School of Social Psychoanalysis. I use the term school broadly to denote an open and diverse range of analysts who incorporated Pichon's teachings in psychoanalytic theorizing and clinical work.

Rioplatense refers to el Río de la Plata (the river of silver), a river that serves as the in-between space of Argentina and Uruguay—a very important inclusion given the Barangers,

influential students of Pichon, trained with Pichon in Argentina, yet lived in Uruguay. Uruguay also being important as the home of Lautréamont (Pieczanski, 2015). Social, in reference to Pichon's ECRO, a theory he proposes, embarks on a journey from psychoanalysis to social psychology (Quiroga, 1986). Pichon's use of social psychology should not be confused with the contemporary positivistic strands of social psychology. It is meant to refer to a psychology that is social in its conception of subjectivity as emerging from the social context; that is, the vínculos, ecological context, and groups that are internalized and produce the conscious and unconscious dimension of the mind; the internalized society that is of concern in psychoanalytic treatment—a psychoanalysis of the social within.

Field Theory and The Barangers

Within the second generation of Rioplatense psychoanalysts, Willy and Madeleine Baranger stand out as highly innovative analysts who influenced the broader international psychoanalytic community for their innovative papers on the psychoanalytic field, such as *the analytic situation as a dynamic field* (1961-1962/2008), and their paper on *process and non-process* (1983) published alongside colleague Jorge Mom, also a student of Pichon (Maldonado, 2015b). Willy and Madeleine, known colloquially as the “the Barangers” (*los Baranger*) to denote the unity of subjectivities present in their theory, are now recognized as the first generation of field theorists by the international psychoanalytic community (Katz, 2017). Moreover, the Barangers field model has influenced Ferro and Civitarese's contemporary post-Bionian field theory—the so-called second wave of field theory (Ferro & Civitarese, 2015; Katz, 2017).

What is field theory? As Katz (2017) explains, field theory started to develop in a period of change between the world wars where certainty and absolute truth were examined. Models of Gestalt and interrelatedness questioned models of positivistic and absolutist thinking. In this

climate of ambiguity, Kurt Lewin created the concept of the field to highlight the interdependence of individual and context (Katz, 2017). Kurt Lewin's creation was assimilated by analysts who sought to apply the concept of the field in psychoanalysis (Katz, 2017). Two models developed concurrently without much influence of each other, the South American model by the Barangers and the North American model by the interpersonal theorists (Katz, 2017). Later models developed, known as the second wave, tracing their lineage to one of the original models. The post-Bionian model in Italy traces its lineage to the Barangers' model, and the interpersonal-relational model traces its lineage to interpersonal psychoanalysis (Katz, 2017). In North America, other models developed in the climate of the interpersonal model but through different modalities, such as the extension of Kohut by the intersubjective perspective of Stolorow and Atwood (Katz, 2017). Differences in the models are topics of contemporary discourse, as the climate of relatedness, intersubjectivity, and co-construction permeates the field (Katz, 2017; Stern, 2015).

While the Barangers developed the first model of the analytic field, the application of Lewin's ideas to psychoanalysis originates in Pichon Rivière. As I have demonstrated in the section on transference and countertransference, Pichon was an enthusiastic proponent of applying Lewin's ideas and Gestalt theory to the analytic situation. Madeleine and Willy Baranger, originally from France, settled in Buenos Aires after World War II (Maldonado, 2015a). Willy was a professor of philosophy, and Madeleine was trained in classics (Fiorini, 2009). Both completed their psychoanalytic training with the original analysts who founded the APA, including Pichon, their teacher, and the training analyst of Willy Baranger (Baranger, 1979). Therefore, the Barangers are considered part of the second generation of Rioplatense analysts who trace their theoretical lineage to Pichon. Willy Baranger himself noted this:

“It is difficult— but worth while and even necessary— for any human being to know where he is standing in relation to who his father was—whether it is paternity strictly speaking, in a familial sense, or symbolic paternity. I was linked to Enrique Pichon-Rivière by an analyst-analysand and teacher-disciple relation and later by a close friendship with a very talented and admired older friend.” (1979/2009, pg. 45)

“In Buenos Aires, around Pichon Rivière, there was an important school of thought as well as other equally active and creative trends. Many of us—Jorge Mom, David Liberman, José Bleger, Edgardo Rolla (to quote just a few does not mean forgetting the others)—were in permanent interaction with him. In such a fervent atmosphere, each of us at times contributed his thoughts, and these would contain a remnant of an idea Pichon Rivière had planted. It seems impossible to tell— and it does not really matter— who produced or who received those ideas, the fact is that Pichon Rivière gave each of us much more than he received from us.” (1979/2009, pg. 45)

As noted by Willy Baranger, his concepts resulted from the fertility of ideas within the APA at the time. At the urge of Pichon Riviere, the Barangers moved from Buenos Aires to Montevideo, Uruguay, to train analysts as the political tensions between Argentina and Uruguay prevented back and forth travel between the countries, thereby preventing Uruguayan candidates from traveling to Argentina to receive training analysis (Pieczanski, 2015). Eventually, as political tensions decreased, the Barangers moved back to Buenos Aires and became regular members of the APA. The Barangers continued to develop the intersubjective field theoretical model of psychoanalysis known as the bipersonal field (Fiorini, 2009). A model that marked the places they lived, Buenos Aires and Montevideo, thereby becoming a staple of the Rioplatense tradition and later influential in Latin America and certain parts of Europe (Pieczanski, 2015).

Building on the assertion by Willy Baranger (1979) of his work containing “remnants” of “seeds” planted by Pichon, the present section will aim to connect Pichon’s work with the work of the Barangers to understand how Pichon’s theorization was used by his students to contribute to notions of intersubjectivity and co-construction—a perspective that dominates contemporary discourse in psychoanalysis. However, the present section is not a deep analysis of the work of the Barangers, as such is beyond the scope of the present work.

A final note on the Barangers & Pichons' relationship, the Barangers disagreed with Pichon's more social theorizing, as innovations by the Barangers did not result in them departing from the APA and its Kleinian framework. As an outsider reading the history, it appears to me the Barangers did not wish to be associated with Pichon's social psychoanalysis and would likely disagree with my inclusion of their thinking as belonging to a school of social psychoanalysis. Willy Baranger stated that he felt Pichon abandoned psychoanalysis in his interest for the social psyche, as he noted Pichon's movement "*would lead him later on to social psychology and to leave us*" (Baranger, 1979, pg. 45, my emphasis). I placed the Baranger couple within the school of social psychoanalysis to denote their link (vínculo) with Pichon and for purposes of tracing the development of Pichon's concepts. However, this must not be confused with an agreement between Pichon and the Barangers on Pichon's emphasis on the social nature of the psyche.

It is also important to mention the Barangers' notion of the field incorporates multiple perspectives other than Pichon's teachings, such as Kurt Lewin's contributions, Merleau-Ponty's reformulation of Gestalt theory, Bion's group work, the Lacanian notion of divided subject, and contributions on countertransference by the Rioplatense and British school such as Alvarez de Toledo, Heimann, among others (Baranger & Baranger, 1961-1962/2008; Baranger, 2005; Kancyper, 2005). As stated previously, my exploration of the Baranger will be limited to their use of some of Pichon's concepts such as the Gestalt, internal group, the third, stereotype, and spiral process.

The Dynamic Field, Bastion, and The Second Look

The Barangers start their famous paper by stating the analytic situation should not be considered a situation of a person with a neutral observer, rather a two-person field in which each party is “unavoidably connected and complementary”; therefore, “one member of the couple cannot be understood without the other”; hence the psychotherapeutic operation is always “bi-personal” (1962/2008, pg. 796). The Barangers use this assertion to pledge their allegiance to countertransference as a tool to understand the patient, citing Heimann as their justification. The Barangers then draw upon Pichon’s legacy to state the field is only bipersonal at the level of ordinary perception yet contains a third party or parties that are “physically absent and experientially present” (1962/2008, pg. 798). The Barangers state:

“This basic functional configuration of the analytic situation can also be called the bi-personal psychotherapeutic relationship. But it is only bi-personal at the level of ordinary perceptual description: in the room where the sessions take place, there are two flesh and blood persons. However, other persons always intervene in the patient’s narrative and phantasy, or even break into the room in the form of a hallucination.”... In ordinary situations, the bi-personal therapeutic structuring remains as a background, present but not perceived, on which the constantly changing tri- and multi-personal structures are made and unmade. Experience shows a clear pre-eminence, within these structures that stand out against the background of the therapeutic situation, of the tri-personal or triangular structure (Pichon Riviere, 1956–58).” (1962/2008, pg. 798)

In the above passage, we can note the Barangers’ use of Pichon’s triangular situation. Yet, a key feature of the Barangers is their extension of Pichon’s concept by elaborating the tripersonal situation as multi-personal because of the various aspects of the patient’s split-off unconscious that take over the field (1961-1962/2008). The Barangers state:

“The bi-personal therapeutic situation, therefore, with the basic organization of the field, disappears under the cover of tri- and multi-personal situations, of multiple splitting’s in perpetual motion.” (1961-1962/2008, pg. 798)

The multipersonal aspect of the Barangers is noted by Bernardi & De León De Bernardi (2012) as referring to Pichon's concept of the internal group taking over the field of the analytic relationship. However, the Barangers did not cite Pichon's concept in their conceptualization. I agree with Bernardi & De León De Bernardi, as Pichon's development of the concept of the internal group naturally lends itself to conceptualizing a multi-personal field. Yet, the Barangerian conceptualization adds to Pichon's concept, as Pichon theorizes the concept of the internal group but does not sufficiently develop how the internal group appears in the clinical context. Additionally, in my opinion, the Barangers' conceptualization contains remnants of some of Pichon's other concepts. For instance, Pichon speaks of an irrational unconscious splitting of roles, an idea similar to how the Barangers used the third party to argue for further splits that lead to a multi-person field.

Another aspect of the Barangers that draws on Pichon's theoretical corpus is their use of Gestalt. They state the field is more than the sum of its parts, thereby giving the analytic situation an intersubjective dimension (1961-1962/2008). The Barangers' 1961-1962 version of the paper cites Kurt Lewin in their use of Gestalt, while the 1969 version and the translated version cite Merleau-Ponty when referring to notions of Gestalt (Baranger & Baranger, 2008). Given Pichon's integration of Kurt Lewin and Gestalt theory, likely the Barangers' use of the concept comes from Pichon.

Perhaps the most important concept the Barangers develop in their extension of Pichon's teachings is their concept of bastion, a concept they cite in their original article in the analytic field but develop further in their paper with Mom (Baranger & Baranger, 1961-1962/2008; Baranger et al., 1983). Bastion is a translation of the Barangers' use of the Spanish word *Baluarte*—a word that refers to a fortress. The Barangers used the term to refer to aspects of the person that are

incredibly defended as if stuck in a fortress, impervious to change by interpretation, as these aspects, like an idealized object, give the person their sense of omnipotence—if broken, it would leave the person feeling utterly helplessness (Baranger & Baranger, 1961-1962/2008). The bastion is an immobilizing structure that is pathological and halts the patient's progress (Baranger et al., 1983). The Baranger and Mom state:

“Within the field exists an immobilized structure which is slowing down or paralyzing the process. We have named this structure the bastion. ” (1983, pg. 2)

In my opinion, the description of the bastion provided by the Barangers is similar to Pichon's concept of the stereotyped structure; thus, might be an extension of Pichon's concept. If the bastion indeed originates in Pichon's stereotyped structure, the Barangers significantly extended Pichon's concept in their description of the co-construction of the bastion in the analytic session. The Barangers and Mom state:

“This structure never appears directly in the consciousness of either participant, showing up only through indirect effects: it arises, in unconsciousness and in silence, out of a complicity between the two protagonists to protect an attachment which must not be uncovered. This leads to a partial crystallization of the field, to a neo-formation set up around a shared fantasy assembly which implicates important areas of the personal history of both participants and attributes a stereotyped imaginary role to each. Sometimes the bastion remains as a static foreign object while the process apparently goes forward. In other situations, it completely invades the field and removes all functional capacity from the process, transforming the entire field into a pathological field.” (1983, pg. 2)

The illuminating description of the bastion, in my opinion, does not leave doubt the concept traces its lineage to the stereotyped formation described by Pichon. The words "crystallization," "stereotyped," and "transforming the pathological field" clearly relate to Pichon's description of the stereotyped pathological structure. However, it is not the Barangers' use of the stereotyped structure that is most innovative; it is the assertion that the bastion forms a "neo-formation" that

implicates the history of "both participants" in which both attributes a stereotyped imaginary role to each other. This description is perplexing, as it asserts the analyst's subjectivity is implicated in the pathology of the patient, thereby establishing an inter-subjectivity where pathology is co-constructed. The bastion is, therefore, a further development of Pichon's concept of the stereotyped structure and his notions of interrelatedness.

The Barangers' bastion also appears similar to other assertions made previously by Pichon, including Pichon's theorization that for good communication to establish between patient and analyst, "each must take on the role the other assigns him" (1979/2017, pg.103). However, the Barangers' contribution again extends Pichon's theorization by providing a more precise description of the implication of the analyst's unconscious in the co-creation of the bastion. Moreover, by implying a neo-formation, the Barangers suggest the bastion is a new structure greater than the sum of its part; hence, it is like Pichon's triangular situation. If we look back at some of Pichon's statements on his concept of the third party and the triangular situation, we can observe Pichon's theorization of the third party, like the bastion, plays the role of the obstacle. Pichon stated, "*the third transforms the dialectic spiral of learning about reality into a closed circle or stereotype that functions as a pathogenic structure.*" (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg.4, my emphasis).

The Barangerian concept of the bastion, however, is a significant extension of Pichon's formulation; not only is it a more explicit and better-formulated description, but it also adds an intersubjective co-constructed dimension. Moreover, the Barangers provide examples of the bastion (See examples B and C below), allowing for a clearer picture of the co-constructed nature of the patient's pathology, something lacking in Pichon's writings notoriously devoid of clinical examples.

“B. An analysand, veteran of a number of analytic treatments. Apparently, each session bears the fruit of some 'discovery'; in reality, nothing is happening. The analyst is delighted by the subtlety of the analysand's descriptions of his internal states, enjoying his own Talmudism. Until he realizes that, while they are toying with their disquisitions, the analysand is monthly placing the analyst's fees at interest, speculating with his delay in paying. The analysis of this bastion reveals a shared fantasy set-up: the analysand's old, surreptitious vengeance on his stingy father and the analyst's guilt-ridden compulsion to set himself up as the cheated father.” (Baranger et. al., 1983, pg. 2)

“C. Example of a bastion which has invaded the field. A seriously psychopathic patient. The analyst is terrified, fearing the analysand's physical, homicidal aggression without being able either to suspend or to carry the treatment forward. The nodular fantasy of this bastion is the patient's as torturer in a concentration camp, and the analyst's as tortured, powerless victim. With the conscious formulation of this maneuver, the analyst's terror disappears. The two individual histories converge in the creation of this pathological field.” (Baranger et. al., 1983, pg. 2)

The Barangers also provide clinical recommendations to manage the bastion; the Barangers' famous formulation of *la segunda mirada* (the second look) advises the analyst to give the treatment *a second look* after their countertransference indicates the field has immobilized (Baranger et al., 1983). The Barangers suggest each analyst must develop a personalized countertransference dictionary to identify and start the clinical process of working with the immobilization of the field (Baranger et al., 1983). The Barangerian development of *la segunda mirada* also contains remnants of Pichon's advocacy for using countertransference in the analytic process. Moreover, in their formulation of the countertransference dictionary, the Barangers echo Pichon's statement that one cannot interpret another person without countertransference. The countertransference dictionary allows the bastion to be identified first, thereby allowing the analytic treatment to progress.

For the analytic treatment to progress, the Barangers state the analyst must break the bastion to redistribute to the analyst and analysand the parts that configure the bastion; thus, allowing the treatment to move forward:

“The rupture of the bastion means redistributing those aspects of both participants involved in the structuring of this bastion, but this redistribution takes place in a different manner in each of them:

conscious and silent recuperation in the analyst's case; conscious and expressed in the analysand's." (Baranger et. al., 1983, pg. 9).

The breaking of the bastion is another concept that parallels Pichon's notion of breaking the closed structure to reengage the analysand in a dialectic spiral process. However, the Barangerian notion innovates on Pichon's formulation by adding an intersubjective dimension. The Barangers believed that in every treatment, the patient's bastion must be renounced for treatment to succeed (Baranger & Baranger, 1961-1962/2008). In this assertion, the Barangers implied that the analyst's involvement in the co-creation of the patient's pathology was not a mistake but a necessary feature of cure, as the bastion had to be co-created before it could be identified and broken in the interpretive process. Therefore, by design, the analyst participated in co-creating the analysand's pathology for treatment to progress—a formulation that went beyond Pichon's notions of co-construction.

Finally, the Barangers borrowed from Pichon's recommendation of interpreting in a spiral process to break the bastion, allowing the analysand to regain a fluid temporality and reengage in the open dialectic process. They stated:

"The fertile moments of interpretation and 'insight' punctuate the analytic process, described by Pichon Riviere (1958) as a 'spiral process', an image which expresses the temporal dialectics of the process. 'Here, now, with me' is often said to which Pichon Riviere adds 'Just as there, before, with others' and 'As in the future, elsewhere and in a different way'. It is a spiral, each of whose turnings takes up the last turning from a different perspective, and which has no absolute beginning or given end. The superimposition of the spiral's curves illustrates this mixture of repetition and non-repetition which may be observed in the characteristic events in a person's fate, this combined movement of deepening into the past and constructing the future which characterizes the analytic process." (Baranger et. al., 1983, pg. 9)

In summary, the Barangers employed various concepts from Pichon's teachings to formulate a bicorporal and multipersonal field in which the analysand's pathological structure is

co-constructed in interaction with the analyst and by the participation of the analyst's unconscious. The pathological structure must be interpreted in a spiral process for the analysand to progress in treatment. As shown, some of Pichon's theoretical concepts relate to the Barangerian theory, including the notion of Gestalt, internal group, the third, the stereotyped structure, and the spiral process. The Barangers borrowed from their Pichonian legacy yet developed their original formulations, such as the bastion and the multi-person field, thereby extending Pichon's theoretical notions of co-construction. Moreover, their formulation of the countertransference dictionary and the second look added to Pichon's advocacy for countertransference.

It must also be noted the Barangers did not use Pichon's concept of vínculo likely due to the differences in the conception of the drives and object relations present between Pichon and the Barangers. Nonetheless, this section clearly shows how Pichon's students, the so-called second generation, borrowed from his teachings to innovate and impact the broader psychoanalytic community.

Chapter IV

Theoretical Linking

Vínculo & Interpersonal-Relational Psychoanalysis

In their groundbreaking book, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*, Greenberg and Mitchell (1983) provide a comparative perspective on psychoanalytic theories by grouping theories into distinct models with varied metaphysical commitments. The authors argued psychoanalytic theories could be grouped into two models, a “drive/structural model” and the “relational/structural model” (pg., 19), both encompassing various psychoanalytic schools. The relational/structural model groups psychoanalytic schools emphasizing relationships, and the drive/structural model encompasses schools with an emphasis on drives.

According to the authors, the various schools operate under different metaphysical commitments regarding what is primary and derivative such as different conceptions of subjectivity, motivation, development and structure of behavior, relationship, and personality. Each pledging allegiance to either a drive/structural model or a relational/structural model. Although not the intention of the work, the book by Greenberg and Mitchell was influential in establishing the relational turn in psychoanalysis that is prevalent in the United States today (Greenberg, 2010).

Pichon’s pioneering psychoanalytic theory of vínculo, developed in the 50s’, 60s’, and 70s’, was not included in the book by Greenberg and Mitchell as a pioneer theory in the relational/structural theories of psychoanalysis. The omission is understandable because translations of Pichon’s work were only recently made available in 2017 (Losso et al., 2017). The unfortunate consequence is a lack of knowledge about the socio-relational perspective in Latin

American psychoanalysis started by Pichon's ECRO and the richness its theory provides to our understanding of relationality and group subjectivity. The present section will aim to rectify the omission by linking Pichon's work to interpersonal and relational theorists, who, like Pichon, moved away from the notion of drives to relationship (*vínculo*). The present section is not one of divergence but of convergence, as my purpose is to link.

The Interpersonalists

As Greenberg and Mitchell state (1983), the interpersonal perspective is not a unified theory; instead, it is a perspective of theories and clinical work emphasizing relationships. In the interpersonal school, the work of Sullivan is prominent as one of the first alternative models to the drive/structural model. Sullivan was an influential psychiatrist whose interpersonal approach culminated in the publication of highly acclaimed books in the 1950s, especially the *Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry* (1953) and the *Psychiatric Interview* (1954). Sullivan's work stressed the interdependency of the individual with the interpersonal context, and while not a psychoanalyst, Sullivan was a pioneer in developing the interpersonal perspective in psychoanalysis.

Sullivan did not believe human beings are motivated by drives, rather by needs for satisfaction and security, both operating in the interpersonal field between self and others and initially satisfied in the mother-infant relationship (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). For Sullivan, the self develops in relationship to others by the reactions of others to the self—akin to a mirror, the self is composed of reflected appraisals (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). In treatment, Sullivan stressed the interdependency of the person with the analytic field and described the analyst as participant-observer (Sullivan, 1953).

In Sullivan's formulation, we can observe many similarities with Pichon, who also emphasizes the importance of need as opposed to drive, and in his concept of the internal group, suggests the self, at least in part, emerges from the perceptions of the group. Moreover, Pichon, like Sullivan, integrates the concept of participant observation in the analytic situation from sociological research (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). The similarities between Pichon and Sullivan have recently been explored by Greenberg (2017), who noted both Sullivan and Pichon were influenced by G.H. Mead. Moreover, Sullivan and Pichon also shared a mutual interest in Kurt Lewin's ideas, as Lewin was a friend of Sullivan and heavily reference by Pichon (Katz, 2017).

Pichon was aware of Sullivan's work as he mentions Sullivan in the transcribed lectures on vínculo (Pichon Rivière, 1979/2017). Pichon also references Sullivan's work along with Fromm-Reichmann in a paper on transference with psychotic patients (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017d). However, Pichon never built ties with Sullivan, and it is unclear if he integrated Sullivan's ideas or was simply reading theorists outside of psychoanalysis who also influenced Sullivan (Lewin & G.H. Mead). Stern (2015), in a personal conversation with an analyst familiar with the Río de la Plata community, stated many analysts in the Río de la Plata community, including Pichon, were aware of Sullivan's work but did not integrate Sullivan because they felt he was outside the realm of psychoanalysis (pg., 81).

It is puzzling that analysts in the Río de la Plata community rejected Sullivan because they felt he was not "psychoanalytic enough" as many analysts in this generation integrated disciplines outside psychoanalysis in their work, such as the Barangers' inclusion of Gestalt theory, for example. Perhaps, Sullivan's emphasis on the interpersonal as opposed to the intrapsychic and his deemphasis of the drives was incongruent with the Rioplatense analysts of the time, influenced by the Kleinian tradition. However, if the latter is indeed the case, it would be unclear why Pichon

did not include Sullivan as Pichon himself questioned the drives and preferred to emphasize needs. Perhaps this might be due to different times in the evolution of Pichon's thinking. Pichon mentions Sullivan in his famous 1956/57 lectures on the theory of vínculo. At the time, Pichon was still a member of the APA and likely had not taken the radical position of deemphasizing the drives for needs. It was in 1964 that Pichon was expelled from the APA (Fabris, 2014), and not until 1971 that he published his writings positioning his movement as a going from psychoanalysis to social psychology.

Nevertheless, whether Pichon did or did not integrate Sullivan does not take anything away from Pichon, who took Lewin's and Mead's ideas in his unique direction, integrating other interdisciplinary perspectives such as genetic structuralism, dialectic philosophy, and communication theory. More critical is the commonality of Pichon and Sullivan, as both theorized at similar points in time, at least one (Pichon) knowing of the other, and both taking psychoanalytic theory in similar directions towards the primacy of relationships and the deconstruction of analytic neutrality.

Another thinker in the interpersonal era bearing semblances to Pichon is Eric Fromm. For Fromm, fear of loss of love and social isolation led individuals to adapt to the demands of the power structures in their socio-cultural and historical context (Layton, 2020). For Fromm, the unconscious was composed of parts of the individual that are repressed due to the power structures of their social context and historical period (Layton, 2020). For example, the repressed sexual drives in the Victorian society that surrounded Freud. Character types emerge in different historical contexts due to the social unconscious of the historical time, for instance, the well-known marketing personality of the capitalist system (Layton, 2020).

Fromm's thinking bears semblance to Pichon, as Pichon also theorized the psyche as composed of interactions established in a socio-cultural context. For Pichon, the unconscious is a social unconscious in a similar fashion to the one described by Fromm. Pichon's himself claimed individuals carry society inside (Zito Lema, 1976/2014). Although it is unknown if Pichon was aware of Fromm, Fromm and Pichon's commonality in theorizing likely stem from their attempts to integrate aspects of Marx into psychoanalysis, Marx being a thinker who was focused on the social sphere. Fromm (1955) is explicit in his use of Marx; Pichon is not as explicit in his writings, but Pichon's students noted that he had Marx in mind in his psychoanalytic theorizing (Adamson, 2018).

Another resemblance between the interpersonal theorists and Pichon is their outsider status within the psychoanalytic establishment of their time. Sullivan and Fromm and the rest of the interpersonalists were ostracized by the dominant psychoanalytic community of the time and disparagingly called culturalists and social theorists (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). Moreover, at least Sullivan embraced this distinction; as noted by Stern (2015), Sullivan did not wish to be considered a psychoanalyst and did not care about the establishment's exclusion. Similarly, Pichon, in a break with the Kleinian tradition of the APA, named his school of psychoanalysis 'social psychology'; a term still used to this day by many of his followers. He was also known by some as a contrarian and anarchist and likely embraced some aspect of being outside the establishment (APdeBA et al., 2007). In summary, both Pichon and the interpersonalists bear much resemblance, including a focus on relationships, the high value they place on the socio-cultural environment in the formation of the psyche, their ostracization by the psychoanalytic establishment of the time, and their embracement of the outsider status.

The Relational Turn

As pointed out by Mitchell and Aron (1999), the relational turn in American psychoanalysis was influenced by Greenberg and Mitchell's (1983) book categorizing analytic schools into a relational/structural model defined against a drive/structural model. Greenberg and Mitchell's connection of the interpersonal, object-relational, and self-psychological approaches into a relational model expanded by influencing the identification of generations of thinkers with a relational/structural model of psychoanalysis, leading to the incorporation of advances in intersubjectivity theory from self-psychology, developments in psychoanalytic hermeneutics, gender theory, and social constructivist perspectives. The thinkers subscribing to the relational/structural model found an institutional home in Division 39 of the American Psychological Association and founded a track within the New York University Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis as well as a journal, *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, thereby solidifying the emergence of a new relational school of psychoanalysis by the mid-1990s. Within this diverse body of theories, the emphasis on relationships seen in the interpersonal tradition continued along with an added focus on the intrapsychic, notions of co-construction, intersubjectivity, and technical innovations on countertransference utility.

As can be observed from history, the relational school is a broad umbrella of different perspectives. Similarities between Pichon and relational analysts have been noted in the literature, although comparisons are not extensive (Ávila Espada, 2013; Scharf, 2017; Tubert-Oklander, 2015). I will aim to link Pichon and the relational analysts by noting several similarities. First, like the relational thinkers, Pichon moved away from the centrality of the drives by integrating interdisciplinary thinkers from the humanities and social sciences. Second, like the American relational school, Pichon also bridges interpersonal field theories and object relations by focusing

on internalized interactions. Third, both Pichon and the relational school emphasize intersubjectivity. Lastly, Pichon, like the American relational school, advocates for the utility of countertransference in clinical work. To sustain my argument, I will link Pichon to relational thinkers who resemble some of his theoretical developments.

A relational theorist with similar ideas to Pichon is Stephen Mitchell and his conception of the social nature of the drives. Mitchell defines the relational model as a “social theory of the mind” and acknowledges the shared conceptions with the interpersonalists and object-relation theorists (1988, pg. 17). Although Mitchell does not acknowledge Pichon because he is unaware of him, both share the word social when describing the psyche. Mitchell explains his views by describing modern developments in the field of linguistics, highlighting how modern linguists initially viewed language as expressing experience, and with the advances in literary theory, including the philosophy of Saussure and Wittgenstein, now realize knowledge is “produced” by language (1988, pg. 18). Mitchell then applies this insight to psychoanalysis by expressing Freud’s conception of a mind constituted by prior contents (i.e., drives) shares the same mistake. Mitchell, arguing for a relational point of view of the mind, challenges the innate conception of the drives by describing the drives as products of the interactive participation in the cultural, linguistic matrix within which the subject lives (1988, pg. 19). Mitchell states:

“Sexuality and aggression are understood not as preformed instincts with inherent meanings, which impinge upon the mind, but as powerful responses, mediated physiologically, generated within a biologically mandated relational field and therefore deriving their meaning from that deeper relational matrix.” (1988, pg. 19)

Let us now examine Pichon’s proposition on the drives:

“Splitting occurs at birth, and every gratifying link leads the baby to view the object as good. This is what Freud (*incorrectly*, in my opinion) calls the *life instinct* (*Eros*). The other part of the

primary link and its object, in turn, become a bad object based on frustrating experiences—a persecutory link that Freud once again considers instinctual. In this case it is Thanatos, the death, aggressiveness, or destructiveness instinct.” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 10, my emphasis)

“In my view, the life and death instincts are *already experiences* in the form of behavior that include a *social component* through gratifying or frustrating moments. That is how children’s incorporation into the social world takes place.” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a pg. 10, my emphasis)

As demonstrated in the text above, Pichon, like Mitchell, is also arguing the drives are secondary to social experiences, therefore, derive from the relationship with another and the socio-cultural context. Ana Quiroga, one of Pichon’s closest disciples, provides more insight into Pichon’s thinking in her well-known but not translated text, *Enfoques y Perspectivas en Psicología Social* (1986) [Perspectives in Social Psychology]. Quiroga details Pichon viewed Freud’s theorizing as being stuck in a conception of drive innatism, which Pichon considered was an obstacle to understand social subjectivity; implicated in Pichon’s belief was also the Kleinian school and their belief in unconscious phantasy as correlates of the drives, leading to conceptions of experience and internal objects as being structured by a priori death and sexual drives (1986, pg. 29). Quiroga details Pichon’s thinking:

“Pichon- Rivière attempts to demonstrate in his concept of vínculo, that opposes the concept of drive, that an innatism of hostility or love does not exist. Because they emerge in a relationship with an other.” (1986, pg. 29/personal translation for present study)

“In his last years Pichon rewords the concept of vínculo, an elaborates its motivation, the interplay need/satisfaction that operates as internal cause for development. In the task of revising his formulations to concepts of need and vínculo, he advances a dialectic conception of subjectivity. It is from this conception that E. Pichon- Rivière develops a social psychology and posits a methodology to approach the subject and its behaviors in interactional systems, relationship matrixes, and groups in which the subject emerges and constitutes itself.” (Quiroga, 1986, pg. 30/personal translation for present study)

As is clearly shown in the text above, both Pichon and Mitchell pose criticisms to the primacy of the drives as seen in traditional psychoanalytic theory by integrating the humanities and social sciences.

Another similarity between Pichon and the relational theorists lies in their mutual focus on internalized interactions of real relationships as opposed to phantasy. Aron (1991), a well-known relational analyst, argues analysts should consider the work of Bowlby's internal working models (1988), who posits that internalized representations of real outside relationships persists unconsciously in psychopathology and elicit responses in others that perpetuate the maintenance of pathological internal representations. Aron (1991) argues the analyst must help the patient understand how the internal models shape the transference relationship, thereby allowing the analysand to experience the analyst as both old and new. Aron argues pathology will improve when the working models are not "closed" and can be reworked (pg. 105). Aron (1991) cites Piaget as a theorist who influenced his conception of reworking the internal models via Piaget's concepts of adaptation, accommodation, and assimilation.

In Aron's emphasis of the analyst working to change closed pathological working models that contain internal representations of real interactions, he parallels sentiments expressed in Pichon's work at an earlier point in history. In his definition of *vínculo*, Pichon advocates for a move away from the Kleinian focus on phantasy to a focus on internalized interactions between the subject and the object. Moreover, Pichon also refers to pathology as a closed structure akin to Aron's use of the term. Another commonality is Aron's clinical recommendation of allowing the patient to experience the analyst as an old and new object. In my opinion, Pichon's spiral process of the here-and-now with me, the then and there with others, and the future and somewhere else is a way to experience the analyst from different time perspectives of old and new, therefore allowing

the analysand to move away from the stereotyped or closed structure. Moreover, in Aron's use of Piagetian concepts, he also parallels Pichon, who used concepts from genetic structuralism to define his view of health as the subject transforming the environment to fit its needs and thereby transform itself. Genetic structuralism blends Marx, structuralism, and Piagetian concepts (Mayrl, 1978).

Another similarity between the relational school and Pichon is their focus on intersubjectivity. The word intersubjective was introduced to the relational school by Atwood, G., & Stolorow, R. (1984) and has expanded to a wide range of thinkers. One thinker I believe has commonality with Pichon is Jessica Benjamin. In her paper *Outline of Intersubjectivity* (1990), Benjamin takes on the topic of balancing the tension between intrasubjectivity and intersubjectivity. Benjamin argues psychoanalysts often focus exclusively on one side of the argument; thus, must learn to think dialectically. Benjamin introduced Hegel to allow for nuance between both realms. Benjamin states:

“Hegel's formulation of the problem of recognition in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807/1952). In his discussion of the conflict between “the independence and dependence of self-consciousness” Hegel showed how the self's wish for absolute independence conflicts with the self's need for recognition. In trying to establish itself as an independent entity, the self must yet recognize the other as a subject like itself in order to be recognized by it.” (1990, pg. 39)

“It is destruction—negation in Hegel's sense—which enables the subject to go beyond relating to the object through identification, projection, and other intrapsychic processes having to do with the subjectively conceived object. It enables the transition from relating (intrapsychic) to using the object, carrying on a relationship with an other who is objectively perceived as existing outside the self an entity in his or her own right.” (1990, pg. 40-41)

If we recall Pichon's initial call for dialectic philosophy, he stated:

“The history of psychiatry has been marked at different times by researchers' speculations concerning the possibility of a kinship among all mental illnesses based on a universal core. Yet, these speculations, plagued by an organicist conception of the origin of illnesses exclude from

mental pathology the dialectic dimension, where quantity becomes quality through successive leaps.” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 3)

Pichon’s use of the dialectic is evident throughout his work. Pichon’s conception of the tension between need—satisfaction and then vínculo (synthesis), and later in the individual’s dialectic relation towards the external society are a few examples of Pichon’s use of dialectic philosophy to conceptualize the tension between intra—inter subjectivity. Moreover, Pichon’s use of the dialectic is also present in his conception of the interpretative process in the existing—interpretation—emergent, and throughout his conceptions of mental health, conceptualizing the individual in a dialectic relationship to society. Pichon himself acknowledges the importance of the dialectic in his conversations with Zito Lema:

“Social psychology has as an object of study the development and transformation of a *dialectic relationship* between formation or social structure and the unconscious fantasy of the subject, based on needs. Said the other way, the relationship between social structure and the internal world, is conceptualized based on the notion of vínculo.” (Zito Lema, 1976/2014, pg. 107, my emphasis/ personal translation for present study)

Much could be said about Pichon and Benjamin's differences; however, the commonality would be in using dialectic philosophy to think about the tension in psychoanalysis between the intrapsychic and interpsychic. The final similarity between Pichon and the relational school is shared conceptions on the utility of countertransference. This is a key distinction of the relational school as opposed to the interpersonal perspective because the interpersonal theorists were not enthusiasts of using countertransference. Sullivan, for instance, did not wish to enmesh himself in the transference-countertransference of the patient, seeing himself more as providing expertise in interpersonal relationships (Hirsch, 2015; Mitchell, 1995). While later interpersonal analysts in the 70s’ revised Sullivan’s views, it was not until the relational turn that the utility of countertransference became a staple of clinical work (Stern, 2015). For example, the seminal paper

by Davies and Frawley (1992) arguing for the necessity of countertransference in working with childhood trauma, among many others. Pichon, as I have demonstrated in my work, also believed in the essential utility of countertransference. For Pichon, the purpose of training analysis was to free the analyst's countertransference for clinical use. It could be argued that Pichon's and the relational school's commonalities in countertransference use likely stem from mutual exposure to object relations, as many thinkers in the relational school discussed the work of Racker, as well as other object relations analysts who advocated for the utility of countertransference (Aron, 1998).

In summary, there are many commonalities between Pichon and the relational turn. Both Pichon and the relational theorists integrate interdisciplinary thinking to innovate in clinical work and theory. For example, both Pichon and Mitchell rejected the primacy of drives and made their argument by integrating perspectives from the humanities and social sciences. To theorize on the tension between intra—intersubjectivity, both Pichon and Benjamin used dialectic philosophy to conceptualize the tension. Additionally, both Pichon and the relational turn integrated countertransference into their clinical work and focused on internal representations of outside relationships as opposed to an exclusive focus on intrapsychic phantasies. Given Pichon's innovations parallel much of the innovations seen later in the American relational turn, in my opinion, it is fair to say Pichon is a precursor to the relational movement and should be rediscovered by the contemporary relational movement as an original pioneer relational thinker.

Conclusion

Towards a Social Psychoanalysis

As I have demonstrated in my work, Pichon Rivière's ECRO transcended the boundary of the internal and external, connecting the individual psyche to the social psyche and crafting, as he called it, a move from psychoanalysis to social psychology. If I were to place Pichon's work within a school of thought, in my opinion, placing Pichon within object relations, interpersonal psychoanalysis, or relational psychoanalysis is limiting. I believe he belongs in a new psychoanalysis called social psychoanalysis. Something he named in an interview with Zito Lema:

"In trying to make conscious the unconscious, I started as an orthodox psychoanalyst. Subsequently, I developed a social psychoanalysis and there my difficulties with the Argentine Psychoanalytic Association (APA)." (Zito Lema, 1976/2014, pg. 91/personal translation for present study)

Social psychoanalysis is a term of recent interest to psychoanalysts, as practitioners have brought attention to the importance of integrating the social sphere in the psyche (Layton, 2020). Layton (2020) references Fanon's (1963, 1967) call for a social psychoanalysis that considers, and aims to deconstruct, the social context of societal oppression. Layton (2020) references many authors who contributed to the intersection of the socio-cultural context and the psyche and explored the concept of the social unconscious as it appears in the theorization of a variety of thinkers. Pichon is not included, understandably, given how unknown his work is in English-speaking psychoanalytic communities. Nonetheless, I believe Pichon's concept of vínculo and the internal group refer to a social unconscious that should be included in the move towards a social psychoanalysis.

Another analyst whose thinking is in line with a social psychoanalysis is Altman (2010). In his book, *The Analyst in the Inner City*, Altman does not call for a social psychoanalysis, but he argues for a “three-person psychoanalysis” that considers the sociocultural context in the analytic relationship (2010, pg. 61). Moreover, he considered the social-cultural context to be akin to a third in the analytic encounter that goes beyond the dyad. He advocated for analysts to get involved in community-based psychoanalytic work (2010, pg. 213). While Altman does not mention Pichon, as Pichon’s work was virtually unknown at the time, I believe Pichon’s concept of the third as a structure in the analytic relationship, and his notion of the social-cultural context as a Great Third, is in line with Altman’s proposition. Moreover, Pichon’s work in groups and families (i.e., the external field) is in line with Altman’s suggestion of applying psychoanalysis to community work.

In summary, I believe Pichon’s legacy is best grouped with the legacy of social psychoanalysts; that is, psychoanalysts in the history of the field who attempted to integrate the social psyche into psychoanalysis and transcend the boundary of the dyad to group, family, and community work. However, I believe Pichon stands out within this group of thinkers because he theorized a social psychoanalysis that is still practiced today. Pichon’s social psychoanalysis is still taught in Argentina through institutes that focus on interventions in groups and communities (Klappenbach, 2014). An example of one of such institutes is the one of Moffat, who worked directly with Pichon and directs an institute where he teaches Pichon’s work (as well as his developments of Pichon’s theory) to intervene systemically in marginalized communities. His approach is detailed in his book (1988) *psicoterapia del oprimido* (psychotherapy of the oppressed).

A final note on Pichon, a confusing aspect of his legacy is his break with psychoanalysis, leading to a renaming of his approach as a social psychology. In Argentina, to this day, Pichon's theory survives as a social psychology. A good number of his disciples and the students who trained in the various schools of social psychology call themselves social psychologists and do not think of themselves as psychoanalysts—unless they studied both traditions and therefore use both names: psychoanalyst and social psychologist.

As an outsider reviewing the literature, in my opinion, the distinction lies more in semantics and a history of institutional fractures. Perhaps the distinction also remains to differentiate a type of psychoanalysis in a culture rich in various psychoanalytic traditions. However, this must not be confused by outsiders to the culture as positivistic social psychology, as it is social psychology based on psychoanalysis, hence, social psychoanalysis. Pichon's ECRO does not exclude psychoanalysis, particularly given its heavy reliance on Kleinian theory and its focus on theorizing the unconscious dimension of the mind, such as in concepts like the internal group and vínculo. Moreover, Pichon's insights are still incorporated by traditional Rioplatense psychoanalysts, further obscuring the distinction (Bernardi & De León De Bernardi, 2012; Arbiser, 2013).

Perhaps, Pichon naming his social psychoanalysis a social psychology was to make a point. To go toward the other side of the dialectic, to become the other in the heavily intrapsychic psychoanalysis of his time. Pichon often had this type of quality to him, as someone not afraid to immerse himself in contradiction, and there are plenty of stories regarding his personality that suggests he would welcome doing something controversial like renaming psychoanalysis a social psychology (Moffat, 2014). For instance, Moffat (2014) recounts an interesting story:

“Enrique, Ana, and I went to see Moreno, the creator of psychodrama, when he came to Argentina. All the authorities of mental health were in an auditorium in the faculty of medicine. We came in a little late. Suddenly, Enrique walks in front of Moreno, mimics the stance of a dog in four feet,

and barks “guau guau guau.” He started the dramatization because psychodrama is being the other: being a dog, for instance. It was unexpected but precise and Moreno smiled.” (pg. 58/personal translation for present study)

Moffat's story, while humorous, does provide insight into this aspect of Pichon's character as daring. Pichon has an element of deconstruction to him, of deconstructing and reconstructing theory, making a *new Gestalt* out of the different elements of the subject's experience. If we think about Pichon naming his psychoanalysis social psychology, it has a similar quality to the story Moffatt recounts; it is unexpected but precise. After all, it was not Pichon, but Freud himself, who first stated that every individual psychology is a social psychology. Freud writes:

“In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so, from the very first individual psychology, in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the words, is at the same time social psychology.” (Freud, 1921, pg. 69)

Further Directions in Scholarship

Pichon's work is still relevant to the field of psychoanalysis today, particularly due to its connection to the notions of intersubjectivity and relationality that dominate contemporary psychoanalysis in the United States. Moreover, his work helps the field connect the social psyche and the individual psyche. As Layton (2020) and Altman (2010) suggest, connecting the sociocultural realm to the individual psyche in clinical work is of paramount importance to the field of psychoanalysis today. Therefore, more research on Pichon and those within the Rioplatense tradition is warranted.

Further directions in scholarship could be taken in various directions. For instance, further scholarship could attempt to connect Pichon's work to other thinkers throughout psychoanalysis who have conceptualized the social aspect of the unconscious, including the modern developments

in relational theory and the humanities, as Layton's book outlines. Research could be done to better understand how Pichon's work connects to the work of his contemporaries in the Río de la Plata region, particularly those who shared his interest in social concepts of the psyche and technical innovations in countertransference. For instance, the work of Arnaldo Rascovsky and Marie Langer and the contributions on countertransference by Racker.

Research could also be done in connecting the work of Pichon to the work of his well-known students. For instance, Jose Bleger developed Pichon's use of dialectics, and David Liberman, who further developed Pichon's ideas on communication (Etchegoyen, 2014). Moreover, scholarship is needed to understand how Pichon's ideas were developed by students outside the Río de la Plata region, for instance, the work of Haydee Faimberg, whose work, *The Telescoping of Generations* (2005) further develops Pichon's concept of the vertical axis (Scharff, 2017).

Scholarship is also needed to comprehend how Pichon's clinical concepts, for instance, concepts such as vínculo and the operative groups, survive today throughout the Latin American region. Understanding how Pichon's clinical legacy survives today can allow for a more comprehensive understanding of psychoanalysis in the Latin American region, thus serve to engage in comparative theoretical scholarship with psychoanalysis in the United States, especially interpersonal and relational psychoanalysis—modalities I argued have significant commonalities with Pichon's clinical and theoretical work.

I hope my work has allowed the English reader to grasp the richness of the theoretical and clinical contributions of Pichon's work, and by extension, the work of psychoanalysis in Latin American countries. I see my work as being a new thesis to start the dialectic process of linking the psychoanalytic contributions of Latin American psychoanalysis to the wider psychoanalytic

discourse in the United States with the hopes that both theoretical bodies can engage in a dialogue of mutual transformation.

ECROs in a Cloud

The final section of my thesis will attempt to draw parallels between Pichon's life and his theoretical innovations. Building on the work of Atwood and Stolorow (1979), *Faces in a Cloud*, a work making connections between the theoretical corpus of psychoanalytic thinkers, their life history, and subjective worlds of experience, I will attempt to draw parallels between Pichon's work and his life narrative.

I will start my parallels with an important insight by Greenberg (2017) in his commentary on Pichon's theory of the three D.'s:

"There are some formulations that, to my eye at least, stand in contradiction to others; overall the paper reads as if it were a first draft by an author whose ideas resist containment within the formal structure of an academic manuscript. This may reflect Pichon's way of conceptualizing and presenting his thinking." (Greenberg, 2017, pg., 188)

I echo (or ECRO?) Greenberg's impressions. Pichon's original writings often contain contradiction, something noted by his disciples (Adamson, 2018). I also find Pichon's writings circular; one insight connects to another but not linearly, like the spiral he described. For instance, in his article *New Problems Facing Psychiatry*, Pichon talks about the spokesperson:

"In this way they further the family's group's goal, which is to segregate the sick member because he or she is the spokesperson of the group's anxiety." Pichon Rivière, E. (1971/2017a, pg. 4).

Pichon does not develop the idea of the spokesperson leaving the reader bewildered, and changes to a different topic:

“In recent years practitioners have added the use of dialectic logic and the notion of conflict to their instrumental use of formal logic. According to dialectic logic, terms are not excluded but establish a genetic continuity based on synthesis.” (Pichon Rivière, 1971/2017a, pg. 4)

The reader is left confused (at least I was) as the two paragraphs lack a linear continuity and appear to stand in opposition to each other. Then in a different paper, Pichon develops the idea of the spokesperson, and in a circular fashion, the concept takes a new life. It almost requires the reader to read the entire body of work to understand the theoretical corpus as a whole—like a Gestalt. This type of writing style repeats throughout his work, and I believe Pichon’s writing style reflects his theory, a theory that emphasizes contradiction, the tension between thesis—antithesis, and then an eventual synthesis in a dialectic fashion. This, in my opinion, demonstrates his upbringing of contrasts, a connection that has been noted by some of his followers, for instance, Jasiner (2014) remarks Pichon was a “*Frenchmen in Switzerland, Swiss in El Chaco, from Corrientes in Buenos Aires, porteño who loves Montevideo, a social psychologist in between psychoanalyst, and always a psychoanalyst in between social psychologist*” (pg. 183, my emphasis/personal translation for present study).

If we reflect on Pichon’s upbringing, contradictions were ever-present. For instance, in his upbringing in El Chaco, where he assimilated to Guaraní culture, he learned the Guaraní language, yet simultaneously lived a markedly French life in his family home. Another example is the quilombo, where Pichon would form a socialist party and teach etiquette to sex workers. Furthermore, if we recall Pichon’s well-documented obsession with the surrealist poetry of Lautréamont, it could be argued the contradictions within the poetry attracted Pichon. For example, in Lautréamont’s famous line from *Les Chants of Maldoror*, “*As beautiful as the chance encounter on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella,*” we encounter a juxtaposition of incongruent elements (Sass, 2017). Perhaps Pichon’s interest and ability to stand in the face of

paradox allowed him to innovate theoretically and clinically, to be able to shed the old, integrate the new, and form a new psychoanalysis.

Pichon's willingness and skill to stand in the in-between spaces to innovate and create is what marks him as a Latin American thinker. In my opinion, this ability is a critical feature that allowed Pichon to transcend the teachings of the British and Freudian schools of his time by thinking dialectically and synthesizing out of difference via the interdisciplinary teachings of too many influences to keep track. Among the few: G.H. Mead, Kurt Lewin, Genetic Structuralism, Hegel, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Saussure, Lagache, Marx, Gestalt theory, surrealism, as well as his various life experiences in the jungle of El Chaco, the Guaraní, his friendship with Canoi, and Roberto Arlt. As Jasiner (2014) puts it: "*Rescuing the Latin American is to advance by the hand of Pichon who renounces purity and is always willing to abandon the known. A universal vocation and Latin American aspiration to transit frontiers*" (pg. 184, my emphasis/personal translation for present study).

Álvarez (2014) calls our attention to commonalities between Pichon's proclivity to synthesize and the Guaraní's culture of syncretism. Pichon, as I described in the biographical section, was influenced by the Guaraní as a child; he was fascinated by their culture and even learned the Guaraní language before Spanish. The Guaraní are known for their syncretism, a practice of unity of difference, to create a new culture that blends difference yet transcends both—a third. For instance, religious practices that blend Indigenous cultures and European influences. Pichon's theory, like the Guaraní, is a work of syncretism. A few examples are provided below to illuminate this conceptualization:

- G.H. Mead and Klein—results in vínculo.
- Vínculo and G.H. Mead—results in the internal group.

- Oedipus and Gestalt theory—results in the triangular situation.
- Freud, Fleiss, Hegel, Marx, and Klein—results in the dialectic spiral of time.
- Genetic Structuralism and the spiral— results in Pichon’s views on mental health.
- All the previous, among others—results in ECRO.

To research the connection between Pichon and the Guaraní, Álvarez (2008) conducted a study comparing the writings of Pichon to the Paraguayan novelist Augusto Roa Bastos, also influenced by the Guaraní culture, and part of the Latin American boom literary movement. Álvarez (2008) concluded both Pichon and Roa Bastos display elements of a circular writing style. For instance, Álvarez noted Roa Bastos's work consists of seventeen stories that connect to form a circular structure through inter-reference. The circular element is also present in Pichon and in various concepts, such as the dialectic spiral. Álvarez (2008) noted how Roa Basto's writing style blends opposites such as dreams and reality, pleasure and fear, desire and hate—distinct aspects that eventually mix to form a whole. The blending of opposites is also present in Pichon, for instance, in his dialectic of need/satisfaction or internal/external field, eventually both sides ending in a synthesis.

To conclude, parallels in Pichon's upbringing, such as contradiction, syncretism, and circularity, play a part in his theoretical corpus. Pichon's ability to innovate theoretically and clinically is influenced by his experience with contradiction, syncretism, and circularity. While elements of paradox, syncretism, and circularity are not exclusive to Pichon or Latin American subjectivity, it is the pronouncement of these aspects in Pichon that illuminates worlds of experience missed by psychoanalysts without the life experience and cultural background of Pichon and the Latin American analytic tradition that surrounded his psychoanalytic career.

Pichon Rivière states in conversation with Zito Lema:

“Personally, I consider my contact with the Guaraní culture, my knowledge of the quilombos and the nightlife of Buenos Aires, my studies on Lautréamont, and my friendship with Roberto Arlt, for instance, equally useful to treat illness as my knowledge of Freud and medicine in general. The contrary, meaning moving in stagnant spaces, is to deny oneself, with anticipation, to know man, that subject that is historical, concrete, daily, who one pretends to connect with in a therapeutic vínculo.” (Zito Lema, 1976/2014, pg. 80/personal translation for present study)

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