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PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION

ROBERT M. YOUNG

Abstract: In this extensive and wide-ranging overview of the complex concept of ‘projective identification’, this essay provides a valuable resource for scholars of psychoanalysis. This article was originally prepared for inclusion in *Other Banalities: Melanie Klein Revisited*, edited by Jon Mills. London & N. Y.: Routledge, 2006: 60-76. It is reprinted here with the permission of the author.

The *locus classicus* of Klein’s concept of projective identification is a passage in her ‘Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms’, which appeared in 1946. Klein concludes seven pages on the fine texture of early paranoid and schizoid mechanisms as follows:

So far, in dealing with persecutory fear, I have singled out the oral element. However, while the oral libido still has the lead, libidinal and aggressive impulses and phantasies from other sources come to the fore and lead to a confluence of oral, urethral and anal desires, both libidinal and aggressive. Also the attacks on the mother’s breast develop into attacks of a similar nature on her body, which comes to be felt as it were as an extension of the breast, even before the mother is conceived of as a complete person. The phantasied onslaughts on the mother follow two main lines: one is the predominantly oral impulse to suck dry, bite up, scoop out and rob the mother’s body of its good contents... The other line of attack derives from the anal and urethral impulses and implies expelling dangerous substances (excrements) out of the self and into the mother. Together with these harmful excrements, expelled in hatred, split-off parts of the ego are also projected onto the mother or, as I would rather call it, *into* the mother. [Klein adds a footnote at this crucial point, to the effect that she is describing primitive, pre-verbal processes and that projecting ‘*into* another person’ seems to her ‘the only way of conveying the unconscious process I am trying to describe’.] These excrements and bad parts of the self are meant

not only to injure but also to control and to take possession of the object. In so far as the mother comes to contain the bad parts of the self, she is not felt to be a separate individual but is felt to be *the* bad self.

Much of the hatred against parts of the self is now directed towards the mother. This leads to a particular form of identification which establishes the prototype of an aggressive object-relation (Klein, 1946: 7-8).

Six years later Klein adds the following sentence: ‘I suggest for these processes the term “projective identification”’ (ibid.).

The concept is introduced to explain a quite early, primitive form of unconscious phantasy and is depicted only in negative terms, albeit offered as the prototype of all aggressive object relations. (NB This is a very large claim.) Subsequent developments in her and others’ thinking will lead it to be seen as a mechanism used for positive and loving feelings, as well. It will also come to be seen as a ubiquitous unconscious mechanism in human communication and internal thought processes, i.e., between people and between parts of a given person’s mind. Wilfred Bion depicted it as the basis for all communications between therapist and patient. Moreover, after reviewing the development of the concept, A. Torras de Beà writes, ‘These authors consider that projective identification is the basic mechanism of empathy and primitive communication and also of the defence mechanism which consists of dissociating and projecting anxiety in order to be rid of it. I agree with this and think also that what we call projective identification is the active element in every communication from empathy to the most pathological and defensive’ (Torras de Beà, 1989: 266). He concludes that it is ‘the mechanism basic to all human interaction’ (272).

Indeed, projective identification is the single most influential concept originated by Klein. It plays a central role in the two basic stances operating in the mind at all times and at all levels of development from infancy to maturity and on to senescence: the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. The former is characterized by extreme splits, part-object relations, punitive and brittle guilt feelings and violent projective identifications. The depressive position also includes splits but not extreme ones, whole object relations (‘concern for the object’), reparative guilt (the urge to make reparation for the damage done to the object) and taking back projective identifications, i.e., taking responsibility for our feelings. Irma Brenman Pick writes, ‘Constant

projecting by the patient into the analyst is the essence of analysis; every interpretation aims at a move from the paranoid/schizoid to the depressive position' (Brenman-Pick, 1985: 158). The tacit injunction to our patients — 'Take back the projections' — is a useful way of characterising the goal of helping her or him to dwell as much as possible in the depressive position.

I believe that projective identification is the most fruitful psychoanalytic concept since the discovery of the unconscious. Of course, as soon as something like that is said, competing claims rush forward to be recognised, for example, the significance of the Oedipus complex. Suffice it to say, then, that it is *very* important. Elizabeth Spillius describes it more modestly as Klein's most popular concept (Spillius, 1988, vol. 1: 81), and Donald Meltzer calls it the most fruitful Kleinian concept over the past thirty to forty years (Meltzer, 1991). Hinshelwood suggests that as well as being a, if not the, most fruitful Kleinian concept, it is also the most confused and confusing one (Hinshelwood, 1991: 179-208). Thomas Ogden presents the ideas of Harold Searles, Robert Langs, A. Malin and James Grotstein about projective identification and describes the concept as the essence of the therapeutic relationship: Therapy is said to *consist of* dealing with it. It is the basic unit of study of the therapeutic interaction (Ogden, 1979: 366). He also tells us that Bion 'views projective identification as the most important form of interaction between the patient and therapist in individual therapy, as well as in groups of all types' (365). In 'Attacks on Linking', Bion says, 'Thus the link between patient and analyst, or infant and breast, is the mechanism of projective identification' (Bion, 1967: 106). In the course of a careful review of developments of the concept from its initial formulation in 1946, to the present, Hinshelwood says that for Bion it became 'the basic building block for generating thoughts out of experiences and perceptions' (Hinshelwood, 1991: 189-90). At this same level of generality Segal has described projective identification as 'the earliest form of empathy' and 'the basis of the earliest form of symbol-formation' (Segal, 1973: 36). Looking to later developments and more broadly, Hinshelwood describes Bion's notion of 'container-contained' as 'an attempt to raise the concept of projective identification to a general theory of human functioning — of the relations between people, and between groups; of the relationships between internal objects; and of the relationships in the symbolic world between thoughts, ideas, theories, experiences, etc.' (191).

This same mechanism is seen to be operative at the heart of autism by Meltzer and his co-workers. He also describes it as '*the* mechanism of narcissistic identification... and the basis of

hypochondria, confusional states, claustrophobia, paranoia, psychotic depression and perhaps some psychosomatic disorders' (Meltzer *et al.*, 1975: 228). It is also the sovereign defence against separation anxiety (Grinberg, 1990: 64). Relinquishment of excessive projective identification is described as the precondition of achieving a fully-dimensional inner world. (Meltzer *et al.*, 1975: 226-7). As he says in his essay on 'The Relation of Anal Masturbation to Projective Identification', 'The feeling of fraudulence as an adult person, the sexual impotence or pseudo-potency (excited by secret perverse phantasies), the inner loneliness and the basic confusion between good and bad, all create a life of tension and lack of satisfaction, bolstered, or rather compensated, only by the smugness and snobbery which are an inevitable accompaniment of the massive projective identification' (Meltzer, 1966: 104). In his book on claustrophobic phenomena Meltzer describes it as central to the most social Darwinist forms of ambitious competitive, survivalist conformism, in his concept of 'the claustrum', in which patients use excessive projective identification as a desperate defence against schizophrenic breakdown (Meltzer, 1992). Another Kleinian, Leslie Sohn, recalls that the original thoughts on projective identification in the British Psycho-Analytical Society conceived of it 'as a defence against intolerable envy and as an outcome of hatred of dependence' (Sandler, 1989: 190).

Elizabeth Spillius begins her overview of the concept by telling us that 'the term has gradually become the most popular of Klein's concepts, the only one that has been widely accepted and discussed by non-Kleinians — especially in the United States' (Spillius, 1988, vol. 1: 81). The problem is that she goes on to say that 'it is often discussed in terms that are incompatible with Klein's conception' (*ibid.*). Hinshelwood draws a similarly disconcerting conclusion when he writes, 'There appears to be no consensus on the value of the term "projective identification" outside the Kleinian conceptual framework' (Hinshelwood, 1991: 204). It is in danger of degenerating into what he calls 'a catch-phrase for all interpersonal phenomena' (196), a fate similar to that which befell the concept of object relations at the hands of Greenberg and Mitchell, who mistakenly reduced all objects to people so as to bring Klein into closer affinity with American psychoanalytic ideas and those of Harry Stack Sullivan (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983; *cf.* Kohon, 1985).

Having sketched the origin and scope of the concept, I shall devote the remainder of this essay to what is intended as a tour de force of the kinds of projective identification which have

appeared in the Kleinian literature and some debates about them, as well as providing some examples.

A number of people have told me that they had trouble getting their minds around the concept of projective identification and have said that the following example was helpful to them. Imagine a fly fisherman (I have in mind some lovely scenes from the film 'A River Runs through It'), casting his line gracefully through the air in a lazy arc across the waters of a lake. The line hits the water some distance away, penetrating it and teasing fish to the surface in the hope of catching one. It lures the fish to the surface, hooks it and reels it in. The fisherman is doing the projecting. The fish swimming around some distance way is the repertoire of responses of the person being projected into. The response that the casting of the line evokes would not otherwise have risen to the surface. It is lured to the surface; the response is evoked. That is the moment of identification in projective identification.

Relinquishing now the fishing analogy and elaborating the example further, we have unconscious feelings that we want to disown or alternatively, want to entrust to someone more reliable. We unconsciously project them into that person's unconscious and call up from their range of potential responses what we want to evoke. We thereby create a symbiosis and impoverish our own egos (hence the ego strengthening therapeutic value of 'taking back the projections'). You cannot evoke any old response; it has to be a potential one in that person's personality. Freud adumbrated the concept and illustrated my point when he was talking about the projections of jealous and persecuted paranoiacs, of whom it is said that they project onto others that which they do not wish to recognise in themselves. He continues,

Certainly they do this; but they do not project it into the blue, so to speak, where there is nothing of the sort already. They let themselves be guided by their knowledge of the unconscious, and displace to the unconscious minds of others the attention which they have withdrawn from their own. Our jealous husband perceived his wife's unfaithfulness instead of his own; by becoming conscious of hers and magnifying it enormously he succeeded in keeping his own unconscious. (Freud, 1922: 226)

Irma Brenman Pick illustrates this point further in saying that 'the patient does not just project into an analyst, but instead patients are quite skilled at projecting into particular aspects

of the analyst. Thus, I have tried to show, for example, that the patient projects into the analyst's wish to be a mother, the wish to be all-knowing or to deny unpleasant knowledge, into the analyst's instinctual sadism, or into his defences against it. And above all, he projects into the analyst's guilt, or into the analyst's internal objects.

Thus, patients touch off in the analyst deep issues and anxieties related to the need to be loved and the fear of catastrophic consequences in the face of defects, i.e., primitive persecutory or superego anxiety (Brenman Pick, 1986: 161).

In drawing these illustrations from Brenman Pick's important article on 'Working Through in the Countertransference' I am coming upon a point which surprised me when I first realised it: that Klein did not grasp that countertransference is a species of projective identification. As I see it, the approach adopted by Brenman Pick takes it as read and as normal that powerful unconscious feelings are moving from patient to therapist and back again, through the processes of projection, evocation, reflection, detoxification, interpretation and assimilation. These feelings are all normal, as it were, in the processes of analysis. More than that, as she puts it, they are the essence of the therapeutic process.

Kleinians have not always taken this view of countertransference. Klein had begged her protégé Paula Heimann not to deliver her first paper on countertransference and told Tom Hayley in the late 1950s that she thought countertransference interferes with analysis and should be the subject of lightning self-analysis (Grosskurth, 1985: 378). According to Spillius, 'Klein thought that such extension would open the door to claims by analysts that their own deficiencies were caused by their patients' (Spillius, 1992: 61). Having said this, it is important not to be too literal about the use of the term 'countertransference'. Klein's subtle interpretations of her patients' inner worlds — especially their preverbal feelings and ideas — only make sense in the light of her ability to be resonant with their most primitive feelings, and Bion's injunction to 'abandon memory and desire' is made in the name of countertransference, whatever term we attach to the process. Indeed, it can be said that his writings are about little else.

It took a considerable time for the concept of countertransference to reach the point that its congruence with projective identification to become apparent. Freud saw countertransference just as Klein did — un-worked-through neurotic material in the therapist. In the post-war period a

number of people began to see it in broader terms. I am thinking of D. W. Winnicott on 'Hate in the Countertransference' (1947) and Margaret Little (1950, etc.). Among Kleinians, Paula Heimann wrote two important papers in which she argued that we can learn from the countertransference (1949-50), but saw as the goal of doing so the reduction of instances of it (1959-60). Roger Money Kyrle, however, saw it as normal (1956), and that view has come to prevail among Kleinians. This position is best argued by Brenman Pick in the article quoted above.

The form of projective identification most often referred to in the literature is when one person projects into another -- whether a therapist or someone else -- mother, friend, enemy, object of affection, etc. -- and evokes unconscious feelings. These may or not be processed and may or may not lead to altered behaviour. In the case of projecting into a therapist, the therapist's task -- often a difficult and sometimes a nearly impossible one -- is to experience the countertransferential feeling, interpret it, detoxify it by neutralizing the violent feelings involved and turn it into an interpretation which is of some use to the patient. This is an analytical version of what a parent or other loved one does in dealing with the distressed feelings of those near and dear to them, e.g., comforting a baby or soothing a toddler.

American analysts have taken up the concept with enthusiasm and have written extensively about it. Although the best of this work is interesting and rich in clinical examples, these writers have tended to concentrate largely on the interpersonal form of the mechanism at the expense of the purely intrapsychic one. In my opinion this impoverishes the concept and does not allow sufficient scope and space for the inner world and internal objects (Grotstein, 1981; Ogden, 1979, 1982; Scharff, 1992). The key issue here is whether or not a real, external Other, who has been affected by the projection, is essential to the concept. British Kleinians say no; some American interpreters say yes. Spillius' summary is helpful:

Considerable controversy has developed over the definition and use of the concept. Whether there is a difference between projection and projective identification is perhaps the most frequently raised question, but others have been important too. Should the term be used only to refer to the patient's unconscious phantasy, regardless of the effect on the recipient, or should it be used only in cases in which the recipient of the projection is emotionally affected by what is being projected into him? Should the term only be used

for the projection of aspects of the self, or should it also be used for the projection of internal objects? What about the many possible motives for projective identification; should all be included? Should the term be used only in cases where the patient has lost conscious awareness of the quality and part of the self he has projected, or does it also apply to cases in which such awareness is retained? What about the projection of good qualities and good parts of the self; should the concept be used for these as well, as Klein so clearly thought, or should it be reserved for the projection of bad qualities, which has been the dominant tendency? Is a specific bodily phantasy always involved in the projection, as Klein thought, or is it clarifying enough to speak of the phantasy in mental terms?

Of these many questions, by far the most discussion has been devoted to the question of whether and how projective identification should be distinguished from projection... In these discussions the most usual basis for the distinction between projection and projective identification is held to be whether or not the recipient of the projection is or is not affected emotionally by the projector's phantasy ... But to restrict the term projective identification to such instances greatly diminishes the usefulness of the concept and is in any case totally contrary to what Klein herself meant by it. The English view is that the term is best kept as a general concept broad enough to include both cases in which the recipient is emotionally affected and those in which he is not... The many motives for projective identification — to control the object, to acquire its attributes, to evacuate a bad quality, to protect a good quality, to avoid separation — all are most usefully kept under the general umbrella. (Spillius, 1988, vol. 1: 81-3)

Hanna Segal's definition seems to side with those who call for an external object: 'In projective identification parts of the self and internal objects are split off and projected into the external object, which then becomes possessed by, controlled and identified with the projected parts' (Segal, 1973: 27). Bion also includes projection 'into an external object' (Bion, 1992:159). Unless we assume that they are written from the point of view of the projector's phantasy, these definitions do not embrace both sides of Spillius' broad approach, which allows for projective identification into an internal object as well as into an external one. It is important to emphasise that projective identification can occur wholly inside the unconscious of the projecting person

and need not be involved at all with behaviour that is unconsciously designed to elicit a response from another person. The Other can dwell exclusively in the inner world of the person who creates the projective identification and supplies the response from his or her phantasy of the *dramatis personae* in the mind. In this case it is a relationship between one part of the inner world and another. Where behaviour is involved, the process of eliciting the unconsciously desired resonance from the Other can be very subtle, indeed. Betty Joseph has made the detailed understanding of these interactions an area of special study. In particular, she draws attention to the patient's uncanny ability to 'nudge' the therapist to act out in accordance with the patient's projection — to evoke the disowned feelings from the therapist's repertoire and induce the therapist to experience and perhaps reproject them (Joseph, 1989, esp. chapters 7, 9-12).

There are further elaborations:

Projective identification has manifold aims: it may be directed towards the ideal object to avoid separation, or it may be directed towards the bad object to gain control of the source of the danger. Various parts of the self may be projected, with various aims: bad parts of the self may be projected in order to get rid of them as well as to attack and destroy the object, good parts may be projected to avoid separation or keep them safe from bad things inside or to improve the external object through a kind of primitive projective reparation. Projective identification starts when the paranoid-schizoid position is first established in relation to the breast, but it persists and very often becomes intensified when the mother is perceived as a whole object and the whole of her body is entered by projective identification. (Segal, 1973: 27-8)

Mutual projective processes are powerfully described in an essay by Tom Main. He provides excellent analyses of projective mechanisms in individuals, couples and large and small groups:

Although projective processes are primitive attempts to relieve internal pains by externalising them, assigning or requiring another to contain aspects of the self, the price can be high: for the self is left not only less aware of its whole but, in the case of projective identification, is depleted [sic] by the projective loss of important aspects of itself. Massive projective identification of — for instance — feared aggressive parts of

the self leaves the remaining self felt only to be weak and unaggressive. Thereafter, the weakened individual will remain in terror about being overwhelmed by frightening aggressive strength, but this will now be felt only as belonging to the other. Depending on the range of this projective fantasy the results will vary from terrified flight, appeasement, wariness and specific anxieties about the other, even psychotic delusions about his intentions.

The above instance concerns only the projector's side of the projective relationship: but projective processes often have a further significance. What about the person on the receiving end of the projection? In simple projection (a mental mechanism) the receiver may notice that he is not being treated as himself but as an aggressive other. In projective identification (an unconscious fantasy) this other may find himself forced by the projector actually to feel his own projected aggressive qualities and impulses which are otherwise alien to him. He will feel strange and uncomfortable and may resent what is happening, but in the face of the projector's weakness and cowardice it may be doubly difficult to resist the feelings of superiority and aggressive power steadily forced into him. Such disturbances affect all pair relationships more or less. A wife, for instance, may force her husband to own feared and unwanted dominating aspects of herself and will then fear and respect him. He in turn may come to feel aggressive and dominating toward her, not only because of his own resources but because of hers, which are forced into him. But more: for reasons of his own he may despise and disown certain timid aspects of his personality and by projective identification force these into his wife and despise her accordingly. She may thus be left not only with timid unaggressive parts of herself but having in addition to contain his. Certain pairs come to live in such locked systems, dominated by mutual projective fantasies with each not truly married to a person, but rather to unwanted, split off and projected parts of themselves. Both the husband, dominant and cruel, and the wife, stupidly timid and respectful, may be miserably unhappy with themselves and with each other, yet such marriages although turbulent are stable, because each partner needs the other for pathologically narcissistic purposes. Forcible projective processes, and especially projective identification, are thus more than an individual matter: they are object-related, and the other will always be affected more or less. (Main, 1975: 100-01)

None of the above descriptions sufficiently emphasises *projective identification into parts of one's own mind*, a topic well-expressed (in the context of envy) by Joseph Berke, whose book, *The Tyranny of Malice* (1989), can be seen as a compendium on splitting and projective identification: 'Projection and projective identification are activities that influence different parts of the self. These, of course, include phantasized or internal representations of actual relationships. Thus a person can indeed feel under attack because he is attacking mental images of his own father or teacher or therapist.'

However, a more ominous reaction occurs when, beset by envy, the envier tries to preserve himself from himself by splitting up and projectively identifying his spite and malice with and into parts of his own mind. Consequently the envier contains a multitude of envious others all threatening to attack him from within. These exist as split off and extremely hostile representations of his own envious self or of envious parents and parental substitutes.' This process leads to an over-severe and envious superego and saps the individual's progressive and creative capacities.

In order to avoid such a psychic catastrophe, whereby a host of inner enviers assault each other, the afflicted person may utilise projective processes to deflect these enmities outward. The net effect is like picking out a pack of piranhas and throwing them into the air. Because of the action of projective identification, when these vicious little enviers land on something, and they always do, the envious person (fleeing from his own envious selves) inevitably converts elements of external reality (benign people, places, or things) into malevolent entities (witches, evil influences, bad omens). But instead of solving the problem, this manoeuvre compounds it, for the individual feels threatened by malignity emanating from within himself and from without. Thus the envier becomes the envied, and the hunter becomes the hunted. (Berke, 1989: 67)

Donald Meltzer's book, *The Claustroom*, is entirely devoted to projective identification into internal objects. He is at pains to reveal the evolution of his thinking. He had for some years been uncomfortable with a bias in Klein's paper 'On Identification' (1955a) and came to 'discover the real reason for my dissatisfaction: the tendency of Mrs. Klein's paper to continue

treating projective identification as a psychotic mechanism and one which operated with external objects, primarily or exclusively' (Meltzer, 1992: 13). He emphasises that an important part of mental space is inside internal objects (118) and that entry into projective identification is a 'ubiquitous phenomenon in early childhood' (118). More generally, he concludes that 'the existence of one or another infantile part either living in projective identification or easily provoked to enter the claustrum of internal objects is fairly ubiquitous' (134; *cf.*: 153).

There is an aspect of projective identification to which I want to revert before moving onto a broader canvas. I have already mentioned it in my analogy to fly-fishing. I have already stressed the intrapsychic form, where both parts are played inside the inner world. I now want to draw attention to a feature of the process when it occurs between people. In much of the literature on this topic, reference is made to 'projecting *into* the Other, whether externally or internally. I believe that there is an important distinction, which is, as yet, not fully worked out. It concerns putting something into another person as distinct from eliciting something from the repertoire of their responses, exaggerating it and evoking a reprojected of that aspect of their personality. The process is one of the projection finding a home and of unconscious collusion on the part of the person receiving the projection. In my opinion this is by far the most common manifestation of the interpersonal form of the process, as distinct from being invaded by something entirely alien, a strange feeling in oneself. What is strange in the case of evoked and exaggerated feelings is the intensity. The recipient reprojects a degree or strength of feeling that is surprising, but, though an exaggeration or enhancement, it is still his or hers.

The person who has made most of this point is Harold Searles, who is not a Kleinian and does not stress the term. His writings have centred on the honesty required to acknowledge the patient's prescience. In describing his findings in his first paper on the subject, he says of himself that he 'has very regularly been able to find some real basis in himself for those qualities which his patients — *all* his patients, whether the individual patient be more prominently paranoid, or obsessive-compulsive, or hysterical, and so on — project upon him. It appears that all patients, not merely those with chiefly paranoid adjustments, have the ability to "read the unconscious" of the therapist. This process of reading the unconscious of another person is based, after all, upon nothing more occult than an alertness to minor variations in the other person's posture, facial expression, vocal tone, and so on, of which the other person himself is unaware. All neurotic and psychotic patients, because of their need to adapt themselves to the feelings of the other person,

have had to learn as children — usually in association with painfully unpredictable parents — to be alert to such nuances of behavior on the part of the other person' (Searles, 1978-9: 177-78; 1979; Young, 1992).

In my view, much of the striking originality of Searles' work stems from this important insight, one which has been grasped by some Kleinians, for example, Irma Brenman Pick (1985, esp.: 41), Betty Joseph (1989) and Michael Feldman (1992: 77, 87), but its implications are far from being taken in by most writers on the subject. There is too little awareness of how nearly fully interactive the processes are, and I believe this is a remnant of objectivist attitudes on the part of therapists, who do not grant the fundamental role of the countertransference in therapy, as in the rest of life.

Kleinian ideas are difficult of access, partly because they are largely about unconscious, pre-verbal and pre-conceptual psychodynamics. Moreover, it cannot be said that Klein wrote with conceptual clarity to match her profound understanding of the inner world and its vicissitudes. For a long time practically the only way to learn about her ideas was to work with them and to get supervision from people who had worked with her or with their supervisees. Kleinians travelled, most significantly, to Los Angeles, Italy and South America, where they gave seminars and supervisions. The effect in South America and Italy was electric, while in Los Angeles it almost led to the disenfranchisement of the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Institute from the American Psychoanalytic Association, so strongly did the orthodox Freudians take exception to this alien way of thinking (see Kirsner, 2000, ch. 4). Splits in the institute and the formation of a breakaway one resulted from this intramural sectarianism.

This situation of paucity of expository writings changed dramatically in the late 1980s with the publication of two volumes of key Kleinian papers edited by Elizabeth Spillius, *Melanie Klein Today* (1988), one volume of which was subtitled *Mainly Theory* and the other *Mainly Practice*. A year later there followed a book that, in my biased opinion (I had the idea to do it, edited it and published it), is the single most helpful secondary source in the Kleinian literature, *A Dictionary of Kleinian Thought*, admirably and exhaustively compiled by R. D. Hinshelwood. The models for this volume were Raymond Williams' *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976) and *The Language of Psychoanalysis* by Jean Laplanche and J-B Pontalis (English trans., 1983). He set out, and largely succeeded, to provide conceptual definitions and historical accounts of the major and minor concepts in the Kleinian literature. The book was

revised two years later in the light of criticisms and is currently being re-written by a committee - in some ways a good thing and in some ways regrettable. Hinshelwood's chapter on projective identification remains the best single account of the concept and its ramifications.

More recently there have appeared several other helpful secondary sources, some of which contribute subtle understandings of Kleinian and post-Kleinian concepts. In her *Melanie Klein: Her Work in Context*, Meira Likierman appropriately confines her discussion of projective identification to Klein's ideas but gives a sophisticated rendering of them based on a close reading of Klein's works (156-61). My book, *Mental Space* (1994, on which I have drawn in this essay) devotes several chapters to projective identification in its interpersonal, intrapsychic and social aspects. I argued that projective identification lies at the heart of many group, social and political processes, e.g., clubs, gangs, sports, team supporters, class, racism, nationalism, political parties, class conflicts, fan clubs, idealization of music and movie stars, charisma, religions — any process where feelings are strongly felt and projected into others. My book is a largely theoretical and conceptual exploration, while *Inside Lives: Psychoanalysis and the Growth of the Personality* by Margot Waddell (2000; revised 2002) is widely regarded as the most evocative rendering of Kleinian and post-Kleinian concepts and includes a number of clinical vignettes which vividly illustrate projective identification (e.g.: 167-70, 199-200, see also index). The Appendix provides a particularly helpful discussion of projective and introjective processes (253-58). *The Dictionary of the Work of W. R. Bion*, by a Venezuelan psychoanalyst, Rafael E. Lopez-Corvo, suffers from the brevity of its entries and a translator who did not make sure of using the accepted English equivalents of his Spanish terms. His one-page entry (Hinshelwood's is thirty pages long) on projective identification in Bion stresses its use by the psychotic part of the personality, where it is employed to evacuate the unconscious of whole aspects of ego functioning (220-21). There are much more extensive discussions of projective identification in *Introduction to the Work of Donald Meltzer* by Silvia Fano Cassese, an Italian psychotherapist who attended Meltzer's lectures, supervisions and seminars for many years during which he frequently taught in Florence. Her entire first chapter is devoted to 'Projective Identification with Internal Objects'. She discusses his ideas on massive projective identification, intrusive identification, adhesive identification and *folie à deux*, and introjective identification.

I am confident that the concept of projective identification will continue to undergo important clinical and theoretical development at the intrapsychic, interpersonal, group, institutional and political levels and look forward to discussions and elaborations of the concept in the psychoanalytic literature.

NOTE: I was invited to write a paper for a collection re-assessing the work of Melanie Klein. I chose to write on the concept of projective identification. I drew heavily on my earlier writings on this concept, and the result can be seen as an epitome of those writings. I also updated my review of the literature. It appeared in *Other Banalities: Melanie Klein Revisited*, edited by Jon Mills. London & N. Y.: Routledge, 2006: 60-76.

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