

PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION

THE INDUCTION PHASE
THE RESOLUTION PHASE

1

1

TWO PHASES OF A PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION
MARTHA STARK (1999)

THE INDUCTION PHASE COMMENCES ONCE THE PATIENT
PROJECTS ONTO THE THERAPIST SOME ASPECT OF THE PATIENT'S
EXPERIENCE THAT HAS BEEN TOO TOXIC FOR THE PATIENT TO
PROCESS AND INTEGRATE AND THEN EXERTS PRESSURE ON THE
THERAPIST TO ACCEPT THAT PROJECTION, THEREBY INDUCING
THE THERAPIST INTO THE PATIENT'S ENACTMENT

THE RESOLUTION PHASE IS USHERED IN ONCE THE THERAPIST
STEPS BACK FROM HER PARTICIPATION IN WHAT HAS BECOME A
MUTUAL ENACTMENT AND BRINGS TO BEAR HER OWN AND
MORE-EVOLVED CAPACITY TO PROCESS AND INTEGRATE ON
BEHALF OF A PATIENT WHO TRULY DOES NOT KNOW HOW -
SUCH THAT WHAT IS THEN RE-INTROJECTED BY THE PATIENT CAN
BE MORE EASILY ASSIMILATED INTO HEALTHY PSYCHIC STRUCTURE

AND, IF ALL GOES WELL, THESE ITERATIVE CYCLES WILL HAPPEN
REPEATEDLY, THE NET RESULT OF WHICH WILL BE GRADUAL
DETOXIFICATION OF THE PATIENT'S INTERNAL PATHOGENICITY

2

2

ALTHOUGH INEVITABLY THE THERAPIST WILL
FAIL THE PATIENT IN MANY OF THE SAME
WAYS THAT THE PARENT HAD FAILED HER

ULTIMATELY THE THERAPIST MUST CHALLENGE THE
PATIENT'S PROJECTIONS BY LENDING ASPECTS OF HER
"OTHERNESS" OR "EXTERNALITY" TO THE INTERACTION

DONALD WINNICOTT (1965)

SUCH THAT THE PATIENT WILL HAVE
THE EXPERIENCE OF SOMETHING THAT IS
"OTHER-THAN-ME" AND CAN "TAKE THAT IN"

IN ESSENCE, THE THERAPIST WILL
CHALLENGE THE PATIENT'S PROJECTIONS
BY LENDING ASPECTS OF HER OWN, AND GREATER,
CAPACITY TO PROCESS AND INTEGRATE

SUCH THAT THE PATIENT WILL HAVE
THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING ABLE TO TAKE IN
SOMETHING THAT IS NOW MORE PROCESSED,
LESS TOXIC, AND MORE MANAGEABLE

3

3

**WHAT THE PATIENT RE-INTROJECTS
WILL ACTUALLY BE AN AMALGAM**

**PART CONTRIBUTED
BY THE PATIENT**
THE ORIGINAL - UNPROCESSED AND TOXIC - PROJECTION

**AND PART CONTRIBUTED
BY THE THERAPIST**
SOMETHING MORE PROCESSED AND LESS TOXIC

4

4

"NEGOTIATING AT THE INTIMATE EDGE" WILL GENERALLY INVOLVE THESE

"SERIAL DILUTIONS"
"GRADUATED DETOXIFICATION"

**ITERATIVE CYCLES OF
INDUCTION AND RESOLUTION**
"MORE OF SAME" AND THEN "SOMETHING BETTER"

**WILL HAPPEN REPEATEDLY
RESULTING ULTIMATELY IN
"STRUCTURAL MODIFICATION"**

**NOTE THAT IT IS THE SECOND - RESOLUTION - PHASE
OF THE PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION
THAT CONSTITUTES THE CHALLENGE
AND THE FIRST - INDUCTION - PHASE THAT REINFORCES
AND SUPPORTS THE DYSFUNCTIONAL STATUS QUO**

5

5

PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION

**INVOLVES SYMBOLIC
REPETITION OF THE
ORIGINAL RELATIONAL TRAUMA
BUT WITH A MUCH HEALTHIER
RESOLUTION THIS TIME**

**THE HALLMARK OF A
SUCCESSFUL PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION
IS THE THERAPIST'S CAPACITY TO TOLERATE
WHAT THE PATIENT FINDS INTOLERABLE**

6

6