

OSVRT NA KNJIGU „PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION – A CONTEMPORARY INTRODUCTION“ AUTORA ROBERTA WASKE

/ REVIEW OF THE BOOK “PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION – A CONTEMPORARY INTRODUCTION” BY ROBERT WASKA

ROUTLEDGE, LONDON & NEW YORK, 2022.

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Autor knjige „*Projective identification – a contemporary introduction*“ dr. Robert Waska američki je psiholog, psihoanalitičar i psihoanalitički psihoterapeut. Od 1985. godine u svojoj privatnoj praksi radi individualnu i partnersku psihoterapiju. Dosad je iz svojeg užeg psihoterapijskog područja objavio još 13 stručnih knjiga. Aktivan je i u uredništvima brojnih međunarodnih časopisa te sudjeluje u edukaciji i superviziji mlađih kolega psihoterapeuta.

Djelo „*Projective identification – a contemporary introduction*“ izdao je ove godine u biblioteci „*Routledge Introductions to Contemporary Psychoanalysis*“.

Waskina knjiga prva je koja je objavljena u novoosnovanoj Routledgeovoj se-

The author of the book *Projective identification – a contemporary introduction* dr. Robert Waska is an American psychologist, psychoanalyst, and psychoanalytical psychotherapist. As a private practitioner, he's been practicing individual and couples psychotherapy since 1985. He is an active member of the editorial boards of several international journals. He is also an educator and a supervisor of younger psychotherapists.

Projective identification – a contemporary introduction was published this year as a part of the *Routledge Introductions to Contemporary Psychoanalysis* series.

Waska's book is the first title published in the newly founded Routledge series,

riji, uz izazovan zahtjev uredništva da svako objavljeno djelo iz ove biblioteke može imati najviše 40 tisuća riječi. Za usporedbu, računalo je utvrdilo da ih ovaj moj tekst ima oko tisuću.

U svakom slučaju, Robert Waska doista se može pohvaliti konciznošću i jednostavnošću podastarte teme te u skladu s idejama uredništva njegova najnovija knjiga ima samo 118 stranica teksta. Podijeljena je u 14 kraćih poglavlja, zaključne misli, 30 bibliografskih navoda (od kojih je 5 autocitata), uz kazalo pojmova i imena.

Upravo zbog njezine informativnosti kojom se ne kompromitira složenost predmeta obrade, knjiga je korisna i profesionalcima mentalnoga zdravlja i obrazovanim laicima.

S obzirom na to da se tema projekтивne identifikacije često doživljava kompleksnom, s brojnim dopunskim značenjima, nerazumljivom, rekla bih gotovo tajnovito nespoznatljivom, poseban je izazov i uzbuđenje pisati o ovoj knjizi. Kao što vjerujem da se, pišući, slično osjećao i autor: (ne)inhibirano, kompetitivno, kreativno (im)potentno, možda i omnipotentno. Uostalom, ovo je djelo zapravo sažet prikaz knjige slična naziva („*Projective identification in the clinical setting*“) kojoj je autor R. Waska godine 2003. posvetio dvostruko više prostora. Koliko i zaslužuje. Osim toga, knjiga iz 2003. doživje-

meeting the challenging standard set by the editorial board that the texts published mustn't exceed the 40 000 words limit. In comparison, the computer calculated that this text is composed of approximately 1000 words.

Robert Waska should be proud of the concise and simple manner in which he managed to cover the chosen topic, since his book, following the editorial policy, has only 118 pages. It consists of 14 short chapters, a conclusion, 30 citations, (5 of which of his own works), and an index.

Being concisely informative without compromising the complexity of its subject, this book is useful to both mental health professionals and educated laypeople.

Considering that the topic of projective identification is often perceived as complex, multifaceted, difficult to comprehend, and even arcane, it is quite an exciting challenge to review this book. I imagine the author must have felt (un)inhibited, competitive, creative, (im)potent, or, perhaps, omnipotent, while writing it. This work is, in fact, a condensed version of a twice longer book of a similar title (*Projective identification in the clinical setting*), published in 2003, and reprinted in 2015, in which the author treats the same subject more elaborately. And deservedly so. This suggests that projective



la je i svoje reizdanje godine 2015. Sve to govori da je riječ o predmetu istraživanja neiscrpane vrijednosti i snage te da o fenomenu projektivne identifikacije itekako ima smisla razmišljati, analizirati ga, pisati i razglabati o njemu, oblikovati ga i revidirati.

Poput psihoanalitičareva kauča koji simbolizira odnos, susret, komunikaciju i konverzaciju, upravo to čini i ovaj list papira. Stranica teksta uz čiju pomoć (doduše s distancije), nastojim artikulirati i oživjeti zamišljeni dijalog s autorom. U razumijevanju te dijalektike, slavni je filozof Slavoj Žižek parafrazirao francuskog analitičara Jacquesa Lacana i izjavio da „napisano uvijek stigne na svoje odredište“ („Letter always arrives at its destination“). Sigurna sam da će tako cirkulirati i moja recenzija.

Vratimo li se nekoliko desetljeća unatrag, sjetit ćemo se da je pojam projektivne identifikacije u psihoanalitičkom misao četrdesetih godina 20. stoljeća prva uvela poznata britanska analitičarka Melanie Klein. Danas, dr. Robert Waska ide korak dalje. Uz brojne prikaze bolesnika, projektivnu identifikaciju označava temeljnim fenomenom koji u velikoj mjeri utječe na bolesnikov intrapsihički i interpersonalni život. To i nije čudno jer se zna da Waska temeljno pripada suvremenoj klajnijanskoj školi.

identification is a powerful and highly valuable research topic, a phenomenon worthy of consideration, analysis, discussion, and revision. It is an important subject to write about, giving it, in the process, the shape and form.

The psychoanalyst's couch stands for a relationship, encounter, communication, and conversation, and this text is trying to do the same. These pages are an attempt to articulate and bring to life an imagined dialogue with the author (even if from a distance). Explicating this dialectic the famous philosopher Slavoj Žižek paraphrased the French analyst Jacques Lacan by saying that "Letter always arrives at its destination". I am sure this applies to my review too.

In psychoanalysis, the concept of projective identification was first introduced by a renowned British analyst Melanie Klein in the fourth decade of the 20th century. Today, dr. Robert Waska takes a step further. Presenting numerous case-studies he shows that projective identification is a fundamental phenomenon influencing a patient's intrapsychic and interpersonal life in a significant way. This is hardly surprising considering that Waska is part of the contemporary Kleinian school.

The extraordinary value of this book is in the way the author places projec-

Posebna vrijednost ove knjige jest što autor projektivnu identifikaciju (kao što je šezdesetih godina 20. st. tumačio Wilfred Bion) smješta u područje zdravog funkcioniranja osobe. Prikazuje je dinamičnim i fleksibilnim svojstvom čovjekove ličnosti što pridonosi njegovu rastu. Također, psihoterapeutima nudi razrješavanje emocionalnog konflikta bolesnika uporabom triju terapijskih koraka: 1. imenovanja, verbaliziranja, kognitivnog razumijevanja konflikta („to name it“), 2. emocionalnog prihvaćanja, suočavanja („to claim it“) i na koncu 3. pripitomljavanja, oplemenjivanja, čak i njegovanja („to tame it“) efekata projektivne identifikacije. Dakako da neupućenima u klajnijanski psihodinamski okvir ovo može izgledati (u skladu sa suvremenim društvenim kretanjima) kao birokratizirana, instantna i prizemna pomoć. Međutim, R. Waska podcrtava neospornu činjenicu da su u psihoterapeutovim akcijama u seansi usto ključne interpretacije transferno-kontratransferne problematike.

U prvom i najduljem poglavlju „Konceptcija i njezin klinički utjecaj“ („*The concept and the clinical impact*“) R. Waska daje obol svim dosadašnjim analitičarima koji su operacionalizirali fenomen projektivne identifikacije. Uz nezaobilaznu M. Klein, među ostalima spominje W. Biona i T. Ogdena. Također naglašava da je projektivna identifi-

ka u području zdravog funkcioniranja osobe (kao što je šezdesetih godina 20. st. tumačio Wilfred Bion) smješta u područje zdravog funkcioniranja osobe. Prikazuje je dinamičnim i fleksibilnim svojstvom čovjekove ličnosti što pridonosi njegovu rastu. Također, psihoterapeutima nudi razrješavanje emocionalnog konflikta bolesnika uporabom triju terapijskih koraka: 1. imenovanja, verbaliziranja, kognitivnog razumijevanja konflikta („to name it“), 2. emocionalnog prihvaćanja, suočavanja („to claim it“) i na koncu 3. pripitomljavanja, oplemenjivanja, čak i njegovanja („to tame it“) efekata projektivne identifikacije. Dakako da neupućenima u klajnijanski psihodinamski okvir ovo može izgledati (u skladu sa suvremenim društvenim kretanjima) kao birokratizirana, instantna i banal kind of help (in harmony with the contemporary social trends). But Waska emphasizes the undeniable fact that the interpretations of the transference and countertransference issues are central to the psychotherapist's activities during a seance.

In the first and the longest chapter *The concept and the clinical impact*, R. Waska honors all analysts up to date who operationalized the phenomenon of projective identification. Next to the major contribution of Melanie Klein, he mentions those of W. Bion and T. Ogden. He also emphasizes that the projective identification is not only a defense mechanism but also a mode of communication (exclusive, unique,



cija osim mehanizma obrane i čovjekov (samo njemu poznat, jedinstven i osoban) način komunikacije, odnosno primitivna forma ostvarivanja odnosa s važnim drugim, način adaptacije, kreativne ekspresije, čak i metode učenja.

U drugom poglavlju „Klinički ciljevi u psihoanalitičkoj psihoterapiji“ („*Clinical aims in psychoanalytic psychotherapy*“) Waska razlaže kliničke strategije u modernome klajnijanskom pristupu, i to od važnosti bolesnikova prepoznavanja vlastitih obrazaca projektivne identifikacije do prihvatanja, toleriranja, reparacije, pa i nalaženja određena smisla u tome.

No, da ne bude sve tako savršeno, Waska naglašava da se reverzibilni proces prihvatanja vlastitih obrazaca nikad ne postiže potpuno i do kraja, pa su bolesnici u otporu te se vraćaju starijim reaktivnim uzorcima ponašanja i doživljavanja. To je posebice vidljivo u različitim situacijama stresa. Stoga, R. Waska, uz interpretativnu izravnost karakterističnu za klajnijance, ističe važnost i kontejnirajućeg selfa psihoterapeuta koji će na empatijski način bolesniku umanjiti osjećaj kaosa i preplavljenosti. U trećem poglavlju „Forma i funkcija PI“ („*The form and function of PI*“) autor nastavlja s konkretnijim definiranjem zdravih i nezdravih formi projektivne identifikacije. Zaklju-

and personal), i.e. a primitive form of establishing a relationship with a significant other, an adaptation, creative expression, even a learning method.

In the second chapter *Clinical aims in psychoanalytic psychotherapy*, Waska explains clinical strategies of the modern Kleinian approach, starting with the patient's recognition of his own patterns of projective identification through acceptance, tolerance, reparation, and finding the meaning in it all.

But not everything is perfect. Waska emphasizes that the reversible process of accepting one's own patterns is never complete; patients resist and return to the old reactive patterns of behavior and experiencing patterns. This is particularly noticeable in stressful situations. For this reason, in addition to the interpretative directness typical for Kleinians, R. Waska emphasizes the importance of the containing self of the therapist who will empathetically decrease the sense of chaos and overwhelmingness for the patient. In the third chapter *The form and function of PI*, the author continues with the concrete definitions of the healthy and unhealthy forms of projective identifications. He concludes that with the rigid forms of projective identifications the distinction between the object and the self is lost since the dividing lines between the two become too fluid, mixed

čuje da se kod rigidnih formi PI gubi distinkcija između selfa i objekta, gdje granice među njima postaju prefluidne, konfuzne, stopljene i kao da pritom postaju jedno. U zdravoj pak formi PI, osoba s uspjehom gradi svoje mentalno zdravlje, i to ponajprije jačanjem empatijskog i intuitivnog razumijevanja drugoga.

U idućim poglavljima „Višestruki motivi i značenja“ („*Multiple motives and meanings*“), „Rad s PI i njezina prorada“ („*Working with and through PI*“) i „Pripitomljavanje PI u psihoterapiji“ („*Taming it in psychotherapy*“) autor približava različite obrasce PI s prikazima bolesnika, kojih je u ovome malenom, ali važnom djelu opisano čak 18. To je još jedna iznimna karakteristika Waskova rukopisa, uz pomoć čega čitatelj stvara zoran doživljaj o kompleksnom sustavu projektivne identifikacije. Usto, mlađi psihoterapeuti i edukanti psihoterapije u Waskinu tekstu mogu dobiti brojne sugestije kako bolesnicima interpretirati određena ponašanja kao i potencijalne odgovore na njihova često postavljana pitanja.

U drugom dijelu knjige, posebice u poglavljima o evoluciji obrazaca PI („*The evolution of PI patterns*“) ili interpretacijama u psihoterapiji (*Interpretive efforts*) Waska piše i o realnoj mogućnosti da psihoterapeut bude na određen način uvučen u destruk-

up, and merged as if one. On the other hand, in the healthy forms of projective identification, the individual successfully builds his/her mental health primarily by strengthening the empathetic and intuitive understanding of the other.

In the following chapters *Multiple motives and meanings*, *Working with and through PI* and *Taming it in psychotherapy*, the author presents different patterns of projective identification via case studies, that is, 18 of them, to be precise. To give so much space to the descriptions of cases in this relatively short work is yet another extraordinary quality of Waska's writing. It certainly helps the reader to form a clear idea of the complex system of projective identification. Also, younger psychotherapists and those being educated for therapists can find in Waska's text numerous suggestions regarding how to interpret certain behaviors as well as potential answers to frequently asked questions.

In the second part of the book, especially in the chapters on the evolution of patterns and interpretations in psychotherapy (*The evolution of PI patterns* and *Interpretive efforts*) Waska writes about the realistic possibility for the therapist to get sucked into destructive patterns of the patient's projective identifications, which happens more often with the patients of



tivne obrasce bolesnikovih projektivnih identifikacija, što se češće događa bolesnicima narcistične ili granične strukture selfa. Tako Waska navodi primjer bolesnika koji je vjerovao da ga njegov psihoterapeut uopće ne sluša i ne brine se o njemu. Takav način bolesnikove komunikacije psihoterapeuta može doživjeti agresivnim, što za sobom povlači još snažniji bolesnikov osjećaj usamljenosti i odbačenosti. Nadalje, bolesnik se počinje osjećati krivim jer ga je strah da je svojim ponavljanim projekcijama iscrpio i psihički ranio psihoterapeuta. Kao posljedicu svih događanja, bolesnik se identificira sa psihički „oštećenim“ psihoterapeutom te se u tim tragičnim trenucima bolesnikova mazohističkog samokažnjavanja jednostavno ne nazire kraj. Sve dok mu psihoterapeut ne klarificira detalje njegova destruktivnog projektivnog iskustva. Zbog toga je, smatra Waska, veoma važno stalno monitoriranje vlastita kontratransfera i transfera bolesnika uz adekvatne empatijske interpretacije.

U konačnici, djelo „Projective identification – A Contemporary Introduction“ prožeto je autorovim bogatim kliničkim iskustvom koje je dao neklješjiziranim opisima svojih bolesnika. Waska je konkretan, nedvojbeno je prilagođen realitetu (posebice širokoj čitalačkoj američkoj publici sklonoj brzim rje-

the narcissistic or borderline structure of the self. Waska gives the example of a patient who believed that his psychotherapist didn't listen to what he was saying and didn't care for him. The psychotherapist can perceive this type of communication on the part of the patient as aggressive which could intensify the patient's feelings of loneliness and rejection.

Further, the patient starts to feel guilty because he fears that by repeating his projections he has exhausted and hurt the psychotherapist. The consequence of these events is that the patient identifies with the psychologically “damaged” psychotherapist and in these tragic moments of the patient's masochistic self-punishment the end is far from sight until the therapist clarifies the details of the patient's destructive projective experience. This is why the therapist needs to constantly monitor his own countertransference as well as the patient's transference followed by adequate empathetic interpretations, says Waska.

Projective identification – A Contemporary Introduction is infused with the author's rich clinical experience reflected in the non-stereotypical descriptions of his patients. Waska is always specific, undoubtedly well adapted to the reality and, in particular, to the general audience in America

šenjima) te je stilski i jezično posve jasan i logičan. Svoj materijal crpi iz svakodnevice, iz svakodnevnog rada sa svojim pacijentima, što zapravo svi srećemo u svojim psihoterapijskim okružjima.

Iako sam očekivala malo više izazova, revolucionarnosti i smjelosti u knjizi, ona doista jest to što joj podnaslov i kaže: suvremeni uvod. Upravo tako aktualizirana, Waskina je knjiga psihološki relevantna i neposredna. Djelo je to koje ćemo rado uzeti u ruke i čitati kako bismo raspršili oblačiće neznanja i pojasnili suptilnu multifasetiranost projektivne identifikacije koja postoji i kao klinički entitet i kao univerzalni aspekt ljudskoga komuniciranja. Razumijevanjem Waskinog djela, svladavajući vlastite potisnute aveti, imat ćemo priliku povezivati ga s dubinom svoje duševne tame, sa svojim psihičkim životom.

which is partial to quick solutions. His writing is coherent and easy to understand. He draws his material from everyday life, from his daily work with his patients, and from the experiences we all encounter in our psychotherapeutic environments.

While I expected the book to be a bit more of a challenge and a bit more revolutionary and courageous in approach, it really is what its subtitle claims it to be: a contemporary introduction. It is a psychologically relevant and direct book, a work we would gladly reach for and read to disperse the clouds of ignorance and clarify the subtle complexity of projective identification which exists both as a clinical entity and as a universal aspect of human communication. If we conquer our repressed specters, we will be able to comprehend Waska's work and relate it to the depths of our soul's darkness, our psychic life.