The author’s theoretical object relations framework, however, does create a view of how psychotherapy works upon which not all psychotherapists would agree. A specific example is when his model patient acts in a fashion that would antagonize the therapist. The author, on each occasion on which this takes place, describes that action between patient and therapist as a “projective identification.” By this he means that the patient has projected on to the therapist the patient’s hostile thoughts. The therapist in turn identifies or takes on the hostile feelings that are projected upon him. In this model, any hostility the therapist has toward the patient is created by the therapist’s identification with the projected thoughts of the patient. It is possible that the provocative actions of the patient might make anyone angry and that the angry feelings are not an identification with the patient. Of course, it is the therapist’s responsibility to observe both his or her own thoughts and feelings and those of the patient and to act in a therapeutic fashion.

For the new psychotherapist, this volume is a welcome addition to a library.

Sidney H. Weissman, MD
s-weissman2@northwestern.edu

Author affiliation: Feinberg School of Medicine of Northwestern University, Chicago, Illinois. Potential conflicts of interest: None reported.
doi:10.4088/JCP.11bk07129
© Copyright 2011 Physicians Postgraduate Press, Inc.