



## **An Introduction to Social Psychology**

### *Projective Identification*

#### **Dr Helen Lucey:**

Projective identification is closely linked to projection. Most people agree that it involves a development of projection. So it's a psychic action that is in some ways further to projection. Now in a straight forward projection the object of the projection may be blissfully unaware of what's going on. But in projective identification the key difference is that the object is altered by the projections and comes in some way to see themselves as actually having the attributes or feelings or thoughts or emotions that have been projected into it.

#### **Ann Phoenix:**

Sometimes people behave in ways that have been projected on to them, because the projection is so powerful and that it's identified with. Sometimes good, and sometimes bad in that the qualities that have been put in are sometimes not necessarily good ones.

#### **Dr Helen Lucey:**

In a kind of social setting it may be that those undigested, that undigested material, the difficult things that people don't want to know about themselves such as hate or anger or incompetence or weakness, becomes placed in, in the other. They become the container for it and then act, it becomes constitutive of their subjectivity in this intersubjective way. So they come to see themselves as actually of being characterised by those, those difficult elements.