

On Hating to Hate

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Hate may be the most dangerous of all emotions for the survival of the planet. The author addresses two questions: What obscures hate when it is actually present? and What masquerades as hate but isn't? Using illustrations from a wide range of fields, the author contends that discerning hate is both essential and far trickier than we think. She concludes by asserting that overcoming hate requires imagination. We must learn to imagine a world without hate and unimagine a world with hate.

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“Absolutely not,” I said to Jane¹ when she called to ask me to be a plenary speaker on hate. Not me, no way, no how is what it felt like at that moment. I had just returned from 2 months on an island; I had been off the grid and off e-mail. Unplugged from my usual life, I felt joined with my surroundings. I was the same person, only on the remote lake in northern Maine, my attunement helped me see the movement of a grasshopper down by the dock, hear the wind shift its direction minutes before it ruffled the pages of my book and taste the change in the lake water as the sun warmed it. I intuited that tuning in to hate would interrupt what I had achieved, a feeling of harmony that, I knew, would dissipate in time, of course, but I suspected—as it turns out correctly—that working on hate would accelerate the process.

I work like a bird building a nest. I scavenge disparate material and weave. Eventually a shape forms as I see the patterns in the elements I have selected. I didn't want to be on the alert and in perpetual scan mode for signs, stories, incidents, texts, words, and images related to hate. I believed it would be unhealthy.

A Hasidic Rabbi is reputed to have said that if he had two hearts, he could afford to hate, but having only one, he would not contaminate his heart with hate. He said this

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long before empirical evidence established that hate is indeed bad for the heart (Smith, Glazer, Ruiz, & Gallo, 2004).

The night Jane called, I had a dream. The bird had begun to weave; I was already working. In the morning I called her back and agreed to speak—that is, to immerse myself for the next 9 months in the thoughts and actions of those who hate. From the start, I realized that I didn't understand hate well, although I had experienced it, and if I did not, what reflections could I offer?

I hated my older sister at times. I hated a girl in elementary school who always did better than I. But these were modest hatreds that led to puny acts—some of instigation, some of revenge. They were puny not because I lacked imagination, but because the stakes were too low to fully engage me.

I was 41 when I first felt thick, swallow-me-up hatred, and it was turned against myself. It was the long night after the day that I learned I had cancer and might die. The day had proceeded responsibly: cry with husband of 20 years, tell young children, call family and friends, eat dinner, put children to bed. But the night careened out of control. I sobbed, flung myself back and forth across the bed, circling around how much I hated myself for maybe, perhaps, doing the most horrible thing a mother could do: dying and leaving her children before they were ready (Weingarten, 1997).

Wrestling with that proposition, talking with my poor exhausted, terrified, heroic partner, finally, around dawn, I created a sentence that reflected an achievement of splitting and dualistic thinking: "It is not I, but the cancer, that has brought this terror into our family." I saw millions of misshapen cells invading me, monsters in my midst, and I had no compassion for them. I hated them.

Hate depends on dualistic thinking, whether of others, our selves, parts of others, parts of ourselves, objects, or parts of objects. There must be an I to hate you. An I to hate it. An I to hate me. A scientist who does PET scans to determine the brain's responses to certain emotions reinforced this idea. I e-mailed her after her study of fear was published to inquire if she knew of any colleagues doing PET scans of the brain reacting to hate (deGelder, Snyder, Greve, Gerard, & Hadjikhani, 2004). Supporting my simple formulation that hate always requires a subject and an object, she replied, "hate stimuli are probably difficult to present in the scanner where typically observers are shown a photograph of a face. Maybe one would need to show a situation between two actors to probe that?" (deGelder, personal communication, November 11, 2004).

Hate fractures harmony, the very state, 17 years and two cancers later, I believe keeps me alive, if not well.

My passage from hate to harmony, to hating to hate, began with the difficult work of managing my relationship to an intimate enemy that required me to surrender parts of my body, accept burning rays, and remain calm while being poisoned.

EXPRESSIONS OF HATE

It has been challenging indeed these past few months to surround myself with the evidence of hate's telltale marks. Yet, although uncomfortable and distressing, the task of witnessing hate is significantly different from being subjected to it. That is, learning about hate is vastly different from being the victim of it. I have tried to be faithful to each and to their incomparability (Hatley, 2000).

In studying hate, it is clear to me that some facets of the subject are well understood by academics, clinicians, and citizens. For instance, people are generally aware that “us versus them” thinking has dangers. These dangers may be manipulated intentionally to foment hate or escalate it out of control. The role of humiliation in triggering hate is now widely understood. For instance, in April 2003, American marines fighting in Iraq spontaneously draped an American flag over a 40-foot statue of Saddam Hussein, which was in the process of being removed. Then, upon instructions from the Pentagon, they quickly removed the stars and stripes and replaced it with a pre-1991 Gulf War Iraqi flag, the only flag at hand. In this instance, the Pentagon, grasping that there could be negative repercussions from such humiliation, ordered it stopped.

We also know that memory and remembrance are related in complex ways to hate. The now iconic image of the Palestinian father shielding in vain his 12-year-old son from bullets has been reproduced by Tunisia and Egypt as a commemorative postage stamp. In Northern Ireland, the parade of the Orange Order on July 12 commemorates the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, which established Protestant supremacy in Ireland. Today, the parade is a provocation for preexisting Catholic-Protestant tensions in Northern Ireland. Clearly, not all forms of remembrance interrupt cycles of hate, and people have different points of view about when it is useful and when not.

For this article, I have tried to steer clear of what I thought we already knew. Instead, I have tried to address an angle on hate, of thinking about hate, that I did not find discussed. My limited scrutiny of the vast territory of hate—a domain with hundreds, thousands of potential aspects one could take up and weave in—revealed that although evidence of hate is all around us, it is also bizarrely absent where it would be apt. Noticing this, I have framed two questions: (1) What obscures hate when it is actually present? and (2) What masquerades as hate but isn’t?

I will provide illustrations of each of these questions, but first let me be explicit about the observations and conclusion that underlie these questions. Hate is more devious, and thus more pernicious, than I had imagined it. Expressions of it insinuate themselves into daily life in wily ways. If we don’t perceive these expressions, we can have no impact on them.

Expressions of hate also camouflage significantly different feelings, beliefs, and attitudes. Unless we notice the camouflage, we are powerless to address what is really going on. And because, unchecked, hate may be the most dangerous of human emotions, the ability to discern what is and is not hate is essential.

Here is an example of hate that conceals its presence. The other day, a client walked into my office and hurled a flyer at me that he had found on his subway seat on the ride out to see me. In the first seconds, I couldn’t reconcile the three prominent components that I saw: the handmade look of the black and white flyer with the word *MISSING* in bold letters across the top and the photo of a child, conjuring earlier times when “folks” produced flyers to call attention to the plight of missing children; the phrase “A Future for White Children”; and the name “National Alliance.” In the first moments of looking at the image, I felt concern well up, to be rolled over by rage. It was as if bodily revulsion and anger occurred simultaneously with my recognition that I was holding an expression of pure hate with no acknowledgment of it and accountability for it. The cute, wide-eyed White face, with all my biases evoked by it, had been used to manipulate me and to obscure this piece of White supremacist racist hate.

Sometimes hate is embedded in complex chains of meanings over extended time sequences (Staub, 1989). President Bush's repeated use of the word *evil* after 2001 greases the path for hatred, so we are not surprised months later when his father, our 41st president, tells us that he doesn't hate a lot of people but he hates Saddam Hussein (Nimmo, 2002). Countries whose government officials speak of evil are creating an enemy and encouraging hatred of that enemy. Talk of evil arouses and justifies hate. It forecloses dialogue in favor of aggression.

If we are saturated in hate that we hide by images or words, we are also shown apparent hate that isn't that at all, or isn't simply that. This scene has replayed in my office more than once; sometimes the sentiment is expressed by a man, sometimes a woman. I am seeing a couple in which one partner—let's say the woman—is having an affair and the man has discovered it. At some point in the clinical work, he says to the woman, "If you stop this affair, I will love you and make changes, but if you divorce me, I will hate you and make you miserable for the rest of your life!" The woman leaves the marriage and the man makes good on his word, or at least the part about making her life miserable. But does he really hate her?

I don't think so. He hates that she has humiliated him and hates that she has deprived him of access to what he has enjoyed. He speaks in the language of hate, but I think that he feels the pain of love. Love and hate are not always opposites, as the dictionary would have us believe, or mutually exclusive.

I believe that it is important to peer and to peel back, to ask what lurks below, through, under, and on the surfaces of what we perceive and what we are manipulated to see and not to see about hate. We cannot intervene in what we do not understand.

The other day, I went to an art exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Rarely have I been so enthralled with the beauty of the decorative artifacts on display. Gorgeous carved furniture made of tropical woods inlaid with ivory and silver; exquisite jewelry; objects of incredible decorative interest. As I admired and played the game, "If I could have only one, which would I choose?" one piece of printed linen, relatively dull and pedestrian by the exhibition's lavish standards, caught my eye. A White French sailor, his ship in the background of the abundant tropical forest that covers all of the cloth, is dancing with a light-skinned woman. She is modestly attired in European dress, but with features, earrings, and scarf that make it clear that she is "native." A bare-chested accordion-playing African man with a conspicuous navel serenades the two. Both his legs and her head are turned away from the sailor, who holds her tightly around the waist.

In a moment of double-take, the ludicrousness and dishonesty of the scene revealed to me what I had not seen in the previous rooms. The beauty of these objects had seduced me into expunging the politics of their provenance. Every artifact developed from a colonizing consciousness, which had accepted and participated in appropriation and exploitation for material riches.

This modest piece of ordinary fabric is inextricably connected to French colonial power, which once circled the globe. The opaque emotional expressions of the three figures bely the contempt and hatred they would undoubtedly have felt in this scene that could never have taken place, unless there was another sailor, not shown on the fabric, pointing a rifle at the Africans' backs. Collectors may have loved these objects, but they chose them—as I first saw them—disconnected from the hate at their point of origin: hatred for the colonizers, hatred of the colonized. The art deco

movement ended in 1939, which was a fateful year for the world. The Nazis would appropriate colonial tactics not for “primitive” peoples from afar, but for the “exotics” in their midst—the Jews, Roma, and other minorities whom they soon exterminated (Wood, 2003).

I don’t mean to suggest that life is an art exhibit, but I do mean to say that seeing is important. Or, as Buddhists say, right sight—right view—is. If we don’t see, we can’t take action. If we don’t understand, we may take misguided action. The absence of explicit hate doesn’t mean hatred is not present, and conversely, explicit hatred doesn’t always tell the whole story.

HATE AND MARGINALIZATION

Roy Cohn was a household name in my home. He was the lawyer on the prosecution team who convinced the judge to impose the death penalty on Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in 1951. His success earned him the role of counsel to Senator Joseph McCarthy on the senate subcommittee on investigations for which he was responsible for outing suspected communists and gays. Cohn, who most certainly hated communists, may or may not have hated homosexuals and homosexuality. Cohn had sex with other men—an activity he denied all his life—which suggests that he did not only hate homosexuals and homosexuality, but hated also something else, something inextricably linked to homosexuals and homosexuality (Von Hoffman, 1988).

In *Angels in America*, the playwright Tony Kushner gives the Roy Cohn character lines that are prescient for our day. Based on an unpublished interview that Roy Cohn gave in 1978, the speech takes place just after Cohn’s doctor has told him he has AIDS (Cadden, 1995). “‘Homosexuals are not men who sleep with other men,’ Cohn says. ‘Homosexuals are men who in fifteen years of trying cannot get a pissant antidiscrimination bill through City Council. Homosexuals are men who know nobody and who nobody knows. Who have zero clout. Does this sound like me?’” (Kushner, 2003, p. 45). Cohn’s internalized homophobia is connected to a fierce rage and hate: He hates homosexuals’ lack of clout, of power. Hating the marginalization of homosexuals from public life, Cohen ends up hating marginalized homosexuals.

Fast-forward 20 years. Look around the United States and see that in 2004, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered Americans have had reason to celebrate and reason to fear. Although 160 bills favorable to their rights were offered into state legislation, only 18 bills passed. On the other hand, 130 bills unfavorable to these rights were introduced, and only 21 bills passed. If you look at the bills by topic, 40% were about marriage, of which only 6% passed (HRC Foundation, 2004).

Of course, the marriage bills are tied in people’s minds to families. Recently, the United States secretary of education wrote a letter to the head of public television, asking her to withdraw an episode of the program *Postcards for Buster*—which shows a bunny visiting children who live on a dairy farm—because their family has two mothers (Spellings, 2005). The letter said that the program did not come

within the intent of Congress, and would undermine the overall objective of the Ready-To-Learn program—to produce programming that reaches as many children and families as possible. Many parents would not want their young children exposed to the life-styles portrayed in this episode. Congress’ and the Department’s purpose in funding this programming certainly was not to introduce this kind of subject matter to children, particularly through the powerful and intimate medium of television.

At dinner a few weeks later, a good friend who was visiting from San Francisco, where he lives with his partner and their 1-year-old daughter, recounted a sentence that his partner, Jeffrey, had said to him: “Will we know any better than the Jews when it is time to leave?”

Jeffrey’s sentence is chilling. It speaks to a feature of hate that I am focusing on in this article: It can be cloaked by other sentiments. I recently saw a photograph in *The New York Times* of a young woman carrying a sign that said, “Fear God” (Dickerman, 2005). She was on a picket line in Topeka, Kansas, demonstrating against homosexuality. So her sign literally meant, “hate gays.” I am trying to point out how much more slippery, dicey, and difficult the identification of hate can be and how urgent it is to notice well and analyze accurately. Effective action depends on this.

HATE AND RIGHT ACTION

Yet action does not necessarily flow easily. The bitter legacy of hate—any hate, anyone’s hate—can complicate our ability to perceive right action, especially when those actions are suggested by people or groups who have hurt us. An abusive parent tells his child to study hard. An American military officer counsels a Vietnamese refugee, now resettled in Florida, about job options. Western scientists tell African leaders that the human immunodeficiency virus causes AIDS.

The last example merits particular attention. The spread of HIV in Africa, one of the most tragic situations of our time, orbits around the complex dynamics that White European racism set in motion centuries ago when it began plundering the African continent of its mineral wealth, timber, wild game animals, and, of course, humans. The Portuguese held the first public European sale of African slaves in 1444, and British, French, Dutch, Spanish, American, Canadian, and Scandinavian slave traders soon followed, capturing, chaining, raping, murdering, starving, and shipping 11 million African men, women, and children. This practice was neatly abstracted in four assimilable words: the Transatlantic Slave Trade (Hochschild, 2005). These four words masked the hatred embedded in the trade. They erased the vileness and villainy. My list of gerunds, which could easily be expanded to include terrorizing, marching, torturing, starving, and countless others barely succeeds at providing names for practices intrinsic to the Transatlantic Slave Trade, but it is an effort to attach actions to the term itself so that it can call forth suitable horror.

And, although this has taken centuries to accomplish, the term the *Transatlantic Slave Trade* now conjures what it stands for. Of course, the Trade was hardly all that Whites carried out on the African continent. White colonialists forced millions more Africans into bondage and slavery on the African continent. Further, they profited to a staggering extent, well beyond what was a common practice even into the 18th century, when three quarters of all people on the planet were in forced labor of some kind (Hochschild, 2005).

Centuries later, Africans are still enraged by this treatment, and they remain mistrusting of the nations who perpetrated and profited from colonization and the Trade. This lack of trust and rage inform African attitudes toward the West in general, but have particularly tragic consequences in the context of HIV/AIDS, where Western science does have a hegemony in identifying the etiology and cure for this pandemic. As if believing that accepting any dominant Western position will be

threatening to Africa and Africans, some African leaders have been reluctant to take on “proven” Western theories about the causes and best treatment of HIV/AIDS. Instead, they have persisted in seeking alternative perspectives, even marginalized Western ones.

Thus, the current relationship between large segments of the African health community and the West with regard to the HIV/AIDS epidemic is extremely complex and fraught. Although Africa constitutes only 10% of the world’s population, it accounts for 60% of AIDS infections. In any one day, three times as many people die of AIDS in Africa than perished in the World Trade Center on that single fateful day in 2001. The life expectancy of an African is 47, more than 30 years shorter than the life expectancy of a person living in a rich developed country. Yet, between 1980 and 2001, despite the overwhelming need, foreign aid per person expressed in 2002 dollars fell from \$32 to \$22 per African. Further, between 1990 and 1996, the World Bank loaned Sub-Saharan Africa a total of only \$116.3 million for control of all sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. No monies were distributed between 1996 and 1998, when the developed world was starting to discover effective therapies. In these years, donors expressed the belief that the problems plaguing Africans were ones that only Africans could solve; the donors had done as much as they could (Sachs, 2005).

Many Africans have interpreted the messages embedded in these modest expenditures—and rationales for them—in the light of past historical practices when overtly genocidal policies were common practice. The interpretations, in turn, have influenced current national policies. It is against this backdrop that President Thabo Mbeki, South Africa’s second democratically elected president, gave his opening address at the XIII International AIDS conference in July 2000. Mbeki focused on poverty and indifference as the most significant problems facing Africans, and as the root cause of the AIDS pandemic.

Poverty is the main reason why babies are not vaccinated, why clean water and sanitation are not provided, why curative drugs and other treatments are unavailable and why mothers die in childbirth. It is the underlying cause of reduced life expectancy, handicap, disability and starvation. Poverty is a major contributor to mental illness, stress, suicide, family disintegration and substance abuse. Every year in the developing world 12.2 million children under 5 years die, most of them from causes which could be prevented for just a few U.S. cents per child. They die largely because of world indifference, but most of all they die because they are poor. (Mbeki, 2000)

Mbeki did not use this world stage to announce that he would allow antiretroviral treatment (ARV) to be made available in South Africa, as so many had hoped he would. Instead, he made it clear that he was still asking questions, trying to understand what caused HIV/AIDS and what were the best and least toxic ways to treat it. The vast majority of the scientific community was appalled, millions all over the world aghast, knowing that his delay would cost hundreds of thousands of lives.

The delay in rolling out ARVs continued into 2004, when the South African government slashed its budget for the drugs from 270 million Rand to 90 million Rand. At the same time, the South African Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang reiterated her belief that certain foods—garlic, lemon, olive oil, and African yams—were useful in bolstering the immune system, and she encouraged South Africans to focus more on affordable treatments like diet than on drugs (Power, 2003).

I believe that the failure to adequately support a vigorous ARV program in South Africa today derives in part from the legacy of hatred and oppression. The skepticism, suspicion, and perhaps paranoia that color contemporary African assessments of White Western science are inextricably linked to the brutal handling of African men, women, and children centuries ago. Africans like Thabo Mbeki link current Western foreign aid strategies to past and present Western racism. Here is one way to frame Mbeki's implicit question and dilemma: Because racism murdered millions of Africans in the past, and because racism currently infects Western economic policy, how can it not permeate Western science, with lethal consequences once again for Africans? The African National Congress government policies, reacting to the legacy of hate 561 years after the first African slaves were sold in Portugal, have devastating consequences for the more than 5 million South Africans currently known to be infected with the HIV virus. Mbeki's caution, born of past hate, kills.

THE COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIP OF HATE AND KILLING

I am now going to take us far afield, weaving into this nest a famous graphic that I will describe in the hopes that you can see it in your mind's eye. On its flat surface, it depicts Napoleon's Russian campaign, showing the eastern march to Moscow and the disastrous return home. The thickness of the line stands for the numbers of men in the army. The top line on the left side of the page is thick, where 422,000 French soldiers massed at the Polish-Russian border in June 1812. The line thins as it moves toward the right, but is still a substantial line, for 100,000 soldiers remained in September when they arrived in Moscow, at what was a nearly deserted city, shown on the right. When the Russian army began to burn the city, Napoleon realized that there would be no capitol to claim. He made the decision to retreat. A darker, thinner line, below the other, depicts the army's retreat, tied to temperature and the day. In December, in the bitter cold, 10,000 men—a thin thread of a line—returned to the Nieman River, where the campaign had started (Tufte, 2001).

Clausewitz said that hatred for the foe is necessary to war. But did 412,000 French soldiers perish because their loathing of the Russians was so great as to render their deaths from starvation and cold meaningful to them? A French colonel offers insight into the motivations of the officers: duty and honor. But what would account for the motivation of the foot soldiers? Bonaparte himself said, "After victory there are no enemies, only men" (Schom, 1997). Is hate so easily reversed, or was it not present each step of the way to Moscow?

In the 20th century, in the 25 largest instances of collective violence, 191 million people died, of whom 60% were not fighters (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002). That is, 1 person perished every 15 seconds. Was each person who died hated by someone? If not, why were they killed?

These huge, unimaginable numbers also always scale down to one.

A client of mine recently did just that, in this case about a form of collective violation that affects her.

My client has a serious heart defect. Last winter she walked into my office fuming.

"Have you seen *Million Dollar Baby*? Do you know what it is about? Tell me what you know."

I tell her it's about a young woman who gets the Clint Eastwood character to train her to be a champion boxer.

"Wrong. Totally wrong. You don't even know how you've been manipulated. You haven't read anything about the fact that she becomes a quadriplegic and gets Eastwood, the prick, to kill her. He doesn't love her; he hates people with disabilities."

Many in the disability community saw Eastwood's choice in the film in just that way. Before the Oscars, the norm of protecting the plot had trumped talking about its controversial subject matter. In a sense, extending the courtesy of not revealing the plot to potential moviegoers had quashed discussion of euthanasia in the press. Few critics mentioned euthanasia. My client experienced this silence as one more manifestation of society's contempt and hatred of people with disabilities.

COURTESY AND COURAGE

Interesting how courtesy is relevant in one but not all facets of an issue. "Courtesy" for, or "sensitivity" to, the sensibilities of some "others" shows up in our language—the term *ethnic cleansing*, for example, is scrubbed of its hatred—and in our acts or failures to act. A friend told me about going to a church hall last November to hear a debate between two candidates. According to her, one candidate had flagrantly mischaracterized the other's stance on abortion, using inflammatory and hateful language. She wanted to rise from her seat and insist that the debate not continue until civil discourse was restored. But she didn't; she was unsure how to do it without being disruptive. She has stewed about her inaction ever since.

In *Defying Hitler*, Sebastian Haffner's (2002) important memoir about how liberal Germans found themselves grappling with Nazism, one anecdote presents a haiku-like version of the liberal German dilemma. In the spring of 1933, Haffner has a diary entry in which he analyzes Nazi anti-Semitism, calling it "something new in the history of the world: an attempt to deny humans the solidarity of every species that enables it to survive; to turn human predatory instincts against members of their own species, and to make a whole nation into a pack of hunting hounds" (p. 143).

A few weeks later, Haffner, who is a novice attorney, is in the library taking notes on a document he needs to prepare a case. Suddenly, loud noise interrupts the silence of the room. It is the SA, and they are rounding up Jews in other parts of the building. Realizing this, some in the library laugh, which unnerves Haffner. A while later, the SA enter. One approaches him and asks, "Are you Aryan?"

He wrote, "Before I had a chance to think, I said, 'Yes.' . . . A moment too late I felt the shame, the defeat . . . I had not lied, I had allowed something much worse to happen" (p. 151)

He deeply understands that the Nazi's embedded question was, "Are you a Jew or a Jew-hater?" Passing the test, he fails his own. He calls it a "terrible reverse, a defeat that would be almost impossible to make good." However, later, he does go on to reverse his reverse, fleeing Germany in 1938 and writing a handbook for English propagandists, who needed to understand Germans as part of the war effort.

Most of us have done, will do, will say, or will do the moral equivalent of Haffner's "Yes." That matters. But what we do next also matters. We can reverse our reverses. Faced with hate, many of us will feel overwhelmed and confused in the moment. After

all, most of us were taught better how to hate than how to counter hate. Yet, countering hate is our task.

HATE AND THE IMAGINATION

Imagination can help us counter hate. There are some wonderful examples and expressions of this. In two I love, our planet is a central image. In the first, Charlie Chaplin brilliantly shows us the effects of trivializing and trifling with our precious orb. In a remarkable scene from *The Great Dictator*, Chaplin, who financed this movie by himself in 1938, parodies Hitler and Mussolini. He performs a megalomaniacal ballet with a helium-filled globe, displaying the passionate gratification the character derives from dancing with, and being in control of, the world. Hitler firmly believed that he could do Napoleon one better, and as a consequence, in 4 years, 20 million people were violently killed between Berlin and Moscow, the distance between Washington DC and Miami.

In the second, Carl Sagan (1994), the astronomer and writer, responded to the image of our planet taken from Voyager I in 1990. The image has become known by his phrase, “the pale blue dot.” He wrote that “the earth is a dot in a vast ocean of dots”:

We succeeded in taking that picture [from deep space], and, if you look at it, you see a dot. That’s here. That’s home. That’s us. On it everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives . . . The Earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena. Think of the rivers of blood spilled by all those generals and emperors so that, in glory and in triumph, they could become the momentary masters of a fraction of a dot. Think of the endless cruelties visited by the inhabitants of one corner of [the dot] on the scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner, how frequent their misunderstandings, how eager they are to kill one another, how fervent their hatreds . . . [To my mind,] there is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we’ve ever known. (pp. 6–7)

Imaginatively, both Chaplin and Sagan counter hate.

Hate is not new in our home or in our homes. Working on my last book, *Common Shock* (Weingarten, 2004), about witnessing violence, took me into the terrain of hate at the largest scale possible (genocide and mass hate) and the smallest (one person’s hateful speech and actions toward another). Digging through, I found what others have: Although inhumanity, expressed as hate, has been constant, the resources to resist have also been continuously present. The question is whether the resources to resist the forces of dehumanization will keep pace with the means to manipulate our humanity.

Well, we must make this so. We must demand the most vigorous, fearless free press possible. We must practice tolerance and empathy, the surest antidotes to hate.

Here is a definition of empathy I embrace: Empathy is the ability to resonate emotionally with, yet stay aware of, what is distinct about the other’s experience. It requires imagination (Halperin, 1993).

Resisting hate requires imagination, but also the ability to unimagine. This fall, I reread *King Lear* to help me think about hope and hate. Turning to the Shakespeare scholar Harold C. Goddard (1951), I was struck by his view that although force can

impose order on chaos, it can never restore harmony. Only imagination can. He wrote, "Hatred and revenge are a plucking-out of the human imagination as fatal to [our] power to find [our] way in the universe as Cornwall's plucking out of Gloucester's eyes" (p. 556).

We need imagination to face hate and to transform it. And we need imagination to unimagine hate. Patricia Williams (2004), author and law professor, told an anecdote about urging her son to eat a piece of fish and his sulkily refusing, pushing it around on his plate, complaining about the bones. Annoyed, Williams told him, "You're in luck. They don't appear to be fish bones after all. I think they're big old spider legs." He looked "stricken" (p. 18).

A writer after my own heart, Williams moved from this domestic tale to the meaning of racial categories. "Like the spider legs in the fish," she wrote, "[racial categories] don't exist in any coherent, consistent, or scientific sense. Nevertheless they have great power over us. Once imagined it is hard to unimagine them" (p.18). Therefore, she challenged us, how do we unimagine the spider legs of race?

I love her question. Adapted, for us, how do we imagine a world without hate and unimagine a world with hate?

Jorie Graham, the American poet, described the voice of a poet whose writing had great impact on her as having "the sound of a sorrow that is inseparable from terminal anger" (Graham, 2004, p.10). I'd like to think that that is the sound I hear in my head when I perceive hate; I believe that it is a sound that can inspire me to counter hate.

I have heard that sound at a performance of Olivier Messiaen's "Quartet for the End of Time." The story behind the sound adds to its resonance for me. Messiaen, a French Catholic, was one of the most influential composers of the last century. A soldier during World War II, he was captured in 1940 along with other French soldiers and taken to a prisoner of war camp in Görlitz, Germany. Knowing who he was, a guard gave him pencils, music paper, and erasers. Months later, Messiaen, along with three other captured soldiers, was permitted to give a performance of the "Quartet" in the prison camp in the presence of 300 officers, guards, and prisoners (Rischin, 1998). In that time of horror and hate, someone unimagined the rules and imagined that this music, the work of imagination, should be heard.

Clinicians are musicians of sorts. We rely on what we hear to do our work. In the course of our work, we weave back and forth between imagining and unimagining. Our job is to hear hate and to unimagine its presence and to imagine its absence. Our job is to hear the spaces for a softening or even dissolution of hate and imagine what might be there instead. Listening well, truly hearing, leads to the work of tiny stitches, the intricate, patient back and forth of the needle of imagination, unimagining what is there, imagining what might be there, which had been there, what can be there again. This is the work of love I am devoted to doing.

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