On Discourse with an Enemy

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I must confess that I have undertaken the task of addressing this topic with a great deal of uneasiness. Living in Israel and in the Middle East in these times, and being an Israeli and a Jew, makes the subject of an enemy uncomfortably close; it is a strain on one's objectivity and neutrality. But to deal with this question from the point of view of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytically informed group relations has proved even more difficult than I had anticipated.

The question itself seems fairly straightforward: enemy is a ubiquitous designation and perception of our daily life with which we are all familiar. We have learned about the enemies of our nation in school, and we have all had, and still have, our childhood, adolescent, and adult life enemies. Some of us, depending on our age and experience, have known enemies on the battlefield, either firsthand or remotely. Our daily politics are full of old and new enemies, real and imagined ones. We all have a good deal to say about enemies and enmity as well-informed citizens and members of society. But do we, as psychoanalysts, have anything of importance to contribute to the understanding of what an enemy is, or how to deal with him or her? Can psychoanalysis tell us anything that is unique and pertinent about this problem? And does it have any course or solution to offer?

The answers to these questions are not easily forthcoming, nor are they particularly encouraging. The peculiar fact is that until recently psychoanalysis has almost entirely avoided direct engagement with these questions. Freud twice addressed the subject of war (1915, 1932). Much later, attention was focused on war again (Fornari, 1966) and in a symposium held in Israel on the "Psychological Bases of War" (Winnik et al., 1973). Prompted by the threat of the Cold War in the 1980s, the organization of Psychoanalysts for the Prevention of Nuclear War took a practical and political stance on human self-destructiveness and the meaning of silence in the face of such tendencies (Segal, 1987), and an entire issue of *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* was devoted to "Aggression in International Relations" (Mack, 1986). At the same time, Volkan (1985, 1986, 1988) offered a valuable elucidation of the concept of "enemy" to

which I shall return. Several attempts in the Israel Psychoanalytic Society to address issues raised by the occupation of the West Bank and the Intifada have frankly failed. The general conclusion was that we were entitled to our own opinions as private citizens, but that our psychoanalytic background did not w arrant a claim for a special position in these matters.

This relative dearth of meaningful contributions to the problem of enmity may appear baffling and almost bizarre in view of the central concern of psychoanalysis with conflict and drive, rivalry and competition, envy and greed, sadism and masochism, aggression and hatred, and even death and destructiveness. Is it legitimate, however, to reduce questions about enemy and enmity to these considerations? Do these concepts provide us with all the necessary and sufficient tools for dealing with this essential human phenomenon?

Enemies are usually encountered in the social sphere. The term designates a person or force that is regarded with hostility or believed to harbor hostile intentions toward us. An enemy may also, however, dwell within us; this is indeed one of the aspects highlighted through psychoanalysis. It seems to me that the heart of the difficulty of understanding and dealing with the notion of an enemy and enmity is that it is one of the most powerful, not to say dangerous, emanations of the conjunction of the inner world and the outer world. I propose that, difficult as that may be, we must learn to think of enmity as an entity spanning internal and external reality, the subjective inner world and the objective environment. Enmity is also, however, a bridge between "self" and "otherness," and hence also, at another level, between individual and group phenomena. Talking with an enemy is usually regarded as a significant advance toward resolving conflicts, insofar as it provides an alternative to physical fighting and allows for a symbolic level of discourse. Dialogue with an enemy is often, however, not possible for a long time, and depends on the kind of enemy he or she is perceived to be. A Palestinian leader has recently said: "There are two kinds of enemies: the enemy you talk to, and the enemy you don't talk to." The dramatic handshake of Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat, viewed across a shrinking world with hope, disbelief, and astonishment by people far removed from the actual conflict, marked the instantaneous transformation of the enemy one does not talk to into an enemy one talks with. What defines the enemy we talk to, or the one we don't talk to? How can we turn an enemy we don't discourse with into one that we do? The answer to these dilemmas seems to me to lie in the dynamics of creativity. It is probably as creative an act as we may ever be able to perform, to be able to regard an enemy as part of us and yet as existing

separately and in his or her own right.

I intend to look at enemy and enmity from the perspectives of individual-intrapsychic and group relations dynamics. I shall touch on key concepts like boundary, otherness and strangeness, and large-group processes. My remarks are roughly divided into three areas. First, I shall examine enmity within the psychoanalytic and the group-process frames of reference. Second, I shall focus on certain characteristics and derivatives of these approaches, reviewing different levels of discourse with an enemy. Last, and perhaps most important, I shall touch on the most difficult question: does our examination of this subject point to or offer guidelines for potential solutions?

THE CONCEPT OF AN ENEMY

Psychoanalysis has always had to contend with the tension between an interactive-interpersonal and an internal-subjective perspective. The preference in psychoanalysis, however, has usually been for elucidating and interpreting the intrapsychic realm. The level the theory speaks of is that of internal fields of forces, perhaps best described as internal relationships and relatedness. It has far less to say about real social and political relationships.

What seems to emerge from a review of the intrapsychic level is that we can distinguish between two enemy categories which differ in terms of psychic structure, internal organization, and developmental level. The earlier, more primitive kind is the preoedipal enemy. The relationship with this enemy is governed by splitting and projective identification; it is marked by polarization and uncompromised evil. In Volkan's terms (1986), this enemy is the best suitable target for the externalization of all our bad parts. Ego and superego levels mobilized are earlier and more primitive; they involve concreteness and lack of readiness for symbolic treatment and discourse, and readily tend toward direct expressions of drives and drive derivatives, like oral rage and cannibalistic wishes and fantasies. These levels of relatedness render this an enemy with whom we cannot have a discourse. Talking, or, more correctly, verbal exchange, may occur, but it is in the service of the direct and literal expression and satisfaction of aggressive and destructive wishes and impulses. Words become weapons and are used to attack, invade, dominate, and eviscerate the enemy.

The more sophisticated and advanced enemy is the oedipal enemy, with whom we can have a talking discourse. The internal relatedness to the oedipal enemy is marked by the complexity that characterizes post-ambivalent relationships, with negative feelings of hatred and rivalry', but also with positive feelings of love, admiration, identification, and emulation. The relationship with the oedipal enemy draws on more advanced ego and superego organizations. Defense mechanisms used are also more mature; they involve repression and more sophisticated levels of psychological operations, like symbolization and abstraction. Stern's (1985) description of the "verbal self' as the highest self-organization achieved in early development is relevant here. The higher level signified by verbal development, abstract thought, and symbolization has, however, causes and implications that are inherent to the level of verbal discourse, yet go far beyond the mere fact of verbalization. They suggest a third frame of reference, a shared cultural order and a type of "otherness," on which I shall expand below.

The intrapsychic enemy becomes a realistic enemy when it manifests itself in social reality. The main arena in which this takes place is that of relationships within and between groups. My remarks here are based on Bion's (1961) work in groups and on numerous observations of these processes within Tavistock Group Relations Conferences, which study group processes in the tradition of Bion and others.[1]

One notion that comes out of this work is that of being positioned "on the boundary." This notion needs to be expanded and explicated. Boundaries occupy a central position in psychoanalytic ego-psychology and in systemic models of group and organizational behavior. Boundaries involve notions of strength and permeability as well as rigidity and elasticity. Above all, there is usually some question about the degree of clarity with which they are set up and defined. Boundaries are also, however, meeting grounds where different sides can and do come in contact with one another. Boundaries sometimes allow, or include, a certain amount of "no-man's-land" which is not clearly under the jurisdiction of any party. Often enough such no-man's-land is precisely the territory in which encounters and testing of limits take place without the danger and risk of all-out war with full responsibility and consequences. In psychoanalytic terms, this suggests the transitional space and transitional phenomena described by Winnicott (1971). I have pointed out that boundaries may be drawn sharply between self and object, contributing to their definition and separateness; they may also, however, encircle and envelop self and object, as in states of merger and fusion. I have described these differing deployments of

boundaries in relation to underlying dimensions of experiencing self and object as Doing or as Being (Erlich, 1990, 1993).

It is extremely helpful to think of boundaries not as well-defined, razor thin lines, which cannot support or contain any life, but as gray areas and no-man's territories, in which a great deal of actual and significant living takes place. This usually happens through some variety of "play"—in the sense that it does not lead immediately to real consequences in well-defined areas of living. The concept of a moratorium is an important instance of such playful extension of boundaries, in this case of temporal and role boundaries, in the transition from late adolescence to adulthood.

Such a boundary region, or better yet frontier zone, has much to offer in terms of elasticity and permeability. Very often, it can give birth to and support what is creative, novel, and psychologically pertinent. Not only positive creative aspects of life, however, have their roots here; negative creations, such as enmity, are also fundamentally linked to the psychological transactions and creations at the boundary. It is this domain and the kind of life that exists within and close to it that I have in mind when I speak of the enemy as created and coming to life on the boundary.

If we consider for a moment the dynamics that take place in a large group, we find that enmity7 occupies a pivotal role. A perennial and centrally important maneuver in the large group is to designate an enemy. One way this takes place is by splitting the large group into subgroups and splinter-systems. Such fragmenting of the whole seems so natural, and occurs so frequently and swiftly, that it is difficult to discern and track. This process of divisiveness is the equivalent of the intra-psychic splitting of the whole bad object in order to assimilate and subjugate it.

The governing fantasy is to reduce the intolerable tension by bringing about "peace"—that wished-for state in which the ongoing and difficult frustration will finally stop—through one subgroup gaining control over the entire group. The actual struggles produced by this elusive fantasy-wish can lead to extremely destructive behavior, ranging from the stark violence of the lynch mob to the fragmentation and disappearance of clear thinking and adaptive reality testing in academic large-group settings. Behind the multiple splits and fights against a shifting variety of enemies is, however, the unconscious wish for final and total submersion in the whole, for a state in which the individual will cease to be a

problem because of his or her separate existence and identity. To hold on to one's identity and individuality in the large group may therefore be tantamount to an act of war and should not be undertaken without sufficient strength to back it up, for the counterattack will not fail to come. The group feels threatened by individuality and individuation, which hinders its quest for peace through homogeneity. It will mobilize its destructiveness in order to diffuse this dangerous and offensive individuality and submerge it in the totality of the large group. Threats to identity in the large group (Turquet, 1975) thus come from two sides: one source is the wish to submerge oneself in the totality of the group, leading to the acquiescent, willing undermining and erosion of one's personal identity; the other source is the actual aggressive threat of the large group against its internal enemy—one's claim to adhere to and develop one's personal identity within it.

Enmity within the large group is thus a tremendously fluctuating, treacherous, and diffuse entity. An enemy identified one moment may be totally disregarded the next. Under these conditions, it is impossible to carry on meaningful discourse with either friend or foe. It is this constant internal shifting and fluidity that makes the large group so dangerous. Its internal instability allows it to be tilted suddenly and irrationally in the direction in which an enemy is identified. The discovery of an external enemy brings about a momentary stabilization of the group, and hence an alleviation of its tremendous inner tensions. This makes the large group extremely vulnerable to being manipulated into seeking and destroying real or imaginary enemies. Once again, the enemy takes shape on the group's boundary, be it a physical, geographical, or ideological boundary. In this boundary region of the large group we find many different sorts of enemies: barbarian invaders, religious heretics, false messiahs, and political reformers bent on changing the group. As leadership is always a boundary function, the group's own leaders are also on the boundary and may easily and momentarily be turned into its enemies. History is full of accounts that substantiate this thesis; recent events in Eastern Europe offer a number of pertinent examples.

HOW DOES ONE HAVE DISCOURSE WITH AN ENEMY?

There seem to be several stock alternatives or preferred answers to this question. The one most idealized in our age is that of talking to an enemy. A caricatured version of this appeared in the 1967 movie *Cool Hand Luke*, where the catch phrase of the Bad Guy was, "What we've got here is a failure to

communicate." This drawled-out declaration preceded the institution of some form of maddening cruelty. Freud's preferred solution discloses his powerful rationalistic bias. While war is regarded as stemming from instinctual drives, discourse with the enemy originates in the rational and reality-bound part of man, in the service of adaptation and survival (Freud, 1915b). Freud's leanings toward rationalistic conflict resolution were deeply embedded in the cultural and ideological tradition in which he grew up (Gay, 1988) and which he continued to represent almost in spite of himself. A straight line leads from this rationalistic bias to the pessimism he expressed on many occasions.

Other schools of psychoanalysis, particularly the Kleinian, offer the solution of splitting off the bad and threatening aspects of oneself and projecting them into the object. This allows for maintaining simultaneous distance from and relatedness to the object by means of projective identification, in which the object is both preserved and controlled (Segal, 1964). Splitting off the threatening, anxiety-producing parts of oneself alleviates the anxiety that threatens the ego with disintegration. Similarly, projecting valued parts of the self into an idealized good object serves as a defense against impending loss and separation. Projecting these split-off parts into the external object and identifying it with them mean that they now control and possess the object. In this way the object is experienced as under the control of parts of the self that are now "encapsulated" in it (Bion, 1962). The object is thus related to in a manner that preserves and controls it, as a source of either idealized or threatening parts of the self, depending on the nature of what was projected into it. This defensive process actually implies efforts to relate to the object through its infiltration, conquest, splitting, and dissolution, with the eventual result being its absorption and assimilation into the self. These are not efforts at speaking or having a dialogue with the enemy, but of controlling and dominating him by penetrating and intruding into him (projective identification), or by mastering him through his becoming a part of the self (introjective identification) (Bion, 1962). This is also tantamount to cannibalizing the enemy and, at a higher level, absorbing him through intermarriage and cultural assimilation.

Assimilation of the enemy at a more advanced level takes place through identification with the aggressor. In this defensive mode, fear of the menacing figure is handled through its internalization and identification with it at the expense of the self. The child identifying with the aggressor experiences himself as possessing the latter's power and might. He can now act, and indeed he does, as he experiences this aggressor. He adopts patterns of thought, values, and behavior that characterize his

object of identification, not himself. This mechanism is widespread (in connection with surviving the Holocaust, as well as Chinese and Japanese treatment of prisoners of war) and evermore dangerous. While positive identification out of love and appreciation is rewarded by the enrichment of the self, identification with the aggressor out of fear exacts a heavy price in terms of the alienation and shrinking of the self and setting up a false self-organization (Thompson, 1940; Winnicott, 1960). In extreme cases this mechanism may lead to a degree of impoverishment of the self that reaches borderline and even psychotic proportions.

Identification with the aggressor points to the dangers of appeasement, of dealing with the enemy in an acquiescent, non-confrontational, non-combative way. As morally distasteful and potentially dangerous as it may be to respond forcefully to aggression, there is also danger in not fighting back, in yielding and assimilating one's own identity with that of the enemy. Such a course may clearly lead to one's disappearance as a viable psychological and/or physical entity. This eventuality must therefore always be weighed against the quest for preserving peace at any cost.

So far we have discussed the enemy who is familiar and so close as to be part of the self. The enemy is, however, also the "other" who is unfamiliar and unknown. It is in this sense that he (the enemy may, of course, be male or female) appears at the specific developmental stage of around eight months of age, and his very appearance—always experienced as surprising and unexpected—arouses existential fright and anxiety. This "other-stranger" who provokes this stranger-anxiety is frightening because of his very otherness. He appears at the exact moment when fusion with the mother becomes an almost conscious source of pleasure and security, stemming from the experience of blissful merger. The stranger threatens to undercut and interrupt that merger. This usually provokes in the infant an immediate focusing of attention, reorganization, mobilization of forces, and readiness to face danger—in brief, an arousal and anxiety response. The extent to which the arousal gives rise to curiosity and exploration—as against anxiety, apprehension, and projection— is probably co-determined by a number of factors. It may well be related to the mother-child dyadic capacity for establishing and tolerating transitional space and phenomena. This capacity, in turn, may have to do with the extent to which dyadic interaction is characterized by a "goodness of fit," in which both parties are capable of affective attunement (Stern, 1985) and synchronization of their experiential modalities (Erlich and Blatt, 1985). The extent to which the strangers appearance arouses anxiety is especially related to the degree of dyadically experienced

security about Being-relatedness (Erlich, 1990), i.e., the experience of merger and union. Where this is shaky, the infant is more prone to mobilize into a Doing-mode, in which preparatory anxiety responses are augmented.

The anxiety response to the stranger is universal. Enlarging on this, we may say that the stranger is the prototype of the internal psychic enemy that becomes a social reality. His threat is the very archaic threat to destroy our peace, to snatch us out of the calmness that comes through Being—the merger with another in the experience of simply being alive. Historically and currently, there is always great readiness to project onto the stranger this role of the enemy, the "destroyer of the peace." But who is this stranger? The stranger I am talking about is not a distant and unknown entity. He lives close by, almost within society, yet is not fully a part of it. He occupies a "boundary position," like the leader in the group and the analyst in the psychoanalytic situation. Taking up the boundary position makes all of them natural targets for the projection of hatred and enmity. We see here the confluence of the enemy as a boundary creature and the other-stranger as both a stimulator and an object of enmity.

Such fence-straddling otherness, close and familiar and yet also different and strange, was depicted by Volkan (1986) as "the best reservoir for our bad externalized parts. . . [so that they] would be located in things and people who resemble us or are at least familiar to us—such as neighbors" (p. 187). At the same time, however, since "we do not wish to acknowledge on a conscious level that the enemy is like us," there sets in "the narcissism of minor difference" (ibid.)—a ritualistic focus on and enlargement of minor signs and distinctions in order to help differentiate between oneself and the "enemy-other."

This dual role of the other-stranger also plays an important part in the course of development, where stranger-anxiety gradually turns into recognition of the other's separate and independent existence. This recognition is an important basis for the development and maintenance of mature object relations (Sandler, 1977). It has, however, an additional facet. The anxiety in the face of the stranger-enemy is a primary, almost reflexive reminder of the limitations and liabilities of the self. In this sense it provides a necessary condition for realistic self-definition. Paradoxically, then, the anxiety stirred up in relation to the stranger-enemy provides a catalyst for the process of self-definition. To paraphrase, if there were no enemy, we would have had to invent him.

ARE THERE ANY SOLUTIONS?

Is it possible to find ways of talking and communicating with an enemy? I should like to finish with an attempt, almost certainly frustratingly partial and insufficient, to draw some tentative conclusions from what has been surveyed so far.

After analyzing the wish of nations to obtain their interests and passions, in his "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death," Freud (1915) poses the following dilemma: "It is, to be sure, a mystery why the *collective individuals* should in fact despise, hate and detest one another—every nation against every other—and even in times of peace. I cannot tell why that is so. It is just as though *when it becomes a question of a number of people*, not to say millions, all individual moral acquisitions are obliterated, and only the most primitive, the oldest, the crudest mental attitudes are left" (p. 288; italics mine). Freud finishes on a sober note, with an appeal for greater honesty and openness in relationships among people, and mainly with the authorities, which he expects will lead toward a turning point.

I believe that this hope is no longer so simplistically held and shared by all of us. It has been the bitter lesson of this century to come to distrust authority and to come to know its irrational and dangerous sides. Indeed, even the psychoanalytic establishment has not escaped criticism for its monolithic stance and what is perceived as the authoritarian nature of its inner political structure.

Freud feels that it is the individual who can be approached and understood, while it is the group, and particularly the large group, that makes human behavior so primitive and irrational. Some advances have taken place in our understanding since Freud's lines were written at the time of the First World War. I suggest that enmity is indeed an inherent part of the individual human psyche; but enmity is also on the boundary between internal and external reality. It takes on its familiar meaning and shape as a social phenomenon when we meet and work with it at the group, system, and organizational levels. These levels, therefore, can no longer be ignored by psychoanalytic thinking.

This brings us back briefly to the dynamics of the large group. From all we know about these processes, even under the relatively controlled conditions of a working conference and with the participation of consultants, there can be only one conclusion: Large-group processes, with their fluctuations, regressions, and fragmentations, are highly lawful and regular. This is so even when the

participants have had the benefit of previous experience and impressive educational and cultural achievements. Therefore, if our aim is rational, enlightened political activity, large- group settings and events must be avoided and prevented as much as possible. It has been recently demonstrated again that large masses of people can be instrumental in changing the political order. But it is equally true that such mass movements and revolutionary upheavals may go in many directions; they do not always lead to freedom and democracy. There were large crowds and mobs involved in so many revolutions—in France, Russia, Nazi Germany, China, and more recently in Eastern Europe. The phenomenon of mass uprising is intertwined with popular visions of democracy; it provides, however, no assurances of the eventual outcome nor any protection against the danger of being manipulated by sinister powers to their own ends. Wherever possible, and especially where negotiations take place, small groups should be preferred to large groups. This may well be true also for gatherings that are not manifestly (yet are implicitly) political, such as symposia and conventions. Negotiations between enemy parties to a conflict need not only the small-group format, however. They also require the clarity and firmness of boundaries that guard against premature exposure, which threatens to throw the process back into the large group.

The small-group format in itself is, however, no guarantee for dialogue. Indeed, the need for dialogue is often glibly and unthinkingly advanced. Our own professional and personal biases (I am speaking as a psychoanalyst) are intertwined here in ways that may produce complications or even fallacies. We are trained in dialogue, and our deep belief in and commitment to discourse and discussion may sometimes border on a magical belief in the power of words. We tend to forget the tremendous importance of the psychoanalytic setting, with its combination of strict boundaries and open-endedness, in enabling, shaping, and contributing to the creation of dialogue, and then only after expending much time and tremendous efforts. Having witnessed attempts at dialogue with "labeled enemies" in professional group settings, I have been amazed at the degree and speed with which such sessions can become confrontational and coercive. Dialogue is based on the ability to recognize and respect the other's essential and rightful difference; this is diametrically opposed to regarding him or her as an enemy. We may be able to extend ourselves and even accord dialogic consideration to an opponent or an adversary. It is much more difficult to do this with a declared enemy, whose very designation as such immediately places him or her beyond the dialogic pale.

These dialogic considerations are related to the differentiation made above between preoedipal

and oedipal enemies. The distinction between these two enemies was seen to be a function of the developmental levels at which they are encountered, whether the encounter is primary and takes place in childhood, or a later, adult-life derivative. These differences account for an enemy with whom we can and do have discourse, as against one with whom we cannot and do not. A closer look into this differentiation reveals, however, that the different levels at which we experience our oedipal enemy are not confined to the mere verbality of the exchange, but extends to the wider implications and connotations of words and symbols.

Symbol formation is often approached from the vantage point of either the intrapsychic, emotional, and cognitive development that enables it, or the extra-individual, cultural framework that contains and transmits these symbols as cultural artifacts and into which the individual is induced. The area in which cultural symbols are created and used is, however, better conceived as a "third" area, which is, in Winnicott's (1971) sense, the area of shared experience that gives rise to play and creativity. This third area, which is indeed where culture comes into being, is the transitional space that envelops the mother-child dyad just as it is being created by them. Situated between the inner world and the external one, between subjective objects and realities and objective ones, it provides an experiential bridge that allows both sides to become alive, to be experienced as psychologically real and viable. This is also, however, the juncture where the oedipal constellation comes together with the notion of transitional space: both are founded on experience, recognition, and encounter with a "third" entity. Oedipal development requires, above all else, the capacity for recognition of a third, another whose existence is on the boundary of the earlier established dyadic oneness and mutuality. Recognition of the other-stranger can be the source of anxiety and apprehension, in which the stranger is the enemy. If, however, the other, or the "third," is experienced as being created and coming to life on this boundary, occupying a space and sharing a frame that partakes of the communality of the dyad, he will be related to positively, as an object of curiosity and exploration.

How does this come about? It seems that the dyadically created transitional space is able to accommodate a "third," which is experienced as an intrinsic part of it, when he or she shares and participates in the framework that enables the transitional space in the first place—a frame of creative illusion and shared symbols. The accommodation of the "third" is therefore greatly assisted and transacted by symbols of various kinds. Symbols, by their very' nature, are experienced as such a

"third"—a semiotic frame that is neither entirely of the self, nor of the mother-environment, but that exists both separately and yet together with the united and merged self-object dyad. Thus symbols—words and language, sounds and gestures, bodily expressions and cultural artifacts—are all part of the wider framework we call culture, of a "third world," encompassing self and other and lending experience its special form, content, and means for further developmental transmutation. It is in this sense that we can have discourse with an oedipal enemy: We share with him not merely a language, but the comforting and enabling experience of the shared frame created out of common language and cultural symbols. Although to the observer this may appear to be a discourse between two sides, in actuality it takes place between two who are aware of their common "third leg"—the wider framework they share and adhere to, and even invest with authority. We may thus claim that oedipal experience has its roots in much earlier developmental periods, in which the "third," or other, though not yet a real partner, nevertheless exists as a potential presence on the boundary of shared experience, where such potential transitional phenomena are created. Preoedipal development, in this sense, refers to an absence of or disability in having this creative experience, and being doomed to a mere "two-person" existence, and therefore to splitting and projection, and to having enemies with whom one cannot share anything, let alone have a discourse.

The actual importance of the third in preventing movement toward splitting may be observed in small groups, where the presence of a consultant who takes up the role of such a third contributes significantly to the management of projections that lead to breakdown of discourse. The centrality of the role of the third in political negotiations between enemy parties—transforming preoedipal, nontalking enemies into oedipal enemies capable of discourse—is vividly illustrated by the part played by the United States in the peace talks between Israel and its Arab neighbors, which reaches far beyond that of an arbiter or courier. It is striking that in all of the White House peace ceremonies, beginning with the Camp David Accords and down to the latest declarations of peace with the PLO and Jordan, the pictorial image is always a triadic one, in which the presence of the president of the United States provides the significant third side of the triangle that enables the Israeli and Arab leaders to shake hands.

It is unrealistic to make prescriptions for advancing societies from one developmental level to another. Such complex movement takes place and is measurable only over protracted historical time units. One wonders, however, whether in the shrinking universal village of our times changes may be

induced that might contribute to the creation of common, cross-cultural semiotic and symbolic frames of reference, which could in turn foster a sense of shared actual frames of reference. The development of common languages, symbolic systems, and cultural heritage can contribute much to the alleviation of unresolved enmities. Modern technology and communication media have already gone a long way toward creating certain collective cultural vistas. Perhaps more could be done. However, this is in no way a utopian dream of messianic peace and millennium. It is merely a step, of limited potential, toward turning preoedipal into oedipal enemies. If it is true, as Volkan says, that "our current knowledge of human nature tells us that enemies are here to stay" (1986, p. 190), then perhaps the best we can hope for is to change the enemy from his preoedipal position of total badness and evil to the oedipal level of rivalry and competitiveness coupled with love and affection, and thus from the enemy to whom we do not talk to the enemy with whom we can and do talk.

The current peace talks between Israel and the Arabs provide an example of how actual contact contributes to the reduction of strangeness and projections. Yet contact will probably produce new and unforeseen difficulties and in itself is no guarantee of the disappearance of enmity and the triumph of reason and peace. Many other factors interact with and activate the psychological ones. Siblings who become enemies over dividing an inheritance are not strangers, but the loss suddenly revives old anxieties of shortage, lack of supplies, and fantasies that there may not be enough for all. We must be open to the entire range of realistic possibilities, including the emergence of new and insurmountable difficulties, as relationships with yesterday's enemies develop and deepen.

It seems that the understanding of the concept of enemy presents us with numerous paradoxes. An enemy at one and the same time partakes of so many opposites: internal and external reality, preoedipal and oedipal, other-stranger and known-familiar, a part of us and yet not. These seeming contradictions and paradoxes lead to the understanding I suggested here, namely that "enemy" is a boundary concept, or a transitional entity, which occupies an exceedingly important intrapsychic position and social role where so many human attributes and dilemmas come together, where so many polar dimensions and entities actually meet. To understand what an enemy is, is to understand what is essentially human.

In closing, let me address once again the issue of distance and lack of it in our relatedness to the enemy. As Volkan (1986) has noted, the enemy tends to be our neighbor, who is closer and more similar

to us than we care to admit, leading to narcissistic highlighting of minor differences in the service of differentiating ourselves from him. His closeness and similarity make the neighbor, however, a suitable target for externalization and projection of the "bad" parts of ourselves in the first place. Our ability to have discourse with an enemy is therefore related to the degree to which he can be defined clearly and is not too closely intertwined with our own self-definition. Distance, boundaries, and separateness make the task of discourse more manageable, though not necessarily more creative. Splitting, projective identification, identification with the aggressor, and similar regression-enhancing conditions make differentiation and individuation of ourselves and the enemy more difficult, rendering talking and discourse impossible. Perceiving the enemy as the preoedipal "other" leads to his dehumanization and demonization. A more advanced, oedipal view of the enemy's "otherness," however, enhances the discourse. At the triangular-oedipal level of development, acceptance of the enemy's "otherness" is a concession to his humanness, to his being a part and a member of the same widely shared entity—the "third" presence of human cultural existence. Such communality, however, also paradoxically allows for the differentiation and individuation of persons and groups; it alone can ensure creative conflict resolution instead of fighting and destruction. Under suitable psychological and developmental conditions, "otherness" can provide a basis for novel and creative contact and intercourse replacing relatedness through fantasy alone, which can foster the wish to destroy and assimilate the enemy.

Truly creative discourse with the enemy can come only with our willingness to immerse ourselves in the "potential space" we both share, in which parts of the enemy and parts of ourselves are fused and intermingled. We may then be able to perceive, however briefly and fleetingly, the shared elements of our common humanity. One of the most creative acts we may ever be capable of is experiencing our enemy as a part of ourselves, while also recognizing his existence in his own right, as separate and distinct from us.

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Notes

1 This working model, and its theoretical underpinnings and developments, are described in Colman and Bexton (1975) and Colman and Geller (1985).