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e-Book 2015 International Psychotherapy Institute

from *The Psychoanalytic Century* David E. Scharff M.D.

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Psychoanalysis has a long history as a progressive social movement dedicated to the alleviation of common misery. In a letter to Putnam, Freud wrote, "the recognition of our therapeutic limitations reinforces our determination to change other social factors so that men and women shall no longer be forced into hopeless situations" (Turkle 1978, p. 142).

And in The Future of an Illusion (Freud 1927):

> One thus gets the impression that civilization is something which was imposed on a resisting majority by a minority which understood how to obtain possession of the means to power and coercion . . . [p. 6] . . .
>
> It is to be expected that these underprivileged classes will envy the favored ones their privileges and will do what they can to free themselves from their own surplus of privation. Where this is not possible, a permanent measure of discontent will exist within the culture concerned . . . [I]t is understandable that the suppressed people will develop an intense hostility towards a culture whose existence they make possible by their work, but in whose wealth they have too small a share, [p. 12]

Freud's radical analysis of civilization and its illusions, which was the major focus of his later work, was continued by Reich, Fromm, Marcuse, and others in a loose association that became known as the Frankfurt school. The work of Adorno and colleagues (1982) on the authoritarian personality

stands as perhaps the most influential research projects in the history of psychology. Yet for the most part, psychoanalytic political writings are untaught in the psychoanalytic institutes and remain outside the scope of clinical discourse. The powerful tools for social research, cultural analysis, and change that psychoanalytic theory offers have been largely ignored.

In its withdrawal from the social realm, psychoanalysis in the United States has come to be viewed as politically conservative and socially impotent. To make matters worse, the clinical field has been subject to internal and external forces that further diminish its social relevance and even threaten its survival as a therapeutic modality accessible to more than the elite few.

One way in which we can return psychoanalysis to the social arena is to assist in the understanding of psychological phenomena underlying racism. As analysts we are in a privileged position to view the complex interplay between personal and cultural factors that support both racism and the denial of racism. Studies confirming that there is no acceptable genetic basis for the concept of race (Cavalli-Sforza et al. 1994), make it all the more apparent that dividing the world into black and white is a delusion of civilization. People are not black or white. Where the line is drawn is politically and psychologically motivated. Skin color is a relatively changeable local variation and phenotypically similar populations may be genotypically

quite different while genotypically similar populations appear phenotypically similar. That “race” is the only ethnic grouping in this culture that does not allow for the possibility of dual identity, belies its delusional rigidity. While “race” has powerful psychological meanings, it was important not to lend the word continuing scientific respectability, as other than a social construction tied to particular times and cultures. Furthermore, it is becoming clearer and clearer that all humans, as a species, developed in Africa less than 250,000 years ago, and that the genetic diversity of the entire world is contained in that continent.

Other disciplines, such as history and anthropology, raise questions about the danger of reifying concepts like culture and ethnicity (Wolf 1982). Alba (1990) has concluded that for the vast majority of whites living in America, ethnic identity had become a symbolic identity, a vestigial attachment to a few ethnic symbols imposing little cost on everyday life. Nearly two-thirds of all native-born white Americans view themselves as having mixed ethnicity. However, on a not quite conscious level, a new ethnic identity is emerging, that of a European American. From that group, which has little real connection to the customs of Europe, Asians, Latinos, African Caribbeans, and African Americans are excluded. The new European-American identity becomes, once again, an ethnicity of privilege and exclusion.

These issues can enter the clinical realm in various ways. A patient became more self-consciously Italian as our work progressed. His dream of me as a moose led to associations to his father's wondering about his analysis with a big-nosed Jew. The moose/Moskowitz/-Jew image was a recurring image in the analysis. Often it seemed that subtle anti-Semitic images and feelings and a heightened sense of being Italian were used as a way of distancing me and making my interpretations foreign and less relevant.

A child patient was the son of a black American soldier and a Japanese woman. Before the age of 2, he was adopted into a middle-class family with a black father (who soon died) and a white mother. My patient looked "black." His new mother considered him black and talked with me about the problems of raising a black child in this culture. Several years into the therapy, in a context I do not remember, I mentioned something about the difficulty of being black in this racist world. He responded angrily: "I am not black!" It then became clear that he viewed himself as Japanese, which suddenly gave new meaning to his longstanding kung-fu fantasies.

If a general statement can be made regarding how psychoanalytic treatments can respond to race and ethnic issues, it is that a primary transforming aspect of analysis is the analysis of transference, and that racist and anti-Semitic transferences and countertransference are analyzable in much the same ways as other transferences with one important caveat. Since

racism and anti-Semitism are touchy subjects, difficult to talk about, and since one's attitudes about these issues are packed with secret and potentially embarrassing meanings, both analysts and patient may be more reluctant to talk about and analyze these issues than they would other issues.

In a recent presentation, Dorothy Evans Holmes (1997) stated that even though there is increased willingness to admit to the ubiquity of countertransference reactions, and a de-emphasis on their being bad, there is still debate about how to make use of countertransference reactions, and no particular emphasis is placed on the use of a therapist's own training analysis as the arena in which one's counter-transference potential is mastered. (In my own informal survey, some analysts spent much of their training analysis talking about patients, while some spent very little.) Joining with Holmes on her point, I would add that most countertransference narratives in the literature have a moral: this is how my countertransference helped me understand my patient. Not, this is how I've been blind, I've missed something, I've hurt my patient.

Holmes goes on to state that racial feeling and defenses against them, which I think she sees as a more generic or culturally universal countertransference, should be explored in every training analysis. This seems to imply that racism can be a topic of every analysis. I think this is a radical position that deserves extensive consideration.

Holmes takes the further—and I think even more controversial position—that the usually didactic approaches to understanding one's racial fantasies and prejudices may be worse than useless in that they reinforce distance from scary feelings. Though supervision provides the opportunity for some change, Holmes feels that supervision alone is inadequate and that self-analysis also falls short. To be adequately addressed, these issues must be dealt with in the therapist's own therapy.

If Holmes is correct, and I think she is, one should be able to see racist elements in all analyses. Yet there is a notable paucity of writing about race-related issues that arise in a white-white analytic dyad. There is an interesting case (Rodgers 1960), powerfully presented, in which a white southern middle-class male psychoanalyst discusses the short (five-month long), unsuccessful treatment of a southern middle-class man. The patient, a 43-year-old bachelor who lived with his mother, started out as a professional pacifist and active member of an organization devoted to the abolition of capital punishment, and ended treatment as a leader of the White Citizens Council, an organization devoted to segregation and capital punishment as a way of "keeping the Negroes in line" (p. 241)-One might call this a negative therapeutic reaction.

This upper middle-class white man was primarily raised by a black woman, who also served as cook and maid. While his parents were

obsessional, uptight neat-freaks, his babysitter was permissive and indulgent. The patient's sexual life was divided into permissible sex with easy, degraded women and a phobic avoidance of sex with forbidden women—virgins, wives, and widows. Early in the therapy, after some analysis of his sexual inhibition relating to his fear of being like a black man—"Negroes were like animals about sex" (p. 240) —the patient allows himself to be seduced into a sexual encounter with a respectable widow. He could not believe that the analyst did not condemn this misbehavior, and that respectable people could be so casual about sex, which he associated with black people. Was his analyst really a black man who was making him into a black man?

He then had a dream in which his mother was lying helpless on the ground about to be gored by a huge bull with black horns. Rousing himself from momentary paralysis, and with a feeling of unlimited strength, he leapt at the bull and pulled off his horns with his bare hands. He felt a great sense of exhilaration. He associated the back horns to black men, his father's black cane, and the analyst's black homed-rimmed glasses. He had the thought that maybe it would be a good thing if all black men were castrated. Two days later the analyst received a letter terminating the treatment. Six months later, he received from the patient the first of several mailings of racist literature from the organization of which he was now a leader. As a complex racial transference had evolved, in which, without either patient or analyst identified as black, both patient and analyst were experienced at different

times by the patient as being black, lending support to Holmes's hypothesis that the racial dynamic is present in all therapies.

Rodgers comments that his patient's relationship to two mothers: one white, uptight and unavailable, the other black, permissive and indulgent, provide ready-made templates for his tabooed and degraded sexual scripts. He goes on to say that white children brought up by black nannies not only have two mothers, but by extension two fathers, with the black male becoming the oedipally feared and hated father who can take way the source of sexual pleasure. He notes that this situation was once common in the South. While it may be somewhat less common, it is still common. How many white middle-class children are raised by women of color who leave their own children sometimes thousands of miles away? It is not surprising that someone raised by mothers of two colors would bring these representations to analysis. However, in other cases where color was not particularly present in childhood, racial representations still arise. I'll give a personal example.

> I remember vividly a dream from my therapy. In it I was denied access to a building by an imposing black doorman. My therapist pointed out that his own name was Schwartz, which I needed him to remind me means "black" in Yiddish. The associations and interpretation that followed related to my oedipally viewing him like my father, by denying me access to my mother's body and not providing me with the key that would give me the power to turn her on. He was my "Schwartz-father," my black father of the night. That I portrayed him as a doorman, with its racist stereotypes, was an attempt to diminish his power. Other dreams and fantasies about black men led back to my analyst, and I'd like to say that this in turn led me to

further insights into my fear and envy of black men. And it did, but not in that analysis. The image stayed with me over the years and got elaborated and further analyzed, and I still work on it.

I grew up in a rundown, impoverished white town, in which direct interaction with black people played no part in my early life. Being a Jew was never far from my mind. Being called "Christ-killer" and "dirty Jew" as I walked to school made it hard to escape. My father's ready explanation was that we were envied, we had a culture, a history, had survived for millennia. This was not my experience. I did not feel envied. I felt attacked. Seeing the civil rights struggle, I felt more identified with blacks fighting against oppression (Malcolm X, Eldridge Cleaver) than with my father's version of triumphant Jews.

My father would get angry whenever "ghetto" was used to designate black communities such as Harlem. He would say no one stops anyone from walking in or out of Harlem—that's not a ghetto. In a ghetto, Jews were locked in at night. What I was not able to see until recently is that by not asking my father about his life, what he knew of oppression, and the ghetto, I was denying his strength and my envy of his knowledge and ability to survive, which I displaced onto blackness.

Maybe I was lucky to have a therapist named Schwartz. I know many men who secretly wished they were black, who were, in Kathleen White's term, "black-identified white men." Black men were fantasized to be more athletic, sexual, and the like, but as importantly they are seen as standing in angry opposition to contemporary culture. We know that by far the largest buyers of rap music are white adolescents.

Yet again, when whites' fantasies of blackness come up in the literature, they are almost invariably reported by analysts of color. What makes these issues so difficult to talk about? And why when they get talked about do they get so often forgotten? Rodgers's paper was written in 1960, and it was proceed by papers on racism by prominent analysts like Brian Bird and Richard Sterba. Many papers on anti-Semitism were written following World War II. But these issues seemed to go largely underground in the psychoanalytic world. They now being revived and supported by a

multicultural consciousness which is, of course, under attack. The analysis of the phenomena of lost or repressed knowledge is one that Russell Jacoby undertakes in *The Repression of Psycho*-analysis (1983). In brief, he states that knowledge gets repressed when it threatens the class and power relationships of a culture. I have continued this analysis in a 1996 paper (Moskowitz 1996).

Another factor that inhibits our analysis of racism is the moral universe we inhabit. Goldhagen drew our attention to this in relationship to the Holocaust. He claimed that to try to understand the Holocaust from our moral perspective only leads to dead ends and confusion. To understand how ordinary Germans could willingly and zealously brutalize, torture, and murder Jews, we must place ourselves in their moral universe and understand what Goldhagen calls the absurd beliefs at the center of a society's view of life.

Throughout history, most societies have been governed by absurd beliefs, such as the Aztec view that human sacrifices were necessary for the sun to rise, or the preliterate belief that trees were animated by good and evil spirits. Of course such beliefs do not seem absurd to the cultures that hold them. Only in retrospect or from a different vantage point do they seem so. Goldhagen argues that at the core of pre-Hitler Germany was eliminationist anti-Semitism, which viewed Jews as less than human and responsible for all the evils of society; as such they *should* be eliminated. In this moral universe the murder of Jews was not a conflicted, crazy, or guilt-ridden act. This view

has certainly struck a chord in Germany where Goldhagen is treated like a rock star or a prophet. In a sense, he seems to be granting Germans expiation. He has given them an interpretation of their actions that shows that they were not crazy or evil, but acting understandably in an different moral universe.

Closer to home, when psychoanalytic societies refused admission to homosexuals, who then thought of it as mad? I assume we now think of it as mad, since we cannot now think of it as ever having been being reasonable.

Writing years before Goldhagen, Eugene Genovese asked a similar question about slaveholders: how could well-educated, intellectual Christians, who perceived themselves as thoroughly modem and moral, justify the keeping of other human beings as slaves? He too described a different moral universe. Genovese argues that slaveholders carried forth a feudal view of the world in that God meant some men should be rulers and others should be ruled. Since there had always been slaves, God must want it to be that way. It was often argued, and seemingly passionately believed, that the slaves of the South were better off than the laboring poor of the North.

Genovese has not been treated like a prophet and a rock star in this country. For reasons we do not clearly understand, we still occupy a moral universe not so different than the one he describes. Racism continues as a

justification for slavery by a different name.

To repeat a few facts: We now imprison a larger share of our population than any other nation (tripled since 1970). There are 1.8 million people in prisons; 58 percent have minor children. About 46 percent of prisoners are black males—eight times their representation in the general population. One out of 4 black men in the U.S. between the ages of 20 and 29 is either in prison, on parole, or on probation.

The life expectancy for young black males in the inner city is lower than that in most developing countries.

We all know this . . . and don't. We can only hope our psychoanalytic discourse can contribute to further understanding so that in the future, the not-too-distant future, we will be able to look back in disbelief at the moral universe that makes these abominations possible.

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