

THE EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF HATE AND ENMITYSmrithi Chabra¹, Devdas Rai², Balachandra A. Shetty³, Joseph Shibu⁴, Meghashree V⁵**HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:**

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ABSTRACT: Hatred/ Hate is defined as a deep seated extreme emotional dislike. According to Freud, "hate" is defined as an ego state that wishes to destroy the source of its unhappiness. Hate is an emotion that masks personal insecurities. Hatred is traumatizing physically, emotionally and morally. It therefore demands greater attention because the most common and lasting effects of hatred involve mental health concerns. Not only is it important to know the impact of hatred on the victim but perhaps more important is to understand the psychology of the person who hates (the hater). This may help in the prevention of various crimes like rape, murder and even terrorism.

KEYWORDS: Emotional, Psychological, Hatred, Enmity, Dehumanization.

INTRODUCTION: ETHNOLINGUISTICS AND CULTURAL CONCEPTS: Hatred/ Hate is defined as a deep seated extreme emotional dislike, the word "emotional" giving an affective undertone to the feeling state. Hatred is often associated with feelings of anger and a disposition to hostility. According to James W. Underhill in his ethno-linguistic and cultural concepts, hate, just like love, is socially and culturally constructed.¹ Hate, in the English language, invariably involves an object or a person, thereby implying a relationship with something or someone. But on a higher emotional plane, hatred is a form of animosity, frustration and hostility which churns within the subject and gives rise to an aimless desire for destruction. However hatred ultimately destroys the one who hates. The related terms to "hatred" are aversion, detest, dislike, disgust, loathing, revulsion, contempt, disdain.^{1,2}

THEORIES OF HATRED AS AN EMOTION: Why do people hate? What turns normal persons into haters? If we go a step further some pathological personalities even hate love. What are the various theories for "hate" as an emotion?

PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY: According to Freud, "Hate" is defined as an ego state that wishes to destroy the source of its unhappiness. Hate itself has two modes- the "pride mode" and the "hate mode". Hatred in "Pride mode" rejects another person, whereas in "Hate mode" rejects any pleasant attachment to the other person.² Thus "hate" is regarded as a "general purpose tool" for severing positive attachments in relationship with other beings or objects. Hatred and the aggression associated with hatred can also be explained on the basis of Denial, Projection and Projective Identification.

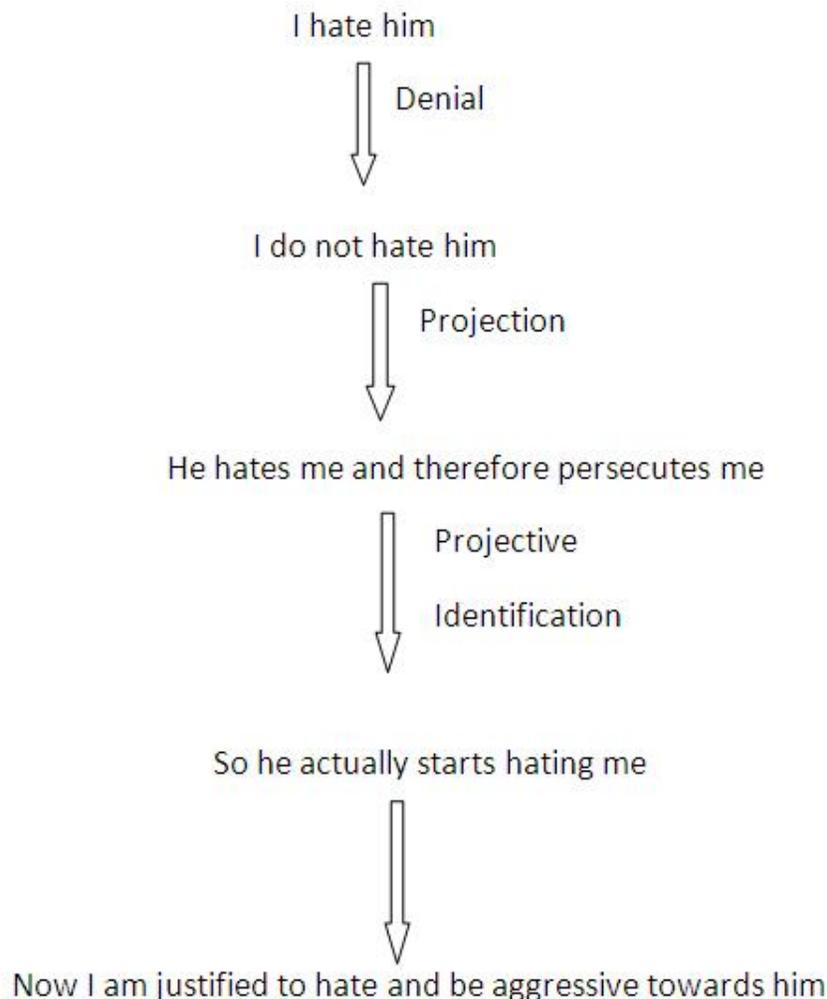
Projection is defined as a defence mechanism in which one's own unacceptable wishes, desires or impulses are forced into the other person. The people who use projection may deny the existence of unacceptable desires in themselves while attributing/ projecting them onto others.^{2,3} For example:- A liar accuses another person of lying, a thief accuses another person of stealing, a hater accuses another person of hating. Latest research shows that projection does not take place arbitrarily but rather seizes on or exaggerates an element that already exists on a small scale in the other person.

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Projective Identification is defined by Melanie Klein to describe a process whereby unacceptable parts of the ego (desires, impulses or wishes) are forced into another person who is then expected to become identified with whatever thoughts or feelings have been projected.³ The projector's behaviour towards the object of projection invokes in that object of projection precisely those very thoughts, emotions or behaviours which have been projected earlier. In other words, the projector relates to the other person on whom he has projected his unacceptable thoughts/feelings in such a way that the other person alters his/her behaviour to make those beliefs come true.^{3,4}

According to latest research, unlike in projection, in Projective Identification, the individual does not fully disavow what is projected. Instead the individual remains aware of his or her affects (unacceptable/undesirable) or impulses but misattributes them as justifiable reactions to the other person.^{3,4,5} All this may happen outside the awareness of both parties involved. For example, an angry person accuses the other person of being angry and relates to the other person in such a way that he (the other person) actually becomes angry.^{4,5} A hater accuses the other person of hating him and behaves with him in such a way that the other person actually starts hating him.^{4,5}

Now let us see how hate can be explained on the basis of denial, projection and projective identification, the equation for which is cited below:



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ASSIGNING BLAME: When bad things happen to us, it is difficult to blame ourselves as “blaming ourselves” brings down our status in front of our own eyes, lowers self-esteem, breaks our pride. So, one conveniently “assigns” blame to “others”, to “them” the so called enemy.⁵ While assigning blame onto others we unknowingly/ unintentionally start splitting/dichotomizing as us vs them, I vs he/ she, victims vs villain, good vs evil, in group vs out group, friend vs foe. This breeds hatred which in turn leads to enmity.⁵

REJECTING OTHERS: Sometimes a person may hate another person even though the other person may be right or correct. It is often far easier to reject a person rather than to work-out to understand his/ her point of view.^{5,6} Rejecting the other severs any pleasant or positive association with the other based on positive emotions and thus gives rise to hatred.

STRENGTHENING ONE'S OWNS COMMUNITY/ GROUP: Hostility/ harbouring hostile feelings and rejection tendencies towards the out group/ out community enhances in-group/ community spirit, identity and cohesion.^{5,6} It increases one's sense of loyalty and “belonging” to one's own community and enhances the status within the group.

AVOIDING TOXINS: Disgust and revulsion, emotions akin with hatred, are one's defences against noxious behavior/ person. It is believed that, psychic pain gives us the strength needed to mobilize ourselves physically psychologically and emotionally either to get away from the source of pain or to remove the source of pain.^{5,6} Thus hatred helps us to overcome our fear and helps us to show the flight or fight response to the same of pain.

ALLEVIATING FEARS: As mentioned earlier, fear can paralyze a person both physically and mentally, making him/ her incapable of acting appropriately. Hatred destroys the fear within us, arousing the simple urge “to kill or be killed”.⁶ In this respect fear makes us weak but hatred makes us strong and instigates a basic survival instinct in us.

BIAS TOWARDS IDENTIFYING DANGER: Human beings and even animals and birds have a tendency to be biased towards caution and the suspicion of danger. The safest assumption for the survival of anybody, be it a human being or an animal or a bird is that members of the out-group/ strangers/unfamiliar community are dangerous until and unless proven otherwise.^{6,7} This is, of course, a cognitive distortion based on “overgeneralization” but since it helps in the survival of beings so also this bias has survived over time and continues to do so.

PERMISSION TO DESTROY THE ENEMY: If the other person is very different from one's own self, a mature person may think of the other person as “incompatible”. But in some cases, viewing the other as very different can allow first disrespect and then hatred to emerge forth. Hatred often sees the “other” as the enemy which is wrong/bad/ evil/ subhuman and needs to be destroyed/ killed.^{6,7}

COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS: According to Cognitive Theory, varieties of cognitive distortions allow/ give space to hatred as an emotion. The common cognitive distortions are maximization (of the other's faults) minimization (of the other's positive points) arbitrary inference (quickly drawing a

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conclusion without the requisite evidence) overgeneralization (making a broad conclusion based on a single incident or a single piece of evidence).^{7,8} Misattributing benign behaviour to evil/ hostile intent can lead us to hate the other. Another problem is that of “Ego centricism”- the belief that “I am correct and I cannot be wrong”. Since we believe that we cannot be wrong, it makes us conclude that others (not us) are wrong/ evil/ and hence we need to hate the “wrong”.

POLARIZED/ DICHOTOMOUS THINKING: The basic ability to differentiate between right and wrong, friend and foe, good and bad is essential not only for our survival but also for healthy living of any species.^{7,8} The problem comes when this primeval ability becomes a rigid and polarized view, always dichotomizing/ splitting the objects/ persons or even the world as “all good or all bad, all friendly or all foe, all safe or all dangerous”. It is then that the ‘other’ becomes/ or is seen as “all bad or all dangerous or all enemy or all foe” and needs to be hated and destroyed.^{7,8}

THE PSYCHODYNAMICS OF HATE :

THE SEVEN-STAGE HATE MODEL: Hate is an emotion that masks personal insecurities. Although temporarily the emotion of hating may place the hater at a psychologically higher position than the “hated”/victim, yet all haters are insecure people. But it is not necessary that all insecure people turn into haters. The following is a seven-stage model proposed by Jack Shafer that describe the psychodynamics of hatred.⁹ It is a widely accepted model to understand the single and the group dynamics of hatred.⁹ While studying this model it should be remembered that, in the end, the hater is destroyed by 2 things his personal insecurities which he refuses to face and the emotion of hate itself which he propagates.

Stage 1: THE HATERS GATHER: If one person/ hater hates another person that hater can rarely survive alone. HE NEEDS OTHER PERSONS TO HATE WITH HIM HIS CHOSEN TARGET. Finding a few persons willing to tag along with him, he forms a peer-group which boosts his already failing sense of self-worth and also provides “empowerment” to his fragile ego. Along with that he is saved from introspecting himself which would in turn have revealed those very personal insecurities which he is running away from.

Stage 2: THE HATE GROUP DEFINES ITSELF: The hate group then attempts to establish its identity and group cohesion. The methods which the hate- group adopts to achieve these objects are usually meant to degrade the objects/ victims of their hate at least covertly, amongst the group members. For example, the members of the hate group may adopt/develop some ritualistic behavior like hand signals, code- words, secret greetings amongst themselves. The aim of these ritualistic behaviors is not only to degrade the victim of their hatred but also to exclude the victims so that victim remains “ignorant” of the “hidden meanings” of these behaviors. This binds the haters more strongly than ever.

Stage 3: THE HATE GROUP DISPARAGES THE TARGET:-The next stage is characterized by the haters disparaging their victim or target. In this stage, the members of the hate group regard the victim as worthless or of little or no importance or outright bad. The aim is again to debase the victim. The haters may even start harboring aggressive ideations and thoughts towards their target/ victim

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which itself is known to increase the likelihood of aggressive behavior occurring against the victim/target.

Stage 4: THE HATE GROUP TAUNTS THE TARGET: Hate unless fueled and fed now and then is not a stable consistent emotion in itself. Left alone, hatred can smoulder down, become inactive and altogether die down. To keep hatred alive, haters need to maintain high level of agitation. They do so effectively by using taunts, offensive gestures, degrading and offensive symbols and signals all within the hearing and seeing range of the victim. They may lay territorial claim to certain areas/neighborhoods where in the target/victim would not be welcome.

Stage 5: THE HATE GROUP ATTACKS THE TARGET WITHOUT WEAPONS: This stage is an important stage as it is in this stage that "OPEN VERBAL ABUSE" of the victim starts. It is also landmark stage in that the members of the hate group actively seek out their victims/targets. Haters become verbally violent and each successive attack is more violent than the previous one. Haters remain in a stage of heightened arousal and hyper vigilance which predisposes them to further such attacks. It is also at this stage that the haters cohesion among each other is so extreme that they become isolated and hardly maintain any contact with mainstream society. Lastly it is this stage which differentiates verbally abusive haters from physically abusive ones.

Stage 6: THE HATE GROUP ATTACKS THE TARGET WITH WEAPONS: In this stage the haters openly demonstrate physical violence against the target/victim. Interestingly haters prefer those weapons, which for their use, require them to be close to the victim/target and which require the use of physical "force"/effort on the part the haters/attackers. For example, they would prefer whips, ropes, belts, sticks or even broken bottles. But they may not prefer guns or pistols as these weapons neither require close physical proximity between the hater and the victim nor do they require the use of much physical force on the part of the haters to use them.

Stage 7: THE HATE GROUP ATTEMPTS TO DESTROY THE TARGET BUT GETS DESTROYED IN THE PROCESS: In this last stage, the hate group attempts to destroy their target. The very thought of "destroying the target" imbues the haters with a false sense of mastery and power, the very qualities which haters lack but refuse to acknowledge. But in reality this whole process only destroys the haters physically, psychologically and emotionally. Also the process of hating is very taxing emotionally and sooner or later tires the target.

THE LINK BETWEEN HATRED AND ENMITY: The term "enemy" seems to have a wide range of meaning. According to Jones and Loersch, an enemy is a person someone dislikes, believes to be malevolent or threatening, and on whom one wishes some degree of social, psychological or physical harm. If the above mentioned feelings exist between two individuals/ groups/ communities it is called as enmity.¹⁰ It is said that guns do not kill, persons do. To be more specific, person's minds do. Before killing the enemy physically by pressing the trigger, one needs to envision the destruction of the enemy in his/her mind.¹⁰

When we talk of enmity, there are 2 to 3 terms which deserve at least a passing reference. These terms are "in-groups and out-groups, pseudo-species and propaganda."

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Regarding "in-groups and out-groups" the history of human evolution deserves an exploratory glance. Since the beginning of human society, persons have always belonged to various units, clans, races, tribes, castes, etc. This by itself is not bad. But what is crucial in the development of enmity is the transition from the accurate and realistic perception of inter group differences to associating the in group/ one's own group with a higher level of humanity than the out group which is regarded as "subhuman", dangerous or bad and thus to be eliminated.⁹

The term Pseudo-species was coined by Erik Erikson. By the term "pseudo-species", Erikson describes the way humans developed separate units and then began to act as if these units were separate species. They began to have a (pseudo)perception of the "uniqueness" of their own group. This was done at the expense of losing the broader/ global human identity and by devaluing the humanity of the other "pseudo-species". Thus enmity with other groups enhanced their own in-group cohesion, identity and loyalty.^{9,10}

Propaganda in the context of Enmity is defined as the expression of opinions or actions carried out deliberately by individuals or groups with a view to influencing the opinions or actions of other individuals or groups for pre-determined ends and through psychological manipulations.^{10,11} This term was coined by Harold Lasswell. Propaganda in the context of enmity can be done through explicit means, for example, distributing leaflets, sticking posters or through media and literature. It can also be done through implicit means, for example, misinforming, telling lies, with holding factual information.^{10,11}

Now having described these terms, let us explain the psychodynamics of enmity as to explore/understand enmity is one of the initial steps in preventing crimes, murders and even terrorism and war.

PSYCHODYNAMICS OF ENMITY:

1. SPLITTING: Just like in the case of hatred, even in the process of making enemies or harboring enmity, there is a split or a dichotomy between "us vs them", "good vs evil", "safe vs dangerous". As mentioned earlier, the general ability to dichotomize and judge is essential for survival and safety of any being/species. But when this basic ability translates into a rigid, polarized view, which always sees races/cultures/specific people or even countries as either all good or all bad, with no overlap in between, hatred is translated into the process of enmity.¹²

Hatred fuels and paves the way to enmity and the so called "enemy" is to be feared, hated, destroyed, killed or murdered for us to feel safe. Several cognitive distortions, besides splitting, play a role in translating hatred into enmity. They are polarizing, exaggerating and rigidifying.^{12,13}

2. DOUBLE STANDARD IN ATTENTION AND EVALUATION: In this, a person/ persons/ group use different yardstick/ measure to judge the actions or behavior of the " hated one" and a different yardstick to measure the same for themselves or their friends.

The result is that the actions of the enemy/hated one would be judged with suspicion or bad or with evil intent but the same actions coming from themselves/their friends would be seen as good/noble or at least neutral.^{12,13}

3. DOUBLE STANDARD IN ATTRIBUTION: In this, the enemy's hostile actions are likely to be attributed/ interpreted as being due to personal choice or natural characteristics/ behavior. But the

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peaceful, conciliatory actions would be seen as with "ulterior motives" or "suspicious" or due to situational factors.^{12, 13, 14} Thus even if the hated one/enemy makes/ tries to make peace, the action would still be regarded as suspicious and is less likely to be viewed in a positive light.

4. HOSTILE PREDICTIONS: This is again due to cognitive bias. There is always a tendency to judge the hated one's/enemy's actions negatively along with hostile predictions of the enemy's intentions which often far exceed the facts. The same defenses of projection and projective identification which worked in hatred are operational here in a subtle way.^{12,13,14} Persons harboring such a bias are more likely to perceive the enemy as more dangerous and threatening than it actually is.

5. SELECTIVE ATTENTION: When persons harbor enmity towards others, they often unconsciously demonstrate selective attention. For example, they focus more on the negative aspects and actions/behavior of the enemy and are more able to retain critical comments and recall negative adjectives about the enemy.^{13,14}

6. BIAS IN CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT: According to this bias, persons are more likely to judge as more credible the informer or the information which represents their own point of view or echoes their own thoughts than the informer/ information which represents opposing or contrary thoughts/ views.^{13,14} It is not surprising that people, owing to such bias, can completely disregard, ignore or deny any information which is inconsistent with their own attitude/ views.

7. UNWRITTEN RULES OF ENMITY ARISING FROM HATRED: There are 4 unwritten rules of enmity. They are:

- a) The enemy of my friend is my enemy also.
- b) The friend of my enemy is my enemy also.
- c) The enemy of my enemy is my friend.
- d) My enemies are friendly with each other.

Many of us may unknowingly, follow these unwritten rules throughout our lives but are consciously unaware of them.^{13,14,15} Furthermore these rule are true not only at individual level but also at intergroup or community levels.

8. IGNORANCE ABOUT THE ENEMY: When we think about our enemy whom we hate, it is surprising to realize how little we "know" our enemy in the true sense of the word. We may "know" all the so called "negative" characteristics of the enemy.^{13,14,15} But how many of us can claim that we know our enemy's culture, traditions, customs, core beliefs, values and morals. How can we like or judge something/ someone positively if we do not know them. Thus we may develop certain "misconceptions" of the enemy which continue to fuel our hatred towards him/ her. If we know them, we may not hate them.

9. DEHUMANIZATION OF THE ENEMY: Dehumanization is defined as the creation of images of the enemy / hated victim that strips the enemy / victim of its human, domestic or individual characteristics so that the "hated one" is perceived as less than human.^{14,15}

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It involves assigning the enemy / hated one a Devil - Evil form / image or an animal image. If the enemy or the hated one is perceived as "less than human", one can hate him / her without guilt and can even translate this hatred into overt action, for example by killing or murdering the victim / enemy.^{14,15} Think of how often we dehumanize someone we hate by calling him "rat" or "dog" or "devil". Unconsciously and without our awareness we are dehumanizing our enemy.

INDIVIDUAL PREDISPOSITION TO ENMITY: Each individual has his / her own predisposition to enmity. There are many schools of thought which contribute to the understanding about the predispositions to enmity at the individual level.^{14,15,16} A brief description of each is given below.

SELF PSYCHOLOGY THEORY BY HEINZ KOHUT: According to this theory, a new born has an undifferentiated self, meaning that it exists only in relationship to its primary care giver. New borns are not able to differentiate that the good parent who gratifies them by picking them up, feeding them, cuddling them is also the bad person who frustrates them- does not pick them up or does not feed them at times. When infants are 8 months old, the process of integration of this "split" begins and by 36 months, they are able to integrate fairly well that "good" and bad person are the same and thus good and bad qualities can exist within the same person.

If they receive good enough parenting, (not perfect or best) they are able to tolerate ambivalence much better, that is, they are able to both love and hate the same person at different times and do not feel guilty. Such persons are less prone to enmity and are able to resist peer/ group pressure better. Similarly blame, externalization and denial are all defense mechanisms used by toddlers or very young children.

Later on, the extent to which the children develop beyond these primitive levels of functioning determines their attitude towards enmity. If blame, denial or externalization persists into adolescence or adulthood, such a person "needs" and, therefore, makes enemies.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHILD DOES NOT RECEIVE GOOD-ENOUGH PARENTING?

The following are the situations in which the child does not receive good enough parenting:

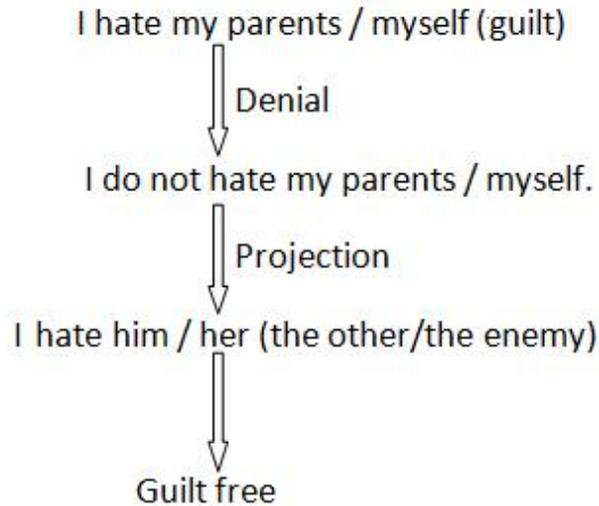
1. Excessive criticism by authoritarian and rigid parents.
2. Neglect (Emotional/ Psychological) by self- absorbed, narcissistic or histrionic parents.
3. Physical and psychological abuse by violent/ aggressive parents.

In such cases, the child develops low self-esteem, a sense of emptiness and rage. Children may find it too threatening to direct their anger towards parents so they direct their anger inwards towards themselves. Such a child becomes self-destructive.

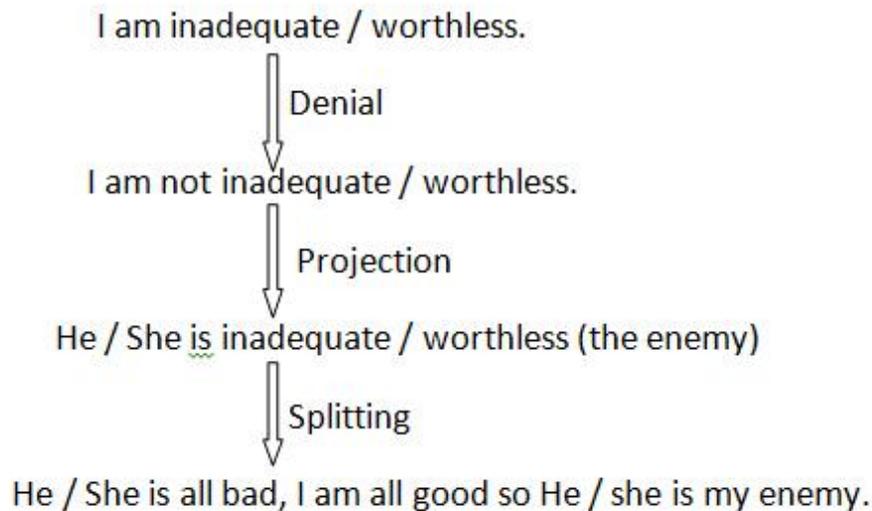
Sometimes children externalize their anger, that is, direct their anger to an external object or person. Such children "need" enemies in order to let out their anger and in such cases the "other person or object" becomes their enemy at whom they can vent out their rage without guilt.

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For example, consider the example of a child who harbors negative feelings:



Consider another example :



JUNG'S THEORY: According to Jung, each child harbors a dark, unacceptable part of his/her personality in which are embedded unacceptable drives, emotions and impulses about themselves and their parents. Jung calls this dark side of the personality as the "shadow". So each child or even an adult initially disowns (denies) these feelings and then projects them outwards on to someone else, who then becomes the enemy. Thus the enemy is nothing but a shadow, a dark part of one's own self. Hence, the popular saying by POGO, the cartoon character, "we have met the enemy and it is us."

ALLPORT'S THEORY OF PREJUDICES: According to Allport, at the age of 5-7 years, children are capable of forming prejudices towards/ against others. They are aware of racial and ethnic differences and adopt their parent's views in order to please them. In the next 4-5 years, the young

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children echo their parent's biases and prejudices. However when they reach adolescence, abstract reasoning and logic supervenes and as they gain "autonomy", they become capable to draw their own conclusions.

Thus the adolescents have a more autonomous and a less rigid thinking and hence are less prejudiced and biased and rarely need enemies.^{15,16} However if their autonomy is hindered or disapproved by parents, they continue to be biased and prejudiced and need enemies to project/ vent out these inner biases and prejudices.

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION THEORY: Political socialization is defined as the process by which the individual learns to conform to the values and norms of the group to which he/ she belongs and becomes a fully functional member. According to this theory, parental attitudes as well as other socializing agents like schools, peers, media are important means to learn about enmity, biases and prejudices.^{15,16} Thus children learn about enmity from all these and internalize the enemy image in order to become fully functional members of that particular culture.

CONCLUSION: After discussing about hatred and enmity, where do we stand now? Do we have the mental maturity to accept that there is good and bad in each one of us? Do we have the level-headedness to acknowledge the kinetic nature of humanity? Perhaps this article poses more questions than answers but that exactly is the aim of this article-to put all of us in an introspective mood.

"Do not I destroy my enemies when I make them my friends" was a famous quote by Abraham Lincoln. A person who is "bad" can show good traits in the future. A person who is our sworn enemy can become our loyal friend. As it is said "Ask and it will be given, seek and you shall find" so also accept the badness and ugliness of human nature and we have a good chance to modify it. It is far healthier to accept and acknowledge our faults and to make an honest attempt to change rather than to out-rightly deny their existence.

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