

A Five-Part Poetic Induction in
Favor of Human Decency
(Countering the Hate Movements)

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I. WHY TALK OF HATE MOVEMENTS AT AN HYPNOTHERAPY CONFERENCE?

Throughout the ages people have tried to believe that normal psychological behavior includes only that which is good at the social level... At times, man's inhumanity to man is given some euphemistic label, but no effort is made to investigate scientific-

Note: While the views presented in this chapter may not conform to those of the Board of Directors of The Milton Erickson Foundation, the Board supports the right of Dr. Ritterman to express them.

cally the extremes to which the *normal, the good, the average, or the intellectual person or group* will go if given the opportunity :

consider the Spanish Inquisition, the Salem witch trials, or the introduction of slavery into ar-country dedicated to the right of everyone to equality and freedom... How did it happen that noble purposes of the Pilgrims led to the position that "the only good Indian is a dead Indian"?

These words were written by Milton Erickson in 1968 (pp. 277, 278).

During our years of connection, Milton and I communicated about sanity, politics, and human rights. While he was still alive, I wrote much of my first book about a form of *hate that begins at home* in the intentional and unintentional abuse in families (Ritterman, 1983).

After Milton's death, I studied a case of *hate by the state*, in which General Augusto Pinochet, who had seized power in Chile, carried out a 16-year national ideological purge that included systematic torture (Ritterman, 1991). I described how families and communities resisted.

At the completion of my second book. Nelson Mandela had Just taken his freedom walk in South Africa. In Chile, Pinochet was replaced by a Democrat and all of Europe, as if in a single gesture, shook off the chains of totalitarian communism. The cold war was miraculously ended and along with it our long nightmare of living under constant nuclear threat. Democratic capitalism blew in like a fresh wind, sweet with promises of *world peace*.

Before we could sigh with relief *sad. memorize this great historical moment*, violent nationalism, as if coming from under some dark, slimy rock, reared its head, feeding upon global economic unrest, hunger, and racial, religious, and ethnic differences.

Yugoslavia fractured into blood-thirsty rival peoples; East Germans turned against non-Aryan-looking immigrants; swastikas flew again in Rome, France, Austria, and Poland. These polluted tides threw up to the shores of North American public office David Duke, Patrick Buchanan, and others campaigning on a *reach out and hate someone* platform. Too many Americans accepted as justice the beating by a group of heavily armed white police of a defenseless black man, Rodney King.

Here we were on the vista overlooking the 21st century and sounding like World War II again, slipping linguistically to the level of racial epithets, discussing concepts like "ethnic cleansing," and letting people die in concentration camps. Here we were again, trampling in the garden of Eden.

Had not World War II, which lay waste cities, the genocidal war of the Holocaust, the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the napalm burning of Vietnam sent humanity a wake-up call that *it is not the technol-*

ogies we have created but the violence in the nature of our species that is the single most destructive force on earth?

To write now about a third form of hate—not familial or government-sponsored, but organized civilian hate movements—I had to venture into organized mean-spirited inductions. I quickly learned that in order to study hateful suggestions, I needed first to confront and *discipline my own mean spirits, animosities for people and not ideas, my own resentments of relatives, of political candidates, of therapists who deviate from my line of thinking about psychotherapy.*

I also had to find a way to *approach the baser passions without inciting them.*

In this conference on therapeutic tale-telling I chose to invite poetry to help me. To me, a story may imply invention, as though we could compose a good Hfe story, tell it to ourselves, and be done with what harm has been perpetrated against us by a loved one or by an organized hate movement.

Human troubles are epitomized in their poetic distillation. *The poem appeals to all the senses and to the intellect to trigger in the listener a profound, even visceral, reaction.*

Naturally, to prepare this five-part *counterinduction to the hate movements*, I appealed to my muse for guidance.

When one thinks of the muse, one may imagine a frail poet consulting with a Greek goddess. *The poet-warrior is as fundamental to the traditions of the art as is the poet-lover.* In fact, the poet has at times been the indter of the mob spirit.

Listen to Tyrtaeus (1970) of 7th-century B.C. Sparta as he arouses his defeated men to war, directly suggesting hate to do so:

Each man should bear his shield straight at the foremost ranks and make his heart a thing full of hate, and hold the black flying spirits of death as dear as he holds the flash of the sun.

Another tough-talking poet and defender of civil rights, Yevgeny Yevtushenko (1965), wrote:

Poetry
is no chapel of peace.
Poetry
is savage war...

The poet is no frail participant in the struggle for good or for evil, because he is, according to John Donne, "involved in mankind." In fact, there is no profession that cannot be abused for mean-spiritedness or

constructed to cultivate human kindness, because these human capacities naturally color our every endeavor.

The muse I use today, by the way, is not a creature outside my mind but the modern type, a state of mind I enter to *muse, to daydream, to waste clock time, to enter into subjective time, and to creatively fathom this and other passionate subjects from an unconscious and healing perspective.* I invite you to muse along with me.

My hope for this synchronous daydreaming is to leave you with a *lasting message, a time-release message, charming and valuable enough that you may wish to keep it for a decade or two, or to use it in helping others for the rest of your life: a poeticized induction in favor of human decency.*

D. THE COLLECTIVE MIND AS A NORMAL AND NEUTRAL STATE: SYNCHRONOUS MUSING

The state of mind organized hate groups appeal to is, in reality, a neutral state, *a readiness to care for*

or to hate,
a kind of mental slate
engraved upon,
by those who monger hate
and peace lovers,
poets and hypnotherapists.

Caring and hate take us as their scribe and witness, writing on our minds.

William Caries Williams (1969), the physician and poet, helps us to visualize the swayable group brain that submerges our individuality and allows us to follow the leader or the group mood, for better or worse, in a grand game of Simon Says:

At the Ball game

The crowd at the ball game is
moved uniformly
by a spirit of uselessness
which delights thorn-all the
exciting detail of the chase

and the escape, the error, the flash
of genius—all to no end save
beauty the eternal.

So in detail they, the crowd, are
beautiful

for this to be warned against,

saluted and defied— It is
alive, venomous,

it smiles grimly, its
words cut.

The flashy female with her
mother, gets it—

The Jew gets it straight. It is
deadly, terrifying.

It is the Inquisition, the
Revolution.

It is beauty itself that
lives

day by day in them idly... without
thought.

Lewis Thomas, MJD. (1992), the biology watcher and essayist, suggests that "when we humans are collected together at dose quarters all over the face of the earth, in angry mobs or in orderly but folly-prone nation states or in auditoriums listening carefully and silently to the Late Quartets," we are immersed in a kind of group mind, a unique collective entity, a human equivalent of the ant community. Each ant singly, with a life span of a few weeks, seems smart enough only to pick up a fecal pellet. Yet the fact that, collectively, ants are able to build tall termite anthills in Africa, lasting a hundred years, each with unique architecture and airconditioning systems, has led scientists (Thomas, 1992) to speak of a super organism.

That this *collective mind* is affected differently by suggestions to care and invitations to hate gives us some decision-making power in its absorption.

Social hate is the destructive use of this state of collective reverie. *Decent social suggestion* can be creatively employed to *slow down invitations that one group makes to another group to entice them to harm a third group*.

May not one *invoke*, as readily as the warrior for hate, *the muse of love*?

m. SOCIAL SUGGESTIONS;
WORDS THAT HARM, WORDS THAT HEAL

Organized Hate (Nongovernmental)

Where do hate inductions come from? Any holier-than-thou religious pulpit espousing a defaming theology, violence-prone youth identity group, correct-line professional organization, or gender-biased group, or any non-government entity may intentionally or inadvertantly adopt this destructive inductive posture. Organized hate is epitomized by what I call Hate-Whfle-You-Wait groups. These racially oriented, paramilitary organizations keep their members pent-up, but ready to take power in an orgy of violence.

Hate groups feed on *family values* about Us vs. Them: *We* are good, smart, clean, strong, and have better genes. *They* are bad, dangerous, smelly, materialistic, ignorant, or primitive. Social hate is also nourished by individual animosities, fears, ignorance, lack of self-discipline, and an attraction to blaming someone else for one's troubles. Even scientific detachment can provide hate groups with something personal to sink their teeth into. Severed from unconscious understandings and affect, scientific analysis leaves us cynical and indifferent to the plight of others. Hate loves indifference to others' pain. *Do not be afraid to shed a tear in the name of science.*

The Three Targets of Social Hate Inductions

Social hate groups need three different kinds of inductions because they must uniquely affect three distinct social categories: *haters-in-training*, *victims-to-be*, and *witnesses*.

1. *Coals for Haters-in-training*: For this group, *hate must be passionate and obsessive*. Haters-in-training must be made to feel threatened by their victims-to-be. The mducers of mob hate must debase, dehumanize, and depotentiate the victims-to-be. The instinct to identify with the victims-to-be must be shut off in the haters-in-training, lest they weaken at the moment of harming.

This summer in Israel, Miriam Druch, a holocaust survivor in her sixties, told me of the Nazi soldier who came to her home in Poland when she was five years old. He stormed into the house, informed Miriam's parents and the three children that he was under orders to kill them, cocked his gun, and then lowered it. << "I have a family and children just like yours," he said to Miriam's parents, breaking down. << "I can't do this!" Others better desensitized to the humanity of the victims did carry out their orders, but this soldier gave the Druch family the chance to shelter Miriam, who was raised by a priest as his daughter.

For risks they will take toward harassing the enemy, Haters-in-training must be offered rewards such as financial benefits, special uniforms, and status within the hate group, a chance to be a somebody by hurting someone else.

It is rare that a hate group proclaims itself such. Usually, words like identity, patriotism, defense, and freedom appear in the group name. The Christian Patriot Defense League is the name of a group that, since 1979, has held conferences called freedom festivals, which combine weapons training with bigotry. In 1981 their workshops included guns and reloading; demolition and camouflage; anti-aircraft, anti-tank, and knife fighting (Anti-Defamation League, 1987).

Hate, effectively suggested directly or indirectly to this group of persons, will trigger *seemingly automatic* behavioral responses, from cross-burnings and lynchings to wife-beating and murder.

2. *Hate Inductive deals/or the Victims»to-be:* The hated must be made to feel isolated or ghetto-ized and then exhausted with fear, humiliation, inferiority, and shame so that they are weakened and rendered at least emotionally defenseless. They are to remain uncertain or confused about the actual extent of danger posed to them, so that they seem at first paranoid, then spineless.

Whether or not a victim defends against it, hate hurts. It produces a sympathetic nervous system reaction of danger or threat, which, when constant, keeps the target of choice keyed up most of the time. Hate often refers to body and identity: women's or men's genitalia, skin color, distinctive features. Whether victims ignore or fight them, as suggestions get more detailed and body-focused, the suggestions are harder to resist.

Paradoxically, the hate group ties the hated to itself. Hate binds. Think how inextricably and passionately hate binds Klansman to Afro-American, Turk to Armenian, Israeli to Palestinian, Serb to Croat, Chinese to Tibetan, Irish Protestant to Irish Catholic, North American settler to Native American. On an individual level, think of the rapist who stalks his unwitting victim, obsessed with the details of her life.

3. *Witnesses in Training.* The third group hate movements must affect suggestively: those reluctant to associate with either the haters or the hated. As a wife is asked by her husband only to look away when her daughter is sexually abused by him, so a third sector of society is asked by the haters just to look the other way, to not hear, not empathize, not see while they do the dirty work of abusing the victims.

But most importantly the witness group—typically the majority of *any* population—must be induced to silence.

Poetically, in sum thus far:

Hate loves a uniform when it is
not wartime. It has a name for
everyone:
kraut, honkey, wop, injun, broad, faggot, gimp—
names I utter
for you to feel
the effect of a single hateful word.

For hate,
nothing is sacred holy,
unspeakable.

Hate waits
coiled
for the signal
to release,
which is pleasing,
oigasmic,
frenzied,
bloody,
ecstatic.

' Hate is humorless, but
mocking. It creates only
enemies. It fantasizes
only in ditferentnesses. It
hallucinates
animals, viruses, cancers and madmen-where
ordinary people stand.

A Five'Part Poetic Induction

Hate works best
when it aims at its target
with a single arrow
or a half sentence,
in a tone of fury,
with its finger angled for accusation
using a phrase like
"tired of talk."

Hate would electrify to silence anyone who
has seen the shadow fall and would otherwise
cry out:
Beware, hate is in the room.

Hate is in a hurry.
All the molecules in the great social beaker
must be speeded up.
There must be
no time to think
or feel.
Action!
Only Action.
Follow orders.

Like the sexual abuser
hate may boast in public,
but hides
its dirtiest deeds,
if not in shame,
then in fear that
a passing wind
will catch the victims' stifled cries
and carry them to
the conscience of others.

Hate is passionate, obsessive.
It is the rapist who stalks his victim.
It is the worst of us ungirdled
the most destructive force on earth.
What if we try to bury hate
with other obsolete
weapons of mass destruction?

Untended,
 it lies, coiling up again,
 building up its great
 frustration,
 waiting for its next chance
 to thrust
*Can we not render hate something
 momentary? Can not this
 momentary hate be used somehow
 to trigger love ...*

IV. WHY PROMOTE HUMAN DECENCY?

To prepare against the likelihood of natural disasters—earthquakes, forest fires, diseases—we tirelessly work in high-risk areas to construct earthquake resilient and fireproof buildings, to improve social hygiene, and to make vaccinations mandatory. Is it not also *important to shore up human resources against the storm troopers of hate?*

Moral and Biological Imperative: Excessive and prolonged hatred threatens our biological imperative as a single species programmed linguistically and otherwise for interdependent living *to cooperate, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the homeless, care for the special needs of the disabled, and employ those who can work.*

Hating the haters will not do! As the Israeli peace activist and poet Jehuda Amichai reminds us: *^Even a fist was once an open palm with fingers"*(1991).

Likewise, Alice Miller (1990) reminds us that adults who commit hate crimes have often themselves been victims of child abuse—as were Hitler and Saddam Hussein. Cutting down on domestic violence is imperative. A recent National Public Radio program cited a Michigan-based study on domestic violence showing that when police stop men in the act of abusing their wives and tell them to take a walk and cool down, 70 percent of them will not abuse again. When police give abusers advice, 81 percent will not abuse again. When abusers are arrested, 90 percent of the men will not physically harm their wives again. I believe there is a social analogy to these figures: Hate, unchallenged, accumulates. Hate, pushed back, can be dissuaded.

Socially: Often in the tenor of recent political life, resonating with polarities and antagonisms between Us and Them, each of us receives an invitation to hate: at home, school, church; from the detached observations

of the press, violence on television, racist radio sermons; from politicians, neighbors, shopkeepers, other therapists. What about abuses of feminist values that led, according to an NPR report, to the banning of the writing of the provocative Camille Paglia as "anti-woman" at a Connecticut women's college? Where do we draw the line? What are the First Amendment rights of the Ku Klux Klan? Has our threshold for scapegoating descended or our tolerance for intolerance ascended to virtue? Do we conceive of the common interest at least as often as we use the word *hate*?

Professionally: Those of us who know that the *unconscious mind is more than a receptacle for hate and pain* bear some proud responsibility for delivering that message. Our message must be more effective than that of intolerance, because *our message is privileged to draw its vision from a broader range of human emotions and to be morefarsighted biologically*, in order to be effective with the public, we need to rule out pettiness, grudges, and needless dichotomizing in our own field. Do we show real concern for the well-being of our clients or go through the motions, refining technique but neglecting the heart of the approach?

*Even as we defend against it,
hate fulness takes us as its scribe and witness.
Therefore, decency becomes a tool
to transform this sad poem
into a song of hope
a prayer for love.*

We can better defend ourselves against socially hateful invectives with *Self-discipline*:

Neither a victim nor an oppressor be. Do not
bear witness silently.

and *Education*:

If you are biased against a culture, gender identity, or religion, educate yourself about it. Parley Mowat (1988), grappling with his own ignorance of wolves, learned that it is humans who "eat like wolves," not wolves, who save their food to regurgitate it for their young.

V. HOW TO DAILY CELEBRATE ALL OUR SENSES AND OUR CONSTRUCTIVE STRENGTHS

When I first met Milton Erickson, I was an intern at Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic with Salvador Minuchin and Jay Haley. I told Milton that
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we studied videotapes of initial family interviews to train ourselves to quickly track long sequences of interaction. I said that I had a habit of listening with my eyes dosed and was often quick at assessing what was going on.

"All right," he said, *"but why wouldn't you want to use all of your senses?"*

In my experience, an effective countering of internal hate, besides the *outward-focused* activities already mentioned, requires *the disciplined enjoyment of all our senses*.

Fill Your Eyes "With Natural Beauty:

I was in Venice recently. There I was reminded how context etches itself visually onto our brain cells, how the life around us writes itself onto our minds.

Far from the urban streets of North America, on a gondola, returning from the Lido island back to Venezia, I allowed the circling dark waters of the Adriatic Sea to *hypnotize me*.

I let the water have its way with my mind, asking only that I be able *to recall, refeel, relive this moment of natural beauty*, this sense of going back in time to the 14th century.

Enchanted by ancientness, I allowed my mind to memorize the drops of sunlight bouncing on the water's deep blue surface. Having surrounded myself with great works of art, I at last entered into an imagist painting, myself a wind-brushed receptacle for light and peacefulness, aglow with a pastel *tenderness for the human endeavor* and all that nature so gracefully provides.

Even as we defend against beauty, it takes us as its scribe and witness.

I visited in Florence the Keats-Shelley House and saw in Keats' own handwriting, the original manuscript of "A Thing of Beauty Is a Joy Forever."²

"A thing of beauty is a Joy forever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing."

It is important, not trivial, to concentrate on natural beauty.

At home,
my husband and I
were hypnotized
by our Bonsai.
I stared at the little tree
given to me as a gift,

feeling myself to be in a beautiful
Japanese garden communing with a
giant stone feeling not loneliness but
alone in an atmosphere of holiness.

I did not hear the roar of highway traffic,
but only the birds,
the wind,
my own spirit rustling.

It is Important, Not Trivial to Allow Your Ears
to receive beautiful and pleasing sounds
and not ugly rumorings
but music which exalts
the happy, longing songs of birds ready to mate,
the crickets singing with their feet
about the temperature of the night.
In sound alone
we can perceive
the harmony possible
for all that lives.

We Can Celebrate Our Sense of Synchronicity Lewis

Thomas (1992) writes:

The oxygen in the air is not placed there at random, any old way \$ it is maintained at precisely the optimal concentration for the place to be livable. A few percentage points more than the present level and the forests would burst into flames, a few less and most life would strangle. It is held there, constant, by feedback loops of information from *the conjoined life of the planet* (p. 22)

We can observe intelligence in the interrelatedness of all forms of life from the complex relations between the cricket and the bat to the matching up of the medicinal properties of a rare plant that grows in the Brazilian rain forest with the ailment of a city dweller in New York.

As Individuals Need To Use All of the Senses, so the Species Needs To Use All its Peoples, and Synchronously.

Ought not each culture be regarded like an endangered or threatened species, a one-of-a-kind mixture, a unique experiment? Just as each individual is as unique as his fingerprints and optic and dental nerve x-rays, so

all of the peoples of the earth are unique in terms of the niche they inhabit, food, clothing, color, language, discoveries and inventions.

What is More Powerful More Primitive Than Our Senses of Taste and Smell and Feel which carry us on the currents of our sweetest memories of lilac, honeysuckle, fruit of the vine?

I hypnotized a group of Salvadorans.
 They had escaped the death squads
 that killed tens of thousands of Salvadorans in Just ten years.
 These Salvadorans lived the life of exiles
 in Costa Rica.
 In trance,
 to heal from hate which had displaced them,
 they all traveled home
 to the poor communities they had come from.
 They went back in time before the terror
 and home to smell the streets, the schoolyard,
 to smell the courtyard air around the church,
 and most of all to smell the food
 being prepared by mother,
 still steaming from the big pot, stirred by mother
 being prepared by mother with them beside her
 now
 as if it really was happening.

The world is
 not with us enough,
 O taste and see...
 living in the orchard and being
 hungry, and plucking
 the fruit (Levertov, 1962, p. 53)

And What of the Physical Sensations and Passions?

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
 Twill make a thing endurable, which else Would upset
 the brain, or break the heart... (Wordsworth 1965, p.
 134).

I sing the body electric, ... And if the body does not do fully as
 much as the soul?

And if the body were not the soul, what is the soul?
(Whitman, 1931, p. 97).

The river in its abundance
many-voiced
all about us as we stood
on a warm rock to wash

slowly
smoothing in long
sliding strokes
our soapy hands along each other's
slippery cool bodies

quiet and slow in the midst of
the quick of the
sounding river (Levertov, 1962, p. 55)

I ask the most important thing of you
you there listening to my voice today
enjoying as much as I hope
and more than I can know
all your faculties and senses,
that you *REMEMBER me when you are packing your suitcase
as you put the clothes you brought back into the suitcase,*
that you put your own ideas of beauty
into the folds,
that you fill the sensuous corners with humor,
and your shoes
with an expanding compassion
to lengthen your gait.

When you return home and are unpacking,
*won't you remember me,
my message to you?*
And when you wake up
the next morning,
will you not allow your eyes and ears
to fill with beauty
so that you will have,
let's say in five years, little room for hate,
in a decade, no time or space to waste on hate.

When we talk about the heart of Erickson, is not
the bottom line

that we *have the courage*
to stand up
for the best that human nature is capable of,
whether or not we see that best around us.

•»

For Milton the limits of the imaginable were discovered in working hard to attain it.

Human decency remains an
 unfinished business. We are a
 neonatal even foetal species...
 perhaps that is why we
 sometimes care more for the
 unborn than the living.

I end my talk today
 with *this photo*
 of a statue from Michelangelo's prisoner series.
 It shows that we
 are struggling to
 extricate ourselves from
 what we are made of,
 still prisoners to our nature,
 an unfinished work

a work in progress,
which leaves much to the imagination.

For those of you
who like to travel light,
five words:
Hate harms. Caring can
repair.

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