The Fear of Immigrants

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The presence and growing visibility of racial minority immigrants in the United States and across the globe has triggered a sense of collective anxiety, where dissociative defenses maintain emotional distance and identification with groups perceived to be threatening. Fringe movements and mainstream political parties have framed immigrants and refugees as the major cause of unemployment, crime, and a threat to their cultural and social fabric. Recent policies in the United States, such as those resulting in heightened policing of Black and Brown people and deportation of undocumented immigrants and separation of children from parents, have made explicit the connection between racism and xenophobia. These macrolevel policies and the broader xenophobic and racist sociopolitical climate in which they are implemented have important implications for intrapsychic life and interpersonal relationships. This paper explores psychoanalytic perspectives on the roots of xenophobia, racialized defenses, and their implications for the experiences of racial minority immigrants in the United States. The paper further addresses how the fear of immigrants reflects anxiety in multiple dimensions, involving not only fears of the receiving context or the host country, but also the xenophobia that immigrants carry with them from their countries of origin. The implications of xenophobia and racism are explored in the context of the therapeutic relationship, where the client and the therapist engage in difficult and emotionally charged ways with respect to the current sociopolitical climate. Clinical examples are provided to illustrate transference and countertransference dynamics, and related dilemmas centered on xenophobia and racism that arise in psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

Keywords: xenophobia, racism, immigrants, racial minorities, sociopolitical climate

Xenophobia has been defined as the "fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign," that is connected to nationalism and ethnocentrism, or the belief that a certain nation, state, or community is superior to others (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, n.d.; Yakushko, 2009). Studies concerning majority groups' contact with immigrants suggest that the presence of larger numbers of immigrants is associated with fewer xenophobic attitudes within local contexts, but in broader state and national contexts, a greater presence of immigrants can exacerbate xenophobia, due to increased perceptions of threat (Jolly & DiGiusto, 2014). In the United States and in other parts of the world the presence and growing visibility of racial minority immigrants have triggered a sense of collective anxiety, where dissociative defenses maintain emotional distance and identification with groups perceived to be threatening (Ainslie, 2009a; Bromberg, 2010).

Rather than carrying a neutral position, xenophobia carries "discriminatory potential" (Watts, 1996, p. 97) that is linked with economic, social, and political instability and the perception of loss of resources (Yakushko, 2009). Importantly, xenophobia is experienced in intrapsychic life and in interpersonal encounters in ways that have become increasingly problematic in many parts of the world, including the United States. This paper explores how the fear of immigrants reflects anxiety within multiple dimensions. Specifically, xenophobia involves not only the fears of majority groups within the receiving context or the host country, but also fears that immigrants carry with them from their countries of origin. It further reflects the inevitable loss and disappointment, traumatic stress, and shifts in identity produced in an immigrant's adjustment to living in the new, adoptive country. While the problems of xenophobia and racism are longstanding and have always been relevant to the experiences of clients and therapists, it is critical to better understand the ways in which they manifest in contemporary U.S. context, as explicit forms of anti-immigrant sentiment and racist acts increasingly impact the intrapsychic and interpersonal lives of racial minority immigrants and the broader social fabric of the United States. This paper examines particular manifestations of present-day xenophobia and its connection to racism in the United States, the effects of xenophobia and racism on the lives of racial minority immigrants, and how psychoanalytic perspectives can facilitate an understanding of xenophobia in psychotherapy. Clinical case vignettes offer illustrations of the ways in which xenophobia and racism pose dilemmas for the client and therapist in the therapeutic process.

Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy in the Present Sociopolitical Climate

Many therapists today are struggling with how to address multiple forms of social injustice, sociocultural trauma, and political polarization in the United States. Solomonov and Barber (2018), in a recent study, examined the effects of the U.S. presidential elec-

tion of 2016 and the current sociopolitical climate on clients' experiences of psychotherapy. Their findings indicated that most therapists and clients shared, either implicitly or explicitly, their political views with each other in psychotherapy, and that a stronger therapeutic alliance was associated with perceived political similarity with the therapist, implicit political disclosure of the therapist, and helpful political discussions in therapy. The findings are consistent with clinical evidence that sociopolitical issues are an inextricable part of the therapeutic process (Ainslie, 2011; Boulanger, 2012; Ipp, 2010; Tummala-Narra, 2015; Yi, 2014). Yet, therapists contend with questions concerning how to engage with sociopolitical context and the timing of these discussions with their clients. As xenophobia is experienced in conscious and unconscious life and embedded in early object relations and structural privilege and marginalization, addressing these questions remains challenging. In particular, therapeutic engagement with sociopolitical context in psychoanalytic psychotherapy involves examining multiple layers of the client's and therapist's experiences, including unresolved personal conflicts with sociopolitical conditions, accompanying feelings of guilt, shame, envy, rage, and fear, histories of sociocultural trauma, internalized stereotypes and prejudice, and more broadly, public discourse on issues of race and immigration, and how these various layers manifest in clinical process (e.g., transference and countertransference).

In my own work as a clinician and researcher, I have struggled with the question of whose narrative is privileged in any given context. I have reflected increasingly on my own history of migration to the United States and its influence on my experiences of xenophobia and racism. When I emigrated to the United States from India in the 1970s, I brought with me the burden of colonialism, caste, sexism, and heterosexism. I was born in a large multicultural Indian city with a long history of tensions between Hindus and Muslims, and among people of diverging Hindu castes and subcastes. Although I belonged to a majority religious group in India, I also belonged to a Hindu subcaste that was victimized by harassment and violence by members of another regional subcaste. As such, my family's experiences of being both insiders and outsiders were familiar even before migrating to the United States. These premigration experiences were met with new forms of discrimination in the United States. As a racial minority woman, at times, I fluctuate between feeling frustrated with accommodating others who do not know nearly as much about my sociocultural world as I know about theirs, and recognizing that all of us, regardless of race, coexist in a traumatic framework of race in U.S. society. The effects that racial and other forms of sociocultural trauma on the therapeutic process have been examined in depth by psychoanalytic scholars (Altman, 2010; Boulanger, 2012; Holmes, 2016; Yi, 2014). Yet, the current sociopolitical climate in the United States has made even more explicit the presence of sociocultural trauma in psychotherapy, calling for therapists to examine and reexamine the influence of their own interpersonal and social, cultural, and political histories on their approach to practice.

In my clinical practice, I have had various conversations about the 2016 presidential election and current sociopolitical climate with my clients. Some patterns of reactions to the 2016 election have included the following: (a) Working with clients who are retraumatized: My second-generation, South Asian American client who identifies as queer, and a survivor of sexual assault asked me the day after the election, "How is it possible that in 2016, this country elected a sexual predator as president? Who will ever believe me, anything I say, a queer South Asian woman?" (b) Working with growing numbers of clients coping with the fear of deportation, or the deportation of loved ones: My client who is an immigrant from a South American country sought help to cope with intense anxiety related to the fear of deportation. He has witnessed multiple murders of loved ones while in his country of origin, where political persecution is an ongoing reality. He has legal immigration status in the United States, but the consequences of losing his documentation are so dire that he lays awake at night fearing for his life both in the United States and in the country of origin. Even in instances that do not involve imminent danger in a country of origin, many immigrants fear that their legal immigration status no longer protects them in the United States. (c) Working with clients who voted for and/or support Donald Trump, as their political views contrast with mine: My White male client, survivor of childhood physical and sexual abuse who grew up in working-class background stated in a session, "I don't think people understand what oppression feels like for White people." He explained to me that he has never experienced privilege and rather only oppression at the hands of his parents and the schools that had failed him. (d) Working with racial minority immigrant clients who are critical of other racial minority immigrants: My first-generation Hindu, Indian American client shared her disdain for other Indian immigrants who are of "low class." I will elaborate on these two latter examples in the case illustrations in a subsequent section.

It is clear in all of these cases that it is no longer a question as to whether therapists should explore xenophobia and racism in psychotherapy. Rather, these issues are key aspects of clients' and therapists' identity and relational life, and critical to physical, psychological, and spiritual self-preservation. Working with xenophobia and racism requires a willingness to witness and engage with sociocultural trauma and defensive reactions in intrapsychic and interpersonal conflicts. I have increasingly noticed my own defensive reactions to my clients' experiences of the world today, and the emotional burden of bearing my own reactions and being present enough to really hear my clients' experiences. Many therapists are in crisis and grief as they engage in this work and, consequently, psychotherapy has felt different than before, even though social oppression has long been a real part of clients' and therapists' lives. As such, it is important to more closely consider psychoanalytic perspectives that offer a critical understanding of xenophobia and racism in the context of immigration, and of the impact of sociopolitical context on clients' and therapists' intrapsychic and interpersonal lives.

Xenophobia and Race

Xenophobia and racism have been known to be "mutually supporting forms of oppression" (Yakushko, 2009, p. 47). Xenophobia, in collusion with racism, embeds itself in the establishment and the perpetuation of traumatic stress. In the United States, racist ideology lies at the root of our history of genocide and slavery, and within our contemporary context. While it is important to recognize that on a global scale, immigrants perceived to be racially similar can be targets of discrimination due to religious conflicts and ethnocentrism, immigrants of color are targets of racism and endure the detrimental psychological and physical effects of rac-

ism to a far greater degree than White immigrants in the United States (American Psychological Association, 2012). In the United States, fantasies of immigrants and immigration contain both a wish for postracial inclusiveness and a longing for White power. For some immigrants, associating with White people in powerful positions facilitates the hope of someday belonging and thriving within the American racial hierarchy (Eng & Han, 2000). For others, the contemporary context is terrifying on a daily basis and challenges basic questions concerning safety and belonging. Still others face deportation and imprisonment. For many people who scapegoat immigrants, the contemporary political context offers the opportunity to imagine and secure a sense of nativity, ownership, and power, all of which are experienced as under threat by the "browning" of U.S. society.

In the United States and various European countries today, fringe movements and mainstream political parties have framed immigrants and refugees as the major cause of unemployment, crime, and a threat to their cultural and social fabric (Jolly & DiGiusto, 2014). Since 2017, Trump administration policies of heightened policing of Black and Brown people, separating unauthorized Central American and Mexican children from their parents and caregivers, and banning the entrance of Syrian refugees and people from six predominantly Muslim countries have made explicit the inextricable connection between racism and xenophobia in the United States (Torres, Santiago, Walts, & Richards, 2018). In fact, we are currently living with the "Trump Effect," initially a term used to mark the rise in racialized, xenophobic, misogynistic, homophobic, and transphobic bullying in schools rooted in Trump's rhetoric during his presidential campaign (Zimbardo & Sword, 2017). For example, racial minority immigrant children and children of immigrants have been called terrorists at school, told by classmates and teachers that their parents will be deported, and that they would be put into camps (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016). These collective traumas persist, and bystanders are either apathetic or avoid the pain of these realities by minimizing and denying the chaos and violence and their impact on human beings (Varvin, 2017). Many others are engaged in the work of resistance against oppressive policies and actions, and some are frozen with shame. Within the context of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, these crises have important implications for how clients and therapists experience the sociopolitical climate and engage with each other.

Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Xenophobia and Racism

Xenophobia manifests in intrapsychic and interpersonal realms, and as such, psychoanalytic perspectives elucidate an understanding of prejudice and aggression directed against racial minority immigrants. Psychoanalysts have written about the role of early life experiences, such as separation anxiety, as fundamental to developing benign prejudice as a way of differentiating specific objects of attachment, such as parents, from other objects (Parens, 2007; Spitz, 1965). With regard to the development of malignant or harmful prejudice, Henri Parens (2007) underscored the role of ambivalence toward objects of attachment implicating the use of defenses, such as projection and denial, the role of childhood trauma and neglect, and the demands for children to identify with their parents. Relatedly, Vamik Volkan (2017) emphasized the role

of parents transmitting traumatized self- and object images related to traumatic dislocation into a child's self-representation. He pointed out that "depositing" is distinct from identification in that "depositing" involves an adult mostly unconsciously using a child to become a "reservoir for certain self- and other images belonging to that adult" (Volkan, 2017, p. 667). It is important to consider that the intergenerational transmission of traumatic stress and prejudice can encompass a wide range of defenses, such as denial, projection, and rationalization. For example, a parent who is experienced by a child as loving and attentive, and who holds negative attitudes toward immigrants may consciously and/or unconsciously communicate these attitudes and expect that the child carries similar negative attitudes as a condition for maintaining a sense of connection to the parent. The child, in this case, becomes a container for hateful attitudes toward immigrants, which are dissociated from loving images of the parent.

Ilany Kogan (2017) further noted that xenophobia has roots in early childhood, when an infant's fear of strangers can mark the quality of relationship with a caregiver, and specifically whether the infant develops a response of curiosity or that of fear. Kogan refers to a basic interpersonal survival mechanism in infant development. She suggested that "strangers represent an attack on our inner equilibrium" (Kogan, 2017, p. 380), and that rather than tolerating this destabilization, we hold the stranger responsible. As such, an inner conflict becomes externalized and aggressed upon someone who has less social, political, or economic power. The strangers are then seen as dirty, lazy, stupid, exotic, and violent nonhuman objects (Kogan, 2017). It is important to consider that xenophobia and racism internalized in childhood and adolescence are not only located in family dynamics and parent–child interactions, but also in schools, neighborhoods, workplaces, ethnic and religious communities, political groups, and social media communities. As such, xenophobia and racism are cultivated in private and public spaces.

Other psychoanalytic scholarship has focused on the motivations underlying prejudice. For example, Elisabeth Young-Bruehl (2007, p. 226) proposed that there is no single type of prejudiced personality, but rather distinct character types: (a) Obsessional type, characterized by rigidity, "moralistic conventionality," conformity, and hyper-rationality; (b) Hysterical type, characterized by splitting and dissociation where there are good and bad selves, and a "real self" and an "impostor self"; (c) Narcissistic type, characterized by grandiosity and "complex phallocentrism," lack of empathy, and the expectation of privilege and indulgence. In this perspective, all types of prejudice are "social mechanisms of defense" rooted in an individual's developmental histories (e.g., early object relations) and social developmental histories (Young-Bruehl, 2007, p. 234). As such, defenses related to prejudice must be considered in the context of one's relational history across different developmental and social contexts.

Salman Akhtar (2007) noted that the defenses underlying prejudice become rigid as individuals show little or no interest in others who are different from them with regard to religion, culture, and race, and socialize within their own sociocultural groups. Akhtar further described "unmentalized xenophobia" as an important consequence of this defensive structure: "The restriction of the ego's social rind to a homocultural in-group buttresses intrapsychic repression" (Akhtar, 2007, p. 16). Akhtar's concept of unmentalized xenophobia has important implications for the problem

of alienation. In particular, unmentalized xenophobia impinges on one's ability to develop a sense of cooperation with others, and to explore and form friendships and intimate relationships that pose new perspectives countering or challenging rigid notions of others (Kanwal, 2019). In reference to the current sociopolitical climate in the United States, Kanwal (2019) has noted the increasing dissociative gaps within and between people, and the ways in which these gaps contribute to perceptions of what is considered to be the "not me" or other as dispensable. These dissociative defenses serve to justify xenophobic and racist attitudes and actions, as racial minority immigrants are viewed as criminals and terrorists (e.g., not me). Further, the privilege of not having to know, learn more about, and humanize immigrants reifies these defenses in such a way that stereotypes become further fixed (Bhabha, 1994).

Several scholars (Aviram, 2009; Davids, 2009; Kogan, 2017; Varvin, 2017; Volkan, 2017) have also called attention to the role of unconscious fantasies of a homogenous community that contribute to the normalization of xenophobia and racism. In particular, Fakhry Davids (2009, p. 178) has pointed out that discrimination and prejudice become unconsciously normalized such that facts about minorities become interpreted through a "normal pathological organization," and any threats to this set of organizers is met with defensive strategies. Specifically, qualities felt to be undesirable and unacceptable are projected to racial minorities, and Whiteness becomes a standard against which racial minorities are evaluated (Altman, 2010; Suchet, 2004). Alongside these projections, particular traits or qualities considered to be positive are assigned to racial minorities. The model minority stereotype of Asian Americans and the ascription of natural athletic ability to African Americans are such examples. It is worth noting that these positive stereotypes coexist with negative stereotypes of the same racial groups, signifying both envy and hate. Importantly, these racialized defense mechanisms have serious negative consequences for the safety and well-being of racial minorities.

Relatedly, Sarah Jaffe (2018) noted how sexism continues to feel "normal" for so many women in the United States and across the globe. The normalization of sexism is evident in the election of a president who makes derogatory comments about women and has admitted to sexually assaulting women during his presidential campaign. Jaffe (2018), in her analysis of the 2016 U.S. presidential election, noted that many White women, even those who consider themselves to have progressive beliefs regarding gender roles, experienced "learned pessimism" (p. 20), where sexism was something expected. In describing some women who voted for Donald Trump, she stated, "To them, to get something that felt like change, putting up with the same old sexism did not feel like that much of a price to pay" (Jaffe, 2018, p. 20). Interestingly, Jaffe (2018) elaborated the views of a subset of White women whose interpretation of feminism encompasses racist ideology. She pointed out that White women have always participated in White supremacy in the United States, which in part has centered on defending White women's purity. From this perspective, some women believe that warding off racial minority immigrant men whom they perceive as antifeminist or more traditional, is, in fact, a feminist endeavor (Jaffe, 2018). Xenophobia, in this context, is intertwined with sexism and nostalgia for an idealized past when White families secured economic stability and dominance over other racial groups in the United States. For these subgroups of White Americans, anxiety of potentially losing power and dominance in the face of growing numbers of racial minority immigrants underlies their attempts to marginalize others.

When xenophobia, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, social class inequality, and ableism are interwoven with political or religious ideologies, unconscious processes shape fantasies shared by a group or community (Varvin, 2017). Sverre Varvin (2017) has suggested that these fantasies are related to other life themes such as the struggle between good and evil, sibling rivalry, and separation-individuation, all of which become amplified in a xenophobic nation. Perceptions of the other are based on projections of unwanted parts of the self, and become justifications for the dehumanization of other such as racial minorities (Varvin, 2017). Ruth Lijtmaer (2017, p. 692) has further noted that a nation or community can be experienced in bodily terms, and the experience of insecure boundaries is "roughly equivalent to the fear that one's own body will be penetrated." Indeed, the notion that racial minorities have the potential to "contaminate" White Americans has been a prevalent source of anxiety among many White Americans.

Kogan (2017) posed an important question regarding the inner life of majority status individuals and groups. She stated, "Liberal thought and international human rights laws recognize the rights of minority groups to maintain their cultural identity, but assume that majorities have neither a need for similar rights nor a moral ground for defending them" (Kogan, 2017, p. 388). Kogan's point can be extended to the invisibility of Whiteness in the United States and more specifically within the clinical encounter. For example, when I have asked my White clients about their ethnicity, many of them report not having an ethnicity, but instead state, "I'm just White." The transference dynamics in these interactions with some of my White clients at times reflects their anger and envy about not having an ethnic identity that is visible to others, and at other times reflects their guilt and shame about having the ability to choose whether or not to think about ethnicity or race. These dynamics can also indicate a wish to maintain White privilege as there is an implicit message in stating, "I'm just White," that conveys the feeling that their Indian American therapist is the one who is different or unusual, and that their Whiteness is the standard reference point against which my Indian American background is perceived. In all of these cases, the client's wish to be seen is diminished by a disavowal of family migration history and messages of White as standard, privileged, and oppressive.

The assumption that majority status people do not have as much of a right to explore or assert their cultural identity has contributed to a fusion of White race and a fictional monolithic White culture in sociopolitical, interpersonal, and intrapsychic contexts. When people of color defy stereotypes of being stupid, lazy, and so forth, there is a reckoning with the real past of American history. White Americans are faced with the reality of their conscious and unconscious aggression against racial minorities. The inability to bear the truth concerning oppression and White privilege can foster defensive rage, whereby rhetoric on what is real America has to relanguage and, therefore, rewrite the story about people of color and immigrants (Achebe, 2000). The language used by Trump and others to describe immigrants as "rapists," "criminals," and "terrorists" reflects such rewriting of narrative. In U.S. society, we have been internalizing these words and narratives, and even those who consciously oppose them are transformed by them. Unconscious and implicit biases have been unleashed in rage

against racial minorities in ways that are framed as not only justifiable, but also just. In psychoanalytic psychotherapy, we must consider how this explication of unconscious and implicit hate, envy, and rage may affect inner life, and the permission one feels to oppress others.

Experiences of Racial Minority Immigrants

Xenophobia and racism have profound effects on how immigrant youth and adults experience themselves in relation to others and on their sense of belonging. In fact, a study conducted by Warner and Swisher (2015) indicates that immigrant youth are less optimistic about their future well-being and health when compared with U.S.-born White youth. Immigrants and their children negotiate conflict, identity, belonging, and emotional health within the parameters of constraint delineated by xenophobia and racism. For immigrants, culture and race in the United States is often intertwined, and as such they navigate overlapping cultural and racial identifications. For example, cultural symbols become racial identifiers, and therefore markers of fear and hate. My client, Mira, a second-generation Indian American woman wonders whether she should wear a piece of Indian clothing to work. She stated, "If I wear my kurtha to work, it just draws attention, like oh look, she is from another country, and then all kinds of assumptions come. If I don't wear it, then I'm annoyed, because it's not me who is deciding whether I can wear this or not." It is the experience of many first-, second-, and later-generation people that they have to choose between not being identified as other and losing their ethnic identifications. Existing in this in-between space means that one never has full access to an ancestral identity or to an American identity.

For, Eli, an immigrant from Indonesia who identifies as queer, his experience of these in-between spaces vacillates between being seen and unseen. He has temporary documentation, and learned from his parents about his undocumented status as an adolescent. His anxiety about his documentation status has reached a new and dangerous degree since the election of Donald Trump. He lives in constant fear of not being able to keep his employment and having to return to Indonesia. He has not come out as queer to his parents, and is tormented about the idea of disclosing his identity to them, and of the possibility of having to hide his sexual identity if he returns to living in Indonesia. The present climate of explicit hate in the United States toward multiple aspects of his identity and experience poses an impossible dilemma for Eli, as he must pay close attention to whom he can trust and from whom he can seek help. In psychotherapy, we each sit with and bear the unknown and the possibility of deportation, and continue to make efforts to resist by securing legal and other resources and by naming the injustice directed against him.

In each of these cases, communities play a critical role in the psychic organization of racial minority immigrants. Both Mira and Eli engage in communities where at least some aspects of their authentic selves are mirrored in ways that provide emotional refueling (Akhtar, 2011). In other words, they both have access to friends and other supportive figures that are critical to restoring the psychic energy required to cope with racism- related stress. Psychoanalytic scholars (Ainslie, 2017; Akhtar, 2011) have discussed the need for recreating psychic spaces where the psychological functions of communities are restored. Ricardo Ainslie (2017)

pointed to Winnicott's (1971) concept of potential space as essential to what communities provide for immigrants, as communities provide transitional space where individuals can engage creatively with "external" or mainstream reality. Other scholars, such as Vamik Volkan (2017), have suggested that individual identity is embedded in collective experiences. Collective identity can become even more salient for immigrants and their children in a xenophobic, racist context. In fact, many immigrants feel compelled to manage impressions of their respective ethnic and/or religious communities as an attempt to diminish negative stereotypes, discrimination, and aggression. This impression management may indeed help to reduce some negative attention directed against one's community. However, it also serves to diminish experiences of marginalization and trauma within one's ethnic and/or religious community (Kanukollu & Mahalingam, 2011). The fear of being further targeted lies at the root of this type of denial and minimization.

Salman Akhtar (2014), in his essay, "The Mental Pain of Minorities," pointed out that minorities are not just people who exist in smaller numbers than the majority but rather become colonized subjects who, in general, have less voice, representation, and fewer resources than the majority. He suggests that being a minority reflects cumulative trauma (Khan, 1963), where "the protective and holding functions of the society-at-large accrue over time and put a silent but palpable strain on the ego, both at an individual and collective level" (Akhtar, 2014, p. 138). An important paradox is put forth in his perspective; that is, the majority group tends to ignore the presence of the minority group, and yet at the same time, unconsciously desires the minority group, which becomes a target for externalization of the majority group's paranoid and depressive anxieties (Akhtar, 2014; Volkan, 1997). Akhtar poses the question, "If one is not wanted but does exist, then what is one to do with one's existence?" (p. 140). As such, it is often the case that racial minority immigrants experience anxiety, confusion, and despair related to not knowing how to be fully seen and present and at the same time invisible to the majority group. Further, one has to potentially sacrifice authenticity to be seen and accepted by the majority group, and secure safety (Akhtar, 2014).

Influence of the Premigration Context

Many immigrants leave their countries of origin to escape minority status and persecution, while seeking new opportunities and new personal freedom. Ricardo Ainslie (2009b) has written about how the significance of premigration class identities can become amplified in the new country, shaping immigrants' identity and adjustment. Relatedly, it is important to consider that immigrants are socialized with systems of oppression that take forms in their countries of origin distinct from those in the United States. For many immigrants, remaining connected to their cultural heritage is a source of strength, but so is aligning with Whiteness. As such, the premigration context of privilege and oppression become the internal objects and reference points for new systems of privilege and oppression in the adopted country.

Recreating ethnic and religious communities provides essential functions of maintaining a sense of continuity in the new cultural context. At the same time, the connection to one's ethnic and/or religious community can implicate the transmission of prejudice and oppression rooted in the premigration context. I refer to caste

in India to illustrate this point. The caste system draws from an ancient Hindu division of professions noted by the term *varna* (the English term *caste* is derived from Portuguese *casta*), which includes, in order of descending social status: Brahmanas, or the intellectuals and priests; Kshatriyas, or the warriors and kings; Vaishyas, or the merchants and traders; and Shudras, or the workers and laborers (Sharma & Tummala-Narra, 2014; Vallabhaneni, 2015, p. 362). Over the course of South Asian history, a fifth group, Dalits (formerly known as "untouchables") was designated to those considered outside of the traditional varna classification. Increasingly, each of the four major varnas were thought to carry certain social status, varna designations became more rigid, and Shudras and Dalits became viewed as subhuman and as contaminants to people in the higher castes (Vallabhaneni, 2015). Caste in India, similar to race in the United States, is a system encompassing the notion that human beings are by birth separate and distinct from each other, and its effects are pervasive across religious lines. Both notions of caste and race encompass paranoia that groups of people thought to be intellectually, socially, and morally inferior can contaminate groups of people thought to be superior (Hamer, 2006; Roy, 2017). Madhusudana Rao Vallabhaneni (2015) described the splitting and projection of the bad self as unconscious mechanisms through which the Brahmin frees the self of distress and oppresses the Dalit, such that good affects and objects are preserved for the Brahmin. Indians, regardless of whether or not they are Hindu, cannot escape the influence of caste in interpersonal contexts (Roy, 2017; Vallabhaneni, 2015). This is evident in social sanctions concerning marriage within castes. Both racism and caste discrimination are traumatic frameworks that are internalized by Indians across the diaspora and across generations. For some immigrants from privileged caste and class backgrounds, the fantasy of returning to India provides a sense of continuity with a sense of power and dominance that they feel stripped of in the U.S. context (Tummala-Narra, 2009). For others who are from lower caste or class backgrounds in India, the U.S. context may offer an escape from one type of oppression but pose yet another type of oppression, such as racial or religious discrimination.

There are interesting parallels between the Hindu higher caste immigrants from India and White middle- and upper-middle-class Americans. For example, most wealthy White Americans, regardless of their political views, are reluctant about financial reparations for the descendants of slaves in the United States, even when they it comes at relatively less financial cost to them. Relatedly, debates about affirmative action in college and work settings in the United States reflect ongoing fear that Whites will lose their privilege to racial minorities. Similarly, in India, there is a fear of Dalits taking over positions of power in business and government and admission to colleges, a privilege previously held only by those Hindus deemed to belong to a caste (Roy, 2017). These fears persist despite the reality that Whites continue to hold significantly more social, political, and economic power than racial minorities in the United States, as do those Hindus designated a caste when compared to those considered Dalits. The majority group's fear, envy, and mistrust are projected toward the minority group, such that the rage of minority groups becomes the majority group's justification for further violence and oppression against minorities (Altman, 2010; Roy, 2017).

I use this example of caste as a way of illustrating how immigrants and subsequent generations contend with racism, xenopho-

bia, sexism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism through a framework internalized prior to immigration. In some cases, people vehemently maintain idealized notions of their own caste or subcaste or class as a way of preserving their majority status and power, even when this aspect of identity no longer carries real social and economic power within the U.S. context. For example, some of my first- and second-generation clients emphasize that they are not like other "typical" Indians, Chinese, or Mexicans. They tell me that they are from a distinct caste or class of individuals who held privileges that demarcate them from mainstream American images of their cultural and racial groups, and others have dreams and fantasies reflecting a sense of power and omnipotence connected with their "special position" in their ethnic community or country of origin. Some clients express their discomfort with more recently arrived immigrants, as the presence of these immigrants raises anxiety about their own sense of belonging in the United State. Racial minority immigrants carry with them their own forms of xenophobia while they resist being oppressed by the White majority group in the United States. These fears are magnified in the face of broader racial oppression in the U.S. context, and they serve to mask oppression, such as racism, sexism, gender-based violence, homophobia, transphobia, classism, and ableism, within immigrant communities. As such, the premigration context and early object relations embedded in this context influence the ways in which immigrants bear the complexity of privilege and oppression in the United States. Most often, the systems of oppression in the country of origin or heritage culture and those in the United States remain unintegrated.

Case Illustrations

The following case vignettes illustrate some dilemmas that have arisen in my psychotherapeutic work with two clients, a White, Irish American man, and a Hindu, Indian American woman. Each client has a unique sociocultural background and interpersonal history that interacts with those in my own life. The vignettes reflect critical moments that illustrate some ways in which xenophobia and racism affect the client, the therapist, and the therapeutic process, within the context of the current sociopolitical climate.

Case Vignette 1: John

John is a White, Irish American cisgender man in his mid-30s who identifies as heterosexual. He sought psychotherapy to cope with posttraumatic symptoms rooted in physical and sexual abuse. John, after speaking with his physician about his intensifying feelings of anxiety, was referred to me. We have been working together for approximately 3 years. In our first session, John told me that he wanted to find a therapist who understood how to help male survivors of sexual abuse, but that he did not want to work with a male therapist. Early in our work, he disclosed that he had been sexually abused repeatedly by a priest at his family's church, when he was a young child. He attempted to report the abuse to his parents at one point, but they did not believe him. In a second attempt to tell his parents about the abuse, his mother asked him more questions and realized that John was telling the truth. John stated that his parents were deeply saddened by the abuse and felt too ashamed to confront the priest or anyone in the Church. They

decided to attend a different church, and never spoke with John about the abuse again. John described his parents as "strict, religious, and hard-working," and the challenges he and his family faced in their working-class neighborhood, such the lack of adequate schools and housing. John also experienced physical abuse by his father periodically throughout his childhood and adolescence. His mother would often intervene, and make attempts to protect John, although John feared that his father would then become enraged with his mother.

Our therapeutic work focused primarily on John's traumatic stress, especially his anxiety in his intimate relationships with women and in his interactions with male coworkers. He connected his anxiety in relationships to the betrayal he experienced by the priest whom he trusted, and to his father's abuse. He often held back his tears as he described his abuse by the priest and by his father. He stated, in one session, "I don't ever think I could really trust guys. It was really horrible, the things that happened. I didn't think I would make it through some days. I was really vulnerable." At times, he expressed that he felt relieved to be able to talk about his experiences with someone who is not "American" and "from a culture where families stick together." In these moments, I would respond to John by saying, "I am American," and "It seems like you know something about Indian culture. Can you tell me more about what you know or what you imagine about it?" He typically responded to me by letting me know that he didn't mean to offend me and that he admired Indians as he believed that they become successful in the United States by working hard. These conversations remained largely in the background of our work for several months, as we continued to focus on discussing his experiences of sexual and physical violence. However, in a subsequent session, we revisited his fantasy of Indian families "sticking together" when I asked him, "I wonder if you wished for a different type of family, more like the one you imagine among Indians." He then shared that he had often wished to leave his family, and found some solace in moving far away from his hometown. He also decided to end his affiliation with the Catholic Church, another significant and complicated loss. John spoke of this loss as though a part of him was both "dead" and another part "enlivened." Referring to his loss, he stated, "There is no real family, no parents and no church." On other occasions, he shared his relief, stating, "When I left the church, something lifted. They couldn't tell me who I was anymore."

Our discussions about our sociocultural differences became markedly different in the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election. A few days after the election, John began our session by saying, "It's great news! We won. I didn't think it would happen." My response was silence, as I was deeply saddened and still in shock over the election results. It was difficult for me to bear John's excitement about Donald Trump winning the election. While in previous conversations about our sociocultural differences, I felt more comfortable in actively engaging with John around his questioning my Americanness, and of what he imagined of Indian culture and families, I was not able to respond with anything other than silence during this postelection session. After a few minutes, I asked him what specifically excited him about the election. He then proceed to tell me about how he could connect with Trump's vision of "making America great again." When I asked him to say more, he talked about feeling frustrated that some racial minorities had privileges that he had not experienced. He

said, "I didn't have much growing up, but then I would see some Black people and immigrants get advantages just because of their color. I'm tired of people telling me that I have privilege. What privilege? I was abused as a child, and no one helped me. I had to get through things all by myself. Who was helping me? So, I'm the one with privilege?" I asked, "You don't think that White people have certain privileges in this country?" He said, "Well, I didn't. Now, I feel bad. I don't mean people like you. You obviously worked hard for what you accomplished. There are others though, and this is one of the things that is messed up."

I continued to listen and remained mostly silent during the rest of this particular session. I felt the best that I could do on that day was to bear John's aggression silently. I was aware of how difficult it was for him to express his anger directly toward anyone in his life. He lived in constant fear that he would be hurt or abandoned if he revealed his feelings to others. At the same time, I was aware of how painful the days and weeks after the election felt for me, with a growing sense of disappointment and fear, reminiscent of experiences of discrimination and harassment that I have faced previously in my life. In subsequent sessions, I continued to be more silent than what is typical for me in working with John. In one session, he spoke directly to my silence, and said, "You seem different lately. Did I say something that offended you?" At this point, I decided to share with John my disappointment in the election and in Trump, and my hope that we would somehow find a way to talk about our differences honestly. John thanked me for sharing my feelings with him, and for not dismissing what he had sensed in my response to him. Then, he stated, "I don't think it's as bad as you think it is. Things are not going to affect you so much." I immediately associated to his attempts to tell his parents that he was abused, and their subsequent minimization of the abuse. I shared my association with him, after which he stated, "I didn't think about it from that perspective, but I know how horrible it was when no one believed me."

My experience of sitting with John is rife with mixed emotions, at times wishing I could end the session so that I do not have to hear his views on racial minorities and immigrants, and other times, feeling a deep sense of connection with his experiences of loss and trauma. I have been reflecting on mistakes that I have made in my work with John, as I consider the effect of my initial reluctance to talk about my real feelings about the presidential election. I understand these mistakes not only as defensive reactions, but also as opportunities for me to recognize transference and countertransference dynamics, and to move toward a deeper understanding of John's conflicts (Gilhooley, 2011). I have learned over the course of our work together that his splitting of "good" and "bad" immigrants reflects racialized messages that he internalized from his family, friends, and broader society, and his conflicted feelings about the same people who taught him these racialized beliefs. John's beliefs about immigrants were inextricably tied with an affective connection to his parents toward whom he felt ambivalent (Parens, 2007; Volkan, 2017). The questioning of these racialized messages posed intense anxiety about his relationships with his parents, as he struggled with the potential of losing them both in terms of physical and psychic proximity.

John's struggles with racialized messages further posed conflicts for me in that I have had to revisit painful experiences related to race and immigration inside and outside of our work. My countertransference, at times, mirrored his transference in that I

experienced him sometimes as a "good" White person, and other times as a "bad" White person. Yet, I realize that these are constructions steeped in our individual social contexts that are projected toward each other, particularly when we both feel the risk of annihilation. I often think about John's experience of loss of personal power and sense of masculinity, and how this loss is intertwined with his experience of not having or owning White male privilege. I'm aware of how he makes attempts to not overpower me in our sessions by paying close attention to my feelings and reactions. In fact, he has talked about how he gets scared of being "too male," in other words, too aggressive, in his relationships like his father had been toward him. John's loss of power is rooted in his abuse, victimization, and vulnerability at the hands of powerful people, and his wish to secure power manifests in projecting internalized aggression toward immigrants and people of color. I have continued to sit with my ambivalence, as I witness the complexity of his experiences.

Case Vignette 2: Anika

Anika is an Asian Indian cisgender woman in her late 20s who identifies as heterosexual. She had hoped to work specifically with a South Asian therapist, and was referred to me by a coworker in a large business firm where she was employed. She had been coping with depressed mood and difficulty with concentrating on her work. Anika left India in her late teens to pursue her education at a college in the United States. Her parents are wealthy, and own several successful businesses in India. Her parents had made the decision when she was a child that she would pursue higher education in the United States, but that within a few years of completing her degree, she would return to India. Although Anika initially agreed to her parents' plan, she has since decided to settle in the United States, and has recently married someone who is White and of German and Scottish ancestry.

Anika grew up in an urban area of Southern India and lived in a home with her parents and two older sisters. Her parents had met in college and married against the wishes of both of their families, due to differences in caste. Anika's mother was of a lower Shudra caste and her father was from a higher Vaishya caste. Their families vehemently opposed their relationship, and subsequently, Anika's parents had what is known in India as a "love marriage," or eloped. The families eventually reconciled, and Anika and her sisters had close contact with both sets of grandparents while growing up. Despite being aware of her mixed-caste status, Anika and her sisters were told by their parents and extended family that they were Vaishyas, the higher caste of their father.

During my initial session with Anika, she described her relationship with her family as fairly distant, and that she could not imagine living in the same house as her family were she ever to return to India. She stated that it was challenging to develop a close relationship with anyone in the family largely because of intense arguments between her parents. She recalled several events during her adolescence when she mediated these arguments, and how much she dreaded these arguments. She felt conflicted about having to take sides with a parent, and as her sisters lived away at college during this time, could not draw on their support. Anika also described her parents as "status conscious," and that they did not want their marital conflicts to be known by anyone outside the

family, or for her to interact with others who were of lower caste or class backgrounds. She stated, "They wanted everyone to see how perfect we all were. We were not perfect by any means, but this was important for the family reputation. You had to show off your wealth, your status, your house, your servants. This was all for show." Anika also shared that her father would at times make demeaning comments to her mother about her lower caste and that of her family members. When Anika tried to console her mother after these incidents, her mother would ask her not to talk about it. In other instances, her mother made demeaning comments to Anika about Anika's darker skin complexion. Since she was a young girl, Anika was told by her mother that she had to work hard in school and secure her own career as she was not as physically attractive as her lighter skinned sisters. Anika felt torn between wanting to support her mother during the arguments with her father, and wanting to distance herself from her mother in order to cope with the devaluing comments about her skin color.

When Anika moved to the United States, she met her boyfriend, Michael, whom she would later marry. In describing her husband, she stated, "He is hard working, worldly, and he loves me." Although she had no significant overt conflicts with her parents-in-law, she sometimes felt as though they did not understand her Indian cultural heritage. Anika's parents were initially disappointed about her decision to marry someone who is not Indian, but over time, accepted and welcomed Anika's husband to their family, in particular because he and his family are "wealthy and White." In the United States, Anika had made active efforts to assimilate to White American mainstream context. While in college, she hired a coach to help her with reducing her Indian accent, and did not associate with other Indian international students or Indian American students. She developed close friendships with primarily White women and men who she described as "more worldly," when compared to people in India. When she met Michael, she imagined that he would help her to secure the material life with which she was familiar in India, but also hoped that her marriage would not resemble that between her parents.

Several weeks after working with Anika, when she had described her wish to distance herself from other Indians, I asked her about how she felt about working with an Indian American therapist. She responded by telling me that she did not want to work with someone who had grown up in India, but that at the same time, she wanted to work with someone who was familiar with her cultural heritage. She stated that some experiences of Indians are uniquely understood by other Indians. Over time, she increasingly spoke about her ambivalence about living in the United States, and stated in one session, "This country is so racist. I mean look at Trump. It's disgusting. Last weekend, Michael and I were at a work party, and this one woman kept bothering me. She kept telling me how exotic I look. She doesn't get it." Anika proceeded to tell me about how she feels devalued and overlooked at her workplace and will likely not be promoted, even though she works harder than some of her White colleagues. She proceeded to discuss her feelings of anxiety heightened by Donald Trump's policies of travel bans and separation of immigrant children from their parents. We talked in depth about Anika's feelings of difference and marginalization within her husband's family and in the broader mainstream United States, which were experiences that she had tried to minimize and dismiss during her years in college.

In other moments in our work, however, Anika talked about her negative impressions of some Indian immigrants in the United States. She stated, "They don't try to get to know anyone here. They want to be totally Indian. They are kind of low class." I responded by asking, "What do you mean when you say low class? Say more about that." She followed, "They are not from the same kind of family I'm from. They come from different castes. I can't believe I'm even thinking about caste. It's such a stupid thing, and I always hated it in India." In this moment, Anika stopped talking about caste and she told me that she wished she hadn't brought it up with me. The session ended soon afterward. In the next session, I asked her how she felt after the previous session, and she stated, "It was kind of awkward, you know the caste thing. I don't know how much you know about it." In listening to Anika's ambivalence about her caste backgrounds, I began to reflect more deeply on the messages around caste that I had internalized in my own upbringing. My family is of the Shudra caste, the lower caste of Anika's mother, which has been largely disavowed in her family. I had grown up internalizing largely negative views of caste discrimination, and as an adult, I have gradually come to despise the idea of caste itself, due to its destructive effects on Indians across the diaspora. I was uncomfortable, at times, when Anika spoke of caste, and what I perceived to be a colonized perspective of caste and privilege in which Anika had been socialized. In the session, I decided to ask Anika, "What about talking about caste feels awkward?" She then shared with me that she worried that I wouldn't know much about caste since I didn't grow up in India, and that I may judge her negatively for her views on caste. I told her that I am familiar with caste, although I grew up in the United States, and then I asked her if she would elaborate on her views on caste even though it may feel difficult, as it would help me to understand more about her ambivalence about living in India and the United States. She stated, "It's hard because I know we had a lot of privileges in India because of my parents' wealth and caste. I didn't personally look down on people of other castes, but I never really interacted with anyone who wasn't from my caste. Here, there is no caste, not around Americans. So, in a way, I don't really have a way of identifying myself. They just see me as a Brown person, or an Indian. I'm not the same as other Indians though." We proceeded to talk further about what she imagined of my caste. In one subsequent session, after Anika asked me directly about my caste, I disclosed my caste background to her. We have since explored her feelings about working with someone who is of lower caste than her, and I have continued to feel uncertain about her willingness to share all that she may feel about this difference between us. However, she has expressed that she feels ashamed of her family's attitudes toward caste, and that my disclosure of my Shudra caste background has helped her think about the ways in which her own mother's background was devalued in her family.

Our conversations about caste allowed for further exploration of skin color. Anika began to talk with more depth about her sadness and isolation from her mother who demeaned her skin color. Anika shared, "She (mother) used to make me feel that nobody would find me pretty because I'm dark. So, you have to be rich and smart, and this way someone will like you." Over time, Anika was able to reflect further on how caste, class, and skin color affected her

fantasies of securing a different life in the United States, and of a better marriage. In her relationship with Michael, she felt that she didn't have to worry about colorism, and she fantasized that someday when they had children, they would have a lighter skin complexion, which would protect them from being discriminated in the United States and in India. At the same time, however, she rebuked herself for having these thoughts because she, in fact, did not share her mother's views about skin color. Nevertheless, her conflicts reflected a complex separation and individuation process involving unconscious attempts to satisfy her mother's wishes and at the same time, guard against her mother's negativity and disapproval.

It became increasingly clear in these conversations that Anika's fantasies of securing her high caste status in the United States were challenged by her experiences with racism. She both wanted to be identified by others as an Indian who is connected to her heritage, and at the same time as a particular type of Indian who is more sophisticated than other Indians. At times, it was difficult for me to bear Anika's disdain toward other Indian immigrants of a different caste and social class, as my personal feelings about caste in the United States parallel those regarding race in the United States. I view caste and race as destructive social constructions that victimize and oppress minority individuals and communities. As an Indian American woman whose skin color is similar to that of Anika, I also empathized with her experience of colorism in India. It is challenging, at times, to attend to Anika's experiences of marginalization and her sense of entitlement associated with her class and caste privilege. I recognized that she had not only internalized a narrative of privilege in India but that in the United States, particularly when she spoke of the Indians whom she perceived as less sophisticated than her, reflecting both Hindu, Indian privileged, and White, colonized perspectives. Yet, bearing witness to her conflictual feelings about these various dimensions of caste, class, race, and gender has been critical to her exploration of her sadness and ambivalence.

Anika's case underscores the point that all people have fears of the unknown or the other embedded in relationships with significant people in their lives and in specific social structures and conditions that shape experiences of privilege and/or marginalization. For Anika, the xenophobia and racism in the United States and discrimination regarding caste, class, and skin color in India left her feeling both marginalized and privileged across different contexts. Her negotiation of racism in the United States had to then consider her privileged position both in India and the United States. In psychotherapy, she no longer denied her privilege, and eventually came to talk about her feelings of guilt and shame related to privilege, and her feelings of anger and sadness related to marginalization. Anika's case highlights how many immigrants contend with histories of colonization and premigration stereotypes and discrimination as they negotiate their identities and social positions in the new, adopted country. In the United States, many South Asian immigrants face the dilemma of how much to acculturate and identify with White Americans. The model minority stereotype reflects a wish to become accepted in White American context, by attaining academic, professional, and financial success. Yet, experiences of racism and xenophobia become barriers to realizing these fantasies of acceptance and belonging (Eng & Han, 2000).

Concluding Thoughts

John's and Anika's case vignettes raise important concerns regarding the current sociopolitical context in the United States, and its relationship with psychotherapeutic work. Although the dynamics of xenophobia and race have been relevant to psychoanalytic psychotherapy across different historical periods, it is worth directing attention to the unique aspects of the contemporary climate and its impact on the lives of clients and therapists. In both of the case vignettes, the client and the therapist struggle with defenses that are learned early in their lives within the traumatic frameworks of race and/or caste. It is worth noting that these defenses, such as projection and dissociation, are challenged over the course of psychotherapy, where John and Anika begin to reconsider xenophobic and racist messages, as they mourn trauma and losses occurring since early in life (Young-Bruehl, 2007). Experiences of trauma and marginalization overwhelmed these clients such that the experience of privilege was not readily accessible. Both John and Anika had dissociated from the privilege they held with regard to race and caste, respectively, challenging the ability to bear self-states associated with privilege (Bromberg, 2010). In certain moments in psychotherapy when there was a growing recognition of social or economic privilege, they experienced a deep sense of shame, and became concerned about disappointing me or feeling disconnected from me. At other moments, they felt justified in their derogatory views of some groups (Akhtar, 2007). John and Anika were raised in environments where it was "normal" to think of minorities or those with lower social status with disdain and mistrust (Davids, 2009). In psychotherapy, connecting with a therapist who is an Indian American immigrant woman from a particular caste and skin color both raised anxiety and disrupted the normalcy of xenophobia and racism.

The current sociopolitical climate has made explicit unconscious wishes, fears, and dilemmas concerning privilege and marginalization. John and Anika felt conflicted about identifying with those whom they perceived as holding social power (e.g., White men [John]; lighter skinned people from higher castes [Anika]), as these figures betrayed their trust even while fostering a feeling of specialness associated with Whiteness and higher caste and social position. For John and Anika, gaining and sustaining social and economic power through an identification with Whiteness and the avoidance of the "not me" associated with marginalization were rooted in early developmental needs that remained unmet (Altman, 2010; Kogan, 2017). The clients' experiences of the current sociopolitical climate reified the belief that one has to secure power in order to avoid being marginalized. For John, marginalization was embedded in his traumatic history of sexual and physical abuse and in the lack of economic resources earlier in his life, and any experience of privilege as a White man was dissociated. For Anika, marginalization based on skin color in India and race in the United States was met with ambivalence about her Indian and American identities. Her identification with Whiteness and higher caste and wealth served to protect her from fully recognizing and experiencing the loss and disappointment related to her mother's rejection of her. In both cases, xenophobia and racism were the frameworks through which privilege and a sense of connection to families and communities could be secured. Yet, the experience of privilege and marginalization were largely unintegrated, and posed conflicts concerning safety, identity, and relationships.

Akhtar's (2007) concept of unmentalized xenophobia is also relevant to both John and Anika, as they each engaged in defensiveness against knowing the "other" (e.g., minorities, members of lower castes) more fully. In fact, impressions of the "other" were dominated by rigid views that served to contain anxiety and fear of knowing the "other." Humanizing the "other" posed threat to their own identities, relationships, and sense of power. These two case vignettes further raise questions about the role of the therapist in navigating the sociopolitical context and its meanings (Tummala-Narra, 2016). There have been several moments in my work where I have recognized my own feelings of sadness and anger as John and Anika seemed to operate within an acceptance of Whiteness and caste as the standard or the norm. I felt like an outsider in these moments, and at the same time as a container for their projections of badness, "other," and the "not me." I wondered about my particular role as a therapist in exploring what I view as the pathology of racism and casteism, and whether my personal wish to stand against racism and casteism interfered with knowing more fully their experiences of race and caste. I continued to reexamine my own life history with regard to xenophobia, racism, and casteism, and my identity as an Indian American immigrant. My work with these clients raised my awareness of the importance of the dialectical nature of exploring xenophobia and racism in all forms, and the ways in which xenophobia and racism affected each of us independently and our relationship with each other.

In psychoanalytic psychotherapy, therapists are called to engage in witnessing and resisting injustice. Within the context of immigration, this work requires our willingness to listen to the full complexity of immigrants' lives, including experiences of aggression experienced by and within immigrant communities (Tummala-Narra, 2016). We can consider the ways in which our own theories, discourses, and practices either facilitate or impede our ability to witness and engage with authenticity, and to explore our clients' and our own sociocultural histories, traumas, and present-day anxieties. Akhtar (2015) suggested that therapists implement psychoanalytic convictions in psychotherapy, such as sustaining a belief that we all require a sense of safety for normal psychic functioning, and that human wishes are bound by experience, and therefore culturally variable; but that human needs, such as needs for dignity, identity, affirmation, mirroring, love, and generativity, are globally the same. The challenge of meeting these needs belongs to all of us.

摘要

摘要:少数族裔移民在美国和全球的存在和明显增长引发了一种集体焦虑感,其中解离的防御保持着情感上的距离,并与感知到被威胁的群体保持着认同. 边缘运动和主流政党将移民和难民归结为失业, 犯罪和威胁他们的文化社会结构的主要原因. 美国最近的政策,例如那些导致加强对黑人和棕色人种的监管,驱逐无证移民,将儿童与父母分离等政策明确表现了种族主义与仇外情绪的联系. 这些宏观层面的政策及其

所处的广泛的仇外情绪和种族主义的社会政治气氛对人的内心生活和人际关系有着重要的影响. 本文探讨了精神分析视角下的仇外心理, 种族主义防御及其对美国少数族裔移民经历的影响. 本文进一步探讨了对移民的恐惧如何反映出多方位的焦虑, 不仅包括对接收环境或东道国的恐惧, 还包括移民从原籍国带来的仇外情绪. 仇外心理和种族主义的影响将在治疗关系的背景下进行探讨, 在这种关系中, 相对于当前的社会政治气候, 患者和治疗师会陷入困难的情绪交流的方式. 临床案例可用来说明移情和反移情的动力, 以及在精神分析心理治疗中出现的集中于仇外情绪和种族主义的相关两难困境.

关键词: 仇外, 种族主义, 移民, 少数族裔, 社会政治气候

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