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Studies in Prejudice: Theorising Antisemitism in the Wake of the Nazi Holocaust

Stephen Frosh

Asking Questions about Hatred: the Mission of *Studies in Prejudice*

In the period immediately after the Second World War, the question of how the murder of millions of people mainly on racial grounds could have come about in the centre of Europe fuelled interest in both the sociology and the psychology of authoritarianism, fascism and prejudice. The topic of antisemitism was one focal point for this, understandably because of the specific fate of the Jews under Nazism but also because antisemitism could be seen as a prototype of, or perhaps a core element in, all racial hatred. Comprehending what had happened and how to prevent it recurring was a crucial moral and political endeavour, and it also may have seemed to many people that without a conscious effort the lessons of the immediately preceding period might be lost before they had even been learnt. This was certainly the view of the editors of the American Jewish Committee-backed series *Studies in Prejudice*, produced by adherents of the Institute of Social Research, the 'Frankfurt School'. In their Foreword to the series, Max Horkheimer and Samuel Flowerman famously asserted (1950, p. v), 'Today the world scarcely remembers the mechanized persecution and extermination of millions of human beings only a short span of years away in what was once regarded as the citadel of Western civilization.' The claim that forgetfulness was already happening, that the memory of what had not yet come to be called the Holocaust was being lost, is explicit here and was to become an orthodox point of view amongst many historians in subsequent years. The argument ran that immediately after the War this forgetfulness was motivated by an emotional inability to face the facts of what had happened, a need to focus on personal and social reconstruction, fears provoked by the Cold War and possibly by a triumphalist discourse necessary for the foundation of the State of Israel. In governmental circles, the perceived dangers of communism had overtaken the actual experience of Nazi barbarism, in a shift that had all the hallmarks of the psychoanalytic process of denial writ large. This version of things has now been put severely in doubt, not just by ideologues such as Norman Finkelstein (2000) who have traced the explosion of more recent interest in the Holocaust to the efforts of American Jews and Zionists to create a favourable climate for themselves. More careful scholarship has also revealed a substantial amount of writing and activity around 'remembering' the Holocaust that started immediately at the War's end (and even before it in some cases) and never really ceased, even if it did not come together until towards the end of the 1950s. In his Introduction to the edited collection *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence* (Cesarani and Sundquist, 2012), for instance, David Cesarani comments (p. 2), 'The purpose of this essay collection is to present evidence that in the wake of the Second World War the Jewish survivors of Nazi persecution and mass murder were not "silent" and that, over the ensuing fifteen years, the world was gifted a plenitude of information about the horrors that had so recently occurred in Europe.' The evidence the collection presents is indeed compelling on this, but it also offers some explanations as to why people who it might be assumed wrote in good faith about the 'silence' could have thought it had existed. One reason was language: much personal testimony written in the early years was in Yiddish or Polish and was not translated; in addition, it was very difficult to sustain networks of international collaboration and memorialising once the post-war East-West divisions were fully in place. This all means that the situation was much more complex than Horkheimer and Flowerman's statement about

'scarcely remembering' suggests: there was plenty of activity, even if keeping track of it and institutionalising it was hard.

Of course, Horkheimer and Flowerman were not naïve. On the one hand, the warning about forgetting was an important factor in setting the work of the authors of *Studies in Prejudice* and that of the American Jewish Committee in a strongly moral and therapeutic framework – their role was to remind the world of the horror that it had just witnessed and was in the process of denying. But Horkheimer and Flowerman were also aware that the forgetting was nowhere near absolute: they continued by suggesting that the trend they identified towards denial had not fully silenced the troubling questions posed by Nazism; and that these have something to do with the fragility of the structure of civilisation within which supposedly advanced cultures live.

Yet the conscience of many men was aroused. How could it be, they asked each other, that in a culture of law, order and reason, there should have remained the irrational remnants of ancient racial and religious hatreds? How could they explain the willingness of great masses of people to tolerate the mass extermination of their fellow citizens? What tissues in the life of our modern society remain cancerous, and despite our assumed enlightenment show the incongruous atavism of ancient peoples? And what within the individual organism responds to certain stimuli in our culture with attitudes and acts of destructive aggression? (Ibid.)

This sets up the work very clearly as an attempt to understand *irrationality* and mass psychology. What is articulated here is a polarisation of the 'culture of law, order and reason', which one might assume to be the enlightenment project, against 'irrational' forces that are left over as 'remnants of ancient racial and religious hatreds' and which are visible in the willingness of people to tolerate violent destructiveness. 'Irrationality' here is a kind of vestigial but still active process; the account is reminiscent of Freud's (1927, p.48) seemingly despairing response to the continued hold of religion over people who should know better: 'surely infantilism is destined to be surmounted.'

The way Horkheimer and Flowerman articulate this similarly draws on the idea of a developmentally 'primitive' state that puzzlingly sustains itself and breaks into the mature organism to do damage. The dominant images are colonial and bodily, running together the idea that there is a primitive stain in civilisation ('atavism') with the equally familiar one of an apparently healthy body politic that is subjected to a spreading illness. The shock of Nazism was that it could appear as an 'irrational remnant' in a 'culture of law, order and reason' – as if psychoanalysis had not already told the world that such 'culture' is built on shaky foundations, that irrationality is not just something it contests, but is its permanent underside. The 'incongruous atavism of ancient peoples' breaks through, damaging 'our assumed enlightenment' and in this formulation echoing Freud's own colonial imagery of the 'primitive' and the 'savage' (Freud, 1913). Switching from this language of primitivity and 'ancientness', Horkheimer and Flowerman also attribute the going-astray of western civilisation to the attack on it by a bodily pathology: 'What tissues in the life of our modern society remain cancerous?' they ask. The key point, softened by their use of 'assumed' in 'assumed enlightenment', is that there is something left over or extraneous that is damaging contemporary culture, and it is this we need to understand – rather than that it is the culture itself that is wrong. That is to say, they do not prefigure the later suggestion, for example from Zygmunt Bauman (1989), that the Holocaust was not an aberration, but an *expression*, of modernity; rather, they maintain the simplification that there is a fundamental opposition between civilisation and barbarism, between the cultured and the primitive, between the healthy organism and that which invades it to make it ill. This is a view not consistently held by Freud himself, despite his push to oppose the civilised

European by the other as 'primitive'. Indeed, that the seeds of destruction might be *intrinsic* to 'a culture of law, order and reason' is suggested by his own account of how culture originates in acts of violence (the murder of the father in *Totem and Taboo* and in *Moses and Monotheism* – Freud, 1913, 1939) as well as by the broader psychoanalytic proposal that each human subject, however 'cultured' she or he may be, is inhabited and preoccupied by irrational, unconscious urges that may even take the form of a drive towards death.

Still, Horkheimer and Flowerman ask excellent questions. 'How could they [i.e. 'many men'] explain the willingness of great masses of people to tolerate the mass extermination of their fellow citizens?... And what within the individual organism responds to certain stimuli in our culture with attitudes and acts of destructive aggression?' These questions remain timely: how can it be that such things can (be allowed to) take place? In the full glare and gaze of the populace, with everyone's knowledge, in full daylight – because this is what happened and happens, even if there were shadows too, in which much of the detail was hidden – something bursts through that excites some people into destructive action and terrorises others into silence, and brutalises everyone until they hardly see it for what it is. And asking such questions was no trivial matter in the immediate post-war period, even if the claim is heavily overstated that there was little discussion of the Holocaust. As details of the concentration camps seeped into public awareness; as people started to rebuild their lives and particularly as the Jews who had escaped began to trace what had happened to those who had been left behind, the force of these questions was sometimes too much for people to take in and silence was at least sometimes the preferred response (e.g. Roseman, 2001). In articulating the issues at all, the authors of *Studies in Prejudice* were very much on the side of those brave enough to risk seeing what was there.

In search of useful answers, Horkheimer and Flowerman draw heavily on psychoanalysis and social psychology. They are in fact alert to the possibility that they will be criticised for their psychological focus, and attend quickly to it; after all, the Frankfurt School was one of the most influential and sophisticated groups of sociologists and social theorists of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, they choose to stay with psychology in regarding the essential intervention that will follow from their studies as one of *education* and through that protection of the individual against the possibility of being led astray again; and for them, such educational interventions are individually and psychologically based. 'Once we understand, for example, how the war experience may in some cases have strengthened personality traits predisposed to group hatred,' they write (*Ibid.*), 'the educational remedies may follow logically. Similarly, to expose the psychological tricks in the arsenal of the agitator may help to immunize his prospective victims against them.' The model here is pedagogic and therapeutic; the point is to understand 'irrationality' and 'atavism', and indeed susceptibility to 'agitators' advancing extremely prejudiced views. And for them, this is a personal affair: 'education in a strict sense is by its nature personal and psychological,' which means that one has to understand just what the personal and psychological element in 'prejudice' might be in order to find ways to 'eradicate' it. This psychological focus both allows for a nuanced and powerful utilisation of psychoanalytic theory, and raises questions about what *Studies in Prejudice* might offer for a fully social analysis of what nowadays we might more easily recognise as racist hate. The rest of this chapter takes up these points in relation to the core racialised component of *Studies in Prejudice*, the issue of antisemitism, asking about the limits of the approach taken by the Frankfurt School theorists of the time, and also about how it feeds into some later developments, with particular reference to some of the ideas of Slavoj Žižek.

Cultural Nomadism

Given the emphasis on psychology, the persuasive power of authoritarianism and the 'irrationality' of prejudice and hate, it is not surprising that psychoanalysis was one of the conceptual systems drawn on in *Studies in Prejudice*. Its influence can be seen very profoundly in its best-known volume, Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson and Sanford's (1950) *The Authoritarian Personality*. For Adorno and Horkheimer, the lead figures in the Institute for Social Research, the stakes were high. Wiggerhaus (1986, p.275) describes how, by 1940, Adorno was seeing the Jews as 'the proletariat of the world-historical process of enlightenment, deprived of every vestige of power', so that analysis of the Jewish situation and of antisemitism would cut to the heart of the issues of domination and oppression. Adorno developed a vision of the Jews as representing 'nature' (in the form of an attachment to 'nomadism') against the depredations of 'civilised', alienated class society. This provokes envy amongst non-Jews, with the Jew representing a happier, less constrained humanity, in which the forces of rationality and alienated labour are kept at bay.

It has to be said that this seems an unlikely portrait of Jews, who throughout the twentieth century were more characteristically viewed as urban. Indeed, distance from 'nature' was often used in the rhetoric directed against them, in particular through the trope of 'rootless cosmopolitanism' and divorce from the 'land' or 'soil'. On the other hand, Adorno's reference to nomadism is resonant of some of Carl Jung's notorious commentaries in the pre-War era, in which the Jew is seen as parasitical on the more substantial and genuinely creative Aryan consciousness. 'The Jew,' Jung wrote (1934, p. 165), 'who is something of a cultural nomad, has never yet created a cultural form of his own and as far as we can see never will, since all his instincts and talents require a more or less civilised nation to act as host for their development.' What is apparent here is that the representation of the Jew as nomadic, which is understood by Adorno as a source of antisemitic envy, is turned by Jung into an accusation of parasitism. This combines the idea of rootlessness with a more general feeling that has recently become central to some psychoanalytic thinking on racism: that the core racist fantasy is of having something stolen. The others enjoy themselves too much; this is envied – there is so much freedom in it – and the question arises, why do *they* have so much pleasure, and *we* so little? The answer has to be, because our deserved enjoyment for which we have worked and suffered so hard, has been taken away from us by underhand means. The Jew has stolen the money, the black has stolen sexuality: this is what drives much racist fantasy. For Slavoj Žižek, prime exponent of this view of the racist imaginary, such a fantasy is premised on the repression of a different awareness, that what has been 'lost' or stolen in this way was never part of the subject at all: 'What we conceal by imputing to the Other the theft of enjoyment is the traumatic fact that *we never possessed what was allegedly stolen from us*: the lack ("castration") is originary, enjoyment constitutes itself as "stolen"' (Žižek, 1993, p. 203). Be that as it may, there is a direct line of thought from the presentation of antisemitism as constituted around the idea of the Jew as parasite to the broader theorising of racism as a psychic structure organised around fantasies of the theft of enjoyment. The *currency* of Adorno's thinking in current work (Žižek engages with him thoroughly in several places, for example in a discussion of psychoanalysis and political liberation in Žižek, 1994) is very marked in this way, as it is in many others.

The image of the cultural nomad successfully captures a sense of the Jew as standing outside the social order – the Jew as other – that is powerfully engrained in much antisemitic thinking. Building on this in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947), Adorno and Horkheimer make a link between Jews and women, understanding the hatred towards them both as deriving from their status as outsiders to the coercive power of domination. The point here is not so much the more conventional psychoanalytic claim that weakness is despised

because it reminds the oppressor of her or his own vulnerability, although this notion is present in *The Authoritarian Personality*. It is rather that women and Jews are excluded from the realm of culture, yet they continue to exist; this makes them less alienated (because less acculturated, hence more 'natural') and so produces envy in the 'strong', who are the victim of their own alienation. Where Jews differ from other minorities, according to Adorno and Horkheimer, is in the unusual combination of this association with nature and 'weakness', and the striving of the Jew for something non-material or spiritual – an argument very much akin to Freud's (1939) idea that the key characteristic of Judaism is the belief in an abstract God and that this provokes antagonism from the more regressed, *less* intellectually cultured (Christian) other. The impact of this, somewhat as in Freud's theorising, is supposedly to elicit envy in those who are subject to what Wiggerhaus (1986, p.341) calls the 'failed civilisation'. It is worth noting that the idea that the oppressed group bears the responsibility for preserving 'nature' is resonant of some later psychoanalytic accounts of the relationship between slavery and anti-black racism (e.g. Kovel, 1995), in which the repressed sexuality of the white is understood to be projected onto the supposedly animalistic body of the black. If it still seems slightly odd to extol Jews for their closeness to nature, it is nevertheless stimulating to consider that antisemitism may in this way connect more strongly with the general fantasy structure of racism: the derogated other who is made subject to racism stands in for what is imagined as having been lost or stolen, that thing that would bring the satisfaction which the 'failed civilisation' denies.

Purity and Projection

There are a number of shared themes that emerge from work in the *Studies in Prejudice* tradition. One is the location of responsibility for antisemitism firmly with the antisemite: Adorno et al (1950, p.301) state, 'antisemitism is not so much dependent on the nature of the object as upon the subject's own psychological wants and needs.' The search for purity, both pure goodness within and pure evil without, as a key element in the antisemite's consciousness is an example of such 'psychological wants and needs', and links this work with later psychoanalytic traditions of thinking on racism, which suggest that it is one of many refusals to deal with doubt and ambivalence (Rustin, 1991). Denial of the multifariousness of social and psychic phenomena forms the basis of what Adorno et al refer to as 'psychological totalitarianism', the impulse to keep everything completely in its place, under the sway of one powerful, paranoid organising principle. The cost of this is great because the antisemite lives in terror of the persecutory universe she or he has created, but the benefit is that at least this universe makes sense, and nominates one single, identifiable source of danger – the Jew. For *The Authoritarian Personality*, it is the violence of this psychic process that characterises the fascist and antisemitic state of mind, closing down anything soft and welcoming, replacing it with a repudiating harshness that damages the subject as well as the hated other, and that reflects (again to use the anachronistic mode of expression) a kind of enjoyment that masks an inner emptiness.

It is as if the antisemite could not sleep quietly until he has transformed the whole world into the very same paranoid system by which he is beset: the Nazis went far beyond their official antisemitic programme. ... The extreme antisemite silences the remnant of his own conscience by the extremeness of his attitude. He seems to terrorize himself while he terrorizes others. (Adorno et al, 1950, pp.324-5)

This compellingly captures both the extremity of the antisemitic state of mind and its perversity, a point followed up in other work including Klaus Theweleit's (1977) exploration of what he references as the 'monumentalism' of fascism, the way it acts to preserve psychological and social boundaries in the most rigid way, setting them up as a bulwark against fluidity. 'Terrorising' antisemitism is seen by Adorno et al as a kind of addiction

demanding increasingly intense satisfaction if it is to leave the subject satisfied, yet with every 'fix' there is something more that is needed, and something more that is lost. Any 'difference' becomes a threat and has to be wiped out, but the more tightly the boundaries around what is acceptable and 'same' are drawn, the more likely it is that difference of one form or another will be encountered. So it is that the capacity of the self to tolerate anything 'outside' is continuously reduced, and the intensity of hatred of all that is other is exponentially increased. This account offers a relatively simple yet quite durable model for understanding antisemitism in a psychosocial framework: the Jew is a figure chosen initially for its cultural congruence as a hate object, but is then excessively invested in as a carrier of all this otherness; conspiracy is to be found everywhere. This produces a spiralling of paranoia and hatred, as the Jew serves both to contain and to exaggerate the projected impulses of the antisemite. Psychosis is in the air, kept at bay only by endlessly increasing rigidity and escalating antisemitic hate. The Jew is a safety valve for destructive impulses, but this use of the Jew has a profound personal and social cost.

This material indicates the weight placed on psychological interpretation of antisemitic phenomena, a characteristic shared by many studies of Nazism in the preceding years, as Daniel Pick (2012) has recently shown. That is, like Nazism, antisemitism is viewed as a kind of madness that might be responsive to the vocabulary of psychology (prejudice) and psychoanalysis (repression and projection); this also holds the psychopolitical hope that comprehending it in these terms might offer a route towards the 'treatment' or therapy of society. 'The educational remedies may follow logically,' state Horkheimer and Flowerman (1950, p.vii) buying into the Freudian and enlightenment idea that knowledge transforms the uncontrollably irrational into the amenable rational. Given the circumstances, one might wonder whether this is an instance of failing to learn from immediately preceding history, in which the rationalistic model implying the inevitability of enlightened progression to mental and political balance so conspicuously failed. On the other hand, it is perhaps ironic to think that there might be a link to ego psychology, the dominant form of psychoanalysis in the USA after the war, which was so despised by some of the Frankfurters, notably Marcuse (1966). The usual criticism is that ego psychology, which emphasises the role of the ego in mediating between unconscious impulses and the requirements of 'external reality', turns too readily into a conformist psychology stressing adaptation to social norms. However, considering what the psychoanalysts who developed it (who were mostly forced emigrants from Nazi Europe, many of them Jewish) had been through, perhaps one should not be too single-minded about pillorying ego psychology's attempt to reinstate rationality as a moral force. The wish to restore some semblance of rationality as an ideal could seem like a genuinely therapeutic and civilised response to the explosion of irrationality so recently endured.

The Frankfurt School theorists were very alert to the potential limitations of their psychological reading of antisemitism and balanced it by linking it closely to social and economic analysis. For example, according to Bronner and Kellner (1989, p.7), Horkheimer's (1939) essay 'The Jews and Europe' 'basically interprets antisemitism in terms of its usefulness for monopoly capitalism.' Even in this article and with this caveat, however, Horkheimer manages to convey the energy and intensity of Nazi antisemitism as 'intimidat[ing] the populace by showing that the system will stop at nothing,' but also serving psychic needs.

People can secretly appreciate the cruelty by which they are so outraged. In continents from whose produce all of humanity could live, every beggar fears that the Jewish émigré might deprive him of his living. Reserve armies of the unemployed and the petty bourgeoisie love Hitler all over the world for his antisemitism, and the

core of the ruling class agrees with that love. By increasing cruelty to the level of absurdity, its horror is mollified... Pity is really the last sin. (Horkheimer, 1939, p.92)

At this time, Horkheimer was generally scathing about the uses of psychological theories applied to social phenomena, but his analysis here is already pointing to the emotional hold that terroristic forms of antisemitism might have, even over those who ostensibly oppose them. It also shows the ambiguities that this psychic arrangement produced: 'pity is the last sin', not only pity for the other, but also the pity mobilised by recognition of the actual emotional needs of the hate-filled self.

If the fault lies not with the Jews, then why are the Jews so consistently chosen as the recipients of this particular form of racialised violence? The simple answer is that in the history of western civilisation – specifically its Christian history but, as the Nazis had shown, underpinned by a good dose of paganism – the figure of the Jew constitutes a ready-made container for the destructive urges of the antisemite. That is, the psychological formulation provided by psychoanalysis is made *psychosocial* through the thesis of a socially and historically legitimised mode of expression of these psychological forces. For Adorno et al, Jews are suitable 'substitute objects' because of the work that has been done on them historically in the culture, producing a fantasy that is compelling, rigid, and exhaustive. This produces the Jew as a perfect "'object" of unconscious destructiveness', fitting all the necessary requirements to fulfil that role:

It must be tangible enough; and yet not *too* tangible, lest it be exploded by its own realism. It must have a sufficient historical backing and appear as an indisputable element of tradition. It must be defined in rigid and well-known stereotypes. Finally, the object must possess features, or at least be capable of being perceived and interpreted in terms of features, which harmonize with the destructive tendencies of the prejudiced subject. (Adorno et al, 1950, p.300)

According to Adorno et al, the Jew is the ideal, prepared-for hated other for the disturbed individual, who latches onto this escape route in order to preserve psychic integrity when faced with internal destructiveness and an oppressive social order. In addition, the system of domination works to confuse the prejudiced person, creating a sense of being alienated from society, of not understanding how it works or what are the sources of its actual impact. Politically unsophisticated, the antisemite seeks respite from a mystifying reality in the reassuring story of the single enemy, a rigid narrative of existence strong enough, and widely-shared enough, to seem to make sense, and one supported by a social order that ensures opposition is directed against an externalised other rather than against itself. The Jew's 'alienness' serves as shorthand for the alien nature of society itself, but the materiality of Jews makes them accessible as an object of hate in the way that society in general is not. 'Charging the Jews with all existing evils seems to penetrate the darkness of reality like a searchlight and to allow for quick and all-comprising orientation. The less anti-Jewish imagery is related to actual experience and the more it is kept "pure", as it were, from contamination with reality, the less it seems to be exposed to disturbance by the dialectics of experience, which it keeps away through its own rigidity' (p.310). It is interesting to note that this theme of the irrelevance of Jews to antisemitism – the way antisemitism perpetuates itself even, or perhaps especially, in the absence of Jews – is one that continues to thrive in the literature, and has been taken up for example by Žižek. He tracks the ways in which the very unreality of the denigrated other sustains it in the face of violence, making an escalating phenomenon of hatred: 'This paradox, which has already emerged apropos the Jews in Nazi Germany... the more they were ruthlessly exterminated, the more horrifying were the dimensions acquired by those who remained' (Žižek, 1994, p.78). Being unreal, being fantastic, the hated other cannot actually be eradicated; in a sense, the perfect enemy is the one who does not exist.

In one of Otto Fenichel's last pieces (Fenichel, 1946), written for Ernst Simmel's *Anti-Semitism: A Social Disease*, the situation is still starker and more psychoanalytically specific. He takes up the position also found in *The Authoritarian Personality* that antisemitism arises in periods of socially-induced misery: the antisemite, immersed in confusion and led astray by ideological forces, 'sees in the Jew everything which brings him misery – not only his social oppressor but also his own unconscious instincts, which have gained a bloody, dirty, dreadful character from their socially induced repression' (p.29). Jews are the ideal object for projection of these unconscious urges 'because of the actual peculiarities of Jewish life, the strangeness of their mental culture, their bodily (black) and religious (God of the oppressed peoples) peculiarities, and their old customs' (ibid.), which remind the antisemite of 'old primeval powers' that non-Jews have given up (p.18). Jews seem uncanny because of these peculiarities, adding to the sense of threat and disgust they provoke. However, the most significant element leading to the intensity of antisemitic hate is the way the Jew is the recipient of the antisemite's own destructive feelings and also of the fantasised retaliation against them, induced by the individual's own super-ego. That is, both the repressed impulses and the punitive internal response to these urges are projected outwards, onto the Jew. Linked to this is a more profound identification between the Jew as foreign and uncanny, and the site of foreignness within: 'It can be expressed in one sentence,' writes Fenichel (1946, p.20): 'one's own unconscious is also foreign. Foreignness is the quality which the Jews and one's own instincts have in common.' The Jew as foreigner and preserver of archaic customs can be the object of projection of what is feared and hated within oneself, the 'foreign' unconscious; they thus carry the sense of destruction and desire, of 'what is murderous, dirty and debauched' (p.19), and racist hate is magnified by the antisemite's terror of these inner urges. Again this theme can be found exemplified in some of Žižek's writings, but here turned not into a fundamental psychic structure, but one that is socially overdetermined, the structure of capitalism.

Is capitalism's hatred of the Jew not the hatred of its own innermost, essential feature? For this reason, it is not sufficient to point out how the racist's Other presents a threat to our own identity. We should rather invert this proposition: the fascinating image of the Other gives a body to our own innermost split, to what is 'in us more than ourselves' and thus prevents us achieving full identity with ourselves. (Žižek, 1993, p.206)

Against the implication that it is the inner state of the subject that is primary in seeking out an external cause, Žižek (1997, p.76) also gives us a more elaborated version of antisemitism in which it is produced by the structure of capitalism itself: 'social antagonism comes first, and the "Jew" merely gives body to this obstacle.' Culture's investment in this figure of the 'Jew' produces it as an element in the unconscious, and with it arises the widespreadness of antisemitism itself.

Ernst Simmel (1946), writing in the volume of essays that he edited out of a symposium on antisemitism organised by the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Society in 1944, draws a familiar parallel here, using the discourses both of Marxism and of antisemitism-as-illness and making the connection between modernity ('civilisation') and the canker that destroys it.

Applying our method of psychoanalytic-dialectic thinking, we must infer not that antisemitism annihilates the achievements of civilization, but that the process of civilization itself *produces* antisemitism as a pathological symptom-formation, which in turn tends to destroy the soil from which it has grown. Antisemitism is a malignant growth on the body of civilization. (p.34)

For Simmel, thinking back on the Nazi phenomenon, antisemitism is both a cancer and a mass psychosis, a 'social disease', despite the individuals concerned not being psychotic; or

rather, it is the existence of this mass psychosis that *protects* antisemites from becoming psychotic themselves. Although it is the case that there may be various neurotic processes at work within individual antisemites, the individual antisemite is 'normal'. However, when this person joins a group the crowd dynamic takes over, distinguished particularly by 'unrestricted aggressive destructiveness under the spell of a delusion' (p.39) – exactly the characteristic of psychosis. This is also the epitome of the splitting process: 'he can split in two the re-externalized parental power: into the leader whom he loves and into the Jew whom he hates' (p.50). All this further clarifies the comfortable way in which the antisemite can live with irrational beliefs: 'The antisemite believes in his false accusations against the Jews not in spite of, but *because* of their irrationality. For the ideational content of these accusations is a product of the primary process in his own unconscious and is conveyed to his conscious mind through the mediation of the mass-leader's suggestions' (Simmel, 1946, pp.51-2). The lie at the heart of racism, as Rustin (1991) describes it, comes out in full force here as a mode of psychic truth – not in the sense of an ethical truth, which it clearly is not, but rather as a symptomatic statement and a mode of containment-by-excess. The antisemite is attracted to 'irrational' beliefs precisely because they express the turmoil of a mind at war with itself and with the world, yet one that is structurally and socially weak, and needs the prop of its containing madness to keep itself sane. And at the root of this turmoil, according to Simmel, is 'the process of civilization itself', taking us back to the original theme that has at times been hard to preserve: that antisemitism is not something grafted onto modernity as an external force that disturbs what would otherwise be 'a culture of law, order and reason'; rather, as in Bauman's (1989) articulation, it is expressive of the irrationality that lies within modernity itself, and is generated by it.

Conclusion

It can be seen that despite the sophistication of the social theory on which these post-war writers drew, there is quite a simple psychosocial argument about antisemitism being posited. Society is antisemitic in its construction of the Jew as a hate object; and this construction allows individual antisemites to project their unconscious disturbances into that hate object. This simplicity is part of the reason both why the argument remains accessible and influential, and why it is also important to see how it is developed and deepened in later work. One question is, is it possible to go further than this essentially static presentation of the individual-social divide when considering antisemitism and other forms of social hatred? For example, might one build more fully on Simmel's argument that the contradictions in society are not simply accompaniments of, or accidental parallels to, the contradictions of the unconscious, but that they actively *produce* them, through all the micro- and macrosocial processes (parental interactions and anxieties; socialisation practices; familial beliefs; gendered and 'racialised' institutional practices, etc) out of which each person is made? Part of the point of the links made here with some later psychoanalytically-imbued sociological writing is to suggest that the ideas developed by the *Studies in Prejudice* authors prefigure a possibly more nuanced understanding of how the dynamics of racism and antisemitism are intrinsic to modernity and of the mechanisms through which this works to make them both 'personal' (in Horkheimer and Flowerman's sense) and fundamentally social, produced by 'the process of civilization'. For example, Slavoj Žižek, who has appeared frequently in this chapter, often turns to the exposure of antisemitism as a key topic, and even goes so far as to see antisemitism as paradigmatic for an understanding of racism itself. In this regard he writes that today, "'normal", non-exceptional, non-anti-Semitic racism is no longer possible' (Žižek, 1994, p.74). His suggestion is not only that some basic psychic mechanisms are at work, but also that the fantasy structure of antisemitism is central to that of racism in general. For Žižek this turns on the

idea of enjoyment and its theft, on how deprivation is clung to by the antisemite and on how the Jew is constructed, we might say, as the one who 'gets away with it', who can always turn the law to advantage. It should be noted that Žižek is often criticised for the way in which he approaches this material, for his own apparent 'enjoyment' of the antisemitic discourses that he describes (Frosh, 2011). Nevertheless, the detailed examination of the fantasy structure of antisemitism and racism that he uses can be seen to lean on the work of the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School, but also to radicalise it through its articulation of the *social* imaginary as the source of, and arena for, psychoanalytic exploration.

In all this, the figure of the Jew is a particularly powerful instance of the figure of the 'other' in general. Through its historically-derived cultural pervasiveness it is perpetuated as a representation of that which is needed yet despised, that which holds in place the otherwise potentially intolerable destructiveness of a social system founded on inequality and alienation. Such systems *create* their own psychic structures and psychological disturbances; thus, given the organisation of Western society, antisemitism is as much an element in the unconscious of every subject as is any other psychosocial state – love, loneliness or loss, for example. The Jew is a constitutive feature of Western consciousness, primed by centuries of Christian antisemitism; and it is therefore one element out of which subjectivity is made. However, there are plenty of others, as postcolonial theory and feminism respectively have shown around racism and sexism, so antisemitism is by no means unique. One additional question that this gives rise to is over the extent to which the very specific and urgent focus on antisemitism that dominated in *Studies in Prejudice* limits or facilitates the application of its thinking to other modes of racist activity. Is it the case that European antisemitism's roots in the history of Christianity mean that what is theorised about the cultural function of the Jew as other is too specific to have lessons for, say, American anti-black racism? Or, as psychoanalysts have tended to assume, are we dealing with universal psychic mechanisms called into play under certain social conditions (extreme economic insecurity, for example) that then seek out whatever category of denigrated othering might be made available by the particular history of that culture? Whilst to the psychoanalytically attuned ear this seems a plausible assumption, the work still remains to be done, as some of the debates around the appropriateness of using psychoanalytic meta-categories in postcolonial theory have shown (Khanna, 2004) and as criticisms of psychoanalysis' own colonial and at times racist assumptions have also made clear (Brickman, 2003).

The post-Second World War effort to trace the psychodynamics of 'prejudice' was understandably focused on the recent experience of fascism and Nazism and concern over the danger of their resurgence; but it was also highly productive. These texts embody a principled attempt to construct a sophisticated psychosocial theory in the sense of one that understands the structure of personal life as inextricably bound up with social forces. However, the pull back to psychologism in this work inhibits the full development of such an account, effectively polarising the theory so that the social becomes either the true cause of antisemitism, or the 'container' for individual pathology. This makes sense within the prevalent discourse of Nazi 'madness', but perhaps is not so persuasive when one considers the durability of antisemitism and racism across time and space.

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