the race question
in modern science

race

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THE RACE QUESTION IN MODERN SCIENCE

Titles in this series:

Titles in the series *The race question and modern thought:*

RACE RELATIONS
AND
MENTAL HEALTH

by
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UNESCO

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the racial problem has been a steadily growing preoccupation. A bare thirty years ago, Europeans could still regard race prejudice as a phenomenon that only affected areas on the margin of civilization, or continents other than their own. They suffered a sudden and rude awakening. The long-standing confusion between race and culture has produced fertile soil for the development of racism, at once a creed and an emotional attitude. The virulence with which this ideology has made its appearance in the present century is one of the strangest and most disturbing phenomena of the great revolution of our time.

Racial doctrine is the outcome of a fundamentally anti-rational system of thought that runs counter to the whole humanist tradition of our civilization. For this reason it is also an affront to the ideals that Unesco stands for and endeavours to defend. The preamble to the Constitution of Unesco declares that 'the great and terrible war which has now ended was a war made possible by the denial of the democratic principles of the dignity, equality and mutual respect of men, and by the propagation, in their place, through ignorance and prejudice, of the doctrine of the inequality of men and races'.

Because of its structure and the tasks assigned to it, Unesco is the international institution best equipped to lead the campaign against race prejudice and to strike out the roots of this most dangerous of doctrines. Race hatred and conflict thrive on scientifically false ideas and are encouraged by ignorance. In order to show up these errors of fact and reasoning, to make widely known the conclusions reached in various branches of science, and to combat racial propaganda, we must turn to the means and methods of education, science and culture, which are precisely the three domains in which Unesco's activities are exerted; it is on this threefold front that the battle against all forms of racism must be engaged.

The plan laid down by the Organization proceeds from a resolution [116(VI) B(iii)] adopted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council at its sixth session, asking Unesco 'to consider the desirability of initiating and recommending the general adoption of a programme of disseminating scientific facts designed to remove what is generally known as racial prejudice'.

Responding to this request, the fourth session of Unesco's General Conference adopted the following three resolutions for the 1950 programme : 'The Director-General is instructed: to study and collect scientific materials concerning questions of race; to give wide diffusion to the scientific information collected; to prepare an educational campaign based on this information.'

Such a programme could not be carried out unless Unesco had at its disposal the 'scientific facts' mentioned in the resolution of the Economic and Social Council.

It is for these reasons that Unesco has asked prominent scientists to summarize the main results today in the field of their specialization. Since nothing could be more prejudicial to a real success on this front than a campaign against racialism which had the appearance of a sentimental appeal to the emotions, the authors of this series have endeavoured to present the facts as simply and clearly as possible and have rigorously avoided any propagandizing tendencies.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Modern biological and psychological studies of the differences between races do not support the idea that one is superior to another as far as innate potentialities are concerned. Within each race abilities and achievements cover a range which is much wider than that between the averages of various races. The conscience of the world as it is expressed in religious and other ethical systems recognizes the value of an individual without making this recognition dependent on an individual's intelligence or achievement. Yet, notwithstanding science and ethics, the idea of the fundamental inferiority of some races is slow to die in the minds of many.

Because of this persistent, though unsupported, idea of innate superiority or inferiority, race relations present one of the most critical problems in today's world; they engage the passions of men now, as they have done in the past, to an extraordinary extent. These passions often smoulder under the surface. But periodically they erupt into open violence of a peculiar kind, differing from the violence unleashed in wars between nations and from the violence which an individual may commit against another of his own race. Modern wars are fought by persons who do not know those whom they kill. When they come face to face with a member of the enemy nation it is, as a rule, for one of them the last moment; modern weapons spread anonymous death. Racial violence, on the other hand, is often carried out from man to man with the intention to do bodily harm to a particular individual. But, in contrast to other forms of violence between individuals, the ultimate justification of the act is given in terms of who the victim is rather than what he has done. Physical violence against an individual because of his race often meets with a curious condonement and silent approval from other members of the aggressor's race, even though they themselves do not engage in it. And even where racial violence

9

is officially frowned upon, there are many who admit to a sympathetic understanding of acts designed to humiliate a member of another race, of discrimination against him, or of the expression of wholesale dislike for the members of another race.

Our problem here is to understand both the crude violence and the polite antagonism against groups of different origin, or against an individual, solely for the reason that he is a member of such a group; in other words, to understand the problem of racial prejudice.

It should be clear from the outset that race relations need not inevitably be based on mutual prejudices. In Brazil, Jamaica, Cuba and Hawaii, for example, several races live without signs of overt conflict. Yet it is a comment on the general state of affairs that these few examples should be so well known as exceptions to the rule. In any case, the following discussion deliberately concentrates on race relations where they present a problem; and even more narrowly on one specific aspect of the problem, the meaning of racial antagonism for those who feel it.

This is, of course, by no means the only aspect of the problem. Race relations are a complex matter; they can be studied from many possible points of view. But no biological, political, historical, social or economic explanation can in the long run dispense with some at least tacit assumptions concerning the motives of those who engage in racial hostilities. The development of a comprehensive theory of personality, the foundation of which was laid by Freud, makes it possible to replace these commonsense assumptions by a systematic view of man's motives as they affect the relations between races. The following discussion is largely based on the theoretical statements and empirical findings of psychoanalysis.

The fact is sometimes overlooked that psychoanalysis is not only a therapy for persons suffering from mental and emotional disturbances. It is also a comprehensive general theory of personality which applies to the sick and the healthy mind alike. Using psychoanalysis is, therefore, not tantamount to asserting from the outset that racial antagonism is a symptom of mental disease. As will become clear further on, the question of the relation between racial antagonism and mental health is fairly complex. Psychoanalysis, in its scope unparalleled by any other psychological theory, will here first be used to enlarge our understanding of the motives for racial antagonism; in the light of this it will then become possible to inquire into its relation to mental health.

Psychoanalysis as a theory has, of course, many flaws and presents difficulties for empirical study which occasionally appear insurmountable. What Churchill said about democracy, can well be applied to psychoanalysis too: it is the worst theory ever proposed, except for all the others that have so far been tried. In the face of this handicap it will be necessary to bring to bear on the problem confronting us not only psychoanalytic interpretations but also empirical findings and concepts from other studies in the human sciences, even though much of this work is based on different theoretical premises.

Before embarking on the psychological analysis of the meaning of racial antagonism, a specification of the term 'racial' is necessary. Current biological thought uses the concept race in a statistical sense, meaning that the frequency distribution of genes differs among groups of people who do not freely intermarry [10].[1] Colloquially the term race is broader and purely descriptive; it connotes any group of the population with such common characteristics, interests, appearance, habits, or the like as are physically visible or visible by virtue of their assigned social position.

Since we are here dealing with the antagonism of people against what they perceive to be a race, it must be the colloquial meaning of the term which will be used in the discussion.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF PREJUDICE

There exists a large body of research on the reasons people give for their dislike of various racial groups. If one asks people in the United States of America, for example, to explain their antagonism to Negroes, the odds are that they will use one or more of the following phrases: they are inferior, they are lower class, they are low in intelligence, they force out the whites, they are lazy, sloppy, dirty, immoral, oversexed, troublesome, childish, they have a bad smell and carry diseases. If one inquires why Jews are disliked, one learns that they have all the money, control business, are capitalists but also communists, are clannish but also intrude on other people's affairs, are smart, intellectuals, think themselves better than others, work too hard but never do manual labour, and are noisy, bad-mannered and emotional.

Before one takes this array of statements as data for an inter-

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1. Figures in brackets refer to the bibliography on p. 46.

pretation of the state of mind of the person who makes them a question must be faced: are these perhaps realistic descriptions of what the majority of Negroes and Jews are like? The question is crucial. For if these descriptions are broadly speaking accurate, racial antagonism must obviously be interpreted differently than if they are figments of the imagination.

There is every reason to believe that groups which do not intermingle freely with members of other groups, which have traditions of long standing, their own way of bringing up children and special social institutions, norms and values will develop common characteristics. The fact of belonging to a group which is the target of strong racial antagonism must be assumed to be a particularly weighty influence on the behaviour and character of members of that group. It is conceivable that many Negroes are lazy because the assertion of white supremacy denies them the fruit of industriousness; that some crave for sex relations with white women because the white community has established a taboo against such relations, a symbol of their alleged inferiority against which they rebel. Equally, it is possible that centuries of persecution have made some Jews clannish while others try to intrude into the Gentile world in an effort to escape their fate. R. Loewenstein[17] has examined the particular psychological conflict in which Jews find themselves in the western world in his book *Christians and Jews*, and has concluded that while the 'so-called Jewish psychological traits are common to all human beings . . . they may take on a special tinge due to the special situation in which Jews live'.

There is general consensus that such psychological differences between races as may exist express themselves not in each single individual but in different frequencies of qualities in any one race; the variation within each group is assumed to be greater than the variation between groups. The actual frequencies of psychological attributes within any one group are not known. Nothing but a colossal statistical investigation could discover whether Jews and Negroes actually are in their majority what so many members of other groups firmly believe them to be. Even if such a study were made, it would not be possible to infer from it whether such racial characteristics as might emerge are the result of racial inheritance or of the environment in which the majority of these groups find themselves. The most plausible assumption in the light of modern genetic thought is that heredity and environment continuously interact in the most intricate fashion.

In view of this situation it could be argued that it is a small and

pardonable mistake if, in the absence of scientific knowledge, those who allege certain psychological characteristics of racial groups do not base their judgement on a view of the entire race but are content to infer it from the qualities of those whom they have personally met. The question, then, of whether racial antagonism is based on fact or fancy, becomes a question of the adequacy of inference. In psychoanalytic terminology, the adequacy of 'reality-testing' by persons with racial antagonism is at stake.

There is a steadily growing body of empirical evidence to show that inadequate reality-testing is characteristic of many who feel hostile to racial out-groups. A drastic demonstration of this was given by Professor Hartley [11] who included in a study of racial antagonism three *non-existent* groups whom he called the Danireans, the Pireneans, and the Wallorians. A large proportion of those who disliked Negroes and Jews also expressed a dislike for these fictitious groups and advocated restrictive measures against them.

The idea that racial antagonism is determined from within rather than by adequate reality-testing is supported by Merton's [20] argument that the very same qualities which are given as reasons for disliking another racial group—the 'out-group' as the sociological jargon terms it—are often highly appreciated when found in a member of the 'in-group'. In comparing current beliefs about Jews and Japanese in the United States with those about Abraham Lincoln he says: 'Did Lincoln work far into the night? This testifies that he was industrious, resolute, perseverant and eager to realize his capacities to the full. Do the out-group Jews or Japanese keep these same hours? This only bears witness to their sweatshop mentality, their ruthless undercutting of American standards, their unfair competitive practices. Is the in-group hero frugal, thrifty and sparing? Then the out-group villain is stingy, miserly and penny-grinding', and so on.

Several psychoanalytically oriented studies have taken the problem a step further by actually investigating the nature of the experience with members of the disliked group. In some cases it was found that the antagonism persisted without any personal contact whatsoever. In others, the antagonistic person maintains that his judgement is based on direct experience with members of the disliked group; yet his descriptions of such contact are bare of all individual characteristics; it is as if he had met not an individual human being but the incorporation of his idea manifesting only the allegedly typical qualities. But perhaps more interesting are those who were able to evaluate the individuals

whom they met correctly without letting such an experience interfere with their general judgement of the group. In a study of army veterans by Bettelheim and Janowitz [4] one man was quite explicit on his general dislike for Jews, and then continued: 'There was one Jewish fellow in our outfit whom I liked especially, he wasn't like the ordinary run of Jews, that's why I remember him.' This is a typical case of the notorious remark 'Some of my best friends are Jews, but . . .'. Even more remarkable is the case of a man included in another study [1] who when not quite in control of himself would call an opponent 'dirty Jew' and generally complain that Jews take advantage of others. His first contact with Jews occurred in childhood when he established a friendship with a Jewish boy and his family which lasted for years. As an adult he had several Jewish friends. His anti-Semitism existed notwithstanding such friendly contacts. In these cases reality is assigned the place of exception; the rule is established by untested preconceptions. Such ways of thinking in persons of normal intelligence require explanation.

Psychoanalytic theory assumes that inadequacy in reality-testing fulfils a psychological function. The attitude in question meets a need of the individual which he is unable or unwilling to satisfy more rationally. If adequate reality-testing threatens to undermine the functionally significant attitude, it is avoided at all cost. The dislike of out-groups is in such cases based on rationalization, that is to say on socially acceptable pseudo-reasons which serve to disguise the function which the antagonism has for the individual.

This is not to say that every expression of racial hostility based on inadequate reality-testing is necessarily a rationalization of hidden motives. After all, the occasion for reality-testing is rot always available. Prejudgements in the light of insufficient evidence are continuously made by everyone, not only with regard to out-groups but also about many other categories of human experience. By and large, the inclination to make generalizations often results in some economy of mental effort. Such prejudgements can, however, harden into rigidly stereotyped thinking which eschews reality-testing even when facts are available. Only where this is the case is it reasonable to search for the psychological function fulfilled by the rigidity of the prejudgement. Racial prejudice, in its narrowest sense, is an attitude towards out-groups which refrains from reality-testing not just because the mental effort is too much but because the attitude itself fulfils a specific irrational function for its bearer.

It follows that racial antagonism based on inadequate reality-

testing can be of two kinds: first, there is antagonism based on the assumption that others whose example one follows know what they are talking about. A child will believe that coloured persons are lazy without ever having seen one just as readily as he will believe that the earth rotates round the sun without asking for the evidence, or understanding it when given. Where racial antagonism appears among young children it is, as a rule, of this kind. They take over parental attitudes or those of other adults without giving the matter another thought. This may also occur in adults; it is undesirable, but easily understood.

Second, there is prejudice in the narrower sense of the term. The distinction between rational though misinformed antagonism and irrational prejudice is not easily made. The crucial test for determining the type of antagonism in an individual lies in the reversibility of his views when exposed to facts which are incompatible with them. It is the frequency of irreversible racial antagonism which raises the question of the prejudiced person's mental health.

Yet, it may be objected, there surely is a third type of racial antagonism; it is claimed by most who defend their prejudices. Adequate reality-testing, they argue, has led them to assert the inferiority of certain races. This may be a logical possibility. It is, after all, conceivable that a man may meet a whole series of exploiting Jews or unintelligent Negroes. These qualities exist in all races sufficiently often to make such a chance occurrence possible. Granted this logical possibility, the arguments used in the defence of prejudice give little support to the idea that it is often based on such statistical misfortune in encounters with people belonging to another race. Let us examine some of them.

In the stupendous dilemma in which the Union of South Africa finds itself with regard to its racial problems one might expect the apartheid policy to be based on the assertion of adequate reality-testing. But this is not the case. Gwendolen Carter [6] says in summarizing her sober and extensive studies: 'They [the Nationalists] admit, somewhat reluctantly, that there are more highly developed Africans: ... Beyond this, there is something irrational, but none the less compelling, in the Nationalist attitude toward non-Europeans, an instinctive distaste, even horror at the thought of being associated with them on equal terms.... The most extreme example of this sentiment is bound up with the phrase: "Do you want your daughter to marry a Native?" ... One of the most surprising features of Nationalist arguments is the frequency with which

15

they justify apartheid measures on the ground that they are necessary for preserving an acute colour sense. In other words, it almost seems as if Nationalists fear that close proximity, rather than intensify distaste, may blur the differences felt between Europeans and non-Europeans.... But the fear of a white minority lest it lose its distinctive identity is a sentiment which may override more mellow considerations based on personal experience. European South Africans, and Afrikaners in particular, are often devoted to individual Africans with whom they have an easy and mutually satisfactory relationship, but this is very different from the attitude they hold towards Africans in the mass, who somehow tend to take on the worst features of savagery and unreliability of the most drastic stories about Africans they have ever heard.'

This account of the irrational elements in the idea of white supremacy captures the way and even the language in which some white Southerners in the United States express their antagonism against Negroes.

Since the value of a psychoanalytic interpretation of prejudice is predicated on the assumption of inadequate reality-testing for irrational motives, it becomes important to recognize how such irrationality can be detected. The South African example has illustrated a general characteristic of rationalizations: they betray themselves through leading to logically untenable positions. Why this should happen with such regularity is explained in psychoanalytic theory.

In Freud's view two basic processes govern the working of the mind, the primary and the secondary process. The primary process occurs in the unconscious where drives, wishes and instincts strive for gratification; it follows its own laws and is not bound by logic and reason. The secondary process, however, used in adaptation to reality, is based on logic and reason. Ordinarily, both processes occur in normal persons together or alternately, but in the adult person this happens under conscious control. By and large we know whether we are day-dreaming, that is whether we are engaged in the primary process, or dealing with reality, that is, engaged in the secondary process. Sometimes, however, the two processes play into each other without the individual being aware of the fact. The contamination of the secondary by the primary process leads to logical inconsistencies. When prejudicial attitudes are strongly anchored in the unconscious, where primary processes prevail, efforts to deal with the matter rationally are often not successful. There is method not only in madness, but also in logical flaws.

Examples of such contaminated thought by those who defend or explain their prejudices abound; they come from the most diverse sources and are, of course, as a rule produced in complete ignorance of Freudian theory.

In 1827, Macaulay writing in the *Edinburgh Review*[1] brilliantly attacked an example of such thought, needless to say without psychological explanation. In an essay entitled 'Social and industrial capacities of Negroes', he takes to task a Major Moody who had produced a report to the Colonial Office about the conditions of some Colonial Negroes who had recently been freed from slavery. The Major does not say that he is prejudiced. But Macaulay infers it from the confrontation of excerpts from different parts of the report. Major Moody claims to have discovered 'that there exists between the White and Black races an instinctive and inconquerable aversion, which must forever frustrate all hopes of seeing them unite in one society on equal terms'. He also shows, however, that the main and not infrequent form of union between black women and white men is based on physical desire. As Macaulay points out the fact contradicts the opinion: 'Because the Whites form with the Blacks those illicit unions to which the motive is physical, but do not form those legitimate unions to which the motive is moral, he actually infers that the cause which separates the races is not moral, but physical!'

Scientific thought represents one major effort to avoid the contamination of secondary by primary thought processes. That this goal is not always achieved in research on race questions is illustrated by the following quotation from a comparison of the mental abilities of Jamaican Negroes and white persons: 'The Blacks seem to do better in simple mental arithmetic and with numerical series than the Whites. They also follow better complicated directions for doing things. It seems a plausible hypothesis, for which there is considerable support, that the more complicated a brain, the more numerous its "association fibres", the less satisfactorily it performs the simple numerical problems which a calculating machine does so quickly and accurately [2]. These examples demonstrate how irrational motives in prejudice can be discovered by examining the logic of an argument.

To discover the nature of these motives it is useful to examine the content of the beliefs about out-groups. Between the two lists of stereotyped beliefs about Negroes and Jews given before

1. Reprinted in *Critical, historical and miscellaneous essays and poems* [18].
2. Davenport and Steggerda, quoted in M. F. Ashley Montague, *Man's most dangerous myth: the fallacy of race* [22].

17

there is a significant difference. While the Negroes are called lazy, dirty and oversexed, that is without control over their instincts, the accusation against the Jews—that they control industry, have all the money, are ambitious and push ahead—go in the opposite direction: they have too much control.

These two types of accusation correspond to two types of neurotic conflict: the conflict which arises when man cannot master his instinctive drives to fit into rationally and socially approved patterns of behaviour; and the conflict which arises when man cannot live up to the aspirations and standards set by his conscience. In psychoanalytic terminology the accusations against the Negro imply that his Id, that is the instinctive part of the human equipment, dominates his Ego, that is the reality-oriented function of man; the accusations against the Jew imply that the Super-ego, that is man's conscience, dominates. In such conflicts, shame over one's untamed nature or guilt over one's unachieved standards impede the functioning of the ego and, severe cases, the conflict becomes paralysing.

That this parallel between the content of racial stereotypes and the basic conflicts of man is not fortuitous will be demonstrated below. Here, it is worth noting that under the National-Socialist regime in Germany, where the Jews were the major target for out-group hostility, the stereotyped beliefs about them combined what the existence of two target groups on the American scene permits to be separated. In Germany, the Jews symbolized both the conflicts with the id and the conflicts with the super-ego.[1]

Individuals vary, of course, in their selection of what they believe to be attributes of an out-group. There are some whose hostility is unspecific: they experience a diffuse emotional hatred without feeling a need for rationalization. Others accept the entire gamut of concrete accusations levelled against the out-group which is current in their own social group. In between these extreme positions there are persons whose rationalizations appear to fulfil a specific function for their personalities.

Ample evidence for this latter type was found in a study using detailed case histories of persons under psychoanalytic treatment who also happened to be anti-Semitic [1]. One of these patients, for example, disliked the Jews because they were 'emotional and untamed' but also 'shrewd, capable and industrious'. The life history of this man demonstrated that he, too, was shrewd, capable and industrious, but unable to experience

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1. For a discussion of this point see Bettelheim and Janowitz [4].

any warm emotion. This inability was actually one of the reasons which made him look for help in psychoanalytic treatment. There it emerged that very early in life this man had found himself in a conflict of loyalty to an overstrict, rigidly joyless mother and a happy-go-lucky father who spent little time at home, perhaps not surprisingly considering the atmosphere of gloomy righteousness which pervaded it. For the little boy the conflict between the parents presented itself as an irreconcilable dichotomy between being happy and being good. Under the dominant influence of his mother he chose the path of goodness and success, trying valiantly to suppress, as she did, all tender and warm feelings. Yet the suppression did not wholly succeed, and as a result he suffered from loneliness and emotional emptiness in an outwardly successful life. The culturally prevalent stereotype to the effect that Jews manage to combine emotions with success was a fearful reminder to that man that he had built his life on a false premiss. By despising the Jews for the combination of qualities that he had denied himself, he tried to defend his own unsatisfactory device of a way of life. Since he could not satisfy his own longing for emotional warmth, the burden was easier to carry if he found emotionality in others despicable. He acted like a thief who joins the crowd shouting 'Stop thief' in an effort to divert attention from himself. For him, it would have made little psychological sense to rationalize his anti-Semitism by accusing the Jews of being capitalists, communists, or bad-mannered. Neither would it have made sense to hate Negroes or Catholics, for the very combination of qualities which he needed to hate in order to make bearable their absence in himself, are not easily attributed to either of these groups.

The psychological mechanisms employed in this case in order to support a precarious equilibrium are what psychoanalytic theory and practice have identified as defence mechanisms; in this case a person's projection of what is wrong in himself on an outsider and denial of inner conflict. It is of great importance to realize that defence mechanisms are exactly what the name implies: an effort to safeguard the ego from inner conflict. It is reasonable to assume that everyone, prejudiced and unprejudiced, healthy or sick, uses defence mechanisms in the effort to establish a workable psychic equilibrium. Their existence is a sign of striving for health rather than a symptom of disease. Many authors [1] have pointed to the positive function which defence of this kind fulfils. It is well known that the function of

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1. See, for example, Ernst Kris [15].

an external enemy in producing group cohesion is so important that if one does not exist he is often invented. The point is documented in much recent history.

Sofer [24], discussing the racial situation in Uganda, points out that: 'irrational, incorrect, and distorted views ... serve positive functions for the individual and his group. In this situation, for instance, there is no doubt that they help to assuage for the Europeans' uneasiness about the fact that while the rationale of their presence in the country is their contribution to African advancement, great disparities exist between the advantages which they and Africans presently enjoy.'

Defence mechanisms must thus be judged in relation to the degree to which they succeed in banishing disabling inner conflict. In the case of race prejudice, this goal is not often achieved. Particularly where different racial groups live and work within one society, as is the case in Africa and in the United States, the conflicts which defence mechanisms are meant to eliminate are often, in fact, intensified by contact with the rejected group. The man whose life history was given above tried—unconsciously, to be sure—to save himself by hating the Jews. But once he had fixed his defensive needs on the Jews, the very sight of them became a reminder of what was wrong in himself, thus aggravating the problem that he tried to deny. Prejudice often becomes an obsession with those who use it in a futile effort to restore their crippled self. Even though it is meant to achieve emotional, and often also material gain, it hurts the prejudiced person himself as well as the victim whose very existence keeps the conflict alive.

The hatred of the out-group serves the function of supporting the person who entertains it. However spurious the relief that comes from this type of defence, it is a vitally important function in the psychic economy of the insecure person. It is easier to reject others than it is to reject oneself. Yet, what one rejects in others often reveals and intensifies what is wrong in oneself.

Since it is often reality which threatens to destroy the defensive bulwark of the prejudiced person, it is reality which he tries to manipulate so that it will better fit his psychological needs. Thus, prejudiced persons use whatever social power they have at their disposal to create conditions which compel the target group to become as the stereotype prescribes. A vicious circle is set in motion, an example of what Merton [20] has called the 'self-fulfilling prophecy'. In some southern parts of the United States, for example, the Negroes are rejected because they are

lower class and uneducated. Because they are so regarded, oppor-
tunities for advancement and better education are denied to
them; as a consequence many Southern Negroes do indeed suffer
from low status and low educational level, thus apparently justi-
fying the original act of discrimination. Much the same could
be said about the apartheid policies in South Africa: while the
native populations are rejected because of their different culture,
the means of reducing the difference are nevertheless eschewed.
Instead, all policies are designed to intensify the difference. It
may well be, however, that South Africa is about to demonstrate
that such manipulation of reality does not constitute an effective
support for the psychological defence mechanisms at play. For
the inexorable fact of the South African economy is that it
depends largely on African labour, thus requiring contact
between the races which apartheid aims to destroy.

Let us recapitulate the argument presented so far. A psycho-
analytic interpretation of prejudice is legitimate only if there is
reason to believe that the antagonism against another race is not
based on rational judgement of this group's actual qualities.
Since scientific knowledge about the distribution of psycholo-
gical attributes in various races does not exist, the question
arises whether the attributes concerned are rationally inferred
by persons who feel racial antagonism. There is evidence from
several sources to support the idea that many prejudiced persons
employ inadequate reality-testing. This evidence derives in par-
ticular from examination of the contact they have had with
members of the group they are judging. Granted that inadequate
reality-testing need not imply hidden motives for children or
naïve adults, prejudice can be defined as an attitude toward an
out-group which is irreversible by evidence to the contrary and
which fulfils a psychological function for the bearer of the atti-
tude. The discovery of the irrational component in prejudice is
made possible because prejudiced persons use rationalizations;
or, in other words, the irrational element in their thinking about
race which follows primary process lines is so strong that it
interferes with thinking which aims at relying on the secondary
process. An examination of the content of beliefs about other
groups demonstrates the nature of the unconscious motivation;
it is a defence against inner weakness. The use of such defence
mechanisms is universal; the demonstration of their role in the
thinking of prejudiced persons does not stamp them as psycho-
logically sick. What is more, the social position of many groups
who are the target of prejudice often provides a kernel of reality

in the otherwise unrealistic perception of the group by the prejudiced person.

THE PSYCHO-GENETIC ORIGIN OF PREJUDICE

Now the question arises: Why are these people so vulnerable? What is it that requires such intense though spurious defence effort? The fact that racial prejudice is historically and geographically so widespread suggests that it represents an effort to deal with a basic and probably universal human conflict.

A first clue to the nature of this conflict stems from studies concerned with the relation between prejudice and social status. Contrary to popular belief, there is no clear-cut relationship between racial antagonism and a person's current status in life. Prejudiced persons are found among the rich and the poor as well as in the middle of the social hierarchy. The relationship becomes strong, however, when a person's social mobility is considered; that is when his feelings of tolerance or intolerance for other groups are related to his movements up or down the social ladder. In the study of army veterans mentioned before [4] it was found that the highest frequency of intolerance against racial out-groups occurred among those who were socially in a worse position at the time of the study than they had been before the war. What further strengthens the clue to the nature of the conflict is the fact that among a small group of veterans who had undergone a rapid *upward* social mobility, intolerance was also very high, higher than among the stable group or among those who had only gradually improved their lot. Obviously, a *certain amount of frustration* helps to bring to the fore the conflict, whatever it is, to which racial antagonism is an attempted solution. But the frustration is not solely the consequence of economic deprivation, otherwise the frequency of the phenomenon when status radically improves would remain unexplained.

What is, then, the psychological experience common to upward and downward social mobility? There is much evidence to suggest that any sudden change in external conditions of life brings the individual face to face with the question of his own identity. In the life-long effort of every human being to define himself |to himself, to acquire, maintain and develop an identity as a person, the external circumstances of his existence are used as props. His name, home, occupation, habits and established relations with others serve to define who he is. Any

22

sudden change in these conditions requiring changes in his habitual responses to the world and producing changes in the way other people respond to him brings to the fore anxieties about himself. The psychological experience of refugees—surprisingly enough an apparently untouched field of research—or even the experience of a casual traveller who finds himself an unknown person alone in an unknown culture may bear out this general statement. Some people, to be sure, can discover new aspects of their own identity through some such experience without feeling deeply threatened by it. But most of us would rather not do without the props which our social existence offers us in maintaining and developing our identity and inner security.

The idea that uncertainty about oneself is at the root of racial antagonism is strengthened by evidence from studies contained in the book *The authoritarian personality* [2]. These studies set out to discover the type of personality which is most often given to intense feelings of racial prejudice. The style of life of the authoritarian personality was found to be one which needed particularly strong external props in order to maintain a semblance of inner security. Conformity to conventional values is an essential aspect of the authoritarian person who 'seems to need external support—whether this be offered by authorities or by public opinion—in order to find some assurance concerning what is right and what is wrong. ... External criteria, especially social status, are the yardsticks by which he [the authoritarian person] tends to appraise people in general and the ground on which he either admires and accepts, or rejects them. Such values form the basis of a hierarchical order in which the powerful are seen at the top and the weak at the bottom. This may well be an over-all tendency in modern culture which, however, he [the authoritarian person] displays to an exaggerated degree' [2].

The basic personality features found to exist in those given to strong racial antagonism are: a rigid adherence to conventional values; a submissive, uncritical attitude toward idealized authorities of the in-group; a tendency to condemn, reject and punish people who violate conventional values; an opposition to the imaginative and tender approach to life; a disposition to think in rigid categories, a preoccupation with the theme of dominance and submission, a generalized cynicism about human nature; a tendency to project outwards unconscious emotional impulses; and an exaggerated concern with the sexual behaviour of others.

The manner in which this personality profile of the prejudiced

person was discovered is fully described in *The authoritarian personality*. This is not the place to enter into a discussion of the techniques employed in the studies. But it is of some interest to note that Jean-Paul Sartre [23] in his *Portrait of the anti-Semite*, arrived intuitively at much the same picture as these empirical studies.

To be able to achieve some sense of their own identity authoritarian persons need a black-and-white perception of the world. (The metaphorical expression 'black-and-white' fits in all too well with the fact that those groups which are most frequently the target of prejudice have a black skin.) And with this need for clear-cut and sharp categories goes, inevitably, a disinclination to look closely at their own or other people's motives. There must be in them a dim fear that a full understanding of people would blur the sharp divisions which serve to tell them where they belong and who they are.

Psychoanalytic theory and practice support the idea of the universality of this conflict. It manifests itself first and forcefully in early childhood when the infant's initial complete dependence on parental love and care is gradually replaced by the development of a super-ego. This is achieved through a process of identification with one or both parents. It is inherent in the social function of parenthood that this identification should be fraught with difficulties, at least in the western industrialized civilization. It is not only rejecting or emotionally-exploiting parents who make the process hard to achieve. Every parent has to control, reject and punish in order to make a child fit to meet the standards of the society into which he was born. As the child's personality develops, these inevitable constraints and controls compel him to appraise himself. And when impulsive behaviour meets with adult restrictions doubts arise in the child's mind about his own worth or that of his parents or about both. Before self-control, internal standards and the ability to understand the need for rules and regulations is acquired, punishment and disapproval can make the child feel that he is unwanted and unloved.

The lack of clarity of the self-image, inevitable for all at one stage of development, may remain a basic feature of a personality. Case histories of persons who feel strong racial antagonism show that their identity conflict was particularly severe. In many cases this is a consequence of a fundamental disunity between the parents or of disturbed relations between the child and one or both of his parents. Even where no obvious failure in human relations occurs, the psychological hazards of

early life are great on account of the child's inability to interpret events at that stage rationally.

In any case, to the extent that the child retains his early insecurity—and, to some extent, probably everybody does—he experiences the apparently clear-cut identity of someone else as evidence of his personal failure which is deeply resented. If he can make himself believe that the other's seemingly clear identity connotes inferiority then the personal confusion is easier to bear. At least he is not a Negro, or not a Jew, however uncertain he is about the more positive aspects of his identity. Being visibly different is, then, an out-group attribute which on one level threatens the insecure personality because it confers apparently a clear identity on the out-group; on another level it is a help because it permits the in-group member to find at least one aspect of his own identity, albeit a negative one. What this amounts to is that for a person without a stable sense of identity a person who is different is the object of both attraction and repulsion. The weaker an individual, the stronger is the threat he experiences when confronted with difference and the stronger is the emotional response. Fundamentally, then, the antagonism against the out-group is the concomitant of self-rejection.

Bronowski [5] in his essay on violence, recognizes the ubiquity of the identity conflict when he interprets individual violence as a result of the wish to demonstrate that one is a man 'in a world in which the sense of being unneeded walks with us like a shadow'.

Members of socially under-privileged out-groups can, of course, also experience this same conflict of identity. The way in which they use the existence of the dominant group in dealing with this conflict is, however, somewhat different, though equally irrational. Considering the frequency and degree of humiliation to which target-groups of prejudice are often exposed, retaliation would appear to be a rational response. But unless the brutality against the out-group approaches that of the Hitler regime and makes psychological adjustment impossible, many Jews and many coloured people seem to try to placate their enemies. The reason for this is that, within a given power structure of society, their self-rejection cannot be alleviated by rejecting the dominant white or gentile group. No safety can be derived from hating the all too obviously powerful group. Consequently, and with the peculiar logic of psychological events, there exists colour prejudice among Negroes, anti-Semitism among Jews. What those who experience this cannot accept in their own individual personalities is attributed to the

group into which they were born. In order to acquire some self-respect they adopt the language of their enemies whose standards and values they imitate by rejecting the group to which they belong. Needless to say their defensive effort is even less successful than that of people belonging to the dominant group.

In this unending effort to come to terms with oneself, the establishment of one's sexual identity plays a crucial part. Unresolved conflicts in that area may well be the most frequent source of anxiety and insecurity in adulthood. When things go well, the child emerges at the age of five or six years from a turbulent period more or less unscathed, having developed a strong identification with the parent of his own sex and the confidence to love, in full recognition of the difference, the parent of the other sex. The domination of either parent and the submission of the other—a very frequent pattern in family life—may be one source of difficulties in forming a solid identification and thus the nucleus for a stable sense of identity. The domination of the father may terrify a small boy or so impress a small girl that each identifies with the person of the other sex. In this manner the psychological basis for later homosexuality may be established. But even where this complete confusion of the sexual roles is avoided or overcome, the vicissitudes of the process of acquiring one's sexual identity are so complex that many adults bear the mark of their early struggle in that area as an anxiety over their male or female adequacy.

It is thus not surprising that racial antagonism, an outcome of an unstable sense of identity, has generally a pronounced sexual component. In South Africa the taboo against inter-racial sex relations has been incorporated into the Immorality Act which makes even a casual sexual relation between persons of different races a crime. The agonies that follow from breaking this law are the theme of Paton's sensitive and beautiful novel *Too late the phalarope*. Intermarriage is against the law of the land not only in South Africa but also in some parts of the United States.The very fact that such laws need to be established testifies to the existence of strong tendencies to break them; the fact that in the United States only about 20 per cent of the Negro population, according to anthropological estimates, are of unmixed African origin, testifies to the frequency with which the taboo is broken.

Indeed, wherever the taboo against inter-racial sex relations is established, its breaking can be taken for granted—which

demonstrates that the inner conflict of the powerful white group is only intensified by it.

Philip Mason [19] in his history of Rhodesia describes with much psychological insight the probable cause of events that followed the arrival of the first Europeans: 'The invaders brought at first few women of their own and they were not all saints or monks; what sometimes took place between those first Europeans and the women of the hunting tribes they made servants, or of the slaves they imported, must usually have been a matter of physical gratification and no more, with no element at all of shared life or common endeavour; the experience was so far from satisfying to a people of conscience, whose only book was often the Bible, that they came to look on it with horror and repulsion and as soon as women of their own kind were in the country the community began a determined effort to keep themselves pure in race and in their way of life. 'And somewhat later: 'It may be stated crudely, heavily over-simplified, using old-fashioned words. There was no love but only lust between that first official of the Netherlands East Indies Company and that first Hottentot servant-girl. Therefore he regarded what had taken place with remorse and repulsion and tried to forget it ... to make sure that there were no marriages, there must be no danger of the common interests, the shared misfortunes, that make love instead of lust. The gap between his mind and the woman's had bred his horror; because of his horror the gap must be widened and fortified, so that he should not cross it again, so that he should never be reminded of *what he disliked in himself* [italics supplied]. The horror had grown from lust instead of love; because of his horror, love, which might be lasting, had grown more horrible than lust. So marriage between black and white became more shocking than a casual encounter, provided, that is, that the casual encounter was between white man and black woman.'

In psychoanalytic terminology, the gratification of the id was intolerable to the super-ego. These early settlers found themselves in a conflict between their Protestant consciences and their desires. Their sense of identity was based on standards of morality which they could not follow in the extraordinary circumstances in which they found themselves. In an effort to assuage the conflict they felt impelled to regard their experiences with coloured women as alien to their egos, and did what they could to eradicate opportunities which might allow their own 'lower selves' to break through into behaviour unacceptable to them.

Mason's last point about the limitation of the sexual taboo to a relation between white woman and black man, while casual encounters between white man and black woman are often occasions for boasting, for example, in the Southern parts of the United States, once again highlights the deep irrationality of the white supremacy idea. The racial purity is affected, one way or the other. But the myth which has developed about the Negro's extraordinary sexual prowess, perhaps a projection of the white man's fear of his own sexual inadequacy, creates anxiety that the white woman might experience greater satisfaction with a Negro man. This final blow to the white man's pride in his masculinity had to be avoided at all costs. It was avoided at the cost of all the Negroes who have ever been lynched under the faintest suspicion of intercourse with a white woman.

Several authors have remarked on the lack of evidence for the widespread belief that the genitals of Negro males are larger than those of white males. Dollard, [1] for example, who came across this belief comments on it as follows: 'One thing seems certain—that the actual differences between Negro and white genitalia cannot be as great as they seem to be to the whites; it is a question of the psychological size being greater than any actual difference could be ... the notion is heavily functional in reference to the supposed dangers of sexual contacts of Negroes with white women.'

In summary, then, prejudice seems to be embodied in a particular type of personality, the authoritarian personality. This type bears the mark of an unresolved conflict, the conflict about one's identity, to an extraordinary extent. While this conflict is probably universal, prejudiced persons use it in a peculiar way. Sexual identity is a major component in the conflict; hence the preoccupation with sexual matters in race relations among prejudiced persons.

Psychoanalytic theory maintains that the first sexual desire of the child is directed toward his parent. Fulfilment of this desire is forbidden and consequently becomes strongly repressed. But the repression is incomplete, and the attraction of the forbidden fruit stems from this fact. At the same time, the secret belief that out-group members have a clearer identity leads to the assumption that they are sexually superior to oneself, an assumption which creates profound jealousies and intensifies one's feeling of insecurity. The by now familiar mechanism of

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1. Quoted in M. F. Ashley Montague, *Man's most dangerous myth: the fallacy of race* [22].

hating in others what is wrong in oneself leads to the intense emotion of horror, disgust and fascination about inter-racial sex relations.

PREJUDICE AND MENTAL HEALTH

It should be clear from what has been said so far, that recognition of the irrational component in prejudice and of the fact that it often has its roots in a psychological conflict which remained unresolved in childhood is not yet equivalent to saying that prejudice is a type of mental illness. The idea that healthy persons are altogether rational belongs to pre-psychoanalytic thought and can no longer be maintained.

Yet there is sufficient indication of severe disturbance in the picture we have drawn of the prejudiced personality to warrant further empirical inquiry. The most direct way of searching for evidence of the relation between prejudice and mental illness consists in exploring its presence or absence in mental patients. One such investigation by Maria Hertz Levinson[1] was conducted in a state institution for the diagnosis and treatment of psychiatric disorders, an institution to which, however, violent cases and cases for permanent commitment were not admitted. She found that the average degree of prejudice in these patients was, if anything, slightly lower than in the population outside. Furthermore, differences in the severity of the psychiatric disorder were not related to the intensity of the prejudice;... 'one is likely to find people with more or less severe psychological disturbances in the high, low, and middle quartiles [i.e., measures of prejudice] although we cannot say in what proportion'. Again, with regard to the ordinary psychiatric classifications, no relationship was discovered between any one of them and the absence or presence of prejudice. There is some evidence that these negative results are not due to any peculiarity in the institution in which the study was conducted.[2] However, general psychiatric classifications leave much to be desired. A study of the personality dynamics revealed certain differences between the highly prejudiced and the unprejudiced patients. The former, Maria Levinson concludes, 'usually displayed very little awareness of their own feelings and psychological problems. What

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1. This study by Maria Hertz Levinson is reported in *The authoritarian personality* [2].
2. See, for example, A. R. Jensen [14].

is more, they tended to resist psychological explanations and to suppress emotions.... The most common symptoms in both men and women were vague anxiety or physical signs of anxiety and rage. The more disturbed patients suffered from feelings of depersonalization, lack of interest, and depressed affect of a more schizoid type. Very many [highly prejudiced] men and women came to the Clinic with somatic complaints ...'.[1]

In contrast, this is what the study has to say about the unprejudiced patients. 'They were much more familiar with themselves, more aware and accepting of emotional experiences and problems... [their complaints] very rarely consisted of vague anxiety or physical symptoms alone... the most common single symptom... was neurotic depression with feelings of inadequacy. Most of these patients had inhibitions in some area—sexual, work, social—and felt uneasy in group situations.'

These statements about the functioning of the prejudiced personality in mental illness are much in line with the function of prejudice in general. The tendency to look away from one's own psychological problems and to project feelings of discomfort on hard and fast objects—as, for example, on somatic symptoms—is what one would expect from a prejudiced person. The study of anti-Semitic patients in psychoanalytic treatment mentioned before [1] confirms Levinson's findings. There, the authors say: 'An examination of the clinical diagnoses of these psychoanalytic patients reveals that anti-Semitism is *not* the concomitant of any one clinical category of personality disturbance. The diagnoses cover a wide range of disturbances. Anti-Semitic reactions are found in psychoneurotics of various types; in character disorders..., in psychopathic and psychotic personalities as well as in others with less precisely defined disturbances.' And later on: 'In this broad range of diagnoses and vague symptoms, however, one type of disturbance becomes conspicuous through its absence. None of the cases manifested a genuine, deep *depression*.' This last statement is indirectly corroborated by the finding, quoted before, that it was the unprejudiced patients who manifested depressive tendencies.

The relation between prejudice and mental health has been studied also in a less direct manner. On the assumption that psychological disturbances are even more frequent than the large population in mental hospitals would lead one to suspect, a whole set of tests and measures has been devised to diagnose the degree and kind of psychological disturbance in the so-called

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1. Maria Hertz Levinson, op. cit.

'normal' population. Outstanding among these devices is the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, generally referred to as MMPI, which has been used by several investigators in conjunction with measures of prejudice to establish the relationship, if any, between them [12].

The MMPI elicits information about several fairly distinct psychological patterns, each of which corresponds to the symptoms and problems of a clinical category of mental disease. For example, there is one group of inventory items which measures the degree of abnormal concern with bodily functions; this corresponds to hypochondriasis. Another group is composed of items related to the clinical category of depression; a high score on these items 'indicates poor morale (of the emotional type) with a feeling of uselessness and inability to assume the normal degree of optimism regarding the future'. Another group provides indications of suspiciousness, oversensitivity and delusions of persecution, corresponding to paranoia. And so on. A summary of various independent studies using these measures to establish the relationship between psychological disturbance and prejudice among American high school and college students emerges with clear-cut results: prejudice was found to be positively correlated with personality features corresponding to hypochondriasis, depression, psychopathic deviations, schizophrenia and hypomania; it was found to correlate negatively with defensiveness and hysteria.

Thus, from two different types of evidence—studies of mental patients on the one hand, and studies of psychological disturbances among 'normal' persons on the other—we arrive at apparently totally opposite conclusions. Not only do psychological disturbances hang together with prejudice in one case but not in the other; what confounds confusion is that one particular clinical entity which was singled out before for comment, depression, is according to one type of evidence present in unprejudiced patients, according to the other, present in prejudiced people.

What is one to conclude from this? Is there or is there not a relationship between prejudice and mental health? Or do we have to admit defeat by stating that at the present level of knowledge and methodology the question is unanswerable?

I believe an answer, and not a defeatist one, can be gleaned from the material so far presented. It requires, however, a digression from the matter of prejudice. For the crux of the confusion is unquestionably the concept of mental health [13].

What do we mean by mental health? Most frequently and

most unfortunately the term mental health is used, in euphe-
mistic fashion, as a synonym for mental disease. And somewhat
less frequently, but still unfortunately, it is equated with the
absence of mental disease. Ultimately, of course, one can define
mental health however one likes. But a concept becomes scienti-
fically useful only if it helps to solve intellectual or practical
problems. From that point of view to regard mental health as
the absence of mental disease is not particularly helpful, for
two reasons. First, mental disease is itself as yet a vague and
unclear notion; not much is gained by trying to link one vague
term to another only just slightly less vague. Second, and this
is even more important, the absence of mental disease leaves no
scope for making more subtle differentiations between the enor-
mous variety of persons for whom the statement that they are
free of mental disease can be made with confidence.

Many psychologists and psychiatrists have, therefore, found
it useful to think of mental health as a positive attribute of
individuals; its presence in varying degrees helps to introduce
these more subtle differentiations. A survey of the many ideas
in this field yields, broadly speaking, six major categories of
human functioning which present promising approaches to the
concept of mental health.

First, there is the idea that mental health is expressed in an
individual's attitude toward himself. If he is aware of himself,
has a correct image of who he is, can accept himself or has
developed a stable sense of identity, he is regarded as mentally
healthy.

Second, an individual's style and degree of development and
actualization of his potential is regarded as indicative of mental
health.

Third, various proposals emphasize the unity of personality,
that is, the integration of all psychic functions as the essence
of mental health.

Fourth, some authors single out the notion of autonomy;
that is, a person's relative independence from social pressures
and his ability to act independently under inner regulation.

Fifth, various proposals suggest that mental health is indi-
cated in the adequacy of an individual's perception of reality.

Sixth, mental health is regarded as the ability to master one's
environment, which comprises matters such as adequacy to
love, work, and play; the ability to meet situational require-
ments, problem-solving, and the like.

None of these concepts is, of course, free from value conno-
tations. Their suitability will undoubtedly vary from one culture

to another. Even within any one culture there is as yet not enough knowledge about the usefulness of these various concepts in predicting behaviour to enable one to choose among them. What is more, it seems quite possible that several of these various concepts are quite closely related to each other.

Yet, notwithstanding these limitations, singly and jointly these efforts to give meaning to the vague notion of positive mental health represent a considerable step forward in thinking about the subject. One implication of having formulated these concepts is the fact that the statement, 'a person is not mentally sick but neither is he mentally healthy', now makes sense. In other words, the opposite of mental disease is absence of mental disease; the opposite of mental health absence of mental health. The extent to which the absence of mental health coincides with, overlaps or is independent of mental disease, and vice versa, is as yet a moot question. But no longer is this question one of speculation only. It can be empirically approached by studying the extent to which one or more of these criteria of mental health are present in persons who are definitely mentally sick. Indeed, some of the clinical observations quoted before clearly suggest that self-awareness, for example, can be present in some mental patients and absent in others.

I have discussed elsewhere further implications of these ways of thinking about mental health, and the problem of converting these ideas into some form of quantification [13]. Here it remains to be demonstrated that this approach to mental health helps to clarify the confusing data presented before about the relation of prejudice to mental health.

If mental health has positive meaning, that is if it is regarded not just as the absence of mental disease, the major apparent contradictions in the data disappear.

The evidence from studies with persons who are sufficiently sick to be under psychiatric care suggests that there is no reason to assume that prejudice and mental illness are related to each other. Mental patients, like the normal population, do or do not entertain prejudiced attitudes; being more or less severely mentally ill is not related to being more or less prejudiced.

The evidence from studies with high school and college students I take to mean that prejudice is related to the absence of positive mental health. There are several reasons for this interpretation. First, the population with which these studies were conducted consisted of young people sufficiently free from mental illness to be able to attend schools or colleges. Furthermore, even though the MMPI was constructed without

33

distinguishing low mental health in the positive sense from men tal disease, it does not claim that a person who scores hig hon any set of items is actually ill. In its authors' careful wording, the various items are designed to measure *similarities* of such persons with psychiatric patients; they do not imply that this similarity amounts to identity. However, this is not the place to enter into a detailed discussion of the problems and promises of personality inventories.

Further support for the idea that prejudice is a sign of low positive mental health rather than of illness comes from a rough and ready confrontation of the personality and behaviour of the prejudiced person with the six concepts of positive mental health.

From the preceding discussion it is clear that the prejudiced individual gives little evidence of the first criterion, a healthy attitude toward himself. The absence of a stable sense of identity is, indeed, the crux of his human condition. He does not know himself, and he does not want to. Projecting his problems on to others has precisely the function of allowing him to avoid looking at himself.

The case is somewhat less clear on the second criterion—that of self-actualization. But it is, perhaps not an over-interpretation to say that the existence of a deep though unconscious inner conflict is not a condition conducive to the development of one's potentials.

On the other hand, it is fairly obvious that the prejudiced person cannot achieve a unity or integration of all his functions. The defence mechanism or denial of what is wrong in himself interferes with such integration.

Autonomy, too, is outside his reach. For the selection of the target group for his projection is dictated to the prejudiced person by social pressures around him. Unless society has stamped a group as inferior in social position, the prejudiced person will not select it as a target for his hostilities.

In the prejudiced person mental health is equally low according to the criterion of adequate reality-perception. He cannot see individuals, he perceives his own stereotypes. But where reality is overwhelmingly clear-cut, he resorts, as we have seen, to regarding his own positive experiences as exceptions to a fantasied sinister dream world.

The criterion of environmental mastery is, perhaps, the one according to which the prejudiced individual might be judged to have positive mental health. For, as we have seen, his prejudice serves the function of dealing with an inner conflict. He

derives from regarding others as inferior a semblance of support for his self-respect. This secondary gain is, to be sure, often not reliable, for any contact with the group he hates—and he often seeks such contact compulsively in an effort to convince himself of the others' inferiority—nevertheless revives his secret doubts about his own adequacy. But it is conceivable that for prejudiced persons without direct contact with the victims of their conflicts, environmental mastery is facilitated by a strengthening of their sense of their own worth.

Much in line with the assumption that mental disease and mental health are two distinct concepts, and that the prejudiced person suffers from a shortcoming in the latter, are a number of empirical studies. Barron [3], for example, ascertained the degree of prejudice of persons in psychotherapy. He discovered that absence of prejudice was the best single predictor of improvement through therapy. This finding can be interpreted in the following manner: while all the persons he studied were sick, some of them had a greater health potential than others. Those free from prejudice had, notwithstanding their illness, more often the resources for positive mental health. The prejudiced persons gave evidence, by the very fact of their prejudice, of impaired positive mental health. It is as if the inflexibility which is the essence of stereotyped thinking and which makes an individual impervious to direct experience were the reason for his shutting himself off from the direct experience of psychotherapy.

Studies of prejudice among criminals support this line of argument. The controversy of long standing as to whether criminals should be regarded as mentally sick may, perhaps, be brought nearer to resolution by introducing here, too, the distinction between mental illness and low mental health. Be this as it may, in the present context one such study is of particular interest, W. R. Morrow's 'Criminality and anti-democratic trends: a study of prison inmates', published in *The authoritarian personality* [2]. Morrow found that prison inmates have a higher average of prejudice than any other group to which similar measures have been applied. The expression of their colour prejudice and their anti-Semitism reveals what the author calls intense status anxiety: to keep the Negroes in their place and to resent the Jews because of their power.

In the light of this evidence it appears justified to conclude that prejudice is a symptom of poor mental health. Whether or not the most violent forms of prejudice are indications of mental illness, as some authors suggest, is as yet a moot question.

IS PREJUDICE INEVITABLE?

Racial antagonism, according to this psychoanalytically oriented interpretation is, then, a deeply meaningful support to the individual of low mental health who strives, however spuriously, for a solution to the basic conflict of personal identity. Do we therefore have to accept it as an inevitable aspect of modern life?

I believe that the psychological need which leads to racial antagonism is indeed universal, and will be with us for the foreseeable future. There is even some reason to believe that the modern trend toward the destruction of caste systems and toward greater democratization of public life intensifies the conflict over the individual's personal identity. Some one hundred and thirty years ago De Tocqueville had already noticed in his observation of the young American democracy the increased difficulty which persons in this political system experienced in finding security through their status in life. Not that the discrimination incorporated in the structure of a caste society is necessarily preferable to that based on prejudice in a democratic society; but where the entire social web justifies the existence of second- or third-class citizens, the exploitation of this pattern as a projection screen for man's troubles with himself will probably be more successful. In such circumstances the defence mechanisms may well achieve their ends, and the sense of identity in each individual may be stronger, whatever caste he belongs to, by virtue of this clear definition of who he is. This is why Kris [15] says that 'only in a society... whose values include the belief in the equality of all men and in the dignity of the individual, can the fight against prejudice be meaningfully carried on'. Kris, carefully, speaks of a 'meaningful', not a successful fight. Whether, and under what conditions it can be successful is the question confronting us here.

The very universality of the basic conflict underlying prejudice suggests, of course, that this fight can be successful. For not all who experience it are prejudiced. There are people, after all, who can accept the existence of difference without envy or fear. And among them there are many whose positive mental health is also low. In the studies of *The authoritarian personality* it was found that many unprejudiced persons find it very difficult to accept themselves. They are full of self-blame and often ridden by guilt feelings; they tend to be depressed and withdraw from difficulties easily. Often they are worriers, much pre-occupied

with themselves. Thus the statement that prejudice is an indication of poor mental health cannot be taken to mean that lack of prejudice is a sign of good mental health. There are many ways of suffering, and many types of unsuccessful effort to deal with inner conflict. The suggestion, often made with tongue in cheek, that the solution of the problem lies in having every prejudiced person psychoanalysed is, to say the least, not very helpful, notwithstanding the fact that psychoanalysts report that prejudice disappears after a successful analysis. Even if psychotherapeutic efforts could be multiplied many times, this would hardly make a dent in the social problem which prejudice presents.

Although the experience of inner conflict may be a necessary condition for prejudice to become a social problem, it certainly is not by itself a sufficient cause. Unless there are groups who, within the social structure, are assigned inferior status irrespective of the personal qualities of an individual member of the group, not even the most pitifully insecure and tortured souls would create prejudice. They have not got the nerve to attack the strong; they need the judgement of the world around them that members of another group are inferior as the kernel of reality to support their imagination before they dare to attack.

Yet, at first blush, there is small comfort to be derived from this second ingredient that is required to produce racial antagonism. For it seems that the organization of societies into in-groups whose power or prestige stems in part from the denial of power or prestige to out-groups will be slow to change. Thus there will be available for a long time to come a convenient projection screen on to which we can throw, as our weakness requires, ambivalence, envy, fear and hate. The existence of these under-privileged groups in many societies can be the result of initial prejudices in powerful groups, as is probably the case in parts of Africa. But this is certainly not the only, or even the most frequent, reason for their existence. The distribution of power and various concomitant political motives such as the need for cheap labour can induce a dominant yet unprejudiced group to bring about or maintain others in a social position so weak that the prejudiced bystander feels free to use them as a target for his hostilities. At this point, another unpractical solution is occasionally advocated: a revolutionary change to eliminate the organization of society into groups which confer different degrees of power and prestige on its members. This proposal is, to say the least, equivalent to postponing the fight against prejudice to the remote future.

There is, however, a third element that is necessary before prejudice can become a major social problem. It is less visible than the other two. Nonetheless it presents the best target for the fight against racial antagonism. There are no ready means either of eliminating the fundamental psychological problem or of changing society radically. But it is possible to attack the *link* between these two conditions. If this link, which is the third factor in the situation, can be destroyed or at least undermined, then there is a possibility of reducing prejudice—on earth and not in heaven ; that is, within an imperfect society in which troubled people suffer from their own imperfections and make others suffer the consequences.

All realistic efforts to change prejudice have indeed been aimed at breaking this link. Where they have succeeded they have, deliberately or intuitively, built on the psychodynamics of prejudice. Where they have failed they have neglected this important factor. In what follows some failures and some achievements in the effort to change prejudice will be discussed from the point of view of their relevance to the psychodynamic picture presented here.[1]

A simple and, judging from results, all too simple effort to improve racial attitudes consists of a direct appeal on a rational and ethical level. Sermons, lectures, articles, posters and slogans of all kinds have been directed to the American public, for example. In those cases where their impact was systematically studied, the results were disappointing. Communication research has again and again demonstrated that it is difficult to reach people through public appeal who are not already in favour of the views expressed. This is true not only for matters of prejudice but also for election campaigns, adult education and many other areas. Unless the audience is captive its members turn away from ideas at the slightest indication that they might not like what they are about to hear or read. Such 'selective inattention' to disagreeable matters is the most widespread form of propaganda evasion, but not the only one. In a series of experimental studies prejudiced and unprejudiced persons were included in a captive audience of such communications. Here it was found that when the prejudiced person cannot escape noticing that a communication is directed to him, his need to evade the message is so strong that he employs ingenious

1. For a discussion of various other efforts to change prejudice see Harding, Proshansky and Chein, 'Prejudice and ethic relations', in: G. Lindzey (ed.), *Handbook of social psychology* [16].

devices to escape its impact. Dominant among them is his ability to misconstruct and misunderstand what is being said [8]. For example, in public transportation a poster was used showing a group of gay white children playing together with a sad-looking little Negro boy standing unhappily alone. The inscription read: 'Prejudice hurts innocent children'. One prejudiced person, invited to comment on this poster, thought it meant that Negro children prefer to play with other Negro children, and the little boy was sad because somebody wanted him to play with white children. Such astonishing misconstructions occur apparently in persons with reasonably good intelligence. The slightest ambiguity in the material is seized upon in the unconscious effort to evade the message. This is one of the reasons why caricature and satire—by definition ambiguous—are particularly ineffective in reaching the prejudiced. In the United States a satirical cartoon series was once employed poking fun at a Mr. Biggott depicted as a rather ridiculous prudish figure with exaggerated feelings of racial antagonism. What the producers of the cartoon intended was the following perceptual sequence: the prejudiced person would see the similarity between his own racial attitude and that of Mr. Biggott; would notice that Mr. Biggott was an absurd character; would conclude that it was absurd to hold prejudiced ideas; and would, in the final stage of the process, presumably reject his own prejudice so as not to be like Mr. Biggott.

The study demonstrated convincingly that this reasonable and logical process did not take place. Somewhere after the first or second stage the danger to the prejudiced person's self-esteem if he continued along this logical line became obvious to him. And from then on all sorts of devices other than logic came into play in the effort to evade the damage. Misunderstanding, change of topic, invention of bad intentions, accusing the victim of having provoked Mr. Biggott and the like led to a successful avoidance of having to come to terms with the message.

For any attitude less deeply imbedded in the psychodynamics of an individual, the cartoonist's intention might have brought the desired result. It is quite likely that those who are simply misinformed and not prejudiced for psychological reasons would have reacted as anticipated, though no such case is mentioned in the study. One concludes that the rational or satirical effort to change prejudice has little chance of success.

Starting out with a better understanding of the irrational component in prejudice others have tried to combat it by

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establishing occasions for direct personal contact between members of different races. The assumption underlying these efforts is that inadequate reality-testing is made all too easy where segregation is dominant in public life. If people are in a situation in which they can see with their own eyes what members of the other group are really like, they will no longer be able to misconstruct reality to suit their own needs. The assumption is reasonable to some extent. We have seen, after all, that the prejudiced person is not altogether autistic in his view of another race. He needs some support from the actual state of affairs, and he receives it most frequently from the inferior social position in which members of the other race are often put. This implies that direct contact will lead to more adequate reality-testing only where members of both groups meet on a basis of equal status. Having Negroes as native servants, it has been shown, may result in pleasant relationships without, however, leading to a reconstruction of attitudes. There exist in many countries many organizations and clubs which are run on an inter-racial basis. Undoubtedly such organizations are an important positive feature in the general climate of opinion and beyond it carry deeper meaning for the participants of both groups in such meetings. From the point of view of changing prejudice, however, all voluntary efforts of this kind are handicapped by the evasion mechanism discussed before. As a rule the prejudiced person goes nowhere near such an organization, so that much of this good-will work only serves to persuade the persuaded.

But, of course, direct contacts on an equal status basis need not occur voluntarily. In industry and commerce, in the army, in schools and in neighbourhoods, such contact is often a requirement of the situation. And it is from studies in these situations that the idea of breaking the link between psychological conflict and the existence of out-groups which accounts for prejudice as a social problem receives support.

Of the many existing studies in involuntary inter-racial contact situations, those in public housing in the United States are, perhaps, most instructive [9, 21, 25]. In the United States low-cost subsidized housing is provided for families whose income is below a certain level and whose accommodation is inadequate. The policy applies without regard to race. However, the implementation of this policy is left to local housing authorities and housing managers. As a result, different principles guide the allocation of flats to Negro and white families in different localities. In some cases, Negroes and white live as next-door

neighbours; in others they are assigned to separate buildings; and sometimes they are placed so that a considerable distance—a major street, for example—separates the two groups from each other. This situation provides conditions approaching those required for a controlled experiment, and it has been used for this purpose by several investigators. It should be noted that such housing policies not only imply equal status for both groups; they also create a situation in which the families concerned receive considerable material advantages, however much a white family may be opposed to sharing these advantages with a Negro family next door. Under the circumstances only members of the lunatic fringe refuse to avail themselves of the accommodation if the assignment of flats challenges their prejudices. Most prejudiced people enter this situation and stay in it because the advantages offered outweigh the disadvantage of having neighbours whom they regard as undesirable. This initial compromise is facilitated by the social norms established in favour of integrated living arrangements which are clearly supported by the local authority and the housing manager. The comparison of race relations under these conditions, alike in many ways but different in the degree to which they require direct and personal contact between the races, is revealing: where families live as next-door neighbours relations between the groups become friendly and personal. The consciousness of race recedes into the background and people are accepted and judged for what they are as individuals. On the other hand, where segregation is maintained within public housing, hostilities and prejudice continue to prevail. In the latter circumstances, the way prejudice affects the perception of people could be clearly demonstrated. In one of the housing units in which there were 350 families of each group, with about equal status as measured by income and years of formal education, prejudiced white persons believed that there were many more Negro than white families in this large unit, and that the Negroes were considerably less educated. What is more, they maintained staunchly that the Negroes, too, would prefer to live in even greater segregation. An inquiry among the Negro tenants had, however, shown that virtually all of them were in favour of integration.

It is the positive result, however, which interests us here. How does one understand the change which takes place? There is no indication as to whether a wholesale reorganization of personality has taken place. Indeed, there are good reasons to doubt that that could have happened. Rather, the situation was

one in which the prejudiced person's general submissiveness to social norms and to the powers that be was exploited. This, together with the enforced improvement of reality-testing, are the psychological mechanisms which account for the change.

There is much evidence from other sources of the prejudiced person's tendency to conform. The inner conflict which makes prejudice a convenient pseudo-solution also makes the individual yearn to be accepted by the powerful people within the social setting in which he lives. If they condemn prejudice he will comply, just as he will comply if they condone it. The social climate controls the manifestation of prejudice. Psychologically speaking, however, there is less difference than one would like to assume between the politely prejudiced and those given to violent aggressiveness against another race. In the study of psychoanalytic case histories of anti-Semitic patients already quoted [1] one person had been included who had come from Germany to the United States. In Germany he had shared in the rabid anti-Semitism of the Nazis; in the United States he shared the polite anti-Semitism prevalent in the set in which he moved. Nevertheless, however small the psychological difference, socially there is all the difference in the world between societies which favour violence and those which merely tolerate a polite hesitation about contact with another race. It is hence perfectly in line with a psychoanalytic interpretation of prejudice to regard laws against and social controls over the manifestations of prejudice as the most realistic safeguards of a civilized society.

The housing studies include data on the manner of change which occurs under the compulsion of established social norms. It is the behaviour that undergoes improvement long before the corresponding attitudes towards members of the other race start to yield [21]. Thus originally prejudiced white people start being on a first-name basis with their Negro neighbours, visit in each other's flats and undertake mutual baby sitting or common shopping expeditions; but, when asked whether they prefer segregated or integrated housing conditions, they continue for a considerable time to give preference to the former. That behaviour should change before attitude is, again, understandable in the light of the underlying psychological processes. Behaviour is more frequently under ego-control. The function of the attitude is significant for the less conscious part of the personality. Adaptation and change on that level is a much more complex process. It seems reasonable, however, to assume

that the change in behaviour also acts as a stimulus to set in motion a change in attitude if for no other reason than because a flagrant inconsistency between what one does and what one thinks is an uncomfortable experience for many people.

However, there are limits even to the change in behaviour, as the following example illustrates. A white tenant in one of the inter-racial housing units had come to accept her coloured neighbours on an equal basis. She reported with some pride that many Negro tenants greeted her familiarly in the precincts of the project by her first name; yet she added: 'I would faint, of course, if they did so in the main street in front of my friends outside.' Apparently, this 'compartmentalizing' of good relations with another group within specific limits is quite frequent. Another study conducted in a mining village of West Virginia reported much the same tendency; underground the work teams were inter-racial and white miners were quite willing to accept Negro leadership. Above ground the miners strictly adhered to the pattern of segregation in their community. [1]

Apparently it takes a fair amount of time before changes in behaviour affect attitudes, and the mechanism of compartmentalization interferes with the ready transfer of norms acquired in one situation to another. That the transfer does occur is occasionally demonstrated. For example, nation-wide polls in the United States indicate that about four-fifths of the adult population prefer residential segregation. Among people who have either worked with Negroes, or who have had some experience with them as neighbours, only two-thirds prefer segregation. And among those who have had both experiences the proportion is reduced to about half [21].

In the light of all this evidence, some cautious optimism about the possibility of breaking the link between psychological conflict and the existence of underprivileged groups in a society is, perhaps, not out of place. Yet the evidence indicating how difficult it is to bring about change is also strong. Perhaps the best known example of the problems confronting the effort to change race relations within one society arises out of the United States' legal action to end school segregation. There can be little doubt that the legal and constitutional battle in the states will be won by the Federal Government. Notwithstanding the various outbreaks of violence and the temporary suspensiou of some local school systems, close on half a million

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1. See Stuart W. Cook's article, 'Desegregation : a psychological analysis' in : *American psychologist*, vol. 12, January 1957.

Negro children who were in segregated schools before the Supreme Court's decision have already had the experience of going to school with white children.

Where the integration of schools has been successfully accomplished, the chances are that children will ultimately grow up with somewhat less prejudice than their parents. Yet, in the transitional period the personal conflicts of many are undoubtedly heightened rather than assuaged. Adults who are inclined to obey authority, find this standard of conduct of little help in a situation where the state authority is in conflict with the federal authority. Children may experience the authority of their parents as conflicting with that of their teachers. The problems thus created in this transitional period are fully discussed in a report by the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry[7]. Here, only one of these problems need be discussed because it is so often overlooked: the fact that the psychological problems of persons who become champions of racial equality often interfere with their thoughts and actions and thus diminish their effectiveness in working towards the goal to which they are apparently devoted. To some of these persons the first school results achieved by Negro children in desegregated schools came as a major shock: with considerable consistency the average achievements of the Negro children were below those of their white class-mates. Such results could, of course, have been easily predicted from the inferior schooling many Negro children had had before desegregation and from the generally much lower economic standards prevailing in their homes. The surprise of some people at these results indicates that for psychological reasons of their own they found it difficult to accept the existence of any difference between white and Negro. Just as the prejudiced person feels threatened by the recognition of a visible difference between himself and others, so low mental health in unprejudiced persons can also focus on the fact of existing differences. In the latter case, however, psychological purposes are served better by an attsempt to deny that differences exist. An obvious demonstration, such as that provided by the school results, shatters the basis on which their identification with the underdog was built. One easy but unfortunate way out of their peculiar dilemma is the expression of suspicion against the good will of anyone who discovers or assumes differences of any kind between races. The denial of differences is as little helpful as the assertion that their existence presents an unbridgeable gulf between the races. Mental health in the positive sense of the term is needed in the proponents

of harmonious race relations if confusion and exaggeration are to be avoided.

One final question needs to be considered. If efforts to change prejudice take away from the prejudiced person a convenient pseudo-solution for his problems without, however, helping him to solve these problems and without providing an alternative outlet for his hostilities, is it not possible that the already low mental health of such persons will further suffer? Or that they will seek and find other innocent victims for their aggressive needs? It is very likely that both these questions must be answered in the affirmative, even though in some persons a genuine change of outlook will occur.

The dilemma inherent in these considerations cannot be resolved by psychological thought alone. Indeed, to raise them means to raise the vast problem of the relation of psychology to ethics, a problem which transcends the scope of this essay. All that can be done here is to recognize its existence and to indicate roughly its pertinence.

Psychoanalysis has frequently been accused of undermining ethical principles by understanding and explaining all too well the psychological problems which lead to violence, crime, exploitation and prejudice. This accusation once again hits the wrong target: Freud answered it on one occasion in epigrammatic style: 'Auf dem Divan ist es eine Neurose, im Leben eine Schweinerei.'[1] If social action to protect the victim of aggression does not cure the aggressor, this is hardly an excuse for abandoning the protection. If the aggressor feels compelled to attack other victims, new protections must be created. All societies find it necessary to restrain some impulses and to curb socially dangerous actions.

Yet for the psychologist the dilemma persists notwithstanding his recognition that ethical principles must be maintained even at the expense of doing psychological damage to some. As in medicine the psychologist's professional concern with individuals is independent of whether they are good or bad by social standards. A good doctor will set the broken leg of a criminal as carefully as he sets that of a saint. A good psychologist will want to deal with prejudice without doing harm to either its victims or to those who are guilty of it.

The task confronting psychology is therefore to discover or create the conditions under which the basic conflict of identity can be made bearable without the crutch of prejudice. There

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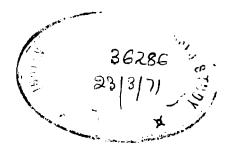1. On the analyst's couch—a neurosis; in real life swinish behaviour.

is no easy and certainly no quick method available to achieve this; some crutch can probably not be avoided. The search for such conditions will probably lead to specific modifications of the environment. For man's greatest achievement throughout the centuries of known history is the creation of protective environments which support many of his needs, however irrational they may be. Perhaps it is not utopian to think that this extraordinary gift for creating a supporting environment could be used in a deliberate and controlled fashion in the service of the psychologically weak among us. To derive one's sense of identity from work, or from stamp collecting, or from mountain climbing may be psychologically as precarious as to derive it from prejudice against underprivileged groups; but it may help one to live without hating either oneself or one's neighbour.

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