PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF PREJUDICE

merican Handbook of Psychiatry

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e-Book 2015 International Psychotherapy Institute

From American Handbook of Psychiatry: Volume 2 edited by Silvano Arieti, Gerald Caplan

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PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF PREJUDICE

A Definition of Prejudice

The definition of negative ethnic prejudice offered by Allport is useful for general discussion purposes: "Ethnic prejudice is an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole or toward an individual because he is a member of that group." As Allport pointed out, "the net effect of prejudice, thus defined, is to place the object of prejudice at some disadvantage not merited by his own conduct."

This is a highly condensed definition encompassing a number of factors, many of which were discussed at individual length by Allport:

- 1. The prejudiced attitude and its associated beliefs are hostile, rejecting, and deprecatory.
- 2. The basis of the rejection is categorical and not related to the actual behavior of the target.
- 3. The prejudice is not usually modifiable through the ordinary learning, reward-and-punishment experiences. The negative attitude is even less modifiable than the specific beliefs associated with it. Information concerning the target individual or group is selectively received and may be so modified as to support the categorical judgment. This

information is used to rationalize the persisting belief system and behavior based on it.

- 4. When the prejudice is threatened by information penetrating the defensive barriers the person holding it may become emotionally disturbed.
- 5. The prejudice may not always be reflected in immediately congruent behavior. There are many degrees of negative action that may be carried out against the target of prejudice.

The definition of prejudice as an unjustified antipathy expressed in attitudes, feelings, and beliefs is operationally useful. Its unjustified nature requires a series of psychological devices to protect its integrity: selective and modified perceptions, rationalizations, and resistance to change. Its basis in faulty generalization, however, suggests its link to prevailing value systems. These are statements of what is considered worthwhile by a society, and they are basic to its normative guidelines for living, whether contained in institutionalized (automatic and shared) patterns of behavior or embodied in a system of external restraints such as a legal code. Values involve a shared recognition of what is considered proper, right, or desirable by a group. Such recognitions and normative guidelines are always evoked by prejudiced individuals; they are, of course, central to group behavior organized to destroy an individual scapegoat available because of his membership in a target category, or to fight another group designated as the upholder of

heretical if not merely incompatible values.

The Significance of Prejudice

Prejudice, dogmatism, intolerance, and closed mindedness are major obstacles to collaboration for more satisfactory human living. They impair the native human capacity to relate effectively to others of differing appearance, background, beliefs, or behavior. Such impairment impoverishes and distorts individual life experience, both for the prejudiced person and his target. By treating a person as a member of a category rather than as a unique individual they dehumanize him and thus facilitate aggression against him. This process of dehumanization is involved in the preparation of troops to destroy an enemy (in contrast to other human beings), or of members of a dominant oppressor group to destroy a minority perceived as inferior or less than human. It can also reduce any potential discomfort suffered by dominant group members who profit from economic exploitation or cultural aggression. In this respect, prejudice may be regarded less as a psychological problem than as a social device, that is, one aspect of an ideology and value system necessary to maintain elitist economic and educational arrangements. The systematic exclusion of less advantaged, immigrant, or culturally distinct groups from full participation in the cultural experience of the majority is one way of perpetuating social distance between the two groups and preserving the former's status as a minority vulnerable to exploitation. Institutionalized

prejudice (outside of individual awareness), and the virulent intergroup hatreds associated with ethnic, religious, and national identifications, can distort, impoverish, and ultimately destroy the lives of entire societies and cultures.

Intergroup hatreds sustained by shared perceptual rigidities are rationalized by shared ideologies. As Abraham Meyerson stated, man "uses his reason to justify his prejudices. . . ." When intergroup tensions reach the point of war, that is, organized attempts by one society to destroy another, they involve collective behavior based on a common ideology. A society at war, one dominated in its behavior by common prejudice, and one working toward the achievement of a constructive goal share certain common properties. Each constitutes what Talcott Parsons called a collectivity, that is, a group committed to action on the basis of a shared value system. Actions taken on the basis of prejudice, thus, may involve the same mechanisms as those motivated by nondestructive, non-prejudiced aims. Human construction and human war (intramural as well as international) both require collective or cooperative behavior. The balance in one direction or the other is determined by the values and prejudices of the society's leaders. The leaders' outlook in turn will have, inevitably, been influenced by the social context in which they developed and live as adults. Beyond this their decisions will be a function of the small groups with which they consult: The shifting explicit convictions of these group members will again vary with their

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implicit or unconscious values and prejudices. Fixed beliefs about the goals of a target group, inability to submit certain types of evidence to rational scrutiny, invarying fear of the stranger, and a persisting anxiety-based need to demonstrate one's own strength and that of one's own group can contribute to the mutual reinforcement of increasingly risky decisions within the executive body.

Prejudice as a Subject of Psychiatric Study

Prejudice is a particular concern of psychiatrists and other students of human behavior because of its obvious relation to problems of character structure, anxiety management, adaptation, and mental illness. It may reflect only an unthinking conformity with prevailing group values and practices. When, however, a hostile or deprecatory attitude cannot be modified by experiences that demonstrate its irrationality and when the possessor of the attitude avoids confrontation with facts that may threaten it, or with the beliefs associated with it, it seems likely that it serves some necessary psychological function for him. A tenaciously embraced antipathy toward a group, or toward a person because he is a member of that group, reflects a functional impairment in reality testing; it may also produce behavior in the prejudiced person that is maladaptive, destructive, or borders on the clinically paranoid. Thus, he becomes a legitimate object of psychiatric study. The victims of prejudice are also objects of psychiatric concern. Prejudices held by members of a power-holding majority may be translated into action that limits the freedom of thought or achievement of members of a target group, usually defined as a minority whether in terms of numbers or of distance from the sources of societal power. In this instance, the prejudices of one group may influence the mental health of another. The most significant example in United States history concerns the black population. A special aspect of this is the influence of school segregation on the psychology of both black and white children. The psychiatric aspects of attempts to reverse the process, including the evoked resistances, have been explored in detail.

The psychology of the victim may be complicated by the fact that he is often conscious of his difference from the power-holding majority by virtue of high social visibility. A person may be socially visible (that is, identifiable by others as belonging to a particular group) because of sex or age; skin color or physiognomy; characteristic behavior including speech, religious, or dietary habits; clothing; or nature and area of residence. A person with high social visibility due to fixed physical characteristics has the greatest difficulty in passing, should he desire to do so, as a member of the majority.

Social visibility may diminish rapidly and markedly in those migrants who physically resemble the majority as they become acculturated and resocialized into their new setting. For them true assimilation is an eventual

possibility. However, adequate enculturation in their previous settings is important. Social histories contrasting with those of blacks whose culture was smashed in their slave period are seen in the United States Jewish and oriental minorities, although these last are, themselves, visible through skin color and physiognomy. A major difference lies in the fact of a strong, transplantable, complex culture capable of providing solutions to new problems and a sense of identity in a new milieu. Members of segregated groups with a strong cultural or religious heritage may reveal their insecurities and try to resolve their problems through overachievement. The main point is that they are able to do this and that their achievement gains consistent recognition within their own groups of origin because it fits their cultural heritage. Since all complex cultures have much in common, such achievement also has significance for and is rewarded by the dominant system as well. As Erikson pointed out, "ego identity gains real strength only from the wholehearted and consistent recognition of real accomplishment, i.e., of achievement that has meaning in the culture." Minorities with strong cultural heritages and values may even strengthen their group identities when surrounded by a dominant society possessing enough values congruent with their own to permit them to survive and to play a

functional role within it. Minority group members with no intact history or culture of their own, however, who can acquire only distorted fragments of the values and achievement techniques of the majority, have little chance of reward for activities with real cultural meaning. Following Erikson again, they have diminished opportunity for developing the sense of reality that comes from a life way that is an individual variant of a stable group identity.

Prejudice and Minority and Majority Social Worlds

Almost all studies of ethnic prejudice deal with the attitudes of majority groups toward minorities. The characteristics classically associated with minority group status have in the past been exemplified by black Americans: high social visibility, relative distance from sources of community power, incomplete access to social, educational, and economic opportunities, incomplete participation in the dominant culture, and certain other behavioral restrictions; these may include segregation imposed by the surrounding community, as well as a degree of self-segregation. A final minority group characteristic is the subordinate group's accommodation to the surrounding community through the adoption of certain aspects of the dominant culture (enculturation) as it gives up aspects of its own culture (acculturation).

In recent years the minority group concept has been applied to a number of nonethnic groups. Adolescents, for example, are socially visible because of age-linked characteristics; they are remote from the sources of social power, deprived of full participation in economic and decision-making

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aspects of the culture, and often unjustly blamed for events in which they had no personal hand. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, influenced in part by the successes of black militancy and widespread attacks on traditional organizations (often associated with United States military involvement in Indochina), other groups that had passively endured discrimination began to assert their own rights. Women protested economic discrimination and lack of equal access to educational opportunities denied them because of sex. The Women's Liberation movement also became associated through some of its leaders with efforts to remove prejudice against female homosexuals and to improve their opportunities for satisfactory living in a heterosexual, maledominated society. At the same time the Gay Liberation Front gathered strength, permitting many Americans who had hidden their homosexuality not only to admit but to assert it. In 1971 an event occurred that dramatizes the rapid changes in public climate about this issue: A leader of this movement ran for Congress from the District of Columbia with the Gay Liberation ideology as his major issues. This climaxed what he described as two decades of development of the homophile movement. It has two basic precepts. (1) Homosexuals are fully the equal of heterosexuals and should have full equality in employment, civil rights, and the like. (2) Homosexuality is not pathological in any sense. In this last respect he accused psychiatry of prejudice, stating that it "has a pathologic psychological need for sexual hobgoblins."

Aside from blacks, a number of other American ethnic groups have been identified as targets of prejudice and discriminatory action at the hands of the majority. These include Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans (Chicanos), American Indians, and Eskimos. In each instance, individuals are the targets of antipathy and placed at a disadvantage, despite personal characteristics, because of membership in a particular ethnic category. Thus, prejudice has the effect of homogenization: The majority rob a minority group person of his unique individuality by perceiving and dealing with him as a member of a class.

Information Deficit and Stereotyped Perceptions

The continued existence of a power-holding majority elite and a powerless discriminated against minority has been based in part upon the maintenance of a degree of social distance between them. The social distance concept was made operational by a scale devised by Bogardus. Another conceptualization of this situation is that of Rohrer and Edmundson and others who think in terms of two social worlds: the social world of whites and that of blacks. Members of two different social worlds may have significant but incomplete contact with each other. Their relationships are not emotionally reciprocal. With this way of relating they have only partial and sometimes distorted information about each other. Such a relative information deficit promotes a tendency on the part of one group to think in

stereotyped terms about the other. Perceiving members of other groups in terms of stereotypes permits, as indicated above, rationalization of their categorical rejection; it also serves an economic function by maintaining simplicity and by avoiding ambiguity of perception. Lacking sufficient data, they continue to view each other on the basis of invalid generalizations. Although such generalizations need not always be hostile and may be modified with additional information, they provide one model of prejudice construction. Public opinion has often been influenced by leaders and information transmitters in such a way as to perpetuate the social distance between groups, and hence information deficit and stereotyped perceptions. This influence need not be explicit or consciously manipulative; it is commonly built into the culture. Thus, attitude and feelings acquired during socialization and reinforced by selective reporting in the mass media and pronouncements of local leaders promote anger, fear, and defensive separation between groups. To the degree that one is a stranger he can be more easily perceived as an enemy.

At various points in history the separation between groups has been reinforced by law. In these instances the law can be understood as the codification of behavioral regulations that, while embodying historically evolved prejudices and stereotypes, are deliberately aimed at maintaining a status quo viewed by the power holders as politically, economically, or socially desirable. The twentieth century has seen the rise and fall of antiSemitic laws in Germany and the accelerating elimination of legal barriers to full personhood and civil rights of untouchables in India and blacks in the United States.

An example of stereotyping not involving ethnic groups concerns the beliefs held about each other by members of the two social worlds of mental hospitals: the patient world and the staff world. The effect of relative lack of information about the sources of interpersonal power is also seen in the development of paranoid ideas about the experimenters in subjects of sensory deprivation studies.

Evoked Behavior and Reference Group Theory

Two related factors tend to perpetuate the stereotyped ideas developed by members of one social group about another. One is associated with what has been called the "self-fulfilling prophecy." This pertains to the person who has a fixed idea about another, for example, that the other is aggressive; he, thus, tends to behave toward the other in a way that actually elicits responsive aggressive or hostile behavior. This elicited behavior, confirmatory of the original belief, tends to reinforce it.

The other factor is the reference group, which provides a person with the social or interpersonal standards by which he judges himself. A man's major normative or comparative reference group is usually the immediate community of peers in which he lives. His behavior may, however, be determined in important ways by standards held by members of some other group to which he attributes high value. If he has only fragmentary contact with this emulative reference group, his knowledge of its actual standards and valued behavior patterns may be both fragmented and distorted. This makes it likely that his behavior when dealing with emulative reference group members (generally the power-holding majority) will be a caricature of what these members regard as desirable and will tend to reinforce their prejudiced, stereotyped ways of perceiving the particular outgroup he represents.

To some degree the minority group member's use of the majority group for emulative reference purposes may be considered an aspect of the process of social accommodation and enculturation. Minority groups do not have complete access to the social institutions and cultural life of the larger societies of which they are a part. This is particularly true if, as in the case of American blacks, they have high social visibility and have been underprivileged and of low social class. In the course of accommodation to the larger power-holding society, the minority adopts fragments of the latter's values and goals. Among these can be stereotyped beliefs concerning people of varying religious, national, racial, or ethnic background, including themselves. This factor may contribute, for example, to the presence of anti-Semitic prejudice in black college students. Anti-black stereotypes, and particularly those regarding relative shades of skin color, while originating in the needs of the majority, also contribute to the frame of reference in which American blacks see themselves. The elements of self-perception seem to become particularly important as the minority group member, of whatever category, becomes upwardly mobile and has increasing, and emotionally meaningful, contact with the majority social world. Such a person, with one foot in the majority world and the other in his own. but not feeling completely accepted by or comfortable in either, has been labeled as a "marginal man." The marginal man's uncertainty of belongingness has been considered by Kurt Lewin as productive of self-hatred and high sensitivity to anything in his group of origin that does not conform to the values of the dominant group. He may be especially prone to adopt deprecatory stereotypes regarding his own group of origin.

The era ushered in by the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court anti-school segregation decision has seen a progressive change in the normative and comparative reference groups for the American black community. The elements of this change have increasing relevance, as well, for the Mexican-American, American Indian, Puerto Rican, and to a lesser degree, the Eskimo communities. (Within the U.S. Oriental communities these changes are still minimal.) The new reference group concept, assuming vigorous and visible form in the Black Power movement of the 1960s, embodies much of the ideology presented by Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). Key

aspects of Fanon's thinking include a perception of the world divided into colonies and colonialists, of the native black owing his oppressed and self-hating existence to the latter, and of the need for violence in the process of decolonization both as a means of reversing the social structure and of gaining dignity and self-esteem as a man for the formerly oppressed. This and other works helped provide the American black leader with a similar view of his own people and of a future to be gained not through integration but separation. In effect, it initiated a transformation of the normative-comparative reference group to one with emulative value as well. The gradual abandonment by blacks of an unattainable emulative goal, namely, to be white, must have incalculable benefits for personality development and liberation. A consequence of this is a recently published volume of essays by black authors entitled *The Black 70's*.

The need for a new black identity was also involved in the concept of negritude used by Leopold Senghor, the poet president of Senegal, as a rallying cry for worldwide black culture building. The low self-esteem engendered by discrimination, by dominant group attitudes and restrictions, requires a sense of identity as an antidote. This sense is crucial to the transformation of a minority from an aggregate of individuals bound together only by an awareness of common misery into a collectivity committed to action on the basis of shared values. It was as part of this process of individuation from the accommodated state of a subordinate formerly slave people, acquiring available fragments of the dominant culture, that a new search was initiated for values and practices from the African homeland. Although the uncritical phases of this effort have been succeeded by a more mature realization that the current Afro-American identity is something separate from black Africa as well as white America, cultural revitalization is recognized as a valid effort toward the promotion of self-esteem and renewed capability. Cultural revitalization is a prominent element in the mobilization of Mexican-Americans and American Indians as well as Alaskan Eskimos in their new efforts to gain political power.

Institutionalized Prejudice, Racism, and Individual Conflict

The preceding discussion has recognized the automatic, unconscious nature of much prejudiced behavior and the degree to which its psychological precursors are socialized into young Americans. The term "racism," to designate some aspects of this, became widely used in the late 1960s. A distinguished black actor and writer defined "racism" as "a belief that human races have distinctive characteristics, usually involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has a right to rule others." This observer characterized the English language as an enemy, referring to "the enormous trap of racial prejudgment that works on any child who is born into the English language." If language is, indeed, recognized as a major source of the symbols involved in cultural experience, the degree to which color or ethnically linked words are deprecatory or anxiety inspiring becomes obvious as a determinant of unconscious racist attitudes.

Racism has been operationally defined by Wilkinson as behavior of whites toward blacks based 011 a concept of white superiority. As the principles of white superiority are culturally learned, racism may be regarded as institutionalized. He traced the development of this concept in the United States to its early slavery of the dehumanizing Dutch-English type, with slaves considered as chattels. The myths and stereotypes arising from this period, many of which reflected the slaveholders' needs to rationalize their positions, became part of the American milieu, a "cultural blanket" with "effects on both blacks and whites alike."

Any practice imbedded in the culture may be considered contagious since it is socially transmitted from one generation to the next and since it is constantly reinforced during adult life. Pierce, in fact, labeled United States racism as "a public health and mental health illness" made up in important part of "micro-aggressive episodes" perpetrated by whites against blacks on the basis of culturally learned "offensive mechanisms." Pierce also emphasized the role of social institutions in perpetuating racist perceptions and behavior by both blacks and whites:

the education system has succeeded in preparing generation after

generation of Blacks to accept the docile, passive positions of abused, disenfranchised, second-class citizens. It is a summation of collective micro-offenses by the majority that permits police department after police department to tyrannize Black communities . . . which applies economic terrors to poor Blacks who have the temerity to demand what the law provides ... to minimize the social importance of any Black or any Black achievement so that Blacks will see themselves as useless, unlovable, unable.

The underrepresentation of blacks in professional ranks has been attributed to racism both in its specific and general aspects. While various solutions have been proposed, the statement by Williams embodies a feeling expressed by many: "a Black nationalist orientation, coupled with the implementation of Black studies, will more effectively deal with the problem of Black professional underrepresentation than the integrationist ethic." Williams linked this conclusion with his awareness of the identity problem of the black professional who has "made it" in the white society. This problem was delineated by Beisser and Harris in terms of the conflict between the black role and a particular professional role. As Williams summarized their point of view, "The dilemma . . . is often solved by compartmentalization and denial of Black identity. While performing as a professional, the individual denies the existence of his blackness. He is either a Black man or a professional, but finds it difficult to be both at the same time." Since the professional part of the person has been mainly white oriented and white educated, and survival in a white academic institution requires the virtual suspension of his black identity, total involvement in the black nationalistic

(but not necessarily separatist) ethic, using one's professional skills, may solve the dilemma: "Black professionals should concentrate heavily on building organizations of Black people, for Black people, and by Black people."

As noted above, the discriminatory practices prevalent against one section of the population, the blacks, have until very recently been so widespread and so effectively rationalized that they have been openly espoused with no guilt by otherwise humane and sensitive individuals. Exclusionary anti-Semitic practices, on the other hand, have tended to be less open, hidden in part by the reluctance of the community and of even the victims themselves to acknowledge what is going on beneath the surface of a traditionally democratic and equalitarian society. This may be due to the diminishing social visibility of Jews over the years and their significant involvement in the cultural, business, and professional life of the nation. These exclusionary practices have been particularly pernicious to the degree that bystanders, living in communities where discrimination has existed long before their arrival, are in a sense coerced into becoming accomplices. Institutionalized patterns of segregation influence a person whose psychodynamics might not result in his becoming an ardent holder of prejudice. If he is going to live in a community, he must go along with prevailing patterns. This involves not only conforming but learning how to discriminate and teaching one's children how to do the same. Sometimes the bystander is "too polite" to object and will not even acknowledge to himself that his freedom of choice regarding personal associations is being curtailed. At some level, however, he is aware that his behavior is not compatible with the American credo. If the resultant guilt or other tension is not handled by repression or by increasing congruence of behavior and ideals, it may become necessary to rationalize the discriminatory behavior by the adoption of the originally rejected prejudiced ideas. This is another way in which prejudice may be considered contagious.

The conflict between institutionalized social practices and traditional ideals with respect to the role of the black in the United States was discussed by the distinguished Swedish social scientist Gunnar Myrdal, in the early 1940s, under the title *The American Dilemma*. The very existence of such a dilemma, of a conflict between values and actual behavior, differentiates the United States from the older stratified societies in which discrimination is not incompatible with the value systems. It also emphasizes that the prevention of prejudice cannot be viewed solely in terms of individual psychodynamics and psychopathology. Resolution of this conflict requires modification of general community customs and adoption of measures to keep patterns of prejudiced behavior from becoming imbedded in community custom, that is, from becoming institutionalized. Once institutionalization takes place, a behavior pattern is doubly difficult to eradicate. As Talcott Parsons defined it, an institutionalized pattern of behavior represents an unthinking conformity to what is considered right, proper, legitimate, and expected in a society. We

may add that it has a psycho-economic function in that it reduces the number of decisions that any individual must make in his daily life and has a selfesteem building function to the degree that the person is supported and rewarded for conforming to the norms of his society. It is unlikely that under ordinary circumstances a person will be inclined to abandon a socially rewarded way of behaving that, in addition, saves him the energy expense and tension involved in making decisions about individuals who might more easily be automatically dealt with as members of a class.

The Psychodynamics of the Prejudiced Person

Problems of Reality Testing

The most general statement about people whose interpersonal attitudes and beliefs reflect categorical judgments that are based on faulty generalizations and are not modified by contrary evidence is that they suffer from impaired reality testing. In a volume prepared for UNESCO, Marie Jahoda reviewed a body of empirical evidence pointing to this deficit as central in many who feel hostile to racial outgroups. One dramatic illustration is Hartley's finding that a large proportion of those who disliked blacks and Jews also expressed dislike for three nonexistent groups to which he gave imaginary names and against which he advocated restrictive measures. This finding strongly suggests that prejudice is one behavioral manifestation of a particular type of character structure and that prejudiced attitudes and beliefs or dogmatism and intolerance can become apparent in a variety of social contexts, and with a variety of targets. The possible relation of prejudice to character is supported also by its fluctuations with severe personality disruptions. One example was the disappearance of strong antiblack prejudice and the emergence of presumably defended against pro-black feeling in a white Southern woman during an acute schizophrenic psychosis; these prejudices reappeared with resolution of the psychotic episode.

The inadequate reality testing of the prejudiced may be considered an expression of the active selection, modification, or scotomization of incoming information that threatens a key belief or attitude. In other words, it has a prejudice-protecting function. The prejudice is also protected by the characteristic tendency of its possessor to regard incompatible realities that he cannot deny as exceptions to the rule. Thus, the modesty and straightforwardness of a Jewish acquaintance does not change one's views on the ambitiousness and deviousness of Jews in general; the acquaintance is considered an exception who proves the rule. On the other hand, a Jew who is aggressively ambitious is seen as living confirmation of the prejudiced point of view. Every datum is perceived as support for the fixed attitudes and beliefs.

Unconscious Conflict and Prejudice

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Prejudice sometimes becomes an obsession that dominates its possessor's psychological life. In this case, an active reminder of the target person may provoke an emotional storm. All these factors suggest that the tenaciously held, carefully protected prejudice is closely connected with unconscious irrational needs. When behavior is so strongly rooted in unconscious factors and so dominated by what Freud called primary-process thinking, rational efforts to modify it are usually unsuccessful. Symptomatic behavior, in general, is not responsive to frontal, logical approaches. Its modification requires changes in unconscious conflicts, which underlie the anxiety or guilt, motivating the employment of (only partially successful) defensive maneuvers, which are in turn reflected in the symptomatic behavior in question.

What are some of the psychological conflicts that underlie prejudice? Much early writing presents the basic hypothesis that members of a minority become targets of prejudice because they are convenient scapegoats who can be loaded with the sins of others and driven out of the community. Another way of saying this is that the outgroup, or minority, is a readily available target for the displacement or projection of unacceptable wishes or feelings of the majority. Because it serves this social function, its existence becomes important for the reduction of the majority's anxiety and guilt and for the maintenance of the majority's self-esteem. The nature of the unacceptable wish that is projected or displaced may vary, and the target appears to be selected in part on the basis of social circumstances. Thus, the deprived, lower-class American black, slowly rising from the status of a slave without an integrated family or a cultural heritage, is considered in terms of a particular set of accusatory prejudices as lazy, dirty, untrustworthy, sexually amoral, and physically dangerous. According to some authors, in this sense he has symbolized for some white Americans their own unacceptable sexual, aggressive, and dependency wishes. For these individuals, the adoption of anti-black prejudice may offer some partial solution to their own problems involving repressed, instinctual wishes.

The Jew, with a culturally determined emphasis on the importance of learning and with a supporting family background that facilitates his upward mobility and business success, becomes the recipient of a different set of stereotypes. Anti-Jewish prejudices include fixed beliefs about a Jew's ambitiousness and his money-grabbing and controlling propensities. An anti-Jewish prejudice may provide a partial solution for problems involving wishes for power and control over others as well as those involving potentially explosive thoughts and feelings.

The sensual and impulse-gratifying stereotype of the black, or Jew, makes him a symbol that can also provide disguised gratification for those who are themselves inhibited and conflict ridden. Some accusatory

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tendencies of prejudiced people are illuminated by this formulation. Thus, a white woman with unconscious sexual desires for black males may come to believe that such men have aggressive sexual designs on her. Or white males who are insecure about their sexual capacities may perceive black males as threatening the white women who are their own legitimate sexual objects. There is some evidence that those with the greatest guilt about their own sexual desires have the greatest tendency to develop hostile prejudice involving sexual fears.

Projection is facilitated when an available target, the outgroup class or individual, lacks a clearly defined, unambiguous structure of its own. According to Ackerman and Jahoda, "for the anti-Semite the Jew is a living Rorschach inkblot." In addition to being unknown for many and thus mysterious and possibly evil, because of historical circumstances he may be regarded as strange and alien, making him a particular object of interest for those who, themselves, feel evil or self-alienated. This quality of strangeness and difference is attributed by many contemporary Argentine psychoanalysts to the practice of circumcision. Garma believed that the specific term "anti-Judaism" should be used, noting that according to Freud the roots of this attitude are found in the fact that Jews: (1) practice circumcision, which evokes the fear of castration in others, and (2) consider themselves to be God's chosen people. Both these factors may contribute to their perception by others as different, special, and potentially threatening.

Prejudice and Character

Much attention has been paid to characterological features that may predispose a person to acquiring and holding on to prejudiced ideas, that is, to incorporating them into the structure of his defensive and need-gratifying system. Narcissistic and sadomasochistic tendencies have been noted as important, particularly for the person who might be prone to translate his prejudice into discriminatory or persecutory action. Adorno and his colleagues, in one of the most significant studies in this area, summarized the characteristics of the prejudice prone in terms of the concept of authoritarian personality. This personality type was described as one needing strong external supports, depending on conventional values, and sensitive to interpersonal status criteria and dominance, since these are important to the maintenance of his sense of inner security. Related features are uncritical submission to dominant group authorities, punitive reactions to violators of conventional norms, cognitive rigidity, cynicism, tendency to projection, and unusual interest in the sexual behavior of others. Many of these features are relevant to Rokeach's definition of dogmatism, characteristic of individuals with a closed mind. The inflexibly organized belief system about reality, which is basic to the definition of dogmatism, depends on a core of beliefs about absolute authority. Perceptions of the world in general are strongly influenced by the perceiver's relation to authority figures. It has been demonstrated that open-mindedness (the flexibility and responsiveness to

new evidence of one's belief systems) is partially related to one's ability to receive, evaluate, and act on relevant information received from the outside on its own intrinsic merits. Such open-minded individuals are more capable than others of discriminating between a message and its source and are less influenced by high status.

Prejudice and Identity Conflict

Jahoda pointed to Jean-Paul Sartre's "Portrait of the Anti-Semite" as an intuitively arrived at picture bearing much similarity to the empirical studies of the authoritarian personality. Jahoda's own review of the evidence focuses on the importance of identity problems, stating that the authoritarian personality "bears the mark of an unresolved conflict, the conflict about one's identity, to an extraordinary extent." Such conflict requires a clear-cut and sharp categorization of the world and a disinclination to examine motives that may result in a weakening of the perceptual structure necessary to maintain some sense of identity. For such a person, another who is easily definable on the basis of differences from himself may constitute both a threat and an attraction.

Identity conflict may have its roots in disturbed patterns of parental identification. A father may be physically absent or personally remote, or he may be experienced as overwhelming and frightening. In neither instance is

he available as a model or object of identification for his growing son. Why such developmental problems should result in prejudice vulnerability and dogmatism in one instance, in paranoid schizophrenia in another, and in homosexuality in yet another is unclear. However, there is evidence as noted above that problems in sexual identification similar to those present in clinically paranoid or homosexual individuals contribute to the identity conflict of the authoritarian personality. This is supported in part by the intense sensitivity to interracial sex relations found among members of dominant white groups and by the great energy expended on maintaining social and legal barriers against miscegenation by the most prejudiced members of such groups. Other psychodynamic factors that contribute to efforts to maintain these barriers (which are regularly crossed) include guilt over wishes to transgress or over earlier transgressions, projection of hostile or sexual wishes, and so on. Reflections of sexual identity conflict in the white Gentile's castration fears may be reflected in stereotyped ideas about the black's large genitals and potency or about the Jew's passionate nature. Destruction of the outgroup male, viewed in this sense, removes a possible sexual competitor and a basic threat to the in-group male's psycho-sexual integrity.

Another approach to the issue of intrapsychic conflict among the prejudiced was suggested by Loewenstein, who found a valuable source of data in the development of transference feelings arising during the course of

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psychoanalysis. He concluded that, with a Jewish analyst, the transference becomes organized on the basis of the patient's latent anti-Semitism. During the anti-Semitic stages of analysis, the Jew who is hated and feared by the patient in the person of his analyst usually represents to him a deformed image of his father or even of himself. The tendency to react in this way appeared to be most intense in those patients in whom it was possible to identify marked ambivalence toward father figures. Such a finding in the psychoanalytic situation is not completely surprising in view of the significance of the analyst as a paternal authoritative figure who cares for his patient but at the same time deprives him of the dependent closeness that he craves. There is, however, other evidence suggesting the importance of deepseated ambivalence toward parental figures with this regard. For example, an early study of anti-Semitic college girls found them to have a sharper cleavage than more tolerant students between conscious feelings and ideas and those at an unconscious level. One reflection of this cleavage lay in the difference between their declarations of affection for their parents and their thematic apperception test interpretations of parental figures as mean and cruel and daughters as jealous, suspicious, and hostile. Unprejudiced subjects who were more openly critical of their parents revealed less hostility in projective techniques and revealed fewer fantasies of their parents' deaths. Similarly, a positive correlation was found between indexes of prejudice and of ambivalence toward parents and other authority figures in a population of medical students.

Allport, reviewing the investigation of college girls and related studies, identified a series of personality elements as concomitants of prejudice. These were, in addition to ambivalence toward parents, moralistic tendencies, a need for definiteness, a tendency to dichotomize, externalization of conflict, excessive devotion to social institutions, and authoritarianism. He considered all of these characteristics "as devices to bolster a weak ego unable to face its conflicts squarely and unflinchingly. They are . . . the earmarks of a personality in whom prejudice is functionally important."

Psychosocial Consequences of Discrimination on the Victim

Symptomatic Responses

A deeply held, prejudiced attitude or belief must inevitably influence the social behavior of its possessor. No matter how well schooled he is in dissimulation, his behavior with members of the group toward whom he harbors antipathetic or deprecatory feelings will communicate the message: You are inferior, dangerous, hated, or otherwise obnoxious. As has already been noted, his discriminatory behavior and, indirectly, his attitudes will also influence the thoughts and feelings of peers, who, as they become aware of his position, must decide whether to lose his friendship and respect and adopt a different point of view or to undergo a series of conflict-engendering psychological maneuvers to enable them to conform comfortably with his beliefs. The situation becomes more generally pathogenic to the degree that prejudice is institutionalized and requires both parents and children to learn how to think and feel in this way. This is a kind of learning that involves the selective submergence of incompatible tendencies in order to maintain their membership and status in the power-holding social group.

Most of the early American work on discrimination was concerned with the static and relatively isolated social world occupied by the Negro. Davis and Dollard focused on the system of caste-like restrictions and the frustrations and aggressive feelings that these restrictions may produce. They concluded, however, that social class membership as it is translated into child-rearing practices is more important than caste (that is, than discrimination) in shaping the habits and goals of black children.

More recent studies, aside from those concerned with school segregation, have been based on studies of patients and have paid particular attention to family structure. A frequently reiterated viewpoint is that of Kardiner and Ovesey, who noted the central role of the mother in many black families and her lack of respect for her husband who cannot act according to white ideals or prototypes. Her dual significance as the provider both of economic and emotional stability for the family forces her to behave with her children in such a way that they often see her as frustrating rather than dependable. The father may be absent or, when present, passive and remote, though occasionally violent. In the broad sense of the word, a long history of discrimination has produced a family structure resulting in "continuous frustration in childhood [which creates] a personality devoid of confidence in human relations with an eternal vigilance and distrust of others."

Similar statements about the working black mother refer to her neglect of her children and of the father's tendency to compete with his children for dependency gratification from the mother. Ambivalent dependency on the mother has been related also to a tendency to emphasize somatic complaints. A more general recognition of the stressful quality of a continuing and pervasive discrimination and of the behavioral modifications necessary for survival under such conditions is contained in the formulation that a personality organization "which clinicians would ordinarily consider to be schizoid" is "an adjusted personality organization for Negroes in American society...since it serves to protect the core or ego aspects of personality...,"

Discrimination as symbolic castration has received particular attention, and the black man, according to evidence presented by Kardiner and Ovesey, and also by Frazier, has a significant problem in maintaining his masculine status not only because of the structure of his family, but also because of the emasculating pressure of the white society against which effective retaliation

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is impossible. It is perhaps significant in this respect that a sample of young black male psychiatric patients displayed a marked lack of interest in using contraceptive techniques. This is interpreted as one way of gaining recognition of masculine status within the black social world and also within the complacent yet suppressive white world.

The emasculation may assume specific developmental significance for the young black boy in his awareness that his father and father surrogates must behave as though they are weak, inferior, or vulnerable in relation to white males. It is immediately obvious that this situation may also apply to the sons of any discriminated-against, subjugated group. On the other hand, the minority group becomes stronger to the degree that it has a distinctive cultural heritage that can serve as a focus for identity formation for the young boy; this is a significant difference between, for example, the Jew and the black.

Conscious awareness of relative inadequacy and lack of real power associated with unconscious conflicts concerning potency are also suggested as possible determinants of psychopathology in mobility blocked socially and economically deprived members of the lower class, illiterate, poverty-stricken populations of certain underdeveloped countries.

Another specific feature of the discriminated-against minority group

member is his retaliative hostility against his oppressors. In some instances, this may take the form of antisocial gestures of defiance, including criminal behavior. The immediate target of the gesture, however, may be a member of his own group, particularly one who may symbolize some aspect of the power-holding segment. The black man's refusal to use contraceptives may be an example of this. In other instances the hostility may be repressed and dealt with by reaction formations. Behavioral reflections of this would be characteristic docile, submissive, passive, and inappropriate cheerful and pleasant behavior. "Uncle-Tomism" among blacks, behaving in terms of a caricature of the cheerful servitor, may be an example of this. There are perhaps such other more subtle ways of discharging hostile tension, as through jokes using the dominant society as the disguised object. Any efforts at psychological and physical survival using any innate or culturally supported talent or socially available channel can certainly contribute to ambitious, hypervigilant, or even devious behavior in any individual member of a discriminated-against minority. Similarly, resignation in the face of overwhelming odds may result in apathy, indolence, and unwillingness to assume responsibility.

Most of the researcher's attention has perhaps been devoted to the issue of self-hatred in the discriminated-against person, particularly the black in America. This self-hatred has been interpreted as a function of inability to express hostile wishes against the whites and of guilt derived from hating the

whites and has also been related to identification with the powerful white group in that introjected white attitudes result in self-hatred: It is impossible to become white, and the black's reactive aim-inhibited hostility, using the introjected attitudes, is directed against himself. This unattainable wish to be white, which is a response to the social context in which the person lives, is conceptualized by Kennedy as a hostile ego ideal. The conflict-inducing value of having acquired the goals and standards of a hated group against which the expression, and even the full consciousness, of hostile feelings may not be possible is suggested by a study of schizophrenic black men. They showed more hostility against blacks and a greater tendency to identify with whites than did non-schizophrenic controls. The latter showed "a greater tendency to accept their own group membership, exhibited more fantasied retaliation against whites, more covert, deeply buried white identifications, and a closer approximation to a Negro ego-ideal." In a similar vein Hendin noted that suicide becomes a problem at an early age for the black urban male because of an early sense of despair that life can never be satisfying. In a psychoanalytic scrutiny of twenty-five suicidal patients, he was impressed by the prominence, in contrast to white subjects, of unconscious murderous rage reflecting "the frustration and anger of the Black ghetto." Other behaviors have been described as concomitants of the discriminated-against minority state. Milner stated that "an undiscriminating, paranoia-like antipathy for 'all whites" may be present that "does not allow a person to evaluate and react to

white persons as individuals. Kardiner and Ovesey described acting-out and essentially self-narcotizing techniques that permit the black to deal with feelings of difference, loneliness, and low self-esteem. Prominent elements of perplexity and confusion in young schizophrenic black men have been related to caste and class effects, which combine to widen the gulf between reality's threats and demands and the young men's actual capacities to perceive and act. It was also postulated that the black man's constant need to deny the threatening or provocative aspects of the white world and to repress or displace wishes that might bring him into conflict with that world contributes to a semantic impoverishment or reduction in the connotative richness of the symbols that he uses.

Early Predispositions

The behavioral characteristics and inferred unconscious conflicts of minority group adults have their origins in early experiences as members of a segregated and otherwise discriminated-against group. There is increasing evidence that self-awareness in a member of a weak or vulnerable group occurs very early in life and that the black child's recognition that dark skin color is associated with lower power and prestige has been demonstrated at four to five years of age. In more general terms, a black psychiatrist, Adams, described the black child's identification with his parents as anxiety laden, particularly when parental insecurity and impotence in the face of social

reality are obvious. He stated that the child might "turn to the white group for identification as a defense against this anxiety," but that at some point the child would inevitably encounter a final rejection. Erikson touched on this problem of split identifications with the dominant whites and the inferior blacks when he postulated an early disruption of the continuity of the black child's identity as he becomes aware of his black identity. Recent studies have shown that young black boys in a border Southern city have significant psychological problems around the issue of low self-esteem, self-directed hostility, and identifications. An important determinant of parental identity conflict appears to be the mixed messages given them by their mothers concerning the importance of equal status and achievement, on the one hand, and the impossibility of attaining them, on the other. Investigation of a comparable group of white boys from the same area indicated that even those with little personal contact with blacks tended to perceive them as symbolic of unacceptable or dangerous impulses in themselves. They too might be considered to suffer from identity problems related to color. They too were their mother's sons since, like their black counterparts, they constantly received from them mixed messages about the significance of skin color. In this case, one message stressed the importance of granting equal rights and privileges to blacks, while the other emphasized the blacks' dangerous aggressivity, potentially uncontrollable sexuality, laziness, and unreliability.

Adaptation or Regression

Low self-esteem and hopelessness as a concomitant of distance from social power may perhaps be most easily studied in groups whose lack of selfdetermination is magnified by their lack of the verbal symbols necessary for the exchange of culturally important information. The migrants who accumulate on the rims and in isolated pockets of the great South American cities constitute such a group. As Willems pointed out, in Brazil they do not as yet form a true urban proletariat, but rather a poorly assimilated agglomerate of individuals who have transplanted rural ways of living into the metropolitan area.

Andean Indian serfs studied by Klein revealed through interviews and projective testing a self-concept dominated by despair and a perception of themselves as impotent and ineffectual in the face of a powerful and malevolent world. Their defensive preferences were those that might be characterized in an adult North American as indicating pathological regression or incipient behavioral disorganization. These included a defensive avoidance of sensation. defensive immobility. limited communication because of danger of exposure, and a pervasive perception of others as power oriented and hostile. Yet these people functioned as members of their oppressed village society, and the culture of their group, including the attitudes and values passed on from generation to generation, tended to perpetuate their reality situation by limiting their aspirations and conscious desires. In short, their perceptions and attitudes seem more

logically interpreted as adaptive than as indicating vulnerability to disorganization.

Without question, deprivation, discrimination, contempt, and exclusion from full participation in the dominant culture all have an impact on character and behavior. But to what degree may these concomitants of minority group status be regarded as adaptive, and to what degree as regressive or disorganized? And to what degree is it justifiable to generalize from one minority group to another? For example, the data of unsystematic observation and of mental hospital statistics suggest that both lower-class black men and women are prone to develop more dramatically psychotic states with interpersonal stress associated with alcoholic intoxication or with the stress of jail incarceration than are whites of similar age and sex. Derbyshire and Schleifer demonstrated that lower-class blacks of both sexes show more florid symptomatology, and particularly, more temporal disorientation, on being identified as psychotic by virtue of public disturbance than is the case in comparable white disturbers of the peace. The phenomena are not seen, however, among the Jewish or Oriental minorities. In other words, minority status cannot be treated as a unitary concept any more than social class. The key may not be access to total societal power after all but rather the available quality and range of alternative solutions to problems associated with the lack of such access. This requires an adaptive or functional view of minority behavior, as well as scrutiny of what features of

the life of a particular group have protective significance. The two interrelated protective and problem-solving assets of any individual or group are education and membership in a viable ongoing cultural process. These assist in the provision of a broad repertory of interpersonal and intrapsychic problem-solving techniques with a sufficient number of alternatives to meet a variety of circumstances. Without this, the institutionalization of passivity can constitute a protection against behavioral disorganization. This is quite different from the protective patterns used by European migrants to North America. For them the ultimate goals were involvement in the dominant culture, assimilation, at least on occupational terms, and the acquisition of economic power. In the absence of resources the only response to threat, the only alternative to disintegration, is passivity. This means group withdrawal into parallel personal cocoons that shut out the disturbing stimuli of the hostile environment and help avoid the potential flooding of their inner worlds with phantoms of their own making. I described this phenomenon in lowest-class illiterate South American peasants as cultural regression or hibernation. I contrasted this picture of adaptive or adjustive cultural regression with a type of cultural evolution that can be described as coping rather than adjusting, or as actively rather than passively adapting. A major example now in an early phase of evolutionary change is that of the black in America. The civil-rights movement and its offshoots, such as the Black Power idea, are beginning to unite blacks into a true collectivity with a commitment to common socially significant goals and values.

Prejudice, Group Rigidity, and Flexibility: Other Areas of Concern

The psychological precursors and concomitants of prejudice are involved to varying degrees in most human and intergroup relations. Ethnocentrism, for example among Puerto Ricans in New York City is positively correlated with generally unfavorable attitudes toward prevention and cure of illness through medical and public health means. Inability to free oneself from negative preconceptions concerning strangers, and persistent limiting of one's emotionally secure world to that populated by those of like kind, impairs the freedom to seek medical assistance from technically qualified though impersonal or unfamiliar sources.

Rigidity, closed-mindedness, and the tendency to view other nations in stereotypes have been documented as sources of persisting conflict in the international system. Closedmindedness, like ethnic prejudice, can cause national leaders to make progressive revisions in their general image of the world until disappointment is reduced to a tolerable level. This process is reminiscent of mental illness, since it involves the inability to adequately test reality. Part of the resistance to attitude change at the international level is the tendency to judge the actions of others as inherently hostile, behavior that at the interpersonal level would be considered as paranoid. The hypothesis that there exist cognitive dynamics that tend to sustain bad faith images of the enemy, and that such dynamics have identifiable consequences for international relations, has been to some degree substantiated by detailed study of the publicly available statements of former Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his attitude toward a single subject, the Soviet Union.

Finally, the possible resolution of group tensions and of individual prejudice has attracted a great deal of attention. The range of proposed solutions is great because of the variety of factors that perpetuate prejudiced feelings, attitudes and beliefs, and discriminatory behavior. It has become clear that discriminatory behavior can be modified while prejudiced feelings remain, albeit in a dormant state. Economic factors seem particularly important in this respect. Whites, for example, who would never do so otherwise, have lived uncomplainingly next to blacks while working in government jobs. The converse is also true. White soldiers, emotionally close to black comrades in combat, have reverted to discriminatory patterns after discharge as part of unthinking conformity to the context in which they find themselves. This, despite profound and moving shared experiences with blacks, and despite their acknowledgment on questioning of changed basic attitudes. It is evident that inertia is one of the significant factors perpetuating prejudiced behavior and attitudes among large segments of the population; this contrasts with the tenaciously held antipathy described earlier. Even in this latter instance, however, social changes promise to modify the behavior

in question. If the symptomatically prejudiced share the personality dynamics of the authoritarian personality, particularly his uncertainty of gender identity and associated need for approval from father surrogates, it follows that their attitudes and behavior will be strongly influenced by that of the most powerful social and governmental figures. In other words, the unofficial, covert messages of the president and of other community leaders, as well as their official pronouncements and legislated attitudes toward discrimination, will be powerful antidotes or reinforcers of prejudice.

Two other elements would seem important for a social context in which ethnic prejudice directed against familiar minorities is minimized. One is the available experience of emotionally reciprocal relationships between majority and minority children. This reciprocity is essential for one to see the world through the eyes of the other. The second element is the vitalization of the historically defined minority so that its own deprecatory self-image is not continued.

The social context is changing significantly in the 1970s so far as institutionalized and individual black-white prejudice is concerned. There is 110 evidence, however, that prejudice in general is being eliminated. Many authors are concerned, for example, with the impact of United States Indochina involvement, increasing Middle East tension, and the possibility of a need for new scapegoats on the future of anti-Semitism in this country. Some see significant similarities between the social climate of the United States of the early 1970s, especially in relation to its assimilated intellectual Jewish population, and that of immediately pre-Hitler Germany. It appears unlikely, given man's hierarchical and territorial proclivities, his sensitivity to threats from the unknown, his need to reduce the range of his decisions, and his primitive tendency to manage his guilt and anxiety by externalizing, that he is ready to abandon totally the advantages of closed-mindedness, scapegoating, and prejudice.

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