

Insides and Outsides: A review of psychoanalytic renderings of difference, racism and prejudice

Farhad Dalal

Published in:

Psychoanalytic Studies, vol 3, no 1, 2001, pp43-66

Abstract

The paper critically collates psychoanalytic perspectives on racism, prejudice and difference as they emerge in the treatment setting of the clinic. The articles appearing on these subjects in several major psychoanalytic journals provided a window onto the 'conversations' taking place in the psychoanalytic community, and in particular the clinical community. It was found that in the main prejudice and racism were perceived reductively, as symptoms and projections of internal difficulties; little consideration was given to the possibilities of racism and prejudice as the causes, and not just effects, of internal distress. It is argued that aspects of racialized power differentials that exist in society are bound to be reflected in psychoanalytic metapsychology, and it is this, in part, that leads psychoanalysis to read racism and prejudice in these reductive and 'internalist' ways.

25 October 2000

<u>Introduction</u>	3
Statistics and Generalities.	3
The nature of difference	5
<u>Human Nature.</u>	6
We are all the same (yet different): multiculturalism in psychoanalysis	6
Culture allocated an importance	7
Absolute difference; absolute similarity	7
Working with the universal in the psyche	8
We are all unique: essentialism in psychoanalysis.	8
A fear and hatred of difference: anti-Semitism	9
<u>Models of Racism and Prejudice</u>	10
From differentiation to difference to hatred	10
Similarity not difference	10
Splitting and projection	10
Stranger Anxiety	11
Oedipus and envy	11
Oedipus and difference	12
The problem of the external, and the ‘underlying’ internal.	13
The External as Pathology and Acting Out	14
The Transference: difference as resistance	14
The Transference: difficulties in the analyst.	15
The individual and the group.	16
Racism and prejudice in psychoanalytic discourse	17
The intentional fallacy	19
Racism and its discontents	19
Against the grain.	20
Conclusion.	22

Introduction

Attempts at making generalizations about psychoanalysis get immediately enmeshed in a series of critical difficulties. The first of these consists of the variety and number of psychoanalytic frames, each of which generates its own model of the human condition, many of which are antithetical to each other (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983). Thus any statement about psychoanalysis immediately throws up the question: ‘which psychoanalysis?’. The second complication pertains to who is making use of psychoanalysis (clinician, academic, cultural theoretician etc.) because each of these will bring different interests and preoccupations to the table. These latter divisions are not clear cut of course, because there exist clinicians who are also academics and so on; thus the division is not one of *type*, rather it is one of emphasis and primary focus. This then brings in another element – the *task* for which psychoanalysis is being employed: psychotherapy, theorizations of civilization, cultural productions and so on.

. Given the sheer range of ground covered, where was I to look for this material? There is always the danger that one chooses one’s data in ways that reinforces one’s thesis, and this must be true of this paper as of any other. However there is the equal and opposite danger that if the findings are uncomfortable ones, then they are dismissed by the *device* of discounting the sampling procedure as an invalid one.

It seemed to me that I was fortunate to be provided with a ready made sample that would serve my purpose; these being the set of journals found on the CD¹ published under the auspices of the main psychoanalytic Institutes in Britain and the USA. These then are the ‘establishment’s’ choice of journals, and so are validated by them. In the main, these journals also happen to be read by, and contributed to, by practising clinicians. This is not at all a surprising fact, as primary task of the Institutes is to train practitioners of psychoanalysis. Thus the articles in these journals provide a window onto the ‘conversations’ that take place in the psychoanalytic community, and in particular the clinical community. To this group of journals I have added one other, The British Journal of Psychotherapy, as this is the main journal of psychotherapy in Britain, and serves a similar purpose to those above.

One of the reasons for making this distinction between the clinical, and (for the want of a better word) the academic, is that I think that the levels and types of discourse that predominate in each are different to each other. In my experience, clinical discourses are lagging behind those being developed in other settings by remaining in a broadly positivist way of viewing the world. Whilst this paper itself is a substantiation and elaboration of this assertion, I would like to give one preliminary illustration of what I mean. In conversations with many clinical colleagues, as well as in most of the papers discussed below, the notion of ‘race’ is still taken to be a self-evident observed fact. This is in direct contrast to the ideas being generated in other settings where the idea of race has been understood as a problematic reification for some decades.

Statistics and Generalities.

But now, having made this division between the clinical and the academic, we are faced with the differences within each of these domains. The *type* of psychoanalysis that is used (say – instinctivist or relational) will throw up different readings of the clinical situation and so different analyses; further, psychoanalysis has been used to substantiate left wing ideologies as well as right wing, etc.. How is one to cope with this diversity?

When doing research of any kind, it seems to me that there are broadly two paradigms available, a vertical depth analysis and a horizontal statistical analysis. No doubt both are necessary for a

fuller analysis, but in this paper I will be limiting myself to the latter by examining a large number of articles that refer directly to these subjects. In part I do this because of the constraints of space, but there are two more reasons. The first is that the findings of a depth analysis of one or more schools or authors, will not necessarily say anything about psychoanalysis in general. The second more important reason relates to the nature of prejudice and racism itself, and anticipates some of the argument that is to follow. The conventions of clinical discourse make the individual case study paramount. Whilst this method throws up certain kinds of useful information to do with the particulars of an individual history, other existential aspects escape this kind of individualized analysis (Foulkes 1948, 1964, 1990). To explain: racism and prejudice are group phenomena; they grip large numbers of people at one and the same time (Brown (1995), Miles (1993) and Cohen & Bains (1988)). Thus any examination of racism or prejudice has to include a statistical² analysis in the sense of a *number* and range of the items under discussion. Whilst racism is a group phenomenon, it does not operate on all individuals homogeneously; thus there are always variations. Now, the nature of statistical evidence is such, that there will always be particular instances that confound the statistical truth. The danger is that the particular is used to deny the validity of the statistical truth. For example, the fact that *some* of the apples are green in this basket, does not disconfirm the statistical truth that *most* of the apples in the basket are red (Dalal 1997b). It is my contention that certain facets of racism and prejudice *only* make their presence known when the field of view is a broad and general one, and that the device of focussing on the particular is a means of denying their ubiquitous presence.

It is for these reasons that I am favouring the broader horizontal paradigm in this paper. On the whole, the papers examined did not make their theoretical frameworks explicit. I thought it more important to organize the ideas found in these papers according to the implicit metapsychologies that lay behind them, because these are of critical significance to how ‘differences’ are thought about. It also seemed to me that whatever the theoretical allegiances of the authors, the explanations for racism and prejudice tended to coalesce around a limited number of themes, and so I have used these to organize the remainder of the paper.

Despite the varieties of psychoanalyses, the overwhelming majority of the papers³ treat the topics of racism and prejudice as a symptom, that is, they think of it as the *effect* and expression of internal psychological dynamics. These types of formulations are due in some degree to the metapsychological foundations that permeate positivist psychoanalytic theories. In this world view there is a categorical split inserted between the internal world and the external world, between the individual and the group, and between biology and society. Additionally, the first term of each dichotomy is prioritised over the second – the internal over the external, the individual over the group, and the biological over the social. Another facet of this metapsychology is the view that that which takes place in the external world is thought of as an outcome and *expression* of what is taking place in the internal psychological world. Thus the ‘real’ thing is the latent content; the manifest is a happenstance – the shape that the ‘real’ happens to take.

At this point it will be helpful to tabulate the dichotomies to show their relation to each other.

External	Group	Social	Manifest
Internal	Individual	Biological	Latent

Norbert Elias (1994) has shown that these associations are not inevitable, but have been generated over centuries by the struggles between figurations of power in what was to become

Europe. Thus the conflations and associations between these dichotomies are not peculiar to psychoanalysis, but are found there because they permeate the larger consensual world view within which psychoanalysis is located. As will become apparent, the thrust of this belief system results in the external manifestations of racism and prejudice being treated as the ‘manifest’, and therefore requiring less attention than that which is thought to lie below it, the ‘latent’. One can see then how it is that this way of thinking comes to view racism and prejudice almost entirely as *effects*, and so seeks to look for the *causes* within biology (the vicissitudes of the instincts) and *individual* development (the vicissitudes of the developmental process)⁴. Because the movement in much psychoanalytic theory is from the inside to the outside, much is made of projection in these papers and little or nothing is said of introjection. In the main these papers argue that some internal malfunction causes internal distress which is then projected out in the shape of racism or prejudice, *in order to ameliorate an internal distress*.

This description will quite rightly be challenged for over simplifying the psychoanalytic position, because as is well known, neither Freud nor Klein simplistically divide the internal from the external. In Freudian theory social life is given birth to by the vicissitudes of instinctual conflict. The rules of social engagement are then internalized and instituted within the superego. Thus in Freud the social exists in both *spaces* – the internal and the external. Meanwhile in Kleinian theory there is a complex interplay of internal and external through a series of introjections and projections, which means that bits of the internal world are found outside, and the social world is internalized to ameliorate and modify the death instinct. However, the fact that in Freudian and Kleinian theory the social is *second* onto the stage after biology, is mistakenly used to render the social *secondary* in its significance by psychoanalytic theory in general, and these papers in particular. Thus it happens that the formulations in these papers are such that even when they give weight to the social or external, they end up machining it away, so that by the end of the analysis it is not to be found anymore. It is consistently vaporized as they get back to the ‘true’ underlying conflict.

The relational theories of Fairbairn and Winnicott have gone some way to overcome these difficulties by making *relatedness* central to the developmental drama from the first moment of existence, and in this way they move beyond individualism and the tendency towards solipsism that is found in the instinctivists. However, to my mind they remain theories of biological relations and not social relations. What I mean by this is that the objects that the theories discuss relations between are biological objects – mother, father, child, sibling and so on. These objects appear to exist in a sociological vacuum, and so the social (as opposed to the external) is not given a formative role in the theorization of the developmental process (Dalal 1998).

The point is borne out by Gordon (1993) who researched psychotherapy training organizations in London to find that on the whole they took little or no cognisance of issues of race, colour and the like. This finding adds weight to the thesis that the body of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis sees its domain as an essentially asocial one.

The nature of difference

Any discussion about prejudice or racism towards those who belong to other groups presupposes a theorization of the nature of a group. To put it another way, where and how does one group end and another begin? Clearly differences have a critical role to play in the process of differentiation, but what are the nature of these differences? In the main these papers do not engage with these questions. They do not give thought to how groups are manufactured and not just found, which leads them to speak of races, ethnicities or cultures unquestioningly as self evident universal categories – but in idiosyncratic ways. So for example Schacter and Butts (1994) focus on two ‘races’ named Negro and White. Bird (1957) meanwhile talks of Jews and

Negroes as races. Fischer (1971) has four races – black, white, Jew and Negro. Goldberg, Myers, & Zeifman (1974) and Holmes (1992) have two races – black and white. Davidson (1987) flits between transcultural, cross cultural and sub cultural without discussing what makes a difference absolute or relative; thus she designates the Orient and the West as cultures, whilst the distinction between Jew and Roman Catholic is designated as sub-cultural. Meanwhile Zaphiropoulos (1987) makes ethnicity identical to culture and says racial or socio-economic differences are sub-cultural. The list of conflations and contradictions can be continued endlessly. I would like to make just two points, the first of which is the obvious one that many different *types* of things are alternately either being conflated or being used to differentiate and essentialize groupings: ‘races’, ‘cultures’, colours, religious affiliations, geographical locations. The second related point is that the internals of each designated grouping (Catholic, Jew, Black, Oriental) are assumed to be homogenous. This viewpoint is born of a monolithic notion of culture. This allows the authors to elevate some differences to absolutes, and in so doing they imply or/and assert that there are no similarities between the differentiated groupings.

Human Nature.

Not only does the confusion about what constitutes a sufficiently relevant and significant difference play a critical role in all the papers, but so does the question of where the difference is located.

Any discussion on hatred between people must be predicated on some belief about human nature. I would say that the majority of the papers may be divided between two belief systems. One of these says that at our deepest levels we are the same, and our differences are not of true significance. The other belief system says that at our deepest levels we are different, this difference is provided by nature and is our unique individuality. The table of dichotomies drawn earlier clarifies the distinction between the two: the first belief system locates difference in the top row and similarity in the lower, and the second reverses the location of each. To take each set in turn.

We are all the same (yet different): multiculturalism in psychoanalysis

External	Group	Social	Manifest	<i>Difference</i>
Internal	Individual	Biological	Latent	<i>Similarity</i>

The ethos of the papers that locate similarity in the domain of the biological, the individual and the internal, can be broadly described as being akin to a multiculturalist philosophy; an ethos that says that whatever the appearances are, at bottom we are all the same. But now, there is the question of the nature of this sameness. In some psychoanalytic renditions this sameness is said to be a primitive layer, wherein one will find all that is destructive and malevolent in human kind (e.g. Freud 1921, p.74). On other occasions this biological domain of similarity is perceived in a more benign light. But as we will come to see, this can lead to banalities like ‘I don’t see the colour, just the person’.

Culture allocated an importance

Davidson (1987), Zaphiropolous (1987), Speigel (1988) and Bhugra and Bhui (1998) focus on the *contents* of cultures. They argue that because we are the same at this deep level, then the thing of significance is that which makes us different – ‘culture’. This leads them to the familiar multiculturalist view that says that difficulties between groups are caused by misunderstandings and ignorance, and so information about other cultures would modify hatred between groups. Here, cultural difference is not so much a bad thing as a benign thing or an insignificant thing.

This group of papers is particularly prone to homogenizing not only ‘cultural’ groups but also individuals. They write as though it is whole cultures that interact with other whole cultures, and that it is whole individuals that interact with other whole individuals. Whilst the solution suggested of more and better ‘information’ about the ‘Other Culture’ is undoubtedly helpful to some degree it is not nearly enough as it does not take into account unconscious forces, and how these might be formed by the deep interiorization of social attitudes to particular sets of ‘Others’.

Absolute difference; absolute similarity

The fantasy of internal homogeneity and absolute differentiation between groups leads into problematic waters. It leads to an idea that if certain behaviours and attitudes belong to an ‘us’, then they cannot also belong to a ‘them’. This fallacy forms the basis of some schools of cross-cultural therapy that focus almost completely on the contents of cultures. They appear blind to the fact that attributes with a higher status are more often than not allocated to dominant social groupings. Thus Davidson pronounces that the East is a shame culture, whilst the West is a guilt culture. The implication of this formulation is that people in the East would try to get away with as much as is possible – as long as they are not found out and so shamed. Those in the West meanwhile, police themselves internally and behave properly whether they will be found out or not.

One can witness the conflation of dichotomies taking place in this formulation: *shame* is a *public* process, and therefore its domain is the *external* and the *group*, whilst *guilt* is an *private* process, and therefore its domain is the *internal* and the *individual*. The status and implications are clear: those from the East need to be watched all the time as they cannot really be trusted, whilst those from the West are responsible ethical adults. If someone from the West acts in a criminal way, then it is a particular individual that is doing so, whereas if someone from the East acts in a criminal way then they do so because it is part of their general way of life.

Davidson provides another example of this kind when she says: ‘Socio-politically the West is ideologically democratic with much freedom to openly criticize authorities. In the East authorities may be influenced only through polite suggestion, indirect statements or manipulation’ (1987, p. 664). The allocation of honesty to the West and deceit to the Orient is at best an overstatement, and at worst propaganda.

It would seem that once divisions are made and particular attributes get attached to groups, then one is literally blind to the prospect that at times ‘we’ also are like ‘that’. This is of course a version of splitting. For example, Bhugra and Bhui describe an apparent difference in attitude to therapy by the ‘ethnic minorities’: ‘[in] some ethnic minority groups [their] model of healer is a traditional one; in this model of healing the healer asks few questions and ‘knows’ the problems of the patient quite quickly’ (1988, p.313). There are two things to be said about this: First, the patient’s expectation for the therapist to ‘know’ the answers is ubiquitous in clinical practice and found as often in white middle class patients as in patients from exotic ethnic minorities. And second, the description of the healer here is not at all unlike a version of the psychoanalyst – someone who asks few questions and somehow ‘divines’ what the unconscious conflicts are

through reading, not bones or tea leaves, but associations and slips of the tongue. Sometimes things are not as different as they are made out to be.

Working with the universal in the psyche

Devereux (1953) agrees with the authors that deep down people are the same, but then uses this to build a contrary argument where the content of cultures counts for nothing, or at least, very little. He begins by attempting to dissolve the nature-nurture divide and says that that culture is an actualization of a basic biologic potential and so ‘it is an illusion that culture constricts behavior’. After this promising beginning he re-inserts the nature-nurture division in the psyche – a universal, biological part that is said to be prior to culture, and an acculturated differentiated part that is formed through sublimation. This is the crux of his theory: he asserts that personality disorders are drawn from less differentiated parts of personality, the pre-social, and therefore are the same in all cultures. Thus really deep psychological work has no need to know of person’s cultural configurations because the work is done in the universal part of the psyche; this work he calls psychoanalysis. Meanwhile the ‘shallower’ work of engaging with the effects of particular cultures takes place in the social part of the psyche, and this work he calls cross cultural psychotherapy. Notice the status allocated to each of the tasks by the use of the terms *psychoanalysis* and *psychotherapy*.

There is a curious and telling revelation in the paper by Goldberg et.al. (1974). They describe how they ‘embarked upon the treatments with some fantasies that the unconscious of these black patients would be different from that of whites’. They say: ‘We often found ourselves exclaiming with amazement: “why, their unconscious is just like ours!”’ (p. 498). If the unconscious is understood as a manifestation of a universal human ‘nature’ (which is their premise), then these authors are revealing that their expectation was that these blacks were not part of this universal, but were a different kind of humanity because they differed from whites in their ‘nature’, their biology. One could even argue that they unconsciously thought of the blacks as not-human – literally, a different animal. This ‘curiosity’ is a bridge into the next section in which the ruling belief system is that at the deepest levels we find not universality but uniqueness.

We are all unique: essentialism in psychoanalysis.

External	Group	Social	Manifest	<i>Similarity</i>
Internal	Individual	Biological	Latent	<i>Difference</i>

Those who propose that one’s ‘true nature’ is endogenous and unique to each individual, argue that to preserve this internal sanctum, the external has to be resisted: ‘if the demands of the biological forces within the individual are denied, much of individuality goes, and we are only what our culture makes us’ (Axelrad, 1960, p184). In this and other similar accounts, difference is a good thing and similarity is a bad thing, as in the parody of a communist regime where individuality is crushed and everyone is made the same.

This kind of thinking leads to the suggestion that individuals behave badly to others because they have been unable to resist being taken over by an external ideation – an ideation that is not their true (internal) belief. There are two sorts of explanations given for why this happens to certain individuals: the instinctivists propose that people succumb to the external because of a

constitutional weakness to do with the instincts, and the formulations grounded in relational theories say the reason is to do with some developmental malfunction that has left them in a weakened state and so unable to resist the external.

A fear and hatred of difference: anti-Semitism

In this sort of account the social is dreaded as it is thought to swamp one's true internal being and replace it with some external construct. For example, Ackerman and Jahoda (1948) begin their theoretical formulation by saying that some individuals have a weak sense of self, their 'image of self is confused and unstable' (pg.245). They go on to say that because of the weakness in personality structure the putative anti-Semite disowns aspects of his identity in order to conform, i.e. he is said to gain security through becoming one of the crowd by disowning his individuality (his differences from the crowd). Thus difference comes to remind the anti-Semite of the difference he has repressed, and so he hates it. They then say that the Jew symbolizes difference, and so is hated. 'Having submissively renounced parts of his own individuality, the anti-Semite feels deep resentment against anyone who does not do likewise. ... Thus, difference comes to symbolize the fruitless suppression of self in the anti-Semite... It is understandable, therefore, that the prejudiced person should want to destroy the nonconformist' (pg.249).

Although the authors are aware that images projected onto Jews are inconsistent 'as capitalist and as communist; as clannish and as intruder' they do not question why the Jew should symbolize difference rather than some other grouping. Presumably they do not feel the need to ask the question because in their minds, the Jew *is* different *per se*. To recapitulate the argument: something different on the outside is hated because of the hatred of something different on the inside⁵.

Things had not changed much thirty six years later. In Traub-Werner's (1984) paper the Jew is continued to be *defined* as the outsider. 'Within the context of group psychology the Jew is experienced as a threat because in an indefinable way he is different, has defied oppression throughout centuries in spite of cruel persecution, and has *refused to assimilate*' (p 407; italics added). There are many things to be said about this. First is the moot point of whether Jews exclude themselves or whether they are excluded. This difference of viewpoint gives us a glimpse of the ideologies inevitably embedded in psychoanalytic discourse. Second, the sentence structure reveals that the author is at the centre of this 'group psychology' (implicitly gentile), and its normativeness to him means that it does not have to be described further. Third, Traub-Werner homogenizes the Jewish group. Many Jews *have* quite consciously assimilated. The notion of assimilation cannot be answered without taking up the question, what is being assimilated? In other words what is Jewishness thought to be? The fact that Traub-Werner says that the difference is 'indefinable' should give us a clue to the problematic nature of what is being described. The difference is indefinable but somehow, indelible – like water and oil they can never really mix.

Foote challenges this way of thinking to say:

'I used to debate with Zionist friends whether Jews are a race, a religion, or a nationality. That was before I began to realize that they are none of these, that all three are essentially figments of the imagination. ... Out of those old debates... [came only] bland and barely meaningful terms like "a people"' (1980, p392).

Although versions of these 'belief systems' are to be found in all the articles discussed in this paper, I will not labour the point further. I will change tack now, and group the articles according to the kind of explanation they offer for prejudice and racism.

Models of Racism and Prejudice

From differentiation to difference to hatred

Most theories of infant development agree that the early processes of psychological and physical (birth) separation from mother are to a greater or lesser degree traumatic for the infant. This developmental moment – the first separation – is the kernel around which some theories of racism and prejudice are formed. The main idea behind these theorizations can be summarized in this way: contemporary *differences* are hated because of the consequences of an earlier *differentiation*.

Similarity not difference

Similarity not difference

Tan (1993) delineates such a theory in a two stage argument. First, he says, difference is difficult to bear and so one works towards making the self and the object the same by denying differences between them. He then proceeds to define racism as the ‘inability to accept and acknowledge difference without attempting to control and dominate the object that is felt to be different and separate’ (p.33). Although I agree with thrust of his paper that racial (*sic*) differences permeate the transference, he does tend to talk of racism as ‘defence’. This leads him to equate racism *per se* with the ‘denial of difference’, and this in turn leads into problematic waters. It seems to me that the denial of difference is not racism but the *defence against racism*. All the examples of racism that I am aware of consist of an inability to accept *similarity*. The racists say ‘they’ are not like ‘us’, they do not say we are the same. The clinical examples that Tan provides usefully show his patients denying racial (*sic*) differences between themselves and the therapist; negative feelings flow once this difference is made explicit. As Tan himself says, the interpretation of similarity led to an ‘unfolding of racist feelings’ (p.39).

It seems to me that Tan is putting forward two different mechanisms that get conflated because each is called a ‘defence’. On the one hand he talks of the denial of difference as a defence against experiencing feelings which might be called racist (which I agree with). On the other hand he says that racism is ‘a defence firmly lodged in the paranoid-schizoid position’ (p.42); but here, it is not clear what it racism is supposed to be a defence *against*. It is this conflation gives the impression that racism is the denial of difference.

Splitting and projection

A similar difficulty is found in Timmi (1996). He is one of many who begin by acknowledging that psychoanalysis has not taken into account historical and social reality when addressing racism. But thereafter the paper makes no further mention of these elements and very early on reveals its true thinking: ‘racism develops out of internal paranoid schizoid splits’ (p.183). In saying this he firmly locates racism as an internal phenomenon that is externalized. Timmi places the source of racist feeling in the psychotic and primitive layers of the mind. The basis of this he says is the same as that used by the infant who cannot bear the thought of being separate from mother. This then is magically made the basis of racism. Magically, because the two themes are never actually connected, they are just put together. Look at these two concurrent sentences:

‘[the infant] uses phantasies of controlling the object at the same time as identifying with it, in order to ward off painful feelings of separateness and difference. Cultural and particularly racial differences are in this respect fertile areas for projections’ (p.184).

To spell it out: he begins by saying that the infant cannot be separate from mother so identifies with her. He then says racial differences are fertile areas for projections. Whilst there is truth in both statements – what have they to do with each other? The second statement is necessarily a non-sequitur because the internal and social are so rigidly divided in this way of thinking. This results in the internal somehow having to ‘jump’ to the outside.

Stranger Anxiety

The theme of difference is taken up in another key by Basch-Kahre (1984) as she sets about explaining the aetiology of racism. She suggests that it is inevitable that strangers will be hated by drawing on the phenomenon of stranger anxiety as experienced by infants aged about six months. She says that feelings of aversion inevitably arise in the transference and countertransference when the analyst and analysand are from different backgrounds, the basis of which is infantile stranger anxiety. The baby’s experience of anxiety to strangers is understood as coming about in the following way. The appearance of the father’s face represents a puncturing of the fantasy of endless symbiosis with the mother. The baby hates the father and defends against the realization of the reality by ‘not recognizing’ the father, i.e. by making him unknown and therefore a stranger. This repressed memory is reactivated with the appearance of any strangers, which results in the old hatred towards the father being reactivated and projected onto the stranger. The stranger’s face screens and hides the father’s face. She says: ‘This happens when confronted with people and cultures in which we can discover no similarity with ourselves’.

Like Ackerman and Jahoda above, she does not question what makes for strangeness. She defines strangeness as a difference in socio-cultural background, and by this she means ‘when we can discover no similarity with ourselves’. Clearly this is an impossibility – that there is ‘no similarity’ between analyst and analysand. We have to ask of the analyst a deeper question – how does the analyst manage the feat of experiencing ‘no similarity’, what has the analyst done with the similarities? Where has she put them? Once again we find the notion of absolute difference in play.

What this sort of analysis leaves out is the fact that strangeness *per se* does not inevitably evoke fear and hostility. A stranger knocking unexpectedly at the door, will elicit quite different associations and emotions depending on whether ‘the stranger’ is a young black man, or a white man in a suit. It will also depend on who is opening the door, and where the door is. All of this is to say that the socio-political context cannot be meaningfully left out of the analysis.

Oedipus and envy

Many of the papers make the failure of a proper resolution to the Oedipal complex the basis of prejudice and racism. One such is Bird (1957) who provides a novel theory of prejudice. He argues two contradictory things; on the one hand he normalizes prejudice by aligning himself with the Freudian idea that prejudice serves the function of ‘specifically ... keeping aggression from being acted out’ (p. 493) *within* a group by displacement onto another. And on the other hand he proposes that prejudice is a disorder, a malfunction that sometimes resembles paranoia and sometimes a phobia. Bird himself does not appear to be aware of the contradiction in his writing.

The essence of his thesis is that the mechanism of prejudice is the same as that found in the oedipal situation, where the attack on the desired parent is displaced onto the less desired one. Thus ‘the cause...of prejudice should be looked for not only in the relationship existing between the subject and the object of prejudice, but *mainly* the cause should be looked for in a an

unsuspected rivalrous relationship to a third party – a more fortunate or desired third party’ (p.494 italics added).

This then leads Bird to assert that prejudice is a middle group phenomenon and its basis is envy. The sequence is as follows. A middle class/race feels inferior and envious towards a better off class/race. This envy is repressed and projected onto a lower race. This lower race is now experienced as enviously desiring, and is hated for it. He concludes: ‘the oppressed race is attacked, for something it has not done, by a race which really has nothing against it, using a hatred it does not own’ (p. 502). This is a remarkable sentence as it says that the Jew or ‘Negro’ is not really hated at all. They are incidental to the main *dramatis personae* – the middle and upper classes – which is where the ‘real’ relationship lies.

Bird pursues his formulations to their logical end to arrive at some bizarre conclusions, one of which is that successful people will not be prejudiced because they will not have anyone to envy. Similarly, those who have no hope or ambition, those who have failed completely, will also not have envy and therefore have no need of the mechanism of prejudice. The most bizarre conclusion of all is that to be available to be used as an object of prejudice, the group must ‘harbour envious wishes and active drives to better itself. *There is no prejudice against people who “know their place. ...Negroes who engage in personal-service employment, who devote themselves to their employer, and who show no signs of ambition, are not held in any way as objects of prejudice’.* (p.507 italics added)

Finally, following out of the analytic work he did with a particular patient, Bird concludes that there is a direct correlation between anti-Semitism and success. He says that the more anti-Semitic the patient became in the world the more she successful became. The reason: the criticism she really felt was towards her mother. If she managed to externalize it through prejudice, (i.e. hating the Jew) then she did well. If she turned the criticism towards herself, she became depressed and then she did less well. He concludes that prejudice is a defence against depression (Ackerman and Jahoda also propose a version of this last idea).

Oedipus and difference

Chasseguet-Smirgel (1990) also uses a version of the Oedipal drama to delineate the basis of racist ideology. She says that before the Oedipus complex proper, there is a universal developmental stage which she calls the archaic matrix of the Oedipus complex. She suggests that there is a primary wish in the new born to strip the mother’s body of its contents in order to merge with it. The contents of the mother’s body are akin to ‘difference’ – the thing that prevents the merging, the union, the becoming one and the same. Thus the archaic matrix is a resistance to differentiation, through an attempted flight from heterogeneity to homogeneity. She says that the encounter with recalcitrant obstacles is what in normal circumstances precipitates thought. Thus thoughts become an intrusion and are to be got rid of to enable the possibility of blissful union.

In normal development the archaic resolution is supplanted with the ‘proper’ resolution of the Oedipus complex where the presence of difference is accommodated. Both mechanisms are devices for coming to terms with the entry of difference. The archaic matrix solution to the entry of difference is to destroy it, and remain in a sea of sameness. Meanwhile the more evolved solution to the entry of difference is the ‘proper’ resolution of the Oedipal complex, through identification with the father, when difference can be allowed to exist and be utilized.

She sees a parallel between the structure of the archaic matrix and Nazi ideology – in particular the credo of Blut und Boden. The structure of the Nazi ideology is the wish for the body of the German people (the Aryans) ‘to become one with the body of the Mother (the German

homeland, the whole earth' (p.171). For this merging to proceed, the body of the German people has to be made pure – that is, homogenized – and so all defined contamination - the Jew, the homosexual etc., as obstacles to this union, have to be purged and annihilated: 'in order to form a single body, its constituent cells must be identical, purified of all foreign elements liable to impair its homogeneity' (p.171).

The problem with this as with other universalistic and individualistic explanations is that it does not explain the *group* phenomenon of genocide. For this sort of theory to work, it has to be the case that a whole nation of individuals fall prey to the archaic matrix at one and the same time, and at a later time simultaneously complete the proper resolution of the complex. Further, the argument takes as a given what is meant by '*the German people*'. It does not engage with the mechanisms through which certain constituent groups *come to be defined* as alien and not-German.

The problem of the external, and the 'underlying' internal.

Many of these papers are unable to give the external social world a role in the structuring of distress. For instance Basch-Kahre (1984) says that the explanation for her black African patient's 'deep feeling of being worthless whenever the theme of the stranger was brought up, [was found in]... his experience of weaning and with his oedipal conflict' (p.65). The fact that he was unable to advance in his job was explained completely by this feeling of inferiority, in other words the state of his internal world. No thought is given to the external circumstances that a) might contribute to his inferiority, and b) that might make it hard for him to advance. Whilst his particular experience of weaning no doubt played a significant role in the structuring of his feelings of worthlessness, no space is given to the possibility that *components* of his worthlessness might also have to do with particular experiences of living as a black man in Sweden.

I have argued (Dalal 1997a, b) that the absence of this kind of external reality from the interpretation is due to more than just the technique of psychoanalysis. I have argued that the technical explanation is the manifest reason, but that this disguises the latent reason which is guilt. The white analyst has difficulty in taking account of this kind of external relation because in doing so they are faced with the fact that they are the beneficiaries of the way society is structured, and they are faced with the guilt that follows from that realization. One could mitigate the situation by saying that both are 'innocent' victims of the structuring forces of society, but this attempt turns everyone into pawns with no autonomy.

The fact that actual external events are not thought of as important in themselves has meant that some authors engage in acrobatic manoeuvres to marginalize *actual* prejudice and racism. For instance Ackerman and Jahoda (1948) do this in three stages; first they differentiate anti-Semitism from other 'normal' psychological psychopathologies that are the business of psychoanalysis without saying why they think that this should be the case. They then divide anti-Semitism into two: the first of which is 'the expression of social conformity', and the second is due to 'some basic distortion in his own personality structure'. And finally, in the rest of their paper they focus exclusively on the last of these – personality structure. The effect of the various divides is to progressively marginalize *actual* anti-Semitism from their discussions until it completely disappears.

Even Fischer (1971), who works quite hard to avoid being reductive, ends up saying: 'the black-white difference between the analysand and analyst is a significant, contributing, and visible structure upon which *the more basic and dynamic infantile fantasies* are projected.' (p. 736, italics added). So whilst he says that the social realities count for something, they are secondary

and their significance lies in the *use* they are put to by the ‘more basic and dynamic infantile fantasies’.

Many of the statements found in these papers have this hierarchical relationship between internal and external embedded into them, for example, Goldberg et.al. (1974) say about a black female patient: ‘Her intensely personal feelings of rejection, as experienced in the transference are expressed and observed in terms of social injustice’ (p. 496). Let us unpack the sentence: the story is begun with the ‘intensely personal’ which manifests itself in the transference; the third element is social injustice, which is made a vehicle to ‘carry’ the transference in order to express it. Once again the possibility that the social injustice might be more than a vehicle is not considered, the possibility that the social injustice might actually drive parts of the *personal* feelings of rejection.

The External as Pathology and Acting Out

One of the remarkable things about this collection of papers is the clear consistency with which engagement with the external is denigrated either as an acting out, or read as an expression of pathology.

For example Myers (1977) understands his black female patient’s increasing involvement with black militant groups as a flight from her rage with him. One could construe the patient’s *new* capacity for involvement with Black militant groups as a sign of increasing health and self esteem. Ironically, Myers reports that the patient’s self esteem does indeed increase following this involvement as revealed in her dreams. However, Myers is unable or unwilling to give *any* credit to her involvement in the external for the changes in her; he says: ‘While some of this [the colour black gaining phallic connotations in her dreams] was related to modifications in the patient’s self-esteem as a result of the analytic work, a good deal of it was related to her intense need to deny the underlying degraded black self-representation.’ In other words her feeling better was in part ‘real’ because of the analytic work, and in part ‘false’ because it was due to the *repression* of her ‘degraded black self-representation’.

Another instance is found in the black therapist Holmes’ (1992) description of Miss A who was also black. Her presenting issue was a combination of irrepressible urges to take part in the race riots in her city and the fact that she had been unable to progress at work. Holmes says that through the work they ‘came to understand her protestations as warded-off self-loathing which itself was in part a defence against recognition of her rage, the threatened eruption of which had brought her to treatment’ (p.3). Thus the political rage is understood as a displacement of the ‘real’ internal and personal rage. It is at the very least curious that the self-loathing is *only* understood as a defence, and not as a symptom of living in a racist context.

The Transference: difference as resistance

The dilution of actual prejudice and racism is continued in discussions on the transference. Here, when the external difference, ‘race’ or colour, is consistently interpreted as a mediating phenomenon, not critical in itself but something to be got through to the ‘real’ issues. The idea that the meanings instituted in these differences might have a contribution to make in the construction of these ‘real’ internal issues is never considered.

Schachter and Butts (1994) say that there is a ‘real’ transference which is to do with significant others, and there are the ‘effects of racial stereotypes’. These might work together or against each other, but in essence they are different in *kind* to each other. This leads them to say that the presence of colour or ‘racial’ difference in the patient’s material is a transference resistance to

expressing instinctual material; their interpretations, therefore, are designed to dissolve this difference so that the 'real' analytic work can take place.

Whilst it is no doubt true that these 'differences' are very often utilized in this way, it can never ever be the only thing going on. The interesting statistic is that there is no example of an analyst giving a significance to this difference that is not one born of projection. If and when the external is given significance, it is always because of the internal drama that has been projected into it – the external is never significant *per se*, in and of itself.

For example Myers (1977, p.165) says that 'color differences between analyst and analysand are frequently utilized by the patient as a transference resistance.' By 'resistance' Myers means the suspicions and doubts that the black patient has towards him. Myers cannot make intellectual room for the idea that these suspicions that are being 'imagined' by the patient is a transference from the territory of the external and social – as opposed to the internal and instinctual.

Goldberg et al (1974) also say that their patients used colour difference as a transference resistance. In the transference, the feelings towards the original objects are reactivated and projected onto the analyst. They say that the patient uses what ever differences between the analyst and patient that they can get a hold of to drive a wedge between them, to prevent the reactivation of these old feelings. They say (like Fischer) that colour and racial differences are utilized by black patients to defend against erotic fantasies towards the white analyst.

The general view in these papers is that the increasing absence of colour from the patient's material is an indicator of the analysis succeeding, e.g. 'As the analysis progressed, the analyst was generally perceived as not having any specific colour.' (Goldberg et al, 1974, p.499). This follows out of the idea that social differences are surface phenomena, that when worked through, get back to the 'real' asocial and pre-social persona.

In contrast to these papers that see 'racial' difference as an inhibitor, a kind of bad thing that causes difficulties in the analysis, the black psychoanalyst Holmes writes a paper in which 'race' and colour is a facilitator, a good thing that is helpful to the analysis to the analysis. However, despite the change in emphasis, Holmes too thinks of the difference as something to be moved through to a human universal that is asocial, as she says to the 'more important underlying conflict' to an understanding of pain that 'goes beyond racism'.

The Transference: difficulties in the analyst.

It would appear that the associations between black-bad and white-good are so deeply part of the analyst's unconscious, that when the situation arises when patients reverse the associations, they are experienced as anomalous by the analyst who tends to interpret it as a defensive tactic. We have already come across two examples of the analyst's difficulty accommodating a black-good linkage in the patient's mind, Holmes (1992) and Myers (1977)⁶. The Myers paper also contains an additional example of the converse difficulty – the accommodation of the bad-white linkage.

When a black patient of Myers has associations of death to whiteness (rather than blackness), Myers explains the 'anomalous' association by her interest in Chinese art – wherein white is the colour of mourning. To my mind this is a clear example of cultural 'content' being used defensively by the analyst to avoid facing the live transference in the room. It would appear that the analyst cannot bring himself to think that the association of white with something threatening in the patient's mind is not just from Chinese culture but from the experience of life as a black in contemporary USA, or even her white analyst. Once again I would say that the analyst blinds himself to this because it would implicate him in actuality.

Another example is found in Fischer (1971) who says that a black female patient used the taboo of the black white divide as a vehicle to carry tabooed nature of her incestuous wishes – particularly her libidinal and aggressive fantasies towards him. He also says that ‘Her castrated and narcissistically wounded self-representation was closely tied to, and unconsciously associated with, her black skin.’ (p.742). However, by not saying anything about why there should be such an equation of blackness and the unconscious fantasy, he indicates that for him the linkage is self-evident, one could even say, natural. He also says that his white colour became a vehicle of her penis envy, and that this was expressed through a wish for a white man, a white baby, and the desire to be white.

Now, I do not wish to argue that colour was not utilized by the patient as a defence; the problem is that by making this the only and complete explanation, it is not only reductive, but in my opinion, distorts what is going on and is potentially damaging to the patient. What is being said in effect is that the desire for the white object is exclusively born of projection of instinctual desire, and that when the instinctual wishes and projections are worked through, then the white will no longer be cathected. He is saying that the suspicion of, or desire for, the white object has no basis in social reality.

The individual and the group.

The other main explanation for prejudice and racism is located in an essentialist model of the relationship between individuals and groups. The basis of the argument is the belief that groups are primitive in themselves, and when individuals get into groups, then they behave in these primitive ways because they are part of (primitive) group culture. We have already come across the basis of this idea in the section ‘We are unique’. The same kind of idea is found in Zilboorg (1947) who, like several others, divides the individual from the social, and says that we incorrectly blame the social for the sins of the individual. He says,

‘There is a psychopathology of prejudice, an individual psychopathology which is put in the service of an unjust, immoral, but apparently normal, or at any rate nonpathological social reaction.’ (p.307).

In other words he is saying that an *individual sickness* is used in the service of a *normal social phenomenon*. This equivalence leads him into a series of contradictions and tautologies, for example: ‘Many a Catholic’s opposition to the Jews ... is based on this simple... denial of the universal bent toward prejudice from which we run, only to run into it within and without ourselves.’ (p 308). He has begun by saying that that prejudice is natural, and then says that the denial of prejudice leads to prejudicial thinking.

In ‘Towards a Theory of Prejudice’ Traub-Werner (1984) seeks to marry the findings of the social sciences with psychoanalytic observations. He says ‘the *process* of prejudice is constituted by faulty or arrested development that leads to the formation of pathological defensive structures. The defensive structures can only take the form of prejudice within a historical framework and against a cultural background that will provide the *ideational content* to the *process* of prejudice.’ (p 407). The dichotomy process-content has been mapped onto nurture-nature; when things go wrong in the domain of *nature* (development), then the illness takes a form supplied to it by *nurture* (social mores). He continues:

‘The *content* is culturally bound and will determine “who I hate”, while the defensive structure of the *process* will answer the question “why I hate”. Last, but not least, the interaction between the individual psychopathology and group psychology, will determine the *form* that the process takes, i.e. “how I hate”.’ (pg.408).

The critical slip, which is easy enough to miss, is the equation of ‘individual *psychopathology* and group *psychology*’. This is one of the powerful effects of conflating the individual-group dichotomy with the nature-nurture dichotomy. Like Zilboorg he makes prejudice the property of particular individuals where it is said to be a pathological phenomenon. These individuals are prejudiced because of faulty development. However, the prejudice expressed at a group level is not pathological but said to be normal. It would seem that nature and individuals are good. If individuals behave badly then it cannot be because of their nature (which is good) but because of their nurture (faulty development). Meantime, it is normal for groups to behave badly as in prejudicially – because *group nature* is bad.

Some of the papers put up several different theories of prejudice without delineating the relationship between them. Traub-Werner’s is one such paper containing five unrelated mechanisms. (I describe it in this section as one of the theories is located in the group-individual dichotomy). One of his theories begins with endogenous aggression which is said to be instituted in a harsh superego and which then attacks the ego. In order to defend itself, the parts that are denigrated by the harsh superego are split off and projected outwards into some other object, where it is not tolerated. Having described this well known mechanism, the reader is left to guess which elements are considered to be ‘prejudice’ – presumably it is the final note, the lack of tolerance.

However, if this is the case then another of his propositions makes no sense at all: ‘When prejudice [i.e. lack of tolerance] is denied or repressed, the affect representation is transformed into action.... If denial of repression allows the aggression to remain conflict free the wish become executed’ (p 409). The confusion is this: is prejudice a symptom, or a cause? In the first story prejudice is a symptom caused by denial and the displacement of unwanted parts of the self, and in the second case the denial of *feelings* of prejudice leads to its enactment. The confusion is compounded by a third unrelated mechanism in which prejudice is defined as ‘a *facilitating defence* that contributed to the conflict-free expression of .. id wishes in acts of sadism’ (p 409-410). The fourth definition of prejudice is different again. This time it is explained as a weakness in the individual that makes them ‘more vulnerable to the forces of group and mass psychology’ (p 410). The fifth explanation offered is that people only succumb to repeating the prejudices in society at large when they have not properly resolved their Oedipal longings. Why this should be the case is not elaborated on, neither is the rather important question of how the prejudice comes to reside in ‘society at large’ in the first place.

Racism and prejudice in psychoanalytic discourse

It is an interesting statistic that in the journals being considered here there is not one paper to be found written on the topic by a British psychoanalyst. In the main they are written by Americans and some Europeans. The few papers that are written by Britons are not by psychoanalysts and are to be found in the British Journal of Psychotherapy (Bhugra and Bhui 1998, Fletchman Smith 1993, Gordon 1993a, 1993b, Tan 1993, Timmi 1996, Ward 1997). Of these, apart from Gordon, all are written by members of the so called ethnic minorities. What can be inferred from this statistic? Perhaps something akin to Da Conceição Dias, & De Lyra Chebabi’s comment that despite the ubiquity of the black presence in Brazilian society there was an absence of papers from Brazilian psychoanalysts on the subject; they say ‘we are bound to infer that this is due to extremely powerful unconscious forces’ (1987, p.185).

Whilst we cannot engage directly with what these unconscious forces might be because of space, we can engage briefly with a related matter found in a short paper by Polzer (1991) in which she describes her shock at discovering virulent racist views in Groddeck’s untranslated writings, e.g.:

‘It is bad enough that our time allows for marriage with foreigners, but miscegenation with coloured people is a crime which ought to be punished at least by depriving such couples and their offspring of their rights. He who betrays his blood does not deserve to be a citizen. I understand that certain chemical reactions of the bloodstream.. show that the blood of Malaysians is nearer to that of the apes than that of man. One ought to prove the same fact for the Chinese and the Japanese, and to affix it on all street corners in order to arouse shame, and respect for God’s gift of pure blood’ (Groddeck 1984, p183).

The thing of interest is not so much the discovery of these passages, but the fact that Polzer finds it incomprehensible that Groddeck can hold such views in the light of his other thinking. She wonders whether they can be put down to an ‘infection’ from the zeitgeist of the times. But why should it be incomprehensible to her? In calling these thoughts an infection, they are made something alien and foreign to the body and mind of ‘real’ Groddeck. An attempt is being made to salvage a sanitized good Groddeck from contamination by a bad Groddeck infected by racism. It is truly an attempt at splitting, if not actual amputation. Hers is an attempt to individualize and particularize the issue. Perhaps the worrying thing for Polzer is the thought that if Groddeck is so unexpectedly ‘infected’ then perhaps so is the whole body of psychoanalysis – practitioners black, white and all. Orthodox psychoanalysis in general and the authors gathered here in particular see themselves and their discipline as outside and beyond the tides of history and ideology. This is curious because as Cushman (1994) refreshingly says:

‘It seems noteworthy that a discipline that prides itself in unflinchingly confronting the ambition, greed, power-hunger, perversity, and murderous rage of individuals can unquestioningly accept a disciplinary history devoid of similar influences. ... We routinely expect our *individual* patients to exhibit prejudice and practice self-deceit, and we believe *individual* practitioners to be capable of the same foibles. But when we write history we seem to consider our discipline, as a discipline, beyond such practices.’ (p.809; italics added)

In my experience there are two psychoanalytic discourses, a formal one which is guarded and careful, and an informal one that is overheard and expressed in unguarded moments. The first of these is akin to the conscious – known and controlled; the second of these is akin to the unconscious – revelatory material that leaks out unintentionally. It is in the second of these that the ideologies embedded in psychoanalytic discourse are revealed. The book reviews that were found in this trawl for papers are interesting for precisely this reason – the language and tone is less guarded – and so it is interesting what is found in them. Also of interest here are some of the ‘defences’ that psychoanalysis puts up against charges of racism and the like.

Boesky (1974), the reviewer of Thomas and Sillen’s book *Racism and Psychiatry* allows the authors an authority to speak on the experiences of being black. However Thomas and Sillen’s reading of racism in psychoanalysis and psychiatry is summarily dismissed. Boesky finds no racism in psychoanalysis, instead: ‘My own reading suggests not racism, but conceptual confusion and methodological error’. Even if it were just confusion and error, surely what a psycho-analysis would have to ask is why does the confusion and error occur? What are the unconscious forces that drive the errors in particular directions? And so on. The power of the psychoanalytic method is such that it leaves no territory for the merely innocent – not even for itself.

It is curious to me that some psychoanalysts and psychotherapists react so strongly against the idea that racism must permeate psychoanalysis. To my way of thinking, it is a truism to assert that if racism is part of the socio-linguistic structure of society, then it must exist in *all* its products. This includes not only psychoanalysis, but inevitably also me (despite being one of the so called ethnic minorities). Against this kind of idea some seek to privilege psychoanalysis with

an objectivity that even the so called ‘hard’ sciences like physics gave up almost a hundred years ago. For example, Stein (1984), whilst reviewing Badock’s book *The Psychoanalysis of Culture*, says that psychoanalysis is above ideology, concerning itself with objective truths, and that it reads reality ‘strictly according to metapsychological criteria, ones which are *utterly uninfluenced by statistical and normative considerations*’ (italics added). Astonishingly he goes further to imply that this ‘objective truth’ the property of the ‘West’.

The intentional fallacy

It is interesting to see how criticisms of psychoanalysis are disqualified as are any suggestion that there might be a hegemony of power located at a white centre. Psychoanalysts are prone to falling prey to a version of what philosophers call the *intentional fallacy* – wherein one interprets the state of mind of the person, rather than engaging with the validity of the arguments. This is after all *is* the psychoanalytic method – however its use outside the consulting room is not always appropriate or helpful. Thus in this review Stein attacks not the notion of relativism, but the state of mind of those who put it forward as a philosophical proposition. Stein says that the psychological basis for the belief in relativism is to be found in the developmental themes of adolescence – thus those that hold to this view are by definition maladjusted in some way because they are stuck in their own adolescence: ‘The face of relativism is the mask of inverted evolutionism – itself an ideological mask for perpetual (adolescent?) rebelliousness against anything associated with the (parental?) West’ (p.101). The manoeuvre is one of pathologizing the state of mind of one who holds an alternative view.

Similarly, McDonald (1974) is perplexed as to why the story Little Black Sambo is so vilified because according to her the story is not racist at all. The father and mother of Little Black Sambo, Black Jumbo and Black Mumbo are fine parents – ‘just the kind every child would like to have’ (p.513). According to McDonald Little Black Sambo is in fact the disguised story of a small child’s reactions to seeing the primal scene. She says that the ‘white reader uses this story to deny his own childhood sexuality. *Sambo* reassures him that the sexual thoughts and feelings of childhood belong just to primitive black people from the jungle, not to civilized white Americans.’ This denial does not work for the black reader because the story ‘assigns the forbidden sexuality specifically to people with their own black skin color. *Thus the black reader’s rejection of Sambo resembles the impassioned rejection which greeted Freud’s discovery of infantile sexuality*’ (p527 italics added). The conclusion that McDonald draws then is that the adverse reaction caused by this story causes has no basis in external reality. One can clearly see how even the possibility of the existence of racism is atomized and evaporated. The fact that whites are less perturbed than blacks by the story, is explained away by locating a difficulty in the blacks. Blacks are said to be particularly perturbed by the story because it is said to contain knowledge of *black* childhood sexuality; meanwhile whites are less perturbed because the story protects them from the knowledge of sexuality by displacing it onto blacks. In other words she has pathologized the ‘impassioned reaction’ of Blacks, by calling it a defence against knowing. McDonald ends her paper with a plea, saying that consciously the author was not prejudiced, and that she should not be criticized for the unconscious projection of her childhood sexual feelings onto black skin colour. There is a double movement here: the black anger is problematized, and the racist projection sanitized.

Racism and its discontents

Gardner (1975) takes the opportunity in writing a review of a book by Harrison-Ross and Wyden entitled ‘The Black Child – A Parent’s Guide’, to express some his own views which amount to a list of criticisms at attempts to redress the power balance between black and whites. Unlike Stein and Boesky, Gardner does agree that there is racism, but then implies that nothing can or

need be done about it. What needs to happen instead is for individual blacks to make bigger efforts to 'catch up', however their current efforts are flawed in various ways. For example he says that the use of the expression 'black is beautiful' is problematic because it is a substitution of one racism for another. He also says that saying 'proud of being black is as fatuous as saying that one is ashamed to be black' (p.128) because he says, blacks are using the same mechanism as Jews to make themselves feel better. 'Jews, for example, often say that they are proud to be Jewish because Freud, Einstein, etc. were Jewish. Freud and Einstein had justification for feeling proud of their own contributions – but not everyone else in their synagogues has justification for such pride' (p.129). This is a rather peculiar line of argument for a psychoanalyst as he appears to completely forgotten the significance of ego ideals, and the critical and necessary role they play in the development of healthy self esteem through introjections. A sensitive contrast to the viewpoint is found in Beisner's (1988) moving account of her work with a lost black boy in search of an ego ideal.

Gardner takes the space to launch an attack on something the authors do *not include* in their book 'The authors do not include another specious attempt for ego-enhancement often utilized by black people, namely, rationalizing a failure with the explanation that it resulted from one's being black. Although too many people are rejected from jobs, schools, etc., because they are black, there is no question that some entrance requirements for blacks are probably easier today than ever before. The black person who tends to explain all his rejections on the basis of his skin color may be depriving himself of the opportunity to correct real defects that may have brought about his disappointment. And parents, as well, may contribute to the child's utilization of this ultimately self-defeating mechanism' (p.129).

This is an interesting line of argument – he agrees that there is racism, but then says that standards have been lowered as compensation, and if blacks they still can't get in then it is within themselves they should look. Notice the non-sequitur – racism followed by the lowering of standards. The lowering of standards (if it is actually the case) has nothing to do with ameliorating racism, in fact it is a manifestation of racism as it says that blacks need to be compensated for because of their low abilities.

He also attacks positive discrimination. 'Examples of unqualified and underqualified blacks' being given positions primarily, if not exclusively, because they are blacks are ubiquitous.' (p.129). The problem as ever with this sort of argument is that it does not ever take up the contrary phenomenon, much more commonplace, of blacks not getting jobs because they are black. Gardner's point is that 'a criterion unrelated to competence (namely, skin colour) has been used to determine suitability' (p.130). But this unrelated criterion is more often than not used in the contrary direction – to not give jobs. The reviewer cant have it both ways. But he does – and so do many others. The review is notable for the list of demands it makes on the black, and the complete absence of any demand on the white.

Against the grain.

Against the general reductive trend of these papers, a few exceptions stand out. They do not form a coherent body in themselves, but each has a vital point to make.

Of the clinical accounts, the papers by Beisner (1988) and Fletchman-Smith (1993) stand out in trying to hold onto the internal and external complexities in a non reductive fashion. Fletchman-Smith in particular does not fall into the trap of using either the 'racism' buzz word, nor the 'splitting/projection' buzz words as an explain-all.

As we have already seen in a lot of the papers the black and Jew are incidental to the proceedings, they serve the function of container for the projections of whites. In contrast, Bernard (1953) and Meers' papers (1970, 1973) are unusual in that they focus on the actual effects of racism and deprivation on the black in contemporary USA. One of Meers' purposes is to challenge Jensen's biologicistic reading of the fact that ghetto children score much lower than whites on IQ tests. Meers' thesis is that intellectual retardation in ghetto reared children is a symptom formation - an adaptation to cope with the stress and trauma that is being constantly inflicted by the environment. They are thoughtful papers that do not fall into the usual traps 'blaming' culture nor of homogenizing the ghetto. Nor does he make the mistake of suggesting that love and loving relationships do not exist in the ghetto, but that 'the failure of society of provide minimal family security and protection have direct and serious regressive effects on ego capacities' (Meers, 1973, p.413).

Bernard (1953) has a complex view of difference and does not fall into the trap of homogenizing the internals of cultural groups. She goes one step further than the multiculturalists in that she acknowledges not only difference but also status differentials. Unlike the analysts who regard the disappearance of colour from the analysis as a sign of improvement, she cautions against this and says that this is 'part of their preanalytic personal settlement of racial difference by denial.' (p.260). In her view a successful analysis does not entail going past differences rendering them meaningless, instead she says that the true deep meanings of the difference become apparent. Like Foulkes, she says that the difference is part and parcel of the personality at its deepest layers. She cautions against a psychoanalytic stereotype in which 'the Negro personality whose frustrated hostility towards whites must always automatically constitute his central conflict and the core of his personality organization.' (p.263).

White (1991) makes the vicissitudes of identity formation and retention the basis of prejudice: 'racism is a social defense, a cultural security operation, used by blacks and whites against anxieties about joining and belonging to an overwhelming diverse culture, where the threat of identity diffusion is constant. Racism had made the world more comprehensible to the extent that it has prevailed as a "them-and-us" paradigm.' (p.313).

Da Conceição Dias & De Lyra Chebabi's (1987) paper is unusual in its attempt to tie together psychoanalytic ideas with historical trends without reducing one to the other. Like some of the other authors considered here, they note the conflation of instinctuality with blackness. However, unlike the others who did not question the linkage because it was seen as 'natural', these authors set about deconstructing the linkage with what they call a Hegelian analysis which proceeds as follows: During the Renaissance the light of reason was deified. This movement reached its culmination in the ideology of the Enlightenment of the 18th C. which relegated the passions to a lesser realm. They conclude, 'it is precisely this realm which Aryan European ideology has localized in blackness and the unconscious. ...The climax of the Enlightenment and its consequences in the European mentality resulted in the conceptual equation of slavery and blackness on the one hand and freedom and light on the other.' (p.202)

Blum's (1994) is a refreshing paper for several reasons. It contextualises the analysis of Dora's dreams within a socio-political framework. It gives a historical dimension to anti-Semitism, distinguishing a racial anti-Semitism from religious anti-Semitism. He even dares to comment on the anti-Semitism of Jones⁷.

Butts (1971) describes some findings following a research questionnaire to white psychiatrists. It takes up many themes that are now commonplace but were not so at that time. For example the researchers speculated that 'The failure of many white psychiatrists to respond may have reflected their anxiety about the topic and their reluctance to deal with it' (p.148). The research

also uncovered a generally held view amongst white psychiatrists that the black psychiatrist was better able to treat working-class patients and black patients, in effect those who pay lower fees.

Conclusion.

The fact that the clinical work of psychoanalysis addresses the internal world of patients, might make it appear that the criticism of psychoanalysis as ‘internalist’ is a bit pointless as the psychoanalytic ‘take’ is self consciously intended to be partial, focussing on one aspect of the subject – the internal.

Whilst I would agree with the first part of the statement, I think that a conflation has taken place. There is a distinction to be made between the location of a disturbance and how it came to be there in the first place. I think that in many of the papers, the fact that the disturbances are located *inside* individual patients is mistakenly used to surmise that the disturbances find their genesis there. This makes the analyses not so much partial, as reductive to say that group hatreds are *caused* by internal difficulties. Of the many available examples, here is Ackerman and Jahoda’s conclusion: ‘the entire evidence we have presented in this paper leads us to believe that anti-Semitism, like all other group hostilities, presents *a reflection of a conflict* in the prejudiced person’ (1948, p.259-60; italics added).

The ethos of the psychoanalytic method – as represented in these papers – is to focus on the internal domain at the cost of the external social domain. If and when the external social is given a role at all, it is secondary in that it is said to give a particular shape to the expression of these internal dynamics. The result of this is that the papers focus on the internals of the racist subject to such an extreme degree, that the object of racism – the Semite, the Black, and so on – are made incidental to the proceedings. When they feature at all they do so as containers, screens and vehicles for the projections of the racist subject. Ironically, they are made so incidental that they are not even hated in their own right, the main play is always going on somewhere else.

The papers do not consider the possibility of racism also being a *cause* rather than an effect, and so of actually *structuring* the internal dynamics. This has rather serious consequences not only for the techniques of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, but also on how the ‘treatments’ are experienced by patients. For example, psychotherapy clinics and trainings in the UK are increasingly asking of themselves why it is that more black people do not come forward for either psychotherapy or to train as psychotherapists. The findings of this review go some way to answering this question: it suggests that it is because *aspects* of the actual troubled experiences of the marginalized and dispossessed are not understood for what they are, and instead dissolved by a series of analyses that locates their source in the patient – either in instinctuality or in an asocial personal developmental process. I have also suggested that this analytic ‘technique’ is itself at times a defensive strategy utilized by the analyst to keep their presence out of the picture.

In my opinion, the problems thrown up in this territory shed light on a more general difficulty in some psychoanalytic theories; a difficulty born of a false distinction made between the *developmental* and *socialization* processes. The psychoanalyst and group analyst S.H.Foulkes (1948, 1990) has gone some way to disentangle these conflations. It seems to me that the *practice* of psychotherapy has yet to take the socio-political into account as a organizing principle central to the *developmental* process in order to make it clinically meaningful. This would entail a shift in focus from the insides of individuals to the relationships between them. Although this does occur to some degree in some psychoanalytic streams and also in Foulkesian group analysis, the relationships attended to are inclined to be neutered of the social; in other

words they have been de-politicised and so sanitized (Dalal 1998). The argument is not one of prioritising the social over the biological, nor of saying that human beings are not unique; rather it is to say that our uniqueness is built out of common material – and that this common material is not just biological and chemical, but also social. I think that if this were comprehended, then the imperative of moving the analysis through the social layer back to the ‘real’ layer would be seen to be redundant.

Bibliography

- Ackerman, N. W. and Jahoda, M. (1948) ‘The dynamic basis of anti-Semitic attitudes’ *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* (17), pp. 240-260
- Axelrad, S. (1960) ‘On some uses of psychoanalysis’ *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association*, (8), pp. 175-217.
- Badcock, C.R. (1980) *The Psychoanalysis of Culture* Oxford: Basil Blackwell
- Basch-Kahre, E. (1984) On Difficulties arising in transference and countertransference when analyst and analysand have different socio-cultural backgrounds. *International Review of Psychoanalysis* (11), pp. 61-67
- Beisner, H.R. (1988) “‘I ain’t nobody” – A study of black male identity formation’. *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* (43), pp. 307-318.
- Bernard, V.W., (1953) ‘Psychoanalysis and members of minority groups’ *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association* (1), pp. 256-267.
- Bhugra, D. and Bhui, K. (1998) ‘Psychotherapy for ethnic minorities: Issues, context and practice’ *British Journal of Psychotherapy* (14:3), pp. 310-326.
- Bird, B. (1957) ‘A consideration of the etiology of prejudice’ *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 5, pp. 490-512.
- Blum, H.P. (1994) ‘Dora’s Conversion Syndrome: A contribution to the prehistory of the holocaust’. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* (63), pp. 518-535
- Boesky, D. (1974) Racism and Psychiatry *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* (43), pp. 143-144
- Brown, R. (1995) *Prejudice* Oxford U.K.: Blackwell
- Butts, H.F. (1971) ‘Psychoanalysis, the Black Community and Mental Health’. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* (7), pp. 147-152.
- Chasseguet-Smirgel, J. (1990) ‘Reflections of a Psychoanalyst upon the Nazi Biocracy and Genocide’. *International Review of Psycho-analysis* (17), pp. 167-175.
- Cohen, P. & Bains, H.S. *Multi-Racist Britain* London: McMillan Education
- Cushman, P. (1994) ‘Confronting Sullivan’s spider – Hermeneutics and the Politics of Therapy’. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* (30), pp. 800-844.
- Da Conceição Dias, C. G. & De Lyra Chebabi, J. W. (1987) ‘Psychoanalysis and the role of black life and culture in Brazil’. *International Review of Psycho-analysis* (14), pp. 185-206.

- Dalal, F. (1997a) 'A Transcultural Perspective on Psychodynamic Psychotherapy' *Group Analysis* (30), pp.203-215
- Dalal, F. (1997b) 'The Colour Question in Psychoanalysis' *Journal of Social Work Practice* (11:2), pp.103-114
- Dalal, F. (1998) *Taking the Group Seriously – Towards a Post-Foulkesian Group Analytic Theory* London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Davidson, L. (1987) 'The cross-cultural therapeutic dyad'. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* (23), pp. 659-675.
- Devereux, G. (1953) 'Cultural factors in psychoanalytic therapy'. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, (1), pp. 629-655
- Elias, N. (1994) *The Civilizing Process* Oxford: Blackwell; first published in German 1939, first English editions: 1978 Volume 1, *The History of Manners*, Oxford: Blackwell; 1982 Volume 2, *State Formation and Civilization in Oxford*: Blackwell. .
- Fischer, N., (1971) 'An Interracial analysis: Transference and Countertransference significance' *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association*, (19), pp.736-745.
- Fletcher Smith, B. (1993) 'Assessing the difficulties for British patients of Caribbean origin in being referred for psychoanalytical psychotherapy' *British Journal of Psychotherapy* (10:1), pp. 50-61.
- Foot, N.N. (1980) 'Collective parataxis'. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* (16), pp. 385-39.
- Foulkes, S.H., 1948 *Introduction to Group Analytic Psychotherapy* William Heinemann Medical Books, reprinted 1983 London: Karnac
- Foulkes, S.H., (1990) *Selected Papers* London: Karnac
- Foulkes, S.H., 1964 *Therapeutic Group Analysis* George London: Allen & Unwin
- Freud, S. (1921) 'Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego' *Standard Edition XVIII* pp. 67-144 London: Hogarth Press
- Gardner, R. A. (1975) 'The kids call me Schwartz'. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* (11), pp. 125-134.
- Goldberg, E.L., Myers, W.A., & Zeifman, I. (1974) 'Some observations of three interracial analyses' *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association*, 55, pp. 495-500
- Gordon, P. (1993a) 'Keeping therapy white?: Psychotherapy trainings and Equal opportunities' *British Journal of Psychotherapy* 10 (1), pp. 44-49.
- Gordon, P. (1993b) 'Souls in armour: Thoughts on psychoanalysis and racism' *British Journal of Psychotherapy* (10:1), pp. 62-77.
- Greenberg J. R. and Mitchell S.A. (1983) *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*. London: Harvard University Press
- Groddeck, G. (1984) *Die Natur heilt* Frankfurt-am-Main: Fischer Taschenbuch.
- Harrison-Ross, P., and Wyden, B. (1973) *The Black Child—A Parents' Guide* New York: Peter H. Wyden Inc.
- Holmes D.E. (1992) 'Race and transference in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy' *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* (73) pp.1-11.

- McDonald, M. (1974) 'Little Black Sambo'. *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* (29), pp. 511-528
- Meers, D. R. (1970) 'Contributions of a ghetto culture to symptom formation – Psychoanalytic studies of ego anomalies in childhood'. *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* (25), pp. 209-229.
- Meers, D. R. (1973) 'Psychoanalytic research and intellectual functioning of ghetto-reared black children'. *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* (28), pp. 395-417.
- Miles, R. (1993) *Racism after Race Relations* London and New York: Routledge
- Myers, W.A., (1977) 'The significance of the colors black and white in the dreams of black and white patients' *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association*, (25), pp.163-181.
- PEP Archive 1 1920-1994 (1997) CD Institute of Psychoanalysis, London: Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing
- Polzer, A. (1991) 'Georg Groddeck's Racism – a Dismal Discovery'. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, (39), pp. 575-577.
- Schachter, J. S. and Butts H. F. (1994) 'Transference and countertransference in interracial analyses'. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, (16), pp. 792-808.
- Spiegel, J.P. (1988) 'The effect of strangeness in psychoanalysis'. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* (24), pp. 378-391.
- Stein, H.F. (1984) 'The psychoanalysis of culture' *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* (53), pp. 100-106.
- Tan, R. (1993) 'Racism and Similarity: Paranoid-Schizoid Structures' *British Journal of Psychotherapy* (10:1), pp. 33-43.
- Thomas, A.T., & Sillen, S.S., (1979) *Racism and Psychiatry* New Jersey: Citadel Press.
- Timmi, S. (1996) 'Race and Colour in Internal and External Reality' *British Journal of Psychotherapy* (13:2), pp. 183-192.
- Traub-Werner, D. (1984) 'Towards a theory of prejudice'. *International Review of Psychoanalysis* (11), pp. 407-412.
- Ward, I. (1997) 'Race and racism: A reply to Sami Timmi' *British Journal of Psychotherapy* (14 :1), pp. 91-97.
- White, K.P. (1991) 'A home in the mind'. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* (27), pp. 311-323.
- Zaphiropoulos, M.L. (1987) 'Ethnocentricity in psychoanalysis – blind spots and blind alleys'. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* (23), pp. 446-462.
- Zilboorg, G. (1947) 'Psychopathology of Social Prejudice' *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* (16), pp.303-324.

¹ The Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing (PEP) Archive 1 (1920-1994). This contains Contemporary Psychoanalysis, The International Review of Psycho-Analysis, The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, The Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child.

² I am not using the term 'statistical' in the strict mathematical sense here, but as a counterpoint to the 'particular'.

³ The few notable exceptions are Beisner, Bernard, Cushman, Da Conceição Dias, & De Lyra Chebabi, Gordon, Fletchman-Smith, Foote, Kakar.

⁴ Another place that cause is imputed is to the group – but more of that later.

⁵ A more modern psychoanalytic rendering would use the language of part-objects, and of splitting and projecting

⁶ In the section 'The external as pathology and acting out'.

⁷ Aside: What I find problematic in this paper is the fanciful idea that Dora's dreams were premonitions about the holocaust yet to come some forty years later. The grounds given for this are the fact that in the dreams there are references to cemeteries, burning and so on; he says, 'In a *remarkable coincidence*, a train station was also present in the manifest content of the second dream, as though the cemetery scene were a premonition of massacre' (p.530; italics added). This seems to me to be rather stretching things given the ubiquity of the presence of train stations in dreams - it is hardly a 'remarkable coincidence'.