

THE POLITICS OF UNREASON

**THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL AND
THE ORIGINS OF MODERN ANTISEMITISM**

LARS RENSMANN

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This book has been a long time coming. The project originated more than twenty years ago, when I was a young graduate student of political science and political theory at the Free University of Berlin. Back then, I wrote my master's thesis on the Institute for Social Research—commonly referred to as the Frankfurt School, or Critical Theory with capital letters—and antisemitism. My early research led to the publication of the German book *Kritische Theorie über den Antisemitismus* (Argument Verlag, 1998), which to my surprise was widely received and found a positive academic echo. I subsequently published articles on the subject, and the Frankfurt School's work also played an important role in shaping the theoretical framework of my PhD thesis and second monograph on antisemitism and democratic political culture, *Demokratie und Judenbild* (VS Verlag, 2004). While my primary academic research interests shifted to other issues and areas of political science and political theory, I always intended to return to my early work on the Frankfurt School and antisemitism—revisit my research, pick up important threads, close gaps and rethink loose ends, and finally add a comprehensive English volume on the subject.

In its ideational origins, *The Politics of Unreason* can be traced even further back: namely to 1992, when I had just graduated from Luther College in Iowa. I had the unique opportunity to visit one of the founding fathers of Critical Theory in the twentieth century and a member

of the “inner circle” of the Institute for Social Research: Leo Löwenthal.

Löwenthal had escaped from Nazi persecution to find refuge in America, where he continued his academic career at prestigious institutions of higher learning. Responding to a letter I had written to him, Leo was so incredibly generous to invite me, the twenty-two-year-old student, to come to visit him, the ninety-one-year-old professor, in Berkeley—where he taught sociology at the University of California since 1956—and to stay at his home. So I did, and we spent days talking about Critical Theory—an experience I will never forget. In my conversations with Leo, for the first time I fully grasped the Frankfurt School’s rich historical and philosophical trajectories and Critical Theory’s potential as a living tradition that can be relevant in the contemporary world. Leo Löwenthal passed away just half a year later, before I could visit him again. But much of my academic work is inspired by him, from my first theoretical musings to my later work on the Frankfurt School, political sociology, the radical right, and authoritarian politics of resentment; and so is this book in particular—in which Leo’s academic research and theorizing play a major role. In this study, Löwenthal’s contribution to the Frankfurt School’s thinking about the “antisemitic question” is attributed the central place in the scholarly canon it thoroughly deserves. For him, as he told me then, the problem of antisemitism remained a pressing concern of our time. The book is, like my first one almost two decades ago, dedicated to the memory of Löwenthal, one of the great intellectuals of the twentieth century.

While in recent years some new studies have been published that address the relationship between the Frankfurt

School and the problem of antisemitism, including path-breaking contributions by Jack Jacobs and Eva-Maria Ziege, *The Politics of Unreason* is the first systematic study of the Frankfurt School's research on and theories about antisemitism in English. Considerable parts of this book's research go back to my original study, which still also largely serves as the conceptual and theoretical backbone, and several chapters have been translated from German before being thoroughly reworked, revised, and supplemented.

The book is greatly indebted to many friends, colleagues, and institutions that took part in its production. First and foremost, Kizer S. Walker took a very prominent role: he translated several chapters of the German book, which found their way into five newly designed chapters of *The Politics of Unreason*. I had the great pleasure to work with Kizer Walker on this manuscript, without whom this book would simply not exist. Kizer is not just an outstanding scholar of Jewish and German Studies, and an expert on Critical Theory, antisemitism, and German philosophy. He is also an amazing translator, the best one could imagine, a fact from which this work greatly benefited. Kizer spent hundreds and hundreds of hours on this book project, for which I will never be able to thank him enough.

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mostly—as we are now living and teaching on different continents—via Skype. Jennet’s intellectual rigor, collegiality, and knowledge of political theory played a crucial part in the development, reshaping, and final presentation of my arguments. I do not know what the book would be without Jennet’s contribution and incredible capacities as a meticulous and critical reader. The book would also literally never have seen the light of day without the support of two other fantastic colleagues: Jonathan Judaken, who encouraged me to go back to the subject of the Frankfurt School and antisemitism. Moreover, Jonathan went out of his way to contact publishers to find a suitable press for my study. This enthusiasm found its match with Robert Bernasconi, whose praise of my work on Critical Theory and antisemitism was energizing and who initiated the birth of this book by proposing it for the State University of New York Press’s *Philosophy and Race* series. The idea to dive back into this material and subject was sparked at a conference at Yale in August 2010, which was organized by Ulrike Becker and Charles Asher Small. Hajo Funke, who served as my thesis supervisor, *Doktorvater*, and mentor when I was a graduate student and “wissenschaftlicher Assistent” at the Free University of Berlin, offered generous support and advice for the original project, and has been a good friend ever since. Throughout my academic career, including this long-term research endeavor, I have also immensely benefited from the staunch support by Andrei S. Markovits as a mentor, friend, and later on collaborator and colleague at the University of Michigan.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

How the Frankfurt School Has Shaped the Study of Modern Antisemitism

The Frankfurt School, which signifies a circle of social researchers, philosophers, and theorists associated with the Institute for Social Research that was founded in the German city of Frankfurt in 1923, has had a significant and lasting impact on the social sciences and humanities.¹ It has influenced and partly shaped various fields and subfields, from modern philosophy, social and political research, social psychology, cultural studies, to critical legal studies, international relations, and global political theory.²

However, the relevance and indeed—as I argue in this book—centrality of the challenge of antisemitism for the evolution of this school has only marginally been the subject of scholarly inquiry.³ The same marginalization applies to the reception of the Frankfurt School's theoretical output in this area. This book closes these gaps. It reconstructs and rereads the Frankfurt School's work on antisemitism to deepen and enrich our understanding of

early Critical Theory. But this study is not merely a theoretical or exegetic exercise, or primarily motivated by (intellectual) historical interest to set the record straight against an all too often superficial reception of the Frankfurt School's approach to antisemitism. By systematically exploring and rereading the early Frankfurt School's work on the conditions and dynamics of antisemitism, this book ultimately seeks to bring to the fore some important analytical tools that we have missed. My goal is to open up the discussion of the Frankfurt School's scholarly contributions and theorizing.⁴ To this end, the study pays attention to intrinsic problems and limitations of theoretical transfer to the current age. Yet the book also presents the Critical Theorists' contributions as a multilayered and complex resource for the critical analysis of both modern and contemporary resentments against Jews. The substantive outcome of this project is twofold: it changes our understanding of the Frankfurt School, and it changes our understanding of antisemitism through the Frankfurt School.

Despite some recently renewed scholarly interest in the Institute for Social Research's empirical work of the 1940s, there has been no comprehensive account of the Frankfurt School's theorizing of antisemitism. This study is the first book in English to systematically and critically reconstruct Critical Theory's multifaceted approach to, and thinking about, modern judeophobia.⁵ The Institute for Social Research's early groundbreaking studies of antisemitism in and after exile did find some scholarly resonance, to be sure. They also had some significant effects in the field. Yet established research on antisemitism and racism has so far largely failed to acknowledge the Frankfurt School and Critical Theorists' role in shaping

our understanding of the nature of social resentments, the politics of prejudice, and specifically of antisemitism (and authoritarianism) in the modern world.

Even scholars who employ certain critical theoretical claims about the constitutive features, dynamics, implications, and legacies of modern judeophobia rarely acknowledge the crucial insights that originate in, or were initially advanced by, the Frankfurt School's early scholarship on the subject at the time of the Holocaust and the beginning of the postwar period. Be that as it may, while the Frankfurt School's work on antisemitism and related problems of ethnocentrism, authoritarianism, and fascist politics may have—often unconsciously—influenced key conceptions of antisemitism in social research after the Holocaust, there has been little thorough engagement with the Critical Theorists' theoretical and empirical claims. Consequently, past and present research on antisemitism has not fully explored in how far the Frankfurt School's work can be employed as a resource for theoretical and philosophical reflection.⁶ Indeed, scholarly work theorizing antisemitism in modern history and contemporary society has yet to recognize the potential of the Frankfurt School's pathbreaking contributions in this area.⁷

Facing the Politics of Unreason: Critical Theory, Social Research, and Antisemitism

This study explores the Frankfurt School's social research and theorizing on antisemitism, illuminating the Critical Theorists' work on the subject in its philosophical, political, and sociological origins in view of its potential

critical impact for our contemporary understanding of anti-Jewish resentment in modern history and today's world. In so doing, it brings to light the multilayered arguments but also the contexts and constitutive links of the Frankfurt School's work on antisemitism in conceptual and theoretical terms. The study hereby challenges five major misunderstandings about the Frankfurt School's rethinking of modern authoritarianism and antisemitism, and about first-generation Critical Theory at large, that may have affected its dominant canonical reception.

First, previous accounts have failed to fully explore the sociological and philosophical wealth of Critical Theory's undertaking, and they have largely underestimated how the Frankfurt School's reflections on antisemitism molded various theoretical sources and approaches into something entirely new in response to the Shoah. The study of the "antisemitic question" transformed Critical Theory and engendered new social theorizing in reflection of the Shoah, understood as the "reversion of enlightened civilization to barbarism" (DE xix). Hence, the book reassesses the political and philosophical origins, grounding and impact of Critical Theory's work on antisemitism for the development of the school. Commonly known for engaging with Freudian theory and Marx beyond dogmatic Marxism, the Frankfurt School's contributions also draw heavily on other influences that have often been less central to the canonical reception of Critical Theory. These range from Max Weber and Georg Lukács to Hegel, Kant, Nietzsche, and ancient philosophy, as well as a variety of modern sociological models and traditions. The way the Frankfurt School processed these intellectual resources in order to address the "antisemitic question" and molded them into interdisciplinary

theoretical reflection is itself shaped by historical political events and conditions of the time: most importantly, the caesura of the Nazi persecution and extermination of the European Jews, and the civilizational breakdown it signified.

For the Critical Theorists, the unprecedented atrocities ultimately necessitated new ways of thinking about politics and society. The moral and material collapse of modern civilization was so deep and fundamental that it demanded new categories of analysis and understanding, even experimentation with distinctly new epistemologies.⁸ This insight led the Critical Theorists to rethink the dialectics of rationality and irrationality, universality and particularism, and of modernity and antimodernity in the face of antisemitic unreason.⁹ While absorbing the aforementioned various philosophical and sociological traditions, the Frankfurt School sought to develop a new, reformulated materialist critique of the “return of the repressed” in the modern world—regressive residues, mythologies, and distortions seemingly mastered by modern enlightenment—that helped enable the rise of modern Jew hatred. In this lens, “modernity” is entangled in regressive tendencies negating and destroying the very freedom and hope for an emancipated humankind the enlightenment once promised. However, this new search for a sociologically and philosophically saturated critique of—and social research into—fascist myths and antisemitic reifications does not lead the theorists to propose isolated causal mechanisms to explain such phenomena by reducing societal complexity. This study seeks to bring afore and reconstruct the richness of the Frankfurt School’s insights into those regressive ideologies and the social psychology of modernity’s reactionary

discontents. The Critical Theorists, it is suggested here, are nurtured by a still to be fully appreciated variety of theoretical and empirical resources. The Frankfurt School hereby advances a self-reflexive critique of the societal dialectics of modern enlightenment, progress, social organization, and rationality—without ever rendering any of these concepts obsolete or to be abandoned altogether in an indeterminate critique.¹⁰ Against this backdrop emerges a multifaceted analysis of antisemitism as a social and political phenomenon that cannot be explained by “one” main cause, let alone be understood as any “inevitable” result of the dialectics of modernity.

A second misunderstanding is that Critical Theory’s conception of modern authoritarianism, which is a key element for their theorizing of modern antisemitism, is broadly similar to popular understandings of authoritarianism and conformism along the lines of the Milgram experiment. Indeed, the Frankfurt School’s multifaceted understanding of the problem should not be confused—though it often is—with the findings of the Milgram experiment. The latter has to a considerable extent influenced the popular perception of “authoritarian” behavior. In contrast to the Frankfurt School’s focus on the deep-seated, underlying societal potential and dynamics of authoritarian aggressions directed against those who are perceived as “deviating from the norm,” the Milgram experiment’s general claims about human behavior provide a kind of solace because they suggest that authoritarian domination can be well tamed or banned by institutional and legal mechanisms: if no one is put in an all-powerful position, the problem is likely to be solved. In Critical Theory’s perspective, authoritarianism cannot be conceived as “only” an institutional problem, that is: a

problem of political institutions engendering domination or limiting public freedom. While institutions are important, the Frankfurt School argues that there is no easy fix for the deeper, underlying problems of authoritarianism and antisemitism in modern society. The starting point is a critical understanding of society's dynamics and the complex interdependencies between individual and socio-psychological dispositions, on the one hand, and constitutive structural and political conditions, on the other hand. The Frankfurt School's complex take on authoritarianism in society and as a problem of social psychology is markedly different from, and adds crucial social and psychodynamic dimensions to, common understandings of the phenomenon. In Critical Theory's approach, authoritarianism cannot be reduced to blind obedience or modern functioning as a cog in the machine. Nor should it be reduced to dimensions of submission vis-à-vis authority or powerful leaders. In fact in the Frankfurt School's lens, as will be shown, latent authoritarian aggressions, which point to the readiness to attack "others" if socially unleashed, and projective stereotypical thinking that objectifies the social world and devalues perceived "out-groups," are defining features of authoritarianism. In such redefined, Freud-inspired conceptions of modern authoritarianism Critical Theory in part grounds its understanding of antisemitism's rise in the modern world.

Third, I argue that the Frankfurt School's theoretically and philosophically inspired work on antisemitism is linked to, and grounded in, serious, thoughtful, and often innovative (even though experimental and partly eclectic) empirical studies of this societal problem. This claim has been contested by several scholars who have called into question the interplay of empirical findings and theory.¹¹

But it is shown here that the Institute's empirical research grounded some of the Frankfurt School's key theoretical claims on authoritarianism and antisemitism, just as much of the empirical work was theory-driven—for instance, Adorno's contributions to *The Authoritarian Personality* were influenced by the "Elements of Antisemitism" in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. It is well established that some of their studies were partly motivated by the need for external funding in troubled times. Several Critical Theorists involved in empirical social research on antisemitism initially did not really want to put all their energy into pursuing this work. That notwithstanding, the Institute's empirical studies on antisemitism in the 1940s and 1950s were also crucial for the evolution of the way the Critical Theorists think about antisemitism, and for the development and transformation of the Frankfurt School at large. In the face of the Nazi terror against Jews, and as the persecution of the European Jews went on and accelerated, the analysis of antisemitism became increasingly central to Critical Theory's project. In many cases, the theoretical work of the Critical Theorists and the empirical studies on antisemitism interacted with one another, often mutually reinforcing claims in theory-driven research.¹² Indeed this link, represented in the study of antisemitism and authoritarianism, it is argued here, has led to critical junctures in the formation of "post-Marxist" Critical Theory that have profoundly reshaped this school of thought and its intellectual legacy. The Critical Theorists were convinced that sociological analyses of antisemitism—as well as the critique of social domination—fall short if they do not engage with its psychological origins and dynamics. In this view, the empirical work demonstrated antisemitism's deeply distorted, projective, "essentially

psychological, irrational nature."¹³ However, the study of antisemitism likewise could not and should not be reduced to solely psychological dimensions or individualistic psychology. For the Frankfurt School theorists such analysis also needs to be anchored in critical reflections of societal conditions, which (re)produce social and political domination and exclusion, and thus—even if to varying degrees—feed resentments in particular contexts and political communities, as well as within an emerging global society.

Fourth, I argue against the misunderstanding that Critical Theory's work on antisemitism in particular, and the Frankfurt School at large, is apolitical social philosophy and theorizing. This study seeks to show that while the Institute's members were primarily social theorists and philosophers, political issues and politico-cultural conditions were very much taken seriously. Political questions were profoundly absorbed into empirical, theoretical, and philosophical reflections. The Frankfurt School attributed a significant role to political mobilizations and politics of unreason in modern mass society, on the one hand, and democratic institutions and critical publics, on the other hand. Politics, in this understanding, often makes the difference with regard to the actual societal relevance of antisemitic, fascist, and racist phenomena. In fact, rather than blurring political distinctions, the Frankfurt School often alerts us to their significance—without, to be sure, cutting historical connections or simply isolating different regime types. The Frankfurt School scholars all too well understood critical differences between totalitarian antisemitism and the politics of extermination, on the one hand, and authoritarian dispositions or racist and antisemitic tendencies in democratic societies, on

the other.¹⁴ Moreover, their work pays attention to and advances the particular conditions, dynamics, and mobilizations of antisemitic hate speech and politics. This complicates the narrative about the Frankfurt School's alleged and often diagnosed "political void," that is: their presumed lack of interest in and understanding of political matters and institutions.¹⁵

Fifth, in contrast to deconstructivist and postmodern readings of the Frankfurt School, I argue throughout this book that Critical Theory's take on antisemitism (and racism, for that matter) is deeply universalistic in its outlook and, even if critically, indebted to the enlightenment project and cosmopolitan intentions.¹⁶ Rather than dismissing critical universal ideals, rights, and norms because they seem compromised by their historical origins and ideological use, they need to be resuscitated in view of particularistic regressions. Hence, the specific critique of antisemitism is linked to a universalistic critique of political and social domination in all its forms; whereby, however, antisemitism—rather than class antagonism, for instance—was rightly understood as the central "injustice" (Adorno) of the time of the Nazi genocide, and it has increasingly become a global challenge again in our time. The Critical Theorists advance a post-Kantian universalistic, cosmopolitan ethos that takes humanity as its reference point without subsuming individuals and particular, tortured bodies unambiguously under an abstract category and morality. They do so while criticizing the profoundly unjust conditions shaping the organization of contemporary societies, and all forms of irrational social domination, local and global, as well as unjustifiable but ongoing exclusions and persecutions of human beings. This critical cosmopolitan ethos does

not stop the Frankfurt School—and us—from making important distinctions when analyzing different social phenomena and their political and philosophical relevance, such as differences between racism and antisemitism, or between exploitation and genocidal persecution.

Because of these five misunderstandings, we have yet to fully appreciate and assess the theoretical impact of the Institute's studies and theorizing of antisemitism. This is especially true for its political and philosophical significance. Indeed, the Frankfurt School's work, this book argues, has important implications for self-reflective political theory and philosophy after Auschwitz that are worth engaging with.¹⁷ This study contributes to this discussion. While Critical Theory places the Holocaust—as it unfolded and thereafter—squarely at the center of theoretical reflection, such thinking remains at the margins until this day. The academic discipline of political theory “has found it possible to produce thousands upon thousands of pages about justice and morality as if Auschwitz had never existed and the complex events preceding and following it had never occurred.”¹⁸ And this neglected legacy of Auschwitz cannot be detached from the antisemitism question. In March 1941 Horkheimer wrote paradigmatically to British political philosopher Harold Laski: “Just as it is true that one can only understand antisemitism by examining society, it seems to me that it is becoming equally true that society itself can only be understood through antisemitism.”¹⁹ The second claim by Horkheimer (that society itself can only be understood through the study of antisemitism) may seem somewhat exaggerated today—just as it was fitting to see antisemitism as the central injustice through which one needs to understand global society at a time of the most

monstrous, unprecedented genocidal crimes against Jews. However, Jew-hatred remains an all too present challenge and constitutive element of modern global society, and important to the latter's understanding. Illuminating both society and the dynamics of anti-Jewish politics, a close analysis of the Frankfurt School's work on antisemitism offers a multitude of partly intriguing even if at times controversial arguments, findings, and insights.²⁰ Such analysis also carries significant philosophical implications for reflecting on "race" and, more generally, the conditions of critical thought today. Engaging with the Frankfurt School's work on antisemitism is thus not just a matter of historical interest in one of the twentieth century's most influential traditions in the humanities and social sciences. It is also a philosophical, sociological, and political inquiry in understanding pressing social phenomena of world society, which today witnesses the resurgence of social mythologies, antisemitism, racism, and renewed "politics of unreason."

Critical Theory in Context: The Origins of the Frankfurt School's Work on Antisemitism

To fully grasp the Institute's work, and how it has both shaped the study of modern Jew hatred and reshaped Critical Theorists' reflection about philosophy, politics and society, it is essential to understand how this research initially evolved in the 1930s and 1940s. The mainstays of the newly founded Institute for Social Research were hardly pioneers in the study of antisemitism on their own initiative; in fact, they were initially not interested but failed to see the relevance of antisemitism as a

problem and subject of inquiry. It was history that turned them into scholars of judeophobia. In particular, the history of Nazism, totalitarian fascism, and the genocide against the European Jews induced this change, which pushed the Frankfurt scholars into researching a problem that they did not consider as central to begin with. Their interest and ultimately the centrality they attributed to antisemitism as a modern social phenomenon developed over time and, at first in American exile, initiated a profound transformation of Critical Theory. The historical material circumstances and constellations required this evolution, which is why it is important to view the Frankfurt School's contributions, and some of the contradictions they produced, in historical context.

The path to Critical Theory's extensive studies on the problem and challenge of modern antisemitism is itself a complex one. It is anything but straightforward, and riddled with tensions. There are significantly conflicting interpretations both among the different members of the Institute (even among those of the inner circle) and between different periods that complicate this story. Even after the Critical Theorists had begun to recognize the relevance of antisemitism as a social problem in the 1930s, it was initially not a central issue to them and its explanation lacked empirical knowledge and theoretical sophistication. Some genealogical notes on the historical context of the Frankfurt School's turn to the subject are therefore due.²¹

The early Critical Theorists had begun to analyze the problem of authoritarianism in the late 1920s. Under the guidance of clinical psychoanalyst Erich Fromm, heading the Institute's department of social psychology, and Hilde Weiss, the Institute for Social Research conducted

the so-called Berlin survey among blue-collar and white-collar workers in 1929/30—that is, in the late Weimar Republic, at the advent of the Nazis' rise to power.²² Based on the analysis of more than 700 questionnaires (an often still overlooked groundbreaking document of modern social research), the Institute diagnosed a broad susceptibility to authoritarian ideas and ultimately fascist mass movements among the German working classes. Moreover, the Institute's inner circle—including Max Horkheimer, who had obtained the directorship of the Institute in 1930—intensely discussed the nature and scope of the Nazi movement and perceptively decided years before the Nazis actually took power that it was time to prepare exile and escape from Germany.²³ Still, these critical insights and decisions, inspired by the early work on authoritarianism, did not lead the Critical Theorists to really grasp the profoundly unsettling antisemitic and racist dimensions of the Nazi threat. At the time, Institute members neither saw antisemitism as the most pressing challenge, nor perceived it as deeply anchored in German society and its working class, or even as a genuine driving force of Nazism. Only while in American exile and as the Nazi genocide against the Jews of Europe evolved in full force did the Critical Theorists engage more profoundly with the subject, and began to empirically and theoretically reflect on its meaning.

There are more complications. Despite the early innovative work on social psychology and public opinion, the Institute's initial work on fascism was entangled in Marxist orthodoxy. To be sure, the Critical Theorists clear-sightedly recognized the potential for fascism in Germany before 1933, already producing groundbreaking work on the subject of authoritarianism while preparing

early for escape from the authoritarian Nazi rule that was foreshadowed on the historical horizon. They saw the writing on the wall. Yet up to the start of the Nazi war of annihilation, among leading members of the Institute a rather strictly economic interpretation of fascism held sway, alongside an almost naive, resilient faith in the emancipatory power of the German working class. Indeed, Horkheimer's 1939 essay "The Jews and Europe," the source of his much-cited dictum that anyone who does not want to speak about capitalism should keep silent about fascism, reduces antisemitism almost entirely to an instrument of class struggle and an aspect of capitalist crisis.²⁴ Moreover, as Philip Spencer observes, when Max Horkheimer "belatedly devoted some attention to the question (1939), he identified Jews as representatives of commercial capital, now doomed to disappear as capitalism entered a new phase."²⁵ Horkheimer's understanding of antisemitism at the time was that the attack on the Jews was only a means to an end, and that the German working class was the true target rather than among its agents. Following an orthodox Marxist line, the essay holds that antisemitism is a matter of unenlightened, false consciousness, a manifestation of the superstructure that serves merely to mask class antagonisms and at the same time to divert the attention of anticapitalist forces. In this view, the capitalist class, without being antisemitic itself, strategically exploits the Jew hatred that arises reflexively in the petty bourgeoisie due to its particular class position, in order to organize a mass following. The ideology of antisemitism, then, appears either as a nakedly cynical capitalist strategy or as a purely reflexive reaction to economic crises.²⁶ The specificity of antisemitic persecution is thereby elided, along with its

actual victims; since, in this view, antisemitism is not, first and foremost, an assault on the Jews, but rather on the German working class. If at the time Horkheimer was firmly convinced that the German working class looked on in disgust at the pogroms, and for this reason did not act as a political subject of antisemitism, he also tenaciously believed that "open aversion to the regime's anti-Semitism" is going to make itself heard "among the German masses."²⁷ While Horkheimer had already profoundly changed his view of antisemitism and the working class by 1941, even as late as 1944 Institute member Franz Neumann still avowed his conviction against all evidence and plausibility that "the German people, as paradoxical as it might seem, remain the least antisemitic of all."²⁸ However, Horkheimer's earlier standpoint leads to a historic misjudgment of Nazism's development and the inability to perceive antisemitism as an ideological driving force motivating the unfolding historical caesura of the Shoah that was in the making:

The hatred of Jews belongs to the ascendant phase of fascism. At most, antisemitism in Germany is a safety valve for the younger members of the SA. It serves to intimidate the populace by showing that the system will stop at nothing. The pogroms are aimed politically more at the spectators than the Jews. Will anyone react? . . . The great antisemitic propaganda is addressed to foreign countries.²⁹

Even though antisemitism had been addressed as a problem in some of Horkheimer's early work and in prior essays by Marcuse and Löwenthal written shortly after the Nazis had taken power, much of the early work of the

Institute fails to understand antisemitism as an autonomous phenomenon with its own dynamics.³⁰ Instead, as indicated, at least Horkheimer even reproduces some stereotypes about Jews, whereby Jews are unreflectively identified with capitalism.³¹ The history of orthodox and economistic Marxist approaches to the “Jewish question” resonates here. For the most part, they ignore antisemitism as a particular, powerful, and deep-seated ideology and take it as an epiphenomenon of secondary relevance: a merely ephemeral propaganda tool among many others that is used by the ruling class and supposed to be peculiarly extrinsic to the working class and its consciousness. Moreover, orthodox Marxist approaches often reproduce the identification of Jews with capitalism that can be traced back to Marx’s *On the Jewish Question*.

Be that as it may, the initially dominant notion that fear and manipulation driven by economic interest, rather than antisemitism and authoritarian bonding, integrated the dependent masses into the Nazi state was subsequently replaced by a multifaceted engagement with the problems of Nazism, modern totalitarianism, and antisemitism. In fact, the previous misperceptions were ultimately sharply critiqued by the core members and most affiliates of the Institute.³² Critical Theorists finally, even if they at first did so only reluctantly, came to grasp without any illusions the scope, magnitude, and significance of antisemitism that had taken hold in broad sectors of the German labor movement and society at large. At the critical juncture at the beginning of World War II and with accelerated anti-Jewish persecution, the Critical Theorists recognized that the decentered dissemination and rise of antisemitism from below and above was precisely what needed to be explained:

an antisemitism becoming manifest in propaganda and state-sponsored, organized as well as spontaneous forms of violence against Jews in Nazi Germany and beyond. Antisemitism, it had become clear to these scholars, was not simply a propaganda tool belonging to the ascendant phase of fascism; to the contrary, it turned out to be Nazism's apocalyptic, genocidal telos.

Thus, by the early 1940s, reports of the systematic destruction of European Jewry—the historical experience of the Nazi genocide—induced profound changes within critical social theory and in the thinking of its main exponents. Breaking new ground toward critical theorizing on modern and contemporary antisemitism would be part and parcel of this paradigmatic shift. The turn simultaneously implied a substantive transformation of Critical Theory of society in general. It also meant nothing less than the sincere search for a new social philosophy after the breakdown of civilization embodied by Auschwitz. The paradigmatic shift thereby signified the development of a new material theory of political modernity, subjectivity, and rationality reflecting the rise of Nazism and antisemitism in the modern world, which had enabled the catastrophe. This new direction of philosophy and social research was grounded in a renewed, more thorough interest in manifestations of social ideology, reified forms of consciousness, and antisemitism in particular; empirical and theoretical work on socio-psychological and political authoritarianism in light of Freudian theory; and a profound rethinking of the civilization process and the dialectics of modern society.

Most members or associates of the Institute for Social Research escaped this genocidal persecution by finding

refuge in America, though some barely made it across the Atlantic; Walter Benjamin, for that matter, did not.³³ Yet while America provided a safe haven for many refugees, including the scholars affiliated with the Institute for Social Research and its inner circle, Nazi Germany's racial antisemitism was coupled with the transnational rise of fascist movements. In addition, the spread of modern antisemitism also affected America domestically. The concurrent emergence of pro-Nazi groups, antisemitic demagogues, and the expansion of domestic racist mass organizations like the Ku Klux Klan—flourishing as a national organization with up to 4 million members since the mid-1920s—raised serious questions about fascist, racist, and antisemitic threats within the United States.³⁴ The Frankfurt School's work in exile, including its social research funded by the American Jewish Committee and the American Labor Committee, thus responded to two desiderata: first, the need to understand the origins of Nazism and the genocide against the Jews of Europe—and why Nazism's particularly fanatic, totalitarian, and murderous antisemitism could take hold in Germany; and second, the need to grasp the nature and scope of fascism's potential, including the lure of modern antisemitism, even *within* American democracy and ultimately worldwide.

Finally, after the Institute had resettled in Frankfurt after the Holocaust, antisemitism became once again a subject of concern and of scholarly analysis.³⁵ Only Horkheimer and Adorno left the United States and returned to Germany to continue the development of Critical Theory in the land of the perpetrators. Especially Adorno pursued this return with astonishing

optimism about the philosophical and educational prospects in post-Holocaust Germany and about the cohort of students he was going to teach—even though all of them had grown up in the Nazi system with its state-sponsored antisemitic paranoia.³⁶ Such optimism and enthusiasm would soon fade in the face of persistent resentments confronting Adorno at the university, and in view of a general social refusal to break with the Nazi past or challenge its legacies among German citizens.

The first major social research project after Horkheimer's and Adorno's return to Germany, the so-called Group Experiment, focused on the social processing of national and individual guilt in relation to the Nazi genocide and its legacy but also addressed antisemitism. The study indicated that deep-seated and widespread resentments against Jews continued. Antisemitic incidents in academia and the general public, propaganda offenses as well as violent acts against Jews, Jewish cemeteries, and institutions—this was the context in post-Holocaust Germany that fostered the Frankfurt School's continued work and theorizing about antisemitism in the 1950s and 1960s. While subject to several studies and essays, to be sure, antisemitism was less central to the reestablished Institute's project than to the previous work in exile.³⁷ But understanding antisemitism's social force, and the legacies of the antisemitic genocide for modern civilization and society, remained a key objective among the Frankfurt School theorists after the war—just as the Critical Theorists deemed it impossible to reflect on social theory after 1945 without thinking about the Holocaust and the possibility of previously unimaginable extreme evil that had materialized in the Nazi concentration camps.

Rediscovering Critical Theory: The Structure of the Book

The purpose of this book is to reconstruct, reread, and rediscover the Frankfurt School's understanding of antisemitism. The study seeks to systematically examine the Frankfurt School's multifaceted analysis of Jew hatred under conditions of political modernity, and the theoretical models employed to approach the "antisemitism question." The first generation of Frankfurt School theorists developed their claims and findings over a span of thirty some years, addressing totalitarian, "democratic," and "post-Holocaust" forms and motives. This inquiry engages in depth with influential books and essays, more marginal manuscripts and publications as well as empirical social research material produced in that period. While drawing connections between them and without losing sight of more general models and theoretical claims, the study looks systematically at political, ideological, social, and psychological dimensions. The goal is to conceptually explicate and clarify these dimensions—and corresponding theoretical arguments about the origins and potential power of antisemitism in modern society.

Taking the Critical Theorists' work on the subject seriously as a contribution to political and social theory hereby also means to move beyond mere exegetical interpretation and the history of ideas. Reconstructing their work implies critically reflecting the contradictions, tensions, and historical limitations of their analyses, and it also means extrapolating their theoretical potential for contemporary interdisciplinary studies and future

research. In pursuing both throughout all chapters, this study challenges some of the Frankfurt School's prominent critics and defenders alike.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to the Frankfurt School's theory of the subject. The chapter engages with the civilizational origins of subjectivity and, ultimately, of antisemitism. They are epitomized in the Odysseus of Homer's *Iliad*. In the Frankfurt School's lens, Homer's Odysseus represents the first model of the "bourgeois subject." It thereby also allegorically exemplifies the core of repressive, authoritarian subjectivity of modern times. Turning to Critical Theory's appropriation of the Freudian theory of the subject, the chapter reconstructs both Freud's key assumptions and their transposition into a materialist psychoanalytic theory of subjectivity grounding critical thinking about antisemitism. Such theory takes full account of the civic subject's repressive civilizational genesis, its entanglement in domination, and the precarious constitutive features that linger on in "late modern" and present forms of societal organization: the unreflected suppression of nature, irrational sacrifice, objectifications of the external world, and structural social pathologies in human relations. In this view, civilization's unresolved contradictions—inscribed in historical patterns of subjectivity and socialization—pave the way to authoritarian transformations and build the nucleus of antisemitic projections in modern society.

Indeed, these elements are absorbed and exacerbated in the modern "authoritarian" or "antidemocratic" personality syndrome, which the Critical Theorists diagnose to be the signature type of social character disposition in the postliberal era. Chapter 3 explores this syndrome in detail. It examines the Frankfurt School's complex social

psychology of modern authoritarianism—its conditions, traits, and dynamics. The analysis pays attention to conceptual nuances usually disregarded or overlooked and, in so doing, also brings to the fore inner tensions of the model and some of its presuppositions. Challenging conceptually flattened accounts of this model, however, the focus is on the theorists' account of the changing features and conditions of subjectivity in the modern world that are crystallized in the antidemocratic personality disposition. In this understanding, the transition from liberal to authoritarian subjectivity dictated by powers that are completely alien to the ego and escape (self)reflection, marks the conditions of late political modernity. The authoritarian subject is thus conceived as an ideal-type of modern subjectivity. While recognizing the need for individual psychology, for the Critical Theorists such type is first and foremost the expression of larger societal forces and trends: it is conceived as socially formed, situated, and—under particular political conditions—unleashed in fascist and antisemitic politics. Oscillating between authoritarian aggression and indifference toward others, the most striking element of the antidemocratic syndrome is not blind submission to authority; rather, it is the authoritarian, sadomasochistic love to hate. It correlates with susceptibility to hatred of others, and in particular to fascist and antisemitic ideology.

In light of these sociopsychological dispositions and susceptibilities, chapter 4 provides a thorough analysis of anti-Jewish stereotypes, and of antisemitism as a modern social and political ideology. Taking as its basis theoretical arguments provided by the Frankfurt School's studies in the 1940s, the chapter reconstructs the psychological and social functions of modern antisemitism. The main

thread of the argument is twofold. First, Critical Theory proposes that modern antisemitism is intimately linked to modern authoritarianism: the former corresponds with the latter, and both mutually reinforce each other. Serving particular needs, antisemitic stereotypes are projective in nature and can largely be explained by their sociopsychological functions. Antisemitism in this view correlates to a certain authoritarian, "stereopathic" mentality when coping with the world. Second, in addition to generalizable elements converging with other stereotypes or forms of racism, antisemitism is a specific social phenomenon. It ultimately does not *only* signify a set of anti-Jewish prejudices and stereotypes, or idiosyncratic hatred of Jews. At the heart of Critical Theory's analytical reflections is an understanding of antisemitism as an ideology that is profoundly contradictory, amorphous, free-floating and totalizing. It enables antisemites to project all the actual or perceived problems of the modern world to the Jews. Different from other ideologies antisemitism, it is argued, potentially offers a comprehensive, total "antimodern modern" world explanation: a universal conspiracy myth and social paranoia personifying all psychological and social malaise in the antisemitic image of "the Jew," but also projecting the repressed and denied longing for freedom that is tied to the modern enlightenment and its promises.

Chapter 5 delves into the social theory foundations of the Frankfurt School's approach to the antisemitism question. The chapter shows how Critical Theory's work is, on the one hand, anchored in a variety of sociological paradigms and traditions of social thought from Max Weber to Marx. On the other hand, the Holocaust profoundly reshaped critical social theorizing, pushing

it beyond Marx's framework—and toward a new materialist critique of social domination that reflects on its most extreme expressions: the exclusion and persecution of minorities and Jews. These new forms of terror are not derivatives of more fundamental social problems or contradictions. Rather, such violence is itself at the core of social irrationality that social theory must address. The chapter unfolds Critical Theory's substantive arguments about the societal origins of modern antisemitism by reconstructing their understanding of the dialectics of instrumental rationality, conceived as the ever-expanding societal logic of subjugation and objectification of the internal and external world. Establishing the presumed intimate affinity between this presumed social totality of objectified relations to political paranoia and antisemitism, the latter can also be understood as the modern product *and* the fetishized critique of modern capitalism and modernity as a whole. In light of these diagnosed social trends, the chapter concludes with Critical Theory's argument about modern transformations of authority structures in family and society as enabling conditions of authoritarianism and antisemitism.

These theoretical reflections culminate in chapter 6. It offers a close rereading of the "Elements of Antisemitism" that illuminates the richness of this until today underappreciated chapter of Horkheimer and Adorno's groundbreaking philosophical work *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. The "Elements" are at the heart of the Frankfurt School's philosophical and theoretical reflection on antisemitism. Written at the most murderous moments of the Shoah, they also provide the most comprehensive analytical discussion of antisemitic politics

of unreason. While my excursus on this final chapter of the *Dialectic* elucidates some of the problems and tensions of the Frankfurt School's account, it shows the significance of the "Elements" as arguably until this day the most instructive theory-guided resource for reflecting on antisemitism as a sociopolitical phenomenon. Drawing on a variety of insights and sources in view of the Nazi regime and the genocide against the European Jews, "Elements of Antisemitism" investigates different religious, social, economic, political, and psychological origins of modern judeophobia. Its historical limitations notwithstanding, the "Elements" hereby advance the discussion to an hitherto unprecedented level of theoretical sophistication. Offering several important theoretical trajectories, Horkheimer and Adorno's reflections refuse to explain antisemitic madness by one comprehensive theory or reduce the phenomenon to one explanatory account.

Countering the still common claim that Critical Theory has been disinterested in genuinely political issues and dimensions, chapter 7 turns to politics in a stricter sense. Even though these issues may have not been systematically developed, it is argued that politics is not Critical Theorists' "blind spot." The chapter first looks at the role the Frankfurt School attributes to totalitarian, authoritarian, and democratic conditions—institutions and political cultures—in enabling or disabling antisemitic politics. The chapter then proceeds to examine the Frankfurt School's early analysis of fascist and antisemitic demagoguery, as especially studied in the context of American hate speech in the 1940s. This research particularly focuses on political mobilization strategies operating in democratic political environments and politics.

In view of posttotalitarian political conditions, chapter 8 discusses Critical Theory's analysis of the Nazi legacy in Germany and elements of post-Holocaust, "secondary" antisemitism. These were primarily explored in empirical studies with various groups and strata of citizens in postwar Germany (the Group Experiment), conducted by Horkheimer and Adorno in context of the resettled institute and further elaborated in subsequent essays by both authors. At the core of these considerations are dynamics of guilt feelings in a perpetrator society responsible for the most horrible atrocities in the history of humankind. "Secondary antisemitism" is conceived as a particular form of judeophobia motivated by the wish to repress and split off Holocaust remembrance and national guilt from the collective memory of a tainted nation. Especially among those who strongly identify with the nation and have a desire to clear Germany off national guilt and responsibility, according to the Frankfurt School's findings there is a strong tendency to blame the Jews, perceived to represent the past by their very existence, for the unwanted memory of the German crimes. Such antisemitism is therefore seen as a reflection of the ideological and sociopsychological aftereffects of Nazi rule, and of the societal failure to critically process the Nazi past. The Frankfurt School's insights into the problem and dynamics of guilt and national legacies, it is argued here, might help explain some distinct aspects of contemporary antisemitism as well; just as this work raises broader questions of societal and individual guilt and responsibility as a factor in social psychology and politics.

The concluding chapter 9 reflects on the relevance of the Frankfurt School's research and theorizing—more than half a century later—in today's world. Taking account of

the historical limitations of their pathbreaking original work, the chapter discusses what Critical Theory can contribute to our understanding of contemporary forms and dynamics of antisemitism—as well as related authoritarian challenges and politics of unreason in the “partially globalized” societies of the twenty-first century.³⁸ In so doing, the project of rediscovering the Frankfurt School points to its potency as a resource for critical social research and political thinking in our time.

CHAPTER 2

FROM ODYSSEUS TO POSTLIBERAL SUBJECTIVITY

Revisiting Freud and the Civilizational Genesis of Social Domination

Nowhere is Critical Theory's paradigmatic turn to combining social theory with Freudian psychoanalytic theory more striking than in the study of antisemitism. Indeed, the social and political transformations that the Frankfurt School theorists experienced in Europe—the rise of fascism, Nazism, and “totalitarian antisemitism” (FP 79)¹ in the late 1920s and 1930s—are arguably the central cause of this paradigmatic reorientation. The “eclipse of reason” happened in the midst of modern, rational, “enlightened” civilization. The political developments forced the members of the Institute of Social Research to escape from the European continent and seek refuge overseas even before the advent of Nazi rule, which several Frankfurt theorists had predicted, and this

profoundly shaped their thinking about irrationality and the role of psychology in understanding modern society at large.

From afar, the Critical Theorists witnessed many German citizens' apparently willful authoritarian subjugation to a repressive regime. The scholars started to cope with mass expulsions, antisemitic persecutions, and genocidal violence committed by their former fellow countrymen, neighbors, and colleagues. Increasingly pushing the theorists in exile to recognize the obviously and ultimately undeniably irrational elements of Nazi ideology and mass behavior, the totalitarian political developments reinforced the initial project among the Frankfurt School theorists that social theory and research needed to be combined with social psychology. Attributing high salience and significance to the latter, Critical Theory thus evolved in the 1940s and henceforth especially by revisiting and appropriating Freudian theory as a critical lens on societal madness. The appropriation of this lens really happened across the board. The Critical Theorists hereby sought to advance a better understanding of modern subjectivity, its civilizational origins, and the particular material context of modern society itself which had presumably induced changes in dominant social personality types and societal behavior.

In so doing, for the Critical Theorists no less was at stake than actualizing critical theorizing in the face of massive negative social and political transformations that had led to world war and mass atrocities. This required developing a new, or profoundly reshaped, Critical Theory of modern social and political domination—and of modern irrationality. In this sense, the full-fledged “Freudian turn” of the Frankfurt School theorists implies that they began to view

the rise of authoritarianism and antisemitism as *symptoms* of the irrationality and prevailing patterns of social domination of the time—while in turn suggesting that we need to understand the unfolding, eminently sociopsychological dynamics of political modernity if we are to grasp the nature and core features of society in the twentieth century. Consequently, both theoretically guided social research and interlinked theories on authoritarianism and antisemitism took center stage.²

This chapter reconstructs the Critical Theorists' psychoanalytically grounded understanding of subjectivity in view of its precarious constitutive features and repressive civilizational genesis as a key element of their theorizing of antisemitism. In order to grasp Critical Theory's conception of the emergence of *modern* authoritarianism and antisemitism, presumably shaped by transformations and continuities at the level of both individuals and society, we must first trace authoritarianism's social-psychological origins in the historical construction of the subject. Only against this background can we fully understand the historical changes toward modern authoritarian personality dispositions that the Critical Theorists diagnose as increasingly prevalent in the administered world of postliberal modern society; dispositions that allegedly make people especially susceptible to fascism, racism, and antisemitism.

The chapter revisits Freud and the way the Critical Theorists' appropriate Freudian theory, transposing it into a critical, materialistic psychoanalytic theory of subjectivity.³ Such theory is reflective of the civilizational genesis and precarious historical dynamics of subjectivity. The chapter thus proceeds by reconstructing central concepts of the Freudian theory of subjectivity and

civilization, which serve as the key reference point for critical-theoretical rethinking of the relationship between individual and society. In a second step, the chapter looks at the Critical Theorists' critical reception of Freud. This grounds their conception of the sociopsychological origins of modern authoritarianism and antisemitism in the "civil" or "civilized" constitution of the human subject in ancient times. Such subjectivity is allegorically and paradigmatically epitomized in the Odysseus of Homer's *Iliad*. In Critical Theory's lens, Odysseus represents the first model of the "bourgeois subject." This model points to civilizational continuities of surplus repression and domination in forms of bourgeois socialization. In the Frankfurt School's view, these material conditions linger on in the postbourgeois context of late modernity. The resilience of such social domination, suppression of nature, and irrational self-sacrifice in all hitherto existing societies, as reflected in the constitutive forms of subjectivity and pathologies analyzed by Freud, presumably contains the nucleus of antisemitic projections and paves the way to authoritarian transformations of subjectivity in modern society. The repressive and blind civilizational origins are absorbed in the modern "authoritarian personality syndrome" that Critical Theory diagnoses as typical for the postliberal era. Against this backdrop, the subsequent chapter discusses the social psychology of modern authoritarianism and its presumed correlating susceptibility to fascism and antisemitism. Building on the analysis of the civilizational origins, that chapter explores the theorists' account of the changing features and conditions of subjectivity in the modern world: the transition from bourgeois liberal subjectivity to an authoritarian subjectivity dictated by powers that are completely alien

to the ego—and the implications of this presumed transition for critical theorizing of modern authoritarianism, and of antisemitism in particular.

Reconstructing Freud: Conflicts of Culture and the Self

Initially inspired by the critical psychoanalytic work of Institute member Erich Fromm, all Frankfurt School theorists early on deepened their interest in psychoanalytic theorizing of subjectivity and an “analytical social psychology.” It is the task of such an analytical social psychology, for Adorno, to “reveal determinant social forces in the innermost mechanisms of the individual.”⁴ This represents an extension into the social realm of Freud’s project of shedding light on the unconscious driving forces behind human actions. Indeed, at the level of the subject, the Critical Theorists take the Freudian structural model of the psyche and the Freudian theory of the subject as their points of departure. The latter is an essentially dialectical theory, insofar as it conceives the antagonistic psychic and cultural forces to which the individual is subjected as mediated contradictions that form a dialectical unity.

Freud’s structural model holds that at the presocial starting point of every individual’s ontogeny there is only the *id*, consisting solely of unmediated drives—beginning with *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud divides them into life drives and death drives—that are acquired at birth and bear on bodily organization.⁵ The second part of the personality structure, in this model, is the *ego*, which mediates between the *id* and the outside

world and ensures self-preservation. The ego is the first entity that confronts the id and transforms the impulse toward immediate gratification of the drives into a self-preserving impulse, thereby gaining mastery over the demands of the drives. Like the id, the ego pursues pleasure and seeks to avoid unpleasurable sensations that would interrupt the absolute rule of the pleasure principle. In this respect, the ego is not divided from the id, but rather continues it “inwards, without any sharp delimitation, into an unconscious mental entity”;⁶ as Freud writes, “the boundaries of the ego are not constant.”⁷ At the same time, the ego mediates between the id and the external world, the demands of reality; “originally the ego includes everything, later it separates off an external world from itself.”⁸ This capacity for making distinctions is the first step in establishing the “reality principle” and guarding against unpleasurable sensations that could threaten the ego from the external world.⁹ The goal of the ego is the maximal gratification of needs, yet to that end the ego must rein in the id and bring its demands into line with reality, in order to avoid pain, rejection, and sanctions by reality, which sets limits. The ego is capable of gaining and applying knowledge through experience, of learning and self-regulating; it checks the demands of the drives, but also grants them conditional admittance or channels them into mediated activities, that is, sublimates them. In this view, every self is constituted by means of repression and redirection of the drives, as well as by accommodation to reality.

The third agency standing against the instinctual demands of the id is the *superego*, which bears the mark of parental influence from the dependent phases of the emergent human being, as well as the influence of social

institutions and ideals. An internalized superego is essential to the successful regulation of the ego, to autonomous self-monitoring by the subject, but also serves as a mediating factor of cultural socialization, that is, the subject's assimilation to societal norms and authorities. For Freud, the internalized superego, integrating the cultural superstructure, is the agency that prevents a regression to the "man's natural aggressive instinct"¹⁰—the primary manifestation of the death drive (Thanatos)¹¹—and a return to the purely instinctual "state of nature," the Hobbesian "homo homini lupus."¹² At the same time, the forces of the superego, which direct aggression inward, themselves spring, in part, from the destruction drive. Freud emphasizes, moreover, that the ego should arise in place of the id and the superego, that the ego must emancipate itself from the unconscious forces¹³ to form an autonomous, integrated, and conscious self that mediates between pleasure and reality principles, between instinctual needs and social norms, between id and superego. For Critical Theory, drawing on Freud, "successful" ego development is characterized by a balance of the demands of id and superego and a capacity for mediation and sublimation, that is to say the redirection or "ennoblement" of the drives.¹⁴ Ego development is the source of consciousness, but in a bourgeois society it remains precarious and it can founder on unconscious antagonisms: a weak ego, unfit for reality, overpowering or zealously repressed drives, and a rigid, archaic superego.

In any case, the superego functions as "an aggressiveness which [has] been displaced inwards,"¹⁵ integrating cultural norms and pressures into the subject and exercising a repressive role vis-à-vis the id and the narcissistic demands of the ego, restraining the egocentric power of

the latter. The conscience, as an essential cultural force and a source of both “civility” and ethical-moral behavior, is a function, in this view, of the superego. The function of the conscience “consists in keeping a watch over the actions and intentions of the ego and judging them, in exercising a censorship. The sense of guilt, the harshness of the super-ego, is thus the same thing as the severity of the conscience. It is the perception which the ego has of being watched over in this way. . . . [T]he need for punishment . . . is an instinctual manifestation of the part of the ego, which has become masochistic under the influence of a sadistic super-ego; it is a portion, that is to say, of the instinct towards internal destruction present in the ego, employed for forming an erotic attachment to the super-ego.”¹⁶

Freud locates key processes for the integration of the three agencies and the development of the personality in the Oedipal phase, although other pre- and post-Oedipal stimuli contribute to the “disengagement of the ego from the general mass of sensations.”¹⁷ It is in the Oedipal phase, according to Freud, that the first significant step toward individuation, toward the ego formation of the individual, is achieved: a process in which external pressure (compelling the renunciation of impulses) can bring about an important restructuring of the life of the drives toward “good” social behavior, toward altruism.¹⁸ For Freud, the establishment of the superego—the internalization of external compulsion and external authority—is largely a legacy of the Oedipus complex, pointing to the most important phase in the constitution of the ego. For the male child, in this view, the father is the sexual rival in the genital-sexual desire for the mother that arises in the genital stage. The rivalry that accompanies

the quest for narcissistic omnipotence and possession of the first love object—the mother—is, for Freud, the source of rebellion, even animosity against the paternal authority that asserts its power over the child, who experiences it as a renunciation: from the point of view of the child, the omnipotent father stands between the mother and the child's narcissistic as well as sexual satisfaction. Through fear of authority, made concrete, for Freud, in the threat of castration, the child is compelled to relinquish his original dependency on the mother and the "symbiotic" relationship with her, and thereby to internalize paternal authority.

This resolution of the Oedipus complex, which in every case represents a tremendous degree of narcissistic injury, frustration, and rejection, functions, according to Freud, by means of identification with the omnipotent entity, the superior rival: the unassailable authority of the father is assimilated by the individual.¹⁹ The menacing superiority of the father and fear of him are transformed into internal fear and authority, and renunciation of the drives is then achieved in reaction to this fear. At the same time, identification with the father provides a partial, vicarious gratification of the subject's libidinal desires. Most importantly, however, the affront that the father's power represents, as well as the subject's renunciation of aggression—the unfulfilled aggression toward the father—lead to powerful aggressive impulses in the subject. Each instance of aggression that cannot be realized is incorporated by the superego, heightening the aggression toward the ego;²⁰ therefore, the consolidation of the superego plays an essential role in the formation of the ego, but oppresses the ego at the same time. In this sense, then, the formation of the superego remains

ambivalent with regard to the economy of the drives. The rigor of external authority, supplanted and partially replaced by the superego, is perpetuated internally in the subject. Yet while the renunciation of the drives fulfills the requirements superimposed by direct pressure from an external authority whose love one does not want to lose, the superego continues to generate anxiety and guilt feelings, because instinctual desires cannot be hidden from the superego:

Thus, in spite of the renunciation that has been made, a sense of guilt comes about. This constitutes a great economic disadvantage in the erection of a superego, or, as we may put it, in the formation of a conscience. Instinctual renunciation now no longer has a completely liberating effect; virtuous continence is no longer rewarded with the assurance of love. A threatened external unhappiness—loss of love and punishment on the part of the external authority—has been exchanged for a permanent internal unhappiness, for the tension of the sense of guilt.²¹

The “resolution” of the Oedipus complex, in this view, amounts to the transformation of authoritative validation or the fear of authority through the establishment of an internalized superego. It is responsible for the conscience and the sense of guilt for lingering unhappiness in the social world: the sense of “discontent” in civilization. But the superego also promises self-regulation. Despite the narcissistic injury that the ego suffers from the “ban on love,” the ego emerges stronger, in the Freudian model, from a “successful” resolution of the Oedipus complex. With the establishment of the superego, the ego

acquires a self-contained regulating mechanism; it can identify with the larger omnipotence of the father, and through renunciation, dissociation, and desensitization toward the demands of the drives, the ego gains autonomy vis-à-vis the mother, thus overcoming dependency. Because the child must give up its identification with the mother and her ego ideal (which is replaced with the father's) and detach from the pre-Oedipal love object, it must, over time, build new (genital) object relations in order to achieve satisfaction. External compulsion and imposed renunciation of the drives are supplanted by self-control, unmediated urges are replaced by independent consciousness.²² Ultimately, there is a remainder of rebellious impulses vis-à-vis the father, and these serve as another basis for independence. On the whole, according to Freud, the process of forming the conscience inevitably leads to emotional ambivalence with regard to (paternal) authority. Unassailable authority is secretly hated for its aggression and, at the same time, loved and revered. The sense of guilt and the emergence of conscience are, for Freud, expressions of the conflict inherent in this ambivalence, the "eternal struggle between Eros and the instinct of destruction or death."²³

The internalization of authority and turning-inward of aggression are thus not the only forces that contribute to the conscience. Freud also views love toward the authority figure as an essential prerequisite, without which a sense of guilt cannot be firmly established. The subject does not want to lose the beloved figure, identifies with it, and yet harbors aggression that—whether or not it is acted out—produces feelings of guilt. Fromm, in his reception of Freud, emphasizes the moment of force and the repressive character of this internalization: the

coercive aspect of the conscience. The child is left with no alternative than to cast its libidinal energies onto the authority figure, which meets it with aggression, thus bringing forth a sadomasochistic drive structure in which the libido is yoked to the destruction drive. Internalization per se, for Freud the precondition for progress and peace, is historically bound, for Fromm, to authority in bourgeois society and could vanish with the abolition of this social formation.²⁴

With regard to the development of the female child, Freudian theory holds that, in contrast to men, women never truly overcome the Oedipus complex, but retain the libidinal connection to the father despite the incest prohibition. A woman, in this model, is denied the possibility of identifying with the father as an independent cultural actor endowed with sexual and economic power and self-determination; her superego cannot achieve the degree of strength and independence that would lend "cultural significance."²⁵ In her critical reception of Freud, Jessica Benjamin has noted that this individuation process has less to do with genital sexuality as such that would lead to castration anxiety in the male and penis envy in the female child, than with the penis as a social-unconscious symbol and expression of power relations and dependency in patriarchal society—of the autonomy and power that are represented by paternal authority. This authority appears to be free of the mother and capable of forcing a detachment, of performing actively and independently of the mother and exerting (sexual) power and domination. Identification with the father, accordingly, is also a socially produced identification with and participation in a particular type of autonomy formation, one constituted by means of separation from all attachments,

by means of power. In this reading, the Oedipal phase in patriarchal society is characterized, for both sexes, by a pursuit of individuation that entails identification with the father who represents a particular, socially formed model of autonomy that is based solely on detachment, submissiveness, and renunciation of the drives and, at the same time, radiates omnipotence.²⁶ In this view, the little girl seeks to become independent and to participate in power by orienting her genital sexuality toward the male parent. Benjamin perceives this as “identificatory love” for the masculine representative of power. For the female child, however, such identification quickly comes up against limits; like a boy, she learns renunciation of the narcissistic libido and the incest prohibition, but she might also experience libidinal violations that weaken the child’s autonomy and perpetuate the Oedipus complex.

Early on, Erich Fromm laid programmatic emphasis on the notion that the father represents, first and foremost, (unlimited) social power. Fromm contends that the father is a reflection of authority in society as a whole; this is not a timeless or incidental relationship, but instead grounded in the authority structure specific to bourgeois society.²⁷ Internalized and secured through this process and within the context of this authority structure as a masochistic redirection of aggression, the superego plays a prominent role in the development of the ego. It is as contradictory and ambivalent as bourgeois subjectivity in general, containing both a repressive and an emancipatory aspect. Based on an internalization of social domination and norms of renunciation and, in that respect, hostile to the drives, the superego is, at the same time, nourished by the aggression or death drive. As an unconscious driver, a strong superego can forcefully restrain and

intimidate the ego in its reactions and its consciousness. At the same time, it grants the bourgeois subject autonomy against unmitigated repression. Herbert Marcuse described such emancipatory potential of the superego within the context of the bourgeois subject's constitution as follows: "The Superego, in censoring the unconscious and in implanting conscience, also censors the censor because the developed conscience registers the forbidden evil act not only in the individual but also in his society."²⁸ Conversely, the loss of conscience produces a consciousness that "facilitates acceptance of the misdeeds of this society."²⁹ The loss of conscience and the capacity for experience

is the token of declining autonomy and comprehension. Sublimation demands a high degree of autonomy and comprehension; it is mediation between the conscious and the unconscious, between the primary and secondary processes, between the intellect and instinct, renunciation and rebellion. In its most accomplished modes, such as in the artistic *oeuvre* sublimation becomes the cognitive power which defeats suppression while bowing to it.³⁰

As Freud recognized, resolutions of the Oedipus complex that are based on renunciation and the internalization of domination, and ego development founded on repression continually create new problems, all the more when they bind with superfluous societal domination. The process of superego internalization and identification with the father represents an ordeal of suffering for every subject, at once creating the ego and hardening and sado-masochistically abusing it: the subject becomes its own

disciplining authority. But internalized violence remains violence just the same. Fear, guilt feelings, and submissiveness merge. The parental agents of omnipotence are simultaneously loved and feared, and Eros—the life and love drive—is thus linked to aggression in the individuation process. The crushing of the self by paternal omnipotence creates a continual sense of rejection and narcissistic injury that is reproduced whenever societal domination and authority go undisrupted. At the same time, the absolute idealization of parental authority and power looms over the subject, so that resistance seems difficult. And sometimes even this “resolution” fails almost entirely. When early object relations are greatly impaired, such as when a child experiences unmitigated aggression—from an extremely authoritarian father, for instance—that it must repress within itself vis-à-vis the all-powerful authority figure, and the child receives no caring support, it is nearly impossible for authority to be internalized and integrated into the ego. Those who have not experienced love, according to Freud, are unable to establish, or fully establish, a superego within the ego, resulting in a severe deformation of the life of the drives. The subject either internalizes a renunciation of the drives or the drives are redirected; a repudiation of the libido, in turn, unleashes aggression that is directed inward, whether by the force of the authority figure or out of fear of the loss of the authority figure’s love.³¹ Without the experience of love, Freud maintains, the mediation between ego and superego is negated, so that the superego can scarcely anchor in the subject as a distinct moral agency. Instead, it remains alien to the ego and aggression—the subject’s own aggression as well as aggression suffered by the subject—is predominantly projected directly outward. At the same

time, the internalized aggression of the conscience conserves the aggression of the external authority.

Excessive external aggressions can thus lead not only to emotional blockage and particularly latent aggressivity, but also to a failure of the superego to integrate with the ego, leading either to a lack of conscience or plaguing the individual with strong, unconscious guilt feelings and the need for punishment. Such hostility toward the ego cannot be assuaged solely by turning inward, but pushes its way out, so to speak. By way of an extreme renunciation of the libido that is not compensated by love, the needs of the (object) libido are thrown back onto the self and converted back to an overly narcissistic libido. If identification with authority is unsuccessful and authority remains external, the superego and the ego regress to an archaic state, a primitive, weak ego structure, and moral decisions and consciousness continue to be dependent on external authorities. Now the superego appears as alien as the ego and the id. Narcissistic desire remains fixed on the original sense of omnipotence, yet the subject is constantly reminded how small it is—an unbearable antagonism of the unconscious drives that the subject might later seek to overcome by means of collective-narcissistic extremisms and fantasies of omnipotence and persecution. In principle, however, Freud recognizes that this structural weakness of the ego is not limited to personality disorders but affects the precarious subject with its psychological contradictions in general.

Despite the emancipatory potential of internalization, consciousness, and sublimation (or “ennoblement of the drives”), the constitution of the bourgeois subject is inscribed, for Freud, not only with the problem

of domination and renunciation, but with questions of narcissism and inferiority. Freud's eminence as a dialectician becomes evident, for Adorno, in his recognition of the double-edged quality of this process of subject constitution, in the fact that Freud "allows contradictions to stand unresolved and disdains all pretenses of systemic harmony when the thing itself is internally divided."³² Here, the "thing itself," for Adorno, refers both to the bourgeois subject and to the antagonistic social reality in which the subject is embedded.

Like aggression that originates in the superego and represents transfigured fear and domination, aggression that is projected outward is permanently set on both devaluing the self and "reducing the world, objectifying it, subjugating it."³³ At the same time, such aggression is the expression of a striving for omnipotence and dominion, which in turn represents a manifestation of the Freudian death drive. This destructive striving, which points to severe narcissistic injury, survives the Oedipal phase because it is an unmediated expression of the "unenobled" drive. As much as through the Oedipal resolution itself, the substitution of paternal omnipotence for the "dangerous" maternal omnipotence that seems to prohibit independence, is achieved by way of the narcissistic infliction of hurt. The cycle of omnipotence and injury is thus perpetuated along with the cycle of renunciation of the drives, domination, and aggression.

Not all aggression can be internalized and directed against the self; a portion of the energy of the destruction drive is always directed sadistically toward others. The living organism, Freud tells us, "preserves its own life, so to say, by destroying an extraneous one."³⁴ Some more than others, but every subject participates in the cycles

of domination and aggression (inwardly and outwardly directed) and of narcissistic injury and omnipotence fantasies. Fear, powerlessness, and inferiority—elements of psychic life formed in the context of the subject's constitution—are always coupled with aggression. Damaged narcissism and feelings of inferiority, intimately linked to the deflation of the (masculine) armored self, promote aggression that continually breaks through and a striving for dominion that itself is an unmediated expression of the destruction drive. I discuss in the next chapter how the dialectic of the hardening of the ego and the violence of modern society is intensified, according to Critical Theory, as social conditions weaken human beings and their subjectivity and bring forth new, even more acute forms of psychosocial impoverishment and regression.

Freud Meets Odysseus: Civilizational Origins of Authoritarianism and the Constitution of Subjectivity

The “integrated self” is based on the principle of repression of the drives, the sometimes boundless subjugation of the libido and blind internalization of repressive social norms. In this realization, according to Adorno, lies the radical moment of Freudian theory. By focusing on the libido as a presocial force, Freudian theory can address, “phylogenetically as well as ontogenetically, the points . . . where the social principle of domination coincides with psychological principle of repression of the drives.”³⁵ Even the conscience, which, when completely integrated with the ego, represents an emancipatory moment of

bourgeois subjectivity—"socializing" the drives, hemming in their unmediated "execution," and redirecting them from the object they would dominate—is based, for both Freudian and Critical Theory, in domination: in the sadomasochistic operation of aggression, in the assimilation of the dominant social norms. In a competitive society, the self is consolidated in the struggle for survival against others onto whom danger is projected; it submits to the reality principle and to societal demands for conformity, conveyed through the superego. Consciousness itself, which alone seems to point the way out of mythically eternalized cycles of domination, which might even be in the position to annul domination and replace it with reason, has its origins in power: the social refinement of the subject is based in exclusionary practices vis-à-vis the other, and in social violence and the social-cultural pressure that have burdened the individual since time immemorial, compelling self-discipline.³⁶

In contrast to Critical Theory, however, Freud supposedly reifies these antagonisms: the struggle between Eros and Thanatos, between superego and id, between society and the principle of the drives that must be repressed, as well as the principle of human competition. Critical Theory sees this as bound to a particular, bourgeois form of socialization, rather than historically inevitable. For Freud the impoverishment of the subject, which according to Adorno is already in play at the moment of the subject's constitution, becomes an "ontological property."³⁷ Though he problematizes its powerful function in the psyche, Freud proclaims the superego as a source of psychic and social autonomy in the development of the masculine subject, and indeed as a precondition for cultural progress in general.³⁸ But beginning with Fromm's

early studies on authoritarianism, for Critical Theory the superego comes to be seen above all as a guarantor of inner subordination to external powers—not only to the father, but to authoritarian social structures at large (even though, as indicated, the Frankfurt theorists also recognize the superego's emancipatory qualities).³⁹

Moreover, in contrast to the Frankfurt School, Freud sees social domination as universal and inevitable, because without it, the death drive—the drive toward nothingness and loss of tension—would turn wholly inward and destroy life itself. Freud, failing to recognize the historical character of the contradictory condition of subjectivity, must thus ultimately objectify domination and aggression (inwardly and outwardly directed), Adorno argues, as well as the subjugation of the libido. Freud is doing so, without critical reflection, at both the individual and the civilizational level. Adorno observes:

On one hand, [psychoanalysis] regards the libido as the psyche's intrinsic reality; its satisfaction appears as positive, and its renunciation, because it leads to sickness, appears as negative. Yet on the other hand, civilization, which demands renunciation, is accepted, if not utterly uncritically, then at best with resignation. In the name of the reality principle, [psychoanalysis] justifies the spiritual sacrifice of the individual, without ever subjecting the reality principle itself to rational examination.⁴⁰

For Adorno, then, the ego is to be understood as both a psychic phenomenon and a product of historical forces external to the psyche. It is, on one hand, an expression of libidinal impulses and countervailing processes of

repression and, on the other, a manifestation of a socially and historically antagonistic reality.⁴¹

For Critical Theory, the psychology of the subject thus cannot be understood apart from an analysis of the modern monadological structure of society that atomizes and alienates human beings, but which Freud takes as a given.⁴² The ego's interest in autonomy and self-affirmation collides, according to Adorno, with the need for self-assertion against the powerful pressure to conform in modern, bourgeois society. Under these specific social conditions and in the repressive culture that accompanies them, the ego is coerced into rigid conformity. The renunciations that this requires are not rationally comprehensible, because the immanent logic of domination and exploitation is itself irrational. The organization of society and its labor persists in structurally denying the pleasure principle and enforcing the primacy of the repressive reality and achievement principles; it is chiefly the destruction drive that achieves satisfaction, regardless of other needs that the productive forces of the age have the potential to satisfy. Ultimately, even the well "integrated" liberal individual, equipped with consciousness and conscience, is only able to internalize the norms, taboos, and values that arise from the dominant society; the fact that the internalized morality of the superego is dependent on questionable societal values, which are imprinted on the individual, is not problematized by Freud. Instead, he only one-sidedly affirms civilization and its cultural norms, expressed in the superego as "the vehicle of tradition and of all the time-resisting judgements of value,"⁴³ as a force for peace and progress.

Driven by society to a state of mere survival, the ego, according to Adorno, can only cope with the surrender of its

autonomy and the renunciation of the libido by deflecting, in an unconscious manner, the perpetual narcissistic injuries inflicted upon it by this state of affairs. Such a defense against threats to the ego's sense of self-worth, already weakened by social forces, runs counter to any conscious analysis of social repression. Because the renunciations and often senseless behavioral demands are less feared by the ego than failure to survive in the social context, the bourgeois subject does not rebel against them. Thus, the integration accomplished by the ego remains tied to external authorities, and the ego's resistance against them is largely crushed. The bourgeois self is a priori in an aporetic situation: it desires self-consciousness, but this cannot be attained under the conditions of omnipresent social pressure and the narcissistic injuries that they reproduce. It desires self-assertion in society, but that is not to be had without, on one hand, blind submission and a hardening of the ego and its libidinal foundations and, on the other, dissociation and domination vis-à-vis the concrete other.⁴⁴

Adorno admonishes Freud for failing to take the ego's paradoxical position vis-à-vis social relations into account in explaining this "double position of the ego,"⁴⁵ the source of ego weakness. Instead, Freud is charged with only seeing the aspect of intrapsychic conflict. By leaving them out of the picture, Freud reifies the social and historical conditions that block the gratification of the drives and narcissistic satisfaction, that disallow nonrepressive sublimation, ego strength without self-protective armoring, and social solidarity without "surplus-repression."⁴⁶ The genesis of the subject is never conceived as a historically situated process. Consequently, Freud cannot understand, in an analytical sense, the distinction between socially necessary labor and oppression that serves only

the culture of domination. Ultimately, the point for Critical Theory, despite the esteem for ego strength and self-critical reason it shares with Freud, is to overcome the repressive aspect of Freudian theory. In the evolution of civilization, which is built on repression, Freud sees only "a strengthening of the intellect, which is beginning to govern instinctual life, and an internalization of the aggressive impulses, with all its consequent advantages and perils."⁴⁷ Freud insists, moreover, that "whatever fosters the growth of civilization works at the same time against war."⁴⁸ Civilization, in this view, serves solely to curtail the aggression drive by repressing it.⁴⁹

With such a model, the dynamics of societal leaps into barbarism remain largely unintelligible. Freud positions civilization unproblematically against what we might call the social oppression drive, which, as it relates to civilization, appears in Freud's writings as the destruction drive. With regard to the unconscious Freud is in accord, Adorno maintains, with the typical "bourgeois contempt of instinct which is itself a product of precisely the rationalizations that he dismantled." Freud fails to recognize the "Janus-character" of the dominant culture. "As a specialist in psychology, he takes over the antithesis of social and egoistic, statically, without testing it. He no more discerns in it the work of repressive society than the trace of the disastrous mechanisms that he has himself described. . . . In Freud's work, however, the dual hostility towards mind and pleasure, whose common root psycho-analysis has given us the means for discovering, is unintentionally reproduced."⁵⁰

The masculine subject, which Freud ultimately celebrates as a vehicle of civilization, and holds as superior to women, is at the center of critique. Critical Theory

views this patriarchal and purpose-directed subject also as a potential vehicle for barbarism. Humanity's "ideal condition"—a conscious and collective structuring of social life—cannot, in Critical Theory, be unproblematically conceived, as it is in Freud, as "a community of men who had subordinated their instinctual life to the dictatorship of reason."⁵¹ To be sure, Marcuse in particular sees in a different, utopian rule of reason "a matter of the sublimated life instincts, Eros, of intelligence becoming responsible and autonomous, striving to liberate life from dependence on unmastered and repressive forces."⁵² But the genesis of the bourgeois subject, as both Freud and Critical Theory depict it, is inscribed with an essentially antagonistic drive structure. Both Freud and Critical Theory are mindful at every step "that violence is what is internalized by the individual."⁵³

Autonomy in its bourgeois form is conceivable here only at the price of exclusion and domination vis-à-vis internal and external nature as well as other subjects. Such autonomy as self-preservation depends on forms of domination that are defined in sharp opposition to the "other," who is alien to one's own identity; it cannot permit an awareness of the mutual imbrication of subject and object. Even erotic goals, the instinctive needs of Eros (the life drive),⁵⁴ are configured by rigid societal repression and tend toward the sadomasochistic: they are shot through with violence, submission, and fantasies of violation of the self and others. While the destruction or death drive theoretically has, at the level of the id, an "immortal adversary" in Eros, the life drive, in fact they typically occur in an admixture. Ultimately, sadism and masochism represent, in unique combinations for each subject, "manifestations of the destructive instinct . . . strongly alloyed with

erotism."⁵⁵ Bourgeois socialization, according to Marcuse, places the life drives under the domination of the destruction drive. Marcuse concedes that "the social utilization of aggressiveness belongs to the historical structure of civilization," functioning as a driving force for repression *and* for progress.⁵⁶ Yet because the destruction drive, all sublimation notwithstanding, strives toward death, while Eros, in the sense of late Freudian theory, aims to preserve, protect, and improve life, the destruction drive can only serve as a beneficial force for culture and the individual to the extent that it is subordinated to Eros. Destructive energy prevails, according to Critical Theory, because antagonistic individuation, carried out under the primacy of domination, competition, and exploitation of the subject, above all requires the unreflected repression and displacement of the drives; and, in Marcuse's reading of Freud, "destructive energy cannot become stronger without reducing erotic energy."⁵⁷ In this view, the constitution of the bourgeois subject, which compels accommodation to the demands of a repressive society, has historically inhibited the unfolding of the life drives and bound them to the dominant authority structure of society, while also intensifying the aggressive instincts.⁵⁸ The subject's "nature," blindly repressed and displaced for the purpose of self-preservation, can return and retaliate.

As we have seen, sadomasochistic elements are part and parcel of the psychosocial internalization of repressive authority and violence, as well as of the historical formation of conscience and the self, and they belong to the process of the bourgeois constitution of autonomy and subjectivity. For Critical Theory, this has its origins in identification with the bearers of power, in the blind renunciation and redirection of the gratification of the

drives, and in the precarious internalization of the (societal) superego along with the unconscious guilt feelings it continuously produces, but that remain alien to the self. The superego particularly afflicts what for psychoanalysis is the most fragile of the mental agencies, the ego, while at the same time playing an essential role in the ego's development. The superego is a motor of sublimation, but it is also responsible for the sadomasochistic constraints on the ego and its perpetual intrapsychic debasement. Misapprehended and unprocessed guilt feelings, virtually instilled from without and exerting excessive force, remain largely external to the regulation of the ego, or else evade it entirely by escaping into the unconscious. Yet they bring about a fundamental diminution of the sense of self-worth as well as the prospects for narcissistic satisfaction, weakening the bourgeois ego as a whole. Freud writes: "[T]he major part of the sense of inferiority derives from the ego's relation to its super-ego; like the sense of guilt it is an expression of the tension between them."⁵⁹ The superego punishes the ego when norms are violated, with anxiety as the chief consequence: "If the ego is obliged to admit its weakness, it breaks out in anxiety—realistic anxiety regarding the external world, moral anxiety regarding the super-ego and neurotic anxiety regarding the strength of the passions in the id."⁶⁰

In the view of both Freud and Critical Theory, the feelings of guilt and the need for punishment that unconsciously beset the ego are tightly interlinked: "The desire for punishment arises from the aggressiveness of conscience or the superego and is turned against the self in the form of masochism and against others in the form of sadism."⁶¹ One's own qualities and intentions that are reviled by the superego can, via the mechanism of

projection, be externalized and ascribed to others, and the need for punishment, resulting from unconscious feelings of guilt and inferiority, can likewise be directed outward. The tensions within this dominant civilizational mode of socialization and subjectivity create a precarious condition for the individual subjects: a surplus of unquestioned cultural repression, sacrifice and suffering that damage the individual psyche and engender irrational behavior from the very beginning.

For the Critical Theorists, however, the repressive and contradictory nature of the bourgeois subject, which Freud brilliantly diagnoses yet ahistorically reifies, springs from the very nature of the bourgeois order and the monadological and autocratic structure of society that is anchored in patterns of social domination.⁶² In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno draw on Homer's myth of Odysseus to reveal the perilous dialectic of bourgeois subjectivity and its ideology of inner and external domination. As recounted in Horkheimer and Adorno's Odysseus chapter, the subject constitutes itself through renunciation and sacrifice; yet the guile that, by means of perpetual sacrifice, protects the self against the forces and temptations of interior and exterior nature, remains trapped in myth:

The history of civilization is the history of the introversion of sacrifice—in other words, the history of renunciation. All who renounce give away more of their life than is given back to them, more than the life they preserve. . . . The transformation of the sacrificial victim into subjectivity is done under the aegis of the same cunning which always had its share in sacrifice. In the untruth of guile the

deception inherent in sacrifice becomes an element of character; it becomes the mutilation of the cheat [*Verschlagener*], whose shifty look still cowers from the blows [*Schläge*] self-preservation has brought down on him. (DE 43–44)

The subject is preserved through the sacrifice of its own inner wishes and those of others, and through the instrumental cunning of renunciation, which does not stop to consider whether or not it is superfluous. Horkheimer and Adorno trace the developmental history of the bourgeois individual through the dialectic of sacrifice; in the prehistory of subjectivity, Critical Theory perceives the germ of a persistent mythic irrationality that in the twentieth century turned rapidly into the madness of systematic, meaningless human sacrifice. The Frankfurt School's critical diagnosis especially absorbs Nietzsche's earlier philosophical diagnosis of modern delusions, ideologies, and *ressentiment*, or the delusions of modern bourgeois man.⁶³ At the same time, Critical Theory's reconstruction of bourgeois subjectivity refers to the Marxist labor theory of value: the fully formed, capitalist commodity society embeds the superfluous sacrifice, which is present in the origins of subjectivity, in the law of value on which modern society is based. Sacrifice is also a moment of exchange; wage workers, forced into the role of sacrificial victim for the sake of self-preservation, give away more than they receive, producing surplus value that is appropriated heteronomously, even though the exchange appears, through the lens of ideology, or "false illusion" (Hegel), to be an exchange of equivalent values.

Critical Theory's key claims about the civilizational origins of subjectivity, mythical repression, and social

domination, according to which reason and myth are deeply entangled, are hereby inspired by Siegfried Kra-cauer's observations about the resurgence of premodern myths by means of modern technology in *The Mass Ornament*.⁶⁴

Toward Political Modernity and Postliberal Subjectivity

Against the backdrop of these problematic civilizational trajectories of bourgeois subjectivity, Critical Theory focuses on a peculiar dialectic of continuity and change in relation to social domination and subjectivity toward a postliberal condition in the twentieth century. The autonomous individual, or the liberal subject, operates according to the repressive logic of exploitation and self-preservation, but also exhibits an independent ego and the capacity for sublimation. In the view of Critical Theory, however, the social and economic mediations that enable and engender the autonomous individual in the first place are supplanted in modernity by more direct societal pressure on the subject from the earliest phases of individuation; society stipulates unequivocal assimilation to the dominant rationality of social subjugation and accommodation of the current ruling power. For Critical Theory, this has certain consequences for the psychosocial structure of the modern, postliberal subject:

The process of mechanization and bureaucratization demands of those who are subjected to it a new kind of adaptation: in order to meet the demands which life makes on them in all its domains, they have to

mechanize and standardize themselves to a certain extent. The more tenuous the dependency of their fate on their own independent judgment becomes, the more they are obliged to enter into omnipotent organizations and institutions, and they will do all the better, the more they surrender their own judgment and their own experience and begin to see the world from the viewpoint of the organizations which decide their advancement.⁶⁵

These societal changes affect the individual at the level of the drive structure. The conditions that once “sustained the individual against and beyond his society,”⁶⁶ writes Marcuse, are for all practical purposes abolished. Mediated forms of subjectivity, experience, and pleasure, however fragile and neurotic, are increasingly supplanted by the direct intervention of society in the economy of the human drives. Mediated pleasure is superseded by immediate—but socially controlled, selective, and repressive—gratification. For Marcuse, “technological reality *limits the scope of sublimation*. It also reduces the *need* for sublimation.”⁶⁷ Indeed, sublimation, which builds on developed psychic agencies and their capacity for mediation, is transformed into a repressive, “institutionalized desublimation.”⁶⁸

The twentieth-century subject, Critical Theory maintains, loses its autonomy along with spiritual and moral power, genuine experience, and the residual capacity for resistance against societal pressure to conform. It adheres to societally sanctioned gratification, moving between immediate submission and the desire for immediate gratification. The disappearing autonomy of the individual accompanies increasing social controls—distributed

across society as a whole and exercised by parents, peer groups, mass media, organizations, and the state—as well as a standardization of consciousness, generalized across society.⁶⁹ This modern weakening of the bourgeois subject in an economically rationalized, seemingly disenchanted, bureaucratized, “administered world” (following Max Weber) supposedly produces authoritarian dispositions in a stricter sense. While a dispassionate bourgeois subjectivity had once actuated some individual potential for resistance and conscience as a socially critical agency, these faculties are wholly demolished in the authoritarian individual that is typical for modern society, the Frankfurt School suggests.

The empirical study of *The Authoritarian Personality*, to which we will subsequently turn, consequently constructs a typological contrast between the allegedly vanishing liberal-bourgeois, civil individual, on the one hand, and variations of the postliberal, authoritarian personality type, on the other. Likewise, corresponding with this contrasting typology Critical Theory suggests that there is a significant structural transition between liberal society of the nineteenth century and postliberal society of the twentieth.

However, it would also be misleading to overstate these differences in theoretical terms, let alone conceiving them (or distinctions between modern and premodern periods) as antagonistically different. As this chapter has indicated, in Critical Theory’s account the genesis of deeply problematic forms of subjectivity can be traced back to the ancient origins of civilization, allegorically embodied by Odysseus as the “first citizen,” and analyzed by Freud’s model. They are anchored in blind forms of suppression that have all along characterized subject formations

modeled after mythical patterns of sacrifice, internalization of the reality principle shaped by dominant cultural norms, and the struggle for survival. Rephrasing Marx, the Frankfurt School emphasizes that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of domination: of intertwined forms of domination over external nature, of domination over internal nature, and of social domination in relationships among human beings. Hence, all historical forms of subjectivity have been entangled in domination, producing identities plagued by powerful conflicts and precariously holding the self together in sadomasochistic structures—while always being on the verge of regressing and turning authoritarian aggressions outside. All human societies have engendered, in this understanding, damaged subjectivities prone to internalize blind submission to authority—conflicted individuals who are entangled in repressive forms of socialization, tend toward indiscriminate objectifications of the object world, and harbor aggressions against “others,” including Jews.

Modern forms of authoritarianism and antisemitism, which are the primary subject of the Frankfurt School's research and theorizing, have to be understood against this background. The narrative employed here does not simply signify the construction of a history of decline that leads from the origins of civilization to the terror of the concentration camps.⁷⁰ It would be equally misconceived to idealize any premodern form of social organization. Little could be further from the Frankfurt School theorists' intentions than construing antimodern or antienlightenment claims that reject political modernity and modern enlightenment's reason altogether. This is even unmistakably expressed in the clearest terms in *Critical Theory's* arguably darkest, most negative take on the historical

evolution of enlightenment as an idea and social pattern, the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, written during the time of the Holocaust: "The aporia which faced us in our work proved to be the first matter we had to investigate: the self-destruction of enlightenment. We have no doubt—and herein lies our *petitio principii*—that freedom in society is inseparable from enlightenment thinking" (DE xvi).⁷¹

Rather, in Critical Theory's account modern contemporary problems of authoritarianism and antisemitism are conceived as intimately linked to certain repressive societal patterns of subject formation that point to deep-rooted and unresolved tensions between society and individuals, and thus to constitutive problems of the very model of patriarchal subjectivity, ingrained in the history of civilization and most soberly and brilliantly analyzed by Freud.⁷² Mythological sacrifice and superfluous repression in society; the conflicts between ego, fear, desire, and a punishing superego; perception as blind projection and reification of the object world—they all originate in this social model that has shaped the history of civilization from its beginning.

In Critical Theory's view, then, to some extent the reconstructed matrix of bourgeois subjectivity has been reproduced, refined and transformed in the course of this history without ever being overcome. Moreover, it is suggested that the instrumentally hardened yet fundamentally precarious structure of dominant forms of subject constitution in (Western) history undermines clear-cut divisions between social and individual psychological pathologies, or "authoritarian deformations." In fact, the diagnosis of the civilizational origins of authoritarian deformations of subjectivity implicitly points back to the Allegory of the Cave from Plato's *Republic*. The prisoners

who, unlike the philosopher, defend the darkness of the cave in which they are imprisoned, attribute greater reality to the shadows on the wall than to the insights offered by the freed man and his independent pursuit of knowledge. Not only do they prefer to remain bound and incarcerated. They also defame him who deviates from the established norm. They attack the other's allegedly corrupted vision, and if they were somehow able to get their hands on the other, Socrates concludes, they would even kill him—or anyone who attempted to liberate and drag them out of the cave, towards freedom.⁷³

Indeed, Critical Theory's insight also points to the civilizational origins and nuclei of antisemitism as a form of social pathology. It is argued that antisemitism has—already since ancient times—historically provided an unreflected outlet for the contradictions within individual subjects, and between individuals and society. However, there is also the notion of qualitative and quantitative change of dominant patterns of subjectivity in the modern, postliberal age. It seemingly eclipsed the brief moment in time that appeared to enable, within the limits of the bourgeois model of society, better conditions for critical public and private autonomy—after the civic liberal revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth century that promised freedom, progress, and enlightenment to all citizens in the Western world and, at least temporarily, also finally granted formal equal rights to Jews. For the Critical Theorists, the problems of subjectivity and the dialectic between individual and society need to be reassessed under conditions of advanced, postliberal modern society, which have accelerated the technological and societal potential for human emancipation *and* regression to new forms of barbarism. This is particularly

the case in face of fascist and totalitarian movements that gained traction the world over, and especially in mid-twentieth-century Europe.

In light of this, we can reconstruct the Frankfurt School's analysis of changing patterns of authoritarianism from liberal to modern postliberal forms of subjectivity and society as both distinctly historical and situated in a more universal theoretical framework. The same applies to Critical Theory's analysis of antisemitism's general dimensions as well as specific transformations and functions antisemitism may serve in modern times. In order to understand the dynamics of continuity and change in the Critical Theorists' view of dominant modern modes of subjectivity and socialization—which provide a crucial foundation for the Frankfurt School's theorizing of antisemitism—the following chapter examines both the specific features and sociopsychological conditions of “the authoritarian personality.” For the Critical Theorists it needs to be understood as an ideal type of social character formation in the modern world: a personality type that seems particularly susceptible to fascism, racism, and especially modern antisemitism. Yet both—such personality type and the logic of resentful exclusion—are also grounded in the history of civilization at large, understood here as an historical evolution and human progress that has remained entangled in social domination, and in the blind expansion of mastery over nature.

CHAPTER 3

LOVING TO HATE

The Antidemocratic Syndrome and the Social Psychology of Modern Authoritarianism

At the latest since the investigations of the early 1940s that fully broke open Critical Theory's economistic confines, the major Frankfurt School theorists shared the thesis that the modern dynamics of antisemitic resentment are essentially related to what they conceive as modern "authoritarian-masochistic"¹ personality dispositions—which are, to be sure, seen as anchored in "objective" social conditions and tendencies of modern society, including economic ones. Against the backdrop of the Institute for Social Research's earlier research in Germany, Adorno's sociologically and psychologically grounded empirical studies of the *Authoritarian Personality* explored the "structural unity" of the "potentially fascist individual" (AP, 262). By this he means the "total structure . . . of the authoritarian character which is itself the product of an internalization of the irrational aspects of

modern society."² According to the Frankfurt theorists, this structural unity correlates with antisemitic ideology and fascist agitation which are capable of forging an authoritarian, potentially violent mass. The theoretical approach at the center of Critical Theory on modern antisemitism, in so far as it is grounded in a theory of modern authoritarianism, hereby focuses on, first of all, "psychological potentialities that are realized in objective social and political situations."³

The elements of attachment to authority that harden, in the individual, into a particular ethnocentric and potentially antisemitic personality structure were first theorized by Erich Fromm in the context of his attempt to mediate between Freud and Marx (as well as Max Weber's sociology), between the theory of the drives and critical social theory. Fromm developed and refined his theorizing against the backdrop of the Institute for Social Research's initial groundbreaking study on attitudes among workers in Weimar Germany, in which Fromm played a leading role (and which helped the Frankfurt scholars to recognize the need to prepare for exile before the Nazis rose to power).⁴ The study, empirically based on a survey conducted in 1931, showed that even Communist party members and other manifestly leftist leaning workers and white-collar employees often displayed authoritarian 'personality' features, predisposing them to authoritarian politics and making them susceptible to Nazism rather than providing a strong anti-fascist bulwark against societal regress.⁵

According to Fromm's theorizing of the early empirical findings, modern capitalist society gives rise to sadomasochism, which is the predominant drive structure of the authoritarian personality.⁶ Although Adorno notes

that Freud himself had already laid out the basic outlines of the sadomasochistic personality,⁷ Fromm was the first—in his early social psychological work while still at the Institute for Social Research—to truly elaborate on this model and attempt to link it to Marxist social theory. A theory of the authoritarian personality in its fully developed form finally emerges—albeit with certain divergences from Fromm’s early reflections—in the key research volumes of the *Studies in Prejudice* series on the subject.⁸ These empirical studies were commissioned by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) to probe latent fascistic and antisemitic tendencies in the United States and their potential to become a relevant political force—just as previously the Institute for Social Research’s study *Antisemitism among American Labor*, which was organizationally supported and financed by the Jewish Labor Committee (JCL).⁹

While engaging with the empirical material, Adorno and previously Fromm make few attempts to disguise their interests in a more general theory of modern authoritarianism and its sociopsychological dynamics, aiming at ultimately situating the authoritarian or antidemocratic syndrome in critical theorizing of modern society at large. The ideology and mentality of the antisemite, according to Adorno, is largely fostered by the objective character of our society, as pointed out explicitly even in the empirical study of the *Authoritarian Personality*.¹⁰ Indeed, in the empirical findings of Critical Theory, the psychosocial evolution of the potential antisemite is understood in its specific expressions and dynamics. Yet, due to Adorno’s influence, authoritarianism and antisemitism are also always identified in their broader social context, as an expression of problems constitutive for

modern society as a whole—not just as matters of individual pathologies or problems of specific social milieus and ideologies.

Critical Theory conceptualizes the authoritarian character—as indicated, viewed as particularly susceptible to stereotypical thinking and as potentially antisemitic—as a sort of *ideal type* (in the Weberian, non-normative sense) of modern damaged subjectivity that has become increasingly relevant under conditions of political modernity. On the one hand, it reflects the historical evolution of patriarchal subjectivity. In part, this type is a *generic* expression of the history of civilization's patterns of social domination, and the explosive conflicts of culture and self—diagnosed by Freud, outlined above. On the other hand, this new, postliberal modern ideal type is qualitatively different from the “liberal” (Adorno) or “revolutionary” (Fromm) character of the late-bourgeois epoch.

This chapter explores the specific arguments about the “authoritarian syndrome” and its social psychology as a fundamental cornerstone for the Frankfurt School's analysis of antisemitism. Analytically, the primary focus is on psychological features, dispositions, conflicts, dynamics, and processing (respectively the lack thereof) on the subjective level. This allows us to get a more comprehensive theoretical understanding of a set of key claims advanced by the Frankfurt School's social research at the time, which are usually discussed in a more superficial, undertheorized fashion. These claims are not only reconstructed but also critically discussed, and I point to some internal contradictions, conceptual problems, and issues with the assumption of a universally applicable trend.

First, I briefly address the sociopolitical and social scientific context of the work on the authoritarian

personality in the 1940s, and discuss some theoretical presuppositions involving conceptual distinctions and the use of Freudian terminology. This sets the stage for, second, the theoretical framework and key substantive claims about the nature of the "antidemocratic syndrome" of the "authoritarian personality," which is then developed more thoroughly (also compared to the widespread reception of the Frankfurt School's ideas about the social psychology of authoritarianism). I hereby describe and analyze the more specific, empirically tested core psychological features and psychodynamics characterizing authoritarian personality dispositions, signifying a psychologically and socially weakened subject shaped by sadomasochistic compulsions. There is, third, a more detailed reconstruction of the particular relationship between constitutive sado-masochistic rage and aggressiveness, on one hand, and on the other hand social conformism and authoritarian submission to external social and political authority in respective personality dispositions. Aggression and rage toward authority must be denied and tends to be transformed in self-hatred as well as displaced onto others: perceived weak, hostile, or "unworthy" members of society. Fourth, related to this projection mechanism and especially significant for the analysis of (antisemitic) stereotypes, the effects of psychosocial authoritarianism on collectivism, social identification, and stereotypical thinking are examined in the Frankfurt School's lens. Fifth, distinctions between different types or variations of the authoritarian syndrome are reconstructed, with a special focus on the two presumably most relevant ones, the "manipulative" type and the "rebellious conformist." Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the relationship between

the presumed relevance of modern authoritarianism in its relation to objective conditions and constellations, on the one hand, and, on the other, the rise of antisemitism as a social and political phenomenon in modern times.

The Study of Modern Authoritarianism: Key Presuppositions in Political and Social Scientific Context

Before turning to a detailed analysis of Critical Theory's substantive claims and findings, in this section, I set the stage by elaborating the historical and social scientific context of the Frankfurt School's work on authoritarianism; establish the research framework's key tools, conceptual terminology, and hypotheses; and add some clarifications and qualifications in response to common misunderstandings vis-à-vis the original authoritarianism research (with which the Institute for Social Research was associated since its empirical work on authoritarian attitudes among blue- and white-collar workers in Weimar Germany).

Whatever its lasting generalizable theoretical output and surplus, Critical Theory's work on the social psychology of modern authoritarianism, and most notably here the studies on *The Authoritarian Personality*, took shape in a distinct political-historical and social scientific environment. It is situated in a specific political climate that could not easily be universalized: the Frankfurt School's research evolved against the unprecedented backdrop of 1940s Nazi terror against the Jews of Europe in the midst of modern German/European civilization, yet was conducted in American democratic society (and

to a considerable extent by exiles who had barely escaped persecution). The former had provoked questions for the latter: What are the social, political and psychological origins of modern authoritarianism and fascism (as well as antisemitism and the politics of hate, generally speaking)? Are they specific to German or European culture—or rather universal, the byproduct of universal authoritarian phenomena, susceptibilities, and tendencies in modern society, and thus could ultimately lead to the rise of fascist forces that threaten minorities in American society as well (anti-Jewish agitators and racist mass movements, such as the KKK, seemed to be a political indicator of the latter)? The study was commissioned because of the assumption that “it could happen here,” and the Critical Theorists and their social scientific and psychological collaborators certainly presumed this: that they were facing social authoritarianism, crystallized in widespread psychological personality traits, largely as a generic modern phenomenon that is linked to forms of dependency and heteronomy in modern society. And if modern society gave by and large universally rise to authoritarian personalities, fascism could happen anywhere—at least if fascist political movements are not confronted with a bulwark of political institutions, constitutional rights, and proactive left, liberal or conservative groups defending democracy.¹¹

It is important to be especially mindful that this research evolved against the background of the first comprehensive reports about the unimaginable scale of the Nazi atrocities against the European Jews, and this could hardly have been without influence on the researchers and the research process; how could it be? But even *if* America would be immune to the rise of fascism and

totalitarian antisemitism due to political, institutional, and other factors, it still merited scholarly research to assess the authoritarian potential in the United States, and to understand why there is widespread authoritarianism and antisemitism—at least to some extent universally across borders—in “enlightened,” advanced modern twentieth-century industrial societies like the U.S. (and how it functions). Indeed, in order to do so, the *Studies in Prejudice* set out to research the history of modern antisemitism, its scope in contemporary modern (American) society, and aimed at nothing less than explaining the societal, psychological, and political factors conditioning the receptiveness or predisposition for antisemitism and authoritarianism among American citizens.¹²

While other research concentrated on these larger social and political-cultural conditions, the *Authoritarian Personality*, however, focused on psychological dimensions and sociopsychological interpretations of this presumably “modern” and “universal” phenomenon of authoritarianism.¹³ The following sections explore these sociopsychological foundations by looking primarily at the findings by Adorno et al. on the subjective level and the diagnosis of its presumed social relevance.

In terms of the social scientific context, the *Authoritarian Personality*, like the other parts of the *Studies in Prejudice*, is the product of different, heterogeneous, and partly disparate research approaches and theory traditions leading to different scholarly trajectories yet also to an enormously productive “teamwork.”¹⁴ With their leading role in the *Studies in Prejudice*, the Frankfurt School scholars continued to familiarize with—and employ—“American” quantitative and qualitative

social science research methods reflecting the state of the art at the time. The European social scientists and theorists had already experimented with these methods in the preceding research project on *Antisemitism among American Labor* (see chapter 4), and some Frankfurt scholars had already participated in the Institute's aforementioned first large surveys on authoritarian attitudes among blue- and white-collar workers at the end of the Weimar Republic. Still, in part they did so rather reluctantly or, especially in case of Adorno, they were de facto forced to engage with standardized techniques and collaborate with "positivistic" scholars in this new research context.¹⁵ However, Adorno later praised this research project, the "Berkeley Study," as much more productive than others he took part in while being in America, also because of the collaborative spirit of the research team, the transatlantic exchange and transfer of knowledge, and the study's "common orientation toward Freud."¹⁶ These scholars include social scientists Daniel J. Levinson and R. Nevitt Sanford, who were experienced in quantitative survey methods, and the psychologist Ruth Frenkel-Brunswik. Indeed, Sanford and Brunswik were the first to present core hypotheses at Ernst Simmel's conference on antisemitism of what was later to become and be published as *The Authoritarian Personality*.¹⁷

However, the Frankfurt School scholars, Adorno included, could add to this not only theoretical and conceptual insights to the *Studies in Prejudice* but also an interdisciplinary focus of which they were genuine founding fathers when they launched the work of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt. Moreover, the entire framework of the research project and its presuppositions are

heavily shaped by the Frankfurt School. After all, the very conception of an “authoritarian personality” and authoritarianism originates in the Institute’s earlier research in Germany. Although in the case of the *Authoritarian Personality* only one of the collaborating research team was a representative of the Frankfurt School (Adorno), it was he who was the most important theoretician and architect of this “enormous book.”¹⁸

Be that as it may, in addition to an orientation toward depth psychology and theoretical approaches, the social research conducted by Adorno and his colleagues in the 1940s successfully employed the tools of empirical social science—standardized questionnaires and surveys, content analysis, and various qualitative clinical interviews. They then combined both empirical methods and theoretical reflection, enriching their empirical findings with an interpretative lens grounded in Freudian terminology and psychoanalytic concepts as well as, undeniably, some (critical) social theory reflections originating exclusively in Adorno. Probandes of the research project were initially college students. But the project’s sample ultimately included broad strata of American society, including several key groups ranging from union members, psychiatric patients, to prisoners, and Marines.¹⁹ Still, Adorno himself recognizes that the sample remains “peculiar,”²⁰ and the authors concede that the findings of the study, which excluded minorities, “may be expected to hold fairly well for non-Jewish, white, native-born, middle-class Americans” (AP 23). At any rate, the authors did not intend to gain (or claim to offer) representative findings, but suggest the research output could be useful for subsequent representative surveys.

Some new social science research techniques were developed, intelligently combined for the first time, and refined in the research process—which made especially the *Authoritarian Personality*, as outdated as some of its methodology seems today, a truly groundbreaking study also in terms of its elaborate research design. Rather than just describing features of an authoritarian or “antidemocratic” personality, as in the Frankfurt School’s *Studies on Authority and Family*, the *Authoritarian Personality* also made a serious effort to demonstrate and measure the presupposed type and the correlations between a deep personality structure and various sets of attitudes. This includes the initial creation of theoretically guided and subsequently empirically refined scales with which the support of antidemocratic preferences and attitudes can be measured in opinion surveys based on questionnaires.

The surveys are supplemented by subsequent qualitative interviews addressing general ideological topics, such as politics, religion, minorities, income, and profession. The interviews include an individual clinical-genetic part designed to gain insights into the present situation and the emotional condition, fears, and desires of respondents. These interviews are concluded by an “apperception test,” in which probands are supposed to create stories based on images.²¹ The analysis of the interviews serves the purpose to refine the exploration of variables with which one can identify attitudes and their correlations, and ultimately personality features, by means of new questionnaires.²² This way robust scales are created to measure ethnocentrism²³ (the “E scale”), attitudes toward politics and the economy, that is, politico-economic conservatism (“PEC scale”), and antisemitism (“A-S scale”). In another

step, mostly in an inductive fashion, a scale is created that measures what the scholars conceive as a fascistic "disposition," that is, authoritarianism ("F scale"). It does not aim to measure specific political attitudes but, in line with the Frankfurt School's original proposition, underlying dispositions signifying an "authoritarian" or "antidemocratic" personality. Indeed, the goal here is to operate indirectly in order to measure such deeper dispositions of "implicit antidemocratic" traits—the authoritarian personality—without displaying this purpose and without mentioning minority groups or other political preferences (AP 222ff).

Sample statements to measure such deeper antidemocratic, authoritarian dispositions in the second F scale—based on new and revised questionnaires—point to nine presumed key authoritarian personality features, which are seen as interlinked. One statement could therefore indicate one or more authoritarian trait(s). Respondents could indicate slight, moderate or strong agreement or disagreement. For instance, "conventionalism" and "authoritarian submission" are supposedly measured by support of statements like "obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn" (AP 231; 248). "Exaggerated concern with sexual 'going-ons'" as well as "authoritarian aggression" could find indicators in statements like "homosexuals are nothing but degenerates and ought to be severely punished," or "sex crimes, such as rape and attacks on children, deserve more than mere imprisonment; such criminals ought to be publicly whipped, or worse" (AP 240; 248; 250). Projectivity, the "disposition to believe that wild and dangerous things go on in the world" and "the projection outward of unconscious emotional impulses," as well as power and

toughness, that is, the preoccupation with “dominance-submission, strong-weak, leader-follower dimension” are seen as reflected in agreement with the statement “most people don’t realize how much our lives are controlled by plots hatched in secret by politicians” (AP 249; 250). Power and toughness, as well as “superstition and stereotype,” are also indicated by agreement with the claim that “people can be divided in two distinct classes: the weak and the strong” (AP 249). “Destructiveness and cynicism” is supposedly expressed and measured through support of claims such as “the true American way of life is disappearing so fast that force may be necessary to preserve it” (AP 250). “One main trouble today is that people talk too much and work too little” is supposed to point to levels of anti-intraception, that is, authoritarian “opposition to the subjective, the imaginative, the tender-minded” (AP 249).

The correlation of both antisemitism and ethnocentrism with the F scale proved to be particularly prominent. Individuals exhibiting high values on the F scale, but not on the A-S and E scales, stood out as exceptions requiring an explanation why there would be “inhibitions upon the expression of prejudice against minorities” (AP 224). Only in the case of political-economic conservatism was this connection found to be severed, at least under certain circumstances.²⁴ The authoritarian disposition—as expressed in the F scale—was shown to draw on relatively suppressed, but particularly inflexible character traits. This is interpreted by Adorno and his collaborators as the foundation and connective link for those prejudices and values, which do not lie as deep.²⁵ The study thus also provides the tools to empirically substantiate and test for the first time in a convincing manner—even though challenged, refined, or revised in

subsequent studies on authoritarianism—Critical Theory’s hypothesis of a demonstrable link between ethnocentrism, conventionalism, and antisemitism, on the one hand, and, on the other hand and most importantly, an authoritarian psychological disposition distinct from surface attitudes but with strong effects in relation to other scales.²⁶ In their view, the research team had succeeded in developing a scale to measure an authoritarian syndrome as the sum of certain identifiable social character traits of potentially fascist individuals, and in showing that it correlates with antidemocratic attitudes, ethnocentric prejudices, and especially antisemitic resentments.

As other work by the Frankfurt School on antisemitism and in the context of the *Studies in Prejudice*, the authors share a key premise of antisemitism research that has evolved with and after the work by Critical Theory, namely that antisemitism is based on “subjective factors” and the “general situation of the antisemite” (AP 3), rather than actual experiences and interactions between gentiles and Jews.²⁷ The authors right from the beginning oppose any “interactionism” or “correspondence theory,” which seek to explain antisemitism by pointing to the actual interactions with, or behavior of, Jews or “Zionists.” This opposition to interactionist explanations and correspondence theory, which to some extent replicate the antisemitic “rationale” that Jews are to blame for antisemitism, can be found throughout Critical Theory’s and especially Adorno’s work—from the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* to the *Studies in Prejudice* and to Adorno’s contributions on antisemitism in the 1950s and 1960s, Adorno contests the all too common assumption that antisemitism in some way involves actual Jews.²⁸

As previously suggested, Critical Theory's definition of authoritarian or "antidemocratic" personality dispositions that are to be measured centers on the notion of a psychosocial framework, a context within which—to varying degrees and in various forms—particular personality structures crystallize. At issue in what follows are the shared qualities of the ideal type, the internal network of associations that makes up an "authoritarian personality," exhibiting a "relatively rigid, unchanging structure that appears time and again and is everywhere the same," in contrast to the "free human being, who is not blindly tied to authority."²⁹ At the same time, the notion of a personality structure is not to be conceived in an absolute way. The totality of a character structure in the sense of a complete or functional system is, for Adorno, "fictional": if at all, a character structure could rather be considered "a system of scar tissue that heals only with great pain and never completely. The infliction of scars is actually the form in which society asserts itself within the individual."³⁰

The insight into this framework, as elaborated by Critical Theory, should also safeguard against an abstract and undertheorized typology of entirely distinct variations of antidemocratic syndromes, even though Adorno and Horkheimer developed several respective typologies on various occasions.³¹ With due consideration to their diverse forms and gradations, all types ultimately belong to "one single, 'over-all' syndrome" (AP 464).

As the Critical Theorists were aware, when the theory is applied to real individuals, it is also essential to bear in mind that there is a range of nuance in the postulated relationship between the authoritarian personality structure and antisemitic resentment, as well as other

anti-emancipatory ideologies. The point here is an analysis of the societal average and of the “average antisemite.” On one hand, numerous empirical studies past and present have demonstrated that “[s]ubmission to authority, desire for a strong leader, subservience of the individual to the state, and so forth, have so frequently and, as it seems . . . correctly, been set forth as important aspects of the Nazi creed that a search for correlates of prejudice ha[s] naturally to take these attitudes into account” (AP 197). Yet, on the other hand, Critical Theory stresses that the same ideologies can also have different psychosocial anchors in different individuals, and that the same needs with regard to personality structure can manifest in disparate ideologies. Although an evident correlation exists among antisemitism, ethnocentrism, and authoritarianism and has been demonstrated in various studies since the *Authoritarian Personality*, which have operated with the F-scale or some variation of it,³² there are numerous examples of entrenched aggressive and authoritarian personality traits that manifest themselves in undifferentiated violence without an antisemitic or racist aspect—although a turn in this direction is always a possibility.³³ The central idea here is social-psychological *potentiality*.³⁴ By the same token, there are structures of antisemitic prejudice that are not exclusively grounded in authoritarian-masochistic presuppositions. But authoritarian needs and the psychosocial characteristics of the damaged subject recur again and again in connection with racist and antisemitic thinking. While they might exhibit an internal rationality within their individual psychic economy, or indeed some level of rationality and functionality within the logic of the larger power structure, all antisemites would seem to

have in common an ideological core that is profoundly idiosyncratic and, above all, projective. While attending to necessary differentiations, Adorno and his colleagues therefore also emphasize that the distinctions between "potential," "latent," and "manifest" should not be overdrawn in reference to either underlying personality traits or ideological resentments: "Given emotionally determined antidemocratic trends in the person, we should expect that *in general* they would be evoked" by items suggesting antisemitism, ethnocentrism "as well as by the F scale and other indirect methods" (AP 224; emphasis by the authors). And, while Fromm had still found a heightened identification with authority among the petty bourgeoisie and white-collar workers and only in a limited way among the industrial proletariat, the fully formed theory of authoritarianism presupposed that authoritarian dispositions occur across all social classes.³⁵

Still, Adorno and his colleagues also found that the intensity of the authoritarian disposition as well as the fixity of antisemitic prejudice could widely vary. For instance, what they term surface resentments of "more ambivalent" types stood opposite hermetic, fully paranoid forms that proved impenetrable to reality. In some cases, Fromm argues, "the differences in the emotional structure appear larger than the commonalities, and one doubts whether the latter can viably sustain a unified treatment of the subject."³⁶ This foreseeable objection does not diminish the heuristic value of the attempt, on the basis of Frankfurt School research, to structure the relationship between "authoritarian personality formation" and antisemitism as an ideal type and to ground it theoretically. Fromm's comment should certainly not be taken to imply that the authoritarian personality and

antisemitism, which for Critical Theory are correlated, are merely “formed by individual and chance circumstances.”³⁷ Rather, as Fromm himself insists, the psychic structure of individuals and classes should be understood as expressions of their objective situation.³⁸ While the authoritarian subject functions, indisputably, as an active subject of aggression and hate, Critical Theory nonetheless construes “strains and stresses” to which the individual is subjected and which motivate his action as fundamentally social. They are “grounded in the normal functioning of this society (and of the individual!) rather than in its disturbances and diseases.”³⁹

Let us therefore now unpack in detail how the Critical Theorists construe the ideal type of the antidemocratic syndrome and the social psychology of modern authoritarianism, which simultaneously provides a key model for their theorizing of modern antisemitism. Engaging with authoritarianism as a core element for Frankfurt School theorizing on antisemitism in a more detailed conceptual fashion is all the more due because few if any have seriously done so, let alone critically reconstructed the theoretical argument in its multiple dimensions. There has been a widespread reception of *Authoritarian Personality*, to be sure. Neither the methodological impact of the study nor the influence of the F scale and similar measures in subsequent social scientific applications should be underestimated—despite various critiques suggesting that the F scale is biased in favor of the educated or that it measures authoritarian political attitudes rather than underlying character dispositions. Yet there has been little work reconstructing and thoroughly discussing the psychoanalytic and social theoretical grounding and presuppositions of the Frankfurt School’s

studies of the subject. In what follows, I address the specific psychosocial features, constitutive structure, and potential dynamics of authoritarian subject formations suggested by the Critical Theorists in conceptual light—and with the purpose to illuminate it as part of a general, comprehensive theory proposed by the Frankfurt School. After a discussion of the social-psychological genesis and dimensions of the authoritarian subject, I then turn to various manifestations of the authoritarian disposition as a “social character” and discuss the relevance of these types for a critical theory of modern authoritarianism and antisemitism.

Paralysis, Subjugation, and Aggression: Understanding the Antidemocratic Syndrome’s Features and Dynamics

According to the Frankfurt School, the social psychology of authoritarianism is characterized by the dialectical interplay among various social and psychological factors that weaken the self with regard to the drive structure and force the self and its drive organization into conformity with societal constraints. In view of the evolution of the hypotheses and the empirical findings of the *Authoritarian Personality*, its basic characteristics consist of the aforementioned nine key features: (1) rigid conventionality, that is, the unreflective attachment to social norms and dictates, and conformism that “produces anxiety at the appearance of any social deviation”;⁴⁰ (2) authoritarian submissiveness, that is, the “uncritical attitude toward idealized moral authorities of the ingroup” (AP 248); (3) authoritarian aggressivity, that is the tendency

to seek, condemn and punish anyone who violates conformist morality or authoritarian norms; (4) the lack of intraception and sensitivity, and opposition to the imaginative, as well as unqualified coldness and narrowness with regard to emotions and social questions; (5) crude swagger and infatuation with toughness and power, coinciding with individual powerlessness, and preoccupation with dominance-submission dimensions; (6) destructiveness paired with cynicism, disclosing and underlying, “generalized hostility, vilification of the human” (AP 249); (7) stereotypical, “stereopathic” thinking, combined with an incapacity for self-critical reflection and feelings of solidarity; (8) linked to that a fundamentally projective attitude, that is, susceptibility to project one’s unconscious emotional impulses outward, and thus to prejudice, manipulation, and collective-narcissistic valorization; and (9) fixation on the drives and sexuality, expressed in an exaggerated concern with anything sexual.

The essential link among these authoritarian elements, according to Critical Theory, is the subject’s weak ego, which can lead to entrenched authoritarian deformations, yet at the same time, according to Löwenthal, expresses itself in a persistently vulnerable “emotional stability and . . . precarious inner balance.”⁴¹ The profound weakness of the ego, which in the face of the overpowering pressure of social forces and institutions no longer feels equal to the demands of self-determination—of independently organizing the economy of the drives or establishing an autonomous life—combines with the authoritarian assent to any order that proves capable of wielding extreme instruments of power.⁴² The combination of precarious emotional stability, unmastered ambivalences, and hardly controlled aggressive desires,

on one hand, and on the other hand hardened character features largely formed in early childhood crystallizes in the diagnosed antidemocratic syndrome.

Faced with entrenched authoritarianism in a subject, as pointed out Critical Theory follows Freud in diagnosing a barely integrated personality structure and extreme ego weakness, however hardened the personality. These deficits can be expressed in a labored and irrational repression of drive impulses, divorced from any reflection or ego regulation. Such subjugation of the drive structure and consequent buildup of aggression is ostensibly dominated by an "archaic superego," hardly internalized or anchored in the self and incapable of gauging, much less reconciling, even partially, the tension between its strivings and the demands of the superego, the intrapsychic representative of social requirements and norms.

According to Adorno, the failure of the superego's internalization can be traced to the ego's "inability to perform the necessary synthesis, i.e., to integrate the superego with itself" (AP 234). It seems the authoritarian subject is unfit for the exertion of sublimating the demands of the drives unaided; again and again, the subject must discipline himself with the help of a scant, regressive superego, one reduced to static and repressive conceptions of societal norms and a rigid need for punishment, as well as with the aid of societal authorities. Such discipline directs unmediated aggression against the subject's own aggressive and libidinal tendencies. The accumulation of societal aggression, experiences of powerlessness, and the obstruction of libidinal desires—all of which, according to Adorno, escalate in modern society, in the "administered world"—contribute to the subject's dependence on the dominant societal authorities. The

subject becomes more docile, more compliant, and at the same time increasingly aggressive.

The authoritarian subject, then, is bound to external authorities and ruled by unconscious strivings that elude processes of working over, mediation, and sublimation. The individual with a weak ego is marked by powerful "antagonism[s] between varied psychological forces"⁴³ that confound autonomous mediation by an ego, that is, they remain alien to the ego. This alienation from the ego is particularly pronounced in the case of the demands of the drives, that is to say, the id. The authoritarian subject is incapable of integrating within the self a superego that is regulated by the ego, whose role it should be to mediate between the external world and the demands of the id and superego. Because of this weakening of the ego, the subject is unable to bring the unconscious demands of the drives, the requirements of the superego, and the "reality principle" (the necessities of objective reality as reflected in the subject) into relation with the ego's own interests. The subject fails to satisfy the archaic superego, which has either a punishing effect on the unconscious or is barely anchored in the subject at all; nor does the subject succeed in adequately sublimating the demands of the id. The ego is incapable of rationally redirecting libidinal energies or the demands of the drives, of working them over and fulfilling them conditionally. Instead, the id is only suppressed and repressed until it is finally given license to act out directly and without inhibition. When no ego can form in the space once inhabited by superego and id, the subject is governed by the unconscious agencies of the psychic apparatus, which are alien to the ego; psychological integration, the capacity for reflection, and the subject's power of resistance are all

expressed in the ego and are contingent on its strength. In Freud's model, "consciousness is attached" to the ego, which "controls the approaches to motility—that is, to the discharge of excitations into the external world; it is the mental agency which supervises all its own constituent processes. . . ."44

If the ego is unable to unfold as an independent, autonomous agency, it remains emotionally and spiritually stunted. This is the "small ego,"45 which is bound, morally and at the level of the drive structure, to unconscious and "external" agencies. Powerful exertions of the id that can completely dissipate the weak ego, together with rigid moral concepts springing from societal pressure to conform, which are hostile to the id and infuse the chaotic energies of the drives with anxiety, can thus become determining factors. At the same time, societal aggression against the individual, converted into an unconscious need for punishment, finds its intrapsychic counterpart in the aggression drive. An essential characteristic of the authoritarian subject, Adorno claims, is "a lack of integration between the moral agencies by which the subject lives and the rest of his personality. One might say that the conscience or superego is incompletely integrated with the self or ego, the ego here being conceived of as embracing the various self-controlling and self-expressing functions of the individual" (AP 234).

The "small ego" of such a nonintegrated personality, profoundly incapable of any action that transcends the limits of a narrowly conceived self-interest or interest of the subject's own group,46 mirrors according to Adorno the goal-oriented rationality of capitalism, which in the advanced phase of its diffusion recognizes nothing beyond the exploitation of objects for profit. The

nonintegrated personality is unable to perform the most important functions of the autonomous self: ensuring that the drives are regulated in such a way as to allow gratification or diversion without provoking the superego's harsh punishment, and seeing to it that the actions of the individual are, by and large, kept in accord with the demands of reality: "There is some reason to believe that a failure in superego internalization is due to weakness in the ego, to its inability to perform the necessary synthesis, i.e. to integrate the superego with itself. Whether or not this is so, ego weakness would seem to be concomitant with conventionalism and authoritarianism. Weakness in the ego is expressed in the inability to build up a consistent and enduring set of moral values within the personality; and it is this state of affairs, apparently, that makes it necessary for the individual to seek some organizing and coordinating agency outside of himself" (AP 234).

If the ego is too weak to develop the capacity to integrate seemingly overwhelming instinctual desires and the superego, and thus the individual's conscience is externalized, that is, not integrated into the self, and hardly brought in tune with the requirements of reality, internal conflicts cannot be mastered. This may lead to anxiety-filled, tormented reactions. The superego appears as particularly rigid in the attempt to bring the internal chaos and aggressions in sync. The result, according to Adorno, is a destructive congestion of the drives, severe repression of the subject's instinctual needs, which then manifest in the authoritarian individual's furtive fascination with the sexual.⁴⁷ This induces, Adorno maintains, to the activation of defenses against intraception,⁴⁸ as well as to the underdevelopment of the capacity to distinguish

between fantasy and reality. When this capacity is lost, the individual's perception of reality is no longer grounded in independent reflection, relying directly on social and political authorities instead. This dependency enables the acceptance of virtually any projection trotted out by those in power.

"Decency" is a key component in the self-perception of the authoritarian subject, whose emotional life "is likely to be very limited," according to Adorno, and thus "the impulses, especially sexual and aggressive ones, which remain unconscious and ego-alien are likely to be strong and turbulent" (AP 232). Largely unconscious, mutually antagonistic impulses predominate and together form a dialectical unity: the unconscious id stands in opposition to the superego, the socially determined "reaction-formation against the instinctual processes of the id,"⁴⁹ from which the superego, in turn, obtains part of its aggressive energy.⁵⁰ According to Horkheimer and Adorno, this state of affairs is the product of the utter failure of individuation, in the place of which the individual is "broken," in early childhood, by authoritarian power—for instance an authoritarian father or the societal authorities that stand in for him—or by a "lack of love."⁵¹ In order merely to survive, authoritarian personalities are compelled to "repeat, for their part, that which once had been done to them."⁵² Their defense mechanisms lead them to love to hate: they validate or heighten the violence and aggression to which they were subjected, because it is the source of their own unconscious identity, and seek to redirect it at those perceived as "the weak": their own children and devalued out-groups. However, this violence is a manifestation of the powerful need for a brazen acting out of the destruction drive in which the ego is

wholly dissolved; in other words, it is also a source of self-destruction. According to Critical Theory, the standardized social order creates stability through repetition (in the labor process, in the organization of free time by the culture industry), without ever allowing fulfillment. And because the authoritarian subject is refused genuine fulfillment, its own constitutive, unmitigated violence has to be repeated again and again. Freud hypothesizes the death drive in connection with his analysis of repetition compulsion, as "the striving for a state of complete inertia, absence of tension, return to the womb, annihilation," in Marcuse's formulation.⁵³ Ruled by overpowering and antagonistic forces of the drive structure, which crush the ego, authoritarian subjects must not only bind themselves to external authorities. But they are also slaves to a drive for mastery and destruction that strives for the dissolution of all internal tension.

With the failed development and autonomy of the subject accompanying the modern socialization process, authoritarian subjects become "prisoners of their own weakened ego."⁵⁴ The ego identity that arises is both compulsive and constrained. As Fromm writes, they pay for the "alliance of authority and superego with the surrender of autonomy and . . . sovereignty."⁵⁵ That is to say, the authoritarian subject survives by repetition of the violence to which he was subjected and by social conformity vis-à-vis the embodiments of unmitigated power.

At the same time, the superego is presumably not integrated in the psyche as a proper moral arbiter that could enable independent decision-making, but functions instead as an unbending authority that remains alien to the ego,⁵⁶ an agent of exacting discipline of the libidinal energies. For the exponents of Critical Theory,

the integration of the agencies, ego strength, and the internalization of the superego represent the essential criteria within the drive structure that determine the subject's autonomy and strength of resistance vis-à-vis societal pressure to submit to authority. Writing in 1936, Fromm places stronger emphasis on the problem of internalizing domination than would the Critical Theorists later in their advanced research and models of authoritarianism and antisemitism, which focus on particular modern, postliberal types. Fromm radically problematizes the internalization of repressive social norms as the constitution of an "internal violence," which is to say a superego, as well as the libidinal attachment to authority that is bound up with this internalization process.⁵⁷ In this respect, Fromm's reflections are more akin to the Critical Theorists' considerations on civilizational processes that were touched upon in the analysis of the genesis of the bourgeois subject; in this view, the patriarchal subject tends to display an indiscriminate defensiveness toward anything that appears alien to him, toward the unconscious and the "other," and any self-reflection on this defensiveness is typically absent. Thus is the societal principle of exclusion and subjugation—social violence—reproduced. Feelings of hatred toward the father or other authorities that "broke" the individual in early childhood—feelings that cannot be acted upon—are hereby transformed into sado-masochistic "solutions" displacing hatred onto minorities or "others" while blindly identifying with actual or imagined powerful people, institutions, or ideas.

The authoritarian personality, the Critical Theorists suggest, is distinctly disposed to conformity without reflection, accepting unmitigated social domination, along

with the blind repression of the demands of the individual's own drives. In due course, for the sake of preserving the self, an aggressive and archaic "coercion of conscience"⁵⁸ develops, permanently engendering strong, though unconscious feelings of guilt and fantasies of punishment, and remaining attached to sanctions by external forces. The subordination beneath these forces and the societal pressure that they convey is libidinally cathected:

In order to achieve "internalization" of social control which never gives as much to the individual as it takes, the latter's attitude towards authority and its psychological agency, the superego, assumes an irrational aspect. The subject achieves his own social adjustment only by taking pleasure in obedience and subordination. This brings into play the sadomasochistic impulse structure both as a condition and as a result of social adjustment. (AP 759)

Under social conditions that hinder the strengthening of the ego beyond a certain point, Fromm holds, "the task of the suppression of the drives can only be accomplished with the aid of irrational emotional relationships to authority and its intrapsychic representative, the superego."⁵⁹ The stronger the level of renunciation and repression of the drives to which the subject is exposed, the more irrational and sadomasochistic the relationship to the superego and to external authority; the more "the strength of the ego is restricted, the more rigid and unrealistic are its reactions."⁶⁰ Internalized coercion, for the authoritarian character, is directed toward the ossified and diffuse "defense against impulses that . . . strike something personal in the unconscious, something that cannot be

admitted at any cost."⁶¹ The barely integrated, but particularly rigid "coercion of conscience" and the orientation toward authoritarian power substitute for the conscience, the function of the internalized superego, as a critical agency of moral responsibility and independence. "This overt rigidity of conscience, however, shows strong traces of ambivalence: what is forbidden may be acceptable if it does not lead to social conflict. The over-rigid superego is not really integrated, but remains external" (AP 760). Moral decisions are rendered dependent on external social agents that appear powerful or on the libidinally cathected political leaders of the masses. In short, the conscience, the capacity for moral sublimation of instinctual violence, is directly tied to social norms, conventions, and forces—it is, as indicated, delegated to external agencies.⁶² Of "fascist personalities," Adorno writes:

They fail to develop an independent autonomous conscience and substitute for it an identification with collective authority which is as irrational as Freud described it, heteronomous, rigidly oppressive, largely alien to the individuals' own thinking and, therefore, easily exchangeable in spite of its structural rigidity.⁶³

This, in the view of the Frankfurt School, inevitably leads to "conflict . . . between certain foreconscious or repressed id tendencies on the one hand and the superego, or its more or less externalized, conventional substitute, on the other" (AP 629). Moreover, "because he has had to accept numerous externally imposed restrictions upon the satisfaction of his needs," the antidemocratic, authoritarian individual "harbors strong underlying aggressive

impulses" (AP 639). Because these impulses cannot be sublimated or integrated to achieve a balance between the drive energies and the superego, the authoritarian individual is sustained chiefly by conforming to power, order, and convention; he identifies with the social values that have been imposed upon him—achievement, power, money, toughness, exclusion—and cultivates hatred for those who, putatively or in fact, reject these values. "The individual who has been forced to give up basic pleasures and to live under a system of rigid restraints, and who therefore feels put upon, is likely not only to seek an object upon which he can 'take it out' but also to be particularly annoyed at the idea that another person is 'getting away with something'" (AP 232).

Regarding the socialization of the subject, the result is that the authoritarian individual is incapable of developing autonomy and of pursuing his own needs; he responds to forbidden and, later, unacknowledged libidinal desires with submissiveness or strict renunciation, thus dialectically augmenting the aggressive impulses of the drives. Whatever cannot be assimilated to the fragile, dependent ego structure, the strict sense of order, and the self-image of the authoritarian individual must be warded off. In this process, socially mediated aggression roundly prevails over eros in both its sublimated and nonsublimated forms. The prevention of erotic satisfaction, whether direct or "ennobled," engenders frustration and aggression against the party that brings about the inhibition; Freud makes this plain. Yet in everyday life, this aggression and animosity must be suppressed and repressed; it cannot be directed against the root causes of the inhibition or the authorities that impose on it. If the responsibility cannot be shifted to the superego and converted into

guilt feelings, there is constant danger that the aggression will turn suddenly outward as furtive sadism with aggressive impulses.⁶⁴

Due to the countless restrictions imposed upon the satisfaction of his drives by outside forces, the antidemocratic individual harbors intense aggressive impulses that can find their outlet when displaced onto an out-group, but these impulses must ordinarily be "sufficiently modified, or at least justified" before they are "acceptable to the ego," even to a very weak one (AP 239). However, according to Adorno, the authoritarian personality structure also contains other, "generalized aggressions"⁶⁵ that bourgeois ideology typically assigns to "human nature." These might manifest in an ideology of social Darwinism or a basically misanthropic outlook. Such attitudes are easily channeled against women and minorities.⁶⁶

As we have seen, the failed integration of the superego and morality may result in a particular character structure that poses a particular moral problem. The "small ego" and the externalized morality of the authoritarian personality—the archaic, regressive superego—are oriented toward conventionalism and conformism. Under societal pressure, the weak ego develops an oppressive dread of deviation. Its identity derives from total adaptation to societal authorities, to the institutions and agents of domination toward which its libidinal energies are directed. The assertion of the individual's own interests against the supreme power of society, or even a mere break with convention, is thus perceived as a deadly threat.⁶⁷

Ego weakness is always accompanied by the tendency to adhere to authority in matters of moral values. It is the task of the ego to regulate the drives in a manner that permits gratification without provoking the superego's

punishment, and to reconcile the actions of the individual with the demands of reality. Indeed, "[i]t is a function of the ego to make peace with conscience, to create a larger synthesis within which conscience, emotional impulses, and self operate in relative harmony. When this synthesis is not achieved, the superego has somewhat the role of a foreign body within the personality, and it exhibits those rigid, automatic, and unstable aspects. . . ." (AP 234). Thus the moral problem culminates in "the inability to build up a consistent and enduring set of moral values within the personality" (AP 234), a moral value system that is regulated by the self. Under such conditions, according to Adorno, the individual finds it necessary "to seek some organizing and coordinating agency outside of himself" on which to depend for moral decisions.⁶⁸ It should be noted, however, that such a delegation of decision-making also reflects a more general sense of the powerlessness of subjects to determine their own lives that, in the analysis of Critical Theory, reflects the objective condition of individuals in modern industrial society.⁶⁹ Authoritarian ego weakness leads the subject to attach to conventional moral conceptions in their most fixed, rigid, and repressive form; the imposition of these conceptions on oneself and especially on others promises to create the sense of moral order that the authoritarian subject craves but fails to develop autonomously. The ego ideal⁷⁰ of the authoritarian embodies the power of a mercilessly punishing authority that lashes out at all "deviants."

Failed ego formation, inadequate integration of the superego and blindly internalized oppression, extreme narcissistic injury and the longing for narcissistic gratification, the renunciation of narcissism and the drives, the withdrawal of love, the dominance of the drive impulses

(particularly those of the aggression drive), the identification with unmediated power: the synthesis of all these factors leads to a repressed aggressivity, to a state of affairs in which the demands of the drives can only be held in check with great effort, so that the subject yearns for external discipline and authoritarian stringency. For Adorno, what is reflected here is “not only the weakness of the ego but also the magnitude of the task it has to perform, that is to say, the strength of certain kinds of needs which are proscribed in the subject’s culture” (AP 237).

The authoritarian subject attempts to stabilize the weak ego and to overcome powerful impulses perceived as threatening to the self, as diffuse and chaotic, in part by means of attachment to a seemingly strong figure, a procedure that originates as an identification of the powerless with the aggressor. The attachment to authority is complemented by an unyielding suppression of the subject’s own needs and ambivalences. Both strategies are traceable to a predominance of antagonistic psychic forces. Authoritarian masochism—which is to say sadistic aggression directed inward—is not capable of containing all of the aggression that these processes produce. The unconscious need for punishment that arises in the course of the authoritarian socialization of the subject manifests itself as authoritarian submissiveness, as an excessive emotional need for obedience, but also as authoritarian aggression directed outward against outgroups “charged with dictatorship, plutocracy, desire to control” on which negative imagery is projected.⁷¹ The intense need for punishment—the primary manifestation of these forces, particularly the inadequately integrated superego—culminates not least in an outwardly directed *desire to punish*, a powerful need to “discipline”

the other, to castigate transgressors.⁷² When this desire to punish is given positive sanction, the coldness and violence experienced by the authoritarian subject, as well as the subject's nagging sense of his own weakness, can be taken out on the other. Massive suppression of both the libido and, from childhood on, the aspiration for autonomy means that authoritarian subjects "find relaxation unbearable because they do not know fulfillment" (DE 140). The authoritarian subject, who is powerless in the face of social domination and lacks inner authority (i.e., conscience) to cope with it, seeks to compensate for his weakness with physiological strength, hate, and violence.

The cumulative experience of powerlessness, frustration, and aggression to which the authoritarian subject is disproportionately exposed is not without a lasting effect. In the view of Critical Theory, this results in a particular configuration of character in which the determining factors are external power, powerlessness of the subject, and a superego that is hostile and alien to the ego, as well as intensely aggressive tendencies of the id, which likewise torments the ego as an alien force. These aggressive impulses can break out when external authorities allow it or when it serves those authorities' ideals. In the psychodynamics of the authoritarian personality, the Frankfurt School contends, part of the aggression (grounded in submissiveness) that is constantly being produced and dammed up is converted to masochism, which binds the suppression of the ego and the id with desire. As pointed out, authoritarian submission is an outlet, "a way of handling ambivalent feelings toward authority figures" that has the function of reinforcing authoritarian relations: "underlying hostile and rebellious impulses, held in check by fear, lead the subject to

overdo in the direction of respect, obedience, gratitude, and the like" (AP 232). Authoritarian violence is thus erotically cathected. Another part of this aggression, however, develops into sadistic energy, which typically seeks an out-group—the weak and socially excluded—as its outlet:

Love for the mother, in its primary form, comes under a severe taboo. The resulting hatred against the father is transformed by reaction-formation into love. This transformation leads to a particular kind of superego. The transformation of hatred into love, the most difficult task an individual has to perform in his early development, never succeeds completely. In the psychodynamics of the "authoritarian character," part of the preceding aggressiveness is absorbed and turned into masochism, while another part is left over as sadism, which seeks an outlet in those with whom the subject does not identify himself: ultimately the outgroup. The Jew frequently becomes a substitute for the hated father, often assuming, on a fantasy level, the very same qualities against which the subject revolted in the father, such as being practical, cold, domineering, and even a sexual rival. Ambivalence is all-pervasive, being evidenced mainly by the simultaneity of blind belief in authority and readiness to attack those who are deemed weak and who are socially acceptable as "victims." (AP 759)⁷³

Critical Theory construes this structure, in true Freudian fashion, as a failed, sadomasochistic resolution of the Oedipus complex,⁷⁴ an infantile regression to pre-genital aims of the drives,⁷⁵ a return to the anal-sadistic

phase⁷⁶—a retrogression, that is, to archaic forms of the self that precede the proper development of the ego. As discussed earlier, the authoritarian subject's failure to establish autonomy is primarily localized in the "Oedipal phase" of early child development. The complex psychic agencies—relics of various forms of object relation, characterized by the identifications⁷⁷ from which they derive—are insufficiently differentiated from the id. Ego weakness and moral regression to an archaic superego are determined by the absence of these individual processes of differentiation. Parental attentiveness and the satisfaction of the drives, as well as the contradictory resolution of the Oedipus conflict through the internalization of external authority in the ego—all are prerequisites for successful differentiation. In the case of the authoritarian subject, by contrast, a nonintegrated, dependent character develops, one that reacts "to stronger characters with submission and to weaker characters with contempt,"⁷⁸ and finds its orientation in a hierarchical, sadomasochistic order that corresponds to the dominant form of society, and achieves satisfaction within it.⁷⁹ It should be recalled that in bourgeois society the painful reconfiguration of the needs of the drives is highly ambivalent and always tends to bear sadomasochistic traits.

The suppression of libidinal desires and the disruption of ego formation cause permanent damage to the individual—narcissistic injuries that ultimately crystallize in the character. This takes the form, on one hand, of hardening and violence toward all object relations and, on the other, of reverence, admiration, and "love" toward persons, institutions, and ideals that embody power. According to the Frankfurt School, the hatred and social violence that the individual experiences in response to the

aims of the drives create the conditions under which "in the battle with his own drives, this individual becomes sadistic" (FP 282). This hatred, originating in processes of subjugation, is split off and directed outward.

Rage and Ambivalence: Social Conformism, Self-Hatred, and Displacement

Especially in modern society, the rage that arises in the moment of submission cannot be focused on the all-powerful, repressive authority that is its ultimate source, but must instead be redirected inward against the self and outward against weaker others. These objects serve as surrogates for the agent of domination, which is hated and at the same time compulsively loved and idealized. In the economy of the drives, the existing order, which appears unassailable, requires a scapegoat: "One might say that in authoritarian aggression, hostility that was originally aroused by and directed toward ingroup authorities is *displaced* onto outgroups" (AP 233). It should be noted that Adorno clearly distinguishes this authoritarian mechanism from the conventional conception of "scapegoating." For Critical Theory, authoritarian displacement and projection are not primarily a matter of the subject misperceiving the nature of his frustration that has its true source in the renunciation of economic needs, and thus misdirecting his aggression at targets suggested by the dominant groups or social elites.⁸⁰ According to Adorno's "theory of displacement," in contrast, "the authoritarian *must*, out of an inner necessity, turn his aggression against outgroups. He must do so because he is psychologically unable to attack in-group authorities,

rather than because of intellectual confusion regarding the source of his frustration" (AP 233). The conventional aggression-frustration hypothesis underestimates the social-psychological entrenchment of this dynamic in an authoritarian personality and scarcely develops a specific conception of how frustrations are processed and communicated by the subject.⁸¹

The *theory of displacement* explains why aggression against out-groups is characteristically justified, or rather rationalized, in conformist and moralistic terms. The ostensible moral laxity that the authoritarian personality perceives in others and feels compelled to condemn is a defense mechanism against the individual's own inhibited desires, which are imposed on the other by means of projection. The authoritarian "individual's own unacceptable impulses are *projected* onto other individuals and groups who are then rejected" (AP 233).⁸²

The dialectic of powerlessness and authoritarian-sadistic aggression, which is sanctioned by external authorities and justified with rigid moralism vis-à-vis the other, also touches on the "power complex" (AP 237) of the authoritarian character. The authoritarian individual orients his thoughts and actions toward the agency in power, particularly toward an authority figure that is expressly fixated on power. "It appears that he wants to get power, to have it and not to lose it, and at the same time is afraid to seize and wield it" (AP 237). In relation to the apparently unassailable authorities of the in-group, the individual hopes to participate in power by submitting to it.⁸³ The in-group, valorized by means of ethnocentric stereotypes, offers a sense of superiority. What is more, the authoritarian achieves an actual gain in

power by subjugating others—the out-group denounced as “inferior”—with sadistic violence.

Attuned to power and venerating power, the weak authoritarian-patriarchal personality must behave submissively toward the “top” and roughly, even brutally toward the “bottom,” toward those who appear physically weak, in order to prove his manhood to himself. Self-denial is part and parcel of this bifurcated relationship to authority: “The denial of material gratifications, indicative of a restrictive superego, is no less characteristic than the twofold pleasure in being obeyed and giving pleasure to the boss” (AP 760). Pleasure, however restricted, affords a clearly structured hierarchy that both gratifies the power complex and provides a sense of order for the ego-weak individual.

In the Frankfurt School’s conception of the authoritarian character, there is a further dialectic contained in the authoritarian subject’s ambivalence vis-à-vis an implacable social authority—be it the father, the brother, or later perhaps the peer group or Hitler Youth leader—as well as toward the strivings of his own drives. We turn now to a closer examination of this dialectic. As we have seen, rebellious and hate-filled impulses toward authority are transformed within the subject, through fear, into respect, obedience, and gratitude, or else channeled in another direction, because the ego feels too weak for either revolt or dissociation. Authoritarian submission is a way of “handling ambivalent feelings toward authority figures.”⁸⁴ The masochistic desire to submit and obey, to receive orders and carry them out, and to subordinate oneself to a more powerful figure can go so far that the authoritarian “even enjoys the castigation and abuse

carried out by the stronger one."⁸⁵ And yet, the submissive love showered on the powerful—the basis, for instance, of German authoritarianism, the “military ethos,” and the Prussian “secondary virtues” of obedience and sense of duty—arises from a highly ambivalent emotional base. The idealized external authorities are simultaneously admired, envied, and hated;⁸⁶ what is more, this ambivalence can, under certain circumstances, turn to open hostility and rebellion against them, without ever breaking the authoritarian dynamic. Built-up feelings of hatred and envy can be unleashed on these authority figures if they are no longer seen to embody unassailable power, if they show weakness or come into conflict with other authorities—or with the ideological power wielded by notions of “race” and “nation.”⁸⁷ In such cases, the old authority can be supplanted by a new, stronger one.

The authoritarian individual identifies with the societal agents of power and repression because he has never experienced an alternative to renunciation of the libido and the ego, an alternative to unmediated bonding with authority. Yet, these agents of power only partly correspond to “the image of the father whose role during the later phases of the subject’s infancy may well have decreased in the present day society.”⁸⁸ The subject’s ego ideal becomes the callous authority to which it submits—whichever authority appears to be the most powerful, the most steeled and sadistic—as well as the rigid social order that underlies this authority. Marcuse stresses that this ego ideal is “brought to bear on the Ego directly and ‘from outside,’ *before* the Ego is actually formed as the personal and (relatively) autonomous subject of mediation between him-*self* and the others.”⁸⁹ It acts on the subject, in other words, before the conscience, that voice of the other in

the self, can be internalized in the ego. "The mediation between the Self and the Other gives way to immediate identification," Marcuse writes.⁹⁰ The authoritarian individual is thus always an "adjusted" individual, a conformist. Since he has neither worked through the renunciation of his instinctual desires nor formed an autonomous subjectivity vis-à-vis authoritarian power, he is beaten and powerless and conforms to whatever system is in power, particularly if it represents hardness, order, and physical force. He takes on the coldness and inflexibility with which he was treated, while the deadened or damagingly constrained libidinal needs manifest themselves in distorted ways: in longing for the empty "warmth" of authoritarian community and the soldierly romanticism of the bivouac, and in the bond with a leader.⁹¹ Accordingly, it is argued, the most thoroughly adjusted individuals, who conform most to a certain "middle-class culture," also tend to harbor the most prejudices.⁹²

A sadomasochistic character disposition thus implies not only the total submission of the ego to higher agencies and powers, but also, as we have seen, the internal repression of the subject's needs and desires beneath the overwhelming social pressure and a superego that remains alien to the ego. The authoritarian subject "must act according to the pattern of conformist social behavior rather than according to the needs of his individual personality" (FP 123). For Critical Theory, the strained drive structure with its aggressive distortions must always submit to the discipline of "social adjustment." At the same time, in the words of Gertrud Hardtmann, the authoritarian character is waging "a war on two fronts: against his own rampant drives, on one hand, and on the other, against a severe, intolerant superego."⁹³ The tension and

frustration thus constantly reproduced and heightened can only be offset to a very limited degree by masochistic pleasure. The "heavy demands of self-discipline" (FP 97) find their concrete manifestation in authoritarian character traits. These include exaggerated conceptions of decency, "order, exactness and pedantry" (FP 114), which are tied to an obsession with the sexual, with dirt and chaos. These traits are tied to deep-seated needs of the drives, and they form the basis of a callous ideology of achievement, a fetishization of labor, which in its historical, alienated form, structured by an authoritarian organization of industry, stands for the dismal, unyielding discipline of libidinal desires. The subject whose ego is weak despises his own unconscious drive stimuli and, while unable to acknowledge their existence, responds to these stimuli with intense self- and outward-directed aggression. For such a subject, the need to fulfill his "sadistic instinct"⁹⁴ through domination and destruction increases along with the tension produced by these antagonistic psychic forces. As Otto Fenichel noted, "[t]he lust to kill, love of dirt, and low voluptuousness,—these are the things which people try painstakingly to keep hidden in their unconscious."⁹⁵ Yet, libidinal renunciation and "professed obedience to sexual taboos" are typically tied to "considerable resentment of self-denial of illicit enjoyment" (FP 239).

What results from these tensions and contradictions, in the view of Critical Theory, is not only an ambivalent relationship to authority on the part of the authoritarian personality, but ambivalence toward others' and the subject's own libidinal needs, as well—toward the demands of the drives, which must be continually repressed because they are forbidden. The authoritarian personality's

most intense unconscious desire, then, arises in order to resolve these distressing, unconscious ambivalences. On one hand, the subject yearns to brazenly live out his desires; on the other, operating under the primacy of the archaic superego, he must despise these powerful, unconscious drive elements, which are, in fact, key in shaping the authoritarian subject. It is characteristic of the authoritarian personality structure that the individual hates these forbidden energies; the authoritarian individual, in other words, hates himself. Critical Theory construes this self-hatred as a product of the authoritarian subject's ambivalent position vis-à-vis those who have developed a putatively "moral self,"⁹⁶ as distinguished by an integrated conscience, a strong ego, individuality, and a less repressive form of life without hostility to pleasure. Covert admiration and envy of the other's vitality are matched by an implacable authoritarian contempt, which is nurtured by the continual repression of libidinal needs to which the antidemocratic individual is subjected from without and within. The prevailing hostility toward the sexual, as well as the conformist submissiveness to authority, aimed at the curtailment and domestication of libidinal energies, "is intrinsically related to the resentment against anyone who is different and hence virtually directed against any minority group."⁹⁷

The element of self-hatred in the subject deformed by authoritarianism is likewise ambivalent, however. Its source is not merely the frustration and irrational attachment to power that engender aggression in response to the demands of the libido: self-hatred also has a rational core. The authoritarian individual unconsciously senses that his self-contempt stems from his incapacity for individuality and a self-determined, sensual existence: he

feels his own inferiority and powerlessness. The ambivalent hatred for particularity and the integrated, more liberal personality structures of others, the “opposition to the subjective and tender-minded” (AP 235), as well as the self-hatred of the authoritarian individual might indicate a vestigial inkling of his own moral regression. For Critical Theory, the dialectic of hatred and self-hatred, sadism and masochism can only build, along with the destructive and “self-destructive implications”⁹⁸ noted by Adorno, since the authoritarian subject feels threatened not only by an all-powerful societal authority, but also by his own libidinal needs. In particular, the subject feels provoked and threatened by those who would appear to deviate from the irrational and repressive authoritarian structure. These external and internal stimuli, in the view of the Frankfurt School, lead the authoritarian subject to “paranoid fantasies” (AP 611). Perhaps more than he fears the oppressive, but familiar agent of authoritarian power, the individual, blindly tied to this irrational authority, fears the incomprehensible, the foreign, the “Other” who calls his unhappy existence—authoritarian order as a way of life—into question.

For the authoritarian subject, all that is perceived as polymorphic, free, or indeterminate in others, as well as in the economy of his own drives, is desired, and yet, because it is forbidden, must be mastered or destroyed, in accordance with the anal-sadistic unconscious. For the subject who is susceptible to resentment, feelings of fear—fear of being weak or showing weakness—and the intuition of one’s own human weakness constitute the enemy. He “discovers them everywhere and prefers to strike at them in others, rather than in himself.” One who “knows how to act the strongman is preoccupied

with weakness he detects in others, as a means of forgetting it in himself."⁹⁹

For the individual with a weak ego, the unyielding hardening or armoring imposed by the externalized superego appears as the only option for asserting the self against all that is chaotic and flowing,¹⁰⁰ against the demands of the id and the heterogeneous external world. As Löwenthal notes, the "diminution of his 'ego' decreases his ability . . . to exercise self-control" (FP 123). A manifestation of the binding of the individual's instinctual life to the destruction drive, the longing to overcome ambivalences, to achieve a fixed and static order and to find "peace" takes on a fanatical form: "The extreme antisemite silences the remnants of his own conscience by the extremeness of his attitude. He seems to terrorize himself even while he terrorizes others" (AP 633). The potentially antisemitic subject, a personality that is incapable of self-determination and at the same time bound to resist it, because it could endanger a sense of security that is as false as it is fragile, ultimately despises every truly subjective force: every intellectual impulse, every spark of imagination.¹⁰¹ Just as the authoritarian subject needs to contain, punish, project, or deaden the chaotic drive energies that build up in his own psyche, countering them with strict adherence to hierarchical order, so, too, does he aspire to rebuild the external world of the living as a dead world, one that would function according to his rigid principles of order. Subservient to the idealized moral authority of the conformist group or society, the authoritarian personality stands at the ready to attack the weak and nonconformist outsider in the group's midst, to reenact, in heightened form, the violence to which he has been subjected. Terror awaits only a thinly veiled rationalization for unleashing the desires of

the drives within the authoritarian-aggressive framework. Yet the struggle for the realization of the authoritarian social ideal represents aggression against all that is vital and human. It tends toward a form of "self-realization" that for the authoritarian subject appears to be possible only in death: in killing and in the subject's own ("heroic") death—the destructive sublation of the self. The ambivalences and antagonistic forces within the authoritarian subject thus find their definitive "solution" on the battlefield or in acts of terror—and in the program of systematic annihilation of those stereopathically declared to be "others," "inferior," or "enemies."

Collectivism, Inside and Out: Stereopathic Consciousness and Social Identification

In the view of Critical Theory, the subject's regressivity and ego weakness also lead to an intellectual regression, a "weakening of the 'critical' mental faculties: consciousness and conscience."¹⁰² Circumscribed by the rigid demands of the archaic superego, the thinking of the authoritarian individual is, to a large extent, limited to stereotype and dichotomous reaction. This thinking is consistent with the dominance of the unconscious and the drive structure in the stunted, authoritarian personality:

Stereotypy, in this syndrome, is not only a means of social identification, but has a truly "economic" function in the subject's own psychology: it helps to canalize his libidinous energy according to the demands of his overstrict superego. Thus stereotypy itself tends to become heavily libidinized. . . . (AP 759)

The authoritarian individual seeks and finds ways of releasing libidinal energy, which has been distorted by frustration into aggression. The truncation of thought into stereotypy—"the disposition to think in rigid categories" (AP 236)—offers a form of release that is allowable by the "socialized" superego because it is compatible with established authority. According to Critical Theory, the contempt for anything nonconformist or uninhibited, anything that has not entirely submitted to irrational power and authoritarian order, provides a veneer of rationalization for "releasing pent-up malice"¹⁰³ and "banned instincts" (FP 60), and crystallizes as a "stereopathic" mentality.¹⁰⁴ The authoritarian personality, for Adorno, is characterized by the lack of "an imaginative, subjective human outlook" (Murray in AP 235), by "anti-intracception," a deficiency in sensitive feelings and thoughts:

The extremely anti-intracceptive individual is afraid of thinking about human phenomena because he might, as it were, think the wrong thoughts; he is afraid of genuine feeling because his emotions might get out of control. Out of touch with large areas of his own inner life, he is afraid of what might be revealed if he, or others, should look closely at himself. . . . [I]nstead of examining an inner conflict [he would] turn his thoughts to something cheerful. (AP 235)

This characteristic insensitivity to one's own emotions and the emotions of others, along with a flaunted roughness of manner, is accompanied by a "reification" of thought: a debasement of everything human and alive and an overvaluation of material objects. Things—or commodities—exercise a high degree of emotional

attraction and become endowed with “subjective qualities.” As Marcuse repeatedly emphasizes, things are libidinally cathected, while human beings are held in contempt or treated as mere objects. Such reification and emphasis on the static object correlates with stereotypy, an intellectual “obtuseness particularly in psychological and social matters” (AP 236).

While Adorno, who always underscores the social character of authoritarianism, curiously presupposes that stereotypy tends to accompany “low intelligence” (a categorization taken directly from positivistic psychology and not quite in line with his critical social theory), he insists that ethnocentrism, although it is related to stereotypy, correlates only marginally to “low intelligence” (AP 236). Ethnocentrism, the aggressive valorization of one’s own group and abasement of “outsiders,” is a manifestation of a societal tendency toward violent mastery and collective-narcissistic gratification that lies at the very core of authoritarianism. Yet Adorno also sees stereotypy, “in part at least” (AP 236), as an expression of modern authoritarianism and ego weakness, as a disposition that is produced by modern society:

It might be hypothesized that one reason why people in modern society—even those who are otherwise “intelligent” or “informed”—resort to primitive, oversimplified explanations of human events is that so many of the ideas and observations needed for an adequate account are not allowed to enter into the calculations: because they are affect-laden and potentially anxiety-producing, the weak ego cannot include them within its scheme of things. (AP 236)

The schematic limits placed on perception and consciousness are interconnected with the psychic mechanism of projection. These unconscious, "deeper forces within the personality which the ego cannot integrate with itself are likely to be projected onto the outer world" and in this regard form "a source of bizarre ideas concerning other peoples' behavior" (AP 236). At the same time, the reactions of the weak ego are as unrealistic as its mode of perception.

Authoritarian individuals are susceptible to stereotypical prejudice not least because it offers a means of defense against and separation from the hidden, aggressive aims of the drives and unconscious tensions that are constitutive for the antidemocratic subject. Prejudice permits the projection of one's own desires, weaknesses, and hated aspects of the self onto another or a group of others. As Adorno notes, "the suppressed impulses of the authoritarian character tend to be projected onto other people who are then blamed out of hand. Projection is thus a device for keeping id drives ego-alien, and it may be taken as a sign of the ego's inadequacy in carrying out its function" (AP 240). The suppressed, hostile feelings toward idealized power figures, toward the bad sides of one's own group or toward oneself, or originally toward one's parents can, via projection, be transferred to alien groups, which are then open to be attacked as an outlet.¹⁰⁵

The mechanism of projection allows the authoritarian individual to indulge in instinctual imaginings that would otherwise be (ostensibly or actually) abhorrent and forbidden, under the "moral" pretext of punishing harmful disorder, uncleanness, and deviation from established

norms or the prevailing ideology of achievement. Ethnocentric resentments, in this regard, are part of a broader tendency to act out the individual's own sadomasochistic desire to punish vis-à-vis supposed transgressors of conventional norms: "Once the individual has convinced himself that there are people who ought to be punished, he is provided with a channel through which his deepest aggressive impulses may be expressed, even while he thinks of himself as thoroughly moral" (AP 233). In this psychodynamic of stereotyping, projection, and release of authoritarian aggression—release, that is, of drive impulses—the particular interest of the authoritarian in sexual matters, which Adorno establishes, is also operative. "A strong inclination to punish violators of sex mores . . . may be an expression of a general punitive attitude . . . but it also suggests that the subject's own sexual desires are suppressed and in danger of getting out of hand" (AP 241). The authoritarian individual projects sexual excesses onto an out-group because his own active but unconscious, or barely conscious, impulses tend in this direction.

Drawing on a fear of deviance that is anchored in the structure of the drives and that is constitutive in the individual's socialization, this ideological facade serves to justify contempt for all those who do not fit into authoritarian fantasies of order. The displacement of immorality, through the mechanism of projection, from within the subject to an out-group that can be singled out and attacked, provides a moralistic rationale for the subject's destructive desires that might otherwise not have passed through the censorship of the ego, such as in the idea that the "Jews brought [the Nazi extermination policy] upon themselves" (AP 631). This way, the rigid, hardly

integrated superego, which itself contributes to the formation of the stereotypical mentality, becomes the mouthpiece of the id, transformed into an agency of punishment marked by unbridled aggression and sanctioned by "culturally 'approved' stereotypes."¹⁰⁶

In this view, the ego-weak individual, attached as he is to power, is particularly prone to clinging to the authoritarian "solutions" that have already structured the subject in an authoritarian and aggressive mode, and which now strengthen the subject's regressive disposition. Because he cannot attack the authorities within, the antidemocratic individual must act out his aggressions on outside groups. The stereopathic mentality—fed on social prejudice and, due to ego weakness, bound to the ideological directives of those in power—is shored up by projections as well as positively sanctioned discrimination and rationalizations of the subject's own violent outbreaks or aggressive sexual wishes. "[T]he expropriation of the superego by the fascist character, with underlying unconscious guilt feelings which must be violently silenced at any price, contributes decisively to the transformation of 'cultural discrimination' into an insatiably hostile attitude feeding upon destructive urges" (AP 630).

Authentic, individual experience is denied to the authoritarian subject. This incapacity conjoins with stereotypical forms of thought and frequently corresponds to overtly "political stereotypy and personalization" (AP 618), which provide the authoritarian individual with an explanation for deep-seated social and psychological discontent. Emotionally and intellectually, the weak ego of the authoritarian individual goes about on "the crutches of stereotype, personification and discriminatory prejudice."¹⁰⁷ While, according to Löwenthal, authentic

experience stagnates in the ego-weak, potentially antisemitic subject,¹⁰⁸ dichotomous, schematic thinking offers stability in the midst of otherwise unbearable emotional disorder, at the same time bringing a longed-for “emotional release.”¹⁰⁹ Aggressive drive energies can be at least temporarily gratified by gestures of moral condemnation of the vice that is supposedly rampant among out-groups. Stereotypy and ethnocentrism are inseparably interrelated.

The stereotypical categories of “beloved in-group” and “rejected out-group”¹¹⁰ are consistent with the psychological structure of the ego-weak individual, without necessarily being inscribed in it. The dichotomy, according to Critical Theory, promises a twofold psychic advantage: first, a valorization of the weak self by way of (collective) narcissistic gratification¹¹¹ aided by derogation of the other; and second, the prospect of an “*unrestricted discharge of destructive aggressions*”¹¹² against an identified enemy—the hope of official sanction for the subject, in Freud’s original phrasing, “to throw off the repressions of his unconscious instinctual impulses”¹¹³ within the collective.

The authoritarian character disposition thus proves to be highly receptive to ideologies that irrationally fetishize power and trade in collective narcissistic exaltation. Nationalism, racism, antisemitism, social Darwinism, and notions of “volk-ish” identity align with the psychic makeup and libidinal needs of the authoritarian individual, and tend to be generalized as a stereotypical worldview that is immune to personal experience. Such authoritarian political ideologies can easily connect with conventional moral codes, offering security when the individual is weak.¹¹⁴ Authoritarian personalities seem to

find a substrate of their psychological distortions in these ideologies, and an apparent way out of their precarious psychosocial situation. Simultaneously, for Adorno, the collective narcissism that characterizes the modern era is "nothing other than a desperate effort on the part of the individual to compensate, at least in part, for the fact that, in the repressive society of 'universal exchange,' no one ever gets his money's worth."¹¹⁵ Indeed, "through the nearly insurmountable difficulties that lie in the way of any spontaneous and direct relationship between human beings today," Adorno maintains, social forces practically coerce the individual, "to direct unused drive energies back onto himself."¹¹⁶

By sharing in the collective ego, the potential antisemite "can split into two the re-externalized parental power: into the leader whom he loves and into the Jew whom he hates."¹¹⁷ While authoritarian bonding ordains that hatred of the strong must be repressed, "one can at least enjoy cruelty toward the weak."¹¹⁸ As Fromm writes, the "authoritarian attitude affirms, seeks out and enjoys the subjugation of men under a higher external power, whether this power is the state or a leader, natural law, the past or God. The strong and powerful are simply admired and loved for these qualities, the weak and helpless hated and despised. . . . Sacrifice and duty, and not pleasure in life and happiness, are the guiding aims of the authoritarian attitude."¹¹⁹

The masochistic attitude toward harsh authority, with which the subject can identify through collective subordination and in which he can participate, "satisfies the need for an alleviation of anxiety as well as for greatness and power."¹²⁰ This amounts to a narcissistic "substitutive satisfaction," for which the ego-weak individual

yearns in light of his perpetual experience of emptiness, powerlessness, and inferiority: serious, cumulative narcissistic injuries.¹²¹ The subject with a weak ego hopes to acquire strength through collective-narcissistic identification. Irrationalist ideologies, the Frankfurt School maintains, promise a seemingly healing elevation of the weak self; compensation, through participation in collective feelings of omnipotence, for narcissistic injury inflicted on authoritarian personalities, from early childhood onward, by deprivation and submission. This is achieved without calling the subject's ego-weak personality structure or his libidinally cathected attachment to authority into question. On the contrary, collective-narcissistic identification reinforces these traits.

In Adorno's view, Freud had already grasped the essential role of narcissism for the formation of the fascist mass in his theory of idealization. When particular powers or persons are idealized, a greater measure of narcissistic libido flows to a beloved or revered object, substituting an external agency for one's own, unachieved ego ideal. Through idealization, the externalized ego ideal becomes the object of libidinal attachment; the powerful leader embodies a perfection that the small ego desires and in which it can share. The ego-weak subject's recurrent failures in modern society, Adorno maintains, lead to "strong narcissistic impulses which can be absorbed and satisfied only through idealization as the partial transfer of the narcissistic libido to the object [i.e., the leader]. . . . [B]y making the leader his ideal he loves himself, as it were, but gets rid of the stains of frustration and discontent which mar his picture of his own empirical self."¹²² As Fromm writes, this sort of "'substitutive satisfaction' through masochistic submission to a higher, formidable

power is achieved not only through a relationship to the ruler," to the authoritarian leader who tends to take the place of paternal authority, "but also through taking part in the radiance of the nation or the race. The higher the individual's esteem for the radiance of the power in which he takes part, the greater is his satisfaction."¹²³

"Identification is 'the earliest expression of an emotional tie with another person,'" Adorno affirms with reference to Freud.¹²⁴ In blind identification with political leaders, Adorno sees a collective "enlargement of the subject's own personality, a collective projection of himself" that is disconnected from reality and that can be traced, in part, to this pre-Oedipal, "primitively narcissistic aspect of identification as an act of devouring, of making the beloved object part of oneself."¹²⁵ This infantile regression, which facilitates the formation of the fascist mass, the submission to leaders, and "volk-ish" ideals, conforms to the stereopathic-regressive elements of the authoritarian personality. These traits, along with the social-psychological assumptions and emotional ambitions of the authoritarian individual correspond to a regressive and reactionary worldview based in ethnocentrism, exclusion, idolization of power, rigorous hierarchies, and authoritarian order.

According to the theoretical model proposed by the Frankfurt School, the construction of an "enemy image" (*Feindbild*) is an essential element in the translation of the authoritarian disposition into political action. Such an enemy is easily made a "scapegoat," in the aforementioned sense of a projection surface for all the fundamental problems identified by the authoritarian personality. This mechanism is particularly likely when a structure of prejudice is already in place to provide at least temporary

satisfaction of the subject's aggressively distorted social and psychic needs: the need to participate in power, the need for narcissistic fulfillment, for group belonging, for relief for the overexerted ego, for a simplistic explanation of the world, and especially the need to act out authoritarian aggression. What is more, as indicated, prejudice serves to rationalize underlying resentment on moralistic grounds, in accordance with the demands of the archaic superego:

The good people are described in such a way that one is like them oneself, and can, without question, count oneself as one of their number; the schema makes it unnecessary to first prove oneself as one of the good people. And that there are supposed to be those who are simply evil furnishes the semblance of a justification for letting loose one's own sadistic impulses on whoever has been designated as the victim.¹²⁶

Critical Theory never tires of calling attention to the social character of consciousness, in particular to the stereopathic regression of consciousness reflected in the products of the culture industry. The coarsening and stultification of thought, and its reduction to stereotype, are diagnosed as societal trends propagated by the agencies of cultural reproduction—from television to the cinema to popular fiction—through the standardized cultural commodities that they offer up. Susceptibility to prejudice is reinforced as a consequence. "The total effect of the culture industry is one of anti-enlightenment," Adorno writes. Indeed, enlightenment itself "becomes mass deception and is turned into a means for fettering consciousness"¹²⁷ under the auspices of the culture industry. "The concepts

of order which it hammers into human beings are always those of the status quo."¹²⁸ Adorno continues:

In contrast to the Kantian, the categorical imperative of the culture industry no longer has anything in common with freedom. It proclaims: you shall conform, without instruction as to what; conform to that which exists anyway, and to that which everyone thinks anyway as a reflex of its power and omnipresence. The power of the culture industry's ideology is such that conformity has replaced consciousness. . . . The consensus which it propagates strengthens blind, opaque authority. . . . [T]he potential of its effect . . . lies in the promotion and exploitation of the ego-weakness to which the powerless members of contemporary society, with its concentration of power, are condemned. Their consciousness is further developed retrogressively.¹²⁹

Of course, this forcible conformity to the demands of social reality, this social submission, is both the origin and the manifestation, according to Critical Theory, of ego weakness. In consequence of this pressure to assimilate by adjusting unequivocally to the reality principle, the subject forfeits the regulation of perception and reaction formation that is necessary for an autonomous assessment of reality. "Under the pressure of society," according to Adorno, "the psychological sector responds in the end only to sameness and proves incapable of experiencing the specific."¹³⁰ Adorno sees this failure as a regression to stereotypy and projective thinking, and as both a foundation and a manifestation of the susceptibility to antisemitism.

It is worth revisiting and critically reengaging with an internal tension in the theoretical work on authoritarianism. The theory of the authoritarian character's particularity vis-à-vis the ideal, liberal, "integrated personality" of the late bourgeois era is not entirely consistent with the notion of authoritarianism as a general societal phenomenon; the theory that regards the authoritarian type as a characteristic manifestation of modern socialization. This contradiction is also reflected in the theory of the stereopathic mentality. Critical Theory underscores the authoritarian's unrealistic and narrow perception whose logical endpoint is a loss of reality, highlighting the irrational potential for paranoia, for muddled and reckless projection, that is a consequence of ego weakness. Yet, emphasis is laid precisely on the modern authoritarian subject's "conformity to reality, adaptation to power" (DE 170), ostensibly produced as a direct effect of social power. Presumably the subject's adaptation is the enabling condition for the loss of reality. Both tendencies—the loss of reality and the accommodation of reality—are conveyed via mechanisms of consciousness characteristic of the modern society of exploitation, in which thought becomes a mere function. The accommodation of reality means not only the recognition of existing reality, but also the incapacity for questioning it; the Freudian reality principle, which, according to Marcuse,¹³¹ reigns over the modern individual does not necessarily correspond to objective reality and knowledge.

Still, in this regard, unresolved contradictions remain in Critical Theory that must be more closely delineated. It should be noted that the integrated personality, which in the social research on authoritarianism serves (overtly and tacitly) as a positive model, as a bulwark against

stereopathic regression, is elsewhere dialectically critiqued, from a social-theoretical standpoint, as a form of postliberal bourgeois subjectivity. Indeed, it is subject, at times, to massive critique by Adorno himself as a Freudian ideal that is part and parcel of the context of a modern society shaped by domination:

The goal of the "well-integrated personality" is objectionable because it expects the individual to establish an equilibrium between conflicting forces which does not obtain in existing society—nor should it, because those forces are not of equal moral merit. . . . His integration would be a false reconciliation with an unreconciled world, and would presumably amount in the last analysis to an "identification with the aggressor," a mere character-mask of subordination. . . . The "good" Freudian uninhibited by repressions would, in the existing acquisitive society, be almost indistinguishable from the hungry beast of prey and an eloquent embodiment of the abstract utopia of the subject, or, in today's jargon, the "image of man," whose autonomous development was unimpeded by society.¹³²

Under the conditions of modern society, in Adorno's view, the effort of adjustment to the reality principle leads to the "integration" of the subject hypostatized and idealized by Freud (the agencies in equilibrium), which amounts to a reconciliation with society, dissolving subjective suffering into a universalized social whole. From this perspective, the "fully integrated personality," in the midst of organized renunciation, suffering, antagonism, and violence, appears as one that has wholly succumbed

to society's relentless pressure to conform. It seems to entirely embrace ("unharmful," as it were) the societal principle of appropriation, to pursue "oral" cravings in a manner barely distinguishable from animal behavior. For Adorno, the personality that is adapted to reality must be understood as a blind monad, asserting its freedom in the midst of universal bondage and oppression. This abstractly free subject, ostensibly "independent" and "emancipated" from existing social relations, is thrown back to a presocial state, since freedom outside of society could only mean a freedom of unmitigated, regressive gratification. Before we return to these tensions, however, we shall explore different manifestations of the authoritarian syndrome that the Critical Theorists, in their typological approach to authoritarianism, understood as particularly significant for in the late modern era.

Eichmann Reconsidered: The "Manipulative" Type

The various elements of the authoritarian character, which we have presented up to now in structural terms, become manifest in particular forms, according to the Frankfurt School. Ernst Simmel notes early on that "the average individual antisemite appears to be a relatively normal, well-adapted person."¹³³ Similarly, Hannah Arendt identifies the Eichmann type as the specifically modern antisemite, a "typical member of the lower middle classes" who objectively, deliberately, detachedly, and without conscience organizes discriminatory violence in search of narcissistic gratification. This form diverges from

the "insane and obscene" antisemitism "of the 'Streicher kind,'" the unbridled paranoia of the authoritarian.¹³⁴

Adorno refers to the former instantiation of the antisemite as the "'manipulative' type." This is the authoritarian and bureaucratic functionary who has no moral sense of guilt, and few impulses of conscience. His conscience is wholly bound to social power; this type experiences a guilty conscience only when he has not satisfactorily fulfilled his social function, when he is not able to complete the tasks assigned by those exercising authority. In this respect, the conscience is not morally integrated, but remains an exclusively ideological function. Adorno considers this form of authoritarian character structure to be "potentially the most dangerous one" (AP 767). What distinguishes this "manipulative" type from the ideal type of the authoritarian discussed above is the way in which coldness and hardness, along with the sort of externalized superego structure that we have already encountered, come together in a particularly extreme narcissism as well as a complete lack of "affection," as Adorno puts it (AP 767). Frenkel-Brunswik conceives this as emotional detachment. At the same time, the unconscious exerts less pressure on the weak ego for this psychological type than for other prejudiced types. Adorno describes the manipulative type as follows:

Their sober intelligence, together with their almost complete absence of any affection makes them perhaps the most merciless of all. Their organizational way of looking at things predisposes them to totalitarian solutions. Their goal is the construction of gas chambers rather than the pogrom. (767-768)

In these individuals, aggressive, pent-up drive energy is “repressively sublimated,” so to speak. A compulsive interest in the exercise of power, manipulation, and control (in the place of the pogrom) vis-à-vis the despised weaker population appears diverted and disconnected from any strong impulse of the drives. The manipulative individual seems “unemotional and detached” (AP 770) even toward his imagined foes and, at the same time, compulsively hyperrational and devoid of intraception and imagination. This is accompanied, Adorno maintains, by an extreme form of stereotypy in which “rigid notions become ends rather than means and the whole world is divided into empty, schematic, administrative fields” (AP 767). In this context, the division of the world in terms of the “ingroup-outgroup relationship” (AP 768) represents the key mental categorization on which the individual’s thinking is based. At an ideological level, this structure is manifest, for instance, in the concept of the political advanced by Carl Schmitt, in which the friend-enemy distinction is fundamental.¹³⁵

One component of the lack of affect, according to Adorno, could be a consequence of a “complete and unconditional identification of a person with the group to which he happens to belong,” a notion of “loyalty” understood as a renunciation of “all individual particularities for the sake of the ‘whole’” (AP 770–771). The manipulative authoritarian personality desires objects to manipulate. As the prototypical *Schreibtischtäter* [perpetrator behind a desk], he “organizes” his victims as mere objects of administration; they become material under his gaze. At the same time, the individual of this type is particularly susceptible to manipulation

himself. However innovative his techniques might be, he is always acting in the service of something, without ever entertaining any (moral) doubt as to whether his actions are "right." For Adorno, the manipulative type "comes close to the classical Freudian conception of the 'anal' character" (AP 768). The traits exhibited by this type suggest profound psychic traumas in the pregenital phase that have precluded successful object cathexis and object relations. The manipulative type is distinguished by extreme primary narcissism and boundless sadism, which, however, is largely diverted into "dispassionate" fantasies of violence that are integrated into administrative structures. This correlates to an antisemitism for which a particular hatred of the Jews is not even required: "'The Jewish question will be solved strictly legally' is the way they talk about the cold pogrom" (AP 768).

Rebellious Conformism

In addition to the manipulative type, the authoritarian rebel type described by Critical Theory is worthy of special note. In this case, authoritarian aggression is discharged in a markedly free and unsublimated form, provided that this action is legitimized by new, apparently stronger authority figures—the ring leader or the radical rightwing cadre—who take the place of the old authorities. Critical Theory emphasizes this manifestation of authoritarianism in particular with regard to the conduits of antisemitism in youth culture; it is deemed highly significant as a source of fascist potential. The

theory of authoritarian rebellion describes an authoritarian admixture of conformism and revolt.

Without altering the aggressive, authoritarian disposition or disrupting the dynamic of authoritarian bonding, Adorno contends, a rebellion is carried out against a previously idealized parental authority, or against other societal authority figures—sometimes against the State itself. The rebellion might come about because the established authority is suddenly unable to radiate the strength that was once both admired and feared, the power to create order and to clamp down. Identification with paternal authority turns to rebellion against it, but another authority immediately takes its place; in fact, the new authority is a prerequisite for destroying the old. The many instances, under National Socialism, of children and wives denouncing their fathers and husbands provide an exemplary case of authoritarian rebellion. This process of replacing one authority with another, Adorno maintains, is “facilitated by the ‘externalized’ superego structure” that is common to all prejudiced individuals (AP 762). The extreme manifestation of the authoritarian rebel syndrome, the type Adorno calls the “Tough Guy,” is less rigid in disposition than the “conventional” authoritarian:

Here, the superego seems to have been completely crippled through the outcome of the Oedipus conflict, by means of a retrogression to the omnipotence fantasy of very early infancy. These individuals are the most “infantile” of all: they have thoroughly failed to “develop,” have not been moulded at all by civilization. They are “asocial.” Destructive urges come to the fore in an overt, non-rationalized way. . . .

Their indulgence in persecution is crudely sadistic, directed against any helpless victim; it is unspecific and hardly colored by "prejudice." (AP 763)¹³⁶

Fromm had been the first to propose a typological distinction between the conservative authoritarian personality, which he locates historiographically in the traditional *petit bourgeoisie*, and the newer rebellious authoritarian personality types that, he writes, had gained growing social significance beginning in the early years of the Weimar Republic: "The petty bourgeoisie, and above all, the younger generation, revealed rebellious-authoritarian traits and rose against the increasingly hated authorities. The more conciliatory and weak authority appeared," Fromm asserts, "the more grew their hatred and disdain."¹³⁷ While identification with the existing order is, in most cases, a component of authoritarianism, Fromm notes that the usual authoritarian assent to the status quo and to those in power can be revoked if the existing societal authority is partly democratized and thus fails to fulfill the expectation of implacable hardness:

Many intermediate steps lead from this type of rebel to the individual who abandons the current authority figure, only to submit, simultaneously, to a new authority. . . . Often . . . the cause lies in the fact that the existing authority has forfeited its defining quality of absolute power and superiority, and in so doing, inevitably loses its psychological function.¹³⁸

For the ego-weak subject, one precondition for this sort of rebellion is an authoritarian in-group, such as

a neo-fascist social milieu provides. One of the most attractive aspects of such a milieu to its participants is the strictly organized power that is exercised there, even in its informal structures. It also fulfills a strong “wish to ‘belong,’ to become a member of a closed in-group,”¹³⁹ and offers a chance to exert power against an “other.” As Gertrud Hardtmann observes in regard to participants in extreme right groups:

Exerting power is the secret desire of the authoritarian personality. He doesn't do this openly on his own behalf, but rather for the sake of an idea, a worldview, out of responsibility and a sense of duty. The chaos of destructive emotions that dominates his inner life is not truly contained; it is merely channeled, diverted into courses set by prejudice. . . . Under the ideological cloak of a demonized enemy stereotype, it becomes possible to act out aggression and destructiveness without internal conflict. . . . If this outlet were barred to them [rightwing youth], they might become neurotic, that is, their aggressions might manifest in symptomatic form.¹⁴⁰

New authorities and ideologies that replace the old satisfy “two needs at the same time—rebellious tendencies and the latent longing for comprehensive submission,” according to Fromm.¹⁴¹ Authoritarian rebellion enables an act of “patricide,” an open break with the traditional authority that was hitherto not only idealized, at a libidinal level, by the authoritarian personality, but also unconsciously despised. Yet, Critical Theory maintains, this break is only possible for the authoritarian individual

if new, more powerful authority figures have already taken the place of the old. The notion of authoritarian rebellion—or “rebellious conformism” as Kurt Lenk puts it¹⁴²—plays an important role in studies of the radical right until this day. Characterized by a wholly archaic superego structure and narcissistic fantasies of omnipotence that compensate for deep, narcissistic injury, this authoritarian personality type appears to occur with increased frequency in potentially antisemitic, extreme rightwing milieus. In contrast to the conservative and manipulative manifestations of authoritarianism, affect control through the agency of the superego appears particularly tenuous in the case of the authoritarian rebel, while the destructive and distorted strivings of the id are especially intense—apt abruptly and flagrantly to erupt, they are held in check only by external power. Sadistic fantasies, which can find their expression in antisemitism, in this case outweigh the masochistic bond, which is also present: the self-directed sadism of the sadomasochistic, potentially antisemitic personality. “It is hardly adequate,” however, as Adorno emphatically states, “to define the forces of fascist rebellion simply as powerful id energies which throw off the pressure of the existing social order. Rather, this rebellion borrows its energies partly from other psychological agencies which are pressed into the service of the unconscious.”¹⁴³ Adorno alludes here to the ostensibly “civilizing” agencies, the ego and the superego, which impart societal constraints to the individual. Destructive energies, in this view, are not only the expression of the unmitigated violence of the drives, but also a manifestation of the process of suppression by means of which civilization is able to promise

freedom and cultural progress. What should be borne in mind here is the basic structure of the authoritarian disposition as it was consistently put forward in the work of the Critical Theorists. While this work grounds the theory of the authoritarian personality in a discussion of overall societal tendencies, the authoritarian personality is consistently juxtaposed to a nonauthoritarian personality structure. Early on, Fromm proceeds from this dichotomy in positing his ideal types. At a general level, Fromm maintains, personality types can be divided into those "whose aggression develops in opposition to the powerful and whose sympathy evolves toward the oppressed, and those whose aggression targets the defenseless and whose sympathy is directed toward the powerful."¹⁴⁴ Adorno, in his sociological studies, places an even stronger emphasis on this psychological antagonism within existing social relations, referring to those subjects that, in his view, have no compulsive attachment to authority as "unprejudiced" or "free of prejudice."¹⁴⁵ In contrast to Fromm or Löwenthal, who refer to reformers and revolutionaries, Adorno gives pride of place to the "genuine liberal" as exemplar of the unprejudiced individual (AP 781–783). This stands somewhat in contrast to Adorno's social-theoretical work, which understands authoritarianism as an expression of bourgeois subjectivity and of postliberal tendencies within the civil order, whose "essence," Adorno the theorist maintains, "however it may hide itself at times, is the violence which . . . is openly revealed" in fascist terror and antisemitic hysteria (DE 139). This theoretical tension, an indication of the complex relationship of antisemites, the ideology of antisemitism, and social and political context, is considered at greater length in the next section.

Loving to Hate: Rethinking Modern Authoritarianism and the Rise of Antisemitic Resentment

For the Critical Theorists and Adorno in particular, the social-material basis of modern authoritarianism comprises, on one hand, the modern trend toward authoritarian forms of the state order that seek to rescue the bourgeois-liberal, capitalist system. On the other hand, this material basis entails the societal tendency of late modernity toward a totality of social integration and subjugation through the pressures of the law of exchange and a fully administered world, both of which intensify the dependency, powerlessness, and social despair of (petty) bourgeois and proletarian subjects vis-à-vis societal authorities. The patriarchal nuclear family of the nineteenth century liberal age is increasingly substituted, and the abstract authorities of the capitalist economy are increasingly supplemented, Critical Theory argues, by direct societal authorities such as those of the state and the leader with which the individual then identifies. "Joyful submission" to such societal superegos, authority figures situated at an unbridgeable distance, results not least, according to Critical Theory, from the effect of the reified authority of the economy and the state vis-à-vis an ever expanding and economically dependent and impotent mass. The resulting powerlessness of subjects and societal weakening of the ego affect both character development and consciousness. The authoritarian personality that emerges and that has thus its contemporary origins to a considerable extent in the societal pressure of capitalist principles and the corresponding work ethic and ethic of exclusion yearns for authority

and conformity. It ultimately no longer presupposes an independent, acting subject.¹⁴⁶ Reified and hardened in character, the authoritarian personality does not call for liberation, but rather for more concrete domination, for a harsher treatment of the “deviant.” In this view, the authoritarian character in turn serves—by carrying out socially unnecessary labor—to perpetuate both an outmoded social formation and its relations of domination. “This process of exchange,” Leo Löwenthal writes as early as 1934, “maintains existing power relationships and acts in this capacity as a retarding factor, as a putty holding things together when the contradictions of this order begin to threaten the order itself” (FP 296).

Moreover, for the Critical Theorists the authoritarian dispositions described above represent key preconditions for the rising lure of antisemitic ideology and the politics of hate in the modern world. If such politics is given positive social or political sanction, whatever the context, it can result in the taboo against inhuman violence being called into question or relaxed, as Löwenthal notes.¹⁴⁷ The step of accepting violence against an out-group is essential in enabling human beings to unite as prejudiced masses or “crowds,” prepared to carry out “violent action without any sensible political aim.”¹⁴⁸ What Adorno terms “the conquest of the superego by antisemitic ideology” (AP 630) can be inculcated and rationalized by society, just as the ideology itself functions as a projective rationalization for acting out suppressed drives. This process is made easier, according to the analyses of the Frankfurt School, if subjects have a less integrated, moral superego. Or, to put this differently, subjects are all the more pliable to antisemitic ideology the more the traces

of an atrophied conscience have been lost, where super-ego development was once partially successful.

In this view, modern antisemitism is first and foremost to be understood as a historically sedimented ideological matrix expressing political and social-psychological functions. This matrix corresponds to both the authoritarian personality as a characteristic product of modern societal forms of socialization and subjugation, and to the increasingly ubiquitous late modern form of consciousness—what Adorno called objectification, or commodification. In this view, as is reconstructed in chapter 5, objectification is the dominant mode of modern social relations grounded in the objective principle of abstract exchange value. It simultaneously engenders objectified social patterns of apprehension that are detached from subjective experience, that is, standardized and standardizing perceptions of the external world and “others.” Ethnocentric and antisemitic frames of reference thus replicate and reinforce such objectified mode of perception, which are—in the Frankfurt School’s account—characteristic for both authoritarian character dispositions and modern, postliberal society at large.

This claim, as bold and powerful as it is, points to another problem in Critical Theory’s analysis of modern authoritarianism. Critical Theorists significantly expand and enrich our understanding of authoritarianism as a social phenomenon beyond the focus on issues of political organization and narrow, state-centered conceptions of regime typologies in political science. Driven by the objective to formulate a universal social theory, however, the Frankfurt School scholars in turn tend to neglect—at times dismiss—relevant distinctions in the formation

of authoritarianism. They arguably downplay the role of particular political and cultural legacies as well as government policies in producing character dispositions that combine “joyful submission,” stereotypical thinking and authoritarian aggression—people who love to hate.

While the Critical Theorists by no means ignore political factors and conditions when they reflect upon the actualization or mobilization of antisemitism—as is argued in chapter 7 of this book—they attribute modern *authoritarianism* predominantly to universal tendencies in modern society rather than to specific politico-cultural contexts. This is the case even though the Frankfurt School’s initial studies of authoritarianism among German workers and white-collar employees helped the Institute’s members to recognize Nazism’s likely rise to power in Germany—an insight that propelled the Critical Theorists to plan their emigration and seek refuge abroad before Hitler’s rule began.¹⁴⁹ However, the Critical Theorists’ perceptive empirical understanding of the scope of aggressive German authoritarianism initially left largely unaffected the Frankfurt School’s emerging theoretical reflection on authoritarianism’s presumably ubiquitous modern character. The general thread of Critical Theory’s work on authoritarian dispositions, authoritarianism, and its social psychology seeks to detect generalizable modern origins and tends to downplay variations in different modern societies. This leaves the puzzle largely unanswered why authoritarianism was so powerful in Germany, and why Nazism’s aggressively authoritarian, persecutory regime took shape and succeeded there.

The Frankfurt scholars do, to be sure, occasionally relativize their universal theoretical presuppositions about

the societal foundations of modern authoritarianism. This also applies to its political-cultural and psychological origins—as evident especially in some of Horkheimer and Adorno's postwar writings on authoritarian traditions in Germany and their material and institutional causes.¹⁵⁰ Years after his return from exile in America to his native Frankfurt, Adorno begins to detect and analyze particular historical conditions of a "belated nation" that contribute to—indeed partly explain—the origins as well as the special significance of authoritarianism as a social disposition and aggressive nationalism as a cultural ideology in modern-day Germany, both of which helped engender Nazism's societal regression: "Because historically German unification was belated, precarious, and unstable, one tends, simply so as to feel like a nation at all, to overplay the national consciousness and irritably avenge every deviation from it. In this situation it is easy to regress to archaic conditions of a pre-individualistic disposition, a tribal consciousness, to which one can appeal with all the greater psychological effectiveness the less such consciousness actually exists."¹⁵¹ Adorno hereby points to a particular tradition of "deification of the state," the primacy of the interest of the "collective over the individual self-interest . . . coupled with the aggressive potential of an offensive war," and a wide-spread "urge toward boundless domination" that accompanied the "boundlessness of the 'idea.'" If one is permitted to speculate about what is specifically German, Adorno argues, it is the "interpenetration of what is magnificent, not contenting itself with any conventional boundaries, with what is monstrous. In transgressing the boundaries, it at the same time wants to subjugate."¹⁵²

It is also noteworthy that Marcuse—long before Adorno—provides some striking qualifications to Critical Theory's key claim that there is a universal modern tendency to generate authoritarian character dispositions (as opposed to specific cultural legacies and traditions serving as explanations).¹⁵³ In signature studies from the early 1940s, produced in the context of the Institute of Social Research, Marcuse explores what he calls the "new German mentality," and the conditions to overcome "German chauvinism" and authoritarianism. Especially his manuscript "The New German Mentality: Memorandum on a Study in the Psychological Foundations of National Socialism and the Chances for their Destruction" stands out (a piece which, Douglas Kellner argues, is closely connected to Marcuse's Institute work and helped him get a job with U.S. intelligence agencies fighting Nazi Germany, the Office of War Information and the CIA predecessor Office of Strategic Services).¹⁵⁴ The study dates back to June 1942. Marcuse probably produced it while working on "State and individual under conditions of National Socialism."¹⁵⁵ Until recently, his reflections about the social mentality in Nazi Germany were unpublished.¹⁵⁶ Without illusions, Marcuse analyzes the dominant mentality in German society and the "logic and language" of Nazism in order to evaluate limits and possibilities for antifascist struggle and the reconstruction of democracy. Marcuse incorporates many Frankfurt School arguments about the modern antidemocratic syndrome and its psychological, social and technological foundations into his empirical report. In line with the Frankfurt School's general arguments, he diagnoses an authoritarian psychological mix of a "pragmatic layer" of "matter-of-factness" expressing

instrumental rationality and conformism, on the one hand, and on the other a "mythical layer" expressing the irrationalism of authoritarians and their cult of power, strength and violence (and of the antisemitic racial Nazi state).¹⁵⁷ Yet in addition Marcuse examines peculiar ways politics, propaganda, and culture operated in Germany at the time. He also argues that a particular kind of aggressive authoritarianism in German political and cultural history was a favorable condition for a new genocidal mentality facilitated by Nazism. According to Marcuse a widespread "new German mentality," nurtured by cultural sediments of the pre-Nazi era, is embodied in a societal form of organization, which is not identical with the Nazi regime but finds in this regime the most aggressive expression. This mentality disposes toward cold-hearted, ruthless conformism and hatred against "enemies." Although Marcuse points to the need to differentiate within the German public and among diverse social groups and strata, Marcuse hints at both the role of a particular cultural context affecting citizens' dispositions and government policies that reinforce the diagnosed underlying "German mentality."

More recent sociopsychological studies of Nazi Germany have focused on the authoritarian effects on individual subjectivities and psyches, produced by the totalitarian regime's educational and family policy from early childhood onward. Hitler declared: "We bring them up to be new German human beings and we bring them up thoroughly."¹⁵⁸ "While the Nazi rhetoric evoked the nostalgic myth of a sheltering family," historian Claudia Koonz points out, "state policy promoted a submissive family that delivered up its members to the total state."¹⁵⁹ Official Nazi physician and ideologue Johanna

Haarer, for instance, provided "guidance" in books like *The German Mother and her First Child* (millions of copies were distributed and sold). Haarer instructed mothers to feed their children only a rigid schedule and not to nurture their children when they cry or face trouble. Children, even babies, were supposed to learn to get hard and "left to rely only on their own underdeveloped coping mechanisms and not on parental care."¹⁶⁰ Epitomized and promoted by Haarer's ideology of authoritarian submission, ethnic German parents of the Nazi period ignored their children's needs and "ruined their sense of trust."¹⁶¹ Societal regression is hereby expressed and reinforced by physically removing children from parents in various organized ways and by deliberately ruining child-parent relations. As psychoanalyst Vamik Volkan argues, because "parents were to ignore their children's cries and desires, children were forced to experience the sense that there was no benevolent power in their surroundings and robbed of the opportunity to identify with a nurturing parent. . . . Indeed, they were 'taught' that the whole world was populated with aggressors and grew up under the injunction to show no sign of weakness."¹⁶² These particular policies damaged children's psyche and mental development.¹⁶³ They also engendered authoritarian projections of their own needs to those constructed as "undesirable" groups and individuals. The product is weak personalities displaying "'empty' self-esteems with defensive grandiosity."¹⁶⁴

The case of Nazi Germany illustrates how authoritarian policies can severely damage children's emotional and mental developments, actively producing the authoritarian syndrome on a massive scope and scale but hardly being the mere expression of universal trends in

modernity. Conditions in established modern democracies can be remarkably different. We return to this problem of theoretical overgeneralization and the neglect of cultural-historical particularisms in the discussion of Frankfurt School's social theory of antisemitism.

Finally, the Critical Theorists' sophisticated sociopsychological and Freudian understanding of authoritarianism should not be confused with the claims generated by the famous Milgram experiment. While the Milgram experiment yields disturbing results about the susceptibility to authoritarian submission even among members of democratic societies, in the Frankfurt School's perspective the experiment may also provide a false sense of solace in two ways. First, it suggests that virtually everyone is ready to harm others when ordered or authorized "from above." This downplays the enormous, deep-seated societal origins shaping authoritarian individuals and the psychological drives motivating them "from below." Second, Milgram implies that there is an easy institutional fix to the problem of authoritarianism: if there is a functioning legal system that prevents everyone from acquiring an all-powerful position, the problem appears to be solved. While institutional contexts are undoubtedly important, the Critical Theorists recognize that authoritarianism is a deeper, so much more troubling challenge of modern society.

As elaborated in this chapter, the Frankfurt scholars' model points beyond an indiscriminate, ahistorical and universally applicable group psychology that suggests that all human beings tend to blindly follow orders or act sadistically when encouraged to under group pressure.¹⁶⁵ The Critical Theorists also refute simplistic psychological conceptions that suggest authoritarianism can

be reduced to automatic submission and cogs acting in a bureaucratic machine. While such models may have some partial validity, they fail to capture the dynamics of modern authoritarianism. These models underestimate the psychological energy that authoritarianism tends to release. By contrast, Critical Theory's advanced understanding focuses on authoritarian aggression and fantasies: the role of hate, drives to subjugate or persecute, and susceptibility to authoritarian ideologies.¹⁶⁶

Drawing on socially available images, in the Frankfurt School's lens the authoritarian and sado-masochistic subject, its deep-seated emotional structure, tends toward paranoia and potentially antisemitic reifications when dealing with the social world. More often than not he uses the social images of Jews that society provides, and *projects* problems anchored in a deformed structure of drives and social frustrations, as well as the self's own unacceptable impulses, onto the ideological image of "the Jew": "prejudice, according to its intrinsic content, is but superficially, if at all, related to the specific nature of its object" (AP, 275). Resentments that are crystallized in the image of "the Jew" and totalized in Nazi antisemitism, prove an ideal projection screen for the various antagonistic and tension-filled needs of antisemites. This projection screen allows the subject—particularly when politics, society, and cultural norms positively sanction it—to live out repressed wishes and aggression. Authoritarian fixations and aggressions lie in wait, ready to pour out their excesses on anyone who deviates from the norm and is "both conspicuous and unprotected" (DE 140). Antisemitism, as is developed in the following chapter, ultimately offers a perfect matrix for these fantasies and emotions, the opportunity to render the taboo

against violence null and void without being punished, at least “as soon as it has acquired social approval” (FP 222). To the particular authoritarian dynamics of projection in antisemitic images, old and modern, and the interpretation of their social meaning in Critical Theory we now turn.

CHAPTER 4

OBJECTIFYING THE OTHER

The Ideology of Antisemitism as False Projection

Critical Theorists dedicated their major research projects in the 1940s—and some important work thereafter—to examining the specific empirical form, scope, and functions of modern antisemitism. While situated in the American context and in view of the rise of antisemitism under democratic conditions with which they directly coped, this research cannot be isolated from the global political context: the rise of totalitarian antisemitism, World War II and the Nazi aspiration to conquer the world, and especially the Nazi genocide against the Jews of Europe.¹

The Critical Theorists' empirical interest, partly the by-product of organizational and institutional needs in their American context, is persistently coupled—how could it be different in the case of Critical Theory?—with theoretical objectives. In particular, the exiled members of the Institute for Social Research aimed at understanding the origins and broader social meaning of

antisemitism in modern society. As pointed out in this book's introduction, Horkheimer suggested in American exile in 1941 that, after the rise of Nazism, modern society could no longer be understood without analyzing and understanding antisemitism, just as antisemitism could not be understood without situating it in society.²

The Frankfurt School's empirical analyses are, of course, themselves shaped by a certain set of preconceived theoretical presuppositions about modern antisemitism as a social phenomenon. The Critical Theorists understood Nazi Germany's global persecution of Jews and the particularities of the total antisemitic frenzy abroad as a breakdown of civilization with global significance. However, antisemitism is conceived as a problem that primarily originates in civilizational dialectics of social domination, not in national or cultural particularities. In the lens of Critical Theory, the rise of antisemitic ideology motivating the horrific terror against Jews is in part seen in the context of broader societal tendencies, that is: decidedly modern societal processes and transformations with ultimately global or universal impact (even if the scope of such antisemitism varies and the anti-Jewish terror it unleashes is not necessarily understood as a universal phenomenon). Rather than being a problem of particular cultures, in this conception the rise of modern antisemitism and the radicalization of anti-Jewish resentments are to a considerable extent reflections of transformed social organization under conditions of advanced modernity. Indeed, when the Institute published its first proposed plan for a full-scale study of antisemitism in 1941, it proclaimed from the onset that antisemitism was neither an anachronism nor an aberration but "one of the dangers inherent in all more recent culture."³

To understand these dangers, the Critical Theorists recognize that socioeconomic analyses would no longer suffice but have to be “supplemented by an analysis of . . . psychological mechanisms.”⁴ All recent culture and the development of modern society, then, also point to concurrent dispositions among masses of presumably psychologically deeply conflicted and socially weakened individuals sharing authoritarian personality traits, as analyzed in the previous chapter. Against this backdrop, the Critical Theorists understand antisemitism as a *mass medium*, in the sense that it connects to unconscious impulses, drives and tendencies, which it reinforces and manipulates.⁵ The Critical Theorists’ specific study of antisemitic phenomena is thus grounded in their critical-dialectical understanding of modernity, the empirically saturated model of the “potentially fascist personality” and, of course, in their theoretical work on antisemitism—in particular embodied in *Dialectic of Enlightenment’s* “Elements of Antisemitism,” to be explored in detail in chapter 6. The latter partly preceded and engendered these studies but was also influenced by initial empirical findings.

The empirical work on modern antisemitism was advanced in various ways since the early 1940s: first in the Institute’s very own large-scale study on *Antisemitism among American Labor*, financed and with organizational support by the American Labor Committee; and second through the subsequent multifaceted *Studies in Prejudice*, in which members of the Institute for Social Research took on a crucial role, and which was sponsored by the American Jewish Committee. While the first study exclusively focused on antisemitism in society, it is often overlooked that the *Studies in Prejudice’s*

most influential work, *The Authoritarian Personality* by Adorno and his collaborators, also dedicates significant parts (documented in more than 100 pages) to examining anti-Jewish resentment. Thereafter the Critical Theorists returned to the problem of antisemitism directly and indirectly in subsequent research projects, including the *Group Experiment* after Horkheimer and Adorno's return to Germany (see chapter 8), as well as philosophical and sociological reflections of the late 1950s and 1960s.

The primary focus of this chapter are these parts of *The Authoritarian Personality* and the key qualitative sections on anti-Jewish images presented by Leo Löwenthal in the often neglected study on *Antisemitism among American Labor*. As said, this is the Institute's first major study on antisemitism, largely conducted by Löwenthal, Paul Massing, Arkady Gurland, Friedrich Pollock, and accompanied by communications researchers Paul Lazarsfeld and Herta Herzog.⁶ This project is also generally the first study on antisemitism in America that empirically analyzes this social phenomenon beyond the common opinion surveys generated by the Gallup Institute or by Public Opinion Research Operation: driven by theoretical interests, the study points to structural and behavioral elements, and takes the "concrete totality" of society at large into account.⁷ It is, moreover, the first study that explores the effects of the genocide against the Jews on antisemitic attitudes, thus anticipating research questions and problems only gaining traction years later.⁸

As reconstructed in the previous chapter, the Critical Theorists analyze modern authoritarianism on the microscopic psychological level as a more or less universal modern phenomenon, crystallized in a modern ideal type of authoritarian subjectivity that can be theorized in

Freudian terminology. The Critical Theorists hereby argue that the objectified social imagery of antisemitic fantasies and world explanations, which is transmitted and reproduced in various sociocultural contexts, can be linked in almost all its facets to the psychosocial features and desires of authoritarian personality types, to which modern society gave rise. In the view of the Institute for Social Research, antisemitism correlates strongly with the basic conflicted structure and motivations of an authoritarian individual's drive and personality structure (although this is not seen as antisemitism's exclusive source). Indeed, the "close connection between antisemitic prejudice and the authoritarian-bound personality structure, and generally authoritarian powers, should not be denied for a second."⁹ Antisemitism should therefore be understood not merely as a disjointed assemblage of historically transmitted and actualized resentments. Despite its insurmountable internal and logical contradictions and its partly amorphous and flexible character, it provides for a particular matrix of projection. This matrix draws on and distordedly reflects, like a concave mirror, the internal psychodynamics of authoritarian dispositions.

In Critical Theory's perspective, these dispositions should not be merely individualized, however, but rather viewed as a product of modern societal conditions. The Frankfurt School scholars suggest that this link between authoritarian dispositions and correlating antisemitic resentments at least partly explains the attractiveness of antisemitism. It serves multiple, logically contradictory psychological and social functions that are only thinly rationalized: the essence of antisemitism is "false projection" (DE 154). The Critical Theorists first and foremost assume that antisemitism has nothing to do with

the reality of Jewish behavior or intergroup relations. Rather, antisemitism constitutes a historically transmitted matrix of hate and resentment. It is not about actual individual or collective behavior or incidents but individual and collectivized projections by the antisemites and in society at large. Indeed, it works best if there are no actual Jews “disturbing” the antisemitic image of the Other.

Following the theoretical and empirical conclusions from the preceding chapters on Freudian theory, this chapter takes a close look at Critical Theory’s specific understanding of modern antisemitic phenomena themselves, and links this analysis to the previously developed arguments and theoretical claims about the social psychology of modern authoritarianism. In so doing, the chapter examines how in Critical Theory’s account the micro level—the psychological authoritarian dispositions of weakened and dependent subjects—corresponds to the macro level of culturally transmitted anti-Jewish resentments in the social world, which under conditions of political modernity have been absorbed in full-fledged political ideologies or world views. The substantive findings of the qualitative social research on antisemitism carried out by the Critical Theorists, in particular by Adorno and Löwenthal in the context of the *Studies in Prejudice* series and *Antisemitism among American Labor* respectively, are explicated in what follows. First, the chapter briefly explores the social research, political context and methods of the groundbreaking empirical studies the Institute conducted in American exile in the 1940s. In a second step, I examine Critical Theory’s notion of antisemitism as a mutable social ideology that is essentially projective in nature. In a third step, the Frankfurt School’s conceptualization of modern

antisemitism is clarified by analyzing its relationship to modern racism and other prejudices, on the one hand, and by further developing the link between antisemitic projections and the social psychology of modern authoritarianism, on the other. This theoretical framework paves the way for the reconstruction of the Frankfurt School's theory-driven critical phenomenology and specific empirical analysis of modern antisemitism. The section turns especially to the respective studies by Löwenthal and Adorno—mainly based on American interviews and content analyses—that empirically examine and dissect as well as theoretically interpret antisemitic resentments displayed in the 1940s, namely research on antisemitism among American labor and among American agitators of the time.¹⁰ This reconstruction of the Frankfurt School's contributions seeks to analytically distinguish between ego functions and social functions of modern antisemitic projections: between resentments fulfilling subjective desires, and those culminating in an antisemitic social paranoia—an *anti-modern explanation of the modern world* that personifies all its negative aspects and its crises in the image of “the Jew.”¹¹

The Political Context and Research Methods: The Frankfurt School's Empirical Studies on Antisemitism in the 1940s

In this chapter, the qualitative findings about antisemitic stereotypes and the nature of antisemitic ideology that Löwenthal and Adorno present are the focal point, alongside other contributions by Adorno (and Horkheimer) to the analysis of antisemitism.¹² Yet it is

important to briefly address the broader research context as well as political and social context in which the empirical material was acquired that the Critical Theorists used to advance their understanding of modern judeophobia. It is noteworthy that there were substantial differences between the American Jewish Committee (AJC)-supported *Studies in Prejudice* and the antisemitism project realized with the Jewish Labor Committee (JLC), *Antisemitism among American Labor*, which was internally often simply called the "labor study."¹³ Jack Jacobs argues, for instance, that the labor study is overall closer than *The Authoritarian Personality* to the theoretical claims developed in "Elements of Antisemitism."¹⁴ This is not surprising in so far as researchers unaffiliated with the Institute and its theorizing contributed significant parts of the AJC-supported work, whereas the labor study, conducted and finalized between 1944 and 1945, was written by four members of the Institute, who analyzed the data collected by fieldworkers and volunteers in close collaboration and under supervision of Adorno.¹⁵

Because the labor study is not only the blue collar but also the multicultural complement to *The Authoritarian Personality*, Eva-Maria Ziege suggests it is the "missing link" between *AP* and *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.¹⁶ I agree with Ziege that the study provides such a link between the two other major books but primarily for a different reason: it offers the most extensive qualitative study of antisemitic ideology that the Frankfurt School ever conducted, and possibly the most extensive study of antisemitism until this day. Its particular payoff may be less due to the composition of the respondent pool or the research methods (experimental interviews and questionnaires employed) but rather to its in-depth

reconstructive and theory-guided analysis of antisemitic stereotypes and ideologies in modern (democratic) society.¹⁷ These, Critical Theory suggests, correspond with widespread authoritarian personality dispositions analyzed in *The Authoritarian Personality* and the theoretical insights into modern society advanced in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

All the empirical antisemitism projects of the 1940s were initiated and developed in response to the Nazi persecution of Jews abroad. But they evolved partly also in response to deteriorating domestic conditions and race relations in the U.S., namely a noticeable rise in antisemitism and the race riots of 1943 in Harlem and Detroit. Pro-Nazi organizations had grown in America since 1933, alongside an increasing popularity of the KKK as a mass movement, and the antisemitic Catholic preacher and propagandist Father Coughlin with his radio addresses reached millions of listeners.¹⁸ Antisemitic hate crimes, including desecrated cemeteries and swastikas, had become an everyday phenomenon in American society between 1941 and 1944.¹⁹

Antisemitism among American Labor is consequently marked by the fear that "totalitarian" stereotypes are detectable among significant parts of the American population, providing a pool of antisemites in society that could serve as a potential political mass basis for fascism and totalitarianism; that even here, among workers in the oldest constitutional democracy that had never experienced extreme *volkish* nationalism or a powerful totalitarian movement, antisemitism may develop its destructive power.²⁰ It may, the Frankfurt School scholars and the collaborating Jewish NGOs feared, socially emerge and politically escalate against America's generally robust

democratic institutions “if underlying socio-economic conflicts would explode.”²¹

Conducted and written between 1944 and 1945 and thus for the most part before the *Studies in Prejudice* (1945–1947) and *The Authoritarian Personality* in particular, for which it provided some social scientific groundwork, the labor study employed new qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys and experimental interviews. Even though the Institute also followed the surveys by Gallup and other organizations at the time, it tried to profoundly enhance research findings by means of nonquantitative procedures and qualitative participatory observation.²² The multilayered standardized and qualitative research allowed for in-depth exploratory research generating robust hypotheses and provided a broad content analysis of antisemitism in the multicultural American workforce. Rather than systematically testing or creating valid, reliable quantifiable data and measuring the scope or distribution of antisemitic attitudes in society, the main focus was from the start to develop qualitative interpretations to improve the understanding of the phenomenon on a social scientific basis. Both direct and indirect questions about Jews innovatively reflected the problem of socially desirable responses.²³

The core of this empirical study were the protocols of camouflaged interviews, based on questionnaires serving as the basis of “casual informal conversations” and partly improvised social field research involving altogether thirty researchers. The field research primarily took place in America’s industrial centers, and excluded the South and the “Farm Belt.” Questionnaires and protocols were distributed and returned by altogether 270 volunteering non-Jewish and Jewish workers as participant

interviewers, using 4,500 questionnaires and submitting 613 usable protocols. In addition, fieldworkers conducted 47 interviews with businessmen and housewives functioning as control interviews beyond the target group of workers.²⁴ The research group then systematically evaluated and interpreted the empirical material, including quantifiable data that were isolated, computed, and analyzed.²⁵ In sum, the research project was massive in scope and resources, especially in light of the research conditions at the time.

It was also pathbreaking in its methods and experimental design, including the way "grounded" labor community volunteer interviewers were incorporated, even though this research was highly challenging, largely operated according to "trial and error," and partly fell short of some goals. The European social scientists were responsible for organizing and evaluating the research. The interviews, however, were conducted primarily by the volunteer American (field)workers and trade unionists organizationally supported by the JLC, not the European social scientists.²⁶ Within the Institute, to be sure, there was some controversy about the political goals of the study and its self-understanding. Most of the researchers and fieldworkers shared the ambition to use the research proactively to create opposition to racial and antisemitic resentment among the workforce by, ultimately, initiating discussion groups that helped enlighten about one's antisemitism and the link between antisemitic and anti-labor attitudes.²⁷ In March 1945, Löwenthal described this as "action research": "Our approach is one of action research, meaning by that that while we go on with our work, while our study was carried out something happened: action is taken."²⁸

The result is, in the end, a 1,449-page-long typescript concerned first and foremost with the nature, not the empirical scope of antisemitism among American labor and in American society.²⁹ However, the surveys and quantitative data did indicate that anti-Jewish resentments were widespread among those interviewed. This was particularly striking with regard to one of the key questions of the questionnaire of *Antisemitism among American Labor*: "How do you feel about what the Nazis did to the Jews?"³⁰ Among many other innovations, the labor study was, as Eva-Maria Ziege rightly emphasizes, one of the first studies examining the link between antisemitism and perceptions of the Nazi genocide. According to the hypotheses of the Institute's research group, the intensity of antisemitism would not be weakened by the Holocaust but, to the contrary, rather be reinforced. And indeed, only 56 percent of the respondents unconditionally rejected the Nazi persecution of the Jews, while 18 percent of the workers taking part in the study supported the Nazi genocide and Hitler's antisemitism. Moreover, while a clear plurality rejected the crimes against Jews, a significant part of respondents supported their segregation or exclusion.³¹

The six parts of the four-volume study address (1) the scope of American workers' perceptions of Jews, and (2) some general perceptions of Jews, (3) the impact of war and Nazism, (4) the nature of antisemitism and the anti-Jewish images and stereotypes reproduced through antisemitism, including its modern and totalitarian aspects, (5) opinions and reactions of labor union officers, and (6) lessons of the study. The study also provides an appendix with statistics, geographical surveys, and a documentation of antisemitic propaganda circulating in factories.³² Initial plans for publication of the entire

research typescript never materialized.³³ By 1949, years after its completion Adorno—then on his way to resettle in Frankfurt—unsuccessfully continued to attempt to turn the massive lengthy study into a publishable book, even though he felt even its edited version failed to sufficiently emphasize the impact of the whole system of society upon workers.³⁴

While also extensively employing qualitative interviews in the research process and dedicating significant parts to exploring antisemitism, the subsequent study *The Authoritarian Personality* (discussed in chapter 3 of this book) primarily uses sample statements in order to measure and understand modern Jew-hatred. It employs interviews in reconstructive research mainly to refine and cater to those standardized questionnaires. These sample statements include: “On the whole, the Jews have probably contributed less to American life than any other group”; “Jewish millionaires may do a certain amount to help their own people, but little of their money goes into worthwhile American causes”; “the Jew’s first loyalty is to Jewry rather than to his country”; “much resentment against Jews stems from their tending to keep apart and to exclude Gentiles from Jewish social life”; “there is little doubt that Jewish pressure is largely responsible for the U.S. getting into war with Germany” (AP 68–70). Respondents could reply to these sample statements on a scale from plus-3 (“strong support, agreement”), moderate and slight support and slight to moderate opposition, to minus-3 (“strong opposition, disagreement”).

Hence, neither *Antisemitism among American Labor*, nor *The Authoritarian Personality* claim to provide representative findings about antisemitism in America (let alone anywhere else, for that matter), although they do

provide some interesting quantitative data. However, especially combined, both studies offer crucial qualitative insights into the nature and variety of antisemitic resentments in mid-twentieth-century (American) society—and arguably beyond—as well as illuminating the open and coded forms through which they are articulated. Until this day, this work has hardly ever been replicated. Few subsequent qualitative studies have to a similar degree empirically collected, processed and explored qualitative data on antisemitic stereotypes in modern society.

As already indicated in the original proposal to a research project, antisemitism is hereby seen both as a challenge in and of itself and as an indicator for general antidemocratic tendencies, or the “totalitarian contagion” observed by Horkheimer: “To fight the spread of the totalitarian contagion, one has to know how far it has yet penetrated, and what degree of resistance may be expected in different sectors of the working class.”³⁵ But, what is, really, the essence or “nature” of modern antisemitism as a social phenomenon in Critical Theory’s lens? What are the fundamental insights into, and what is the conceptualization of, antisemitism that the Institute develop and explicate on the basis of their various empirical studies in the 1940s?

What Is Antisemitism?

Antisemitism can generally be understood, according to the Frankfurt School scholars, as an arsenal of resentments collectively discriminating against, devaluing or demonizing Jews because they are Jews or represent allegedly “Jewish traits.” Antisemitism features some

generalizable dimensions of stereotypes, analogous to other racisms—group discrimination, othering, prejudicial generalization, and so on—and specific dimensions only featured in antisemitic perceptions of Jews—such as global conspiracy myths, warmongering, intellectualism, media control, capitalism and money, and so on. In Critical Theory's lens, antisemitism is an expression of a reified form of social consciousness, and an ideological product of society and its historical legacies. Modern antisemitism, in particular, absorbs historically transmitted stereotypes. It molds them into an ideological worldview: a comprehensive conspiracy myth blaming Jews for all the problems or perceived evil in the modern world.

In this perspective modern antisemitism, racialized in discourses since the nineteenth century and increasingly mobilized by political mass movements thereafter, constitutes a form of social consciousness that attributes all kinds of problems to "Jewish machinations." Antisemitism suggests to "explain" these alleged machinations in a mode of collectivized personification that makes Jews qua existence responsible for all that's going wrong in the modern world and, for that matter, with one's individual life, group, or nation. Modern judeophobia inevitably locks Jews into these resentments. In the *Authoritarian Personality's* classic definition, antisemitic ideology is thus conceived as "stereotyped negative opinions describing the Jews as threatening, immoral, and categorically different from non-Jews, and of hostile attitudes urging various forms of restriction, exclusion and suppression as a means of solving 'the Jewish problem'" (AP 71). Antisemitism, hence, creates "the Jewish problem" or "the Jewish question," and then attributes any actual

or perceived modern social malaise and personal misery to Jews.

In Critical Theory's lens, antisemitism is viewed as a social ideological formation to which certain individuals are particularly disposed and susceptible—those who are generally attracted by the aforementioned “political stereotyping and personalization” (AP 618), which Critical Theorists also diagnose as a broader social trend in the modern world. Antisemitism is hereby conceived as a societal manifestation that is reproduced in the ideologies that make up everyday discourse as well as explicit political ideologies, and should not be misunderstood as limited to either. In the main, the spread of antisemitism does not rely, as common sense might suggest, on individual ideologues indoctrinating a population according to some rational scheme. Rather, modern antisemitism primarily originates in society, as a specific form of reified consciousness emerging in a decentralized fashion, or “from below.” Hereby modern antisemitic resentments, Critical Theory holds, supply ideal projection surfaces to accompany the psychological splitting of the authoritarian personality. As developed earlier, these projections have little or nothing to do with their purported object, the Jews: “In the image of the Jew which the racial nationalists hold up before the world they express their own essence” (DE 137).

In the view of Critical Theory, judeophobia constitutes a multifaceted, mutating, essentially amorphous social ideology and ideological matrix fulfilling diverse social and psychological functions. It lacks any inner plausibility and, incapable to reflect on the object and itself, the “ability to differentiate” (DE 156); yet it enables weakened, dependent members of society to project

psychological problems, fears, and desires as well as societal problems to the sociocultural imaginary of the Jews as the existential Other. Critical Theorists understand antisemitism first and foremost as a form of social ideology that plays on the desires and psychic disfigurements of the authoritarian individual, which is itself a product of modern civilization and its dialectics. Hardening into a stereotyped worldview, modern antisemitism as a social ideology incorporates the most disparate psychological interests. It objectifies Jews collectively in all kinds of socially reproduced reified images. These images disclose the intrinsic affinity of antisemitism to modern authoritarianism and a general societal mode of objectification, which both reifies and denigrates the object world and, in so doing, also the objectifying self.

In so far as antisemitism serves as a psychological and social outlet that mirrors authoritarian impulses and desires, it tends to function as a hermetic "system": it provides orientation in the world, unconstrained by lived experience and hardly irritated by social reality, and it operates according to a closed, internal dynamic vilifying "the Jews" for the most heterogeneous and contradictory psychological and social issues—no matter what these issues are. If antisemitism functions as a container, an almost free-floating matrix where all kinds of problems can be projected and "unloaded," then it can completely renounce on the presence of actual Jews which it targets, discriminates against, and may seek to eliminate. In fact, antisemitism's own rigidity keeps itself pure from contamination with reality, and in so doing immunizes itself from being exposed to actual experiences with Jews, which could disturb its projective fantasies and ideological clarity: "The less anti-Jewish imagery is related

to actual experience and the more it is kept 'pure,' as it were, from contamination by reality, the less it seems to be exposed to disturbance by the dialectics of experience, which it keeps away through its own rigidity" (AP 619). As a projective ideological matrix immunizing itself to reality and experience, antisemitism works well in the presence of Jews—and even better without them. As Adorno writes, all "too often the presupposition is that antisemitism in some essential way involves the Jews and could be countered through concrete experience with Jews, whereas the genuine anti-Semite is defined far more by his incapacity for any experience whatsoever, by his unresponsiveness. If antisemitism primarily has its foundation in objective society, and only derivatively in anti-Semites, then—as the National Socialist joke has it—if the Jews had not already existed, the anti-Semites would have had to invent them."³⁶

Adorno points out that antisemites often "incessantly repeat the same patterns again and again," and "different speakers use the same clichés."³⁷ However, although antisemitic imagery may partly represent a somewhat discernible "structure" or pattern of interconnected resentments in which certain stereotypes tend to feature prominently and are repeated time and again ("greed," "secrecy," "money-mindedness," "revenge," "intellect," etc.), the Critical Theorists also argue that antisemitism ultimately remains largely amorphous—a wildly projective matrix to which new fantasies can be added. Looking at agitators, antisemitic speech "does not employ discursive logic but is rather . . . what may be called an organized flight of ideas."³⁸ While antisemitism has homogenizing effects by excluding and denigrating Jews as a collectivized Other, a dichotomy between friend and foe,³⁹ it is mutable

in terms of its content as it fulfills a variety of functions; its constitutive “logic,” void of discursive reason, is only the fundamental binary antagonism between the in-group and “the Jews” that antisemitism itself creates.

All historical “antisemitisms” suggest that Jews epitomize a form of threat or source of evil subverting the in-group, the nation, order, or humanity as a whole. But antisemitism’s concrete form—what this evil is and what its relevance is—changes with history, culture, and society. In premodern Christian Europe, Jews were wrongly charged for killing Jesus, and antisemitism mobilized the old blood libel according to which Jews need Christian blood to bake their matzah bread. Yet, even though such old antisemitic stereotypes can recur and be reiterated in ever new forms, seemingly every arbitrary projection, old and new, is possible and can infinitely flourish in the antisemitic imaginary and imagery—especially if it is socially accepted and sanctioned.

Critical Theory’s view of antisemitism as a “flexible,” and fundamentally intrinsically contradictory, social ideology fulfilling the needs of those who project can be contrasted to other schools of thought.⁴⁰ It stands in particularly sharp contrast to approaches in the tradition of Karl Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge, which suggests that antisemitism constitutes a logical, immanently coherent semantic system of interlinked prejudices.⁴¹ Instead, Critical Theory suggests, logical incongruities are part and parcel of antisemitic ideology. It is an amorphous, profoundly incoherent patchwork of resentments, kept together not by any substantive logic or immanent reason but by the psychosocial functions it serves for the antisemite. Modern antisemitism creates, Löwenthal explains, “a logically self-contradictory but

psychologically consistent image of the Jew, who appears both as weak and strong, victim of persecution and persecutor, endowed with unchangeable racial characteristics and irrepressible individualism" (FP 75–76). In this light, Löwenthal elucidates the antisemite's definition of "The Enemy as Jew" (FP 75): by means of projection, the Jew is equated with the radically Other and can appear in the guise of either persecutor or victim.⁴² The radically Other that is projected in the image of "the Jew" is not just different or inferior but can never be integrated into society in any function—not even as servant.

Clinical and applied empirical psychological research has henceforth confirmed that the antisemitic image of the Jew does not just contain one stereotyped projection but multiple contradictory ones, whereby "anti-Semites share an internal racist system that powerfully keeps the Jew in the position of the racial other."⁴³ Or, to put it in the words of clinical psychoanalyst Mortimer Ostow, the "irrational hatred" against Jews is an "expression of primary process thinking, that is, thought that is driven by feeling and not subjected to the discipline of reason, logic, or reality testing."⁴⁴

Far from forming a seamless ideological system, then, the Frankfurt School's theorists are eager to point out antisemitism's inner contradictions, which can only be explained—deeply conflicted and "irrational" as they are—by sociopsychological needs that overwhelm the remnants of subjective rationality: a mythic web or mania "equally overwhelming towards others and toward a self at odds with itself," as Horkheimer and Adorno put it, that "seizes whatever comes its way" (DE 157).

Hence, in light of Critical Theory, antisemitism never generates a logical or rational system but a system of

paranoia in which Jews are omnipresent, imagined actors. This, to be sure, does not mean that judeophobia, reproduced and transmitted over centuries and resonating in ancient religious documents, is entirely an empty box.⁴⁵ As indicated, some traditional antisemitic stereotypes are more ubiquitous than others, and more likely to be reproduced—for instance, the images of Jews as “parasitic,” “greedy,” “conspiratorial,” “manipulative,” or “bloodthirsty.” Moreover, Critical Theory also points out, as we see later, that some resentments represent radical and reified distortions of some historical elements of Judaism, such as the defense of abstract rule of law, of universal rights, or of a culture of knowledge, as well as the social rise of Jewish citizens when more rights were granted to them in civil society. But all modern anti-Jewish resentments tell a story about those resentful individuals who hold and reproduce them—while they do not say anything about the object of hatred: Jews.

However, as argued, antisemitism—the hatred of Jews or people imagined to be Jews—can take ever new forms, and as a historical social phenomenon and form of consciousness, it can also affect the ideas of Jews themselves. There is little doubt among the Frankfurt School scholars that Jews are not free from antisemitism only because they are born as Jews, just as women are not free from reproducing misogynist stereotypes, or blacks from reproducing racism. All members of society can be influenced and adopt societal resentments and projections.

Flexibility and mutability are not just essential features of modern antisemitism. They are also essential to Critical Theory’s concept of ideology. Critical theorizing reflects on the relationship between “objective” material interests, subjective consciousness, and ideology in

historical context. Ideology is not to be understood as a deception concealing “true” interests or, in an orthodox sense, as mere “false consciousness” that misapprehends social reality for lack of “enlightenment.” Rather, ideologies are embedded in societal structures and practices, and objectified reflections thereof.⁴⁶ Yet Critical Theorists also recognize that ideologies are partly autonomous from objective social processes; ideological objectifications, though originating in and subjected to a societal system and its behavioral imperatives, can “run wild.” In ideological formations, stereotypical and topological thinking hardens into a structure that is then subject to historical transformations. In the antisemitic worldview even the thin inner rationality of reified thinking and instrumental reason repeatedly breaks down under the social-psychological functions of ideology. From this fact stems the necessity of political psychology to understand antisemitism (and racism); if you want to explain antisemitism and its most disparate and contradictory ideologemes, for the Frankfurt scholars it is clear that you need to understand judeophobia’s psychodynamics and their societal context.

The Critical Theorists underscore that there are no “eternal” antisemitic perceptions of Jews, just as there is no immutable racism. While antisemitism is viewed as a persistent undercurrent of society that can be traced back to ancient times and never fully disappeared, the Critical Theorists recognize significant cultural and historical variations. Indeed the Frankfurt School scholars are, alongside Hannah Arendt, among the first to raise awareness that several forms and functions of antisemitism have considerably varied at different times.⁴⁷

Antisemitism, it is argued, changes over time in its scope, expressions, and manifestations under distinct social and political conditions. It has served different functions in society and among individuals in different political and social contexts, even though some motifs are as old as the problem of social domination in which several of these historically situated resentments originated and emerged. Political modernity and its crises allowed antisemitism to flourish in a particular modern, racist, and radical variant, especially so in Germany and Europe. While antisemitism always discriminated against Jews in the course of history, constructing them as an "evil" that allegedly causes problems throughout history and ultimately needs to be overcome, converted, or eradicated, Critical Theory is aware that not in all historical periods and social contexts was "the collective Jew" construed as an existential Other. The perception that Jews are an absolute evil, or "racial enemy," who has to be eliminated by all means, only became dominant in Germany and Nazified Europe by the mid-twentieth century. Modern ideological constructions, to be sure, hereby absorb multiple "old" stereotypes—for instance, the cultural myths of Jews as "alien bodies," "child killers" committing "ritual murder," or "well poisoners" harming the autochthonous in-group. These tropes are included in the arsenal of modern racial antisemitism, and they have an all too vivid afterlife even after Auschwitz.

Critical Theorists have traced the civilizational origins of modern antisemitism to a long societal tradition of anti-Jewish stereotypes that congealed into a self-contained racist ideology. Particularly in the historical European

context, latent and open forms of judeophobia were part and parcel of the very foundations of Christian culture that, in secularized form, have continued to shape modern society. Drawing on disparate traditions of anti-Jewish stereotypes and almost two thousand years of Christian anti-Judaism, the ideology of antisemitism became a full-fledged racial ideology, or “race theory,” alongside modern antisemitic movements in late nineteenth-century Europe.⁴⁸ Heinrich von Treitschke’s antisemitic speech of 1879, which met with wide acceptance among the non-Jewish German public of the day, epitomizes modern antisemitism’s construction of Jews as the absolute evil in the modern world. Even though the historian’s demagogic claims were not “racialist” as such, that is, motivated or developed based on an anti-Jewish “race theory,” the speech later on resonated in Nazi propaganda declarations. The latter would transform Treitschke’s claim that “Jews are our misfortune!” into an ideologically absolute, officially propagated demonization of Jews, and ultimately into a societal program for their extermination.⁴⁹ In Europe, antisemitism further radicalized as a political ideology and became an ubiquitous “code” during World War I and in its aftermath.⁵⁰ In the modern world, hence, this civilizational undercurrent became a genuine mass ideology in the form of political antisemitism that has mobilized people the world over—though, to be sure, especially in twentieth-century Germany and Europe.⁵¹

As pointed out, modern antisemitism was intensified to an extremely radical, racist, and *totalitarian* form under National Socialism.⁵² The Nazi movement-state turned it into the ultimate and supreme *raison d’état* governing all other “rationalities.” Under Nazi rule racist antisemitism formed the core of politics and society,

from above and below.⁵³ In Nazi Germany judeophobia thus advanced, with incomparable violence, to a prevailing societal consensus. But antisemitism did not stop with Auschwitz and the subsequent demise of Nazism through military defeat. Antisemitism preceded the racial anti-Jewish policies and Nazi persecution during the Holocaust. But Critical Theorists early on recognize that, far from being merely a historical phenomenon, it also survived its own death.⁵⁴

For Critical Theorists, the mutable and historical character of antisemitism also points to the possibility of its *modernization*. Contemporary or “modernized” antisemitism may be articulated in more subtle and coded forms, or reproduced on a latent level.⁵⁵ Adorno refers to this in terms of “crypto-antisemitism.”⁵⁶ Furthermore, Critical Theory emphasizes that the distinction between mere stereotypes about Jews and racist antisemitism—like the difference between “potential” and “active” or “implicit and manifest” prejudice—must be upheld with precision. But at the same time this analytic distinction should not be exaggerated.⁵⁷ For Critical Theory, antisemitic resentments always have the potential to open gates to a flood of anti-Jewish hate or an uninhibited antisemitic worldview.⁵⁸

Although they are also scrutinizing Nazi propaganda and later on public discourses and privately expressed sentiments in Germany, most of the empirical material the Frankfurt scholars analyze to examine modern judeophobia comes, after all, from American sources and research conducted in a democratic political environment—and a political culture with democratic and republican traditions that are quite different from Nazi Germany. As pointed out, especially qualitative interviews (rather than

standardized public opinion surveys) among American labor and content analyses of public speeches by American political demagogues (rather than German Nazi ideologues), both examined in depth by Löwenthal, are the main sources of this social science inquiry and theorizing. This circumstance is, of course, a reflection of the particular conditions of this social scientific research. As commissioned by the AJC and JLC, it was the declared goal by the Frankfurt School scholars in exile to grasp the fascist and antisemitic potential in the U.S. The Frankfurt School's analyses help explain the links between widespread, deeply conflicted and problematic sociopsychological dispositions also in American society. The material shows the presence of an enormous variety of all too present antisemitic resentments in America, even if they appear for the most part to be more subdued than in Europe at the time, and they are not necessarily coupled with blatant "race theory." For the Frankfurt scholars, to be sure, the link between modern authoritarianism and antisemitism could be detected and demonstrated here and in Europe. According to Critical Theory's conception the authoritarian's contradictory, suppressed drive impulses and narcissistic desires, his aggression, his (self-)contempt, and his tendency to project find in antisemitism a specific political and ideological substrate. From the standpoint of the authoritarian individual, anti-Jewish images represent an "ideal target of social aggressiveness" (AP 608).

The scholars were aware, however, that the analysis of antisemitism based on American material may illuminate general features, functions and dynamics of judeophobia—the more universal elements of modern antisemitism—but also manifestations, codes and functions reflective of the particular *democratic* cultural context in America. The

political cultures of constitutional democracies tend to make group hatred and antisemitism less broadly socially acceptable. This inspires innuendo or coded resentments.

Drawing Connections, Recognizing Differences: Authoritarianism, Racism, Nationalism, and Antisemitism

Before I turn to the specific analysis of antisemitic stereotypes and tropes as well as their psychological functions as empirically deciphered and theorized by the Frankfurt School, I now further situate the analysis of modern antisemitism with regard to related issues and concepts of authoritarianism, racism, and nationalism. In so doing, I point to connections and differences among these modern social phenomena and ideologies. Moreover, the contextual problem of cross-cultural differences in the scope and relevance of antisemitic imagery is addressed, and how the Critical Theorists view such differences.

The members of the inner circle of the Institute for Social Research all share the view that antisemitism can be linked to the social tendency toward objectification and to the conditions of modern authoritarianism. The latter is itself seen as the product of powerful societal dialectics to which we turn in the subsequent chapters. As indicated, Adorno and his colleagues argue that the antisemite's often rigid anti-Jewish imagery, driven by projective instincts, desires, and accusations, tends to hermetically immunize itself toward actual experiences and their processing. Thus antisemitic perception remains largely undisturbed by facts, indeed uncontaminated by experiences or interactions with the object of one's hatred

(AP 619). Until this day, there would seem to be hardly any other set of resentments, the Critical Theorists suggest, that succeeds in uniting such disparate, illogical, outright contradictory fantasies—the unconscious antagonistic forces of the authoritarian personality—in a single ideology. Fulfilling multiple psychological needs, the subject experiences antisemitic ideology and fantasies as consistent even if they are utterly inconsistent in reality.

Especially if legitimated by social discourse, dominant norms or public demagogues, antisemitic ideology allows the authoritarian subject to split off abhorrent and denied aspects of the self and to project them, along with various forbidden desires, onto an external object. In so doing, antisemites rationalize the expression of these desires and wishes by attributing them to “the Jews.” For antisemites, Löwenthal suggests, “the Jew is not the abstract ‘other,’ he is *the other who dwells in themselves*. Into him they can conveniently project everything within themselves to which they deny recognition, everything they must repress. . . . They find an outlet for their repressed aspirations only by simultaneously condemning them” (FP 90).⁵⁹ As argued before, Critical Theory’s psychodynamic model of authoritarianism provides one of the main links explaining the antisemitic worldview in an increasingly complex modern society that is regulated by seemingly incomprehensible, abstract organizational principles, rationalities, and functionalities—a society that simultaneously produces cognitively and morally weakened, dependent authoritarian masses who fail to grasp the modern world’s constitutive social mechanisms. This link strongly shapes the Frankfurt School’s theoretical understanding of modern, or “primary,” antisemitism.

Although their work is focused on antisemitism, however, contrary to common charges that they were disinterested in issues of racism the Frankfurt School's Critical Theorists are aware of numerous structural parallels between antisemitism and (colonial) racism, which can also be linked to authoritarian dispositions and desires. The rise of modern racist ideologies, which are directed against blacks and other visible minorities and emerged in tandem with Europe's colonial enterprise, also points to those authoritarian-aggressive motives. Some social projections that the Critical Theorists link to the origins and lure of modern antisemitism can, moreover, be identified in modern racist discourses. Empirically and theoretically speaking, Adorno's work in particular shows, as suggested in the previous chapter, that the correlations between antisemitism and other racisms as well as "ethnocentrism" are strong.⁶⁰ Subsequent research has shown time and again that antisemitism is hardly isolated from other resentments and exclusivist dispositions but often significantly correlates with racism and the rejection of diversity, as well as misogyny, homophobia, illiberalism, and orientations toward social dominance and political authoritarianism.⁶¹ Historically, it was only under conditions of political modernity that elements of anti-Jewish prejudice were themselves transformed into a biological, racist political ideology and pseudo-scientific "race science"—just as the rise of modern antisemitism is to some extent also part of a general modern racist discourse, or dispositive.⁶²

In Critical Theory's understanding, which gradually developed during the research of the *Studies in Prejudice* and resonated in a variety of dispersed reflections on racism (including Adorno's *Minima Moralia*), modern

antisemitism indeed intersects and correlates with modern racism. The former displays several similarities but also differences with the latter, which is why Critical Theory's conceptual framing of the anti-Jewish imaginary distinguishes between generalizable and specific, distinct dimensions of antisemitism, if for the most part only implicitly.⁶³

Let us first elaborate on the generalizable, shared features of antisemitism and racism. In the antisemitic and racist lens, Critical Theory suggests, Jews, blacks, or other minorities are condemned whatever they do or not do. They are locked into an image, objectified through socially created collective reifications. It is part of antisemitism—analogue to racism and any other set of prejudices—to denigrate and collectively exclude the “other,” to make these Others collectively distinct from an “us,” the in-group. This process of “othering” is widespread. Jews are separated and discriminated against because they are Jews, just as blacks are discriminated against just for being black. Both antisemitism and “colonial” racism collectivize and dehumanize visible or other minorities, justifying their discrimination, ideologically or even legally denying them (full) citizenship.

Furthermore, antisemitism and colonial racism are social—and often socially accepted—projections that are completely detached from the actual object of hate. Small wonder then that some of these projective generalizations are overtly contradictory in the case of both antisemitism *and* racism. As already discussed with regard to antisemitism, they seem undisturbed by logic, reason, or experience. If needed, one distinguishes between “good” and “bad” blacks, or “good” and “bad” Jews in order to thinly rationalize such contradictions and even seem

critical of generalizations—the good ones allegedly being the exception to the rule and viewed as “detractors” from the respective group’s “true” nature. Or, in a more subtle way, one simply construes the devaluation of others, blacks and Jews, by following the inclination to construe according to “the well-known scheme two different classes of Jews and then to condemn one of them again according to stereotype.”⁶⁴

There are also significant differences between racism and antisemitism in Critical Theory’s understanding. Although there are various similar—always nonsensical—stereotypes attributed to Jews, blacks, and other minorities, the colonial racism that today casts an ethnocentric gaze on the populations of the so-called Third World and visible minorities in the “First World” serves primarily to legitimize cultural domination, exclusion, and subjugation. In so doing, it provides a source of collective self-valorization of the white, European subject. Racism primarily projects an image of the colonial “other” as a manifestation of nature. We also find this stereotypical mechanism in a kind of inverse orientalism that glorifies the image of the noble savage or “idealized nature”—reproduced today in a certain kind of Third Worldism, or sometimes in “anti-imperialist” glorifications of Islamist terrorism against Western democracies and their citizens.⁶⁵ Visible minorities are often portrayed as instinctively sexual (indeed often hypersexualized), lazy, stupid, uninhibitedly emotional, irrational, fundamentally cognitively inferior, criminal, and dirty. To be sure, racism’s glue, like antisemitism’s, is primarily psychological, and the stereotypes it reinforces are profoundly illogical and contradictory. Like antisemitism, racism functions to a large extent as a container—among other things for the

projection of sexual fantasies.⁶⁶ Judeophobic images may absorb all of those stereotypes—sexualizing alleged Jewish pleasure, suggesting Jewish criminality, viewing Jews as “filthy,”⁶⁷ and so on. The stereotypical convergences are plenty; so are convergences between judeophobia and homophobia, judeophobia and misogyny.⁶⁸

Even though the differences between racism and antisemitism should not be exaggerated, however, the latter also shows significant deviations from the common racist frameworks. Illogical sentiments, denigration, generalization, sexualization, discrimination, and subjugation are typical for all kinds of racism and antisemitism. While all racisms are highly irrational and intrinsically contradictory and false—however pseudorational and pseudoscientific they sought to appear in the modern world—antisemitism has traditionally pushed the inclusion of conflicting images to the extreme. In Critical Theory’s view, as is developed in detail later, antisemitism serves as an almost amorphous projective matrix or container to unload one’s fantasies. Judeophobia thus manages to integrate the most heterogeneous images of “the Jew,” who may simultaneously represent intellectualism and instinct, menace and victimhood, power and powerlessness, egoism and solidarity, collective human regression and individual emancipation, communism and capitalism, rationalistic, materialistic civilization and an irrational force against civilization.⁶⁹ Nonwhites face a structural denial of their intelligence and cognitive capabilities.⁷⁰ Jews, to the contrary, are often seen as overintelligent. Blacks are viewed as physically strong; Jews are viewed as equipped with illicit powers, while being physically weak, due to their alleged global conspiracies, money, hidden influence and secretive machinations; while both

blacks and Jews are construed as forces disrupting and undermining social order, only Jews are viewed as a force behind capitalism and communism. While racism looks down on blacks as inferior, antisemitism constructs Jews as inferior, yet also elevates them to a hidden world power aspiring to dominate the world. While blacks (or women, for that matter) have like Jews often faced resentments about alleged "cunningness" or "manipulative" behavior, this is different from the power antisemites attribute to Jews to conspire, manipulate public opinion, and run the economy. As the Frankfurt School scholars observe in *Antisemitism among American Labor*, Jews are mostly not seen as a job competitors (though at times they are). Rather, they are associated with "complex rationalizations and inherited 'images' of the Jew as the 'money-grabber,' rapacious businessman, parasitical non-worker . . . While the Negro is a concrete competitor, the 'Jew in business' is an abstract 'threat' religiously believed in."⁷¹

Hence, antisemitic fantasies, the Critical Theorists remind us, often combine attributing to Jews low, sexualized instincts and a fantasized lack of morality in their pursuits with allegedly dangerously superior intellect and a lack of bodily prowess. Anti-Jewish stereotypes construct desires for revenge and cold rationality, greed for money and lust for murder or blood, extreme inferiority and superiority, exclusivism and globalism, powerlessness and power—indeed the pursuit of world domination, invisibly, even though the antisemite fantasizes about Jews' alleged physiognomic traits. And different from most racist discourse, Critical Theory points out, the antisemitic image of Jews points to a reified universal world explanation. Antisemitism displays a peculiar, intimate historical affinity to all conspiracy myths,

which ultimately always tend to suspect “the Jew” to “pull the strings” behind all that happens in the modern world, from financial crises to wars the world over.⁷² The wild array of images demonizing Jews that have emerged in modern society incorporate old racist projections. None of this is inevitable, the Frankfurt School would emphasize. But there are particular historical trajectories that can be, and have been, mobilized time and again in the modern world. Revisiting the Frankfurt School does not provide conclusive answers about the relationship between antisemitism and racism (or misogyny); for that, too little attention has been paid to the latter, in theoretical and empirical terms. But a close look at the Institute’s work is helpful to reopen the conversation on their relations and interactions.

In this context, the Critical Theorists are also among the first to decipher that few if any other resentments are tied not just to fantasies of subjugation but also to implicit or overt fantasies of annihilation. Modern antisemitism, for which ordinary prejudice sets the societal stage, denies the Jews every human right, including the right to life, and dwells in the fantasy of their persecution and extinction. In Nazified Germany and Europe, this fantasy became practice and reality. “Anti-Semitism in action,” Löwenthal explains, “is organized sadism in action” (FP 241). Yet, as Löwenthal also points out, “dehumanization and killing of the Jew cannot be carried out effectively unless the killer too is dehumanized, unless he extirpates in himself every claim to human existence as an individual” (FP 99). This dynamic was most obvious and realized in Auschwitz. Since the Shoah, radical antisemitism directly implies the transgression of the taboo against killing—indeed the taboo against systematic

genocide—and thus represents a radical dehumanization of the antisemite. Antisemitic paranoia entails the fantasy of becoming “one of the destroyers in the service of destruction” (FP 151). Löwenthal notes that antisemitism appears, not least, as “tantamount to a suggestion that [its] adherents destroy themselves” (FP 151). The potential dialectic between destruction and self-destruction, which corresponds to the authoritarian dialectic of hatred and self-hatred analyzed earlier, is intrinsic to modern antisemitism.

The construction of the Otherness of the Jewish minority, to be sure, also performs a key social function common to every racism: presenting a common enemy of one’s group or nation. This is the precondition, Critical Theory explains, to “unite a disparate group” (FP 241) of ego-weak individuals, turning them into a homogenous mass of followers, holding out to its members the promise of collective narcissistic uplift and participation in power: “Since the cliché regularly makes the outgroup bad and the ingroup good, the antisemitic pattern of orientation offers emotional, narcissistic gratifications which tend to break down the barriers of rational self-criticism” (AP 619).

The link between racism, antisemitism, and collective narcissism of national or racial superiority leads to another important concept and problem related to antisemitic phenomena: nationalism. In fact, aggressive nationalism, Critical Theory emphatically underscores, has been a major factor in the evolution of modern antisemitism and genocidal politics. Genocide, Adorno argues, has its “roots in aggressive nationalism that has developed in many countries since the end of the nineteenth century.”⁷³ Moreover, the glorification and appeal

to “national cohesion” has not only been used as a recurrent agitational method of enforcing stability and engendering mass “identity,” but often goes along with the aggressive exclusion of the “stranger” who allegedly does not belong. In Critical Theory’s lens, extreme nationalist aspirations, that is, collectively narcissistic megalomania and delusions of grandeur, often march in step with fantasies of being the victim of (Jewish) conspiracies, that is, paranoia and delusions of persecution. Implicitly taking issue with Hannah Arendt’s notion that antisemitism and fascism represent “an anti-national international movement,”⁷⁴ Adorno reiterates:

Everywhere a particular type of militant and excessive nationalism is preached, antisemitism is automatically disseminated along with it. In movements such as this, antisemitism has long proven an effective means of arriving at a common denominator among the otherwise disparate forces that are represented within every form of rightwing radicalism.⁷⁵

“Excessive” or extreme variants of modern nationalism require an existential fashioning of the image of the hostile other against which it can define itself. For instance, in the German context, where judeophobia witnessed the most murderous explosion in the twentieth century, antisemitism seemed inextricably enmeshed with the rise of a specifically *volk-ish nationalism*. The antisemitic roots of the ethnic idea of homogeneity historically generated and shaped conventional German nationalism. This form of nationalism, in contrast to more civil or republican forms of nationalism in England or France,

pushed the binary opposition between “us” and “them” distinctly further. Therefore distinctions between different nationalisms and national political contexts also need to be made. The Critical Theorists—and especially Adorno in the 1960s—show awareness of that without fully developing this argument.

In the absence of political unity until the end of the nineteenth century, German unity was to a considerable extent construed as the antithesis to the Jewish “enemies of the German volk community”—a perception subsequently radicalized in the twentieth century. This process should not be regarded solely as a psychosocial projection outward of self-destructive traits. Antisemitism also points well beyond being just another source of collective narcissistic gratification by means of devaluing or discrimination against an out-group perceived as inferior.⁷⁶ In fact, antisemitism historically represented a *sine qua non* for the construction and elevation of the collective self in the German idea of an imaginary *Kulturnation*—a country suffering from belated national unification and statehood, in Adorno’s view. Partly caused by these conditions Adorno refers to Germany’s deep-seated “anti-Semitic culture.”⁷⁷ With its component parts of “rootlessness” and “internationalism,” the counterimage of “the Jew” hereby fulfills a narcissistic social function of providing ex negativo imagined cultural cohesion without statehood. Unlike any other figure in the catalog of resentments, it represented the opposite of the German ethnically and culturally construed “homeland” and “nation.”

Coupled with social Darwinism, other racisms and authoritarian ideals, antisemitism was so firmly entrenched that it would remain an influential—though

often denied and subterranean—tenet of post-Holocaust German political culture in both East and West Germany. Critical Theorists like Horkheimer and Adorno, who as discussed returned to Germany after the exile years and conducted various studies there, eventually recognized this *longue durée* as astute observers of their postwar German environment. Absorbing century-old antisemitic legacies, one could argue with the Frankfurt School thinkers that totalitarian National Socialism itself has exerted a formative influence on subsequent generations in German society—an ideological and cultural legacy Adorno, for instance, originally underestimated when he observed Nazi rule from abroad.⁷⁸

Although the stereotypes themselves are hardly very different across cultures, the Critical Theorists conclude that the significance of antisemitism partly depends on the politico-cultural relevance of antisemitic tropes and narratives, and the diverse cultural reservoirs in which they are historically actualized. A cultural environment historically susceptible to or reproducing deep-seated anti-Jewish elements and codes, even when they are only unconsciously transmitted, plays a key role to understand the particular role of modern antisemitism in society. Adorno notes that “the underlying antisemitism of our cultural climate, keyed to the prejudiced person’s own unconscious or preconscious wishes, proves in the more extreme cases to be stronger than either conscience or official democratic values” (AP 608). Although Adorno emphasizes the role of modernity and Western civilization in engendering antisemitism when he speaks about a general “cultural climate,” he does, in his late years, cautiously recognize that specific contexts and traditions matter if we are to understand why antisemitism has

been such a relevant projective matrix—even and especially in the modern world.

In Critical Theory's analysis, the modern antisemitic worldview does not just construe Jews as an enemy of the nation (that, too). Jews are also perceived as an "enemy of the world," of humankind, with whom there can be no peace. For the antisemite, Horkheimer and Adorno observe, "the Jews are not a minority but the antirace, the negative principle as such" (DE 137). For centuries—and until this day—the antisemitic imago has entailed the trope that "the Jews" are the main obstacle to human emancipation and world peace. In the antisemitic worldview, "the Jew" has been demonized as evil, guilty of the nation's or the world's misery, and can be punished or persecuted, in fantasy or reality.

According to Critical Theory, modern antisemitism is thus linked to modern authoritarianism and bears an ideological connection with various forms of resentment (including misogyny and racism), just as it integrates other social or political stereotypes (antiliberal and anti-democratic discourses, for instance). Yet it also remains distinct from them. It is therefore essential that we analyze the general and specific elements and psychological mechanisms in play in modern antisemitism's fetishistic construction as examined by the Frankfurt School. The remainder of this chapter reconstructs in more detail the critical phenomenology of antisemitic stereotypes, images, and motifs that Critical Theorists depict and analyze in the 1940s and 1950s, understanding and explaining the depository of these discourses in their sociopsychological functions. What, then, are the central general and specific elements of antisemitism that have made "the Jews" appear, as Talcott Parsons put it

in 1942, as “a particularly appropriate symbol on which to project aggressive attitudes generated by a large-scale state of *anomie* in modern society”?⁷⁹

Hate and Desire in a Distortion Mirror: Psychological Functions of Antisemitic Projections as Reflections of the Self

Through the aforementioned construction of a radical dichotomy between Jews and “Aryans,” Jews and gentiles, grounding an extreme dissociation of the Jews from society and one’s collective self-image, Jews can epitomize fundamental problems that ego-weak authoritarian subjects living under contemporary social conditions have with themselves and with modern society. By projecting them onto “the Jews,” the problems of deeply conflicted and weak subjects are externalized. This may offer a kind of sociopsychological relief. This operation is possible without ever drawing the social order into question, Critical Theory maintains, and it works best if such projective externalization is fully socially accepted, that is, if antisemitism is the dominant social norm. This is evident in the horizon of Nazi society, in which radical antisemitic social paranoia was the widely shared, totalitarian mainstream ideology. Yet even if antisemites are in the minority, there can be a widespread rebellious conformism that affirms society’s existing social domination but often makes Jews responsible for all kinds of individual and social malaise. Often submissive toward firm authority, rigid order, and the powers-that-be, authoritarians tend to turn their hatred against social or religious minorities. Indeed, for the antisemite order as such often

becomes the ideological ideal. The ideal of a total and ultimately lifeless order, in which everyone has orientation and knows his place is celebrated and longed for, and contrasted with the heterogeneity, diversity, and individuality of the Other, personified in the antisemitic image of the Jew. This image represents chaos and subversion of society yet, in so doing, simultaneously provides orientation in a complex social world.

Antisemitism, Adorno points out, hereby draws on an array of extremely destructive "unconscious drive impulses, conflicts, predispositions, and tendencies," which it "reinforces and manipulates, rather than elevating them to consciousness and resolving them."⁸⁰ As argued, the distorted antisemitic phantasmagory corresponds to the ego-weak individual's incapacity to contend with unwelcome impulses, prominent among them not only destructive and narcissistic desires, but the longing for power and the need for an orienting theory of the world; the desire for a "different life" is also operative under the surface. The assignment of whatever is repugnant to the Jews provides merely a sham solution to these internal conflicts and serves to intensify, in turn, the paranoid fear of those figures on whom unacceptable aspects of the self have been projected and who appear to threaten the accepted "order."

The Jews are made to represent repugnant and unacknowledged aspects of the self: those aspects formed by the archaic, externalized superego, now marked by unconscionable aggression and unbounded (self-)hatred that seek an outlet in anti-Jewish images, but also those yearnings for liberated individuality, for "happiness without power, reward without work, a homeland without frontiers" (DE 165), that are inadmissible or unrealizable.

The Jews thus serve a double function as the symbol, on one hand, for the antisemite's own displaced instinctual drives and ruthless power and persecution fantasies and, on the other, for a life of freedom that the authoritarian cannot abide because it appears off-limits to him. What must be rejected is the promise of a fulfilled, sensual life, one that is not bound to power, to repressive, authoritarian submissiveness or the compulsion to work; self-determination not based on naked, physical violence; abundance without the pain of work; individual freedom and autonomy from societal coercion. The extreme antisemite is marked by profound ambivalence toward his image of the Jewish foe, "which points in the direction of 'negatively falling in love'" (AP 615). The antisemite presses for destruction because the aspects of the self that have been split off and assigned to the Jews are forbidden or denied him and must be repressed.

In the antisemitic imagination, Jews embody an anti-civilizational force, an unbridled acting out of suppressed drives that is withheld from the authoritarian through the workings of a rigid and externalized superego and the potential attachment to the naked power of authority figures. Like no other group, the Jews symbolize a life filled with sensual pleasure and freedom, and this elicits life-negating hatred from the antisemitic subject.

Fantasized images of the Jews are regarded with secret envy. They present a model of human beings that are dependent neither on the terror of brute power nor on the misery of endless labor, that appear, in other words, to be free of those anti-instinctual ideologies with which the authoritarian individual compulsively identifies and which, in fact, stem from excessive, shadowy, and aggressive impulses of the drives. In the words of Löwenthal:

“What the Jews are . . . blamed for is that they seem to challenge both the discipline of civilization, which prescribes restraint, and the suppression of the urge to display one’s own emotion. They appear free to act out their passions and desires, their demands and fears, their sympathies and above all their antipathies” (FP 90).

Similarly, in the antisemitic unconscious, the Jew can stand for the seduction to another way of life and a less repressive sexuality. The fixation on the sexual in the image of the Jew corresponds to an element of the authoritarian disposition. The projection, in antisemitic caricature, of an ostensibly “Jewish physiognomy” characterized by protruding lips is an index of this preoccupation with the life of the drives (FP 242). In antisemitic representation, “Jews practice that which is forbidden. They indulge in restrained laxities and depravities. They refuse to forgo anything that may be pleasure but they do not want to pay in self-imposed restrictions” (FP 238).

While clearly an object of envy, this imputed ease vis-à-vis bodily needs is at the same time identified with filth. This is a rationalization, viewed by Critical Theory as an indication of the antisemitic subject’s suppressed drives and unacknowledged obsession with those drives’ (regressive, anal-sadistic) unleashing. The identification of Jews with filth and chaos corresponds to the authoritarian’s compulsive propensity to “create order,” “clean house,” “sanitize”—to homogenize the world. By projecting his own unconscious yearnings for unsublimated abandon, along with the filth that fascinates him, onto the Jews, the authoritarian can indulge in fantasies of filth and dissoluteness cloaked in the rationalization that what he really wants is to “cleanse,” to create a world in which no deviancy disturbs the peace.

The antisemite is acting according to a similar dynamic, Critical Theory maintains, when he attributes an aggressive character to the ostensibly unfettered sexual life of Jews. His warnings of rape, incest, and predation, voiced with apparent revulsion, manifestly correspond to his own sadistic fantasies.⁸¹ A procedure of “pathic projection” bars any possibility of self-reflection or testing against reality; instead “socially tabooed impulses from the subject” are simply transferred to the object of antisemitism (DE 158). “Under the pressure of the super-ego,” Horkheimer and Adorno write, “the ego projects aggressive urges emanating from the id which, through their strength, are a danger to itself, as malign intentions onto the outside world, and succeeds in ridding itself of them as reactions to that outside world . . .” (DE 158). This dialectic of antisemitic prejudice is manifest, as Löwenthal maintains, in the prominent role of the metaphor of stench in anti-Jewish stereotypes:

When people smell a bad odor, they quite often do not turn away from it; instead they eagerly breathe the polluted air, pretending to identify it while complaining of its repulsiveness. One does not have to be a psychoanalyst to suspect that in such instances the bad smell is unconsciously enjoyed in a way somewhat similar to that in which scandal stories are enjoyed. . . . The idiosyncratic violence with which various disgusting odors are rejected . . . points to a repressed and forgotten origin. (FP 114–115)⁸²

The radical “alienness” ascribed to the Jews in antisemitic stereotype likewise points, according to Critical

Theory, to the suppressed, "alien" demands of the unconscious, the diffuse elements of the self that for the authoritarian subject have remained ego-alien, always evading reflection. "The Jews were hated . . . because they were secretly envied."⁸³ This hatred is rationalized by way of an ethic of exaggerated cleanliness and a fetishization of order and discipline that is sadomasochistic in character and frequently takes a masochistic, self-flagellating turn, as we have seen, particularly in submissiveness to authority figures.

In this view, the fixation on order, which is anchored in the drive structure, is bound up with (potentially antisemitic) projections. Both, according to Critical Theory, are the expression of a fragile ego structure which, unable to deal with the individual's own drive stimuli in a reasonable way and always tied to externalized authority, can only assert itself by constantly creating order and eliminating disorder. The Jews become the outward symbol of carnality, heterogeneity, laxity; they are branded as "different," undisciplined, and hypersexual.⁸⁴ The authoritarian, but "pseudo-rebellious cry of 'It's time someone did something! It's time order were restored!'"⁸⁵ represents the externalized articulation of the authoritarian's inner struggle, which frequently takes the Jews as the projective object. Owing to persistent legal and social discrimination, the Jews represent the historically "weakest group" (FP 69), the easiest targets for authoritarian violence. The authoritarian prefers to strike at those who appear weak and powerless, in order to avoid conflict with the ruling powers. At the same time, he finds intolerable the weakness that he projects onto the Jews and that he fears

in himself: "Their powerlessness attracts the enemy of powerlessness" (DE 138).

"The Jew" is not only envied because, according to the antisemitic worldview, he acts on his instinctual needs and goes "unpunished" (FP 235). The individuality and freedom that are expressed in an enciphered way in the antisemitic image also constitute an object of particular envy, Critical Theory maintains—so much so that the antisemite takes pains to convince himself that all Jews are alike.

By virtue of their alleged renunciation of institutionalized social duties, the Jews are seen as creating a sphere of their own, a living space within—or rather outside—the genuine living space of the community. They have created a sphere of independence in a world of interdependence, a sphere of autarchy in a world of mutual dependency, a sphere of license in a world of restrictions. Breathing a social air of their own, they attempt to live by moral standards of their own making. (FP 235)

The Jews are resented for their ostensible disruption of painstakingly constructed rules of social order, as "social outsiders" guilty of "nonconventional behavior" (FP 215) precisely because "unconsciously everybody would like to break the rules" (FP 232). In Löwenthal's view, the Jews' homelessness so despised by the antisemite also represents, at a psychological level, the suppressed yearning for freedom of the antisemitic self.⁸⁶ As a counter to this rootless freedom, the antisemite fanatically invokes traditional order and labor and, above all, elevates to the status of a fetish the "natural homeland" and attachment to

biological roots. The less individual freedom is allowed or seems possible to the antisemite, the stronger is his bond to parental or societal authority—and, the Frankfurt theorists maintain, the more he despises the representatives of freedom and individuality who think beyond blood ties and the land of their birth, and the more he defends collective constructs like “homeland” and “nation.”

The image of a sphere of freedom and autonomy in which the Jews appear to participate is associated, in particular, with the notion of the Jew as an “intermediary,” a representative of modern bourgeois society’s sphere of circulation, a banker or intellectual, for instance, freed from the compulsion to work.⁸⁷ Anti-intellectual aggression and the fight against the “nonproductive capital” of the financial sector⁸⁸ are central components of antisemitism. They express the rage of the authoritarian personality against those who enjoy a conscious existence and the luxury of leisure. It is not the exploitation of one class by another that is condemned here, but the freedom from compulsory (alienated) labor, a freedom that is yearned for by all, whether or not they admit it. In the antisemitic imagination, the Jews are the representatives of this type of freedom. They appear to want something for nothing—“money without work”—and thus they stand against the logic of personal achievement that is idolized by the antisemite. According to Löwenthal, the hatred of money and intellect culminates in this simple formulation: the Jews “are useless and unproductive while making use of something that neither belongs to them nor was created by them. They are parasites” (FP 197).

In the ideology of the antisemite, “[t]he intermediary between the acquisition of money and the eschewing of work,” for the Jew, “is the intellect” (FP 197). The hatred

of the Jews as people in the position to avoid sweat and hard work is firmly grounded, Critical Theory holds, in the repressive superego of the authoritarian personality. A rigid superego reinforces the willing submission to the social labor process that is imposed on the individual by societal authorities and by the very principles of modern society. A glorification of the ordeal of physical labor (FP 206) serves to hold together the ego-weak, dependent subject, who has not developed any competence for the independent decision-making that might allow him to distinguish between labor that is meaningful or necessary and that which is not. Where consciousness is weak, labor itself becomes a fetish; in the words of Walter Benjamin, "[t]he old Protestant work ethic was resurrected among German workers in secularized form."⁸⁹

For the U.S. workers interviewed by Löwenthal and his colleagues in the mid-1940s, condemnation of the Jew's ostensible "laziness" and "inborn business sense" (FP 197; 198) appears "to express a need for confirmation and reaffirmation of their own social function," while at the same time, these workers "question neither the objective necessity of this function in the contemporary social setup nor the desirability of a change of their own social situation" (FP 197). If the antisemite himself is objectively "useless" from the standpoint of social productivity—jobless or on the dole, for example—the notion of Jewish laziness and uselessness can function as a psychological release valve. An aggressive stance toward the Jewish intellectual might be "a sign of unconscious longing for the release of one's own intellectual abilities" (FP 197); and this aggression is easily rationalized by way of the cliché of "intellect as a force with a 'corrosive' effect on civilization."⁹⁰ The projective image of the Jew's weak body and large nose

represents a physiognomic equivalent of the notion of the useless intellectual. "The nose and its function," according to Löwenthal, "are assimilated to the Jew's social functions. As an organ of exploration, the nose takes on intellectual significance, which, by virtue of its agility, assists the parasite in its parasitical activities" (FP 242). It symbolizes intellectual inquisitiveness and voracity. As a "physiognomic *principium individuationis*, which writes the individual's peculiarity on his face" (DE 151), the nose also stands for the singularity of the autonomous thinker and intellectual—the particularity of the individual.

In Löwenthal's analysis, "[t]he onslaught on the Jew is the onslaught on the individual, more precisely on the individual's specific and particular nature, on his rights in a free society" (FP 245). Inasmuch as "peculiarity," that is, the insistence on maintaining distinctive characteristics, is ascribed to the Jews, they necessarily deviate from the authoritarian ideal of an inalterable, racially defined collective identity, embodying antagonism to the authoritarian conformism to which the ego-weak subject is attached. "Once again, the Jews refuse to conform. . . . They are portrayed as despicable and dangerous, for they insist on the right to be individuals" (FP 90). In sum, "Jews are blamed for being different."⁹¹

Sensing that his own path to subjective development, experience, and individual happiness is blocked, the antisemite detests the emancipation that he unconsciously envies: "[I]n modern life individual happiness seems to become so exceptional that the presence of a group that seemingly continues to pursue it is felt as an affront and a menace" (FP 98).

This feeling of menace reflects not least the threat posed to the authoritarian personality's potential for

narcissistic gratification by the autonomy and the capacity for solidarity that the "integrated personality" exhibits. The valorization of the powerless subject through mere belonging to a hard and biologically determined collective, along with the subject's palpably unfree, wretched existence, is called into question by emancipatory departures from hardness and authoritarian norms and by the appearance of "happiness without power" (DE 141). On one hand, the Jews are persecuted as a socially weak group to which physical weakness is also ascribed, yet on the other it is precisely their strength, their individuality, and their *happiness* that is envied and thus not to be tolerated. Antisemites, as Horkheimer and Adorno explain, "must constantly repress the thought of that happiness, even as a possibility, an idea. . . . Wherever it appears to be realized amid the systematic deprivation, they must reenact the suppression which has been applied to their own longing" (DE 141). The authoritarian ban on happiness, which is secretly envied, and the uninhibited and "unpunished enjoyment" (FP 235) that is projected to "the Jews," represent an explosive mix that nurtures the fantasy of punishment: antisemitic aggression.

It is an essential feature of antisemitic ideology and the functions it fulfills that the projections of the authoritarian personality ultimately tend to harden into paranoia. Hatred of difference and a worldview that perceives both the rigidly (and racially) defined in-group and its fetishized notion of "order" as under constant threat from the Jews point to the radicalized manifestation of authoritarianism. It neither slackens nor ceases until, in the most extreme case, the Jews who persecute the authoritarian in his imagination, yet for whom he has, at the same time, a psychological need, are finally destroyed. Antisemitism,

in the view of Critical Theory, represents ideologically rationalized social paranoia. It corresponds to the authoritarian subject's stereopathically regressive forms of consciousness. Since Jews are perceived everywhere, the antisemitic image of "the Jew" offers an explanation for both individual and societal desires and problems, from the smallest to the most pressing. "[P]aranoia and the paranoid 'system,'" according to Adorno,

always tend to include everything, to tolerate nothing which cannot be identified by the subject's formula. Nothing can be left untouched, as it were; everything must be made "equal" to the ego-ideal of a rigidly conceived and hypostatized ingroup. The outgroup, the chosen foe, represents an eternal challenge. As long as anything different survives, the fascist character feels threatened, no matter how weak the other being may be. It is as if the anti-Semite could not sleep quietly until he has transformed the whole world into the very same paranoid system by which he is beset. . . . The extreme anti-Semite simply cannot stop. (AP 632–633)

The "Jewish culpability" discerned by the antisemite also serves to unleash the sheer limitless need for punishment that constitutes a core of authoritarian dispositions. The archaic logic of the authoritarian rationalizes the wildest inferences, which stem from the subject's own destructive fantasies and can culminate in a death sentence for the object of hatred. "It is here," writes Adorno, "that the 'expropriation' of the superego by the antisemite's punitive moralism obtains its full significance. . . . There are no inhibitions left by which the associational

crescendo of destructive ideas could be checked. Hatred is reproduced and enhanced in an almost automatized, compulsive manner which is both utterly detached from the reality of the object and completely alien to the ego" (AP 633). From a psychological standpoint, Adorno contends, the notion of eternal Jewish guilt can be seen as expressing the antisemite's own criminal aggression fantasies and related unconscious guilt feelings: "*ideologically*, it is a mere epiphenomenon, a rationalization in the strictest sense" (AP 633).⁹²

The antisemite identifies authoritarian power—to which he has himself been subjected and now reveres—with civilization, while individual nonconformity—represented by the Jews—is seen as inimical to civilization. Paradoxically, this move provides a thin rationalization for rescinding the democratic achievements of civilization when it comes to those who the antisemite excludes from civilization's ambit. By way of projection, the antisemite's own fantasies of power and persecution, his aggressive, authoritarian drive impulses and unconscious needs, can be leveled at the Jews under the pretext of combating destructive schemes. The superego thus positively sanctions rage that is directed at the Jews as an outlet for pent-up drive impulses and "deep-seated malice."⁹³

"Explaining" the Modern World: Social Functions of Antisemitism as the Antimodern Personification of Societal Domination and Crises

In the view of Critical Theory, antisemitic social paranoia also constitutes a specific, reified explanation of the modern world. Antisemitism simplifies and personifies the

social malaise of modern society in all its facets. Anti-Jewish paranoia, intersecting between the individual level and socially disseminated beliefs, fulfills an essential function for the antisemite, enabling him to identify and explain the societal problems that threaten to close in on him and that he does not understand. Misapprehended by the antisemite, capitalist modernity and its inherent maladies, among them the complex social conditions and alienation to which individuals are subjected, are personalized in the image of the Jew, which becomes their stereotypical representation:

[P]olitical stereotype and personalization can be understood as devices for overcoming this uncomfortable state of affairs. . . . as signposts of orientation and as projections of the fears created by disorientation. Similar functions seem to be performed by the "irrational" imagery of the Jew. He is, for the highly prejudiced subject, extremely stereotyped; at the same time, he is more personalized than any other bogey in so far as he is not defined by a profession or by his role in social life, but by his human existence as such. . . . (AP 618–619)

For Critical Theory, the lack of human connections is a characteristic facet of capitalist socialization, one that is especially constitutive for individuals socialized in an authoritarian manner. Rebellion against authoritarian values such as power, discipline, and hardness appears impossible to these individuals, yet they are beset by a deep sense of discontent (barely registered at a conscious level) with the paucity of human relationships. Antisemitic ideology enables the individual to localize the cause

for this discontent outside of the self. The seemingly outwardly “inconspicuous” Jew, who—in keeping with the paranoid disposition—appears to be omnipresent and to pull the strings behind the complex processes of modern society, only to be recognized and identified by the antisemite.

By projecting the responsibility for social isolation outward, the narcissistic integrity⁹⁴ of the authoritarian and his idealized in-group can be preserved or restored. In this process, submissiveness, valorization, and narcissism attach to the subject’s own authoritarian ego ideal or to the hard father imago, to the powerful leader or to the nation.

The root causes of the individual’s suffering and injuries can be split off intrapsychically and assigned to the Jews, who thus appear to represent the side of authority that is both evil and vulnerable to attack. Such narcissistic splitting, the outward projection and personalization of social problems as “Jewish” problems serves—like any psychological splitting mechanism—as a defensive function for the ego. Ackerman and Jahoda explain: “anti-Semitic hostility can be viewed as a profound though irrational and futile defensive effort to restore a crippled self.”⁹⁵ Otto Fenichel substantiates the Critical Theorists’ argument regarding the double-sided nature of antisemitic “rebellion”: “Unconsciously for the anti-Semite,” Fenichel writes in 1946, “the Jew is simultaneously the one against whom he would like to rebel, and the rebellious tendencies within himself.”⁹⁶ In other words, the Jews can symbolize the authoritarian’s own repressed yearning for freedom, as analyzed earlier, and can at the same time embody for the antisemite those elements of societal authority that are the desired target

of his rebellious rage, a target against which he is, in fact, in the position to rebel.

It is significant that in the structure of antisemitic prejudice, the Jews are not only deemed to exert a "corrosive" effect on civilization; indeed, they are also disparaged as exponents of "progressive" elements of modern civilization, of formal equality and emancipation and civil liberties. However, blame for the sense of discontent, dependency, and powerlessness, for societal impoverishment and rootlessness—in sum, the unremitting experience of individual isolation, exploitation, suppression, and frustration to which human beings in modernity are subjected—can all be attributed to the Jews. The Jews function as "a substitute for attacks on social domination" (FP 216) that the authoritarian subject is not capable of launching directly. "The Jew becomes the symbol on which," according to Löwenthal, the antisemite centers the projections of his own impotent "rage against the restraints of civilization" (FP 98).⁹⁷

In place of critical reflection on the social causes of this discontent, the ego-weak subject, incapable of genuine experience, takes recourse to antisemitic stereotypes of the Jew as the "radically other" and follows a path of ideological regression that glorifies archaic physical violence. According to Adorno, the antisemitic narrative promises orientation and illumination in the darkness of alienated society:

The [Jew's] alienness seems to provide the handiest formula for dealing with the alienation of society. Charging the Jews with all existing evils seems to penetrate the darkness of reality like a searchlight and to allow for quick and all-comprising orientation . . . It

is the Great Panacea, providing at once intellectual equilibrium, countercathexis, and a canalization of wishes for a "change." (AP 619)

The secret, shadowy power of the Jews—a projection of antisemitism and its object of attack—is portrayed as equally insidious and incomprehensible as the social structure in which human lives are enmeshed.⁹⁸ Society's stock images of the Jew have traditionally offered conveniently personified embodiments of covert and indirect domination. They stand for the totality of the evils of capitalism, the social system shaped by both concrete and abstract power to which the authoritarian individual is, in part, blindly subjected; social complexity as well as the economic mechanisms and the law of value governing that system remain unrecognized and uncomprehended.

Thus, Löwenthal maintains, the Jews not only stand for that which is "alien" and must be suppressed within the self of the authoritarian personality, they also represent those alien features of modern socialization that undermine the traditional, established hierarchies and replace them with new forms of social violence and domination. This finds a special expression in urban modernity and resentment against its perceived chaos, destruction, immorality and "decadence" with which antisemitism has historically identified "the Jews," whose status improved with modern trade, urbanization, and the rise of bourgeois society.⁹⁹ The Jews are assigned the blame for the experience of social "uprootedness" and deprivation, the permanent transformations in modern capitalist societies which the antisemite is unable to apprehend as a social process. He defames the process as "Jewish decomposition."¹⁰⁰

Löwenthal cites a 1941 radio speech by American antisemitic demagogue George Allison Phelps on the seemingly incongruous roster of fundamentally “asocial characteristics” brought by the “foreigner” to U.S. shores: “atheism, mental and moral decay, vulgarity, communism, imperialism . . . intolerance, snobbery, treason, treachery, dishonesty” (FP 58). The antisemite identifies “societal decay” with the universal values of modernity that the Jews seem to epitomize, since it is the partial legal and social emancipation of the Jews in bourgeois society that first afforded them the opportunity of upward social mobility.¹⁰¹ In their ideal form, these values—universal human and civil rights—proclaim their antagonism to the law of the strongest and to the unconditional submission to existing authority,¹⁰² both principles that are essential, of course, to the authoritarian personality. Jews personify the abstract elements that characterize modern bourgeois society: abstract law, abstract reason, as well as the abstraction of the unfolding totality of commodity production. In developed capitalism, social domination is essentially international (“international Jewry”) and conveyed by means of abstractions, by means of money, which for the antisemite is embodied in the Jew (identified with the “rapacious” aspect of capital: *raffendes Kapital*). In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer discern a “specific economic purpose” of antisemitism, namely “to conceal domination in production” (DE 142). Critical Theory identifies the germ of antisemitism in the distinction drawn between “productive” and “speculative” capital, the latter referring to the sphere of circulation to which bourgeois society had traditionally confined the Jews. In the industrial arena, surplus value is expropriated at the source, but this act of

domination is obscured and fetishized as “production”; while exploitation has its origins in industrial relations, the blame is shifted to the traders and bankers who operate in the sphere of circulation.¹⁰³ This circulation sphere, which could only arise with what Marx describes as a double-sided liberation from personal relations of domination, comprises the entire domain of the “middlemen”: the intellectuals, the lawyers, and above all the bankers, who merely “process” money. For the antisemite, this stratum appears “unproductive” and “parasitic,” triggering an anticapitalist reflex, but one that fixes on the convenient, personified image of the Jew and thereby fails to confront the social reality of capitalism. Thus characterized as singularly “rapacious” and superfluous, the Jews become the target of the antisemite’s hatred.¹⁰⁴

Manifestations of capitalist domination associated with industrial production and the concrete drudgery of labor—that is, physical work and ostensibly “productive capital” (*schaffendes Kapital*)—are fetishized and insulated from critique, while those manifestations associated with the sphere of circulation are biologized, despised, and attacked by antisemitism.¹⁰⁵ The antisemite yearns for the annihilation of circulation, which by means of “a socially necessary illusion” (DE 143) appears to bear responsibility for exploitation, as well as abstraction as such, personified by the Jews, whom he makes the locus of social ills. At the same time, the antisemite obscures and venerates the concrete facets of capitalism: industrial capital, technology, and the forces of nature and production. The authoritarian, as we have seen, is bound to concrete domination and sociopsychologically incapable to break free.

The pressing social problems of modern society, along with the unredeemed, "false" promises of emancipation, can all be traced to images of the other, to the deviant Jew who is ostensibly embodying "those dark forces" behind everything.¹⁰⁶ Complex social processes are thus rendered personal, making the negative facets of social reality graspable within the confines of the authoritarian personality's stereopathic mentality, explicable by means of stereotypes, without ever posing a challenge to real power in politics and the economy. The misapprehended "social malaise" (FP 21 and *passim*) that besets civilization dissolves into paranoid imaginings about hidden actors and an international Jewish conspiracy. Long-range tendencies of societal subjugation (alienation, dehumanization, the depersonalization of domination), and especially their root social causes are cloaked in ideology—then they are attributed to the Jews. Antisemitism, in the end, amounts to "a condensed, perverted, manipulated concept of all social conditions" resented by the authoritarian personality (FP 241). As Löwenthal notes, "the image of the Jew stands for a blurred theoretical concept of social phenomena and their dynamics" (FP 200).

The projection of a conspiracy can generate wholly contradictory stereotypes like the "bold imaginative construction" of the Jewish "communist banker" (FP 52; 53). The antisemite, Critical Theory tells us, despises every tendency that appears to subvert the authoritarian order that gives his life direction, any force that might actually or apparently call it into question. In the structure of antisemitic prejudice, democracy and liberalism represent a challenge to this order. In Europe and beyond, the antidemocratic reaction has traditionally been expressed

in part as anti-American resentment and this anti-Americanism, in turn, is often coupled to anti-Judaism: the Jews have long been imagined to be the most powerful force behind American capitalism and its political institutions.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, just as Adorno points out that there is historically and structurally a close link between extreme nationalism and antisemitism, it is often only a small step from conspiracy myths to judeophobia. In Critical Theory's lens, there is a strong affinity between authoritarian fantasies longing to personify modernity's social malaise by identifying secret string-pullers as Jews. The anarchists and communists as well as the bankers seem determined to take away from the authoritarian personality what little he has left in terms of ideals and material possessions. The antisemite is convinced that the Jews are behind the anarchists and the communists, who allegedly operate under a pretext of a desire to achieve justice, something the antisemite is certain is unattainable and therefore must be a lie concealing egotistical material interests. The image of such a Jewish conspiracy, of a world that is manipulated by Jews who secretly control it or aspire to do so, offers the antisemite "pseudo-orientation in an estranged world, and at the same time . . . devices for 'mastering' this world by being able completely to pigeonhole its negative aspects" (AP 289). Once "World Jewry" has been branded as "pulling the strings" of modern society and all reflection gives way to paranoid projection, the latter can take on truly insane features:

It is as though the anti-Semite could not tolerate them on any part of the earth. He regards them as intruders and infringers *everywhere*: in the theatre, where they have bought their tickets as well as the

"Gentiles," no less than in the vacation resort or in an exotic country. Their very existence is perceived by him as a threat to the potentiality of feeling "at home."¹⁰⁸

For the antisemite, "Jewish influence is behind every threat to society and every frustration of his . . . hopes." (FP 91) Many people justifiably feel abandoned in a hostile world, lied to, and cheated: "The world is full of manipulated statements or, plainly speaking, lies, and everybody knows it." But the antisemite levels his rage about this state of affairs at the Jews, branding them the "liars" and "swindlers," because he can "neither detect nor eradicate the real causes of universal falsehood" (FP 204). The conspiracy myth fulfills another function: the antisemite can indulge in fantasies of unlimited, ruthless global power that mirror his own wishes. It was the Nazis who aspired the world domination they attributed to "the Jews."

The image of the Jew is particularly open to this sort of projection, precisely because assimilated Jews cannot be identified as Jewish by external traits. The Jews can thus be perceived as omnipresent yet concealed, as chameleon-like and responsible for the fear and frustration felt everywhere in modern society. The antisemite sees the enemy everywhere in the person of the Jew, who appears to be so cowardly that he has "never dared to emerge undisguised into daylight" (FP 67). The extreme antisemite believes he could never be deceived about the true nature of the worldwide Jewish conspiracy, because he is convinced he can spot a Jew at first sight on the basis of his physiognomy and his fundamental nature.¹⁰⁹

As Löwenthal observes, "fantastic images" of subversive Jewish conspirators "seem, first of all, to satisfy [the anti-Semite's] craving for an explanation of [his] suffering" (FP 35). Meanwhile, the notion of a conspiracy insinuates illegal and treasonous activity. And once the Jews appear dangerous, erratic, and motivated by senseless and destructive rage, the antisemite can rationalize his own rage against them as legitimate self-defense. The moral construct according to which the Jews are seen the original aggressors and are thus to blame for their own persecution serves, as Adorno explains, as a rationalization for destructive desires; and this "interrelation between death-wish and moralistic rationalization" can take "truly terrifying" forms (AP 632). At the same time, the authoritarian individual, hardened to his own impulses as well as the feelings of others, remains identified at the deepest level with those dehumanizing, oppressive elements of modern civilization that he projects onto the Jews and condemns as immoral. While accusing the Jews of "extreme egoism" (FP 217) and propagating the stereotype of "Jewish greed" (FP 99), it is the authoritarian himself who for the most part upholds the conservative posture of pitilessness toward the poor. The Jews become thus once again a mirror of the self in a society that positively sanctions pitilessness, and of the authoritarian's own avarice and will to push through his own interests against others.

According to Critical Theory, it is precisely because "denial of material gratifications, indicative of a restrictive superego" (AP 760) is typical of the authoritarian personality that antisemitism can be regarded as an expression of social envy, grounded in the economic powerlessness and social isolation of the authoritarian. The antisemite projects social ambition and the "greediness which he has

learnt not to admit to his own consciousness" (AP 699) onto socially as well as economically successful Jews.

The Jews are blamed not only for social conflict, but for societal aggressiveness as a whole. In antisemitic ideology, they are perceived as responsible for the coldness and hardening of modern civilization, which has undermined the old, shared bonds of community—however authoritarian and hierarchical these might have been. Yet it is precisely these traits, according to Löwenthal, that characterize the antisemite himself: "The accusation of aggressiveness could be seen as a paradigmatic projection of the aggressiveness of the anti-Semite himself" (FP 217).

The Jews' ostensible vindictiveness is similarly a matter of antisemitic projection; "Jewish lust for revenge is depicted as unrestrained, as directly pathological" (FP 93). As has been laid out earlier, implacable hatred and aggressively distorted, yet unacknowledged drive impulses constitute central elements of the authoritarian disposition. These traits are manifest as a psychic splitting and paranoid projection in the antisemitic trope of Jewish vengefulness, which also seems to lend social legitimacy to the acting out of aggression and persecution against the Jews. By means of antisemitic paranoia, the drive to self-destruction and the concurrent fear that this drive engenders are turned outward:

Such paranoid delusions . . . are in reality the projections of hatred. . . . As Freud puts it, the man who thinks "I hate him" twists the thought into a defensive projection: "He hates me." . . . By indulging in this projection, the paranoid relieves himself of part of his fear of self-destruction. (FP 72–73)

In the anti-Jewish imagination, it is the Jews who, inversely, appear as the perpetrators of discrimination and exclusion; as those who persecute.¹¹⁰ Today it is one of the key tricks employed by antisemites, Adorno argues in the post-War context, "to present themselves as persecuted victims; to act as if . . . the antisemite would be the one subjected to societal scorn."¹¹¹

Rationalized in this fashion, antisemitism can enable the ego-weak individual to direct his self-hatred outward and find "temporary relief" (FP 73), as the Frankfurt School maintains. This resentment also evinces a close linkage with the authoritarian's destructive instinctual desires. From the antisemite's claim that his anti-Jewish position serves a defensive function, Adorno infers that "the greater a subject's preoccupation with 'evil forces' in the world," with persecution and conspiracy myths, "the stronger would be his own unconscious urges of both sexuality and destructiveness" (AP 240).

Ascribed to the seemingly "omnipresent" Jews in the wild imaginings of conspiracy myths, the power behind the civilizational process is viewed by the antisemite as both illegitimate and precarious or unsettled. For the antisemite, as we have seen, civilizational power appears to be based in avarice and intellectualism, channels through which the Jews are able to fraudulently take hold of it. From the antisemitic standpoint, the Jews appear to possess neither command authority nor physical strength, elements that the authoritarian submissively reveres. Historically, moreover, the Jews represent a persecuted minority of whom 6 million were murdered in the Holocaust. The Jews' ostensible power, one motive for antisemitic hatred, thus appears as nothing more than a slender facade concealing their actual weakness, for which the

antisemite despises them all the more. Löwenthal writes the following on the antisemitic worldview:

For Jewish power . . . has no solid foundations in reality; it is based solely on manipulations and machinations. It cannot withstand the exercise of brute force, and brute force is something that the Jews never have had at their disposal. The very survival of the Jews can thus be felt as a challenge, for it seems to refute the idea that ultimately everything in life is based on physical power, and that those deprived of it must submit to those who wield it. The Jews symbolize the utopia of harmony that has come to be regarded as a deception. This almost automatically suggests that they can enjoy happiness only by deceiving others. (FP 97–98)

The paranoid conception of omnipresent Jewish power and conspiratorial designs, which simultaneously serves to rationalize persecutorial hatred, functions as a psychological complement to the converse notion of supposedly real Jewish weakness and powerlessness, “the idea of the Jew as a weakling.”¹¹² As Adorno observes: “The prejudiced individual, whose hatred is stimulated by weakness, rather tends to stress, on the surface, the strength of the Jews who ‘wield undue influence’ and ‘own everything’” (AP 639).

According to Critical Theory, the ego-weak individual ultimately despises nothing so much as the impotence and weakness that characterize his own position and that he experiences in modern capitalist society, yet cannot acknowledge. In Löwenthal’s view, it is “precisely this lack of real power that provokes anti-Jewish feelings.”¹¹³

Adorno adds in light of the labor study that the “domineering features” for which Jews are blamed are inherent in the workers’ mentality, and thus in the “last analysis it is the absence of power rather than its presence which evinces antisemitism.”¹¹⁴

Images of the Jews represent an ideal surface for the projection of his own weaknesses and feelings of inferiority, attributes that are so contemptible to the authoritarian character. Mirroring the social-psychological makeup of the authoritarian, antisemitic resentment maps closely to the authoritarian’s conflicted, regressive psychic dispositions that remain entirely unconscious yet tremendously powerful. This is the “blindness of antisemitism” noted by Horkheimer and Adorno, the “lack of intention” with which “[r]age is vented on those who are both conspicuous and unprotected” (DE 140).

For Critical Theory, neither the authoritarian dispositions described here nor their manifestations in antisemitic ideology are to be understood as hermetic or ahistorical. According to Löwenthal, many authoritarians “might still be open to the language of experience, of genuine rational and emotional reorientation” (FP 251). Adorno likewise speaks of the phenomenon of “surface resentment” (AP 695) that still appears to be amenable to rational insight; such prejudice might express an unreflective adoption of societal conventions without serving meaningful social-psychological functions. “Superficial” resentments, in this view, do not necessarily indicate deeply rooted authoritarian personality structures. But either way antisemitism, the Critical Theorists are convinced, would outlive the defeat of National Socialism, even if in ever new forms.

The American sources—which provided, as indicated, the primary empirical material of the Frankfurt School’s critical phenomenology of antisemitism—help explore the psychological, social and political dynamics, or essence, of antisemitism and its link to authoritarian fantasies and antimodern conspiracy myths. The analysis of these sources also substantiates critical theoretical assumptions by indicating both: the universal character and sociopsychological functions of certain “typical” antisemitic stereotypes as well as the sheer infinite variety of contradictory antisemitic resentments. They are virulent in different modern societies, on the one hand, and they show the context-dependency of particular forms and manifestations of antisemitism, on the other.

In the republican-democratic American institutional and sociocultural context of the Frankfurt School’s studies, the documented antisemitism is arguably less socially accepted and, though strikingly present, manifests itself in more subdued, latent and coded ways even among less educated working class citizens in comparison to their European—let alone German—contemporaries. Moreover, the material also demonstrates the potentially violent nature of manifest antisemitism, which may motivate antisemitic terror acts and, if politically unleashed, may ultimately lead to mass murder. After the Nazi atrocities, which executed the program of genocidal antisemitism, there is an inseparable ideological bond between antisemitism and the possibility of genocide against Jews. But in Critical Theory’s account it certainly does not start there. Neither before nor after the Holocaust should antisemitism be perceived and criticized only in its most extreme “racial antisemitism” of the Nazi kind.

Antisemitism and its inherent exclusionary violence and discrimination against Jews are not limited to racially motivated mass murder, one may add following Critical Theory's insight, just as racism cannot be reduced to physical violence against ethnic minorities, and sexism is not restricted to rape. After Auschwitz, full-fledged antisemitic political ideologies were largely discredited and marginalized—at least in liberal constitutional democracies (though not necessarily in authoritarian societies)—because it had become impossible to detach antisemitic resentments from what happened in Auschwitz.

Shortly after the Holocaust, the Critical Theorists recognized that the political, discursive, and in some cases legal ban on racial antisemitism in response to the Nazi genocide against the Jews would have some effects on anti-Jewish manifestations. Antisemitic narratives, myths, and stereotypes were likely to transform, disperse, and become more coded or latent—and also more isolated—in the public sphere, even if antisemitism remains a social undercurrent.¹¹⁵ However, while antisemitic worldviews may have dissipated in some politico-cultural contexts, Critical Theory suggests that the (anti-)civilizational “lure of antisemitism”¹¹⁶ is likely to remain with us as long as modern social domination and its crises exist. This is the case because modern antisemitism provides a culturally transmitted, ready-made outlet for deep-seated social aggressions—and the longing for an antimodern exit from the modern world—that has never been fully overcome as a historical legacy.

There are, of course, also several problems with the transcultural and transhistorical transfer of analytic descriptions and insights gained through the study of primarily American material based on research conducted

in the 1940s. Antisemitic projections are, after all, a historical product. They change their forms, and their origins, functions, dynamics, and (individual) motivations may alter or add layers over time. But especially Adorno reminds us with his work and essays in the 1950s and 1960s that antisemitism as a social phenomenon is not likely to become history yet, not even after Auschwitz, even if there are “no longer any anti-Semites” in the conventional sense or those who declare themselves to be (DA 165).¹¹⁷ By the same token, Critical Theory does not deny the possibility of a return of the repressed in Freud’s sense: that under certain political conditions even after Auschwitz and even in democratic societies blatant, uninhibited, indeed overt racial antisemitism may be resuscitated, such as public attacks against Jews as “parasites” and “swines” and chants like “Death to the Jews,” once again blaming Jews for all problems and conflicts of the world, or fantasizing about their collective extermination—as unthinkable as this may seem, or have seemed, after the Shoah. I now discuss the societal origins of this potential under conditions of modernity—which constitutes the heart of critical social theorizing about antisemitism in the Frankfurt School’s lens.

CHAPTER 5

THE SOCIETAL ORIGINS OF MODERN ANTISEMITISM

Judeophobia and Critical Social Theory after Marx and Weber

Following the analysis of antisemitism as a social ideology and its sociopsychological functions, I now turn to the heart of Critical Theory's twofold project: to approach the most pressing injustice of their time—the “antisemitism question”—and to rethink social theory in the face of the Holocaust. The collapse of modern civilization that this genocide represented for the Critical Theorists deeply affects social and political thought—just as addressing totalitarian antisemitism, in turn, requires reflecting on its societal conditions. Indeed, antisemitism cannot be adequately grasped without also returning to social theory. Such theory has to put sociopsychological dimensions, which we have extensively discussed so far and to which the Frankfurt School undoubtedly attributed the utmost importance, in their general societal context.

Hence, Critical Theory's macro theory—its genuinely *social* theory—of antisemitism will be the subject of this chapter. It focuses on the Frankfurt School's signature contribution to our understanding of modern judeophobia and antisemitism theory at large: the link between modern antisemitism and critical theory of modern society. The chapter redirects the view to modern social conditions and their underlying structure of social domination, as conceived by the Critical Theorists, as well as the forms of (political) socialization and (reified) consciousness this structure helps generate. In the foregoing analysis of the origins of authoritarian subjectivity, we have considered how in Critical Theory's view personality structures and patterns of resentment are bound to broader social relations and processes in modernity, and how this linkage affects subjects at their innermost core. The previous reflections on the historical forms of the fascist or antisemitic subject and the ideology of judeophobia are now further expanded to, and situated in, the Frankfurt School's profound critique of modern societal tendencies—modern forms of domination and socialization that Critical Theory suggests foster authoritarianism and antisemitic politics of hate.

The macro social theory shaping and being shaped by the Frankfurt School's study of antisemitism is hereby neither limited to however significant contextual factors (e.g., the political system, political cultures, or totalitarian movements); nor should such theorizing be confused with the search for specific causal mechanisms and isolated factors that can be "added" in a positivistic fashion. Rather, Critical Theory seeks to understand the "objectivity," or constitutive social conditions forming the underlying totality of society, in which "the psychological

mechanisms of antisemitism are situated."¹ Such objectivity "of course also sets certain limits to educational work."² Indeed, from Critical Theory's perspective subjective antisemitic motivations and perceptions, however relevant and presumably linked to a particular antidemocratic syndrome, should never be reduced solely to individual pathologies of atomized individuals, or to isolated political and social attitudes.³ Instead, the observed resilience of anti-Jewish myths—most strikingly expressed and put into murderous practice in Nazi Germany, but all too present even in the American modern republic and its liberal democracy at the time—is in various ways grounded in objective political conditions and social circumstances of the modern world.

As indicated in the first chapter of this book and thereafter, the Frankfurt School theorists aim ultimately at nothing less than a comprehensive theory of antisemitism. The closest to such a universal and general understanding Adorno and Horkheimer would get, by their own account, with the *Elements of Antisemitism: Limits of Enlightenment*—the often overlooked last chapter of their influential *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. To be sure, as its modest title suggests even the *Elements*, to which I dedicate the subsequent separate chapter because of its richness and complexity, is an essay that displays acute awareness that its contribution also falls short of this ambitious goal, and remains fragmentary. However, it is important to note that the *Elements*, while aware that all theoretical explanations are insufficient, does attribute to modern eliminationist antisemitism a certain universal social meaning—in Horkheimer and Adorno's understanding the rise of antisemitism and the genocide of the European Jews, like nothing else, demonstrate the limits

of modern enlightenment and of modern society's "progress" at large.

This chapter thus reconstructs how Critical Theory's work on antisemitism is, on the one hand, anchored in a variety of sociological paradigms and traditions of social thought from Max Weber to especially Marx and Marxian models. On the other hand, it shows how the Holocaust and the reflection on antisemitism itself profoundly transformed critical social theorizing. It is unambiguously clear to the Critical Theorists that, in order to attempt to explain antisemitism, we must also turn to its societal origins; to social practices that originate in the general structures and patterns of social organization. "Though," as Horkheimer notes, "the demagogue plays upon psychological predispositions with psychological weapons, the predispositions themselves and the aims striven for are socially created."⁴ Yet at the same time, it is the experience of antisemitic madness in the midst of civilization and the twentieth century that has profoundly reshaped this critical social theory, pushing it beyond the framework of Marx's understanding of social domination. In view of the Holocaust, a new materialist critique of domination must first reflect on its most extreme expressions: the exclusion and persecution of minorities and Jews. These forms of terror are not viewed as derivatives of more fundamental social problems or contradictions, as Marx could conceive them. Rather, such violence is itself at the core of a new social irrationality that social theory must take into account. Critical Theory therefore sees the need to reconsider social structures and conditions in sight of new material practices of total domination, extreme violence and suffering, and the genocide against the European Jews in particular.

In what follows, I explore in depth the key aspects of the social and theoretical context in which Critical Theory situates modern antisemitism. Reconstructing the main arguments about the relationship between antisemitism and dialectics of modern society, I take four conceptually interrelated steps. First, I ground the social theory of antisemitism in the Frankfurt School's critique of the totalization of an unreflected "instrumental rationality." It follows the logic of ever-expanding subjugation and appropriation of the internal and external world under conditions of late modern society. In so doing, I analyze the Frankfurt School's use of Marxian categories, especially the concepts of reification and fetishization in modern capitalist relations and forms of consciousness. Thus I reconstruct and examine Critical Theory's argument about irrationality at the heart of modern society's dominant, alienated model of rationality itself—what Eva-Maria Ziege has aptly called the "irrationality of rationality"—and modern "totality's" potential dialectical turnover into complete madness, into unrestrained social paranoia. Second, I further explore the exclusionary, authoritarian, and oppressive aspects of this ultimately irrational yet—in the view of Critical Theory—blindly perpetuated societal logic of domination and its presumed relationship to the modern evolution of antisemitic thinking. I hereby reconstruct Critical Theory's argument about the intimate affinity between the social totality of objectified social relations to social paranoia and antisemitism. Third, I go on to discuss related specific arguments about antisemitism as simultaneously the product *and* a fetishized critique of modern capitalism: a blindfolded denigration that identifies capitalism's structural injustices with the sphere of circulation, and

all actual or perceived negative and abstract aspects of modernity at large, with “the Jews” as the alleged representatives of the modern capitalist world. Lastly, I reconstruct Critical Theory’s distinct argument about the role of modern transformations of socialization processes and authority structures in family and society for the Frankfurt School’s understanding of the rise of modern authoritarianism and antisemitism.

After Marx: Instrumental Rationality and Judeophobia in an Objectified World

The Critical Theorists endeavor to explain antisemitism in the context of the history of Western civilization—its social rationality, antagonisms, aporias, and dialectics. Yet they rethink and challenge straightforward, linear, or deterministic general explanations—especially so in view of the particularity of totalitarian modern antisemitism and the Holocaust.⁵ Löwenthal argues that antisemitism and fascist terror are, to be sure, not simply outliers of civilizational processes and modernity but “deeply rooted in the trends of modern civilization, and especially in the pattern of the modern economy”(FP 181). As indicated, it is assumed to be “societal conditions and structures that . . . above all give rise to antisemitism.”⁶ Extreme, totalitarian antisemitism, culminating in Auschwitz, is also perceived as a dialectical “reversion of enlightened civilization to barbarism” (DE xix)—a destruction or negation of societal reason that is simultaneously bound up with dominant social rationality itself: “The not merely theoretical but practical tendency toward self-destruction has

been inherent in rationality from the first, not only in the present phase when it is emerging nakedly" (DE xix).

The societal causes of antisemitism are thus held to be embedded in the history of civilization. A decisive driving force of such history is seen as the evolution of a so-called instrumental rationality of the mastering-mastered subject. It can be traced back to the image of Homer's *Odysseus*, as discussed in chapter 2. Such instrumental rationality, as understood by the Frankfurt School, denigrates the internal and external world to objects serving the precarious and hardened subject, so that it survives in a society modeled after the principled of blind self-preservation. It turns the world into mere objects to be analyzed, objectified, and dissected under a microscope in order to master it as it is enlightened. Historically, enlightenment and domination are thus dialectically intertwined (cf. DE 138).

Fixated on the subjective interest in self-preservation, instrumental rationality tends to reduce reason to mere utilitarian thinking and the pursuit of narrow particular interests. While the subjective, instrumental reason of the sovereign, secularized subject has shattered ancient myths and metaphysics, it thereby remains captive to the unquestioned civilizational myth that surplus domination and sacrifice are the price for preventing the demise of self and society. Unable to break with that myth and the existing subjective and societal organization perpetuating it, the principle of self-preservation based on instrumental rationality becomes increasingly irrational. Critical Theory argues, the more technological progress and possibilities could render such blind instrumental rationality obsolete. Indeed, facing the seemingly

unchangeable existing social order, the subject seems to become ever more tightly ensnared in this one-sided rationality that subsumes the external world into a mere means to a particular, the more senseless coercion and submission become in light of the possibilities of a just and free organization of society.

At the same time, modern antisemitism is understood as a product of specific modern social relations that increasingly dispose individuals to authoritarianism. In this view, it is only in the late industrial capitalist era, with the expansion of bourgeois power into what Adorno calls a "total structure," a negative social totality that integrates everything and all under the principle of abstract exchange and valorization, that conditions become especially favorable for widespread powerlessness: a totalized system generates a loss of vision and a structural weakening among subjects. Such powerlessness decisively shapes consciousness and harms the capacity of self-reflection. This context, it is suggested, ultimately also fosters the social power of antisemitic ideology. Instrumental social rationality run wild and lacking self-reflection or other mechanisms to keep it at bay can transform and turn over into a paranoid system of unfettered destructiveness. This process of "total socialization" under instrumental rationality impoverishing the subject and society can create a situation in which, as Adorno puts it, "rackets" and their followers operate more or less blindly. "Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents* has a substance that was scarcely in the author's mind: it is not only in the psyche of the socialized that aggressiveness accumulates into an openly destructive drive. Instead, total socialization objectively hatches its opposite."⁷ Indeed, the Frankfurt School suggests that the

prevailing objective tendencies of modern socialization increasingly demand the total conformity of the subject under the ideology of self-preservation, the liquidation of all autonomy, nonintegration, and difference. What they unleash is precisely the opposite of societal coexistence: the “natural aggressive drive” and inveterate destructiveness in a struggle of all against all or all against one. Martin Jay summarizes the dialectic by which Critical Theory attempts to explain the fascist and antisemitic shift into barbarism:

The enlightenment, broadly understood as Western civilization’s rationalizing imperative, had treated nature as if it were an objective “other” to be exploited for the benefit of the subject. The result was the concomitant objectification of men themselves, who were treated as if they were natural objects to be mastered. Fascism, the final result of this dialectic, combined a distorted revolt of oppressed nature with a cynical use of the very means instrumental rationalization had perfected.⁸

These theoretical moves deserve closer scrutiny. Let us first turn back to the origins of this turnover or collapse in diagnosed problematic continuities throughout the history of civilization before we more closely examine the modern transformations helping to engender the kind of civilizational breakdown the rise of antisemitic social ideologies epitomizes. The Critical Theorists argue that there is the potential for a rapid slide “into madness” (DE 169). It is rooted in processes of subject formation, oriented toward self-preservation by means of domination and sacrifice. It is integral to the exclusionary practices

and renunciations⁹ of “the bourgeois individual, whose concept originates in . . . unwavering self-assertion” (DE 35) and characterized by “a hardening within the individual” (DE 88). That is to say that the subject has always carried within himself both the antithetical, unexamined subjugation of his own drives and the autocratic control of the other (represented in other human beings, as well as in internal and external nature), initially for the socially sanctioned purpose of self-preservation, later in the interest of open exploitation. The autonomy of the bourgeois subject, Adorno maintains, is achieved through an internalization of domination and renunciation born of fear and suffering in early childhood. Founded on antagonism, bourgeois autonomy creates the conditions for the very loss of autonomy and self-consciousness: unreflected heteronomy. It enables the suspension of reason, which is “under the spell” of ideology.¹⁰ As long as the individual hardens himself into a monad under the primacy of mere self-assertion, he has the potential to be stricken blind, a potential that is realized in modernity and, in particular, in the compulsory collective that fascism and antisemitism represent: “Fear used to be tied to the *principium individuationis* of self-preservation, and that principle, by its own consistency, abolishes itself.”¹¹ Today’s universal “coldness,” which can swiftly turn into destructive madness, will only pass away, Adorno suggests, with the demise of *angst* and its social underpinnings.¹²

Beginning with the primeval history of subjectivity, according to Adorno and Horkheimer, the human mimetic impulse to make contact, to embrace, to be mindful of internal and external nature and of fellow human beings, has gradually been reshaped. The reason that represses mimesis “is not merely its opposite. It is itself mimesis:

of death" (DE 44);¹³ it has tended toward an embrace of rigid heteronomy. In this sense, the hardening of the self amounts to the predominant *cunning of reason*, dominated by the blind desire for self-preservation.

Parallel to the analysis of authoritarian personalities, Horkheimer and Adorno perceive a general tendency, at the very origins of bourgeois subjectivity, to counter the "irresistible promise of pleasure" (DE 25) with an implacable insensitivity, both inwardly and outwardly. Stable patriarchal order, Horkheimer and Adorno maintain, is the bourgeois subject's answer to "[t]he fear of losing the self, and suspending with it the boundary between oneself and other life" (DE 26). Here, too, the rigid superego of the authoritarian personality reappears in rudimentary form. The assertion of the self by means of the wholesale, antithetical subjugation of everything that is other in the self, not only entails the suppression of libidinal demands; it springs, as well, from the destruction drive. And it is founded in fear.

In the history of civilization, which finds its most "advanced" form in capitalist modernity, "[h]umanity had to inflict terrible injuries on itself," Horkheimer and Adorno contend, "before the self—the identical, purpose-directed, masculine character of human beings—was created, and something of this process is repeated in every childhood" (DE 26). This armoring of the individual in Western civilization, which first created and today abolishes the individual, is conceived by Adorno as "bourgeois coldness" (DE 80), which he deems "the basic principle of bourgeois subjectivity, without which there could have been no Auschwitz."¹⁴

Destructive indifference and apathy toward the other, who is transformed into a mere object of regulation, as

well as a blind attachment to the progress of domination, have always been inherent in social and historical processes of individuation, according Critical Theory. This is part and parcel of the dialectic of enlightenment. As Horkheimer asserts, “authoritarian or sadomasochistic personalit[ies]” are not only the ideal type of the modern, socialized subject, but a phenomenon integral to “the entire history of bourgeois society.”¹⁵

Bourgeois subjectivity is thus conceived as constituted, predominantly and from the start, by profoundly antagonistic subject-object relations: the rationality of dominating nature to circumvent its coercive force, of upholding and preserving the self through sacrifice and purpose-directed hardening, and the mimesis of what is dead. These dynamics, in the view of Critical Theory, permeate all modern social relations. In the totality of modernity, all relationships, particularly those between human beings, are more or less objectified. “The individuals,” Adorno infers, “are not only . . . agents of value in a supposedly separate economic sphere. Even where they think they have escaped the primacy of economics—in the depths of their psychology, the *maison tolérée* of uncomprehended individuality—they react under the compulsion of the universal.”¹⁶ The power of individuals to withdraw from the coercion of nature has thus more and more reverted to universal dependency even though enlightenment progress should have enabled the emancipation from dependency.

The relationship between the constitution of subjectivity, social totality, and a decentered logic or understanding of ideology—in sharp contrast to some orthodox Marxist notions of ideology as deliberate machinations or manipulations of the ruling class to deceive the

dependent working class—is at the core of the Frankfurt School's new social theory of ideology in the face of the catastrophe of the Shoah. Critical Theory employs Marxian presuppositions and claims but also pushes them beyond their own limitations in the face of the decentered power of the irrationality of antisemitism—an ideology that epitomizes the complete self-destruction of reason. Such self-destruction develops a life on its own, devoid of actual particular (class) interests. It is, to be sure, seen as tied to the notion of reification—the ideological denigration and objectification of the internal and external world into mere dead material that has been part of rationalization processes and the mastery over nature since the beginning of time. However, for the Critical Theorists, problems of social domination and ideology are not limited to “economic” material relations in the narrow sense.

Marx laid some of the groundwork for such a decentered theory of ideology that originates in societal structures of social domination. He first and foremost does so in his considerations on the fetish character of the commodity. In the commodity-producing society, which perpetuates itself by means of exchange, Marx contends that social relationships take the form of “material relations between persons and social relations between things.”¹⁷ With things—commodities—in place as the organizing principle of life, thought itself is objectified. Commodities are mystified and appear as agents, as autonomous figures of social reproduction. Things, that is, appear as subjects, while human beings, isolated and encountering one another only by way of objectified relations, as buyers and sellers, appear as things, as bearers of value (like the commodity of labor power). As Franz Neumann

concisely puts it, “personal relations appear as objective relations between things (commodities).”¹⁸ In this way, social and historical relations are fetishized, dehistoricized, and naturalized under the universal principle of abstract exchange value.

According to the Frankfurt School, though ripe with material and ideological contradictions, society has thus come increasingly under the spell of this universalized form of what Georg Lukács was the first to characterize as a reification [*Verdinglichung*] of social relations. Lukács understands reification as the embodiment of capitalist production, commodity, and exchange relations in consciousness—what Marx refers to as “objective forms of thought”¹⁹ of the social unconscious. Lukács sees the objectification of human relations, in which mutually dependent human beings become reified, “isolated abstract atoms,”²⁰ as essentially grounded in the fragmentation of the production process via mechanization and in the “permanent ineluctable reality of . . . daily life” under the capitalist mode of production in general.²¹

However, the Frankfurt School extends the Marxian notion of reification beyond Marx and the historical confines to the commodity form attributed by Lukács, who conceives objectification or reification as a modern phenomenon, and in terms of a specific historical condition in the epoch of modern capitalism. Instead, inspired by Weber’s concepts of rationalization and disenchantment, Critical Theory diagnoses a totalization of long-term historical processes that can be traced back to the image of Odysseus and the origins of human civilization.

For the Frankfurt School, then, there is a high price to pay for the objectification of the external world that is inscribed in the socialization under the spell of the logic

of self-preservation. This logic is itself according to Critical Theory increasingly anchored in omnipresent societal demands to harden oneself against one's environment. The devitalization (*Entlebendigung*) of the other that is essential to the process of subjugation goes hand in hand with blind sacrifice and an atrophy of the self. The subject loses his own vitality in an embrace of the lifeless. "In class history, the self's hostility to sacrifice included a sacrifice of the self, since it was paid for by a denial of nature in the human being for the sake of mastery over extrahuman nature and over other human beings" (DE 42).²²

In the form of a totalized instrumental rationality grounded in the abstract valorization of concrete objects and exploitation, Horkheimer and Adorno argue, modern society has then elevated bourgeois subjectivity, "the subjugation of everything natural to the sovereign subject" (DE xviii), to the status of a universal law. In the social domination of capital and modern state institutions, the model of the purpose-directed, patriarchal subject has thus been universalized as a societal principle (one that is no longer limited to men). This universal, totalized principle tends to the "eradication of difference,"²³ the elimination of anything that is not thoroughly rationalized or that disrupts the functional order.

The universalization, in late capitalism, of social relations of exchange and domination in which human beings receive much less than they give, reproduces and makes ubiquitous the lie of necessary sacrifice, which has long since been emptied of meaning. Contrary to the promise of equal universal exchange in bourgeois society, Horkheimer and Adorno insist, the generalization of modern economic rationality does not advance society toward universal liberty and equality. Rather, this specific

rationality creates “a social context which induces blindness” (DE 33), a universal, detached repression, although rationality retains the potential to repel direct domination and violence. This state of affairs culminates in social relations in which, as Marx’s epistemology diagnosed, “what is sensible and concrete counts only as a phenomenal form of what is abstract and universal, contrary to the real state of things where the abstract and the universal count only as a property of the concrete.”²⁴

The commodity-producing society eradicates the particular, the individual, laying the foundation for a totalized society that destroys whatever is no longer of value—or whatever has “value” only in its destruction. “Everything has value,” Horkheimer and Adorno note of the commodity society, “only in so far as it can be exchanged, not in so far as it is something in itself” (DE 128). When everything is reduced to a commodity, when even human beings become things, they lose their particularity, their subjectivity, and their history. Behind the veil of abstract exchange value under which social life is organized are hidden the history of suffering and the drudgery of concrete, living labor, as well as social exploitation and inequality.

Critical Theory hereby recognizes the isolation of human beings and the subsumption of their consciousness under abstract exchange value—a complete reification that forgets everything—as the general operating principle in all social spheres, shaped by a totality of commodity relations. The instrumental law of value, which obliges senseless sacrifice, has touched everything, it is argued, even the most intimate spheres of private life and culture: it has become total.

Individuals are absorbed as monads²⁵ into the “domination of exchange value in social relations, a domination

that reduce[s] individuals to interchangeable exemplars of an abstract subjectivity."²⁶ Under the monadological principle, which Critical Theory suggests has become virtually absolute, everything must be objectified and devitalized. Subjects are compelled to unleash their naked self-interest in order to prevail, and in so doing, they regress to the rigidity of the blind monad that perceives nothing. At the same time, every external object is fetishized and stereotyped—the general as well as the concrete. What is real appears to be natural and, as in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, rational. Labor "in itself" appears to be just as "natural" and "rational" as the fetishistic definition of races that biologically reifies social phenomena and their personified manifestations.

Formulated in Marxian terms, with the advancing capitalist socialization of exchange value over use value, the universal triumphs over the particular and the individual; in this process, the bourgeois subject, too, loses his particularity. In the "exchange society" of late modern capitalism, "the subject was not one, but in fact a social object."²⁷ All that is left of the bourgeois personality as a particular, autonomous, individual agent with individual experience is "a lie needed for living."²⁸ In late modernity, in this view, the postliberal bourgeois individual faces the radical obliteration of the self through an intensification of the logic of the very conditions that led to its constitution in the first place. For the Critical Theorists, late modernity is characterized by this *volte-face*. That which had guaranteed the subject a degree of autonomy (albeit precariously so, and persistently eroding it at the same time), that which had led to the relative emancipation of the individual, is now absolutized to such a degree that it not only undermines this autonomy, but

extinguishes it altogether. What remains is the unconscious, blindly conforming, barbaric subject, now barely capable of self-reflection, and the society of "rackets."

At least capitalism does individuals the favor of ignoring them; yet the essence of the capitalist order creates conditions that, in capitalism's unbridled forms, transforms indifference into persecution. In late capitalism, everything becomes exchangeable and is stamped with the image of the commodity; whatever appears to hold no value in these terms falls away and seems superfluous. Thoughts themselves become commodities and deeply affected by the social totality, so the materialist argument runs: "There are no thoughts that are not permeated, to some extent, with the existing production and property relations."²⁹

For the Critical Theorists, under modern conditions social relations of exchange characterized by an instrumentally diminished reason suffuse every realm of life. In industrial society, every aspect of human existence, from work life to the private sphere, is rationalized in accord with capitalist and bureaucratic norms—for the purposes of economic exploitation and a mechanical, objectivized *raison d'état*—and subordinated to the criteria of expediency, of "universal fungibility" (DE 7), both on a material level and in human consciousness. This universal subordination, which promotes the liquidation of the individual as well as the circulation sphere in which the individual was able to develop his freedom and uniqueness, has consequences in the end: "Under the all-subjugating identity principle, whatever does not enter into identity, whatever eludes rational planning in the realm of means, turns into frightening retribution for the calamity which identity brought on the nonidentical."³⁰

From the standpoint of the subject, "modern society . . . is one of hierarchical division of labor. Modern society produces a fragmentation not only of social functions but of man himself who, as it were, keeps his different faculties in different pigeonholes—love, labor, leisure, culture—that are somehow held together by an externally operating mechanism that is neither comprehended nor comprehensible."³¹ The human being is mutilated in a progressive process of alienation that affects not only labor, Critical Theory maintains, but society as a whole.³² The modern subject is thereby alienated from himself and from social ties, as well as from internal and external nature, which he seeks to subjugate. Subjects are profoundly damaged in this way and stultified by universal domination.³³ The further these modern developments in domination advance, the more human beings are reduced to the function of the societal whole and thus atomized; the more they are forced to curtail their human needs, the more widespread "the subjugation of everything natural to the sovereign subject" becomes, culminating finally in "the domination of what is blindly objective" (DE xviii). The fewer the opportunities afforded for "sublimation and thus, ultimately, the satisfaction of the drives,"³⁴ in the course of these processes of hardening the individual, the stronger the regressive traits and paranoid anxieties of the authoritarian personality emerge, according to the Frankfurt School.

Identity that is based on practices of exclusion and the repression of the "nonidentical" other, is thereby as fragile as it is rigid. The individual loses the critical capacity of nonrepressive sublimation. Exposed to unreflectedly totalized social imperatives the subject continues a rigorous struggle for survival and objectification of the living world (even though, as is discussed later, a different social

organization is attainable that could make these imperatives superfluous). The socially dominant requirements of the identity principle subsume and suffocate the livelihood of the internal and outside world, as identity seeks to master both. In so doing, the self numbs, stiffens, and hardens itself further as it objectifies the other, and thereby tends to unwillingly destroy self and object. Mimetically imitating nature's rigidity under the dominant social imperatives of valorization, functionality, and identity, Critical Theorists argue, the archaic schemata of the struggle for survival, in which the modern enlightenment remains unreflectively entangled, may ultimately make modern individuals and society fall blindly victim to the death drive. The precariously weakened, disintegrating subject literally tries to kill fear, anxiety, and pleasure—the threatening nonidentical, inexplicable, different and contingent—in himself and others. Throwing the baby out with the bath water, the horror of myth leads to “mythic terror” (DE 22).

The social totalization of the identity principle becomes manifest in the fascist collective's identity politics. Its fateful, reified construction of ethnicity and enmity is indeed “mimesis of what is dead.” The fascist collective aims at annihilating the individual, his decisions, and differences. The identity principle is fully realized in the concentration camps, which turned humans into abstract, dead numbers destined for extermination—as enemies and superfluous masses. The antisemitic collective that declares its own delusional superiority, and the terror this collective produces—reducing Jews and humanity at large to objects to be annihilated for a madly conceived higher end or “collective good”—are two sides of the same coin: the expression of a totalization of the identity principle that, gone wild, may turn over into a relentless dynamic of destruction and self-destruction.

Wherever the repressed and the excluded, which lurk everywhere in the paranoid consciousness, appear to return, the authoritarian modern subject, having largely lost his autonomy, feels pressured and lashes out blindly. In that sense, the repressed of the subject, fashioned over the history of civilization, really does return: in the form of regression to barbarous violence. Modern society, in this view, not only fashions the individual to meet the requirements of his own exploitation, weakening the ego in the process; social forces also stoke the individual's need for an unleashing of the drives, which are destructively distorted into aggression and paranoia. With the elimination of any idea of emancipatory change, what remains is a compensatory notion, in some cases positively sanctioned by society, of a liberating all-out assault on a "hostile world." Antisemitic aggression can function as a societal pressure valve in this sense. It can serve as an anticivilizational outlet in a complex modern society with its multiple demands and challenges, and in which its frustrated members often only retain a shaky grip on their lives. Both the opportunity and the "desire to suspend the taboo against violence without being punished," Detlev Claussen writes reconstructing Critical Theory's argument, "is reawakened in antisemitism."³⁵

The Triumph of Totality: Judeophobia and the Irrationality of Power, Exclusion, and Social Domination

In addition to Weberian and Freudian arguments woven into this understanding of antisemitic ideology in the context of the dialectics of instrumental rationality, Critical Theory especially absorbs Marxian concepts about

reification and the capitalist exchange principle as a social form. Yet in its advanced social theorizing on antisemitism the “post-Marxist” Frankfurt School departs from Marxian approaches to ideology in three important ways.

First, ideology no longer appears as a mere appendix or superstructure to the material basis; both are molded into each other. Indeed, for the Critical Theorists the antisemitic madness of Nazism demonstrates that ideology can “take over.” In contrast to other scholars inspired by Marxism, the Frankfurt School recognizes that the extermination of the European Jews, motivated by state-sanctioned and state-organized as well as popular antisemitism, was a program largely devoid of material interests. In the end, in fact, it also took priority over and ran counter to military interests and the interest of the Nazi regime in its own survival. Second, Critical Theory’s very understanding of ideology changes—and becomes post-Marxist—in light of antisemitism. The diagnosed dialectical turn-over of objectification into paranoia points to decentered social processes of ideology formation beyond Marx’s concept of objectively false consciousness. Embedded in powerful social mechanisms affecting all of society’s members, such ideology largely functions “bottom-up.” While antisemitic social violence—the dynamics of destruction—are fully mobilized and crucially unleashed by political leaders or state institutions, antisemitism is to be viewed as a social phenomenon originating in the midst of society itself (rather than being primarily the product of strategic manipulation or “scapegoating”). Third, the Frankfurt School develops social theory arguments about (antisemitic) ideology that transform and broaden the concept of historical materialism itself. Social theorizing on antisemitism needs to turn to the

violent material practices of subjugation and persecution shaping modern society, it is implied, and take all forms of social exclusion and oppression seriously. Rather than sustaining some sort of primacy of conventional class divisions or the sphere of production, such reflection views economic rationality as a constitutive part of the social totality and part of the larger question of social or human domination in all spheres of society.

It is important, then, to keep in mind that the Frankfurt School's analytical reflections on the antisemitic question cannot be reduced to a monocausal theoretical axiom. Its importance notwithstanding, it would be misguided to reduce such theorizing on the reification paradigm, or view antisemitism—despite its further explored affinity to social totality—as an inevitable consequence and byproduct or “objectively false consciousness” of modern society. However, the totalization of domination is intrinsically linked to manic persecution of the other, the alien, the unknown within and without; total domination is destined to turn into persecution. This insight affects the larger argument about social domination and social totality under modern conditions, and its relationship to the rise and relevance of antisemitism. Moreover, Critical Theory on antisemitism also attributes significance to the role of social antagonisms and historical contradictions; indeed, it is Critical Theory's task to make aware of them underneath the surface of ideological unity and identity. The potential or actual collapse into antisemitic madness is not simply enabled by the thorough instrumental rationalization of social relations, which allegedly tends to dissolve the individual's critical mental faculties and capacities—conscience and consciousness—into the societal whole, or totality.

Antisemitism is also socially engendered by glaring objective contradictions shaping modern life.

First and foremost, there is a profound, constitutive societal contradiction in political modernity between the productive potential of the age for an egalitarian, democratic, and free society, on the one hand, and an actual increase of social constraints and demands, on the other. Critical Theory describes a totalized pressure on the individual to adjust and an aggressive drive for self-preservation that is inherent in the social structure and that blindly pursues the principle of *homo homini lupus*. Yet, at the same time, Critical Theory maintains, a free society could long since have been realized by modern means of production. Instead, “the fact that once it was necessary to struggle against the pleasure principle for the sake of one’s own self-preservation” is senselessly perpetuated, even though socially essential “labor that has been reduced to a minimum no longer needs to be tied to self-denial.”³⁶ It is argued that this contradiction—the senselessness of labor and domination today—fosters the irrationality of the system as a whole as well as that of individual subjects. They sense the contradiction and yet cling to the status quo. In the absence of freedom’s viable realization in view of the existing system of power, the subject-objects often call for more senseless victims. “The absurdity of the present system of rule,” Horkheimer and Adorno write, “is so transparent to healthy consciousness that it needs sick consciousness to keep itself alive. Only those suffering from persecution mania can tolerate the persecution which domination inevitably becomes, provided they are allowed to persecute others” (DE 163–164).

Second, the proclaimed harmony of civic society and particularly the ideological unity and identity of the

fascist collective barely conceal society's underlying dissolution; a process of social regression destroying stable human bonds and coherent, rational norms. The "progress" of social domination, which has outlived its necessary demise, does not bring about genuine freedom and equality among human beings, the claim of bourgeois society, but on the contrary effects a "progress of barbaric incoherence" (DE 130). With the decline of stable relationships, atomization within an antagonistic society is accompanied by stereotypy and an incapacity for actual experience. Such alienation, Critical Theory claims, engenders and facilitates the pathos-laden projection that can culminate in barbarism. The "advance toward the administered world" (DE xii) that would reduce human beings to sheer objects leaves therefore its mark upon them. The progress of rationality and domination toward a social totality in which human beings are increasingly regarded "as surplus or commodities or means," (FP 190) Critical Theory suggests, leads inevitably to societal and individual regression:

Adaptation to the power of progress furthers the progress of power, constantly renewing the degenerations which prove successful progress, not failed progress, to be its own antithesis. The curse of irresistible progress is irresistible regression. This regression is not confined to the experience of the sensuous world, an experience tied to physical proximity, but also affects the autocratic intellect, which detaches itself from sensuous experience in order to subjugate it. The standardization of the intellectual function through which the mastery of the senses is accomplished, the acquiescence of thought to the production of

unanimity, implies an impoverishment of thought no less than of experience. . . . Mind becomes in reality the instrument of power and self-mastery for which bourgeois philosophy has always mistaken it. (DE 28)

Thus, the ego weakness and powerlessness described in the foregoing chapters as characteristics of the authoritarian disposition become, for the Frankfurt theorists, "the logical consequence of industrial society" (DE 29):

Through the mediation of the total society, which encompasses all relationships and impulses, human beings are being turned back into precisely what the developmental law of society, the principle of the self, had opposed: mere examples of the species, identical to one another through isolation within the compulsively controlled collectivity. (DE 29)

The universalizing tendency "to make everyone the same" (DE 139), the modern version of social leveling without abandoning class contradictions, promotes an omnipresent domination over the nonidentical, Critical Theory contends. The most extreme expression of social leveling, then, is the fascist collective, in which every member is made the same and turned into a blind servant of the leader and the nation or race, and through which the individual dissolves in the self-destructive authoritarian mass that promises archaic strength and false protection. The universal hereby dominates *consciousness*, understood as an individual, critical agency equipped with the capacity to self-reflect. Consciousness in this sense is nourished not least by love, according to Freud. What takes the place of consciousness, then, is a stereotyped,

commodified “ticket thinking” (DE 170–171) that crushes all particularity, even at the mental level.

The previously discussed unrestrained self-assertion that strikes hard against every real or imagined threat, whether from other human beings or the subject’s own drives, thus rigidifies thinking to the reflexive endorsement of a ticket. Horkheimer and Adorno describe the self-destructive tendencies of blind self-assertion in late capitalism, which amounts to the social predisposition to authoritarianism and antisemitism:

[T]he enthronement of the means as the end, which in late capitalism is taking on the character of overt madness, is already detectable in the earliest history of subjectivity. The human being’s mastery of itself, on which the self is founded, practically always involves the annihilation of the subject in whose service that mastery is maintained, because the substance which is mastered, suppressed, and disintegrated by self-preservation is nothing other than the living entity, of which the achievements of self-preservation can only be defined as functions—in other words, self-preservation destroys the very thing which is to be preserved. The antireason of totalitarian capitalism, whose technique of satisfying needs, in their objectified form determined by domination, makes the satisfaction of needs impossible and tends toward the extermination of humanity—this antireason appears prototypically in the hero who escapes the sacrifice by sacrificing himself. (DE 43)

The history of previous progress and the gradual impoverishment of bourgeois subjectivity—which culminate

in the equalizing subjugation of the “other,” of the excluded and the vital—represent for Critical Theory a central social precondition for the potential subjective shift to antisemitic delusion. In this view, the totality of the thoroughly rationalized society—the administered world—creates the conditions for authoritarian subjects who are susceptible to prejudice by disempowering individual autonomy, weakening the ego, and bringing about the regression of consciousness to a stereotyped “ticket mentality” that excludes difference.

By means of such disempowerment, Critical Theory holds, even the fragments of a moral self, of an integrated conscience,³⁷ can be “suspended” [*aufgehoben*], along with horror in the face of consummate inhumanity such as Auschwitz represented. “It is not just the antisemitic ticket which is antisemitic,” Horkheimer and Adorno insist, “but the ticket mentality itself. The rage against difference which is teleologically inherent in that mentality as the rancor of the dominated subjects of the domination of nature is always ready to attack the natural minority” (DE 172).

Finally, then, the Critical Theorists suggest that the totalitarian domination and antisemitism pursued by the Nazi regime break with civilizational norms—while they simultaneously radicalize what is inscribed into the identity and exchange principles that reduce humans to functions or exemplars of the species: the social totality of unreflected forms of social domination and exclusion. For the Frankfurt School, totality and antisemitism have “always been profoundly connected” (DE 140–141).³⁸ Both totality—the social totality that turns all living things into objects for exchange and surplus—and antisemitism push toward the annihilation of the particular,

of the deviant, of difference, and of a more sublimated nature. Totalizing subjugation of what does not seem to fit in, Horkheimer and Adorno insist, both totality and antisemitism share the blindness of the monadological structure: "Blindness encompasses everything because it comprehends nothing" (DE 141).

Horkheimer and Adorno argue, to be sure, that the enlightened subject inevitably needs to reduce and conceptualize the heterogeneity of external and internal sensations, just as "all perception is projection" (DE 154). The problem is the lack of reflection of such projection, and of a society oblivious to or banning self-reflection. However, under the exclusionary principle of a social totality to which difference is anathema, the projective character of all thought and perception—and therefore of human autonomy—tends to change to paranoid projection incapable of self-reflection. Moreover, "instead of being a personal problem, paranoia had been politicized in the modern world."³⁹ As Horkheimer and Adorno assert, "[a]ntisemitism is based on false projection" (DE 154), which seeks to annul nonidentity, to dissolve the tension between subject and object. As it eliminates reflection in perception, it replaces it by a mad, postfactual topological system that pretends to know the source of evil in advance and independent from experience. The antisemitic paranoia and its persecutory fantasy are thus intimately linked to a total, comprehensive worldview that abstracts from experience and prejudices societal events and agents according to such a fixed topology. It classifies citizens accordingly, distinguishing between believers that conform to its norms and enemies that are doomed. Such a worldview is hardly susceptible to rational arguments, economic incentives, and interest bargaining. Its consequentialist logic leads to the

unlashing of terror against "others" who deviate from the norm. And such paranoia, which antisemitism raises to the level of a sociopolitical ideology possessing concrete social power, is also intimately related to "a universal urge to destroy" (DE 159).

Horkheimer and Adorno understand this false projection turning into a paranoid system as the opposite of a self-reflective projection that is cognizant of the nonidentity of subject and object; it is also seen as "the reverse of genuine mimesis" (DE 154):

If mimesis makes itself resemble its surroundings, false projection makes its surroundings resemble itself. If, for the former, the outward becomes the model to which the inward clings, so that the alien becomes the intimately known, the latter displaces the volatile inward into the outer world, branding the intimate friend as foe. Impulses which are not acknowledged by the subject and yet are his, are attributed to the object: the prospective victim. For the ordinary paranoiac the choice of victim is not free; it obeys the laws of his illness. In fascism this behavior is adopted by politics; the object of the illness is declared true to reality, the system of delusions the reasonable norm in a world which makes deviation neurosis. The mechanism which the totalitarian order takes into its service is as old as civilization. (DE 154)

The ego-weak subject, construing the external as hostile and yet comprehending nothing, "clings passionately to the objectified, collective, approved forms of delusion" that social paranoia represents (DE 163). The paranoid

subject consequently sees conspiracies everywhere, which function to strengthen the cohesion of his own "community," even as his ego has disintegrated. And the step from imagined conspiracies to antisemitism, which historically provides the personified matrix for conspiracy theories, is minimal, especially since the forged "Protocols of the Elders of Zion."

Forever poised, just as in primordial times, to transform swiftly into the persecution of "chosen" victims, modern antisemitism shows that the "mythical spell" has been liberated from its old, religious metaphysics, only to be "secularized into compactly dovetailed reality."⁴⁰ The apologia for reality, the identity of the real and the ideal, shifts into an apologia of fetishized scientific jargon⁴¹ and the reification of racist and anti-Jewish stereotypes that culminates in modern antisemitism. The secular faith in sheer existence, which sees biology as destiny, has become "second nature" for modern human beings, according to Critical Theory, along with a social Darwinist outlook. The collective, *volk-ish* nationalism and the ideological myths of antisemitism that became such a potent ideology in the modern epoch thus became a signature feature of the twentieth century's new metaphysics.

The critique of the dialectics of modernity and the critical exposure of its contradictions, however, should not be mistaken for a rejection of the enlightenment and modernity (or liberal law, rights, and democratic institutions).⁴² The abstract negation of the very idea of enlightenment and the ideal of universal emancipation is, to the contrary, paving the way to reified ideologies of antisemitic antimodernity—something that the Critical Theorists never intended. A critical relationship to

enlightenment reason and morality rather entails the project to self-reflexively reclaim the enlightenment.⁴³ In the words of Horkheimer and Adorno: "The critique of enlightenment . . . is intended to prepare a positive concept of enlightenment which liberates it from its entanglement in blind domination" (DE xviii). Adorno, indeed, investigates the self-destruction of enlightenment in order to create self-awareness of this process, and ultimately to rescue enlightenment from this very fate. Critical Theory's method is "determinate negation" with and beyond Hegel, while it gives prominence to an element that "distinguishes enlightenment from the positivist decay to which [Hegel] consigned it." Enlightenment is thus "totalitarian" only in so far as it "prejudges its trial", that is, becomes a closed system and logic (DE xviii; 18).

Yet the Critical Theorists do identify general social tendencies within "enlightened" modernity, "the repressive principle of society"⁴⁴ as a key source explaining the genesis of specific modern authoritarian and antisemitic forms of consciousness explicated above—the origins of the antidemocratic syndrome, the potentially "totalitarian personality," whose "psychological hardening is a means of adjusting to a hardened society."⁴⁵ Antisemitic regression to naked, archaic violence against all that is particular or aberrant, inscribed in the biologicistic image of the Jew, reflects in this understanding the pitiless socialization process to which modern authoritarian individuals are exposed, and their regressive longings: the liquidation of their own particularities, and the repressed human desires whose fulfillment are denied by constitutive forms of irrational, societal surplus domination—of

self-reproducing structural constraints suffocating and disallowing the (self)reflection of means and ends that Kant saw as the hallmark of the enlightenment project.

In that sense, according to Critical Theory, the “relapsing into barbarism” (DE 67), which is most drastically signified by the systematic totalitarian terror against the European Jews, represents at once a modern and an antimodern reaction to modern society and processes of socialization. The unbridled desire for violence against minorities, and Jews in particular, points to modern societal origins and, let loose under totalitarian political conditions, is thus no external other of modernity.⁴⁶ Indeed, modern antisemitism, though it draws on age-old anti-Jewish imagery, has emerged with the establishment of modern society, and totalitarian antisemitism is partly the product of the twentieth century and its contradictions and social antagonisms discussed here. Yet the totalitarian antisemitic terror against Jews, sanctioned and orchestrated by the Nazi movement-state and only psychologically bound together, also epitomizes unprecedented levels of human destruction and regression that are profoundly antimodern in ideology and practice: they work toward the destruction of modern society and life in the process of unlimited mass killings which may entail the willful self-destruction of the—conflicted—modern self that is overwhelmed in an ocean of fetishized irrationalism. In Critical Theory’s lens, modern antisemitism, which drives and thinly justifies or rationalizes the powerful madness, is simultaneously antimodern in the core of its contradictory ideology: it is *also* a radical, fetishized critique of the very modern society and modern capitalism, which has helped engender antisemitism’s rise.

Antisemitism as the Product and Fetishized Critique of Modernity and Capitalism

While the theoretical claim about antisemitism as a fetishized critique of capitalism and modernity should not be mistaken as the one causal mechanism that Critical Theory employs to explain antisemitism's social force, this suggested dynamic deserves more attention. In the course of the evolution of modern society, Jews have been identified with capitalism. They have also been viewed as the benefactors of modern enlightenment, universal norms, egalitarian legal systems, and universal rights claims that indeed in many ways improved their precarious status as a long discriminated and excluded religious/cultural minority—developments taking shape with the rise of capitalist civil society. In a complex modern world, the image of the Jews thereby comes in handy to personify all possible crises of capitalism and modernity. Personifying capitalism with Jews, antisemitism shuts down the critique of capitalism instead of advancing it. Instead of tackling the difficult task to explain social mechanisms and contradictions, antisemitism is convenient for regressive, lazy forms of consciousness to see “the Jews” as conspirational agents “behind” anything that goes awry in society. This ultimately entails the call for their elimination from society to violently “solve” all problems of modern capitalism with which Jews are falsely identified.

However, this peculiar antimodern reenchantment of the modern world does point back to actual contradictions of capitalism and Critical Theory's critique thereof. Antisemitism, it is suggested, expresses a “distorted modernity” (George Lichtheim) or “distorted forms of

modern life" (Peter Staudenmaier)—a fetishized, mythological and perverted "critique" immune to reflection, yet one also originating in actual societal antagonisms. This social theoretical link between capitalism and antisemitism again adopts (and transforms) Marxian concepts and theorems.

Modern fetishism and stereotyping, which lead to the idolization of "race," "laws of nature," productive forces, modern technology, administration, and authority, profoundly shape the authoritarian subject in both character and consciousness. Stereotyping enables the reified splitting off of the ostensibly "negative sides" of modernity, which have been assigned to the image of the Jews since its rise. These negatives include the denied promise of emancipation and equality that seems to have congealed into a lie, the chaotic "breeding grounds" of the modern city, and the social "excesses" of capitalism. This anti-modern, anticapitalist impulse, of course, does not grasp the essence of modern capitalism. The impulse only attaches itself to some outward manifestations; it is not criticizing domination and exploitation or their sources, but only their abstract aspects which, according to Critical Theory, the circulation sphere represents. The latter, in the reified consciousness of the antisemite, is primarily represented and "dominated" by "the Jews."

Authoritarian consciousness, which we have analyzed as an outcome of modern patterns of domination, reverses not only the dominant powers under which it was socialized. It also displays the formidable totalitarian potential for domination, bolstered by modern technologies. At the same time, to a nearly boundless degree, authoritarian subjects hate every emancipatory aspect of bourgeois socialization that would call the repressive egalitarianism

of the radically hierarchical “racial community” [*Volks-gemeinschaft*]⁴⁷ into question. Antisemites often despise those individuals and perceived “collectivities” that symbolize the antithesis to an antimodern, racialist conception of society, which is imagined to align with the natural order.

The establishment of universal exchange, which characterized the development of bourgeois society, was accompanied by the promise of liberty and equality for all. The rise of bourgeois society also realized at least formal democratic autonomy and civil rights in the liberal sense. And just as the Jews, discriminated against for centuries, seemed to particularly benefit from the establishment of modern rule of law and indiscriminately abstract, formal legal rights entitlement—indeed from the rise of bourgeois society that allowed for increased social mobility and opportunities—so did Jews in the societal perception become increasingly *identified* with modern society and its power and progress.

An important concept is hereby the Marxian understanding of the “circulation sphere,” as especially developed in the second volume of Marx’s seminal *Capital*. Distinct from the sphere of production, the source of exploitation and the appropriation of surplus value, the circulation sphere refers to the sphere of the market, where the exchange of goods takes place. For Critical Theory, one reason for the historical personification of all negative things of modernity in the image of Jews is the growth of the circulation sphere in the development of capitalist modernity—a sphere that, to be sure, is seen as on decline in the course of the emergence of administered, state and monopoly capitalist concentrations of the twentieth century.

In fact, Critical Theory points out that especially the circulation sphere initially expanded with the growth of capitalism. Even before the rise of modern capitalism, Jews were particularly identified with the circulation sphere, into which they were often involuntarily relegated because access to other professions was denied to them. The circulation sphere hereby helped create new forms of social relations notable for the relative subjective autonomy that they permit: as a realm in which power is mediated by the anonymity of the market, in which individuals are “set free”⁴⁸ from previously personal relations of domination by the abstraction of those relations, as a realm characterized by mediation *per se*.⁴⁹ Widespread social perceptions in modern societies have associated the circulation sphere with “Jewish” professions of lawyers, salespeople, bankers, and intellectuals. This identification benefited from traditional anti-Jewish images of the eternal, wandering, rootless, free-floating, pernicious cosmopolitan Jew who allegedly does not belong to the local community and the sphere of production that is based on hard physical labor. The more relevant and powerful the circulation sphere in the rise of modern capitalism and trade, then, the more modern capitalist society was identified with Jewish power. When the market and capitalism as a whole fall into crises, Jews could be blamed—even for the decline of the sphere of circulation they allegedly dominate.

When antisemitic ideology takes hold, Critical Theorists have therefore insinuated, it projects the image of the Jew as the identifiable figure within the universal depersonalization of the circulation sphere. The Jews are held responsible for the manifestations of rootlessness and impoverishment that are widespread in capitalist

modernity. But, as representatives of formal legal emancipation to independent citizenship, Jews also stand for the emancipatory promise of freedom and democracy that bourgeois society had put on its banner—which the authoritarian subject has always felt to be a lie, since it has never been fulfilled for him: the dependent classes largely feel that they have waited in vain for freedom.⁵⁰ As discussed in chapter 4, images of Jewish “middlemen,” of Jewish money and intellectualism, may also point to freedom that is enabled through material resources, and to freedom of the mind and of individual mental capacities from superfluous hard labor—both of which tend to be secretly desired, yet have to be denied. This is expressed by revulsion and abhorrence of the circulation sphere identified with Jews: “The banker and the intellectual, money and mind, the exponents of circulation, are the disowned wishful image of those mutilated by power, an image which power uses to perpetuate itself” (DE 141).

Jews are seen as “representatives of urban, civic, and finally industrial conditions” (DE 143), having been, on one hand, the victims of centuries-old religious discrimination and lack of rights and historically “locked up” in the sphere of commerce.⁵¹ On the other hand, Horkheimer and Adorno emphasize, as indicated segments of the Jewish minority profited, socially and in terms of legal status, from the bourgeois revolution. As Moishe Postone writes, drawing on the insights of Critical Theory, modern antisemitism perceives “[i]nternational Jewry’ . . . to be centered in the ‘asphalt jungles’ of the newly emergent urban megalopoli, to be behind ‘vulgar, materialist, modern culture’ and, in general, all forces contributing to the decline of traditional social groupings, values, and institutions.”⁵² Widely identified with capitalism, democracy,

and socialism, “the Jew” hence serves as a reified explanation for all of these phenomena and is characterized as a source of an unfathomable, international conspiracy that mirrors the reified notion of the local or national community and race, tradition, production, and labor.

While antisemitism stands for a multifaceted set of desires, hopes, wishes, and fears that must be denied, thus antisemitism *also* has “a specific economic purpose: to conceal domination in production” (DE 142). The capitalist is *rapacious* in the production sphere—he appropriates surplus value—and yet he is perceived as *productive*; the Jew, however, who appears to be located outside the production sphere, is seen as parasitically rapacious:

That is why people shout: “Stop thief!”—and point at the Jew. He is indeed the scapegoat . . . in the wider sense that the economic injustice of the whole class is attributed to him. The factory owner has his debtors, the workers, under observation in his factory and can check their performance before he parts with his money. They only find out the true nature of the exchange . . . when they see what they can buy with it. . . . Only the relationship of wages to prices expresses what is withheld from the workers. . . . That the circulation sphere is responsible for exploitation is a socially necessary illusion. The Jews had not been the only people active in the circulation sphere. But they had been locked up in it too long not to reflect in their makeup something of the hatred so long directed at that sphere. (DE 142–143)

Modern antisemitism, in Postone’s words, presents “a comprehensive worldview which explains and gives

form to certain modes of anticapitalist discontent in a manner that leaves capitalism intact, by attacking the personifications of that social form."⁵³ In capitalist society, as Postone lays out, the concrete and the abstract are reified, which entails the splitting and polarization of the two modes in the social consciousness. Thus capitalism is perceived "only in terms of the manifestations of the abstract dimension of the antinomy," such as the notion of money as the "root of all evil," while the "existent concrete dimension," such as "concrete labor," is "positively opposed to it as the 'natural' or ontologically human, which presumably stands outside of the specificity of capitalist society."⁵⁴ Ideology makes of the commodity's "double character" an antinomical disjunction: the concrete product, concrete labor, the concrete per se are associated with use value and appear tangible and natural, while exchange value is perceived as social (capitalist) and abstract, senselessly pernicious, and in reified form as that most abstract means of mediating social relations, that is, as money. On the level of social consciousness the linkage of the two, which would reflect the internal coherence of capitalist production, is blocked. Alienated social relations, as Marx seminally described, appear only in the abstract, but both sides—the concrete and the abstract, use value and exchange value—are fetishized, dehistoricized, and ultimately, in antisemitism, biologized as well.

Following the Frankfurt School's thread, Postone situates modern antisemitism in the context of the material changes that accompany "the transition from liberal to bureaucratic capitalism,"⁵⁵ the latter characterized by production that appears to represent an "organic" unity of human, machine, and the various components of the

labor process. While the commodity and individual labor continue to be fetishized, with this transition the entire material production process can be conceptualized as “healthy” and “natural” and the commodity fetish can be extended into a fetish of seemingly “productive capital”:⁵⁶

On the logical level of capital, the “double character” (labor process and valorization process) allows industrial production to appear as a purely material, creative process, separable from capital. The manifest form of the concrete is now more organic. Industrial capital then can appear as the linear descendent of “natural” artisanal labor, as “organically rooted,” in opposition to “rootless,” “parasitic” finance capital.⁵⁷

The concrete and the social context in which it appears can thus be extracted from capitalism and glorified as a healthy, organic unit: blood and the machine; race, soil, and volk-ish community, as well as production for production’s sake; technology, industrial labor, and industrial capital. Critical Theory was the first to grasp this connection between antisemitism and the fetishization of productive forces. The antisemitic consciousness singles out the Jews as the agents behind every adverse development, setting them apart as the abstract, “parasitic” antithesis of the ostensibly concrete principle embodied in production. The opposition between the concrete and the abstract becomes the antisemitic opposition between Aryan and Jew. Modern antisemitism thus amounts, in part, to a biologization of international capitalism as an “International Jewry” standing for the abstract, as a world Jewish conspiracy.⁵⁸

As one possible channel for the intensification of reified, stereotypical thinking in modernity, as “a particularly pernicious fetish form,”⁵⁹ antisemitism points well beyond its anticapitalist aspect, however. Its hatred of the abstraction that characterizes modernity, personified in the imago of the Jew, encompasses all of the contradictory aspects of the modern age: not only the negative, oppressive sides of capitalism, but also the universalistic demands for the emancipation of the individual that comprise the equally despised images of communism, liberalism, cosmopolitanism, and democracy. The authoritarian personality stands against these universalistic demands, and for the “false immediacy” (DE 160) of power that culminates in a rigidly hierarchical, authoritarian order. The antimodern regression to “nature” and to antidemocratic traditions evolved more easily in Germany given the specifically authoritarian history of its social institutions,⁶⁰ which Adorno, on occasion, alleges to be a historical particularity: “while it is inexact to ascribe Hitler to the German national character as its fate,” he writes, “it is also no coincidence that he rose to power in Germany.”⁶¹

As Postone reiterates, “[t]he quality of abstractness, characteristic not only of the value dimension in its immediacy, but also, mediately, of the bourgeois state and law, became closely identified with the Jews,”⁶² who had, at least according to the anti-Jewish narrative, historically “propagated individualism, abstract law, the concept of the person,” as Horkheimer and Adorno put it (DE 143–144). As a traditionally homeless people, “the only group in Europe that fulfilled the determination of citizenship as a pure political abstraction . . . following their political emancipation,”⁶³ the Jews could embody the abstract human rights of the bourgeois revolution as much as

the abstraction of capitalist domination, the abstract exchange value of money, and the abstract thinking of the intellectual: "Without the sphere of mediation—of commerce, finance capital, and mobility—the free spirit, which detaches itself from the mere immediacy of given conditions, would have been unimaginable."⁶⁴ For the antisemite, then, the Jews represent, in a personalized and objectified form, both the abstract, circulative qualities of capitalism and the sphere of mediation and freedom. The "foreshortened anticapitalist" and antimodern hatred of freedom and individuality culminates in the hatred of the Jews, which expresses, not least of all, the self-hatred of the authoritarian subject.

Institutions of Social Domination: Modern Antisemitism, Crises, and Transformations of Authority Reconsidered

For Critical Theory, the distorted rebellion of suppressed urges and pathetic antisemitic projections are, moreover, engendered by specific transformations of social relations arising in political modernity: changing structures of family, society, and authority. This constitutes another element in the Frankfurt School's social theory of antisemitism: theoretical claims on the universal permeation of the exchange principle and objectifying instrumental rationality in advanced modern society are linked to transformations of the institutions of social domination, which are tightly bound up with ongoing shifts in societal structures of family and patterns of authority. The modern transition from the bourgeois individual, who is already overcome by coldness and hardness, to

authoritarian personality dispositions is characterized by an increase of direct social domination that tends to suspend social mediation.⁶⁵

In Löwenthal's detailed analysis, the extreme modernization drive of modern capitalism has uprooted human beings from traditional social relations, subjecting them all the more directly to the enormous psychosocial pressure that the demands of industrial society entail.⁶⁶ Modern rationality permeates even early childhood socialization in the family.⁶⁷ Modernity, Löwenthal underscores, is characterized by a general malaise arising from these social dislocations:

This malaise reflects the stresses imposed on the individual by profound transformations taking place in our economic and social structure—the replacement of the class of small independent producers by gigantic industrial bureaucracies, the decay of the patriarchal family, the breakdown of primary personal ties between individuals and atomization of group life, and the substitution of mass culture for traditional patterns. These objective causes have been operating for a long time with steadily increasing intensity. (FP 25)

These developments have been accompanied by an expansion of society's material and psychic control over the individual, which has exacerbated a crisis of the individual, Critical Theory maintains. Together with the effects of the modern administrative state and corporate institutions, which are geared toward increasing social control and have partly replaced spheres of mediation, socioeconomic transformations have produced a growing

“economically dependent and non-autonomous mass.”⁶⁸ Such heightened social dependency and powerlessness forms the basis for mounting feelings of anxiety, particularly in individuals of the dependent classes. “These feelings cannot be dismissed as either accidental or imposed,” Löwenthal insists, “they are basic to modern society. Distrust, dependence, exclusion, anxiety, and disillusionment blend together to form a fundamental condition of modern life: malaise” (FP 24). According to Löwenthal, rootlessness, permanent economic insecurity,⁶⁹ and heightened social pressure exert a dramatic impact on the socialization, constitution, and psychology of the individual.

Although the patriarchal family, and in particular the father at its head, continue to fulfill an important function in the mediation of authority as part of the socialization process, paternal authority is increasingly displaced by direct societal authority, due not least to the fact that the economy disempowers many fathers, both bourgeois and proletarian. “To be sure, the father continues to enforce the primary diversion of sexuality from the mother, but,” Marcuse insists, “his authority is no longer fortified and perpetuated by his subsequent educational and economic power.”⁷⁰ Even in the stage of early childhood, the Frankfurt School contends, corporations, state institutions, and the early peer group—collective units of society, that is—increasingly replace the family as the primary agent of socialization. In fact, in today’s society, so-called secondary socialization via peer groups, school, media, the state, social organizations, and so on, often outstrips “primary” socialization in the family.⁷¹

Critical Theory argues that it is especially this socio-economic crisis of the family in its role as a mediating force against direct social domination that help create

the dispositions that prepare human beings for submissiveness to authoritarian power. Horkheimer and Adorno hold that the problematic, but ultimately relatively “protected” processes of socialization in the family have the potential to convey individual autonomy and a moral self:

Under big industry love is annulled. The decline of middle-class property, the downfall of the free economic subject, affects the family: it is no longer the celebrated cell of society it once was, since it no longer forms the basis of the citizen's economic existence. For adolescents the family no longer marks out the horizon of their lives; the autonomy of the father is vanishing and with it resistance to his authority. (DE 84)

This resistance, for Critical Theory, is based in the subject's integration of the superego, which enables human beings, however precariously, as discussed in chapter 2, to regulate social and moral demands internally, to sublimate drives, and to reconcile with the reality principle by means of a strong, rational ego, without rigidly suppressing their emotional lives in the process. Horkheimer in particular argues that such internalization—a dialectic of adjustment and resistance—constitutes the precondition for an integrated personality, one capable of resisting external authority. Modern socialization and the authoritarian state suspend this dialectic. The tension and mediation between conformity and autonomy is replaced by unmediated social influence that sets in before the self is constituted as an autonomous entity.

“This changed prospect makes itself felt in the relations of parents and children long before they grow up,” Horkheimer writes. “Authority in the home assumes an

irrational aspect."⁷² As the family, and in particular the father, loses more and more of the substance of economic security, the child comes to feel early in life that parental authority has no basis in real economic power or independence that might have given it at least some rational foundation:

[The child] soon discovers . . . that the father is by no means the powerful figure, the impartial judge, the generous protector he is pictured to be. The child takes a realistic view and dispenses with all the demands and hopes through which the family in its best periods and in the most cultured classes delayed the radical adjustment of the child to the external world. The socially conditioned weakness of the father, which is not disproved by his occasional outbreaks of masculinity, prevents the child's real identification with him. In earlier times a loving imitation of the self-reliant, prudent man, devoted to his duty, was the source of moral autonomy in the individual. Today the growing child, who instead of the image of a father has received only the abstract ideal of arbitrary power, looks for a stronger, more powerful father, for a super-father, as it is furnished by fascist imagery. Whereas authoritarian submissiveness is still being inculcated in the child by the family, the instinctual relation toward the parents is greatly injured.⁷³

At the same time, the dependent parents themselves are increasingly transformed into "social atoms" in the modern socialization process. They become "actors on the scene of the family," merely playing socially assigned roles, rather than embodying a real family environment.⁷⁴

The discrepancy between the parents' true character as determined by modern industrialism and their role in the family is quickly discovered by the children and is largely responsible for the stunted growth of their emotional life, the hardening of their character, their premature transformation into adults. The interaction between the family and general deculturalization becomes a vicious circle. . . . The same economic changes which destroy the family bring about the danger of totalitarianism. The family in crisis produces the attitudes which predispose men for blind submission.⁷⁵

The father figure compensates for this loss of real power with excessive authoritarian hardness and aggression that stems from the immense social pressure he is under. And the child, for his part, Horkheimer claims, loses both the tender, motherly space of refuge and any individual engagement with moral and rational authority. Particularly the relationship with the mother, which represents a safe space within the socialization process, free of direct coercion and the pressure to adjust that is endemic to modern society, is in Horkheimer's view crucial to the development of an autonomous ego and a moral self. The collapse of the family's social and economic independence strikes this relatively free, maternal space at its core, Horkheimer maintains. According to Critical Theory, then, the sphere of mediation that is essential to the development of autonomous consciousness and the conscience is liquidated from early childhood on in the context of late capitalist modernity, increasingly replaced by unmediated domination and the pressure to conform. Here one can discern a parallel in social theory with the

“liquidation of circulation” that takes place at the general societal level, that is, the elimination of the sphere of mediation that is the site of those qualities the antisemite most hates: independence, circulation, the abstract, the pecuniary, the intellectual. Horkheimer sums up his notion of the relationship between societal mediation and the maternal:

Women have paid for their limited admission into the economic world of the male by taking over the behavior patterns of a thoroughly reified society. The consequences reach into the most tender relations between mother and child. She ceases to be a mitigating intermediary between him and cold reality and becomes just another mouthpiece of the latter. Formerly she endowed the child with a feeling of security which allowed him to develop a certain independence. He felt his love for his mother reciprocated and somehow lived on this emotional fund throughout his life. The mother . . . represented a principle other than reality. . . . Thus there was a force in his life which allowed him to develop his own individuality concomitantly with his adjustment to the external world. . . . [T]he role of the mother prevented the adjustment from happening too suddenly and totally and at the expense of individuation.⁷⁶

Largely deprived of love and affection, the child's capacity to love remains underdeveloped, it is argued. “He represses the child in himself,” in consequence, “and behaves as a scheming little adult with no consistent independent ego but with a tremendous amount of narcissism. His being hardboiled and at the same time

submissive in the face of real power predisposes him for totalitarian forms of life," Horkheimer insists.⁷⁷

With the renunciation of libidinal needs beginning early in life under the authoritarian repression of society and the family, and the failure to resolve Oedipal conflicts, according to Horkheimer, the child loses the potential for formation of the conscience and finally the capacity for sublimation as well. Here the relationship between society, authoritarianism, and antisemitism again becomes apparent. In the "Elements of Anti-Semitism," Horkheimer and Adorno write:

Conformity to reality, adaptation to power, are no longer the result of a dialectical process between subject and reality but are produced directly by the cogs and levers of industry. . . . The unleashed colossi of production have subdued the individual not by granting him or her full satisfaction, but by extinguishing the subject. (DE 170)

Individuation, the source of resistance, is suspended. Human powerlessness in late capitalism culminates in a "feeling of hopeless dependence" (FP 283) and in the complete externalization of the superego that characterizes the authoritarian personality. As we have seen, this is due, in the Frankfurt School's lens, in no small part to the fact that "the crystallization of an autonomous ego failed under the pressure of childhood experiences."⁷⁸ But it is also due to the evolution of powerful institutions seizing direct control over individuals and their development and increasingly substituting mediation, interaction, and interdependence by universal dependence. Conscience and superego are thereby replaced by external unbinding,

“interchangeable authorities” of the administered world with its logic of social integration according to instrumental imperatives.⁷⁹ One can speak of the “claustrophobia of humanity in the administered world, of a feeling of being incarcerated in a thoroughly societalized, closely woven, netlike environment.”⁸⁰

Adorno not only asserts that “conformity has replaced consciousness,”⁸¹ but goes so far as to allege an “expropriation of the unconscious by social control.”⁸² In this view, an “individual no longer has to decide what he or she is supposed to do in a given situation in a painful inner dialogue between conscience, self-preservation, and drives”; in fact, as Horkheimer and Adorno maintain, “[t]he subjects of the drive economy are being psychologically expropriated, and the drive economy is being more rationally operated by society itself” (DE 168). Adrift in the realm of the unconscious and bound to the rigid authority of the dominant power, the subject seeks out opportunities for sadomasochistic gratification; these retain a submissive and conformist character, while at the same time lending the subject’s sadistic aggressions a vilified target and outlet, and thus promising power in an age of powerlessness. Historically, antisemitism took shape as a particularly expedient authoritarian option for this sort of substitute gratification; as laid out above, the antisemitic image of the Jewish enemy provides an ideal surface for the projection for forbidden yearnings, despised traits within the self, and the social discontent of the authoritarian personality. The ethnocentric or fascist ideology of the collective, founded on the antisemitic image of the Jew, promises the narcissistic gratification and participation in power that the authoritarian personality craves. Antisemitism’s propagandistic response

to social malaise offers an outlet for suppressed natural impulses in the form of a blind “regression to nature as mere violence, to the hidebound particularism which, in the existing order, constitutes precisely the universal” (DE 138).

Antisemites, who “always go short, economically and sexually” (DE 140), are thus stricken with blindness as well; they comprehend nothing,⁸³ Critical Theory insists, least of all the social origins of their misery. In reality, the Critical Theorists hold, it is the existing social order that brings about the antisemites’ social privation and also fosters their authoritarian socialization, which in turn diverts their blind rebellion into an attack on the Jews. Hereby the authoritarian personality has the distorted desire to intensify the hierarchical organization and the violence of a social “order, which in reality cannot exist without disfiguring human beings.” As Horkheimer and Adorno make plain, “[t]he persecution of the Jews, like any persecution, cannot be separated from that order. Its essence, however it may hide itself at times, is the violence which today is openly revealed” (DE 138–139).

As a source of antisemitism in the socialization process, unmediated authoritarianism in childrearing drew on particular educational traditions and militaristic societal ideals in Nazi Germany, an aspect that receives little emphasis in Critical Theory. Alphons Silbermann describes how affectionate, motherly bonding is traditionally crushed by the violent discipline of the fathers:

It became obvious that the authority of the father predominates in the German family. In contrast to the French father who assumes an active role in childrearing only when an appeal is made to his power

of judgment, the German father intervenes whenever he can invoke the prestige of his authority to demand unconditional obedience. When the child is older, commandments and prohibitions remain detached from any rational ethical considerations or retain their persuasive currency. The historian Heinrich von Treitschke could declare without irony: "In the family, one can already find the etatist principle of submission." The dictum resonates even today.⁸⁴

Indeed, these cultural traditions were feeding Nazism's totalitarian model of socialization, and—reinforced and transformed through direct institutional means of social control—they also did not completely vanish thereafter. Think of the Johanna Haarer's influential work. Her aforementioned book on early child education, *The German Mother and her First Child* (see chapter 3), was one of the most popular books of the Nazi period. The racist and antisemitic educational propagandist advocated for patriarchal violence and coldness, endorsing and absorbing the particular German "virtues" of discipline and obedience to authority in the fulfillment of one's duties "higher than oneself." She suggested to break children's personalities, lock them away and let them cry and force them, in Vamik Volkan's analysis, "to experience the sense that there was no benevolent power in their surroundings." Haarer's ideology epitomizes a mix of an extreme form of traditional Prussian authoritarianism depriving children of love and affection and torturing them in early childhood, and a new totalitarian variation granting direct authority to Nazi institutions and Hitler. Her work remained popular for decades in postwar Germany.⁸⁵

To be sure, the analyses of the Frankfurt School acknowledge that the authoritarian educational ideal of hardness has traditionally played a significant role in Germany and preceded Nazism. Adorno writes: "The idea that virility consists in the maximum degree of endurance long ago became a screen-image for masochism that, as psychology has demonstrated, aligns itself all too easily with sadism. Being hard, the vaunted quality education should inculcate, means absolute indifference toward pain as such."⁸⁶ Yet despite the deep roots of objectively retrograde authoritarian and antidemocratic traditions in German history and society, Critical Theory tends to explain the authoritarian preconditions for antisemitic delusion not in terms of special cultural conditions, but almost exclusively in terms of the dialectic of modernity, in terms, that is, of "universal social and cultural conditions."⁸⁷ At times, Adorno comes to astonishing conclusions in this context: "Regarding the genesis of the authoritarian personality," for instance, he would "dispute the widespread . . . thesis that the triumph of fascism in Germany had something to do with the ostensibly patriarchal-authoritarian structure of German society." This theory, Adorno insists, "proceeds from a social structure that had already changed at the time of the Weimar Republic and today has completely vanished."⁸⁸ However, both national unity and democratization came about very belatedly in Germany compared to other industrial societies in Western Europe, and liberal democracy did not take hold before Nazism's complete defeat.

The Critical Theorists often oscillate between theoretical claims about universal modern conditions, on the one hand, and critical understanding of the role of

resilient particular cultural traditions as well as national political cultures, on the other hand. Only in the post-war German context, Adorno recognizes the role of particular national conditions and traditions, such as Germany's national unification and statehood and the particular significance of century-old antisemitic traditions: "Antisemitism was not injected into German culture by Hitler. On the contrary, even where it felt itself to be most highly cultivated, German culture was suffused with antisemitic prejudices."⁸⁹ However, these insights notwithstanding, I argue that the Critical Theorists overall still tend to underestimate the relevance of antisemitism's and authoritarianism's specific cultural matrix, contexts, and norms.⁹⁰

There is another problem or tension within Critical Theory's set of arguments. On the one hand, the Frankfurt School's groundbreaking understanding of ideology discloses the progressing decentered logic of societal objectification in late modernity. On the other hand, this is at odds, with the argument they make about a strong centralization of socioeconomic and political power. Horkheimer and Adorno see Nazism and Nazi ideology also linked to forms of state capitalism seizing centralized control of socioeconomic reproduction and fabricated ideologies. At least in terms of a social theory on antisemitism, the relationship between decentered, bottom-up and centralized, top-down dynamics in a world where the circulation sphere and the freedom it had offered are largely liquidated, is not fully developed even in the more advanced models and reflections. How do these different centrifugal and centripetal trends contribute to ideology production, and to the undermining of public and private autonomy? This would be important

in light of simultaneous decentralization and centralization trends in present-day global market society.

Be that as it may, according to Critical Theory a new critical understanding of modern antisemitism cannot be detached from understanding the social order, the false whole, and “its exclusive, particularist character” (DE 143). As Horkheimer put it in 1942, “the universal reveals itself in the particular fate of the Jews.”⁹¹ As much as they endeavor to work out the particularity of antisemitism in their individual studies and as much as they underscore the specificity of the Nazi epoch—Adorno unambiguously recognizes the unprecedentedness and singularity of Auschwitz—the Critical Theorists’s social theorizing does in part run the risk to adhere to a “continuity hypothesis.” Though they clearly reject any automatism or determinism, the link between bourgeois subjectivity and modern society to antisemitic delusion seems to be constructed as more intimate than it actually is.⁹² In this view, the coldness and anonymous violence of bourgeois society liquidates subjectivity. Thus modern bourgeois society, once it is one-dimensionally rationalized through and through, preconditions the desubjectified delusion of antisemitism, even though this ideology is not viewed as an “objectively false consciousness.” At the very least, in any case, structural continuities in and dialectics of modern society create the basis for the social, political, and subjective shift to totalitarian antisemitism, and ultimately Auschwitz. While these are significant theoretical reflections, they tend to be too universalizing. In so being, they only insufficiently account for profound societal differences even in the new global age that emerged in the twentieth century, and for different forms of neofascism and democratic cultural resistance.

However, it is important to note that there are also many complications and qualifications to the Frankfurt School's general, universal and "modern" theoretical narrative, which the Critical Theorists themselves provide by absorbing multiple insights into antisemitism as a social phenomenon. In view of the rise of modern antisemitism in Europe and abroad, and in response to totalitarian Nazi antisemitism and the atrocities it motivated, Critical Theory profoundly transformed and adjusted their social theorizing. From the standpoint of the Frankfurt School, authoritarian antisemitic rebellions are not to be understood as mere diversionary strategies of the ruling classes in the class struggle, as the early Horkheimer of "The Jews and Europe" and in fact early Critical Theory as a whole tended to suggest.⁹³ Such "plausibly rational, economic, and political explanations" (DE 139) no longer suffice for Critical Theory in its maturity.

The irrationality of modern society helps enable antisemitism as an irrational, destructive, and self-destructive end in itself that social theory needs to cope with. Antisemitism has also no end other than itself for the ego-weak subject, ultimately amounting to "complete senselessness."⁹⁴ Critical Theory comes to view antisemitism as rampant unreason ultimately, in its eliminationist or "totalitarian" manifestations, annulling any relationship between means and ends. As a complete social blinding, demonstrating inaccessibility to reflection and self-reflection, "antisemitism has no meaning."⁹⁵

Persecution and murder are carried out independent of the actions of the object of persecution. In the practice of persecution, Critical Theory holds, the persecutor also annuls himself as a coherent subject defined by rational interests; the boundaries of the self are lost to the subject

in antisemitic paranoia and the boundless violence that follows from it. Critical Theory, to be sure, does not entirely abandon the aspect of economic domination by social classes and the functions antisemitism can serve for a power elite. Antisemitism is still seen as expedient for the perpetuation of existing forms of domination—something that is documented by the active propagandistic use of antisemitism by dictatorships in the Middle East and around, and by new fascist leaders aspiring or seizing power in established democracies. Yet precisely the subject-objects of the dependent classes may be bound most securely to fantasies of order, total power, social domination, and hate.

Modern society has an enormous social and technological potential to emancipate humans from domination, oppression, and unnecessary suffering. However, in its existing social form, in the Frankfurt School's understanding it also tends to objectify the consciousness of all its members and all classes "from below." Progress and the evolution of democracies and (human) rights claims notwithstanding, modern society predominantly follows the logic of an "irrational rationality" according to which humans are largely forced to struggle for survival. Indeed, the very contradiction between, on the one hand, the universal promise of freedom and equality—an actual possibility of human organization—and, on the other hand, the tangible lack thereof in the modern world also further fuels the hatred of the disaffected. In the perspective of Critical Theory, reification and the "social glue" of modern authoritarianism that makes citizens susceptible to antisemitism, are themselves to a significant degree anchored in the hardened social structures and globalized conditions of modern society: "Regressive tendencies,

that is, people with repressed sadistic traits, are produced everywhere today by the global evolution of society."⁹⁶

It therefore requires a self-reflective critical theory of society that recognizes the "primacy of objective factors."⁹⁷ In this understanding, as long as surplus domination, authoritarian governments, and massive social inequalities exist, which modern global capitalist society has failed to diminish, the social dialectic of rationality and irrationality is likely to continue engendering social pathologies—including racism, social paranoia, and the astonishingly resilient antisemitic rage resurfacing in contemporary world society. In other words, modern global society in its present form helps produce the very "fury against civilization" in form of a "violent and irrational" revolt.⁹⁸ The recurring antisemitic and fascist rage among large masses of citizens that we witness again today even within the most advanced, robust constitutional democracies, is fueled by those global societal trends in the midst of modern civilization. Once diagnosed by Critical Theory, this anti-civilizational revolt, empowered by demagogues and the politics of unreason, points to the precarious conditions, and possible self-destruction, of democracy also in our time.

CHAPTER 6

POWER, DESOLATION, AND THE FAILED PROMISE OF FREEDOM

Rereading the “Elements of Antisemitism”

The chapter of Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* entitled “Elements of Anti-Semitism,” represents the Critical Theorists' most focused, theoretically rich, and complex account of antisemitism: its features, social-historical embeddedness, transformations, and rise in modern society that negatively culminated in the Nazi Holocaust. It is important to note, of course, that most of this analysis was written while the atrocities of the Holocaust were unfolding, not after the fact. While many ideas originated in previous discussions at the Institute and among Adorno, Horkheimer and Löwenthal, in particular, most of the “Elements” chapter was drafted in 1943 and completed by 1944.¹ By that time, the Nazi persecution of the Jews of Europe had

accelerated. The negative teleology that we may discern in this essay can partly be attributed to the historical context of this writing at the very moment of this unprecedented genocide and antisemitic mass murder. Thus, the “Elements” essay can be understood as a unique, and uniquely reflective, attempt to provide a comprehensive social-theoretical interpretation of the Critical Theorists’ own empirical research on antisemitism in the face of unimaginable terror.

The “Elements of Antisemitism” present not only a collaborative account written by Horkheimer and Adorno, who are the designated authors of the book chapter. The crucial first three theses of the essay were written in collaboration with Leo Löwenthal (DE xix). This once again points to the overall collaborative—though hardly free of conflict—influences shaping the Frankfurt School’s work on antisemitism, with Adorno, Horkheimer, and Löwenthal as the key theorists developing critical theorizing on modern antisemitism.

The “Elements of Antisemitism,” Adorno himself suggests, should be understood as an attempt at a “holistic theory [*Gesamt-Theorie*] of antisemitism.”² None of the theses should be viewed in isolation; rather, they are meant to permeate each other.³ Hereby the theorists of the Frankfurt School attempt to take into account the particularity of antisemitism as a social ideology and the Holocaust as the greatest act of barbarism in human history, while at the same time tracing their significance in terms of the history of civilization and the dialectics of modern society that contributed to the incomprehensible. A theory of antisemitism—the aim of the “Elements” essay, though it was realized only in fragmentary form—would ultimately “develop a unified framework

within which all the 'elements' are linked together consistently," Adorno asserts. "This," he continues, "would amount to nothing less than a theory of modern society as a whole" (AP 608).

This essay is by far the most comprehensive outline we have of Critical Theory's understanding of antisemitism. Yet, for all its theoretical richness and until this day authoritative insights, it is inevitably marked by tensions and contradictions. In the reception of Horkheimer and Adorno's work, and even of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the essay has long been marginalized, if not entirely overlooked, even though the chapter is crucial if one intends to grasp the theoretical claims of the book at large. Rolf Wiggershaus understands it as the "hidden center" of the book, as if Horkheimer and Adorno were still afraid of the subject while starting to recognize its centrality in their time and for their projects.⁴ In fact the Critical Theorists (and especially Adorno), as Jack Jacobs aptly shows⁵ and as I have argued in this book, had long underestimated the scope of the threat of antisemitism even when the Nazis were already in power. However, Adorno wrote in preparation of the book with Horkheimer that a theoretical critique of antisemitism could be the center piece of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* because the antisemitic hatred and persecution of the Jews had become the world's "central injustice": "How would it be if the book . . . were to crystallize around antisemitism? This would bring with it the concretization and limitation that we have been looking for."⁶

At any rate, the Elements' insights and tensions have scarcely been raised in subsequent debates or developed further from a theoretical standpoint, even within the Frankfurt School. Only recently has this work, undoubtedly

constituting the core of the Critical Theorists' theorizing on antisemitism, drawn some renewed interest in philosophical and sociological work that may be the starting point for a reinvigorated, overdue debate on its concepts and merits.⁷

The significance of this essay, in its universal historical scope and ambitions yet its partly fragmented character, deserves a separate chapter and close rereading in order to do justice to its claims, arguments, and theoretical implications.⁸ This is what follows. I reconstruct the central elements, theses, and interrelated arguments of this essay, and critically reflect on its tensions and problems. In so doing, I show the theoretical surplus this work still has to offer for critical analyses of historical and contemporary antisemitism. But my reading also highlights significant difficulties, thus providing both elucidation and critique of this important essay. While oscillating between general theoretical insights and coming to terms with the specificity of antisemitism, the Critical Theorists tend to universalize antisemitism and even view the Nazi terror against the Jews of Europe as a paradigmatic rather than particular event in a particular context. This tendency to flatten out historical, socio-cultural, and political contexts and downplay particular legacies of antisemitism, to varying degrees from thesis to thesis, in the interest of theoretical universality and a holistic theory is especially prevalent in the provocative seventh thesis, which assumes a "disappearance" of antisemitism. Related to this problem in understanding antisemitism as a social pathology is the lack of consideration and focus on particular (political) agency—a theoretical issue that partly affects the Frankfurt School's Critical Theory at large. Addressing these difficulties

but also reconstructing the critical insights of the text, the reading intends to advance a richer understanding of the Frankfurt School's view of conditions and agency of antisemitism in its universality and particularity, and of antisemitism as a universal and particular challenge in modern society.

Antisemitism, Fascism, and Liberalism

Thesis I of the chapter posits a causal relationship between the bourgeois order and an antisemitic ideology that perceives the Jews not as one minority group among others, but as "the antirace, the negative principle as such" (DE 137) whose eradication is essential to human happiness. The authoritarian fascist state that persecutes and kills Jews has not broken with the bourgeois order, according to this thesis, but is in fact its successor, perpetuating in its will to annihilate the Jews that which "the wrong social order spontaneously produces" (DE 137). Already in this first thesis, we see reflected the entire dialectic of enlightenment, the "dialectical intertwinement of enlightenment and power" (DE 138), in which a social order defined by exclusion, domination, and unbridled self-preservation shifts into the persecution of the Jews. We see that the antisemite's own disfigured desires, boundless (self-) hatred, and drive for absolute power are projected onto the imago of the Jew. We see that the guilt of the world is shifted onto the Jews, that the antisemite's own unacknowledged lust for destruction and senseless sacrifice is constructed as Jewish lust. Senseless domination, "no longer needed for economic reasons" (DE 137), now requires a sacrifice to

make itself permanent; the victim is still under the same mythical spell as the obscure sacrificial victim that was made the price of self-preservation in the early traces of subjectivity. As Horkheimer and Adorno write:

In the image of the Jew which the racial nationalists hold up before the world they express their own essence. Their craving is for exclusive ownership, appropriation, unlimited power, and at any price. The Jew, burdened with his tormentors' guilt, mocked as their lord, they nail to the cross, endlessly repeating a sacrifice in whose power they are unable to believe. (DE 137–138)⁹

The lies of fascist ideology about a radical difference between “races” and especially about the Jews as an “antirace” were made “true” under National Socialism: difference became reality as Jews were locked out of society, persecuted, and killed. Yet the Critical Theorists also deem both true and false the seemingly contrary liberal “thesis” that all human beings are equal (rather than equality being an intellectual point of departure), that the Jews too were integrated in society and no different from the population as a whole. “The . . . liberal thesis is true as an idea. It contains an image of the society in which rage would no longer reproduce itself or seek qualities on which to be discharged” (DE 138). It is also false, however, in that it does not only oppose the *volkish* thesis, but is dialectically bound to it at the same time by the claim that a state of affairs is real that is in fact merely utopian. It amounts to “an apology for the existing order” not only because it assumes “the unity of humanity to have been already realized in principle” (DE

138). The "liberal thesis," which hypostatizes equality in the existing order, cannot and will not protect those who have not unreservedly assimilated to the principles of bourgeois society, who have not fashioned themselves entirely according to its model, who have not "equalized." In fact, because liberal modern society itself does not admit difference, autonomous enclaves, or unconventional lifestyles, Adorno and Horkheimer argue, its members feel threatened by nonassimilated minorities.¹⁰ "The mode of life and appearance of the Jews compromise the existing universal by deficient adaptation. . . . Yet whenever they sacrificed their difference to the prevailing mode, the successfully adapted Jews took on in exchange the cold, stoical character which existing society imposes on human beings" (DE 138). Moreover, by lacking self-reflection on liberalism's own condition, that is: the role liberalism plays in protecting an unjust, objectified social order, and the liberal failure to acknowledge that judeophobia is also linked to modern societal structures that have enabled the rise of fascism, liberal thinking is deeply flawed in its view of antisemitism.¹¹

What is problematic about this critique of liberalism are Horkheimer and Adorno's reflections on the "makeup of the assimilated Jews themselves" (DE 138), who ostensibly bear the mark of bourgeois society, as if of a covenant inscribed in the flesh:

The enlightened self-control with which adapted Jews effaced within themselves the painful scars of domination by others, a kind of second circumcision, made them forsake their own dilapidated community and wholeheartedly embrace the life of

the modern bourgeoisie, which was already advancing ineluctably toward a reversion to pure oppression and reorganization into an exclusively racial entity. . . . The harmonious society to which the liberal Jews declared their allegiance has finally been granted to them in the form of the national community [i.e., the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft*]. (DE 138)

Though formulated here in considerably more cautious and nuanced terms, the basic premise seems to resonate with Horkheimer's earlier thinking in "The Jews and Europe," which harshly attributed to the Jewish bourgeoisie a not insubstantial degree of responsibility for antisemitic persecution. This critique of liberal Jews alongside the critique of capitalism, the ostensible source of modern barbarism, might stem from Horkheimer's disappointment that so many understood too late that in Germany their "equal rights" had been granted only on a temporary basis.

According to Critical Theory, the racist worldview does not represent the antithesis of the bourgeois-liberal order; instead, it merely drives the particularistic interests already inherent in that order to a head, pushing to the limit an enlightenment process that is bound up in myth, in which universal domination has become a second "law of nature." The regression to raw power is presumably already embedded in the bourgeois order, which is built on practices of exclusion:

Race is not, as the racial nationalists claim, an immediate, natural peculiarity. Rather, it is a regression to nature as mere violence, to the hide-bound particularism which, in the existing order,

constitutes precisely the universal. Race today is the self-assertion of the bourgeois individual, integrated into the barbaric collective. (DE 138)

The coercive collective of fascism and its unmediated violence are mirrored in the false, coercive harmony of liberalism, which whitewashes over real contradictions, and yet is founded on naked, particularistic interests that compel subjects to self-assertion by adaptation and sacrifice. Horkheimer and Adorno's critique is directed at the apologists of an order that is by no means whole before being disfigured by the Nazis, but that is rather, the authors maintain, already broken, an "order which in reality cannot exist without disfiguring human beings" (DE 138). Critical Theory, then, insists on both the difference between fascism and liberalism and their unity.¹²

While there is no doubt a grain of truth in a genealogy that would trace National Socialism back to the bourgeois order, the version espoused by Critical Theory is susceptible to a problematic reception that blurs distinctions between an antagonistic bourgeois society and Nazi barbarism, between exploitation for the purpose of profit and persecution for the purpose of annihilation. Moreover, to deduce genocide from the bourgeois system of power, from a general state of affairs, as Critical Theory would suggest here, cannot do justice to an explanation of the particular, an explanation, that is, of the German genocide against the Jews. And it was the particular to which Critical Theory intended to address itself. Surely Auschwitz cannot be apprehended as the expression of something other, something universal; if it is to be understood at all, then only as a particular, singular crime,

albeit a crime in which the universal is also manifested. The critique of totality loses its force when it disregards the specificity that is integral to it and that incites the persecution of particular others. Society's transition to National Socialism and the Holocaust is not merely the endpoint of a general, coherent development, of history's "logical course," to use Horkheimer's phrase.¹³ Rather, it is historically singular and unprecedented: such consummate horror took place only in Nazi Germany.

Yet, a distinct tension is already visible in this first thesis and runs through the whole of the "Elements of Anti-Semitism" chapter. Horkheimer and Adorno seek to explain the Nazis' particular genocidal Jew hatred and politics, yet also characterize antisemitic fantasies and practices of persecution as the essence of the bourgeois system of power laid bare: "The persecution of the Jews, like any persecution, cannot be separated from that order. Its essence, however it may hide itself at times, is the violence which today is openly revealed" (DE 139). What is more, they still partly understand antisemitism as a political diversionary tactic here, an intermediary ideology that is really directed by capital against the wage-dependent strata: "The workers, who are the real target, are understandably not told as much to their faces . . ." (DE 137). We later return to this tension between social totality and historical politics, or rather between the universality of the (post)liberal bourgeois order and the particular political ideology of antisemitism.

In the chapter's subsequent theses, to be sure, Adorno and Horkheimer focus on the particularity of antisemitism, an aspect that is occasionally lost in Critical Theory's treatment of prejudice, which proceeds from the notion

that the objects of persecution are essentially interchangeable. Hereby Critical Theory places the antisemitic delusion unleashed in Nazism unambiguously at the center of their reflections. Antisemitism, Adorno and Horkheimer insist, cannot be fully comprehended or combatted by “plausibly rational, economic, and political explanations” (DE 139) and counterarguments, even if partly correct.¹⁴ This also stands in stark contrast to the unconvincing but common allegation that the Frankfurt School viewed fascism and genocide merely as manifestations of instrumental reason, explicable with reference to society’s indifference to victims. Were this the case, Critical Theory’s treatment of antisemitism would in fact seamlessly align with Hannah Arendt’s considerations on the bureaucratic mass murderer Eichmann and the claims of “structuralist” historiography, which holds essentially structural imperatives, dynamics, and mechanisms responsible for National Socialist genocide. Historians of this school see in the perpetrators and their accomplices merely obedient or careerist men and instrumental subordinates; they contend that the large majority of the population could at most be accused of looking coldly away, of doing nothing. Critical Theory recognizes such perpetrators as authoritarian personalities of the “‘manipulative’ type” (AC 767–771). Yet this expresses only one part of the truth. What is essential in Critical Theory’s understanding of social power and the crux of antisemitism is not the mere continuity of instrumental rationality, but precisely the latter’s particular shift into antisemitic delusion, which exists, to be sure, in dialectical unity with the system of indifference and violence from which it emerges. This shift is the subject of Thesis II of the “Elements” chapter.

Antisemitic Projections, Dynamic Idealism, and the Unfulfilled Promise of Freedom

Indifference toward the other, which has characterized bourgeois society from the start, does not explain the motive force of the antisemitic masses, of “[a]nti-Semitism as a popular movement” (DE 139). Antisemitism is a leveling crusade, a movement to “make everyone the same” [*Gleichmacherei*] (DE 139) in multiple senses. Its conformist impulse targets for elimination those who appear different or who deviate from the coercive harmony of the authoritarian order. As well, antisemitism “levels” the Jews by reducing individuals to mere exemplars of a category, an essential move precisely because the Jews, in the antisemitic projection, represent particularity per se. For the antisemite, all Jews are the same: nothing but Jews. Antisemites embrace the leveling impulse, not because a “half-understood ideology” would promise them some real (economic) advantage to be gained from persecuting the Jews, but more for “the satisfaction of seeing others no better off than themselves” (DE 139). As Adorno and Horkheimer write:

That the demonstration of its economic futility heightened rather than moderated the attraction of the racialist panacea points to its true nature: it does not help human beings but assuages their urge to destroy. The actual advantage enjoyed by the racialist comrade is that his rage will be sanctioned by the collective. The less he gains in any other way, the more obstinately, against better knowledge, he clings to the movement. Anti-Semitism has proved

immune to the charge of inadequate profitability.
For the common people it is a luxury. (DE 139)

Here Horkheimer and Adorno brilliantly illuminate that the destructive rage of antisemitism suspends the instrumental rationality of the bourgeois individual, even individuality *per se*, in the antisemitic mass, the "racial community." The liberation of the destruction drive, expressed in the collectively sanctioned impetus to annihilate the Jews, undoubtedly contains traces of conventional self-preservation, of the "primeval-historical entrapment." However, the "mentality, both social and individual, which manifests itself in antisemitism" represents "a desperate attempt to escape" (DE 139) from the entrapment. Antisemitism, Horkheimer and Adorno maintain, emerged from its origins in the "malady . . . deeply embedded in civilization" as a distorted manifestation of "rationality itself, through its link to power." In consequence judeophobia is nearly impervious to "plausibly rational" counterarguments alone (DE 139).

With the suspension of consciousness in antisemitism, power is subjectively robbed of its last rational (or instrumental) purpose. The pogroms, civilization's "true ritual murders" (DE 140) are "meaningless reactions" that "demonstrate the impotence of . . . reflection, meaning, ultimately truth." For the Critical Theorists, the antisemite is not a conscious subject who is capable of experience: his subjectivity is extinguished. The perpetrators are "blinded people, deprived of subjectivity" who have been "let loose as subjects" (DE 140). Antisemitism corresponds in this sense to the regression of consciousness that is determinative of authoritarianism, in which consciousness clings to the fatuous categories and

rigid stereotypes that dominate life in the era of the culture industry. Critical Theory recognizes this "blindness of antisemitism," the senselessness and unconsciousness with which it functions as an autonomous end in itself, and which differs qualitatively from the immanent, rational ends of work for wages or production for profit; antisemitism is compelled to conceal its own purposelessness behind thin rationalizations. This "lack of intention . . . lends a degree of truth to the explanation of the movement as a release valve. Rage is vented on those who are both conspicuous and unprotected" (DE 140).

The second thesis offers the most forceful and complete expression of the Critical Theory of antisemitism, conveying a critique of civilization as well as an analysis of authoritarian drive dynamics and the various particular facets of the antisemitic image of the Jew. The authoritarian, who has antisemitism to fall back on when not much else is left to him, only gets his full satisfaction from unending hatred. Antisemitic followers, organized into a powerful collective, are animated by a barbaric "dynamic idealism"; "they find relaxation unbearable because they do not know fulfillment" (DE 140). The "obscure impulse," the destruction drive, "always more congenial . . . than reason" (DE 140), is directed outward and yet destroys the antisemite himself; the destruction drive triumphs over the "pitiful rational motive, the theft which was supposed to rationalize the deed" (DE 140) perpetrated against the Jews. "All living things become material for their ghastly duty" (DE 140); to repeat the senseless sacrifice on the Jews, to annihilate totally all that appears weak, all that is different and stands against the dead order. "Anti-Semitism and totality," Horkheimer and Adorno write, "have always been

profoundly connected. Blindness encompasses everything because it comprehends nothing" (DE 141).

A society that has become a totalizing system is analogous to the "psychological system" of paranoia.¹⁵ When society has been thoroughly rationalized in its power structure and become a totality embracing and leveling everything, it can slip, like its subjects, into a mode of extreme projection and paranoia, pressing for the persecution of those who still represent freedom. Thus the Jews are not only identified with the misunderstood ills of the social order that imposes renunciation. As "strangers," they also call to mind the "promised land"—the foreign, repressed, undisciplined happiness of a sensual life. The distorted inkling of that happiness, always suppressed by civilization, provokes "the destructive fury of the civilized, who can never fully complete the painful process of civilization" (DE 141).¹⁶ To the ego-weak authoritarian personalities "who compulsively control it, tormented nature provocatively reflects back the appearance of powerless happiness" (DE 141). Antisemites despise the Jews, the Frankfurt School argues, not least because they are held to embody both the idea of human rights, which as a universal promise, "the cheated masses are dimly aware . . . remains a lie as long as classes exist" (DE 141). For the antisemites Jews indeed represent "happiness without power," the only real happiness, yet an idea that is "unendurable" because it is always out of reach for the antisemitic masses:

They must constantly repress the thought of that happiness, even as a possibility, an idea, and they deny it all the more fiercely the more its time has come. Wherever it appears to be realized amid the

systematic deprivation, they must reenact the suppression which has been applied to their own longing. . . . The fantasy of the conspiracy of lascivious Jewish bankers who finance Bolshevism is a sign of innate powerlessness, the good life an emblem of happiness. . . . The banker and the intellectual, money and mind, exponents of circulation, are the disowned wishful image of those mutilated by power, an image which power uses to perpetuate itself. (DE 141)¹⁷

Horkheimer and Adorno's enormously thoughtful and insightful theoretical considerations on the targeted victims of persecution contain some contradictory strands. Despite the authors' efforts to theorize the particularity of antisemitism, at times the legitimate impulse to describe the projective character of judeophobia slips into a claim that the victims of racist persecution are basically exchangeable: "And just as, depending on the constellation, the victims are interchangeable: vagrants, Jews, Protestants, Catholics, so each of them can replace the murderer, in the same blind lust for killing, as soon as he feels the power of representing the norm" (DE 140). Because modern society ostensibly encompasses everything, everyone can become a perpetrator or a victim. Yet historically, it is by no means the case that everyone became a perpetrator: Germans murdered Jews with incomprehensible fervor. Why this is so, why one group became the victims and another their relentless murderers, gets blurred here. Thus Critical Theory vacillates, sometimes abruptly, between an acknowledgment of particularity and a reduction of antisemitism to a false universality in which everything is arbitrarily interchangeable: human beings, perpetrators, victims, prejudices.

Not only the claims advanced, but also the way in which the questions of Critical Theory are framed in this thought-provoking Thesis II would seem to be partly problematic. The authors present a radical conception of a general unconsciousness, in the Freudian sense, and blindness on the part of the antisemitic perpetrators, who are portrayed as "cheated masses," as passive subjects who are "let loose," as dupes of a social expropriation of their unconscious. Does this not run the risk of denying the antisemitic subjects' capacity to decide and to act, their agency, and ultimately of absolving them of accountability for having hated and murdered Jews? Totalitarian systems depend on mass movements backed by "powerful political and economic interests," Horkheimer and Adorno write elsewhere, yet "the adherents of these movements . . . are by no means the ones who actually have such interests," they insist.¹⁸ Would it not be more accurate to say that the perpetrators acted out of conviction, in a more "conscious" fashion, that they acted, in fact, as "willing executioners,"¹⁹ agents of antisemitism and genocide, rather than disempowered "victims" of an ideology? Even if these agents were not "conscious" in an emphatic sense, certainly they had some degree of choice, some opportunity to behave differently. They had an alternative to antisemitism, another option, and they made their choice against it. The Frankfurt School suggests elsewhere, as shown in this book, that judeophobia is no inevitable worldview, no "objectively false consciousness."

Another problem connected to the recurring issue of agency is Horkheimer and Adorno's description of the ruling class, and specifically the social elite's relationship to antisemitism in the view of the second thesis. Here ultimately the ruling class would seem to be excepted, at

least to a degree, from the antisemitic delusion, indeed from the totality of an objectified antisemitic cosmos that Horkheimer and Adorno describe in the “Elements” chapter. They attribute to social elites a merely objective interest in antisemitism as a functional means to stabilize power, a ruse that also serves as a distraction and sets an example of terror: “The respectable rackets condone it, the disreputable ones carry it out. . . . The high-placed instigators, who know the reason, neither hate the Jews nor love their own followers” (DE 139–140). The respectable rackets, the ruling social elites, “neither hate the Jews nor love their own followers”? Why are they supposedly not deeply affected by the societal norm and consciousness, the social paranoia that antisemitism constitutes? This does not make much sense; it may be a residue of orthodox Marxism. While the ruling class may exploit antisemitism for the maintenance of power, it seems problematic that the rulers, the highest ranks of the bourgeoisie, are depicted here as being *a priori* relatively unaffected by the delusion of antisemitism.

Antisemitism and the Reified Image of Capitalism and Modernity

In Thesis III, the question of antisemitism is approached from a different perspective. While also informed by social psychology, it links modern antisemitic perceptions to the “objective roots of antisemitism” in bourgeois society and antisemitism’s economic purpose: to conceal domination in production and “attribute economic injustice of the whole class” to Jews (DE 142).²⁰ For Critical Theory, the antisemitic attack on money and intellect, the sphere

of circulation and mediation, stems in part from a social ruse that assigns responsibility for those aspects of capitalist modernity experienced as “negative” to the circulation sphere and thus, by stereotypical association, to the Jews. When the feudal lord ceded power to the bourgeois and the manufacturer, Horkheimer and Adorno relate, the new masters exalted work: “Work is no disgrace, they said—the more rationally to take possession of that of others. Aligning themselves with the productive elements, they remained the parasites of old” (DE 142). The ideological division into national, “productive” capital, in the growth of which workers feel they take part through their work, on the one hand, and “rapacious,” “parasitic,” “money,” “abstract,” “greedy” global (finance) capital by which citizens feel cheated, on the other hand, may help reinforce capitalist society as a whole.

Yet even for the bourgeois who, consistent with ideology, calls himself a producer although he produces nothing, antisemitism is more than merely a rational means to shift the blame for economic injustice onto the Jews.²¹ As representatives of modern, urban conditions, the Jews also present an image of what the bourgeois captains of industry “secretly despise in themselves: their antisemitism is self-hate, the bad conscience of the parasite” (DE 144). The compulsive self-justifications of the “producer,” who knows that he produces nothing, provoke his guilty conscience, generating rage that is finally directed outward against the Jews. In this sense, hatred of the Jews is in part a splitting-off of the bourgeois’ contempt for himself, a defense against the bad conscience that plagues him, which must thus be repressed all the more (in contrast to the previous second thesis, here bourgeois antisemitism is critically analyzed). This dynamic arises,

on one hand, from a moral moment of the universalizing commodity society and the contradiction that is immanent to it: the proclamation of freedom and equality as universal values although they cannot be realized as such in the commodity society. The dynamic is nourished, on the other hand, by internalized fear and the bourgeois' inkling that he could himself fall victim to capitalism's exclusionary, particularist character. As long as the Jews are the objects of persecution, the non-Jewish bourgeoisie remains untouched, regardless of whether or not modern antisemitism is particularly close to the hearts of individual members of the bourgeois class.

Although the notion of the Jews as representatives of the circulation sphere is essentially imaginary—a false generalization based on a bourgeois minority within the Jewish population that was historically locked into commerce and brokerage—this identification with circulation has also had the effect of associating the Jews with freedom. This is because circulation and exchange precipitated the liberation from the direct coercion that characterized personal domination. With their analysis of the hostility toward the Jews as “colonizers of progress” (DE 143), as representatives of modernity in both its emancipatory promise and its wretchedness, Horkheimer and Adorno provide, in the third thesis, their most pregnant elaboration and elucidation of the particularity of the antisemitic structure of resentment. In the claim about antisemitism's “economic function,” to be sure, some of the classical Marxist arguments about Jews as scapegoats for the capitalist class also still resonate that Horkheimer had proposed in his earlier essay on “The Jews and Europe.” However, new profound insights and critical developments taking this argument into a different direction are

crucial here. They are especially striking in their assertions about the link between antisemitism and bourgeois self-hatred. Here it becomes clear that Critical Theory does not merely posit the ruling class and the oppressed as wholly distinct and diametrically opposed forces; in fact, neither is seen as a unified, monolithic bloc that would act according to a single motive—this despite the notion of totality, which affects everything. The Marxist components are now integrated into a multidimensional approach incorporating social psychology, new ideology critique, and the dynamics of social reification.²²

The Religious Roots of Antisemitism

Thesis IV traces the religious and metaphysical origins of modern antisemitism. It is undoubtedly informed by Freud and psychoanalysis. Critical Theory views Christian antisemitism, which condemned the Jews as unbelievers and “Christ killers,” as largely played out; it is “no longer enough to incite the masses” (DE 144). Yet the anti-Jewish religious tradition has been absorbed into modern antisemitism: “Religion has been incorporated as cultural heritage, not abolished” (DE 144). The reified forms, the stereotypes, have survived and taken on a life of their own, decoupled from religion and from conscious understanding.²³ In fascism, “religion as an institution is partly meshed directly into the system” and partly redirected into the new metaphysics of marches and antisemitism (DE 144). In a postmetaphysical age, Horkheimer and Adorno insist, faith has lost its content, while fanaticism persists in the form of hatred of those who are not of the faith. “Among the ‘German Christians,’” the authors

write, referring to the Nazi-era movement in German Protestantism, "all that remained of the religion of love was antisemitism" (DE 145).

The Critical Theorists hereby disclose the psychoanalytic motif that Christians hate Jews as "one hates those who know better" (DE 147).²⁴ If Christian doctrine contains a "Jewish and negative moment," namely "the non-binding nature of the religious promise of salvation" (DE 146) that serves to relativize the absoluteness of faith and the Church, today the hardened faithful dismiss it, just as they dismiss altogether the emancipatory content of "the religion of love." What remains is a fanatical drive to confirm their own faith and salvation, to banish their own doubt in an attack on the other: "They believe only by forgetting their belief. They convince themselves of the certainty of their knowledge like astrologers or spiritualists" (DE 146–147).

Eternal salvation, which cannot be verified in faith any more than in bad reality, must be confirmed "by the worldly ruin of those who refused to make the murky sacrifice of reason," who repudiated, that is, the conversion to the rationalized, spiritualized religion of Christianity. "That is the religious origin of antisemitism," Horkheimer and Adorno suggest. "The adherents of the religion of the Son hated the supporters of the religion of the Father as one hates those who know better. . . . Anti-Semitism is supposed to confirm that the ritual of faith and history is justified by ritually sacrificing those who deny its justice" (DE 147).

This drive of the hardened faithful points to a dialectic immanent to Christianity as a whole, one that is considered part of the dialectic of enlightenment and that bore

the fatal flaw of antisemitism from the start. With the advent of the Son of God on earth, the divine is humanized and the human deified; the subject becomes a surrogate religion. Along with the subject, the real, the powerful, and the status quo are spiritually sanctified, and the distance between *hic et nunc* and redemption, between the Kingdom and freedom is suspended in an unbroken bond with the existing power structure, in “supranaturalism” (DE 146), that is, in a thoroughgoing hyperrealism.

The Christian rationalization of sacrifice, the “grounding” of the absolute God who once pronounced fate anonymously and ambiguously, is conceived dialectically by Horkheimer and Adorno, not merely as “a regression beyond Judaism” (DE 145), but also as a relativization of metaphysics and a proclamation of love. The God of Judaism appears abstract, distant, and absolute, opposing the worldly principle and the blind cycle of nature from a position outside the world and, as the messianic promise proclaims, offering liberation from the world. With the incarnation, Christianity “softened the terror of the absolute by allowing the creature to find itself reflected in the deity” (DE 145). But the price, Horkheimer and Adorno note, was high:

To the same degree as the absolute is brought closer to the finite, the finite is made absolute. Christ, the incarnated spirit, is the deified sorcerer. The human self-reflection is the absolute, the humanization of God through Christ, is the *proton pseudos* [first substitution]. The progress beyond Judaism is paid for with the assertion that the mortal Jesus was God. (DE 145)²⁵

The hypostatization of the subject and the supranaturalist affirmation, indeed the deification of the existing woeful conditions, in which the realm of freedom has ostensibly already begun, opens the door to a baleful dialectic. Because "spiritual essence is attributed to something which mind identifies as natural" (DE 145), because, in other words, nature and spirit are falsely equated and magic is humanized, spiritualized, and rationalized, the spiritual antithesis of the finite, the bad conscience that knows that nothing has changed after all, must be set apart from general self-preservation as "a special sphere of culture," Horkheimer and Adorno maintain (DE 146). Change is displaced onto magical practices and the symbol. Arising from the "effort of primitive peoples to free themselves from immediate fear," the regulated and rationalized ritual of sacrifice, was "refined by Judaism into the sanctified rhythm of family and national life" (DE 146). Christianity broke with this ritual, only to reintroduce it at a more comprehensive level. Of Christianity, Horkheimer and Adorno write:

In ideology it repudiated self-preservation by the ultimate sacrifice, that of the man-god, but thereby relegated devalued life to the sphere of the profane: it abolished the law of Moses [which rationally regulated social life and work] but rendered what was theirs unto both God and Caesar. Secular authority is either confirmed or usurped, while Christianity acquires a license to manage salvation. (DE 146)²⁶

This division, which serves power by detaching self-preservation from the system of rule, is reproduced in Christianity's single commandment, that of love, before

which the Law melts away. Christianity repudiates Judaism's objective of self-preservation, as crystallized in the Law of Moses, by affirming the principle of sacrificial love. Sacrificial love is separated from natural, erotic love, and likewise owes nothing to the somatic impulse of solidarity; instead it draws on the imitation of Christ, which is imposed by decree, and instrumentally and rationally "turned to account as credit" before God. The worldly self-forgetting, indeed, the sacrifice that such love implies thus takes on a "fraudulently affirmative" cast (DE 146). The Christian religion, Horkheimer and Adorno allow, is more reflective than the ambiguous, anonymous pronouncement of fate from afar, but also, despite its emancipatory aspects, more implacably violent: worldly life is entrusted to the regime that is in power, every arbitrary sacrifice is rationalized, and "the finite is made absolute" (DE 145). In contrast, as Horkheimer and Adorno write elsewhere in the "Elements" chapter:

The Jews appeared to have successfully achieved what Christianity had attempted in vain: the disempowerment of magic by means of its own strength, which, as worship of God, is turned against itself. They have not so much eradicated the adaptation to nature as elevated it to the pure duties of ritual. In this way they have preserved its reconciling memory, without relapsing through symbols into mythology. (DE 153)

These reflections show Critical Theory at its most speculative and, while the results may not be entirely persuasive, also at its most innovative. In contrast to Hannah Arendt's all too sharp distinction between the "old"

religious hatred of Jews in earlier eras and antisemitism, Horkheimer and Adorno rightly insist that religious hostility toward Jews had actually been absorbed, indeed *aufgehoben* in contemporary judeophobia.²⁷ Yet the trenchant ideology theory of religions finally proves somewhat overburdened and constricting. After all, Christianity has played an undeniably emancipatory role in its formulation of love as a standard. Christianity “per se” is not as bad as Critical Theory, understandably enough in the face of the Holocaust, portrays it, even though National Socialism’s weapons of destruction were blessed by priests and churches. It can just as well be argued, as liberation theology has done, that rather than deifying existing reality, Christian faith shifted the start of the struggle for the realm of freedom into the temporal sphere. Still, Horkheimer and Adorno advance what seems to me a particularly important notion here, namely that in the postmetaphysical era, when a fanatical Christian carries out antisemitic acts, he is striking against uncertainty and intellect in a bid to confirm his own salvation with reference to the evil of the Jews. Equally innovative is the reflection that the absolute deification of the human being and of existing reality—supranaturalism—offers a point of ideological connection for racism, the biological hypostatization that persecutes whatever is outside (of “nature”), like the Jewish God, who represents nonidentity. The self-proclaimed “Aryans” deify themselves as exalted subjects, as existing reality, believing themselves to be acting in lieu of God or replacing religious metaphysics entirely with the metaphysics of “race.” This deification of reality is a strike against utopia; it takes as its goal the fully reified notion of “race,” which is held to have been realized “naturally.” And yet, the fact that

both Jewish and Christian traditions emphasize equality before God as a fundamental principle would seem to indicate a divergence between both religions and racial antisemitism.

Mimesis, Social Paranoia, and Rationalized Idiosyncrasy

In Theses V and VI of the “Elements” chapter, Critical Theory’s general reflections on civilization and society are once again brought to bear on the structures of antisemitic prejudice. The fifth thesis centers on the concepts of mimesis, idiosyncrasy, and paranoia.

Mimesis, as developed and discussed in chapter 5, refers to the attempt to imitate nature and, indeed, become like nature “in order to ward off what is feared.”²⁸ Mimesis originally denotes imitation and representation. Horkheimer and Adorno recast it as experiential, conciliatory impulses; as an engagement with the Other not fully demarcated from the self, realizing an affinity of subject and object.²⁹ “Genuine mimesis” (DE 154), broadly understood and outlined, is a process of becoming conscious of and embracing living objects without either objectifying nature or reverting to primal nature. In this understanding, genuine or true mimesis represents a mediated reflection of its object, a “remembrance of nature within the subject” (DE 32). It amounts to an “organic adaptation to otherness” (DE 148), which could break through the rigid antagonism between hardened self-interest and the other.

A concept of self-reflective mimesis that reconciles the relationship between thought and nature, and that

Adorno and Horkheimer seek to prepare with their idea of genuine mimesis, can be contrasted to the concept of "mimesis of death." Mimesis of death represents the assimilation to the thing in a blind performance of life under the compulsion of self-preservation; mimesis of what is dead seeks to elude death by emulating it—it is an adaptation to death. Mimesis of what is dead, or oppressed mimesis, originates in terror and fear. Whatever has not been purified for maximum utility in the process of civilization, "whatever is not quite assimilated or infringes the commands in which the progress of centuries has been sedimented, is felt as intrusive and arouses a compulsive aversion" (DE 147–148). In contrast, "[t]he universal, that which fits into the context of social utility, is regarded as natural" (DE 147). It amounts to a leveling of the subjugated that conforms to the identical, hardened subject of domination that is equally objectifying the external and internal world. This leveling impulse gives itself up and goes blind in the process, since it comes to resemble mere self-preservation, the natural, naked struggle for survival that comprehends the other only as an adversary that must be conquered or subsumed.

Genuine mimesis, in Horkheimer and Adorno's view, is banned by a civilization that promotes "archaic patterns of self-preservation," under the spell of imperatives through which the human being hardens in "petrified terror" in the face of nature. These "numb human reactions" become second nature: "the tribute life pays for its continued existence is adaptation to death" (DE 148). Such "oppressed mimesis" is seen as closely linked to antisemitism, a connection Adorno found empirical evidence for in the interviews from the labor study.³⁰

The concept of idiosyncrasy also underscores the blind, senseless hatred of the antisemite, the intense antipathy toward the particular and the vital, and not least toward the individual who deviates from society. Both mimesis and idiosyncrasy are linked in a specific way in the reaction-formations of modern antisemitism, and both point to profound underlying problems of modern civilization. Mirroring societal dialectics, they unconsciously drive sociopsychological dynamics, resentful perceptions and hate that can culminate in antisemitism as social paranoia.

"The ego," in this view, like civilization as a whole, "has been forged by hardening itself" (DE 148). Rigidification against internal and external nature, against living mimesis and the other, is the principle of a socialization process and a social order that seems to have congealed into second nature. In the process—and this is one of the central ideas of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*—the threat from blind nature is reproduced in human society's absolute immunization against nature, the systematic coercion that strikes back in the form of social domination over nature. Obscure mastery of nature imitates dead nature "by automating mental processes, turning them into blind sequences" of perfected utility (DE 149). Cut off from mimetic modes of being and thus reified and desensitized, subjects "blinded by civilization," as Horkheimer and Adorno put it, "have contact with their own tabooed mimetic traits only through certain gestures and forms of behavior they encounter in others, as isolated, shameful residues in their rationalized environment. What repels them as alien is all too familiar" (DE 149).

Thus by taking on the paranoid "desperation of the persecuted" who can only lash out, antisemites imitate the

“terrified mimesis” of death, reproducing “within themselves the insatiability of the power of which they are afraid” (DE 150). In the mimetic impulse of the tormented creature, “at the furthest extreme from freedom,” “freedom itself irresistibly shines forth,” the very freedom against which “the idiosyncratic aversion, the purported motive of antisemitism, is ultimately directed” (DE 151). For the blind hooligans of civilization, the “mere existence of the other is a provocation” (DE 150) that must be met with endless horror. Particular targets are minorities that can be distinguished by their appearance and already bear the signs of previous violence:

No one who seeks shelter shall find it; those who express what everyone craves—peace, homeland, freedom—will be denied it; just as nomads and traveling players have always been refused rights of domicile. Whatever someone fears, that is done to him. Even the last resting place shall be none. The despoiling of graveyards is not an excess of antisemitism; it is antisemitism itself. (DE 150)

Political antisemitism harnesses the psychic energy of loathing and secret temptation that is averted, but which still beckons to be lived out. It is “rationalized idiosyncrasy” (DE 151). In this context, the political psychology of antisemitism becomes very concrete; its specificity unfolds. The most abstruse political pretexts, when sanctioned from above, suffice to pay respect to the reality principle while allowing the subject to yield to the mimetic temptation and psychological regression. Animated by the impulse to lose themselves to others, antisemites “detest the Jews and imitate them constantly.

There is no anti-Semite who does not feel an instinctive urge to ape what he takes to be Jewishness" (DE 151). For the antisemite, the Jew is not only a particular individual; he represents as well the libidinous, mimetic entity, tapping into "the old nostalgia for what is lower . . . , the longing for immediate union with surrounding nature, with earth and slime" (DE 151). Horkheimer and Adorno describe the dynamic of antisemitic mass psychology in which acting out the banned drives becomes permitted:

The civilized person is allowed to give way to such desires only if the prohibition is suspended by rationalization in the service of practical purposes, real or apparent. One is allowed to indulge the outlawed drive if acting with the unquestionable aim of expunging it. . . . Disinfected by . . . absolute identification with the prohibiting agency, the forbidden impulse eludes prohibition. If it crosses the threshold, the response is laughter. That is the schema of the anti-Semitic reaction. The anti-Semites gather to celebrate the moment when authority lifts the ban; that moment alone makes them a collective, constituting the community of kindred spirits. (DE 151–152)

Derision, naked rage, and the organized "poisoned imitation" reflected in bloody and militaristic rituals are closely interwoven with the desire for annihilation (DE 152). The rebellion of suppressed nature against power, which is coopted by power and which aspires to power in a more barbaric form, is "converted into conforming idiosyncrasies" in fascist antisemitism (DE 152). The desire for freedom and the primal world, as well as the urge to destroy and a lust for limitless power—"tabooed

impulses which run counter to work in its dominant form" (DE 152)—are let loose, passed off as rational interests under the pretext of fighting these very impulses on the part of the Jews: "The popular nationalist fantasies of Jewish crimes, of infanticide and sadistic excesses, of racial poisoning and international conspiracy, precisely define the anti-Semitic dream, and fall short of its realization" (DE 153). Because they serve as the ideal object of rampant projection, the Jews are essential to the functioning of this "mechanism," Horkheimer and Adorno hold: "It makes little difference whether the Jews as individuals really display the mimetic traits . . . or whether those traits are merely imputed" (DE 153). In antisemitic projections, which stem from earlier projections of traditional and religious nature, the Jews appear "as both backward and too advanced, like and unlike, shrewd and stupid" (DE 153). Because they have "eaten of the Tree of Knowledge" and "invented the concept of the kosher," because, that is, they stand at the very origin of civilization, the Jews are "persecuted as swine" (DE 153).

The Social Epistemology of Antisemitism as Pathic Projection

The sixth thesis, completed in April 1944 and with its focus on the societal and psychological dynamic of projection among the most important sections of the "Elements," combines these considerations on antisemitism. The arguments presented in the sixth thesis are informed by a critique of civilization and society, with a material epistemology that cogently elucidates the shift from intellectual reflection into pathic projection.

"In a certain sense," Horkheimer and Adorno write, "all perception is projection" (DE 154). Indeed, without projection, that is, the displacement of unmediated nature, thought itself would be impossible. Originally a defense mechanism and a skill honed for attack in battle and the hunt, projection stems from a capacity to react to every movement, regardless of the intentions of the object; it is a "tool," in other words, "in the struggle for existence" (DE 155). In the history of human society, however, "where both the affective and the intellectual life grow complex with the formation of the individual, projection must be increasingly controlled; individuals must learn both to refine and to inhibit it" (DE 155). The subject's reflective control of projection proceeds in tandem with the emergence of "a distinction . . . between outer and inner, the possibility of detachment and of identification, self-consciousness and conscience" (DE 155), the development of the critical intellectual faculties. Reflected projection is the first essential condition. Between every perception, every "sense datum" and the "actual object . . . yawns an abyss which the subject must bridge at its own peril. To reflect the thing as it is, the subject must give back to it more than it receives from it" (DE 155). In other words, the perceiving subject can only project:

From the traces the thing leaves behind in its senses the subject recreates the world outside it: the unity of the thing in its manifold properties and states; and in so doing, in learning how to impart a synthetic unity not only to the outward impressions but to the inward ones which gradually separate themselves from them, it retroactively constitutes the self. (DE 155)

Horkheimer and Adorno view the “identical ego” as “the most recent constant product of projection.” The ego, they insist, “even as an autonomously objectified subject . . . is only what the objective world is for it. The inner depth of the subject consists in nothing other than the delicacy and richness of the outer perceptual world” (DE 155–156). According to the authors of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, “the possibility of reconciliation” does not lie in the regression to a preprojective, “pre-conceptual unity of perception and object,” but rather in conscious reflection on the antithesis between the two, in a conscious form of projection that would recognize the object as other. If, however, the conscious “intermeshing” with the objective world is ruptured, “the self petrifies” (DE 156). With this loss of connection to the external world, the ego simultaneously loses the capacity to distinguish “between his own contribution to the projected material and that of others” (DE 154). Antisemitism is based on such false, unreflective, pathological projection.³¹

The pathic element in antisemitism is not projective behavior as such but the exclusion of reflection from that behavior. Because the subject is unable to return to the object what it has received from it, it is not enriched but impoverished. It loses reflection in both directions: as it no longer reflects the object, it no longer reflects on itself, and thereby loses the ability to differentiate. Instead of the voice of conscience, it hears voices; instead of inwardly examining itself in order to draw up a protocol of its own lust for power, it attributes to others the Protocol of the Elders of Zion. (DE 156)

In contrast to genuine mimesis, yet related to it in a distorted way, "false projection" is the mechanism by which the entire environment is pathically made to resemble the petrified ego, by which "the volatile inward" is displaced "into the outer world," and the most intimately familiar impulses, unreflected and unacknowledged by the self, are ascribed to the enemy (DE 154). It is the primal origin of antisemitic paranoia, according to Horkheimer and Adorno. This factor of rigidification is already inherent in the early bourgeois subject of civilization, the same bourgeois subject that promulgates the wholesale reification of the object world in capitalism. The particular has no relevance for the bourgeois subject; all that counts is that which has instrumental value for him, that which projects his interests onto the object.

Because access to the experience of reality, the experience of the object world, is largely blocked for the antisemitic subject, he remains unbounded and adrift in that external world; he populates the world with what is, in fact, internal to him. In that sense, antisemitic paranoia is merely an expression of the antisemite himself. This paranoia is independent of the real object against which it is directed; it is a projection of the subject's own desires and investments. The paranoid notion of attaching every misfortune and all that is repressed to the Jews becomes a fixed idea that encompasses everything in its fixation. "Because paranoiacs perceive the outside world only in so far as it corresponds to their blind purposes," Horkheimer and Adorno write, "they can only endlessly repeat their own self, which has been alienated from them as an abstract mania" (DE 157). Repetition in the form of stereotypy, the antithesis of the capacity for

experience, is thus as closely related to paranoia as the latter is to totalitarian domination, which is absolutized as a limitless end in itself. The antidemocratic subject, the authoritarian personality of modern civilization, is ruthlessly seized by a "naked schema of power as such, equally overwhelming toward others and toward a self at odds with itself" (DE 157). The subject is dissolved into blind stereotypy and power that has been made into an idol and appears as an omnipresent threat. "The compulsively projecting self," according to Horkheimer and Adorno, "can project nothing but its own unhappiness, from the cause of which, residing in itself, it is yet cut off by its lack of reflection" (DE 158).

The Jews are made into an identical "race," a type, through the projection of the antisemite's own traits. The antisemite senses and yet represses the fact that he himself has long since been "made the same," that there is little more left of him than his hypostasized ancestry. With the annihilation of the Jews, who cannot be perceived as real objects and yet die real deaths, the project of "making the same" is finally brought to completion, in a sense dissolving the antisemitic subject in the process. The fragmented subject's paranoia and boundless hatred can intensify into a delirium of annihilation, as Adorno explains elsewhere: "The mechanism of 'pathic projection' determines that those in power perceive as human only their own reflected image, instead of reflecting back the human as precisely what is different. Murder is thus the repeated attempt, by yet greater madness, to distort the madness of such false perception into reason. . . ." ³²

In the form of social and political paranoia, such madness becomes a system and ultimately a rational norm—the persecution of the Jews strengthens the "pathological

cohesion" (DE 163) on which contemporary civilization is founded, Horkheimer and Adorno contend. The "normal members" of the antisemitic collectivity "relieve their paranoia by participating in the collective one, and cling passionately to the objectified, collective, approved forms of delusion" (DE 163). Here the Critical Theorists pinpoint the social foundations of the paranoia that they contend corresponds to modernity's totalitarian phase of domination, as well as the significance of the politics and mass psychology that rationalize paranoia and elevate it to the status of a historically powerful force.

In fascist antisemitism, that fragile attainment of bourgeois civilization, conscience, "the ability to make the true concerns of others one's own" (DE 164), is utterly liquidated. "[U]nder the conditions of late capitalism," according to Horkheimer and Adorno, conscience is extinguished in the dialectic, as is consciousness, as "the half-educated condition has become the objective spirit" (DE 163). "Conscience," for the authors, "is deprived of objects, since individuals' responsibility for themselves and their dependents is replaced—although still under the old moral title—by their mere performance for the apparatus" (DE 164). Damaged consciousness, which stems from an objective societal tendency, is for the Critical Theorists a precondition for the continuation of the absurdity of social domination, despite the fact that it is so easy to see through today: "Only those suffering from persecution mania can tolerate the persecution which domination inevitably becomes, provided they are allowed to persecute others" (DE 164). The social developments that decimate individual autonomy are transmitted with the authoritarian dynamic of the subject, which is characterized by a lack of superego integration. In this dynamic,

the "conflict of the drives, in which the agency of conscience is formed, can no longer be worked through," according to Horkheimer and Adorno: "If internalized, the social injunctions would not only be made both more binding and more open but also would be emancipated from society and even turned against it; instead, the individual identifies himself or herself promptly and directly with the stereotyped scales of values" (DE 164).

The Critical Theorists establish here that the Jews are not an entirely arbitrary target of this paranoia that is devoid of self-reflection or conscience. The Jews are not merely interchangeable victims; indeed, modern hatred of the Jews draws on a long prehistory of anti-Jewish projections and fantasies. These projections always also include the utopia of a world emancipated from surplus repression, and of social domination in general. The promise of such emancipation of humanity and of genuine freedom is continuously undermined by the existing social order. Yet human emancipation in a world without borders, happiness without suffering, and reconciled existence, all of which have failed to materialize, keep recurring as ideas and ideals in liberalism and beyond. They must be denied as false and dangerous by the authoritarians for whom such freedom seems forever unattainable and officially unwanted. But genuine freedom, unacceptable to and incompatible with the authoritarian model of society for which it is inimical, survives in the projected image of the Jews, in where it can find a twisted expression of deep-seated human longings: "No matter what the makeup of the Jews may be in reality, their image, that of the defeated, has characteristics which must make totalitarian rule their mortal enemy: happiness without power, reward without work,

a homeland without frontiers, religion without myth" (DE 164–165).³³

The Jews are targeted for persecution not least, Horkheimer and Adorno suggest, because Judaism indicates the possibility of a reconciled existence that appears out of reach for the authoritarian personality. No matter the timeliness of genuine reconciliation without domination or the authoritarian's secret yearning for it, the authoritarian realizes "union with the object," with the other, only "in destruction" (DE 165). Domination can persist, according to Horkheimer and Adorno, only as long as "the ruled. . . turn what they yearn for into an object of hate" (DE 165). Yet in the current system, a world continuously and repetitively marked by desolation, domination "flourishes on the rich soil of self-assertion unhampered by reflection" (DE 165); the sole genuine "countermovement to false projection," according to Horkheimer and Adorno, is "individual and social emancipation from domination" (DE 165).

There are problematical passages in the sixth thesis of the "Elements" chapter, to be sure. It is remarkable that antisemitic subjects can be represented as mere functionaries, as instruments of ruling power, that the Jews are depicted as victims of "capital powers that are merged with the state apparatus" (DE 164 [translation altered]),³⁴ not of antisemitism and its institutional and human actors. Yet, notwithstanding such assertions, the authors address in this section the question of the responsibility of the ruled and of the persecutors. The sixth thesis convinces in particular with its incisive attention to both concrete, historical political psychology and the theoretical foundations of antisemitic paranoia; as a subjective and objective shift from the instrumental rationality that

characterizes bourgeois socialization to the rationalized idiosyncrasy that constitutes modern political antisemitism. At the same time, throughout, the authors never lose sight of antisemitism's connections to its sources and continuities in the history of civilization.

Antisemitism and Ticket Mentality

Theoretical differentiation is rescinded, to some extent, in Thesis VII, written considerably after the preceding sections, and after the end of World War II and Auschwitz. This section marks a sort of break, and the greatest tension within the "Elements" chapter is crystallized here. It begins with the provocative assertion that "there are no longer any anti-Semites" (DE 165), since they have all been absorbed into the social totality. Of course, the claim also implies the expectation that, after Auschwitz, antisemites would no longer openly present themselves as such even though the phenomenon does not disappear—which could be an important insight for critical research on post-Holocaust antisemitism.

The proposition of the liquidation of conscience is intensified in this section, along with the notion of an unmediated identification that wholly supplants subjective decision-making:

Anti-Semitic views always reflected stereotyped thinking. Today only that thinking is left. . . . The anti-Semitic psychology has largely been replaced by mere acceptance of the whole fascist ticket, which is an inventory of the slogans of belligerent big business. . . . Anti-Semitism has practically ceased to be

an independent impulse and has become a plank in the platform. . . . (DE 166)

The elusive concept of the "ticket" and the "ticket mentality," whose ideological content is arbitrarily "interchangeable," the likeness and consciousness-forming manifestation of a totality that permeates everything and presses for the eradication of difference, replaces here the analysis of the particularity of antisemitism and its political significance. Antisemitism as a specific political and historical ideology appears nearly irrelevant in the seventh thesis in the face of late-industrial society. The notion that totality and antisemitism are "profoundly connected" (DE 141) gives way here to the conception of an identity between them:

It is not just the anti-Semitic ticket which is anti-Semitic, but the ticket mentality itself. The rage against difference which is teleologically inherent in that mentality as the rancor of the dominated subjects of the domination of nature is always ready to attack the natural minority, even though it is the social minority which those subjects primarily threaten. (DE 172)

The ticket is to be understood as a "gearwheel" (DE 170) in the machinery of industry that extinguishes the ego and expropriates the unconscious:

The subjects of the drive economy are being psychologically expropriated, and the drive economy is being more rationally operated by society itself. The individual no longer has to decide what he or she is

supposed to do in a given situation in a painful inner dialogue between conscience, self-preservation, and drives. . . . If, previously, the bourgeois had introjected the compulsions of conscience and duty into themselves and the workers, now the entire human being has become at once the subject and the object of repression. (DE 168–169)

The decline of the individual, Horkheimer and Adorno make clear, has not eliminated “the psychological determinants of the individual,” which they view as the longstanding “internal human agencies of wrong society” (DE 170). The “character types” generated by these determinants, they continue, “are now being assigned to their mathematically exact positions within the coordinates of power” (DE 170). Totality and the universal tendency to think in terms of interchangeable tickets “is finally turning even the supporters of the progressive ticket into enemies of difference” (DE 172).

At times, in this section, distinctions seem to blur almost entirely: the culture industry, late capitalist totality in general, fascism, National Socialism, and antisemitic politics can appear to be barely differentiated conceptually. The complex conception of antisemitism developed in the previous theses is flattened in some measure here in tandem with the intensification of all too abstract social theory. Moreover, blinded (antisemitic) subjects are presented here as powerless appendages, dispossessed even of their unconscious; by no means do they appear as accountable actors in positions of power. Here the Critical Theory of antisemitism, while never losing awareness of the shift of the dialectic of enlightenment into madness,³⁵ would seem to take a deterministic tack

and, at the same time, to substitute generalizations for the historical differences that marked the concrete totality of National Socialism with a “new quality.”³⁶ In the seventh thesis, Horkheimer and Adorno directly trace not only the particularity of judeophobia, but even Auschwitz indiscriminately to general tendencies in modern society, effectively allowing both specific resentments or ideologies and concrete agency to fall away. Indeed, the proposition of the practically universal interchangeability of the antisemitic “ticket” also falls short of several key insights and reflections of the previous sections: to now fully neglect the dialectical quality that would mediate between with the general and the specific.

The “Elements of Antisemitism,” to be sure, tend to prioritize the former throughout its discussion of the problem of judeophobia. As flagged from the beginning, the analysis of antisemitism partly serves as a stepping stone for, and part of, a general critical theory of society. The seventh thesis, however, seems to thoroughly dissolve this dialectic, rendering the tension between the universal and the particular obsolete. In its provocative generality, engendering universal claims about “ticket” thinking in modern society, it falls victim to a lack of specificity, as the seventh thesis no longer distinguishes between antisemitism, allegedly interchangeable other prejudices, and other objectified modes of thinking or the uncritical consumption of commercial cultural products that express a general social paralysis of judgment and consciousness.³⁷ In so doing, the authors have little to add about the nature of modern antisemitism, just as they strangely suggest—right after the liberation of the concentration camps in which the most atrocious antisemitic mass murder had been practiced—the end of antisemitism as a particular

problem, potentially downplaying its persistence and longevity in the post-Holocaust world.³⁸

While Marcel Stoetzler is right to argue that “Elements of Antisemitism” “works in a multiplicity of dialectical tensions, including objective vs. subjective factors, society vs. individual, general human civilization vs. the specific constellation of capitalist society,” and so on, at times these tensions seem to collapse into an unquestioned prioritizing of universal theoretical claims that overgeneralize certain social tendencies, while subsuming Critical Theory’s own particular insights into specific conditions and agency so that they virtually disappear.³⁹ In some cases, when Adorno and Horkheimer point to the hatred against liberal and assimilated Jews as well as “lascivious Jewish bankers” and Jewish intellectuals who are “spared the sweat of toil” (DE 141), it may seem that, as Jonathan Judaken argues, the authors “blame the Jewish victim for having become the target of fascist domination” by reinforcing anti-Jewish images or employing “the conceptual Jew” as a “figure of thought” that overlaps “with antisemitic typologies.”⁴⁰ Jack Jacobs also suggests that Horkheimer and Adorno, “products of time and place, were influenced by antisemitic stereotypes.”⁴¹ While this may be the case, it should be pointed out in the Critical Theorists’ defense that, as previously indicated, they insist time and again that they talk about the “banker and the intellectual, money and mind” as a “disowned *wishful image* of those mutilated by power” (DE 141).⁴²

These criticisms notwithstanding, Horkheimer and Adorno develop in these reflections what would become the core propositions of contemporary research on antisemitism, even though many scholars hardly reflect upon the Frankfurt School’s original insights and

influence. If scholars believed, decades later, that they had originated the concept of "antisemitism without Jews,"⁴³ they need only have studied the seventh thesis of the "Elements" chapter. According to Horkheimer and Adorno, the stereotyped ticket mentality, which is hermetically sealed off from experience in any case, is in its antisemitic form wholly detached from reality, that is, from any real encounter with Jews. Antisemitism's blinding function can operate perfectly well without them: "When the masses accept the reactionary ticket containing the clause against the Jews, they are obeying social mechanisms in which individual people's experiences of Jews play no part. It has been shown, in fact, that antisemitism's prospects are no less good in 'Jew-free' areas than in Hollywood itself" (DE 166). To some extent, to be sure, even fascist antisemitism must find its object. Yet, as previously pointed out, antisemitism survives with Jews and, it would seem, even better without them.

It is fair to say that no other text on the subject to date has achieved the theoretical level of Horkheimer and Adorno's "Elements of Anti-Semitism." Despite their failings, Jack Jacobs argues, in this essay the Critical Theorists "illuminate the causes of antisemitism and underscore the significance of antisemitism in a new and compelling manner" that "sheds light in ways that contemporary social science does not."⁴⁴ There is indeed no richer, more profound theoretical and philosophical source for scholarship on antisemitism, whether historical or contemporary. Yet until this day it is a source from which researchers have drawn more unconsciously than consciously. It is certainly time to look at "Elements" afresh: at its undertheorized tensions, its interpretive problems but, of course, also its multifaceted theoretical potential.

CHAPTER 7

THE POLITICS OF PARANOIA

From Totalitarian Antisemitism to Political Mobilizations of Judeophobia in Democracies

“As long as antisemitism exists as a constant undercurrent in social life, its influence reaches all groups of the population and it can always be rekindled by suitable propaganda.”¹ This is how Horkheimer, in 1941, described the explosive political potential of antisemitism in modern society. By then, Nazi Germany’s totalitarian antisemitism had been turned into unprecedented anti-Jewish extermination policies, the full scope of which the Critical Theorists could not even grasp at the time.

While Horkheimer’s claim about antisemitism as a constant undercurrent of social life corresponds with the Frankfurt School’s general theoretical assertion that modern antisemitism is profoundly linked to modern social totality, he also points to the role of propaganda in igniting and mobilizing anti-Jewish resentment. As shown in chapters 5 and 6, Critical Theory views the

social totality of the modern world—the constitutive conditions of modern society and its objectifying mechanisms of social integration—to be tightly bound up with forms of consciousness that subjugate and exclude difference or “the other.” And this includes the ideological artifacts of antisemitism, with their close affinity to topological systems and historical legacies. However, contrary to some canonical perceptions,² the Frankfurt School theorists also time and again attribute high significance to the *political field*—the state, political parties and political mass mobilizations, the public sphere, and distinct political cultures. It is politics through which antisemitic ideology is actualized, mobilized, radicalized, reproduced, and “rekindled” in particular ways.³ The political rise of antisemitism, the Frankfurt School argues, is hardly unavoidable.

After examining the civilizational and cultural origins of judeophobia in Critical Theory’s lens; the role of authoritarian dispositions among members of modern society and their interaction with corresponding, continuously widely shared antisemitic resentments; and critical social theorizing of antisemitism, these political dimensions constitute a remaining key issue that merits more systematic exploration. In how far do the Critical Theorists advance critical understanding of structural political conditions and institutions? Moreover, what relevance do they attribute to political mobilization, and what mechanisms of political propaganda do they decipher and analyze that allow political antisemitism to reemerge and mutate in totalitarian *and* democratic societies—and thus beyond the history of Nazi Germany?

This chapter therefore focuses on the political features and dimensions of antisemitism, in so far as they are

examined by the Frankfurt School. In so doing, this reconstruction also challenges the dominant understanding of the Institute's thinkers as apolitical critical theorists. In particular, the chapter explores Critical Theorists' analysis of anti-Jewish political propaganda and its conditions in democratic as well as posttotalitarian contexts. The Institute's scholars studied antisemitic hate speech and politics in American and German democracies of the 1940s and 1950s, which may also provide indicators for mechanisms, mutations, and modernizations that are relevant in contemporary democratic societies. My interest in the analysis of these works is, first, in better understanding the significance the Frankfurt School ascribes to politics when it comes to engendering the rise or decline of antisemitism; second, in the specific mechanisms, functions and dynamics of fascist and anti-Jewish propaganda as seen in Critical Theory's interpretative framework; and third, in the theoretical payoff to grasp the interactions of political, institutional, psychological, and social dimensions enabling the "politics of unreason," as well as potential implications for democratic politics.

An important objective of this reconstruction of Critical Theory's arguments and findings here is thus to arrive at a better understanding of the functions, features, and dynamics of antisemitic propaganda in contemporary political contexts, including democratic, non-authoritarian societies. It is hereby argued that (1) political, institutional, and public conditions are crucial for the opportunities of antisemitic mobilizations; that (2) anti-Jewish hate speech operates as a kind of "psychoanalysis in reverse" (Löwenthal), reinforcing deep emotions, fears, and preventing insight into the self and political issues; and (3) that such antisemitic politics of paranoia may transform and modernize.

They may in part be successfully repressed or politically marginalized, yet they may also survive, finding new ways of expression in modern societies in which antisemitism arguably remains an inadequately mastered legacy.

The chapter proceeds in three steps: first, it analyzes the role Critical Theory attributes to political contexts, the “political climate,” and political discourse or propaganda in mobilizing antisemitic resentments. Second, based on the Frankfurt School’s empirical analyses, I examine the specific features of antisemitic propaganda in (American and German) democratic contexts, and the strategies employed by political demagogues. I hereby explore how fragments of totalitarian ideology or persistent social stereotypes can be revived, instigated, and modernized under democratic conditions. The chapter concludes, third, by summarizing the findings and by opening up the debate on resurgent antisemitic hate speech in contemporary societies and globalized publics; and thus by discussing the role of the politics of paranoia and unreason in the twenty-first century.

How Politics Matter: On Antisemitism and Political Conditions for Its Mobilization

The political dimensions of antisemitism and the critical role of political contexts in its societal mobilization are particularly explicated by Adorno. To some extent, there is some irony in that. After all, Adorno is usually seen as the most unpolitical of the Frankfurt School theorists. And indeed, his early work is arguably the least sensitive to political issues and contexts among the core members of the Institute and Critical Theory. Yet various

writings published by Adorno since the 1940s illuminate the role of politics and political propaganda. They include his empirical work on fascist radio addresses, his essays on "Freudian Theory and the Patterns of Fascist Propaganda," "Antisemitism and Fascist Propaganda," as well as later post-Holocaust essays on antisemitism and democratic leadership.

A study that immensely contributes to and advances the first systematic social scientific analysis of modern antisemitic ideology in political hate speech is what Jack Jacobs calls the "second most important volume"⁴ of the *Studies in Prejudice: The Prophets of Deceit* by Leo Löwenthal and Norbert Guterman (who was closer to the Frankfurt School than many of the collaborators of *The Authoritarian Personality*).⁵ The book is simultaneously linking the inquiry into ideological propaganda content with Critical Theory's specific interpretative framework. Indeed, as Jacobs persuasively argues, "*Prophets of Deceit* reveals more about the Frankfurt School's approach to the study of antisemitism than do those vast portions of *The Authoritarian Personality* not written by Adorno."⁶

The study, based on extensive previous studies by Löwenthal, Adorno, and Massing and first published in 1949, provides ample empirical data and material for the analysis of antisemitism by studying contemporary propaganda by American radical right agitators. Preceded by Adorno's 1943 trial study *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses*, which examines political propaganda techniques and especially Thomas's use of antisemitism, *Prophets of Deceit* is dedicated to the qualitative analysis of motifs, ideological content, stimuli, and techniques employed by a dozen fascist, antisemitic American agitators in speeches during

the 1940s. They prominently include speeches by Father Coughlin, Joseph E. McWilliams, George Allison Phelps, and Gerald L. K. Smith.⁷ Organized into sets of distinct but interlinked and recurring themes mobilized by agitators and interpreted by the authors in a theory-driven framework, the study displays antisemitism as a multilayered yet standardized set of resentments. It serves social and psychological purposes and, as a modern propaganda tool, provides a readymade “explanation” of the modern world and its problems. Like Adorno’s earlier empirical work, Löwenthal and Guterman focus on the techniques and stimulated interplay with the audience by means of innuendo, emotional discourse, the particular use of stereotypes, and reified tropes serving as vehicles for political mobilization. The qualitative analysis shows that agitators are not interested in discussing specific political issues and problems but, rather, aim at articulating and mobilizing patterns of prejudice.

For the Critical Theorists, the rise of political antisemitism and the emergence of “totalitarian antisemitism” were neither inevitable nor some kind of negative telos of modern society. In their view, to be sure, modern society’s dominant instrumental logic as well as the dialectics of modernity and its crises provided favorable conditions for this rise. But the role of particular political factors and political cultures became painfully obvious to the members of the Institute in the face of totalitarian antisemitism: seizing the state apparatus, the Nazi “movement-state” (H. Arendt) transformed antisemitic mass ideology and political movements into a state-sanctioned, state-orchestrated genocide against the Jews of Europe. As Friedrich Pollock put it, antisemitism was actively transformed by political means from initially an

“attitude” or personal idiosyncrasies to a political ideology and “an institution of Nazi statesmanship”—an institutionalized pillar of the Nazi state.⁸ Rather than understanding these political events as a mere “expression” of universal societal trends, the Frankfurt School theorists also began to fully recognize the incomparable, unprecedented features of these organized genocidal politics and crimes against humanity. Nowhere but under Nazi rule did anti-Jewish attitudes or even at the time widespread antisemitic annihilation fantasies turn into the systematic genocidal extermination of Jews.⁹

Politics, in Critical Theory’s understanding, indeed often serves as a *missing link* that helps explain the actualization of what is perceived as a widespread ideological potential in modern societies. Political antisemitism may hereby help molding individuals, cultural dispositions, and favorable social conditions, and mobilizing regressive authoritarian social collectivities.

Five years before Horkheimer’s disillusioned statement about antisemitism as a persistent undercurrent of society that could always be politically mobilized, Walter Benjamin had in a similar way emphasized the role of fascist politics, which for the Critical Theorists were at the time largely synonymous with antisemitic politics, for the “proletarianized masses.” In this view, fascist politics are not merely imposed on subjects from the outside; rather, antisemitic fascist propaganda “speaks” to instincts, desires, socially transmitted cultural beliefs, and authoritarian dispositions among modern masses. The ultimate purpose of fascist politics, argues Benjamin, is “granting expression to the masses—but on no account granting them rights. . . . *The logical outcome of fascism is an aestheticizing of political life.*”¹⁰

In this conception, fascist mass politics are not a vehicle for the realization of individual or collective interests. Instead, the former are a means for facilitating already existing resentments, fears, conflicts, and disaffection. Fascist politics reinforces and publicly legitimizes them for political purposes through the aestheticization of political life. In Benjamin's sense, *aestheticization* hereby implies the use of visual and aesthetic means to mobilize collective emotions and resentments. In so doing, fascist mass mobilization glorifies political leaders and groups while simultaneously deceiving and stupefying the masses. Such aesthetized mass politics signifies the opposite of individual and political reflexivity, or the pursuit of genuine self-interest. Instead, such politics exemplifies counterenlightening mass deception, or more specifically—in Leo Löwenthal's phrase—"psychoanalysis in reverse."

As shown, antisemitism is in Critical Theory's lens far from being simply a form of "false consciousness" either "objectively ingrained" in society or generated "from above." It is not merely a tool of the "ruling classes" or other powers to distract from or protect their social and political domination. Rather, the Frankfurt School scholars argue that antisemitism is tied to decentered forms of objectifications in modern society. However, political conditions, political manipulation, and the sanctioning state matter. In order to seize control in society or just to become a political force, Critical Theory also claims that antisemitism requires the help of objective powers, as well as a political climate that provides a favorable environment for antisemitic agitation. In turn, to be sure, political factors may also play a key role in the negative sanctioning of antisemitism in society. Thus according

to Critical Theory the political constellations of a given society, together with the active intervention or absence of effective agitators, constitute a significant factor in the transmission or spread of judeophobic ideology. The potential for it to be reignited, at any rate, did not simply dissipate after the end of Nazism's genocidal rule. It is democratic and posttotalitarian political environments in which the Critical Theorists studied and examined political expressions of antisemitism. They entail hate speeches by demagogues in America as well as resurgent articulations of antisemitism in West Germany's public after the Holocaust.

Political propaganda, Critical Theory suggests, is important for the actualization and mobilization of authoritarian dispositions and antisemitic projections in the public realm. Adorno and the other Frankfurt scholars hereby generally recognize that "control of the means of communication is an important basis of political power."¹¹ Anti-Jewish propaganda works best, however, if antisemitism is already socially shared and present as a set of resentments "from below." In other words: antisemitic propaganda, which blames Jews for all actual or perceived negative aspects of the modern world functions best, like any other propaganda, if people already believe in the message (even if they only unconsciously do so and even if they are denying that they share such resentments).

Appealing to and mobilizing emotions, political demagoguery can provide collective-narcissistic gratification on the basis of images demonizing others. Organized fascist politics can repressively collectivize human beings while satisfying demands for group narcissism. The latter is gratified through claims to a group's superiority and the

denigration of others. Idiosyncratic reactions to diffuse feelings of fear, a feeling of one's individual and social weakness, unfulfilled yearning, and the demands of the drives that characterize the authoritarian, ego-weak individual may find their projective outlet—their political form—in the very act of antisemitic hate speech disseminated by (social) media, demagogues, or organized parties. Through political media and political organizations, Horkheimer and Adorno argue, “unchanneled longing is guided into racial-nationalist rebellion” (DE 144). This allows for politically rationalized and legitimated, positively sanctioned indulging in anti-Jewish fantasies.

However, as indicated earlier, in the view of Critical Theory political mobilization may have its most significant effect if there is latent antisemitism. It is “certain,” Adorno insists, “that the manipulation of the unconscious, the kind of suggestion explained by Freud in genetic terms, is indispensable for actualization of this potential.”¹² In interaction with particular political and cultural presuppositions—for instance, political inhibition thresholds that can either be adhered to or consciously broken through—political agitation can provide aggressive channels for latent attitudes that can turn outward as open antisemitism.

Facing the hermetically closed worldview of committed antisemites, then, political agitation might serve to simply reinforce, rationalize, and legitimize existing beliefs, or to organize the faithful fascist followers into a political group and into political action. For Adorno, however, the “achievement” of political demagoguery and organization in integrating the individual is of even greater significance in cases where an individual's authoritarian character traits are less pronounced and his convictions less hardened; where, in other words, those elements of

antisemitic propaganda aimed at irrational emotions are less likely to meet with thoroughly hardened authoritarian dispositions. In the study *Guilt and Defense*, which is discussed in greater depth in the subsequent chapter, Adorno employs the category of the "ambivalent character" (GD 158)¹³ to explain how politics and propaganda can be the game changer in these circumstances. If "people are ambivalent in their opinions," Adorno contends, "opinion formation . . . depends to a large extent on power arrangements." In this context, the political environment and institutionalized power structure play a key role, as do mainstream discourses and political organization: "depending on the objective arrangements, one or the other of the effective intellectual and psychological forces wins the upper hand" (GD 158).

At any rate, the Critical Theorists suggest that political propaganda or discourses can especially affect citizens who do not necessarily possess deep-seated resentments but may still be receptive to both emotional reorientation and antisemitic ideology.¹⁴ These are "people who accept stereotypes of prejudice from outside, as ready-made formulae, as it were, in order to rationalize and . . . overcome overt difficulties of their own existence," as Adorno puts it. "These subjects," he asserts, "are able to present relatively sensible reasons for their prejudice, and are accessible to rational argumentation" (AP 754). For those, the political collective mobilization of fear by means of antisemitic agitation and conspiracy thinking can actualize real anxieties, as Franz Neumann contends,¹⁵ thereby constricting the subject's decision-making abilities. Horkheimer, in his theory of rackets, provides a theoretical grounding for antidemocratic politics in its modern form.¹⁶ He insists that "antidemocratic forces seek to transform man" into a "deindividualized,

incoherent, and fully malleable personality structure" in order to "conceal . . . the very possibility of independent thinking and autonomous decision."¹⁷

In Critical Theory's view an antidemocratic political climate has therefore particular influence on those who, as Löwenthal describes in regard to a group of American workers, are waging "an inner struggle between reason and prejudice" (FP 250)—subjects, that is, for whom prejudice is not yet fully entrenched and part of the personality. If these individuals subscribe to a scapegoat theory, it is typically not necessarily accompanied or grounded by fixed authoritarian traits (although these are unlikely to be entirely absent). Those citizens presumably accept political prejudice when its political power is in the ascendancy. They are susceptible because of the narrow horizons of petit bourgeois experience or because they profit from prejudice outright, yet a certain moral potential or rational motivation can survive (cf. AP 753–754). The latter can be suspended, however, if the political climate promotes prejudice and anxiety (real or irrational), and there are no social or political alternatives in sight: "If no hope of true solidarity is held out to the masses, they may desperately stick to this negative substitute."¹⁸

Löwenthal also emphasizes the role of demagoguery and public speech as a political medium for mobilizing ambivalent subjects:

Even those who do not harbor any anti-Semitic feelings must be mobilized for the hunt, or at least neutralized. It is as though the agitator were aware of the fundamental difference between the kind of "bona fide" suburban antisemitism, which is not usually associated with a conscious political purpose, and

totalitarian antisemitism, in which the Jew is primarily an object of political manipulation. (FP 79)

"In portraying the enemy as ruthless," Löwenthal adds, "the agitator prepares the ground for neutralizing whatever predispositions for sympathy for the underdog his audience of underdogs may feel" (FP 82). The agitator "transforms the awe and admiration" that his audience might feel regarding Jewish survival despite a history of persecution "into fear, envy, and hatred" (FP 92).

Yet, the political-psychological functions of manipulative agitation can only be fully effective against the backdrop of authoritarianism and a socially inherited ideological repertoire. Socially formed authoritarian dispositions and antisemitic psychodynamics, according to Critical Theory, represent the raw material on which the political agitator can draw. Indeed, it is only the social-psychological foundation of ego weakening and corresponding resentments, according to Löwenthal, that really "makes the political manipulation of anti-Semitic attitudes possible."¹⁹ The decisive factor is that antisemitic ideology "harmonizes" with several psychosocial needs of the authoritarian personality: for a destructive unleashing of the drives, for an ideology to explain the world, for a bundling of disparate projections into social paranoia, and for narcissistic uplift. What touches the core of the authoritarian personality structure is hereby neither a concrete political outlook, nor a specific social or youth milieu; more important are modern socialization processes and the social and psychic crises that, together with the subject's experiences of disempowerment, are inherent to it. When the agitator offers his audience "a sense of belonging, no matter how counterfeit it is," Löwenthal explains,

... his words find response only because men today feel homeless and need a new belief in the possibility of social harmony and well-being. And when he calls upon them to depend on him, he capitalizes on both their revolt against the restraints of civilization and their longing for some new symbol of authority. That which they utter under their breaths, the sub rosa thoughts that they are hardly ready to acknowledge to themselves become the themes flaunted in agitation. What the agitator does, then, is to activate the most primitive and immediate, the most inchoate and dispersed reactions of his followers to the general trends of contemporary society. (FP 151)

Popular stereotypes, Löwenthal writes, are "inadequate representations of reality" that might potentially "serve as starting points for analysis of the economic and political situations," as confused points of departure toward a more complex understanding of social reality. Instead, antisemitic agitation employs them "only to encourage the vague resentments they reflect" (FP 33). In this way, agitation lends political articulation to latent "anti-Semitic potential."²⁰ When the latter is "adopted by politics," as Horkheimer and Adorno put it in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, a "system of delusions" can become "the reasonable norm in [the] world" (DE 154).

Consequently, it seems that, in turn, democratic politics and political culture, the prevailing norms of the system in power, can erect real barriers against antisemitism. While authoritarian personality structures are predisposed to a rather uniform set of behaviors and attitudes, whether individuals act on these predispositions or not, Adorno writes, "will always depend upon

the objective situation" (AP 7). Whether authoritarian attitudes are translated into action depends, in part, on whether antidemocratic discourses play a dominant role in society and whether powerful political and economic interests, "by conscious design or not," as Adorno puts it, "make use of this device for maintaining their dominant status" (AP 7). The antisemitism of the authoritarian personality can, in fact, be temporarily curbed—not necessarily through a clear-eyed view of social reality, but by means of adaptation to changing dominant political powers and prevailing norms and mores that negatively sanction antisemitic expressions.

The systematic abatement of antisemitic ideology in politics and the public sphere, along with the creation of societal and legal taboos against open antisemitism, have resulted in a general decline of primary, open, and extreme forms of anti-Jewish sentiment in democratic post-Holocaust societies, the Frankfurt School theorists claim. The social potential of antisemitism, to be sure, has by no means simply disappeared but, it is suggested, can be reactivated in new ways; it is not just a matter of history. But the political conditions for such mobilization are different in democratic societies, or have changed in posttotalitarian contexts.

"Psychoanalysis in Reverse": Features and Strategies of Antisemitic Mobilization in Modern Democracies

In democratic societies after the Shoah, public and political pursuits to espouse open antisemitism have for a long time faced boundaries. In many contexts, anti-Jewish

stereotypes have been viewed as scandalous in mainstream public discourse, or even legally sanctioned over time.²¹ And yet, one must take seriously the skepticism of Critical Theory, which diagnoses that antisemitism, curtailed on the surface of politics, remains an enduring element of social life that can be politically reactivated.

While the Critical Theorists analyze the particular dynamics of antisemitism in a democratized post-Holocaust Germany—the social psychology of which is further explored in the subsequent chapter—they systematically studied strategies and dynamics employed in antisemitic propaganda only in the American context: by examining American agitators and hate speech in American democracy at the time of Nazi totalitarianism. Combining insights into the techniques and political-psychological dynamics of such hate speech in both contexts helps to advance more general insights into antisemitic politics under democratic conditions, and Critical Theory's understanding thereof.

Antisemitic politics, the Frankfurt School authors emphasize, are thereby neither limited to Nazism and state-sponsored fascism, nor to fascist groups. And they are likely to live on in ever new forms in both authoritarian and democratic contexts. The success and relevance of such politics, it is argued, *also* depends on individual antidemocratic leaders and the effectiveness of their strategies to reinforce and drum up antisemitic sentiments among the disenfranchised masses in democracies. Hereby in Critical Theory's take the political mobilization of such resentments is hardly ever isolated from other resentments mobilized alongside such antisemitism: hatred against democracy and democratic institutions; opposition to cosmopolitan norms and to

genuine universal human rights without applying double standards; the authoritarian rejection of individual and public freedom.

In the West German context, the Frankfurt scholars insinuate, antisemitism will linger on as a potential political force as long as anti-Jewish sentiment is not thoroughly worked through in society, and the authoritarian, repressive societal structures enabling it are not overcome: "National Socialism lives on," Adorno argues in 1959, "and to this day we don't know whether it is only the ghost of what was so monstrous that it didn't even die off with its own death or whether it never died in the first place—whether the readiness for unspeakable actions survives in people, as in the social conditions that hem them in."²²

Yet after Auschwitz, in the West German political and public spheres an ethos of nontoleration and scandal had over time been established regarding political antisemitism.²³ This had the effect not only of confining open antisemitic agitation to the neo-fascist fringe; it also altered the forms and strategies of antisemitic propaganda among radical right groups (and later on various radical left ones). In Germany, antisemitism was *modernized* in the wake of the changed political circumstances, and any critical analysis of the politics of antisemitism needs to take into account such strategic ideological adjustments in political discourse and mobilization of judeophobia. The possibility of prosecution for "agitation of the people" imposed a certain restraint on the legal political media of rightwing extremism and other antisemitic groups, which have consequently resorted to "indirect, semi-hidden, fascist and anti-Semitic propaganda,"²⁴ to a "concealed" or "crypto-antisemitism,"²⁵ in Adorno's words:

This crypto-antisemitism is a function of the authority that stands behind the prohibition of open anti-Semitic displays. However, this concealed position contains a dangerous potential of its own. . . . Whoever espouses this belief, this rumor, gives the impression from the start of belonging to a secret, truthful community that is suppressed by the superficial structures of the society.²⁶

Similarly in the U.S. during the 1940s, fascist and antisemitic propagandists analyzed by the Frankfurt School already for the most part employed veiled rumors about Jews.²⁷ While hate speech was not prohibited in the U.S., avoiding to promote undisguised hate speech against Jews points on the one hand to concessions to social expectations that are reflective of democratic sentiments and political cultures, and it enables the agitator to reach out to rather than alienate more mainstream audiences in this context. Adapting to the political environment, such use of cryptic allusions on the other hand allows to reinforce a sense of belonging and community among those who “know” who is allegedly behind society’s malaise. Thus, only occasionally do the Critical Theorists find direct references to Jews; mostly the terminology is inexplicit and coded, which is both a reflection of political conditions but may also be politically and psychologically more effective. Indeed, the “attention of the audience is concentrated on the Jews more effectively when they are not mentioned explicitly. Look into the rat holes, the agitator seems to say, I don’t have to tell you whom you will find there.”²⁸ Rhetorical flexibility is thereby a hallmark of modern antisemitic agitation. Antisemitism research that does not take note

of judeophobia's modernization capacities falls short of critical scholarship. Wild, extreme racial antisemitic fantasies often lurk underneath the political surface, under which old stereotypes and hate are detectable.

Consequently, in both the German postwar and the American context Critical Theorists observe that in place of overt, fanatical antisemitic imagery depicting the ostensible excesses of Jewish sexual life or Jewish financial avarice, what predominates is indirect allusions. They function partly straightforward by simply using a code ("Zionists," the "East Coast," etc.) that can easily be decoded. In part they play with ambiguity, leaving room for speculation.²⁹ While "the Jew" remains the theme and object of paranoid projections, antisemitism is now frequently coded and thus adjusted to existing political conditions, without ever losing its content. As Adorno writes, "the law or at least prevailing conventions preclude open statements of a pro-Nazi or anti-Semitic character, and the orator who wants to convey such ideas has to resort to more indirect methods."³⁰ Yet behind the covert insinuations and modernized delivery stands naked antisemitic aggression. Even today, the image of the Jew as indolent parasite is not infrequently behind wholesale attacks on "intellectuals," just as attacks on "speculators" that ignore the exploitation of industrial production often trade in antisemitic stereotypes.

Contemporary antisemitic agitation thus partly relies on the listener's recognition of established stereotypes, as well as insinuations that serve as psychological stimuli for antisemitic fantasies such as the notion of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy. "The lure of innuendo," Adorno ascertains, "grows with its vagueness. It allows for an unchecked play of the imagination and invites all sorts

of speculation. . . ."³¹ The agitator might refer to "dark forces" determined to "undermine" the nation's culture, "and the audience at once understands that his remarks are directed against the Jews."³² This has the effect of elevating the status of the audience, which is "thus treated as an in-group who already knows everything the orator wishes to tell them."³³ It is, as Jack Jacobs observes, the "latent rather than the manifest meaning of the agitators' speeches that is of import—and the latent meaning is one that can be deciphered by use of psychoanalytic insights."³⁴

In fact, one of the most striking features of antisemitic agitation in democratic contexts that the Critical Theorists observe is *antisemitism denial*. The persecution of Jews is either flatly denied or portrayed as a natural phenomenon that has always happened throughout history and the world—but, if existing at all, surely no cause for special concern. Indeed, actions against Jews are allegedly justified by the ruthless actions of Jews and Jewish behavior at large; this, however, has presumably nothing to do with antisemitism. The trope of antisemitism denial has become a key part of the arsenal of modernized antisemitism under conditions of liberal democracy—a trope that is, one may add, especially relevant again in contemporary times when many suggest antisemitism no longer exists, and that judeophobia is a thing of the past now exploited as a charge in bad faith by Jews against critics of "Zionism" or "Jewish lobbies." Claiming to reject antisemitism, then, and even portraying themselves as the true "friends of the Jew" and asserting pro-Jewish feelings, antisemitic political agitators still talk about Jews and their imagined power—even if coded or concealed, they employ all the negative stereotypes that ultimately converge in the

image of the "Jewish enemy": "The Jew becomes the symbol on which [the agitator] centers the projections of his own impotent rage against the restraints of civilization."³⁵

With the fall of open antisemitism into social and political disrepute, antisemitic delusions—formerly not only socially acceptable but even the *raison d'état* in Germany, unlike the U.S.—had also been partly transferred to other, temporarily more "acceptable" enemies, creating images that resemble antisemitic projections or reproduce them in a veiled manner: Adorno warns of "the possible displacement of what broke out in Auschwitz."³⁶ Under certain (political) circumstances, Adorno asserts, the "potentially fascist character" can fix an "otherwise free-floating aggressiveness" on a particular object of persecution, "and then leave alone other potential objects" (AP 611). This fixation entails the development of "a specific and concrete countercathexis, which is indispensable to [the] fabrication of a social pseudoreality" (AP 611). Such fixations can partly shift, as long as the equivalent psychosocial functions are maintained. In the recent past, the Sinti and Roma, targets of modern-day antiziganism (i.e., anti-Gypsyism), and the figure of the "refugee" have emerged as prominent among numerous potential "substitutes for the Jew" (AP 611). These groups are "liberally endowed," in the imagination of their antagonists, "with traits otherwise associated with the imagery of the Jew," as Adorno puts it already in the 1940s with regard to other ethnic and social groups (AP 611).

Though also finding certain distinct limitations, the image of the refugee in particular is open to the transferal of several social and ego functions of antisemitism, as Löwenthal suggests:

In the agitational image of the enemy, the foreigner tends to be transformed from a specific dangerous but tangible power into an uncanny, irreconcilable extrahuman or subhuman being. . . . For the agitator, the refugee is the most fearsome version of the foreigner. The very weakness, the very plight of the refugees is an argument against them. . . . The refugee becomes identified with the parasite who seeks dupes to do his dirty work. (FP 59)

According to Löwenthal, hatred of the refugee ultimately arises in connection with the authoritarian subject's repression of his own "inner potential of freedom"; parallel to antisemitic stereotypes, the agitators' reference to the refugee's homelessness and outcast status converges to create a symbol "of vague unconscious urges, of the repressed contents of the psyche" (FP 60).

The discussion of the image of the refugee is more than topical in our times. There are, of course, limits to the analogy originally drawn by the Frankfurt School. First, the refugee at the time of their writing was often a stateless Jew seeking escape from the Holocaust. Second, while the image of the refugee perpetuates elements of lust, filth, avarice, and the "parasitic" in common with antisemitic imagery, it is questionable whether the notions of advanced intellect and abstract, conspiratorial power and presumed world domination that are so central to modern judeophobia, can be components of the imagined figure of the refugee. It might therefore be more accurate to say that some resentments are fragmented and dispersed among multiple objects targeted by agitators, while antisemitism's tropes of international conspiracy, money, Jewish "spirit," and social imposture hardly ever seem to find any

substitutes. Moreover, while other resentments may be mobilized, antisemitism never truly vanished; it was less acceptable in the public sphere and partly repressed but never really disappeared or ever became “replaced.”³⁷ What is evident is that demagogues often do blame a variety of enemies, from bankers to refugees. They also insinuate that the “social malaise” of modern society and the grievances the audiences experience “were caused by specific people” and that “positive change would result from eliminating such people, not from eliminating institutions.”³⁸

In much of the political propaganda analyzed by the Frankfurt School researchers, anticommunism and anti-Americanism function as additional propagandistic set pieces. They also serve as demagogic stand-ins for modern antisemitism. Likewise, anti-Zionist, anti-Israel agitation and conspiracy myths that became part of the radical left since 1967, as they had been part of the radical right political discourse since the writings of Nazi propagandist Alfred Rosenberg, serve the same function. Anti-Zionism, Horkheimer argues, provides a thin screen for the antisemitism of neo-Nazis and Communists in Eastern Europe.³⁹ It also marches in step with the blind glorification of Third Worldism and uncritical anti-Western, “anticivilization” ideas, and “antiimperialism.”⁴⁰ What lurks behind them all is nothing new, but rather the old resentment against Jews in new variations.

In the assessment of Critical Theory, apart from the aforementioned modernizations and new images, many of the elements and psychotechnologies of antisemitic agitation remain uniform across the most disparate political conditions—even after Auschwitz and in democratic contexts. While the effectiveness and impact of these psychotechnologies vary strongly depending on different

political contexts and cultures, the standardized techniques tend largely to be the same everywhere. They are best understood, as Löwenthal aptly puts it, as “psychoanalysis in reverse.”⁴¹ They apprehend psychological dispositions. But rather than illuminating, they obscure and exacerbate them.

Although “the mentality of the fascist agitator resembles somewhat the muddle-headedness of his prospective followers and . . . the leaders themselves ‘are hysterical or even paranoid types,’” Adorno argues, the retrogressive structure of antisemitic propaganda is “by no means altogether irrational.”⁴² Neither the “structural similarity of followers and leader,” nor the antisemitic agitator’s “own neurotic or psychotic dispositions” prevent him from consciously planning his agitation. The agitator is fully capable, Adorno insists, of employing his “own neurotic or psychotic dispositions for ends which are wholly adapted to the principle of reality. . . . The fascist agitator is usually a masterly salesman of his own psychological defects.”⁴³

Common to all forms of political demagoguery that trade in resentment, according to the Frankfurt School, is that rather than striving toward rational programs and goals, they home in on social anxieties and unconscious emotions, which they aim to intensify. Political programs offered by the agitator remain extremely vague:

[T]he gratification which he psychologically promises by his total approach is, in the last analysis, the pogrom rather than the achievement of any aim apart from such an outbreak. The movement is presented as a value *per se*, because it is understood that movement implies violence, oppression of the weak, and exhibition of one’s own power.⁴⁴

In agitational politics, Adorno insists, "*the method, the 'how,' is more important than the contents, the 'what.'*"⁴⁵ A principal method of such propaganda is the endless repetition of an extremely limited inventory of themes,⁴⁶ standardized answers to the social discontent and psychosocial deprivations of potential followers. A key element of addressing problems and discontent is by the recurring method of personification. When the agitator raises the question of the cause of social problems, his answer, as Löwenthal notes, invariably indicates a "*who,*" rather than a "*what.*"⁴⁷ Every social phenomenon is reified, and every anonymous, complex social process or structure is personalized and ethnicized—and thus also simplified.

The demagogue affirms and amplifies the everyday antisemitic resentments of his audience "and seemingly paves the way for the relief of the malaise through discharge of the audience's aggressive impulses, but simultaneously he perpetuates the malaise by blocking the way toward real understanding of its cause" (FP 28). This is also expressed in the use of and pleasure in caricaturing Jews. The Critical Theorists find this a recurring motif in various manifestations of antisemitic hate speech. As previously pointed out, "the Jew" is not the abstract "other" but "the other who dwells in themselves" to which they deny recognition.⁴⁸ The links between hidden destructive, aggressive, and sexual fantasies, and metaphors of disease and vermin often expressed in antisemitic demagoguery, even if only employed in subtle ways, point to the evident use of unconscious desires for political mobilization.

In the end, Löwenthal insists, what the demagogue's adherents gain is nothing more than a worsening of their

resentment and an evocation of “sadistic fantasies,” accompanied by a veiled “promise”: “his followers may vaguely hope that when the deluge comes they, too, may be allowed to perform the acts that are attributed to the enemy” (FP 44). This promise, according to Löwenthal, is a matter of substitution—the lives of his followers may not get better but they are enabled to legitimately unleash their aggressions against “the Jews,” the refugees, and “the others” on which the followers have projected their desires: “If the agitator cannot promise his adherents a greater share of the good things of life, he can suggest that the good life consists in something else, the gratification of repressed impulses” (FP 38).

On the basis of such traits as power, hardness, and perceived superiority, the leader and the collectivity are endowed with tremendous, reflected libidinal energy, which can lead to the complete dissolution of self-control within mass formations.⁴⁹ As Freud acknowledged in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1922), the superego, too, otherwise ingrained in the individual, can be suspended in the context of the (political) mass, at least temporarily, and moral decision-making relinquished to the mass and its leaders. The antisemitic agitator hereby unifies his followers into a mass, but in this political-psychological dynamic, the mass also contributes to its own homogenization.

Thus for Critical Theorists political mobilization and integration between demagogues and their followers happen not least by means of collective-narcissistic gratification, which antisemitism (and nationalism) provide. Narcissistic aggrandizement through identification with the group, as well the promise of partaking in power with a degree of dominance over the despised enemy (in

the case of Jews, envisioned as world-dominating and secretly powerful yet ultimately physically weak and to be defeated): these are as much a part of the appeal as is the unburdening of the ego in subordination beneath collective entities and leaders that promise a "delusion-like security" (AP 619).

According to the Frankfurt School, if the damaged individual is to achieve collective narcissistic uplift, entrusting himself to a strong collectivity, casting off the burden of thinking for himself and becoming instead a receiver of slogans and commands, the venerated leaders or collective power must fulfill certain social-psychological requirements; it is not enough merely to brandish the image of the Jew as the object of persecution. Political demagogues and the collective power they represent must hold out the promise of participation in power and, at the same time, offer the individual at least temporary and partial relief, in the assembly of the homogenized mass, from the societal pressure and travail of autonomous self-assertion. The agitator himself can advance to the status of a superman and yet, at the same time, assume the function of an augmented ego for his followers, offering himself as an object of identification, suggesting "that he is quite the same as the mass" of the population (FP 131). The agitator's appeal and mobilization capacity thus depends to a considerable extent upon an amalgam of closeness and distance, familiarity and superiority: "One can identify oneself with the great 'little man' and still look up to him: he satisfies the requirement for closeness and warmth, and after affirming what one is already, he also satisfies the need for an ideal figure to which one will gladly subject oneself."⁵⁰

It is essential that the impression of distance be created—an aura of reverence for the authoritarian power,

which must demonstrate that it is capable of clamping down. The agitators and the collectivity must prove themselves powerful and resolute and can show no weakness, since the authoritarian despises weakness. The authoritarian individual, it is argued, is attracted to an ability to discipline, which is broadcast outward, and an implacable hardness toward all "deviancy." These attributes satisfy fantasies of omnipotence, which are experienced with greater intensity the psychologically weaker the subject is, and the more inferior he feels. In the analysis of the Frankfurt School, the agitator and the hierarchical collectivity together constitute a dangerous, "omnipotent . . . father figure, by far transcending the individual father and therewith apt to be enlarged."⁵¹ The authoritarian individual needs to relate to a vastly more powerful and harder authority than the one that served as an object of both admiration and identification in childhood. This greater authority must exert power over the individual directly. At the same time, the enormity of this authority, reinforced in part by the construct of the nation that it claims to represent, creates an unapproachable distance that exerts an overwhelming and menacing effect. The political leaders are imagined as exalted and powerful supermen, equipped with the ideology of authoritative individuality that is denied their followers. By requiring self-denial and pronouncing threats and punishments, the leaders can satisfy the masochistic element in the authoritarian personality. These individuals take pleasure in authority not only because it provides them a feeling of security, but also because they identify so strongly with power that they are prepared to go along with every harsh measure as a proof of the strength with which, in their abasement, they seek to connect. Yet at the same time, the power that the agitator

and the collectivity represent must be able to promise the helpless subject ego-unburdening care and protection, to hold out at least the prospect of a sense of belonging, thus "further[ing] the tendency to dispose of the individual by incorporating him into a collectivity, where he may feel 'sheltered' but where he has no say at all."⁵² This sense of belonging, in turn, is created primarily by differentiating the collectivity from an outgroup—and this almost invariably includes the "Jewish enemy."

Yet a feeling of proximity to collective power and to the image of the leader also needs to be created for political mobilization of resentments to work effectively. It is crucial for providing narcissistic gratification. Adorno discerns in the imagined figures of the leader and the nationalist collectivity a close connection to the "conception of Big Brother," which Adorno maintains amounts to "an infinitely expanding projection of the weak ego."⁵³ Adorno defines narcissism in psychoanalytic terms as "the libidinal cathexis of one's own ego in lieu of love for other human beings."⁵⁴ The authoritarian subject is scarcely capable of other love relationships (successful object relations), yet, as we have seen, narcissistic self-regard and self-confidence cannot successfully develop when socialization takes place under conditions of coercion and submission. That is why the authoritarian individual is particularly susceptible to narcissistic regression, to the "withdrawal of object-libido on to the ego."⁵⁵ He is, Adorno suggests, receptive to the illusory elevation of his personality, offered to the weak self by external forces. Incorporating the individual into a powerful collective compensates for narcissistic wounds—even if the subject might secretly suspect the lie behind this narcissistic self-aggrandizement. Thus,

along with potentially venerated leaders, a usable collective self-image also requires the traits of the average, ego-weak individual. An "enlargement of the subject's own personality, a collective projection of himself"⁵⁶ allows the subject to participate, by way of narcissistic identification, in the power that lifts him up. As Adorno explains:

The narcissistic *gain* provided by fascist propaganda is obvious. It suggests continuously and sometimes in rather devious ways, that the follower, simply through belonging to the in-group, is better, higher and purer than those who are excluded. At the same time, any kind of critique or self-awareness is resented as a narcissistic loss, and elicits rage. It accounts for the violent reaction of all fascists against what they deem *zersetzend*, that which debunks their own stubbornly maintained values, and it also explains the hostility of prejudiced persons against any kind of introspection.⁵⁷

The key psychological mechanisms hereby are, once again, personalization and identification: "fascist leaders are personalized as attractive authority figures. . . . The follower is able to identify with the leader through identification with an idealized version of him or herself."⁵⁸ In addition to reference to the powerful political group, ethnicity, or nation, the constructed image of the leader thereby plays a decisive role in the production of a collective "we" feeling, "the identity that [the leader] verbalizes, an identity the listeners feel and think, but cannot express."⁵⁹

In his hardly noticed essay "Democratic Leadership and Mass Manipulation," Adorno presciently depicts the old and new authoritarian demagogue who effectively mobilizes resentments, conspiracy myths, and unreason:

The main purpose of the agitator is to arouse our human interest in him . . . He repeats that he is not backed by big money or by any of the powers that be. He is particularly eager to make us believe that he is not a politician but aloof from and somehow above politics . . . Today life is hard, cold, and complicated and everybody is somehow lonely. This is what he exploits. By stressing his isolation he appears to be one of us, suffering from the same causes from which we all suffer. Actually, however, he is not at all alone. He is the man with the good connections and he will boast about them whenever an opportunity presents itself. Then he will read to us the letter of that senator who praises his patriotic zeal. He gives a sales talk all the time, but he wants us to believe that he is not selling anything. He is afraid of our sales resistance and, therefore, hammers into our heads the idea that he is a pure soul while others try to make suckers out of us. As a shrewd advertiser he exploits even our distrust of advertising. He knows that we have heard about political racketeering and corruption and he utilizes our aversion to this sort of thing for his own political ends. For it is he who is a political racketeer with lieutenants, bodyguards, dark financial interests, and everything that is shady. He constantly shouts "Hold the thief."⁶⁰

The New Politics of Paranoia: Critical Theory and Anti-Jewish Hate Speech in Globalized Publics

Even though the Frankfurt School does not offer a comprehensive political theory or explanatory framework assessing the role of politics in the rise of modern antisemitism, Critical Theory's reflections on political conditions and mobilizations of judeophobia offer a series of conceptual and empirical insights. Despite the fragmentary character of most of these observations, falling short of a comprehensive theory, they challenge the notion that Critical Theory has little to say about politics or leaves political issues in a void. The Frankfurt School attributes crucial significance to political mobilizations of antisemitism, on the one hand, and democratic institutions, laws, and critical publics curtailing such mobilizations, on the other hand. Political and institutional conditions, in this understanding, often make the difference on questions of life and death, survival and persecution.

First, Critical Theory suggests emphasizing the role of mass politics, the public sphere, and institutional conditions in reinforcing, channeling, and mobilizing antisemitism. However, these factors are consequently also critical with regard to limiting hate speech. Its success is therefore to a considerable extent dependent on specific political contexts and actors through which antisemitism can be politically instigated or combatted, tolerated, or negatively sanctioned. To be sure, for the Frankfurt School "objective" societal conditions are primarily responsible for a persistent undercurrent of antisemitic resentments and for ego-weak individuals susceptible to the former. Yet specific political conditions—the political and cultural climate, institutions, and the behavior of political

actors—along with semi-public, quotidian, and public discourses facilitated through mass communication exercise decisive influences on the opportunities for antisemitic aggression and its potential transformation into a politically relevant destructive force. “Antisemitic behavior,” Horkheimer and Adorno assert, “is unleashed in situations in which blinded people, deprived of subjectivity, are let loose as subjects” (DE 140). This is what happened in its most extreme form under Nazi totalitarianism, which dismantled all ideational, ethical and political boundaries: “Totalitarianism means knowing no limits, not allowing for any breathing spell, conquest with absolute domination, complete extermination of the chosen foe.”⁶¹

Second, then, it is the responsibility of democratic societies to prevent this from happening. Contrary to common misperceptions, the Frankfurt School scholars vigorously defend the rule of law and democratic autonomy as critical tools against antisemitism, racism, physical violence, and direct social domination. This entails unconditionally protecting universal legal and civil rights, no matter how powerful the underlying social trend against these rights, as well as freedom of speech and a functioning public sphere engendering critical publicity in a Kantian understanding. From Critical Theory’s point of view it is also important to actively delegitimize hate speech, and to exercise social, legal, and political authority against violent authoritarian politics and hate crimes.⁶² A politico-cultural context or “social climate” that allows such hate speech to flourish without being challenged and ostracized is seen as an enabling condition for the rise of antisemitism, and of hate speech in general. Critical publics play a key role in challenging the social and political acceptance of such views.

Third, in their empirical work on hate speech the Frankfurt School scholars demonstrate that there are also context-independent political dimensions. Some psychotechnologies of antisemitic demagoguery appear to function uniformly across the most disparate political conditions. The Institute's researchers observe always recurring patterns, ideological repertoires, and resentful themes and motifs in fascist agitation. This includes a set of standardized, repeated strategies working as devices and organizing principles that can be identified in a variety of political or religious manifestations of antisemitic hate speech operating in different political contexts. A recurring guiding principle is "psychoanalysis in reverse," that is: hate speech seeks to mobilize unconscious fears and desires rather than making them aware, and it consistently lacks specific policy programs. Moreover, Adorno and Löwenthal argue that an effective demagogue tends to simultaneously display features of a leader above the pack, and of a common man who is simply "one of us." Though often unrecognized, these early groundbreaking findings by the Frankfurt School continue to guide the analysis of the political mechanisms and conditions of hate speech today.

Fourth, Critical Theory raises our awareness with regard to the changing forms of political antisemitism. In short: it adapts and transforms under democratic political conditions. This is especially evident in democracies of the post-Holocaust era. At least for some decades, in most Western democracies overt racial antisemitic agitation tends to face limits of social and political acceptability. In most contexts, it cannot enter the public realm without possibly experiencing significant negative sanction. Critical Theory argues that this also affects particular

strategies in the political mobilization of antisemitism in democratic societies. The Frankfurt School theorists, most prominently Adorno and Löwenthal, have initially examined those adjustment strategies by closely studying modern antisemitic agitators and hate speech in the context of democratic American society in the 1940s. In the post-Holocaust world, antisemitism may continue to transform under changing circumstances. In this context, *antisemitism is modernized*. Antisemitic agitation, deployed to rekindle the authoritarian psychodynamics described above and to push for political significance, is therefore shifted to indirect forms: to allusions, innuendo, and codes that skirt legal and political barriers. Critical Theory illuminates the political mechanisms and dynamics of this process: how antisemitic agitators react to shifting discursive and political boundaries; how they operate within yet also seek to change the contested boundaries of “legitimate” discourses about “the Jews,” and thus to expand the legitimacy of hate by employing coded language. As Adorno suggests, explicit “political antisemitism” may be more limited or marginalized in contemporary democracies in contrast to the totalitarian contexts of the mid-twentieth century. However, antisemitism in politics and within democratic publics most certainly exists, to say nothing of its occurrence in many authoritarian societies today.⁶³

One of the political demagogue’s identifiable strategies in the post-Holocaust world is his very denial of any antisemitism—at the very moment he disseminates hatred against Jews. Antisemitic propaganda also often goes along with other forms of homophobic, misogynist and racist hate speech. But this may not necessarily be the case. Antisemitic propaganda is consistently equipped

with a sense of moralism and righteousness. Such propaganda, we learn from Critical Theory, always spreads hate against Jews with good conscience and from the standpoint of moral superiority. This is why judeophobia is at times also cloaked in human rights discourses, which, however, antisemites only selectively apply: employing double standards, human rights violations are only lamented if “the Jews” can be blamed.

Critical Theory’s work reminds us that the politics of paranoia remain a powerful force in “enlightened” modern society—one that continues to negatively influence our political environment. This force, which perceives chaos and disorder all around, still finds a fertile soil in modern states and global publics. Some of the current discussions about how our political environment is imploding—popular perceptions driven by mass anxieties and uncertainty and always on the verge of political paranoia—could come straight out of Part I of Hobbes’ *Leviathan*.⁶⁴ Consequently, there are few indicators that in a globalized environment of hate speech—now spreading dramatically on new social media and also within liberal democracies—the antisemitic politics of paranoia are going to vanish any time soon. To the contrary, as the Frankfurt scholars feared, antisemitic agitation and political mobilizations can still draw on wide-spread quotidian cultural resentments and discourses, which are now often aggressively revived in globalized publics. These flourishing resentments frequently go unsanctioned. In several authoritarian states, such as the Islamic Republic of Iran, antisemitism and Holocaust denial are official government policy—as demonstrated in state-orchestrated Holocaust cartoon contests and the declared goal to wipe the Jewish state of Israel “off the map.”⁶⁵

Antisemitism today also constitutes the core of radical Islamist movements and terrorist groups' apocalyptic antipolitics, from Al Qaeda to ISIS, who mobilize against the "Jewish enemy" through social media in the global public sphere and on the battlefield.⁶⁶ Radical Islamists' claim to world rule over "infidels" is intimately linked to what can be called genocidal, *apocalyptic antisemitism*, that is, a form of "totalitarian antisemitism" in Critical Theory's understanding: radical Islamists' paranoid worldview constitutively entails genocidal aspirations aiming to eliminate Jews wherever they are on the planet and an apocalyptic vision of global social transformation through the destruction of Jews, others, and oneself—as epitomized in suicide terrorism—in order to bring about a new age.

Even though the Critical Theorists especially analyze antisemitic and fascist demagogues operating at the margins of democracies, the Frankfurt School thinkers were also acutely aware that such political imagery is not just a problem of agitators on the fringes. Social and political elites, intellectuals, and the center of society are anything but immune to it. Anti-Jewish hate speech is proto-fascist in its core, and this holds also true if antisemitism is articulated in a right-wing populist discourse or progressive or "left" disguise. Political antisemitism can even be mobilized unintentionally; it does not only find expression in open racial hatred, and it has never been limited to self-declared antisemites. What matters is the substantive content, deliberately or unconsciously disseminated, and its effect on society. "The rumour about the Jews,"⁶⁷ conveyed through the centuries, lives on in spite of Auschwitz and down to the present, and it is taking ever new roads and shapes.

CHAPTER 8

GUILT, RESPONSIBILITY, AND POST-HOLOCAUST DEMOCRACY

Interpreting “Secondary Antisemitism”

There is another important dimension that previous discussions of the Frankfurt School’s work on judeophobia almost entirely neglected. I refer here to the Institute’s postwar studies on the dynamics of German guilt, defense mechanisms, and so-called secondary antisemitism after Auschwitz—a concept introduced by Adorno and Peter Schönbach in the early 1960s.¹ Even more recent research that employs this concept is for the most part oblivious to its origins and conceptualizations in Critical Theory. The goal of this chapter is to recover some of the Frankfurt School’s largely forgotten work on the resentful sociopsychological effects and legacies of the Nazi past in Germany. In so doing, the chapter points to this work’s critical potential for contemporary research and reflections on secondary antisemitism, problems of national guilt, and post-Holocaust democracy.

The Critical Theorists primarily explored attitudes toward the Nazi past and the underlying political psychology of national guilt in empirical studies with various groups and strata of citizens in early postwar Germany. These studies hereby also address implications for reproducing and regenerating anti-Jewish collective resentments. First and foremost, the Critical Theorists did so in one major early project, the *Group Experiment*. In the context of the resettled institute in Frankfurt, research was conducted by Horkheimer and Adorno (in the *Group Experiment* Friedrich Pollock also took a leading role), or under their guidance. The findings from this empirical work also influenced subsequent essays and reflections by both authors. Particular attention, however, is paid here to Adorno's aforementioned social research contribution to the *Group Experiment*, later published as "Guilt and Defense," and to his prominent critical public intervention against the restorative and resentful climate of post-Holocaust Germany, published under the Kantian title *Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit* ("The meaning of working through the past").

Post-Holocaust *secondary antisemitism*, as is explored later, is hereby not conceived as simply a "weaker" form of Jew hatred. Rather, the concept points first and foremost to a particular, new origin or source of antisemitic resentment: it is motivated by the wish to repress and split off Holocaust remembrance and guilt from the collective memory of a tainted nation. In a nutshell, Jews are collectively blamed by their very existence for reminding Germans of their nation's crimes, guilt, and responsibility. Such antisemitism "after Auschwitz" can thus also be understood as antisemitism "because of Auschwitz." At the core of this dynamic are unprocessed, diffuse, and

denied guilt feelings in German perpetrator society—a society responsible for the most horrible atrocities in the history of humankind. Especially those respondents who strongly identify with the nation, and to whom feelings of guilt vis-à-vis the past remain largely external to the self, tend to have a desire to exonerate Germany from national guilt and responsibility—and thus minimize, relativize, or downplay the Holocaust. According to the Frankfurt School's findings and analytical reflections, among those who aggressively react to issues of national guilt in such a defensive way there is also a strong tendency to invert victims and perpetrators: to sociopsychologically turn "the Germans" into the victims of "the Jews," and thus the latter into perpetrators that need to be punished. Perceived as living representatives of the criminal national past, Jews are made responsible for the unwanted memory of the crimes of which they have been the victims. Both guilt feelings and the morality of the punishing superego are projected onto the image of Jews. Such "secondary" antisemitism is therefore seen as a reflection of ideological and sociopsychological after-effects of Nazi rule. They also point to the societal failure to critically process the Nazi past and its terror. Secondary antisemitism, in this conception, is motivated by the refusal or lack of capacity to address Nazi barbarism, to face its crimes, and to take responsibility for this legacy. This new form adds another, different layer to the antisemitism problem that may take new subtle shapes and induce indirect exclusions and denigrations of Jews.

In the remainder of this chapter I take three steps. First, some qualitative findings from the *Group Experiment* are discussed. The focus is on key motives and examples of underlying defense mechanisms, or defense aggressions,

in the framework of Adorno's sociopsychological interpretation. Second, I take a closer look at the link between these defense mechanisms and the concept of secondary antisemitism. Third, some implications for contemporary research and critical theorizing of democracy are considered. They point back to the role of coping with legacies of genocide and guilt for the democratic evolution of posttotalitarian society. In so doing, they also raise broader questions about the political-psychological relationship between the social processing of a criminal national past; societal and individual guilt and responsibility; and democratization.

Guilt and Defense: The "Group Experiment" and the Denial of Historical Responsibility

Originally conducted in 1950 and 1951 and first published in 1955, the *Group Experiment* is the first ambitious study exploring everyday discourses and awareness of the Nazi past among various strata of postwar German society beyond mere public opinion surveys.² While the starting point was still "vintage critical theory," as Jeffrey Olick and Andrew Perrin argue, the Frankfurt scholars develop an advanced and methodically innovative research design.³ It uses multiple group discussions to empirically examine not just manifest attitudes and postwar transformations of nationalistic, antidemocratic, and antisemitic affects but also their deeper underlying psychosocial structures and the social context in which these affects occur.⁴

To explore these issues, 137 group discussions were initiated. They involve Germans from different social

backgrounds, occupations, ages, and political milieus. Horkheimer, Adorno, Pollock, and their fellow researchers initiated group discussions among groups of farmers, housewives, high-ranking employees, and students.⁵ In contrast to quantitative surveys based on questionnaires, this new group discussion design sought to “avoid studying attitudes, opinions and behavior of humans in isolation, in which they hardly ever occur.”⁶ The Frankfurt scholars’ approach therefore “strove to move beyond the putative monistic assumptions of contemporary opinion research to a more profoundly social” and contextual view⁷: “Exactly the effect of an immeasurably grown potential for communication nevertheless no longer allows grasping the individual as monad whose opinion crystallizes and persists simultaneously in isolation and empty space.”⁸ In order to motivate them to speak freely about charged and conflictual topics, participants were given aliases and remained anonymous. To start discussions, a basic stimulus was used in form of a fictitious letter ostensibly written by a former American soldier who criticizes German authoritarianism, and the way Germans have failed to deal with the past, but who also praises the Germans for their cultural achievements and abilities. The letter was designed to touch upon and mobilize the participants’ “psychological nerve points.” After reading the letter, free group discussions followed. The group moderator only formally moderated these discussions.⁹ In the second half of the group discussion, the moderator was to employ standardized counterarguments thematically oriented at the original stimulus. These arguments directly address the self-understanding and self-perception of Germans, the question of guilt, economic hardship after the collapse of Nazism, and the country’s relationship with

other nations, including the Allied forces.¹⁰ The Frankfurt scholars were quite satisfied with the quality of the group discussions, which instigated statements “loaded with affects, from deeper levels.”¹¹ This is especially expressed through the contradictory use of language and ideas: “The irrational, which the speaker seeks to unconsciously suppress,” is “set free” in “the structure of language. Its seemingly futile, nonsensical character proves to make sense as it provides insights into the latent psychological mechanisms effective in the speaker.”¹² The group context may complicate the validity of the findings due to the specific nature of group interactions and the problem to control for findings, as well as the lack of anonymity, and therefore the problem of social desirability (i.e., that participants only say what they think is socially acceptable). However, the group discussions give access to new dimensions and enable reconstructing manifest collective and individual orientations in German postwar society. Furthermore, the group discussions illuminate latent meanings, affects, and psychological undercurrents and dynamics, which are hidden or rejected on the surface.¹³

Most of the findings published in the *Group Experiment* are actually limited to statistical data on aggregate individual attitudes on antisemitism, guilt, and democracy. Only a small part of the study’s rich empirical material was actually subject to a qualitative analysis—namely the one published by Adorno in the monograph *Guilt and Defense*, which arguably offers the study’s most intriguing output. But, as Jan Lohl argues, the “heuristic value” and “theoretical insights” especially of this work for a social psychology of coming to terms with the past “cannot be exaggerated.”¹⁴ In this early qualitative study on guilt and defensive mechanisms regarding the Nazi crimes, Adorno

develops a set of groundbreaking theoretical interpretations on postwar German reactions to the Holocaust that have found only limited reception until this day. However, they also form the empirical basis for Adorno's later, much discussed and publicized radio addresses and lectures on "coming to terms with the past" and antisemitism in the late 1950s and early 1960s.¹⁵

As indicated, the participants were given a fictitious letter that would serve as a basic stimulus to evoke reactions on German cultural achievements and failures in coping with Nazism. Across different social strata, milieus, religious affiliations, and political convictions, strong affective reactions are detected; and in particular, a *collective defensiveness* to questions of Germany's national guilt and political responsibility. Such defense is also displayed by those discussants who were evidently personally "innocent." In sum, the study suggests a broad readiness to fiercely refuse German guilt and collective responsibility to deal with the Nazi crimes across generational cohorts. It also indicates prevailing patterns to employ defense strategies that blame others while exonerating the German nation. The cognitive incapability to judge and evaluate the historical processes, or even to get the historical facts straight; strong national identification and high levels of affective aggressions against "others"; prevailing stereotypes and stereotypical thinking; a general lack of empathy toward the victims, accompanied by a high degree of national and individual self-pity putting the Germans into the position of alleged "true victims" of Nazism and World War II—participants showed these and many other defensive reaction formations towards the issue of national guilt and responsibility. This defensive reaction toward the Nazi

crimes and their legacy, the lack of introspection and critical self-reflection in response to one's feelings and national identity, Adorno concludes, needed to be seen as a "transsubjective factor." It points to, in Horkheimer's term, the collective "force of forgetting."¹⁶ The "wish to be released from all burdensome responsibility" (GD 94) was, Adorno argues, omnipresent. It was extraordinarily difficult for many participants, "and certainly not just for the nationalist and fascist leaning ones, to complete the thought that they had something to make up for" (GD 138). Defensive reactions towards national guilt could be found among all German participants (GD 70). However, while it is "almost impossible to expect the population that experienced the catastrophe to generate a spontaneous feeling of guilt, . . . the desperate defense against any feeling of guilt represents the symptom of an extremely dangerous socio-psychological and political potential" (GD 138). Moreover, the Critical Theorists see the aggressive defense against the whole issue of guilt in postwar Germany as a symptom of broader initial societal failures, including the failure to deal with the relevant legacy of Nazism, despite the progress of institutional democratization.¹⁷

Yet, there are also notable differences among the subgroups. From a psychological perspective, among personalities that are bound to authority, and who are thus without a fully integrated superego, the dimension of "punishment and the need for punishment are much more significant than for individuals who are structured differently" (GD 72). The unmastered conflict between unconscious guilt feelings, residues of bad conscience, and the desire to display defensive reactions is then superficially "resolved" by the "externalization of guilt"

and “externalization of the superego” (GD 76)—and thus by the projection of guilt problems onto others. This may have the same origins as social authoritarianism in general, and the specific dynamic of defense aggression in relation to the Holocaust may follow patterns similar to the externalized superego functions typical for the authoritarian syndrome at large. In general, Adorno observes that attempts to deny collective national responsibility are peculiarly much more affectively loaded than the rejection of individual guilt (GD 82). The stronger hereby one’s national identification, upholding the “blind identification with the nation as collectivity” (GD 54), the less likely is one’s readiness to question aspects of this collective identity—and the more threatening such questions may appear to the collective self-image and the individual who depend on the former’s strength and power.¹⁸

Adorno thus differentiates between two major patterns of reaction. On the one hand, there is the vast majority of participants. Adorno classifies them as nationalists who are highly identified with a nationalist identity. They react defensively and aggressively toward addressing German crimes. In the group process, Adorno hereby encounters astonishingly affirmative comments about Nazism that are openly articulated by many group participants. On the other hand, there are those who less identify with the collective. They are rather ready to communicate or come to an emotional understanding of German guilt. They, too, show defensive reactions, but to a lesser degree, and they are more likely to support compensation for the victims. From a sociological perspective, then, the defensive reaction towards issues of guilt and the “interest in redeeming oneself and Germany at any cost is much lower in the case of non-nationalists than in the case of

nationalists. By no means is this to say that the question of guilt is not significant for non-nationalists. But they appear to be more able to internalize problems of conscience, to come to terms with themselves and to act accordingly, than the others. With these others, the reaction of striking out, putting oneself in the right, emerges right away, and with such an effort they can hardly escape from the critical theme because they could never quite believe themselves" (GD 72). In turn, the social psychology of the complex of guilt shows that those individuals who display the readiness to tackle the moral issues of the German crimes and to seriously work upon the Nazi legacies—and thus internalize guilt and make the problem a matter of their own responsibility—do not just show a capacity to develop substantive solidarity with other people. They also appear to be less neurotic, stronger personalities less likely to strike out against others. They seem altogether better suited to cope with an ultimately unmasterable past. Adorno suggests they are actually less guilty: "Perhaps one can say that the only one who is free from neurotic feelings of guilt and is capable of overcoming the whole complex is the one who experiences himself as guilty, even of those things for which he is not guilty in any immediate sense" (GD 182f).¹⁹

Of all those who participated and found themselves on the defensive, to be sure, none was prepared to say "it was right that they [the Jews, LR] were killed. Instead, it is most often a matter of trying to reconcile one's own excessive identification with the collective to which one belongs with the knowledge of the crime: one denies or minimizes this knowledge so that one does not lose the possibility of identifying with the collective, which is the only thing that allows countless people to overcome the unbearable

feeling of their own powerlessness" (GD 53). The psychoanalytic idea of "repressed guilt" should therefore "not be taken too narrowly": "defense mechanisms, as explained, are only brought into play insofar as the awareness of the injustice that was committed is conscious of it as an injustice" (GD 53).

However, there is, as Adorno subsequently reflects on the *Group Experiment* and the sociopsychological dynamics it displays, "much that is neurotic in the relation to the past: defensive posture where one is not attacked, intense affects where they are hardly warranted by the situation, an absence of affect in the face of the gravest matters, not seldom simply a repression of what is known or half-known."²⁰ The most striking elements of this relationship are shaped by defense mechanisms. They seemed to be persistently present in postwar Germany. Defense mechanisms displace issues of historical national guilt and responsibility, as well as associated moral and superego problems. Some specific sociopsychological elements and configurations of defense mechanisms are particularly noteworthy in our context.

First, defensive reactions toward issues of guilt are mostly stereotypical in character. Despite at times observing some creativity in evading the problem among participants, the Frankfurt scholars find repeated, always recurring standardized patterns in responses driven by the compulsion of defense. Stereotypical reactions, which block conscious self-reflection, are epitomized in both the defensive perception of the global historical event and in the perception of out-groups who allegedly use and manipulate it for their own purposes—of Allied winners and the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, who are mostly seen as external "accusers." With regard to the Nazi

genocide, the Critical Theorists find recurring stereotypical patterns downplaying, relativizing and minimizing its nature and scope in order to deny or “reevaluate” national guilt—so one can exonerate the German nation and “close the books on the past and, if possible, even remove it from memory.”²¹ These stereotypes of history and guilt range from outright denial of the crimes (GD 71) to formalistic “empty reference[s]” and acknowledgment that crimes have happened only to be cast off responsibility from oneself (GD 89). Defensively and aggressively attacking the legitimacy of criticisms of German guilt also often invokes stereotypical perceptions and ways to discredit the actual or perceived critics—for instance, by pointing to the alleged interests and envy of “the others,” of “mysterious powers” or by directly pointing to the presumed interests of Americans and Jews (GD 126). All criticisms of Germany’s past actions, guilt, and legacies are thereby often a priori seen as raised from “outside,” as “propaganda” with a specific purpose, whereas guilt is viewed solely as “internal,” subjective and thus relative (GD 72). Such subjectivist relativization, of course, may help to prevent the discussion of actual facts and objective responsibility (GD 75f). Either by finding facts inaccessible or by deliberately refusing to deal with them, participants display subjective opinions that are regularly stereotypical perceptions in outright contradiction to historical reality. The stereotypical views of the past and national guilt, which the Frankfurt School faced, are cloaked in “expressions of subjective opinion and opinion formation” but stand in striking “contradiction to objective reality,” so that their “irrational character” literally demands the use of psychoanalytic categories.²² Disputing individual feelings of conscience, “denying one’s own

guilt and German guilt in general, get mixed up together associatively, with ornate illogic" (GD 76). "Under the compulsion of defense," Adorno thus argues, "logic falls apart" (GD 85).

When dealing with guilt related to the Holocaust and Nazism, the prevailing pattern of stereotypical and irrational reaction-formations especially applies to references to "others." Guilt and responsibility are hardly perceived as a reflection of historical actions but, as indicated, as a charge raised from outside. Contrasting one's own collective to "others," rigid dichotomies are employed. Frequently using the singular indicating false generalizations, these others—the Jewish victims or the Americans or the Allied forces—are often stereotyped and negatively collectivized. They are presented as a homogenized, ultimately evil force of accusers when German guilt is discussed. Whereas "one generalizes about foreign peoples [and Jews, LR] without any inhibitions, every criticism of German actions is rebutted by pointing out that these are false generalizations" (GD 105). What frequently follows is the manifest striking out against the perceived accusers (GD 72).

Second, defense mechanisms are not just expressed in open Holocaust denial, overt historical revisionism, or the outright rejection of any German guilt, which have been typical for the neo-Nazi extreme right in postwar Germany. Defense aggressions can also use "subtler, especially more rational means, among which reckoning the accounts of guilt (*Aufrechnung der Schuldkonten* [as in balancing assets and liabilities in a ledger]) is arguably the most important" (GD 72). Trivializing and downplaying the Holocaust by drawing up a balance sheet—this widespread defense mechanism is especially evident among the majority who continue to strongly and without

irritation identify with Germany as a superior nation.²³ Tropes already present in the discussions of the *Group Experiment* and then almost ubiquitous in private and public discourses in post-Holocaust Germany include the attempt to historically “situate” the crimes (for instance, as a “response” to “Bolshevism”) or to compulsively refuse the Shoah’s genocidal singularity. The historical distortion of tracing the Nazi policies and deeds “back to the ‘corner’ into which the others ‘rounded’” Hitler (GD 109) is thereby often accompanied by the search for relief from the burden of guilt by means of equating the Holocaust and German crimes with the “crimes committed by others” (GD 115). Distorted, downplayed, and trivialized by the “silliest of rationalizations,” the “murdered are to be cheated out of the single remaining thing that our powerlessness can offer them: remembrance.”²⁴

Strategies to downplay German guilt, in cases where it is somewhat conceded, also entail reducing the responsibility for the crimes to a small minority of perpetrators (“Hitler did it”). This is captured in the popular image of the Pied Piper of Hameln, who magically and tragically seduces people. Applied to the manipulative power of Hitler, this common trope is “used to remove responsibility from the people, who faced such supposed magic powerless” (GD 99). The mythologized image of Germans as an infantile, helplessly seduced mass logically contradicts the equally common trope of “the Germans” as superior, or as mere victims of brute dictatorial force who still “emigrated internally” and refused blind obedience where they could. The unifying element of these tropes, to be sure, is the exculpation of the German nation.

Third, the most striking expression of defense mechanisms in relation to national guilt is projection. It absorbs

both the aforementioned stereotypical thinking and drawing up a balance sheet with the victims of Nazism. Adorno repeatedly observes “blatant example[s] of projecting guilt for wrongs committed onto others” (GD 124). Projection in this context functions by means of a psychosocial inversion of perpetrators and victims that turns things “upside down”: while “the German people is supposed to have been oppressed and to have had bad experiences” (GD 94), participants partake in the “shifting of their own guilt onto others” (GD 126).²⁵ Defense here indeed functions first and foremost by projecting guilt—and thereby simultaneously providing an opportunity to unleash and rationalize one’s aggressive drives: “When the truth or at least elements of the truth are processed by the defense mechanisms, a displacement takes place throughout. One transforms one’s own guilt into the guilt of others by taking the mistakes these others have made or are supposed to have made as the cause of what one has done oneself. This mechanism, however, has a well-known psychological side: that of projection” (GD 114). One’s own unconscious and repressed urges are, says Adorno, “projected to the other. One thus lives up to the expectations of one’s own superego, and at the same time has the opportunity to release one’s own aggressive inclination under the heading of legitimate punishment. The projection mechanism is manifest in paranoia, in the persecution complex. The inclination to project, however, extends far beyond the psychotic sphere and occurs in all possible degrees in normal everyday behavior” (GD 114).

At times, Adorno later analyzes German public discourse, the “victors are made responsible . . . and responsibility for the atrocities is shifted onto those who tolerated this seizure of power and not the ones who

cheered him [Hitler] on. The idiocy of all this is truly a sign of something that psychologically has not been mastered, a wound, although the idea of wounds would be rather more appropriate for the victims."²⁶ The counterfactual inversion of victims and perpetrators, according to which "the Germans" are the collectively innocent, true victims and "the Jews" are the ruthless culprits, engenders free-floating projections of guilt. The self-pitying focus on allegedly suppressed German suffering through bombs, hunger, the "mistreatment of German prisoners of war" (GD 123), is combined with anti-Jewish images in which powerful Jews epitomize crime and guilt, or conspire to take revenge against a German nation construed as innocent in the first place.

Secondary Antisemitism and the Imaginary "Power of the Victims": Blaming Jews for the Collective Memory of the Holocaust

The mechanism of inversion and projection is driving what the Frankfurt School ultimately conceptualizes as *secondary antisemitism*: a new form of Jew hatred that originates in the need to split off, repress, and downplay the memory of the Holocaust, which threatens the unhampered identification with one's national identity. As indicated, Adorno observes that the hostility toward dealing with Nazi atrocities against the European Jews and with national guilt often goes hand in hand with displacing and projecting guilt onto Jewish victims and survivors—a process resulting in such secondary antisemitism discriminating against Jews and also in the use of anti-Jewish stereotypes when doing so.²⁷ Motivated by

the desire to erase the unwanted memory of the unprecedented crimes against humanity tainting Germany and the unprocessed, diffuse or disintegrated feelings of guilt associated with them, guilt and conscience (or: superego functions) are hereby externalized and displaced. They are identified with the very victims of these crimes, or their successors. Many *Group Experiment* participants thus project guilt onto Jews as living collective representatives of this unmasterable past, or their reified image.

A key underlying factor of this is, Adorno later theorizes, a persistent "collective narcissism" motivating defense reactions and aggressions; an ongoing identification with an idealized image of the nation as a huge collective self: "On the subjective side, in the psyche of people, National Socialism increased beyond measure the collective narcissism, simply put: national vanity. . . . This collective narcissism was severely damaged by the collapse of Hitler's regime, but the damage occurred at the level of mere factuality, without individuals making themselves conscious of it and thereby coping with it." As there were no signs that this nationalist identification ever fell apart, Adorno resumes that "secretly, smoldering unconsciously and therefore all the more powerfully, these identifications and the collective narcissism were not destroyed at all, but continue to exist."²⁸

Shielding the self and the nation from the threat caused by the tremendous, to some extent indeed unbearable guilt undermining such narcissism, the antisemitic projective delegation of the "guilt complex" in relation to Holocaust memory may stereotypically attribute to Jews a variety of qualities. First, as indicated unconscious guilt feelings are identified with and projected onto Jews, so that they become the guilty group. The

latent, diffuse elements and awareness of guilt that are present in the weakly internalized superego are rejected and externalized, that is, turned outward, by projecting guilt onto the collective of the victims.²⁹ In this view, Adorno points out, "it was not the SS people who were brutal, who tortured the Jews, but the Jews who supposedly forced the Germans to acknowledge the crimes of the SS" (GD 124). Second, as psychologically displaced representatives of the past, Jews are also made responsible for the collective remembrance of the Holocaust and associated superego aspects. Thus, they are turned into an externalized, moral superego (or "moral authority") that appears to persecute and punish the individual and the nation by constantly reminding the Germans of their crimes and their guilt (GD 129ff). Charging them with being responsible for Holocaust memory that is split off from the individual and collective self, these superego or conscience functions attributed to Jews may make non-Jewish Germans initially look up to Jews, or their image, as moral guidance in this regard. Morally elevating "the Jews" (and other out-groups like the American victors), they are "psychologically maneuvered into the position of the parents, on whom the child depends . . . and from whom it expects forgiveness" (GD 92). Yet, this projective identification of moral superiority is difficult to sustain, especially if forgiveness is not easily delivered—this simultaneously instigates feelings of inferiority, envy, and the desire to find opportunities to dismantle the projected moral authority: to turn the others and particularly Jews into a tainted, guilty party as bad as oneself or one's nation.³⁰ Both the (1) projection of a punishing, sanctioning conscience or superego, and (2) the projection of guilt feelings, against which one can aggressively exercise

one's own punishing superego, are driven by the defense against individual and national guilt, against its unqualified recognition and—societal and psychological—internalization. Seeking to exonerate the burdened self and the tarnished yet still glorified identity, these projections ultimately motivate the denigration and antisemitic discrimination of Jews.³¹

Such “secondary antisemitism,” to be sure, molds with primary motives and classical stereotypes, and in reality they may be difficult to distinguish from each other. While adding new meanings, contexts, and layers to antisemitic tropes and also creating new ones, secondary antisemitism also absorbs and reproduces old stereotypes. Thereby antisemitism might not just be a projective outlet for the split off guilt issue and blind defense in relation to the Nazi crimes or one's nation. The denial or relativization of the Holocaust and of German guilt can also simply or primarily be a reflection of persistent antisemitism. Jews are often made responsible for unwanted Holocaust remembrance, and perceived as ruthlessly persecuting the German nation because of the country's past, which may be analyzed as secondary antisemitism. Yet, the common inversion that imagines the “persecution of the antisemites by the Jews,” and that makes the persecuted Jews “responsible for the most horrible deeds of the persecutors” (Löwenthal), is much older than the Nazi crimes or Nazism; this inversion has been part of the arsenal of antisemitism all along. At any rate, primary modern antisemitic stereotypes are absorbed and reproduced in forms of secondary antisemitism.

Antisemitism of the past and of the present is thereby rationalized as the consequence of Jewish behavior and guilt—and thus antisemitism is constructed as the

responsibility of Jews who allegedly *cause* Jew hatred. This inversion, of course, is also as old as antisemitism itself. Everywhere where we find defense aggressions and relativizations of the Holocaust, Adorno suggests that the “sheer urge to collective defense is likely to treat the antisemitism of the Third Reich apologetically.”³² Hereby antisemitism may be “retrospectively made into a consequence” of Jewish behavior. This way, Adorno points out, “one the one hand, the existence of a German antisemitism in the period in which the worst happened is discussed away; on the other hand, the antisemitic tendencies that are noticeable today are justified with supposed Jewish guilt. Only today, according to the argument, is there even anything like antisemitism in Germany, and the accusations against the past appear at the same time to be nothing and legitimated *ex post facto*” (GD 132). Openly and unrelenting antisemitic participants blame the Jews anyway for “everything that happened to them. The legend of ritual murder, Jewish unscrupulousness, the shirking of physical work—no antisemitic accusation against the Jews is too absurd to not be repeated with this intention” (GD 153).

From Adorno’s qualitative analysis in *Guilt and Defense* and his later reflections, we can isolate three anti-Jewish tropes and their specific variations in the context of guilt and post-Holocaust antisemitism that are particularly striking. First, there is the trope of the presumed Jewish desire for *revenge and lack of forgiveness*, which goes back to early Christianity. It is a classical antisemitic stereotype that Jews are “naturally” driven by a thirst for revenge. Several participants of the *Group Experiment* interpret the behavior of Jews after the collapse as “a thirst for revenge, and this thirst for revenge is frowned

on in the name of humanity that was not exactly highly regarded during the Third Reich" (GD 134). Interestingly, the classical antisemitic stereotype often occurs in combination with a desire for forgiveness that points to the guilt complex, but also to the externalization of super-ego functions. In fact, the expectation for Jews to forgive the Germans and forget the crimes, to "reconcile" with German society, has been raised since the last days of World War II, when the killing was still ongoing. Typical is the proposed "reconciliation committee" by the high-ranking Nazi perpetrator, German Labor Front leader and antisemite Robert Ley, who continued to lament about "the Jew" while drafting the proposal before his suicide in prison shortly after the war. The attitude "that everything should be forgotten and forgiven, which would be proper for those who suffered injustice," is especially "practiced by those party supporters who committed the injustice."³³ Anti-Jewish attitudes can then be rationalized by the lack of forgiveness that is expected: Jews are blamed for being unforgiving because they are not forgetting about German guilt and not willing to erase the living memory of the past. Jews are charged "for insisting on the appearance of justice because one does not want to make up for the wrong, especially when it is a matter of returning Jewish property" (GD 136). By criticizing them for being "Holocaust-centered," in this imago Jews are portrayed as regressive, backward-looking, and blocking progress. However, the "most obvious thought never occurs" to some of these participants, namely that it is presumptuous to ask Jews "to forgive and forget the horrors that exceed all imagination" (GD 136).

The revenge trope is, second, closely related to fantasies of presumed *Jewish power* to exercise such revenge.

The perceived threat of revenge only becomes relevant because—in line with antisemitic fantasies of Jewish conspiracy and hidden world power—some secret power is oddly attributed to the surviving Jewish victims and their successors; indeed even dead Jews buried in cemeteries may be perceived as a powerful threat.³⁴ Absorbing the “manipulation” power stereotype discussed in chapter 4, Jews allegedly control the media, manipulate public opinion, and issue “taboos” on criticizing Jews in democratic society. In the German context, this paranoid perception—just years after Nazi rule—is, of course, itself a continuation of Nazi thought. However, this trope on the one hand turns the mentioning of the Holocaust in the media, and by implication German guilt and criticisms of narcissistically gratifying images of German glory, into the mere expression of Jewish media power. The partial taboo or negative sanctioning of articulations of overt public antisemitism in post-Holocaust Germany, on the other hand, is often used to portray oneself as the genuinely “persecuted,” as the victims; to act as if the public, which disables open manifestations of antisemitism, “would direct the sting of society against the antisemite, while it is generally the antisemites who use the society’s sting most brutally and successfully.”³⁵ This inversion remains powerful and persistent, Adorno argues in 1963, even though in reality the defamed German media continue to reproduce coded forms of antisemitism, for instance in hateful images of the intellectual.³⁶

Third, there is the antisemitic trope of Jewish *money and greed* that stands out. The old antisemitic resentment of the “money Jew” is frequently employed in rationalizing defense. Jews are thereby seen as profiteers from the Holocaust who exploit the past for their own

benefits, status, interests, and especially material gain—until this day a very common, widely shared belief in German society and beyond. But even in the American context Löwenthal observed the occurrence of propagandistic antisemitic resentment that Jews are so shamelessly greedy when they are going after money that they even “exploit their position as a persecuted minority to secure special privileges” (FP 84). Another antisemitic trope is closely linked and often mobilized in this context: that Jews are “dishonest” and “cheat,” and thus there is no actual or serious but only fake interest in Holocaust remembrance. This imago ascribes immoral, low motives to Jews when it comes to German guilt, and thus can psychologically serve as an effective defense mechanism, as it devalues Holocaust memory and questions of national guilt by insinuating bad faith. Raising the subject or charging Germans are then construed as merely the product of illegitimate motives on the part of the victims. In so doing, the desperate search for “evidence” of material gains for victims or their successors serves the desire to dismantle the moral superiority and superego functions projected onto Jews. Whereas the Germans just want to go on living a normal life and might be forced to cheat in order to make a living, it is suggested, Jews cheat because of their greed and even want to materially benefit from their own persecution and demise—and that is why they do not leave the Germans in peace. “The Jews,” it is presumed, want to “get rich,” no matter what, whereas Germans, even if they cheat only want “to live” (GD 108).

Attributing to Jews the ruthless thirst for revenge, the threatening power of memory and the conspirational power to manipulate the media, or the exploitation of the

Holocaust for their material interests—all these resentments, to be sure, are hampered by profound logical inconsistencies. They require a social and psychological explanation. Once again, as with modern antisemitism at large, rationalization mechanisms often employ logically implausible arguments that serve sociopsychological functions—here especially of relief from national guilt and responsibility—and make only sense in this context. In addition to the simultaneous yet contradictory delegation of guilt and superego functions or moral authority—and the dynamics of projection and inversion—denied motives of envy and feelings of ambivalence can motivate specifically secondary antisemitic tropes.

No matter how thin or obscure, ultimately “the rationalization mechanism has to resort to the most drastic means to defend against them, even if these also give up the slightest hint of reason” (GD 152). As with antisemitism in general, those who are rigorously nationalistic are the most susceptible for secondary antisemitism; just as they also tend to be among those who cannot cope with national guilt and therefore seek to defend their main source of collective narcissistic gratifications by all sociopsychological means available.³⁷

Guilt, Antisemitism, and Democratization

The Frankfurt School’s groundbreaking work on social beliefs in postwar Germany toward the country’s criminal past provides crucial findings on the meaning of deep-seated political and cultural legacies after Nazi rule and the genocide against the European Jews. The Critical Theorists’ studies also advance critical insights into specific

new dynamics of “secondary antisemitism.” Such new antisemitism absorbs various anti-Jewish tropes—from presumed revenge fantasies to myths about conspiratorial Jewish power and control over media and images of Jews ruthlessly pursuing their own material benefits. These tropes emerge in ever new configurations. They are itself the product of modern antisemitic legacies (and as such point to an unprocessed Nazi past), *and* they can be linked to specific sociopsychological needs—namely the pressing wish to split off and trivialize Holocaust memory, to whitewash Germany’s national history, and to downplay the country’s crimes, guilt, and responsibility.

In this context, Jews once again become the target of hate: split off the self, guilt and superego functions and the whole murderous complex of the Holocaust are identified with and projected onto Jews. According to Adorno this projection, which is not just an individual perception but carries social force, represents a particular sociopsychological defense mechanism. Especially citizens harboring unprocessed, diffuse guilt feelings; nationalists; and citizens who are incapable to deal with the implications of such guilt and the damage it implies to any glorified image of the German nation, may wish to repress the memory of the German atrocities. It would harm a collectivized positive self-image that serves as a source of collective gratification. Thus, those who represent this memory become the subject of aggression: Jews are *qua* existence viewed as the living embodiment of an unmastered and unwanted memory of murderous crimes that is rejected, devalued and combatted. The history of the Holocaust and its memory are thereby psychologically projected onto the surviving victims and their families. In the projective delegation of guilt, moral authority, and

responsibility in relation to the Shoah, the Critical Theorists thus identify a powerful defense mechanism that motivates the denigration of Jews and serves as a source of antisemitism and social hate.

In so doing, after the war Critical Theorists took research on judeophobia in new directions. Their work helps illuminate new and subtle forms of anti-Jewish exclusions and discrimination. They show the role of unprocessed guilt feelings, persistent nationalistic identification, and lacking democratic responsibility in generating antisemitism after the genocide. And they disclose the underlying dynamics and antisemitic nature of Holocaust denial, even in its “soft” variants of trivialization. The Critical Theorists expose the wide-spread drive to destroy the memory of the Nazi crimes that tarnishes the German nation, and to erase the negative guilt feelings associated with them—while mocking the victims of this unprecedented terror.

The Frankfurt School’s initial work can also help explain some distinct aspects of contemporary antisemitism in Germany, Europe, and beyond. Diffuse, unconscious remorse feelings may partly constitute the origin of “postcolonial” secondary antisemitism on the European continent. Creating the demonized image of Jews as the collectivized “white colonizers” and “alien bodies” in the Arab world or equating Nazism with Israel as a “collective Jew,” have become common tropes in European discourses and public opinion. Such constructs collectively denigrate Jews and turn them into a morally most reprehensible, guilty party—if not into the major culprits of today’s world at large. Commonly invoked Nazi references and inversions vis-à-vis Jews as a collective entity are put on display in phrases like Palestinians are the “victims of the victims,” or “Muslims are today’s

Jews" (implying that Muslims are persecuted on the same level today in Western societies as Jews were in Nazi Germany). These tropes relativize the genocide and the still unmastered legacy of the Holocaust as well as the historical guilt associated with it on the European continent.³⁸ Moreover, these inversions might also point, following Critical Theory, to the deep wish to turn the persecuted victims of European history into today's perpetrators. By extension, this phenomenon may be observed in other delegations and projections of guilt, such as colonial guilt.³⁹ The wish to negatively portray Jews in the Middle East and Israel as representatives of a "white," colonial, demonic evil empire ruthlessly exterminating the indigenous Arab population, then, may also be explained by the need of citizens of former colonizing countries to be relieved from their nation's historical guilt and complicity in colonial crimes—or to make up for it. By displaying hatred of "Zionists" or the "evil" Jewish state, and in the process of proclaiming "solidarity" with its presumed victims, antisemitic images may be employed. Moreover, the sociopsychological dynamics of historical guilt projection, we can learn from Critical Theory, can as well be part of the motivational complex driving prejudice in other contexts; for instance, in relation to forms of racism and resentment that attribute alleged "privileges" to minorities who have been the victim of past discriminations or persecutions.

Analyzing collective defense mechanisms, Holocaust relativization, and tenacious old and new resentments, especially Adorno's work furthermore exposes how anti-democratic attitudes and social hate have lingered on—indeed even have been reinforced by new motives—in the institutionally democratized context of post-Holocaust

Germany. Part and parcel of this observed social trend that signifies the failure to democratize society at large is the societal shortcoming to seriously confront the past, and to address the denial of German guilt and the legacy of judeophobia. Even if institutions had profoundly changed, the depth and scope of the denial of guilt and of secondary antisemitism are viewed as expressions of the political and cultural legacy of Nazism. Adorno summarizes the outcomes and symptoms of this failure in 1959 in *The Meaning of Working Through the Past*, arguably his most influential essay in Germany of all time—and at the same time a biting critique of German postwar society's "destruction of memory" and urge to "break away from the past."⁴⁰

To be sure, significant political and cultural transformations, which Adorno and his colleagues could not anticipate, took shape later on. They were partly induced by institutional democratization and its long-term effects, but especially the product of a cultural opening, a changing social climate, and belated public debates and controversies since the first Auschwitz trials in the 1960s.⁴¹ When analyzing the complex intersections of memory, politics, and democratization in the subsequent evolution of post-Holocaust Germany, controversies like the "historians debate" and the "Bitburg controversy" in the 1980s and the "Goldhagen debate," the Wehrmacht exhibition debate, as well as the "Walser debate" in the 1990s stand out as public discussions critically reshaping Germany's self-understanding and relationship with its past. Still, these are belated debates, often polarized and hostile in nature, and do not represent a one-directional success story. They are marked by, in the words of Saul Friedlander, "a constant seesaw between learning and forgetting."⁴² The urge

to repress and downplay the past remains powerful, while negative sanctions in relation to public manifestations of antisemitism have recently even begun to erode.

However, even though the postwar processing of guilt, and of the particular legacies of Nazism and antisemitism, may at times be overrated in national and global public perceptions of Germany as a “champion” of coming to terms with past, Germany’s political culture has indeed profoundly democratized since Adorno’s days.⁴³ As I have shown in a previous study, there is even a public “dialectic of closure” at work: all public efforts that are made by politicians, journalists, and others to terminate the conversation about Germany’s coming to terms with the Nazi past, that is, to draw a line under the past and move on, are doomed to failure. These efforts rather reinforce Holocaust memorialization and ongoing public confrontations with the history of German atrocities.⁴⁴ At any rate, the public processing of the legacy of antisemitism, Nazism, and guilt—even if slow and arduous—has been crucial for the evolution of postwar Germany’s political culture, and cultural democratization.

The Institute of Social Research’s postwar work also raises broader questions about the societal impact of processing guilt and responsibility in relation to crimes against humanity, and how coping with legacies of mass murder and hate influences the success or failure of democratization. From these empirical studies, and Adorno’s subsequent theoretical and analytical reflections, we can generate general hypotheses about the specific negative effects of unprocessed authoritarian and antisemitic legacies, and of the denial of national guilt, on democracy. While economic progress, the rule of law, and democratic institutional reform are crucial elements in establishing

democracy, Critical Theory shows that much more is required for posttotalitarian democratization to be successful and lasting, and for democratic social value change to take place. Citizens need to take responsibility and process national guilt and responsibility as well as work through legacies of hate for democratic culture to take hold, to become anchored and substantiated in society. Critical public debate, especially on historical guilt and destructive authoritarian legacies, and the development of public autonomy are an integral part of this.

Dealing with society's past crimes and confronting legacies of hate can hence be conceived as a key variable for any substantial democratization and the evolution of a stable democratic culture after a genocidal regime; so is breaking with the authoritarian "inability to identify with others."⁴⁵ In post-Holocaust society, crucial indicators for the state of democratization are therefore the way society deals with antisemitism after the Shoah and the status of the Jewish minority.⁴⁶ Finally, Critical Theory suggests that democracy cannot really work without an underlying democratic political culture that is profoundly at odds with forms of social and political authoritarianism. Indeed, as Oskar Negt argues in Adorno's spirit, democracy is the only form of governing society that needs to be learned and acquired; it is not just about an institutional design, it cannot be established overnight, and it can never be taken for granted.⁴⁷ It requires active, autonomous citizens capable of reflective judgment and a broader public culture of critique.⁴⁸ Democracy requires a self-reflective political culture that is supportive of civil rights and public freedom—and thus not only a democratic or republican institutional framework but also a cultural environment from below that profoundly and

consciously breaks with previous authoritarian, antisemitic, and racist legacies hostile to the egalitarian, universal principles of freedom. In turn, Adorno points out, it is "an indisputable fact" that in whatever form antisemitism occurs, "it is indicative of more or less articulate wishes for the destruction of democracy itself which is based on the inalienable principle of human equality."⁴⁹

CHAPTER 9

WHY CRITICAL THEORY MATTERS

Antisemitism, Authoritarian Politics, and Human Dignity in the Global Age

In 1946, shortly after World War II, Jean-Paul Sartre famously claimed in his essay *Anti-Semite and Jew* that hatred of Jews had nothing to do with what Jews are or do. Antisemitism was not the result of interactions with Jews but rather was caused by the antisemite's "idea of the Jew." It was the antisemitic idea that explained anti-Jewish perceptions: "If the Jew did not exist, the anti-Semite would invent him."¹ Sartre touches on an understanding of antisemitism as a powerful matrix that is entirely detached from actual experience. The antisemitic view of Jews is a social invention. Antisemitism, like hatred of difference in general, hereby self-discloses its projective nature: the hostile images and narratives of the Other reveal stories about oneself. Indeed, as Horkheimer and Adorno suggest, the stories about Jewish criminals, child killers, conspirators, and sadists, precisely define

the antisemitic dreams that ignite the potentially violent practices of hate-mongers. The antisemitic matrix serves multiple social, psychological, and political functions as a social imaginary in the modern world. Many of these functions point to projective qualities and processes: those who hate Jews or legitimate their discrimination and persecution turn their inside—their inner world and inner conflicts—out to the external world.²

This insight into the nature of modern antisemitism has not lost its validity. To fully understand its dynamic, however, we need to turn to the Frankfurt School's original work and the empirical and theoretical explorations by the members of the Institute for Social Research.³ Critical Theory shows that unlike any other set of stereotypes, antisemitism as a political ideology can serve as a mass medium that reinforces the most heterogeneous unconscious drives, conflicts, fears. Projecting all kinds of wishes, insecurities, problems and anxieties onto the image of "the Jews," modern antisemitism can be conceived as a popular means to blame a group for one's own psychological tensions or group failures. As a modern worldview, it "explains" the contradictions of global society by pointing fingers at, or even desiring the destruction of, a tiny minority that had already been persecuted for centuries before six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust.

Revisiting the Frankfurt School: Models for Contemporary Analyses and Their Limitations

This is one among many critical insights discussed in this book. It exemplifies the relevance of the Frankfurt School's early work. And it illustrates Critical Theory's

continuous significance in shaping and advancing the study of modern antisemitism and racism. My systematic reconstruction of the Institute for Social Research's research output and theoretical arguments on antisemitism during and after the Holocaust thus implies more than demonstrating the meaning of the "antisemitism question" in the evolution of the Frankfurt School's Critical Theory. I have argued here that current research on antisemitism, racism, and authoritarianism in a globalized society can significantly benefit from revisiting the Frankfurt School's—at the time groundbreaking—theoretical models and arguments.

Critical Theory often challenges ideas we may take for granted or view as commonly sensical. In so doing, it opens up various directions for critical analysis and empirical research on antisemitism and racism in modern society. In general terms, the Frankfurt School's critical models may serve as a multifaceted resource for innovative political and social theorizing on the origins, dynamics, and politics of hate in the twentieth and the twenty-first century. Moreover, Critical Theory's work represents until this day arguably some of the most thorough reflections on the profound political and philosophical implications of the breakdown of civilization that is epitomized in the extermination of the European Jews. When we are thinking about the conditions of politics and democracy in the age of the Shoah and in response to the legacy of modern genocide, it is difficult to ignore Critical Theory.⁴

In reconstructing the Frankfurt School's contributions, this book challenged some popular misconceptions. It showed, for instance, that the caesura of the Shoah and the subsequent analysis of Nazism and antisemitism led to substantial transformations within Critical Theory—profound

theoretical modifications that had long remained unexplored and underestimated. Only at this critical juncture, and through reflection of the gravest injustice of the time, mature Critical Theory took fully shape. By molding and rethinking a variety of theoretical sources in view of the catastrophe, the Critical Theorists advanced a new critical understanding of political modernity, social totality, and regressive tendencies in the modern world that are hostile to the very idea of human emancipation and freedom—including especially antisemitic politics of unreason.

My rereading of Critical Theory showed a sophisticated understanding of social and political authoritarianism—one that is at odds with Milgram's discrete experimental environment, or with common sense notions equating authoritarianism with general human submissiveness. The Frankfurt School's conception does not limit itself to institutionalized conditions of obedience that treat human behavior and its social conditions as a black box. But neither does Critical Theory's understanding isolate authoritarian dispositions and politics from the sociohistorical conditions, institutions, and deep structures of society in which they are formed and situated. Instead, the Frankfurt School's complex models seek to grasp the underlying sociopsychological origins of authoritarian dispositions in "postliberal" society, linking the pressure on democratic ideals and institutions to structural societal transformations and antidemocratic politics that transcend social classes. And I have made the case here that—in opposition to reductionist models often attributed to them that *exclusively* conceive authoritarianism in terms of conformist submission⁵—the Critical Theorists also focus on modern authoritarian aggressiveness and its specific dynamics of social hate. They point to societal dispositions and actors

that dehumanize the self and the world; they are as self-destructive and masochistic vis-à-vis collectives and leaders as they are destructive and sadistic against "others." These dispositions can motivate sociopsychological "grievances," which are expressed in past and present populist mass mobilizations rebelling against democracy, civil rights, human freedom and equality, and modern civilization. The Frankfurt School's analysis illuminates that these authoritarian rebellions are almost always intimately tied to antisemitic images of Jews.

My study has also demonstrated how important the link between empirical analysis and theoretical reflection was for the Frankfurt School's understanding of antisemitism. Rather than dismissing empirical social research when examining these social and political phenomena, theory and innovative empirical designs interacted. This interplay fostered the development of Critical Theory. While the Frankfurt School's research, including the analysis of antisemitism, remained theory-driven throughout, empirical observations helped refine general theoretical claims.

Furthermore, I have argued that these critical models are much more "political," and sensitive to pressing political questions, dynamics, and conditions, than previous studies on the Frankfurt School suggested. To be sure, political and institutional problems are hardly systematically addressed, or respective arguments fully developed. Yet, it is clear that for Critical Theorists political contexts, institutions, actions, and mobilizations matter tremendously. And the Frankfurt School scholars unambiguously recognize that differences between democratic, authoritarian, and totalitarian rule can mean, for individuals and groups, material differences between life and death. This

is especially relevant in light of political antisemitism and genocidal politics against persecuted minorities. Contrary to popular perceptions, Critical Theory attributes a crucial role to democratic actors and critical publics in limiting ever new manifestations of antisemitic (or racist, for that matter) hate speech and authoritarian politics. Critical Theorists thus point, on the one hand, to the key role of civil rights and democratic political cultures, institutions, and autonomous societal organization, including a thriving critical public sphere, for safeguarding minorities and combating antisemitism; while, on the other hand, they assign particular importance to political mobilizations, and the limits they face in society, in generating “success” (or failure) of the politics of resentment. Among other things, discursive boundaries for hate speech and the active delegitimization of public resentments by public and political actors matter.

As this study has also shown the Frankfurt School’s work on antisemitism is riddled with inner tensions, and it is certainly not short of problems. Some assumptions also appear outdated from a contemporary perspective. Among several problems discussed in this study, the issue that stands out most is the unquestioned prioritizing of universal theoretical claims. These claims tend at times to subsume Critical Theory’s own insights into specific politico-cultural conditions, contingencies, and particular agency. Emphasizing the power of the general over the particular in the totality constituted by modern global capitalist society, the Critical Theorists overgeneralize social tendencies they observe and theorize. Consequently, at times some crucial differences—for instance, between the “regressive” modes of culture industry and actual hate speech—are indeed blurred.

Particular cultural legacies tend to be neglected or downplayed vis-à-vis general “societal explanations” and models. Only in his late postwar work did Adorno increasingly recognize the role of particular sociocultural legacies and national contexts in explaining the rise and power of Nazism and antisemitism. Adorno then concluded that it was hardly a coincidence that Hitler rose to power in Germany; in England or France, he may have well been laughed at. Antisemitism was not injected from the outside into German culture. Indeed, more than just modern rationalization and transformation processes gone mad, German culture was even before Hitler, in Adorno’s words, “interspersed with anti-Semitic prejudices” to its innermost core, particularly where it believed to be most cultivated.⁶

Yet Adorno’s argument about particular conditions of political cultures (in this case, the German *Sonderweg*, or special path) is not fully developed, even though Critical Theorists attribute much more relevance to political dimensions than commonly assumed. Overall, the role of specific societal cultural contexts, trajectories and political cultures remains to be rather underestimated in the Frankfurt School’s analysis of antisemitism. This is epitomized in Horkheimer and Adorno’s claim that the sphere of culture has no explanatory force. Saying so minimizes the important role of persistent cultural legacies and residues, and the *longue durée* of social values and patterns of political behavior in a particular society—an insight at times recognized but largely ephemeral to Critical Theory’s models. And any propaganda—antisemitic demagoguery at that—will only be effective if it meets, responds to, and even reinforces particular societal, cultural, and political conditions. Consequently, critical theoretical models in part fail to persuasively account

for significantly varying sociocultural or national differences when it comes to antisemitic and authoritarian attitudes and dispositions (as well as racist, homophobic, and misogynist ones), or for the cross-culturally varying effectiveness of propaganda and politics of resentment.

In some ways the history of the long hatred of antisemitism, targeting a community that is—on a global scale—tiny and dispersed, indeed still remains a mystery that defies explanation. Today this mystery remains present, even if to considerably varying degrees, in different political communities. After the Frankfurt School, many authors have sought to make sense of modern resentments against Jews by deciphering a coherent “logical” structure of antisemitic ideology or by reducing it to a general form of ethnic stereotyping. Few scholars have addressed antisemitism’s distinct, resilient yet astonishingly mutable, contradictory, and partly amorphous nature. Mostly declared a phenomenon of the past, few have consequently been able to grasp judeophobia’s persistent attractiveness and its repeated resurgence under conditions of political modernity; let alone offer persuasive models advancing its explanation. While antisemitism is understood as a (political) ideology that defies logic and ultimately constitutes a destructive and self-destructive delusion, the Frankfurt School also shows us that judeophobia serves various heterogeneous yet identifiable political, social, and psychological needs. To a considerable extent, denigrating views of Jews can be explained by their functions, and their societal origins can be critically examined.

Another significant shortcoming, for some, is that the Frankfurt School cannot offer a general theory, either. Notwithstanding Adorno’s later claim to have provided such a comprehensive theory in collaboration with Horkheimer, they did not. Clearly not all of the Frankfurt

School's arguments fit together into a theoretical whole. There are tensions and contradictions, loose ends worth reconsidering, speculative ideas that need to be situated in their historical context. The immediate transfer or travel of theories, models, and concepts over time should always be questioned anyways.

Yet, none of this devalues the enormous richness of the Frankfurt School's work and its relevance as a theoretical resource. While falling short of a "general theory"—itself an ambition that, I suggest, should be replaced by the recognition that such a general theory is unattainable—the Frankfurt School does offer important, multifaceted elements relevant for the interdisciplinary critical inquiry into this social phenomenon today. In fact, the Critical Theorists arguably provide more insightful theoretical models to explore the subject than any other single "school" or research institution has produced thereafter. The way forward, in my view, is theoretical modesty: to critically absorb Critical Theory's contributions and models, and to explore their contemporary relevance for social and political science and theory—but to stop expecting or aspiring to generate a single, comprehensive explanation.

**Why Critical Theory Matters:
Modern Antisemitism, Ideologies of Hate,
and the Resurgence of Authoritarian Politics
in a Globalized World**

In Critical Theory's view antisemitism is a *distinctly antimodern* ideology (or fragments thereof) that is both similar to and different from other prejudices. It has a long historical trajectory reaching back to antiquity.⁷ Yet antisemitism is also profoundly shaped by political

modernity and serves to explain the latter's contradictions. In the modern antisemitic imago, Jews control both capitalism and are made responsible for its critique; Jews are construed as too civilized and too uncivilized; they are charged with being too submissive or, alternatively, too unyielding; they are seen as too universalistic or cosmopolitan and too particularistic; too individualistic, yet too collectivist; too powerful and cunning, yet ultimately physically weak and cowardly.⁸

My reading reconstructed both particular dimensions and general elements of the Frankfurt School's theorizing of antisemitism. The former call attention to reflecting the specificity of antisemitism as a modern political ideology and sociopsychological undercurrent serving special purposes; the latter point to links between modern judeophobia and other hatreds and social resentments—a general stereotypical and objectifying logic and the social origins thereof. The Critical Theorists themselves draw connections between the general and the particular, yet also at times oscillate between interpretations emphasizing either. However, Critical Theory ultimately provides a framework that allows for recognizing and theorizing both general dimensions of anti-Jewish resentments, analogous to other forms of racism, and structural principles that are specific to modern antisemitism, such as the Jewish world conspiracy myth. Modern judeophobia, as pointed out with the Frankfurt School, is fundamentally contradictory. It incorporates century-old stereotypes yet it is almost infinitely mutable. It serves as a profoundly irrational container for free-floating projections and “objectifications run wild.” Projective in nature, as it has nothing to do with actions by actual Jews, antisemitism could in principle victimize any minority. Yet it does not:

antisemitism, past and present, primarily targets Jews. And Jews are its victims—while antisemitism, to be sure, more often than not is combined with hatred of other groups, freedom, and democracy.

As a political ideology, antisemitism historically absorbs a set of specific features and tropes fulfilling a variety particular functions. First, it constitutes a topological worldview, separating Jews not just as “others” (or discriminating against them as a minority among others) but construing them as singular “enemies of humankind.” The trope that Jews constitute a single, separate group responsible for preventing universal human salvation and redemption can be traced back to ancient resentments and Christian antisemitism. Since the early years of modern antisemitism and culminating in Nazi ideology, Jews are singled out as unique “threats to world peace” (Julius Streicher). Second, it is only a small step from conspiracy myths to antisemitism. At its core, modern antisemitism is a conspiracy myth that construes Jews as a hidden, cunning, powerful, cosmopolitan, globally operating force running the modern world and pulling the strings behind all that goes wrong, dragging countries into wars for their profit or interest and constantly conspiring to advance their world conquest. Third, and intimately linked to anti-Jewish conspiracy myths, antisemitism objectifies Jews as representatives of the impenetrable sphere of circulation—money and finance, global trade, “rapacious capital,” lawyers and salesmen, cosmopolitan intellect and media. Antisemitism thereby also identifies in its image of Jews all presumably abstract aspects and the inscrutable complexities of modern society. Fourth, modern antisemitism implies the counterimage of idealized, autochthonous,

“natural” ethnic or religious communities that would provide unlimited collective gratification and happiness if only purged from the negative influence of “the Jews” as “intruders.” Based on binary oppositions between the “good people” or “good gentiles” versus the “evil Jews,” judeophobia therefore often combines extreme nationalist aspirations and megalomania with paranoid delusions of collective persecution.⁹

And fifth, accusing them of ritual murder, antisemitism construes Jews as driven by insatiable, “barbaric” desires to fulfill their interests and (sexual) desires, even to poison, kill and eat children. The key to understanding these features and functions, the Frankfurt School shows us, is in analyzing the social and political afterlife of archaic drives and their rationalizations—as well as their expressions in the politics of “psychoanalysis in reverse.”

Critical Theory’s conception of the intimate links between an antidemocratic syndrome, authoritarian social conditions and politics, and antisemitism merits particular attention today. Just as empirical studies have shown time and again that authoritarian dispositions and glorifications of authoritarian rule strongly correlate with homophobia, misogyny, and racism, they also continue to strongly correlate with antisemitism.¹⁰ This points to an underlying sociopsychological authoritarian syndrome as diagnosed by the Frankfurt School. As the Critical Theorists suggest, antisemitism is a specific form of “rationalized idiosyncrasy” that is ultimately directed against freedom and difference as such—against the very idea of “a better state in which people could be different without fear.”¹¹

It is no coincidence that contemporary authoritarian political regimes, denying public freedom, civil rights

and democratic participation in public life, also often engage in politics of hate against ethnic and religious minorities, and Jews in particular—just as these regimes tend to simultaneously persecute gays and lesbians and deny women’s rights. Anti-Jewish hatred and authoritarianism arguably benefit from societal dependency under instrumental economic imperatives and powerlessness, and from weakened public and private autonomy in postliberal societies. Yet they are especially engendered under conditions of state-sanctioned political violence and the denial of civil rights and public freedom under authoritarian rule. In light of the Frankfurt School, political theorizing therefore needs to advance the critique of authoritarian social conditions, political regimes, and movements that undermine or violate human rights and dignity. More often than not, they simultaneously promote antisemitism. Critical Theory’s models show how much such regimes and movements threaten the very condition of possibility of a humane, free and just society.

Critical Theory has also much to offer to the analysis of the contemporary rise of authoritarian right-wing populist parties within democracies, as well as the resurgence and increasingly bold assertiveness of autocratic regimes the world over—all of which frequently march in step with antisemitism, racism, misogyny, and homophobia. New research on authoritarianism, often blithely dismissing the Frankfurt School’s groundbreaking work as outdated without seriously engaging with its insights, in fact largely confirms Critical Theory’s relevance. It points to an overall syndrome that is not limited to authoritarian political cultures but on display today even in the still widespread readiness of citizens of democratic societies to replace democratic systems falling short on

their promises by “a system which sacrifices all claims to human dignity and justice” (AP).¹²

As this study has shown, the Frankfurt School provides profound, still significant insights into the specific dynamics of authoritarian political mobilizations. The Institute’s work on demagogues and their authoritarian propaganda and tactics is well worth revisiting. These demagogues continue to refine their techniques in the age of global social media; yet most of the constitutive elements of the political discourse they facilitate can be analyzed with the help of the work by the first generation of Critical Theory. Especially under democratic conditions, the new authoritarians employ innuendo, codes, and ambiguous statements, which the demagogues’ listeners and followers rightly understand as, and let them to indulge in, hate speech and fantasies of violence—but which allow the authoritarians to claim that they have been misunderstood, or to portray themselves as innocently persecuted by powerful media and “corrupt” “cosmopolitan” elites, who allegedly act in contrast to “the (good) people.” The Frankfurt School shows how the personifications and collective dichotomies work that characterize populist demagoguery. They are not artifacts of a bygone age, but present the world over, and today even revived in the heart of modern democracies.

Attacking “globalism” and those construed as “others” who allegedly do not belong—from Jews to other religious and ethnic minorities, to blacks, immigrants, and gays—the new authoritarians produce claims that can be both read as warnings and encouragements of hate and violence.¹³ Aggressions are time and again directed against the “Others” who are allegedly deviating from the norm, as Critical Theory perceptively noted; the new

authoritarians, their media, and their followers hereby also indulge in fantasies of punishment—often disguised in calls to restore law and order and public safety—while they hope for their violent fulfillment. The new authoritarians include new right-wing populists within Western democracies, autocratic governments and their leaders, as well as countercosmopolitans—like radical Islamists striving for a universal religious regime and engaging in terrorism against minorities, Jews, and the general public. Authoritarian populism with its, in Adorno's term, "prophetic masochism"¹⁴ and ideologies of hate are now once again globally resurging phenomena, from the U.S. to Western and Eastern Europe, from Russia to East Asia, from Latin America to the Middle East.¹⁵ They are part and parcel of political modernity. Rather than being a problem of the past, they are a serious threat to the foundations and future of human rights and democracy. In contrast to Francis Fukuyama, who at the end of the Cold War predicted an upcoming global "universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government," Critical Theory helps decipher the continuous authoritarian appeal in modern society, explain the origins of an authoritarian political backlash against progressive social value change today, and illuminate why authoritarian politics of resentment are likely here to stay for some time.¹⁶ In so doing, the Frankfurt School contributes to understanding what is arguably a new age of global authoritarianism.

Unfortunately, antisemitism is hereby not merely a historical artifact, either—by any measure. It is mutating, spreading out, and lives on with force. The logic of resentment and projection, of which antisemitism is characteristic, can today certainly be discerned in various

forms of discrimination, exclusion, and violence—as well as justificatory discourses—directed against blacks, immigrants, Sinti and Rom, or ethnic minorities. But (post)modern antisemitism, epitomized in the arson of synagogues, propaganda calling for the destruction of the Jewish state of Israel, or hate speech about Jews and “Zionists” as powerful global conspirators behind globalization, is very much alive.¹⁷

This trope can draw from the history of modern antisemitism, in which Jews were perceived as the embodiment of political and social modernity. Like any other propaganda, it traditionally functions best if people already believe in the message. In the Frankfurt School’s lens, modern antisemitism is a particular form of objectified consciousness. It entails a reified antimodernity and anticapitalism. The reflection of this fact is also a starting point for any critical social theory of antisemitism today. Unlike any other social group, Jews were first and foremost identified with the totality of all presumably “negative” dimensions of cultural, social, legal, and political modernity. This personification entails the utmost contradictory modern phenomena that Jews epitomize in the antisemitic imago, from new forms of abstract power to mass violence, wars, individualism, societal crises, unemployment, rapid social transformations, cultural change and subversion or diffusion, and modern constitutional rule of law and civil rights. In the early twentieth century, antisemitic propaganda blamed Jews for all actual or perceived negative aspects of the modern world, including the social malaise of class society. In Europe, Jews were also accused of creating havoc and a continent in disarray. This narrative was not restricted to a specific national context but successfully cut across

national borders. Utilizing traditional anti-Jewish stereotypes, Critical Theory suggests, modern antisemitism continues to personalize the abstract, endlessly complex and transformative aspects of modern society and turns them into an objectified, concrete object of resentment. According to this theoretical argument, the matrix of historical anti-Jewish resentments was not just a permanent undercurrent of European society. It could also be reconstructed elsewhere to serve as a politically usable explanation of the modern world to personify blame for its shortcomings and failures.

In my argument, the contemporary analysis of politics of resentment can also draw inspiration from Critical Theory's claims about the social conditions of "antisemitism without Jews" in global society. Not only are Jews, visible minorities, and immigrants *not* the cause anti-Jewish and racist resentments; to the contrary these resentments tend in fact to be most popular and function best where Jews, visible minorities, and immigrants are absent. Indeed, it is itself a racist or antisemitic trope to suggest that these groups, or organizations they take part in, and their alleged or actual behavior (or the Jewish state of Israel or, for that matter, dictatorships in Africa) "cause" or "produce" racism and hatred of Jews respectively. Doing so means blaming the victims of hate: it perpetuates collective discrimination for the resentments directed against them and thus, unwillingly or not, rationalizes racist thinking.

Instead, antisemitism needs to be explained in the context of psychological and social functions independent from what Jews are, or what they do. Judeophobia has been repeatedly mobilized but initially peaked during the period of the first, industrial globalization from the

late nineteenth century to World War II. Since the beginnings of the modern era, among other things it was a way to “make sense” and personify rapid sociocultural change, traditionally evoking the image of Ahasver, the uprooted “Wandering Jew.” A new rise of antisemitism today corresponds with the dramatic social and technological transformations of the postindustrial, “second globalization.”¹⁸

Critical Theory’s analysis has indeed regained special relevance in a “partially globalized world society.”¹⁹ Unfiltered hate speech and the politics of resentment, paranoia, and unreason have flourished with the rise of new social media, new decentered communication technologies, and global publics—whatever their democratizing effects and virtues and the increased transnational communications they induce.²⁰ Global modernity enables new cosmopolitan, cross-cultural alliances and understandings but also allows for the resurgence of old resentments as a “legitimate” way to make sense of, react to, and oppose an incomprehensibly complex modern world that undermines traditional patterns of social interactions in an unprecedented way. Under conditions of global modernity, generated by global integration that has widened class divisions on a global scale and by a complex network society, even world conspiracy myths have become increasingly popular again. The primary target of these myths have been traditionally, and are still today, the Jews.²¹ Antisemitic political propaganda as rationalized paranoia seeks to identify “organized World Jewry” secretly pulling the strings in order to locate the “source” behind all problems and contradictions of global society. This trend has been accelerated by recent global economic crises and militarized conflicts.

Critical Theory links the reproduction of mythical antisemitic ideology to social contradictions and objectification processes in globalized modern capitalist society that simultaneously engender regressive forms of anti-capitalism, antimodernity, and countercosmopolitanism. They are crystallized in images of cosmopolitan Jews, Jews as global “war-mongering,” “child killers,” “imperialists” and “colonizers,” or as “blood-sucking,” “rapacious” greedy capitalists (as opposed to good, productive capitalists). Contemporary antisemitism identifies and objectifies Jews as the quintessential “globalizers,” indeed as the social force behind globalization and all its problems without interrogating and conceptualizing structures of social and political domination in globalized modernity.

Finally, the Frankfurt School’s studies have laid the groundwork for understanding the transformations of antisemitism after the Holocaust, or *modernized antisemitism*. This includes new, subtle forms and “secondary” motives related to historical legacies and guilt. The scholars provide critical theoretical tools for understanding the use of innuendo, codes, allusions, and proxies—what Adorno calls “crypto-antisemitism”—in hate speech and political mobilizations. Especially in democratic contexts in which antisemitism is illegitimate and consequently “there are no longer any antisemites” who accept the label (just as “there are no longer any racists”), the politics of hate mostly operates beyond the often discredited overt expressions of racialized Jew hatred. Such codes need not be directed against Jews as Jews; as Adorno points out, they can take the form of anti-intellectual resentments or anti-American stereotypes.²² Or they can find expression in coded rants about Jews as “the Lobby,” “the Zionist media,” “Zios,” “the globalizers,”

“Wall Street,” and the “East Coast.” If the same stereotypical content and demonizing generalizations about Jews as “others” and as exceptionally evil are mobilized (e.g., greedy, ruthless, dishonest, revengeful, secretive, conspiratorial, war-mongering, media-controlling, not trustworthy, traitorous), substituting the term hardly diminishes the problem.

Like cultural racism, which has become the subject of an increasing body of literature, cultural antisemitism reproduces resentments and stereotypes about minorities by employing codes, innuendo, and subtle discrimination. Yet cultural antisemitism is mostly unrecognized as such in mainstream discourse. Indeed, its existence is often trivialized, rationalized, or outright denied without examination—a priori assuming that judeophobia is either no longer an issue (and in the perception of many, racism is no longer a problem, either), allegedly harmless if it is not openly instigating hatred, or raised as an instrument for other political purposes. Some on the right and the left even believe that by attacking “the Jews” or “the Zionists” they break a “taboo” and allegedly speak truth to power—suggesting Jews could no longer be seen among oppressed minorities but are a powerful group ruling society—while in fact they articulate majority views critical of Israel as well as widely shared stereotypes in mainstream discourse about Jews, or about Israel as the “collective Jew among nations” (Léon Poliakov). In turn, Jewish critics of antisemitic tropes and codes are frequently presumed to be accusing gentiles of antisemitism in bad faith—thus employing antisemitism as a political weapon to advance their interests and to silence “anti-Zionist” criticism of Jews and Israel, or secretly conspiring to do so.²³ However, as

Critical Theory reminds us, those who harbor resentments often vigorously attack the messengers and tend to portray themselves as society's persecuted minority. Research on antisemitism and racism in the tradition of the Frankfurt School takes these collective resentments seriously. Critical Theory raises awareness and increases sensitivity also to coded and new forms of denigration or stereotyping. And the Frankfurt School employs ideology critique to subject such tropes—and their historical transformations and modernizations—to critical decoding, analysis, and theorizing.²⁴

Critical Theory also helps illuminate links between political discourses of exclusion and the logic of dehumanization, directed against Jews and other minorities, to more structural, institutionalized forms of discrimination. Antisemitism can be entrenched in institutional practices and reproduced in institutional climates by organizational members who subjectively believe they are against antisemitism or racism, and would fiercely deny they uphold resentful tropes. Discrimination against Jews and other minorities may be reproduced in contemporary forms of institutional antisemitism and racism—on a microscopic and local level, in some cases even among international (non-)governmental organizations that nominally promote cosmopolitan purposes but in some cases aggravate the problems they claim to combat.²⁵ Critical Theory's materialist social theory makes us mindful of such institutional forms of anti-Jewish or racist bias and structural exclusions that do not even necessarily depend on individual or social attitudes, or are limited to these.

Overt forms of Jew hatred, to be sure, are also resurfacing in the twenty-first century. While taking many

different forms and configurations, their recent resurgence in various political arenas and publics is as striking as it is increasingly globalized. As indicated, antisemitism is at the core of global Islamist movements and terror, but also advanced by various authoritarian regimes, and new populist and nationalist parties around the world. Even if there are no longer any antisemites—a claim that may be losing its validity in times when antisemites begin to wear that label as a “badge of honor” again and during which anti-Jewish chants can be heard again on European streets²⁶—antisemitism is clearly far from being a merely historical problem, or becoming so any time soon.

In fact, antisemitism is a social and political phenomenon and a pressing contemporary challenge that is likely to stay with us. Thus the causes, dynamics, and politics of unreason and hate need to be the ongoing focus of serious social scientific inquiry, and of social and political theory. To this, I have argued in this book, the Frankfurt School has still much to contribute. Their models are sufficiently rich, complex, and sophisticated; but also bold, theory-building, and inspiring. They comprehensively combine psychoanalytic theoretical claims with economic and social theory, as well as theories about modern subjectivity, socialization, culture, and politics. Recognizing the scope and potential of these contributions does not shield their claims, some of which are undoubtedly the product of a specific time and context, from criticism; nor does it deny the need for developing new interdisciplinary methodologies and more sophisticated research designs able to reconnect different approaches to the study of resentment in a fragmented world society.

The Frankfurt School and Beyond: Critical Cosmopolitanism and the Politics of Human Dignity

Critical Theory itself moves beyond the mere critique of society, power, modern ideologies, and of the politics of unreason, which is most radically expressed in antisemitic political paranoia. Implicitly and explicitly, Critical Theorists provide a significant resource for self-reflective, cosmopolitan political philosophy after the Holocaust—a trajectory of critical thought driven by Adorno’s powerful new, revised categorical imperative, forced upon humans by the horrors of Nazism, “to arrange their thoughts and actions so that Auschwitz will not repeat itself, nothing similar will happen.”²⁷

Reflecting on the challenge of modern antisemitism, the Frankfurt School’s work engenders distinct perspectives for developing critical cosmopolitan political and social theory after the Holocaust. Such philosophy, it is argued here, thoroughly works through the legacy of the Nazis’ genocidal madness and terror. In view of the totalization of irrationality and “limitless horror” (DE 150) that is manifest in the systematic extermination of European Jews, critical thinking consequently objects to any form of irrationalism, which is often still falsely attributed to the Frankfurt School by both its critics and admirers.²⁸

Critical Theorists, to be sure, subject instrumental forms of modern economic rationality to a scathing critique that cannot be neatly separated from normative reflection. Indeed, the Frankfurt School engenders critical cosmopolitan thought that links social theory, including

a materialist critique of objectification, with political and normative theorizing.²⁹ The Frankfurt scholars problematize the ruling mode of instrumental rationalization, which they see as constitutive of modern society's organization. Its immanent monadological logic, blindly entangled in the principle of subjugation, abstracts from particular human qualities and needs while indiscriminately objectifying and denigrating the inner, external and social world. Following imperatives of societal functionality and abstract valorization that serve "purposeless purposes" detached from human ends, this logic simultaneously undermines the individual and social capacities for judgment and thinking—thus disabling the reflection on societal conditions and enabling potential relapses into barbarism. Make no mistake: for the Critical Theorists the politics of unreason, as exemplified in the "irrationalism" of antisemitism, epitomizes a rebellion against reason as much as it "derives from the nature of dominant reason and of the world corresponding to its image" (DE xix).

Hence Critical Theory identifies the prevailing economic and administrative rationality itself as deeply irrational and, once running wild, as a source of authoritarian and violent tendencies. What appears to be rational—instrumental reason—takes part, Critical Theorists insist, in self-perpetuating, superfluous, unnecessary, and unjustifiable human suffering and grievances. These, it is argued, help enable the dialectical turnover of rationality into direct domination. They increase the irrationality of society—the gap between superfluous oppression and modernity's technological as well as organizational possibilities to create a just and free society. In so doing, they engender authoritarian dispositions and rage and

provide fertile soil for modern politics of unreason. As I have shown in this book, the Critical Theorists argue that precisely the dialectics of rationality and irrationality help produce authoritarian dispositions and rebellions against modernity and civilization “directly in the service of domination” (DE 152).

Yet, theirs is not an indeterminate opposition to Western enlightenment, or a defense of identity politics based on collectivist particularisms and the glorification of seemingly autochthonous cultural mores, with which Hegel is complicit. The Critical Theorists, and especially Adorno, see such a defense of cultural reifications and other forms of relativism, in (pan-)nationalistic or other guise, intimately tied to Hegel’s apologia of the false—and dominant—universal, not its opposite. The repressive egalitarianism of the fascist collective replicates and hardens the obstinate particularism universally alive in modern society. By contrast, the Frankfurt School’s work points to a profoundly universalistic, cosmopolitan critique of antisemitism, unreason, and all forms of political and social domination—as well as of those present-day structures and ideologies reinforcing it. In so doing, Critical Theory indeed radicalizes self-reflective enlightenment politics—pushing it further against hardened social particularisms, exclusions, and persecutions.³⁰ The Frankfurt scholars deliberately and explicitly seek to prepare a positive concept of enlightenment. It takes its genuine intellectual force from the Kantian cosmopolitan ideal and “a conception of the good society and its citizens.”³¹ It points to the promise of genuine freedom and emancipation from blind domination, which is often fetishized in unquestioned cultural claims to “authenticity” and identity. Those claims seek or pretend immediacy but

evade critical reflection and conceal that they are the product of historical reifications. Indeed, Critical Theory is motivated and driven by the desire for universal human freedom, which Horkheimer and Adorno conceive as inseparable from enlightenment thinking—even if it is yet to be fully realized. In so doing, the Critical Theorists point to a more robust idea of reason as at once a critical philosophical concept and a norm for human emancipation.³²

While Adorno and the Frankfurt School at large are critical of many of Hegel's substantive claims, they absorb elements of his method, crystallized in the mode of "determinate negation," to which they remain faithful. Critical Theory refuses to give up critical claims and concepts with universalistic underpinnings only because these have been compromised by historical practices, or signify unfulfilled promises. Adorno insists: "One of the most dangerous errors now lurking in the collective unconscious—and the word error is far too weak and intellectual for it—is to assume that because something is not what it promises to be, because it doesn't match its concept, it is therefore worse than its opposite, the pure immediacy which destroys it."³³ Consequently, universal(istic) ideals, concepts, and rights claims should not be dismissed by pointing to the heteronomous cultural origins from which they may have once originated, or by decoding their contemporary use for ideological purposes—however legitimate and important the critical genealogy of norms may be. Reducing critical ideals, in a particular Nietzschean reading, to mere expressions or reflections of power means throwing the baby out with the bathwater, in Adorno's saying. Depriving concepts of their critical qualities, such thinking partakes in one of

“the most dangerous errors” and may itself fall victim to what Richard Wolin aptly calls the intellectual “seduction of unreason.”³⁴

Moving beyond “moral rigor and absolute amorality” (DE xviii), the Frankfurt School advances the critique of ever new forms of political and social domination. Critical Theory hereby inspires models of critical cosmopolitanism in the face of the unprecedented horrors of the twentieth century in order to stop such atrocities in the twenty-first. Quite explicitly, in view of the horrors of the twentieth century the mainstays of the first generation Frankfurt School engender normative political claims that are linked to critical social theorizing and awareness about repressive societal conditions, and demagoguery reinforcing them: this is what grounds their critical cosmopolitanism. It unconditionally opposes the dehumanization of any group, minority, or Other in global society, while grasping why the “hardest hit, as everywhere, are those who have no choice.”³⁵ Such thinking is concerned about sociopolitical structures and material conditions reproducing global poverty and centralized power, authoritarian dispositions and institutions, the politics of hate and exclusion, and threats to public freedom.

Challenging direct and structural forms of domination around the world while recognizing systemic constraints for action, cosmopolitan political philosophy in the tradition of the Frankfurt School actively promotes democratic citizenship, social justice, and solidarity with the oppressed, persecuted, and excluded. The Frankfurt School’s critical reflections are inseparable from a larger, universal struggle against social domination, which entails the struggle to preserve the remnants of freedom and humanity in existing societies: “Critical thought,

which does not call a halt before progress itself, requires us to take up the cause of the remnants of freedom, of tendencies toward real humanity, even though they seem powerless in face of the great historical trend" (DE xi). They point to a critical theory and politics of universal human rights and dignity, which entail the practical and political goal to combat antisemitism, racism, homophobia, misogyny, human rights violations, authoritarian rule, and political terror; more often than not, Critical Theory shows us, these phenomena are interlinked and part of a syndrome.

The theorists were acutely aware that truly realizing human dignity depends on transformed democratic and social conditions. For the time being, the politics of human dignity entails seizing opportunities for public and political interventions against all forms of domestic and global domination and exclusion, and critical reflection thereof. It requires the "responsibility to protect" persecuted groups from crimes against humanity as well as a vigilant take on hate speech. In Critical Theory's lens, this also implies overall more robust universal and civil rights entitlements rather than the outright dismissal of rights discourses; more opportunities for rather than the denial of political refuge³⁶; more democratic public spaces, participation, and empowering institutions rather than less; more practical solidarity with Jews and other minorities in global society; more social and educational equality rather than more global market rule; more cosmopolitanism rather than less. Contrary to misperceptions of the Frankfurt School, Critical Theory hereby does not reject liberal civil rights, from which Jewish minorities among others had historically benefited, but seeks to move these formal claims to a higher, universal

plane, and make them substantive—reflective of contradictions, implicit exclusions, and also of the “coarsest demand: that no-one shall go hungry any more.”³⁷

Critical Theory unambiguously points to forms of universal inclusion and human solidarity without repressive egalitarianism, a society that grants rights and allows for difference without fear, and for homelands without frontiers—while analyzing the political and societal conditions that reinforce unfreedom. Moreover, the Frankfurt School’s critical thinking takes genocide and crimes against humanity seriously—most drastically epitomized in the extermination of the European Jews—as the gravest threat and injustice of our time which needs to be prevented at all costs, and from which to draw lessons for the future. This is one of the central meanings of Adorno’s categorical imperative. It is no longer possible to evade the demanding task to stop present and future persecutions of minorities and crimes against humanity, and address the conditions that enable them—including the incitement to such crimes through propaganda and hate speech.

In so doing, Critical Theory advances a universalistic, postsovereign critique of constitutive economic imperatives of global modern society and social domination—while it confronts all forms of violence and the “right to practice mass murder,” which is often shielded “in the name of the principle of sovereignty under international law, which tolerates any act of violence in another country” (DE 160).³⁸ Recent work has begun to appropriate and more fully develop the political and philosophical implications of the Frankfurt School’s earlier work for rethinking human rights and the politics of human dignity in global society, taking Critical Theory into new

directions without renouncing on its core intentions and normative considerations.³⁹

Combining social research and sociological theory with political and philosophical reflection, the Frankfurt School provides an ongoing inspiration for contemporary political research and theory. It takes into account that after the reversion of civilization to barbarism already took place, future regressions are always possible. In our time, such regressions, including the authoritarian self-destruction of democracy, are a real threat again. Committed to active genocide prevention, to the fight against judeophobia and any politics of hate and unreason, and to the uncompromised ideal of universal human emancipation, Critical Theory's multifaceted work on antisemitism represents a unique kind of cross-disciplinary, self-reflective scholarship. This is part of the Frankfurt School's enduring legacy.

NOTES

Chapter 1. Introduction

1. Theodor W. Adorno, the Frankfurt School's most influential thinker, rejected this label. The Frankfurt School has originally been (self-)identified with "Critical Theory" and later on, to avoid confusion with a broader array of critical theories, "first generation" Critical Theory. In this book I include first and foremost the so-called inner circle of the Frankfurt School and the Institute for Social Research, namely Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Leo Löwenthal, and Herbert Marcuse. They build the primary cast of characters in this study. However, included in the discussion are also Institute members or affiliates like Walter Benjamin, the early Erich Fromm, Franz Neumann, Friedrich Pollock, and Otto Kirchheimer. See also Stephen Eric Bronner, *Of Critical Theory and its Theorists* (1994); Richard Wolin, *The Frankfurt School Revisited* (2005).
2. It is impossible to review the vast amount of literature and the broad reception in all fields. A few works should serve as stand-ins for many others in the respective fields of intellectual history, for example, Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School, 1923–1950* (1996 [1973]) and John Abromeit, *Max Horkheimer and the Foundations of the Frankfurt School* (2011); sociology and social research, for example, Craig Calhoun, *Critical Social Theory: Culture, History, and the Challenge of Difference* () and Zoltán Tarr, *The Frankfurt School: The Critical Theories of Max Horkheimer*

and Theodor W. Adorno (2011); philosophy, for example, Brian O'Connor, *Adorno's Negative Dialectics* (2005) and Gerhard Schweppenhäuser, *Theodor W. Adorno: An Introduction* (2009); social psychology and psychoanalysis, for example, recently Benjamin Lamb-Books, "Adorno and Horkheimer's Collective Psychology: On psychoanalytic social explanations," *Thesis Eleven* 117, 1 (2013); aesthetics and cultural studies, for example, Geoff Boucher, *Adorno Reframed* (2013 [Interpreting Key Thinkers for the Arts]); political theory, for example, recently Diana Boros and James M. Glass, eds., *Re-Imagining Public Space: The Frankfurt School in the 21st Century* (2014); critical legal studies, for example, Hauke Brunkhorst, *Critical Theory of Legal Revolutions: Evolutionary Perspectives* (2014); and international relations theory, for example, Steven Roach, ed., *Critical Theory and International Relations* (2008), and Lars Rensmann, "National Sovereignism and Global Constitutionalism: An Adornian Cosmopolitan Critique," *Critical Horizons* 17, 1 (2016): 24–36. There is a continuous production of new and innovative work engaging with the tradition of the Frankfurt School and, following the School's path, challenging disciplinary boundaries in theoretical projects and research practice, including recently Stefano Giacchetti Ludovisi, ed., *Critical Theory and the Challenge of Praxis* (2015).

3. The status of theorizing on antisemitism for Critical Theory and its evolution is not only contested in the reception of the Frankfurt School (the mainstream reception has largely neglected the subject of antisemitism). The relevance of antisemitism for rethinking philosophy and social theory in modern times is also partly obscured by the Critical Theorists themselves. This can be illustrated by one of the most important books that has shaped Critical Theory and our view: Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, in its first

version completed in 1944. On the one hand, Adorno initially envisioned the “Elements of Antisemitism” to constitute the “core of the book.” On the other hand, the chapter was eventually placed at the end of the book, seemingly like an addendum and somewhat hidden in the book’s organization. Though clearly important and driving much of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment’s* philosophical reflection, antisemitism does not seem to be the central topic in the final organization of the book; see on the “Elements of Antisemitism” and its importance for both the Frankfurt School’s critical philosophy and the study of modern antisemitism especially chapter 6 of this book. Cf. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr and trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). Henceforth cited paranthetically as DE.

4. In addition to my book *Kritische Theorie über den Antisemitismus* (Hamburg: Argument, 1998), which provides the backbone of this study, three recent studies have contributed important work to set the record straight and to better grasp the development of the Frankfurt School’s work on prejudice and anti-Jewish resentment: Jack Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism* (2015); Eva-Maria Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie: Die Frankfurter Schule im amerikanischen Exil* (2009); and Mark P. Worrell, *Dialectic of Solidarity: Labor, Antisemitism, and the Frankfurt School* (2008). Jack Jacobs’ seminal and groundbreaking work focuses on the Critical Theorists’ personal, political, and theoretical relationship to Jewish identity and Judaism, and the way they experienced and processed antisemitism (and viewed Israel). This is an important contribution to an intellectual history of the Frankfurt School and our understanding of the Critical Theorists.

Arguing from a sociology of knowledge perspective, Eva-Maria Ziege's equally well-researched study investigates the social scientific conditions, interactions in the social research process, and the context of the Frankfurt School's work on antisemitism in the exile years. Mark Worrell's work examines exclusively the often overlooked empirical research project on antisemitism among American Labor. My study, to be sure, takes a profoundly different, more systematically theoretical and philosophical approach. It is mostly concerned with substantive claims, insights, and arguments on antisemitism, and their significance for social and political theory. Rather than providing an intellectual history illuminating the Frankfurt School's relationship to their Jewish lives, or an empirical political sociology of the school's knowledge production and the contextual parameters driving their work, this book reconstructs and engages with Critical Theory's empirical and theoretical findings on antisemitism, and their philosophical and political origins and impact.

5. A note on terminology is warranted. The main term used in this book is antisemitism. Following recent scholarship on the subject, "antisemitism" is not hyphenated because it has nothing to do with (opposition to) "semites" or "semitism," something the hyphenated term anti-Semitism (still common in the English language) suggests or implies. Rather, antisemitism is a term invented by Jew haters in the nineteenth century. Ever since, it refers to anti-Jewish ideology and to anti-Jewish resentments but not a "semitic" language, race, or culture. However, despite its disreputable origins antisemitism has since the rise of anti-Jewish ideologies and politics in the modern age become the dominant term to denote discrimination and hatred against Jews. In this book, I use antisemitism interchangeably with some other terms, such as Jew hatred or "judeophobia," which connotes and

points to irrational fears against Jews. This is justifiable as all antisemitisms, and all anti-Jewish resentments, are irrational and pathological in their core, even where and when they are part of dominant society or government policy. See, for instance, Stephen Eric Bronner, *A Rumor about the Jews: Antisemitism, Conspiracy, and the Protocols of Zion* (2003); Stephen Kenneth L. Marcus, *The Definition of Anti-Semitism* (2015); Marcel Stoetzler, ed., *Antisemitism and the Constitution of Sociology* (2014); and Stephen H. Norwood, *Antisemitism and the American Far Left* (2013). On the theoretical implications of these concepts and their debate see chapter 4.

6. Occasional references to some statements by Critical Theorists may have become canonical in the discussion of antisemitism, such as Adorno's famous claim that "antisemitism is the rumor about the Jews." Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life* (1974 [1951]), 110. But such references should not be confused with a thorough engagement with the Frankfurt School's multilayered empirical explorations and especially theoretical arguments.
7. Previous lack of explicit engagement with the Critical Theory's studies of modern antisemitism in the context of contemporary research may be in part due to common misunderstandings and misperceptions that have delineated the trajectory of the Frankfurt School's reception in this field, a notable early exception being Detlev Claussen, *Grenzen der Aufklärung: Die gesellschaftliche Genese des modernen Antisemitismus* (2005). My book challenges such misperceptions, which—if not entirely misguided—have flattened out the richness of the Critical Theorists' contributions, as well as inherent tensions and contradictions.
8. Ira Katznelson, *Desolation and Enlightenment: Political Knowledge After Total War, Totalitarianism, and the*

- Holocaust* (2003), 44. See also Julia Schulze Wessel and Lars Rensmann, "The Paralysis of Judgment: Arendt and Adorno on Antisemitism and the Modern Condition," in Lars Rensmann and Samir Gandesha, eds., *Arendt and Adorno: Political and Philosophical Investigations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 197–225.
9. I take more than just terminological inspiration here from Richard Wolin, *The Seduction of Unreason: The Intellectual Romance with Fascism from Nietzsche to Postmodernism* (2006).
 10. In sharp contrast, for instance, to Martin Heidegger's ontology. Adorno criticized its existentialist jargon and its unreflective rejection of progress and technology; not to mention Heidegger's Nazi collaboration and antisemitism. Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity* (1973). See also Samir Gandesha, "Leaving Home: On Adorno and Heidegger," in Tom Huhn, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno* (2004), 101–128. On the most recent discussion of antisemitism in Heidegger's *Black Notebooks* see Richard Wolin, "National Socialism, World Jewry, and the History of Being: On Heidegger's Black Notebooks," *Jewish Review of Books*, Summer 2014, <http://jewishreviewofbooks.com/articles/993/national-socialism-world-jewry-and-the-history-of-being-heideggers-black-notebooks/>
 11. For the original critique cf. Richard Wolin, *The Terms of Cultural Criticism: The Frankfurt School, Existentialism, and Poststructuralism* (1992), 58; and recently Eva-Maria Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*. Ziege presents in her in many ways remarkable and meticulously researched study an allegedly disjointed relationship of theory and empirical work in the Frankfurt School's studies. I find this argument for the most part unconvincing, as both do penetrate each other. It is also rather unfortunate that Ziege occasionally takes an unfounded jab at

the Critical Theorists, and especially at Löwenthal. Even though Löwenthal immensely contributed to the Frankfurt School's antisemitism research and its theoretical development (as both this and ultimately also Ziege's study show), Ziege describes him as a mere "foot soldier," or worse. Cf. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 269.

12. The empirical work undoubtedly supported the development of theoretical arguments, and vice versa. Horkheimer and Adorno insist that the theoretical reflections in the "Elements" essay are "directly related to empirical research by the Institute of Social Research" (DE xix). While it may be argued that the empirical studies on antisemitism conducted by the Institute were insufficiently meshed with the Frankfurt School's theoretical explanations of antisemitism, Jack Jacobs rightly points out that it is not the case that "the Institute's empirical and theoretical work on antisemitism were mutually indifferent." Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 100 and 109–110.
13. "Memorandum from T. W. Adorno re Evaluation of Participant Interviews (Labor Project)," 6, November 3, 1944, Paul Lazarsfeld Collection, Box 20, Columbia University; cited in Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 81.
14. This general argument does not ignore that some parts of Critical Theory's work can indeed be criticized for all too sweepingly blurring distinctions as well as flattening nuances in their otherwise complex arguments—such as the fourth chapter on "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which at times rather distorts crucial differences between Nazi propaganda and the American culture industry.
15. This widespread charge against the first generation of the Frankfurt School can be traced back to Jürgen Habermas's

pronounced criticism; see, for instance, Jürgen Habermas, *Autonomy and Solidarity*, ed. and introduced by Peter Dews (London and New York: Verso, 1992), 103. See also James Gordon Finlayson, "Frankfurt School Criticism," in Brian Leiter and Michael Rosen, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Continental Philosophy* (2007), 660. In recent years, however, some authors have begun to reconsider the Frankfurt School's relationship to politics, that is, explicitly political dimensions and institutions and law, while taking this question into diverse, at times contradictory directions; cf. Espen Hammer, *Adorno and the Political* (2005); Shannon Mariotti, *Thoreau's Democratic Withdrawal: Alienation, Participation, and Modernity* (2010); Lambert Zuidervaart, *Social Philosophy after Adorno* (2007); and Robert Fine, "Debating Human Rights, Law, and Subjectivity: Arendt, Adorno, and Critical Theory," in Lars Rensmann and Samir Gandesha, eds., *Arendt and Adorno: Political and Philosophical Investigations* (2012), 154–172.

16. For initial cosmopolitan readings of the Frankfurt School see Seyla Benhabib, *Dignity in Adversity: Human Rights in Troubled Times* (2011); Stephen Eric Bronner, *Reclaiming the Enlightenment: Toward a Politics of Radical Engagement* (2004); Lars Rensmann, "Grounding Cosmopolitics: Rethinking Crimes against Humanity and Global Political Theory with Arendt and Adorno," in Lars Rensmann and Samir Gandesha, eds., *Arendt and Adorno: Political and Philosophical Investigations* (2012), 129–153; and Richard Wolin, *The Frankfurt School Revisited*.
17. Initial important treatments of the implications of Adorno's work for social and political philosophy are Gerhard Schweppenhäuser, *Ethik nach Auschwitz: Adornos negative Moralphilosophie* (1993); Lambert Zuidervaart, *Social Philosophy after Adorno*; and most recently Gary A. Mullen, *Adorno on Politics after Auschwitz* (2016)

- and Martin Shuster, *Autonomy after Auschwitz: Adorno, German Idealism, and Modernity* (2014). None of these accounts, however, do full justice to Critical Theory's and Adorno's work on (totalitarian) antisemitism as a distinct sociopolitical phenomenon motivating an unprecedented genocide, and the potential relevance of this for developing a new political philosophy after Auschwitz.
18. Jeffrey C. Isaac, *Arendt, Camus, and Modern Rebellion* (2009), 12.
 19. Max Horkheimer in a letter to Harold Laski, March 10, 1941, cited in Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance* (1994), 690, no. 124. See also Anson Rabinbach, "The Frankfurt School and the 'Jewish Question,' 1940–1970," in Ezra Mendelsohn, Stefani Hoffman and Richard I. Cohen, eds., *Against the Grain: Jewish Intellectuals in Hard Times* (2013), 255–274.
 20. Some recent work on antisemitism already productively absorbs some of Critical Theory's insights, for instance, Marcel Stoetzler, "Liberal Society, Emancipation and Antisemitism: Why current debates on Antisemitism need more Dialectic of Enlightenment," in Stefano Giacchetti Ludovisi, ed., *Nostalgia for a Redeemed Future: Critical Theory* (2009), 145–160; and Karin Stögner, *Antisemitismus und Sexismus: Historisch-gesellschaftliche Konstellationen* (2014).
 21. Looking at the origins of what is coined here, interchangeably, the "Frankfurt School," "Critical Theory," "Critical Theorists" or the Institute for Social Research it is important to justify the (collective) usage of these terms. As pointed out in footnote 1, with these terms I refer to the "inner circle" of the members of Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, or the first generation of Critical Theory (with capitalized letters to signify that they are distinct from the many critical theories and

theorists that exist apart from the Frankfurt School). While references to particular authors are made explicit and differences between individual members are pointed out throughout this book, it is tenable to speak of the Frankfurt School or Critical Theory collectively because they had a shared project—and indeed shared many theoretical assumptions that are reconstructed here. Even though I make references to individual authors and point out differences in their take on, for instance, authoritarianism and antisemitism, I also treat the members of the Institute for Social Research as representatives of this shared project, that is, Critical Theory. While the usage of Critical Theory with capital letters is common among scholars from and of the Frankfurt School, the understanding of the Frankfurt School as a collective, shared social research and theory project can also be traced back to the beginnings of the Institute: the work and correspondence among the members of the inner circle of the Frankfurt School itself. This understanding, too, has subsequently resonated in scholarly research.

22. Erich Fromm, *The Working Class in Weimar Germany: A Sociological and Psychological Study*, trans. Barbara Weinberger and ed. Wolfgang Bonß (1984).
23. Cf. Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School*, 127–148.
24. Max Horkheimer, “The Jews and Europe,” trans. Mark Ritter, in Stephen Eric Bronner and Douglas MacKay Kellner, eds. *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader* (1989), 77–94.
25. Philip Spencer, “European Marxism and the Question of Antisemitism: Reactions to the Holocaust before, during and after the event,” *European Societies* 14, 2 (2012): 278. To be sure, as Spencer also notes, the Critical Theorists were not alone in the initial neglect of the subject among socialists and independent Marxists.
26. Martin Jay, “The Jews and the Frankfurt School: Critical Theory’s Analysis of Anti-Semitism,” *New German*

- Critique* 19, Special Issue 1: Germans and Jews (1980): 137–149, 138.
27. Max Horkheimer, "Zur Tätigkeit des Instituts: Forschungsprojekt über den Antisemitismus," in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften Bd.4* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1988), 408.
 28. Cf. Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933–1944* (2009), 121.
 29. Horkheimer, "The Jews and Europe," 92.
 30. Jay, "The Jews and the Frankfurt School," 137–138.
 31. Spencer, "European Marxism and the Question of Antisemitism," 278; on the critique of stereotypes in Frankfurt School thought Jonathan Judaken, "Blindness and Insight: The Conceptual Jew in Adorno and Arendt's Post-Holocaust Reflections on the Antisemitic Question," in Lars Rensmann and Samir Gandesha, eds., *Arendt and Adorno: Political and Philosophical Investigations* (2012), 173–196.
 32. Oddly, in his last contributions Horkheimer increasingly returned to the conventional view, reducing antisemitism and fascism to a fabrication from above and largely exonerating the working class as an object of history and of manipulation. History has shown, Horkheimer argues shortly before his death, that fascism is created especially among peoples who are "benevolent." "Why did you have to create Nazism in Germany? Because certain circles were afraid that the Germans could establish what one calls democracy." Max Horkheimer, "Sozialpsychologische Forschungen zum Problem des Autoritarismus, Nationalismus und Antisemitismus," in K. D. Hartmann, ed., *Vorurteile, Ängste, Aggressionen: Ausgewählte Beiträge aus der Reihe Politische Psychologie* (1975), 23. My own translation, L. R.
 33. On the Frankfurt School in exile see two excellent recent studies: Thomas Wheatland, *The Frankfurt School in Exile* (2009); and David Jenemann, *Adorno in America* (2007).

34. Cf. Eva-Maria Ziege, "Patterns within Prejudice: Antisemitism in the US in the 1940s," *Patterns of Prejudice* 46, 2 (2012): 93–127; Spencer, "European Marxism and the Question of Antisemitism."
35. It is important to note that only Horkheimer and then, under difficult circumstances and facing much hostility among his colleagues at the University of Frankfurt, Adorno returned to Germany. Neither Marcuse nor Löwenthal, nor any other member or affiliate of the old Institute, ever got an offer to return but continued to pursue their academic work in the U.S.
36. In 1949, Adorno still believed that "in the cultural sphere" Nazism "never succeeded to win over the [German] population," while he optimistically celebrated the "passionate participation" and "interest" of his students after the "intellectual drought" of the Third Reich. Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, "Die auferstandene Kultur," in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften Vol. 20.2* (1986 [1949]), 454–455 (my translation, LR). After a short time in postwar Germany and many disillusionments following his return, which I have earlier tried to describe as a "second shock" about German society after the first shock he experienced when the Nazis took power, Adorno profoundly changed his view. Cf. Lars Rensmann, "Returning from forced exile: Some observations on Hannah Arendt's and Theodor W. Adorno's experience of post-war Germany and their social and political theories on totalitarianism," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 49 (2004): 380–406; Lars Rensmann, "Das Besondere im Allgemeinen: Totale Herrschaft und deutsche Nachkriegsgesellschaft in den politisch-theoretischen Narrativen Adornos und Arendts," in Dirk Auer, Lars Rensmann, and Julia Schulze Wessel, eds., *Arendt und Adorno* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2003), 150–195.
37. See chapter 8.

38. On politics under conditions of a partially globalized world see Robert O. Keohane, "Governance in a Partially Globalized World," *American Political Science Review* 95, 1 (2001): 1–13; Lars Rensmann, "Adorno and the Global Public Sphere: Rethinking Globalization and the Cosmopolitan Condition of Politics," in Diana Boros and James M. Glass, eds., *Re-Imagining Public Space: The Frankfurt School and Beyond* (2014), 163–190.

Chapter 2. From Odysseus to Postliberal Subjectivity

1. Leo Löwenthal, *False Prophets: Studies on Authoritarianism* (1987), henceforth cited as "FP." Löwenthal uses this term, in accordance with the other members of the Frankfurt School, to signify the total, genocidal and exterminationist form of antisemitism which took shape and became government policy under totalitarian Nazi rule.
2. Of course, this change is not just about substantive reasons related to theoretical development. In many ways, the new focus is the direct result of external factors—first and foremost the Nazi terror and the genocidal persecution of Jews, from which the Critical Theorists barely escaped (while Walter Benjamin was forced into suicide). Cf. the very instructive, groundbreaking analysis by Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*. Cf. also for the social scientific conditions and context see the subsequent chapter and the detailed study by Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*.
3. See for an insightful article introducing to the relationship between psychoanalysis and the Frankfurt School Joel Whitebook, "The Marriage of Marx and Freud: Critical Theory and Psychoanalysis," in Fred Rush, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Critical Theory* (2004), 74–102.

4. Theodor W. Adorno, "Die revidierte Psychoanalyse," in Adorno, *Soziologische Schriften I: Gesammelte Schriften* vol. 8 (1979), 27; translated by Kizer Walker.
5. Freud's structural model or theory of the subject since *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* added to the topographical model of conscious, preconscious and unconscious, which was never abandoned. Rather, the structural model cuts across the topographical divisions between unconscious and conscious.
6. Sigmund Freud, "Civilization and its Discontents," in Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 21 (1927–1931), trans. and ed. James Strachey (1961), 66.
7. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 66.
8. *Ibid.*, 68.
9. Cf. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 68.
10. *Ibid.*, 122.
11. According to Freud, Thanatos seeks to redirect life into the condition of dead material, while erotic desires represent life-supporting drives (Eros). "The death instinct," he argues in *The Ego and the Id*, "would thus seem to express itself—though probably only in part—as an *instinct of destruction* directed against the external world." Sigmund Freud, "The Ego and the Id," in Freud, *On Metapsychology* (1987), 381. See also Sigmund Freud, "Why War?," in Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 22 (1932–1936), trans. and ed. James Strachey (1957), 195–216. Until 1920 and until the conceptual turn presented in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, to be sure, Freud had only distinguished between ego drives and object drives. Externalized aggression and hatred against external objects were consequently seen as part of Libido, as an expression of the life drive (*Selbsterhaltungstrieb*). Cf. Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," in Freud, *The Standard Edition of the*

Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 18 (1920–1922), trans. and ed. James Strachey (1957).

12. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, chapter 5. It is noteworthy, however, that in the same groundbreaking essay Freud himself raises considerable objections against an all too one-sided defense of restrictive, repressive and harsh cultural norms and their internalization into the superego. Freud recognizes the problem that the cultural superego with its repressive effects, its forceful demands and rigid bans, does not care about the happiness of the ego. Indeed, Freud argues that it is the very task of psychoanalysis to soften and denigrate the claims of the superego.
13. Fromm points out that Freud's account of the relationship between ego and superego varies significantly and is contradictory; normatively speaking, Freud at times sides with the ego, at other times with the superego, and he often does so in the very same work. On the one hand he argues like an apologist of the unconscious effects of societal norms, repression of desires, and cultural restrictions who praises their internalization in individuals by means of the superego. On the other hand, the "emancipatory" Freud wants the conscious, autonomous ego to be capable of enjoying pleasures while consciously regulating and conquering the id. Cf. Sigmund Freud, "New Introductory Lectures On Psycho-Analysis," in Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* vol. 22 (1932–1936), trans. and ed. James Strachey (1964). Cf. for this discussion Erich Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter," in Fromm, *Die Gesellschaft als Gegenstand der Psychoanalyse* (1993), 85f. This influential piece on the authoritarian personality, from which subsequent work on the subject by Adorno et al. tremendously benefited, was originally published in 1936 as the "sociopsychological" section of the Institute's *Studies on Authority and Family* (1936).

14. In his later cultural theory Freud views the sublimation of desires, redirecting them toward “higher,” mediated, more noble and pleasurable cultural activities, as a key motive of cultural achievements. According to Freud, sublimation is a process in relation to object libido. The desire is redirected to another objective separate from sexual satisfaction. Cf. Sigmund Freud, “On Narcissism: An Introduction,” in Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* vol. 14 (1914–1916), trans. and ed. James Strachey (1957), 73–102. Nonrepressive forms of sublimation therefore point to the ego’s capacity to freely redirect desires without force or compulsion.
15. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 138.
16. *Ibid.*, 136.
17. *Ibid.*, 66.
18. Sigmund Freud, “Thoughts for the Times on War and Death,” in Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 14 (1914–1916), trans. and ed. James Strachey (1957), 283.
19. Cf. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 128.
20. *Ibid.*, 128. According to Freud, the child develops an enormous aggressive tendency against the authority that restricts the first significant satisfaction of desires, no matter what kind of denials these are. The child is also forced to renounce on taking aggressive vengeance for those restrictions. Its way out of this difficult economic situation, says Freud, is through well-known mechanisms, namely by absorbing the indisputable authority by means of identification—the authority turns into the internalized super ego and appropriates all the aggressions that one would have liked to act out as a child.
21. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 127–128.
22. Cf. Jessica Benjamin, “Die Antinomien des patriarchalischen Denkens: Kritische Theorie und Psychoanalyse,”

Sozialforschung als Kritik: Zum sozialwissenschaftlichen Potential der Kritischen Theorie ed. Wolfgang Bonß and Axel Honneth (1994), 433.

23. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 132.
24. Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter," 77.
25. Without a doubt, the position assigned to women by Freudian theory must be regarded as untenable. The processes of gender differentiation are falsely characterized and hypostatized, their historical development in the context of patriarchal social forms ignored. In this case, Freud biologizes social positions, despite the fact that he otherwise tends to take a critical stance vis-à-vis biologisms, generally tracing the problems of the individual developmentally, rather than assigning static instinctual causes. If we are to make use of Freud's model, it is at the very least essential, as feminist psychoanalysis suggests, to apprehend "father" and "mother" as social—and socially constructed—functions or roles. Recent discourse-analytical theory has contributed to a deconstruction of social constructs of gender and their functions in patriarchal society. While acknowledging the suffering they produce for the individual, Freud delivers a positive valuation of culture and civilization; yet Freud's ideal is not merely the conscious human being that has mastered the id, but more specifically the culturally productive, drive-renouncing, sublimating man. In this respect, Freudian theory proves as questionable as its characteristic concept of the Oedipus complex. As I discuss later, the "Oedipus complex" that both Freud and the Critical Theorists accepted as true can no longer unambiguously hold pride of place in a viable model of ego development.
26. Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (1988), 93–96 and passim.
27. Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter," 80.

28. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (2002), 79.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* 127–131; 130n.2. For Freud, it is essential that the child not only hate his father for imposing the renunciation of the drives, but also that he love him, in order to establish the father's authority internally, to transform it into a conscience and sense of guilt. The superego, Freud insists, can only be built by means of identification with the father, even though fear of a loss of paternal love leads to the internalization of remorse and the need for punishment when feelings of aggression against authority arise. Without a measure of love for authority, which not only imposes renunciation, but also provides caring support for the child, conscience could not develop. It must be said that Freud, who seldom critiques educating authorities, leaves unmentioned that the child is to some degree forced to love and internalize authority, even if such love is hardly reciprocated by the figure in power. Other than turning it narcissistically inward, where else is libidinal energy—atrophying and encrusted with aggression—to be directed if not toward the first and most intimate human attachment figure?
32. Adorno, "Die revidierte Psychoanalyse," 40; translated by Kizer Walker.
33. Benjamin, *Bonds of Love*, 67.
34. Freud, "Why War?" 211.
35. Adorno, "Die revidierte Psychoanalyse," 27; translated by Kizer Walker.
36. There are some particularly noteworthy revisions to the Freudian model that could have some implications for a psychoanalytic theory of the subject, and ultimately of our understanding of modern authoritarian subjectivity. Psychological pathologies, crystallized in personality

syndromes, have been the subject of significant post-Freudian psychoanalytic work and recent scholarship. Adorno et al. have been reluctant, and partly outright hostile to "neo-Freudian" revisions; this is the explicit thread of "Die revidierte Psychoanalyse," in which Adorno criticizes Karen Horney as a neo-Freudian revisionist. Horney had criticized Freud's presumed overemphasis of repressed sexual instincts, the "oedipal complex" and "penis envy." A major innovation in the psychoanalytic understanding of personality formation and psychological dynamics is object relations theory. A key founder of object relations theory is Melanie Klein, for the most part a faithful Freudian. The concept of object relation is Freud's invention, who argues that the satisfaction of drives needs objects. With and beyond Freud, Klein's object relations theory focuses on the role of actual object relations in childhood, and the creation of internal objects in the process when unconscious fantasies meet actual objects in the world of experience, that is, the pleasure principle is modified by the reality principle. Object relations, Klein argues, shape the formation of personality and future relations to others as well as behavior in different situations; thus actual part-objects (e.g., the breast) or whole-objects (a whole person, like the mother) play a more central role than in classical Freudian models of subject formation. Moreover, Klein focuses on the importance of pre-Oedipal early formative childhood experiences and achievements in the psychological development ("positions") of the subject, its object relations and ego structure, arguing that they lead ideally to the internalization of good and bad objects into the psychological organization. In departure from Freud and in refinement of his theory, she argues that paranoid-schizoid, characterized by part-object relations, and depressive positions, which experience others as a whole person, already begin to take shape in the pre-Oedipal,

oral stages of development, that is, within the first year (but continue to develop over the life span). They are dominated by mechanisms of splitting, omnipotence, projective identification, and introjection to defend against the child's anxieties, such as fears of being annihilated and to destroy. See Melanie Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation, and Other Works 1921–1945* (1998). Strongly influenced by Klein, Otto Kernberg has taken Freud's model and Klein's analysis into another direction by integrating American ego psychology into psychoanalytic models of personality formation and personality disorders, such as borderline personality, and a modern theory of object relations. The most important contribution for our discussion is Kernberg's conception of "pathological narcissism," as distinct from normal adult and normal infantile narcissism. The type of a narcissitic personality disorder, as diagnosed by Kernberg, would be the most interesting to bring into discussion with the "authoritarian syndrome" as analyzed by Adorno (fully explained in chapter 3). See Otto Kernberg, *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism* (1995). Finally, Joel Whitebook is worth mentioning in this context. Among other things, Whitebook elaborates theoretical links between Critical Theory and psychoanalysis, investigating possibilities of sublimation of the subject-object dichotomy diagnosed by Adorno as a deeply anchored civilizational mode for the genesis of subjectivity. Whitebook points to opportunities of narrowing the gulf between subject and object under transformed societal conditions, without suggesting that reconciliation is possible; see Joel Whitebook, *Perversion and Utopia: A Study in Psychoanalysis and Critical Theory* (1995). For a recent translation and a discussion of Adorno's critique of "psychoanalytic revisionists" see Theodor W. Adorno, "Revisionist Psychoanalysis," trans. Nan-Nan-Lee, *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 40, 3

- (2014): 326–338; Nan-Nan-Lee, “Sublimated or Castrated Psychoanalysis? Adorno’s Critique of the Revisionist Psychoanalysis: An Introduction to ‘The Revisionist Psychoanalysis,’” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 40, 3 (2014): 309–325.
37. Theodor W. Adorno, “Sociology and Psychology (part 2),” trans. Irving N. Wohlfarth, *New Left Review* 1/47 (Jan–Feb 1968): 81.
 38. Ostensibly, “man’s natural aggressive instinct, the hostility of each against all and of all against each” stands in opposition to the traditional “cultural super-ego” as a source of cultural progress that binds people together libidinally and represents a “process in the service of Eros” (Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* 122, 142, and 122).
 39. Fromm, “Der autoritäre Charakter,” 76ff. Cf. also the original empirical study by Erich Fromm at the advent of the Nazi rise to power: Fromm, *The Working Class in Weimar Germany: A Sociological and Psychological Study*.
 40. Adorno, “Die revidierte Psychoanalyse,” 39; trans. Kizer Walker.
 41. Regina Becker-Schmidt, “Wenn die Frauen erst einmal Frauen sein könnten,” *Geist gegen den Zeitgeist: Erinnern an Adorno*, eds. Josef Früchtl and Maria Calloni (1991), 215.
 42. Cf. Adorno, “Die revidierte Psychoanalyse,” 36; trans. Kizer Walker.
 43. Freud, “New Introductory Lectures On Psycho-Analysis,” 67.
 44. Becker-Schmidt, “Wenn die Frauen erst einmal Frauen sein könnten,” 215.
 45. Attributed to Adorno as cited in Becker-Schmidt, “Wenn die Frauen erst einmal Frauen sein könnten,” 216. The phrase “Doppelstellung des Ich” itself originally stems

from Hermann Weyl, *Philosophie der Mathematik und Naturwissenschaft*, 7th ed. (2000), 272 (originally published in 1927). The phrase is translated as “double position of the ego” in Hermann Weyl, *Philosophy of Mathematics and Natural Science*, trans. Olaf Helmer-Hirschberg (2009), 215–216.

46. With regard to “surplus-repression” in advanced industrial society—which no longer stands in the “service of Eros,” as Freud had claimed of civilization (*Civilization and Its Discontents*, 119)—and the economy of drives of the bourgeois subject, Marcuse notes: “The larger the discrepancy between the potential and actual human conditions, the greater the social need for what I term ‘surplus-repression,’ that is, repression necessitated not by the growth and preservation of civilization but by the vested interest in maintaining an established society. Such surplus-repression introduces (over and above, or rather underneath, the social conflicts) new strains and stresses in the individuals.” Marcuse, “Aggressiveness in Advanced Industrial Society,” in Marcuse, *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory* (1969), 251.
47. Freud, “Why War?” 214–215.
48. *Ibid.*, 215.
49. At the level of individual psychology, Freud would certainly not have been swayed by such undialectical claims.
50. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (1974), trans. E. F. N. Jephcott, *Radical Thinkers 1* (2005), 60–61.
51. Freud, “Why War?” 213.
52. Marcuse, “Aggressiveness in Advanced Industrial Society,” 266.
53. Adorno, “Die revidierte Psychoanalyse,” 32; trans. Kizer Walker.
54. The libidinal needs and expressions of Eros encompass sexual needs, to be sure, but they also include the instinctual

manifestations of the life drive as a whole. The repression of libidinal desires is not only a matter of repressing the mere gratification of genital sexuality. Genital sexuality as a means of discharge and an act of conquest on the part of the patriarchal subject can by contrast also be a sign of a libidinal need that is entirely under the sway of the destruction drive.

55. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 119–120.
56. Marcuse, "Aggressiveness in Advanced Industrial Society," 261.
57. *Ibid.*, 257.
58. Cf. for this argument in detail Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (1974).
59. Freud, "New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis," 65–66.
60. *Ibid.*, 78.
61. Gesine Schwan, *Politics and Guilt: The Destructive Power of Silence*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (2001), 169.
62. The Critical Theorists employ the concept of "herrschaftliche Struktur" in its twofold meaning: in its specific political meaning, implying a particular type quasi-feudal type of domination and quality of governance, and in its more generic meaning, implying a nonspecific "structure of domination." This points back to Weber. The 1978 Fischhoff translation of Weber's *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* uses "autocratic structure," when "herrschaftliche Struktur" occurs in this first, specific sense, and "structure of dominancy" and "structure of dominance" in instances where Weber uses the term generically (Kizer Walker).
63. Cf. on Nietzsche and Frankfurt School theorizing and critique of ideology Karin Bauer, *Adorno's Nietzschean Narratives: Critiques of Ideology, Readings of Wagner* (1999).
64. Cf. Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. Thomas Y. Levin (2005).

65. The Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, *Aspects of Sociology*, trans. John Viertel (1972), 178–179.
66. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 74.
67. *Ibid.*, 77. Emphasis in original.
68. *Ibid.*
69. Marcuse, “Aggressiveness in Advanced Industrial Society,” 253.
70. There is Adorno’s famous saying from his *Negative Dialectics* that “no universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb.” Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (1973), 320. However, the history of decline (*Verfallsgeschichte*) that is somewhat presumed here, or progress only in the level of terror human history is capable of producing, is not to be reified as a slogan but needs to be dialectically situated. Adorno firmly sides with the emancipatory claims and possibility of real human progress that is inseparably linked to the idea and history of enlightenment.
71. On the discussion of Adorno’s dialectical understanding of modernity see also Lars Rensmann and Samir Gandesha, “Understanding Political Modernity: Rereading Arendt and Adorno in Comparative Perspective,” *Arendt and Adorno: Political and Philosophical Investigations*, eds. Lars Rensmann and Samir Gandesha (2012), 1–27.
72. Critical Theory’s psychological analysis of such subjectivity may have benefited or could benefit, as mentioned earlier, from a variety of Freudian revisions and post-Freudian models—such as the work by Melanie Klein and Otto Kernberg—which offer additional critical insights, rather than being incommensurable with Freud’s original position.
73. Plato, *The Republic*, trans. and ed. Robin Waterfield (2008), 517a.

Chapter 3. Loving to Hate

1. Erich Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter."
2. Theodor W. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," in Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (2001), 150.
3. Theodor W. Adorno, "Starrheit und Integration," in Adorno, *Soziologische Schriften II: Gesammelte Schriften vol. 9.2* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1975), 375.
4. Erich Fromm had a leading role and was later on also chosen as the lead author of this long unpublished study. Cf. Fromm, *The Working Class in Weimar Germany: A Sociological and Psychological Study*.
5. Apart from the groundwork establishing an interpretative link between Freud, Marx, and Weber and the idea of underlying authoritarian "personality" features, Eva-Maria Ziege notes other methodological innovations of this early study that would resonate in the Frankfurt School's later empirical and theoretical work on authoritarianism and antisemitism. The study "aimed to ascertain what people 'really' thought, and it proceeded from the assumption that what people thought was frequently the opposite of what they said (or were able to say). Against a backdrop of the Freudian *terminus technicus* of 'ambivalence,' Fromm took as his starting point the simple rule 'that a person's claims about his thoughts and feelings cannot be taken at face value, however objective he tries to be, but must be interpreted.' This hypothesis that respondents, though manifestly opposed to authoritarianism and fascism, were latently predisposed to submit to both, would be supported by the turn of political events in 1933." Cf. Ziege, "Patterns within Prejudice: Antisemitism in the United States in the 1940s," 100f.

6. Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter," 110.
7. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda."
8. Max Horkheimer and Samuel H. Flowerman, eds., *Studies in Prejudice* (1950). Five volumes, the result of five completed research projects, were published: *The Authoritarian Personality* by Adorno et al.; *Dynamics in Prejudice: A Psychological and Sociological Study of Veterans* by Bruno Bettelheim and Morris Janowitz; *Anti-Semitism and Emotional Disorder: A Psychological Interpretation* by Nathan W. Ackerman and Marie Jahoda; *Rehearsal for Destruction: A Study of Political Anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany* by Paul Massing; and *Prophets of Deceit* by Leo Löwenthal and Norbert Guterman.
9. Cf. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*; John Abromeit, "Anti-Semitism and Critical Social Theory: The Frankfurt School in Exile," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 30, 1 (January 2013), 140–151, 142; Eva-Maria Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 180 and passim. See also chapter 1.
10. Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), 752. Henceforth cited parenthetically as AP.
11. See chapter 7.
12. Interestingly, as Joachim Wurst points out, authoritarianism and antisemitism are hardly studied anymore in one research context today but are often separated as subjects of scholarly endeavor. The link between the two is disregarded; or either antisemitism or authoritarianism may no longer be seen as the relevant subjects that they obviously still are. Cf. Joachim Wurst, "The Authoritarian Personality," in Samuel Salzborn, ed., *Klassiker der Sozialwissenschaften* (2014), 169.

13. Although the *Authoritarian Personality* and parallel Frankfurt School work of the 1940s in America are the major focus here, Eric Fromm's preceding analytic claims and insights about authoritarian dispositions and their sociopsychological origins, grounded in his studies in pre-Nazi Germany, are included to illuminate the theoretical arguments and output.
14. Theodor W. Adorno, "Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America," in Adorno, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (1998), 232; Cf. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*; Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 264 and passim.
15. Cf. Adorno, "Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America," 229 and passim.
16. *Ibid.*, 232. However, Eva-Maria Ziege points out that not all of the study's authors may have shared Adorno's Freudian orthodoxy; cf. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 272.
17. Cf. Else Frenkel-Brunswik and R. Nevitt Sanford, "The Anti-Semitic Personality," *Antisemitism: A Social Disease*, ed. Ernst Simmel (1946).
18. Adorno, "Brief an seine Mutter," June 30, 1949, no. 249, in Adorno, *Briefe an die Eltern 1939–1951*, eds. Christoph Gödde and Henri Lonitz (2003), 515. Cf. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 269.
19. For a table of groups from whom questionnaires were collected see AP 21–22. Adorno also includes the study on *Antisemitism among American Labor* into his hypothesis formulation vis-à-vis the Berkeley interview material; much of the interpretations directly referring to antisemitic resentments process and reflect Adorno's previous work. With Levinson's sections on antisemitism, 100 of the almost 1,000 pages of the *Authoritarian Personality*

- deal explicitly with antisemitism. Cf. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 265.
20. Adorno, "Remarks," Max-Horkheimer-Archiv, VI I D.75, cited in Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 265.
 21. Cf. Wurst, "The Authoritarian Personality," 167.
 22. Ibid.
 23. We can understand ethnocentrism as linked cognitive and affective orientations according to which the "in-group," one's own nation, religion, and so on, is disproportionately prioritized or seen as superior, whereas other groups or minorities are seen as inferior, or are devalued.
 24. Cf. AP 230; 654 and passim.
 25. Cf. AP 14 and passim.
 26. Notwithstanding Marie Jahoda's later remark that "with regard to the handling of the relationship between empirical data and theory, *The Authoritarian Personality* has not clarified a generally confused picture." Marie Jahoda, "Introduction," in *Studies in the Scope and Method of 'The Authoritarian Personality': Continuities in Social Research* (1954), 19, cited in Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 264.
 27. Cf. for instance, a more recent example in this tradition, Albert S. Lindemann, *Esau's Tears: Modern Antisemitism and the Rise of the Jews* (1997). Lindemann views the study of antisemitism as a "means by which Jews could become aware of their own sins" (15).
 28. Theodor W. Adorno, "The Meaning of Working Through the Past," in Adorno, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (1998), 101.
 29. Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "Vorurteil und Charakter," in Adorno, *Soziologische Schriften II: Gesammelte Schriften vol. 9.2* (1975), 367 and 361; trans. Kizer Walker.

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30. Theodor W. Adorno, "Die revidierte Psychoanalyse," in Adorno, *Soziologische Schriften I: Gesammelte Schriften vol. 8* (1979), 24; trans. Kizer Walker.
 31. It is not my intention here to categorically reject the attempt to differentiate among a range of antisemitic character types. Yet I do wish to highlight the critical-theoretical notion of an overarching structure of the authority-bound character. Despite Adorno's contrary claim that the rigid "'subsyndromes' that we outline . . . are not intended to isolate any of these traits" (AP 464) and despite the thorough self-criticism with regard to typological experiments, the notion of a cohesive, definable authoritarian character is contradicted, to a certain extent by the Critical Theorists' elaboration of wholly disparate—and empirically barely tenable—syndromes. In what I intend as a systematic examination of Critical Theory's findings, my goal is first and foremost to integrate particular variants—such as more pronounced manipulative or authoritarian-rebellious tendencies—into the structural analysis. On the typology of various antisemites see initially Max Horkheimer, "Research Project on Antisemitism," *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* 9.1 (1941), reprinted in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 9 (1970); also Theodor W. Adorno, "Research Project on Antisemitism: Idea of the Project," in Adorno, *The Stars Down to Earth and Other Essays on the Irrational in Culture*, ed. with an introduction by Stephen Crook (1994), 135–161.
 32. The *Authoritarian Personality* produced an enormous academic echo, starting even before its publication, and has led to hundreds of studies operationalizing the F-scale in the 1950s and thereafter. Less than ten years after its publication guides on the research it had generated were published; cf. Richard Christie and Peggy Cook, "A Guide to Published Literature Relating to 'The Authoritarian

Personality' through 1956," *Journal of Psychology* 45 (1958): 171–199. See also Jos Meloen, "The Fortieth Anniversary of 'The Authoritarian Personality'," *Politics and the Individual* 1 (1991): 119–127. Recent studies and revisions, often include social dominance indicators or employ a concept of "right-wing authoritarianism"; M. Brewster Smith, "'The Authoritarian Personality': A Re-Review 46 Years Later," *Political Psychology* 18, 1 (1997); *Strength and Weakness: The Authoritarian Personality Today*, eds. William F. Stone, Gerda Lederer, and Richard Christie (1993); Richard Lippa and Sara Arad, "Gender, Personality, and Prejudice: The Display of Authoritarianism and Social Dominance in Interviews with College Men and Women," *Journal of Research in Personality* 33, 4 (1999): 463–493; Jos Meloen, Hans de Witte, and Gert van der Linden, "A Test of the Approaches of Adorno et al., Lederer and Altemeyer of Authoritarianism in Belgian Flanders: A research note." *Political Psychology*, 17 (1996): 643–656; Jos Meloen, Hans de Witte, and Gert van der Linden, "Authoritarianism and Voting for a Racist Party in Belgian Flanders," *International Journal of Political Psychology and Political Socialization* 8, 1 (1999); Andreas Zick and Thomas Petzel, "Authoritarianism, Racism, and Ideologies about Acculturation," *Politics, Groups and the Individual* 8 (1999): 41–61; Karen Stenner, *The Authoritarian Dynamic* (2005). See also the most recent state of the research field in Friedrich Funke, Thomas Petzel, Christopher Cohrs, and John Duckitt, eds., *Perspectives on Authoritarianism* (2014).

33. Cf. AP 239.

34. Adopting the section title of the earlier study on *Antisemitism among American Labor, the Authoritarian Personality* was initially supposed to be called "The Potential Fascist." Cf. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 271.

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35. While Adorno still sees a slightly stronger authoritarian susceptibility among the middle classes. Cf. Fromm, *The Working Class in Weimar Germany*.
 36. Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter," 71; trans. Kizer Walker.
 37. Fromm, *The Working Class in Weimar Germany*, 62.
 38. *Ibid.*, 69.
 39. Marcuse, "Aggressiveness in Advanced Industrial Society," 249. Kizer Walker notes that the published English version of this passage differs from the German in a crucial way. The German version emphasizes that individual "Spannungen und Belastungen" should be understood as responses to "normal" societal forces, rather than individual (psychological) pathology. Shapiro's English translation also ascribes a social cause to individual "stresses," but instead of suggesting and then refuting *individual* pathology, this version ignores the possibility of psychological disturbance, instead raising the idea of *social* pathology in order to refute it (individual suffering is "grounded in the normal functioning of this society . . . rather than in its disturbances and diseases"). In both the German original and the English translation (published nearly simultaneously in 1968), emphasis is placed on the *normality* of the social processes that cause individual distress in the context of industrial society; but it should be noted that the society in question is specifically the postwar, American "affluent society."
 40. Cf. Alphons Silbermann, *Der ungeliebte Jude: Zur Soziologie des Antisemitismus* (1981), 40.
 41. This reference by Löwenthal to emotional instability appears in another study of antisemitism from the 1940s (also part of *Studies in Prejudice*), which critiqued the very concept, in social psychology, of a fixed personality structure. Cf. Leo Löwenthal, *False Prophets: Studies on Authoritarianism* (1987); henceforth cited parenthetically

- as FP. Cf. Nathan W. Ackerman and Marie Jahoda, *Antisemitism and Emotional Disorder, a Psychoanalytic Interpretation* (1950). Similar to the Critical Theorists, Ackerman and Jahoda, in their clinical psychoanalytic study of 27 case histories, identify a close connection between antisemitism and the “disturbances” of the personality, namely an overwhelming drive to conformism, outward submissiveness and authoritarian aggressiveness.
42. Adorno and Horkheimer, “Vorurteil und Charakter,” 368.
 43. Adorno, “Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda,” 137.
 44. Sigmund Freud, “The Ego and the Id,” *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud vol. 19 (1923–1925): The Ego and the Id and Other Works*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (1961), 17.
 45. Leo Löwenthal, “Address upon Accepting the Theodor W. Adorno Prize on 1 October 1989,” trans. Jamie Owen Daniel, *New German Critique* 54 (Autumn 1991): 179–182; 181.
 46. Adorno and Horkheimer, “Vorurteil und Charakter,” 369.
 47. Cf. AP 240.
 48. Adorno refers to the term as defined by Murray as “the dominance of feelings, fantasies, speculations, aspirations—an imaginative, subjective human outlook.” Henry A. Murray, *Explorations in Personality* (1938), 148; cited in Adorno, et al., *Authoritarian Personality*, vol. 1 (1964), 235.
 49. Freud, “The Ego and the Id,” 56.
 50. Cf. Freud, “Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety,” *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 20 (1925–1926): An Autobiographical Study, Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety, The Question of Lay Analysis and Other Works*, 75–176; esp. 114–115. The sadistic, “aggressive energy with which we suppose the super-ego to be endowed,” is to be understood as an inward-directed aggression that “merely carries on

the punitive energy of the external authority and keeps it alive in the mind" and, at the same time, as aggressive energy that is native to the subject and which is directed "against that inhibiting authority." Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 137–138.

51. The Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, *Aspects of Sociology*, 177. Following Freud, Critical Theory does not understand "love" as a merely altruistic or sublime attachment, separate from the drives or beyond Eros and the pleasure principle. At times, the neo-Freudians are sharply criticized on precisely this score: "The fervent defense of tenderness and human attachment against the suspicion that they might have their roots in sexuality attests to the fact that taboos have greater power over the revisionists than they did over Freud. When they protest against his sexual theories in the name of love, they take up against him, from the very start, the conventional distinction between sexual and sublime love. In doing so, it is not the idea of the repression of the sexual that they wish to ward off, so much as the attack on the spurious notion of an unalloyed sublime." Adorno, "Die revidierte Psychoanalyse," 35; trans. Kizer Walker.
52. The Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, *Aspects of Sociology*, 177.
53. Marcuse, "Aggressiveness in Advanced Industrial Society," 267.
54. The Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, *Aspects of Sociology*, 177.
55. Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter," 92; trans. Kizer Walker.
56. In contrast to some of his social-theoretical reflections, in his reflections on the *Authoritarian Personality*, Adorno at times assumes a one-sidedly positive conception of civilization. The ego, the "identical, enduring self," which stands as the object of critique in the cultural theory of

Dialectic of Enlightenment (DE 42) appears in a predominantly positive light in the social-psychological studies. The acceptance of conventional values and conformity to societal norms, even the "satisfactory" internalization of prevailing norms of behavior, are placed in contrast to an externalized conventionalism and attachment to authority that points toward a rigid identification with power: "If the adherence to conventional values was an expression of a fully established individual conscience, then we should expect no necessary connection between these values and antidemocratic potential. The same standards which render the individual easily offended by what he conceives to be the morally loose behavior of unassimilated minority group members or of 'lower-class' people, would—if they are well internalized—cause him to resist the violence and delinquency which characterize the advanced stages of fascism" (Adorno, et al., *Authoritarian Personality*, vol. 1 [1964] 230).

57. Cf. Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter," 76 and 92.
58. Theodor W. Adorno, "Individuum und Organisation," in Adorno, *Kritik: Kleine Schriften zur Gesellschaft* (1971), 79. See also Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 32. Ashton renders "Gewissenszwang" as "coercion of conscience" in his translation.
59. Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter," 105; trans. Kizer Walker.
60. Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter," 92; trans. Kizer Walker. It should be noted here that there are significant differences between Fromm and Adorno in the conceptualization of superego formation. Adorno focuses, in classic Freudian fashion, primarily on early childhood processes. While Fromm adopts some of that focus and stresses the importance of early childhood experiences in shaping one's drive structure and personality, he tends to *historicize* the superego to a higher degree. By this I mean

that Fromm believes that a later change in external societal authority structures may well transform the superego a posteriori, up to its potential disappearance as a punishing agency and internalized authority if the social conditions change. For Fromm, the superego is not internalized once and for all but its character and substance is dependent on the continued existence of certain external authority structures. This claim, of course, still suggests a strong revolutionary Marxian influence. Cf. Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter," 77.

61. Theodor W. Adorno, *Notes to Literature*, vol. 2, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (1992), 78.
62. Cf. AP 234.
63. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," 155, n11.
64. Cf. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 138.
65. Cf. AP 239.
66. Ibid.
67. Cf. Michael Werz, "Wissen, was ein Antisemit ist," *Perspektiven* 24 (1995): 26.
68. Cf. AP 234. Under National Socialism, this externalization of conscience and morality reaches its most extreme form. Conscience, for many, was Adolf Hitler; this was enshrined in soldiers' loyalty oaths.
69. Cf. AP 236.
70. "Ego ideal" is simply Freud's earlier term for what he later called the superego. It was only after Freud that other authors made categorical distinctions among the "ego ideal" (in the sense of a model or paragon), the "ideal ego," and the superego.
71. Cf. AP 232.
72. Ibid., 233.
73. Werner Bergmann describes and illustrates this ambivalence: "The fear of being destroyed, the disappointments and pain experienced through the conflict with the father,

are transformed into hatred and aggression directed at his authority. These feelings, however, must frequently be repressed or transferred, either because the source of the fear is too powerful and threatens reprisal, or, alternately, because the subject experiences the ambivalent emotions of affection and rejection. These inhibited aggressions, then, tend to be directed, though the defence mechanism of 'displacement,' at powerless persons or groups from whom no sanctions need to be feared." Werner Bergmann, "Approaches to Antisemitism based on Psychodynamics and Personality Theory," in Werner Bergmann, ed., *Error without Trial: Psychological Research on Antisemitism* (1987), 11f.

74. Cf. AP 759.

75. Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter," 99.

76. Cf. AP 759.

77. "[I]dentification endeavours to mould a person's own ego after the fashion of the one that has been taken as a model." Sigmund Freud, "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego," in Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* vol. 18 (1920–1922), trans. and ed. James Strachey (1955), 106.

78. Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School*, 153.

79. Cf. AP 759.

80. *Ibid.*, 233.

81. Cf. George Eaton Simpson and J. Milton Yinger, *Racial and Cultural Minorities: An Analysis of Prejudice and Discrimination* (1965), 53.

82. The problem of projection is fully examined later in this and the subsequent chapter.

83. Cf. AP 760.

84. *Ibid.*, 232.

85. Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter," 111; trans. Kizer Walker.

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86. Ibid., 111.
 87. Ibid., 121.
 88. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," 140.
 89. Herbert Marcuse, "Obsolescence of Psychoanalysis," in Marcuse, *Philosophy, Psychoanalysis and Emancipation*, eds. Douglas Kellner and Clayton Pierce (2011), 112; emphasis in original.
 90. Marcuse, "Obsolescence of Psychoanalysis," 112.
 91. This is evidenced in hundreds of thousands of documents, particularly in the letters and stories of fascist activists and soldiers composed under National Socialism. I wish to cite merely one example, chosen almost at random, but representative of these texts. It is a brief excerpt from an SA man's remembrances of the Nazi party rally of 1929, but it expresses sentiments that can also be found in neo-Nazi newspapers today: "Then we get changed. Each one helps the other. 'Now "Adolf" just has to give us a cart and we're off to Berlin!' somebody jokes. First thing in the morning in Nuremberg we head straight for the 'Knauer-Schule' quarter. The finest camp life is getting started there. After we get our orders, I go into town with my group. Yes, sir! No one can lose his place in the ranks! . . . Sit around later in the 'Tiefer Keller' with comrades from the Oberbayern Rossbachern, share thoughts and experiences. 'God, it's good to all be together again!' After the march-past, there was a big argument. 'He looked straight at me!' 'Adolf nodded at me!' All I say is, 'You should all be satisfied—the Führer looked at each of us!'" (trans. KW). Cited in Hans Mommsen and Susanne Willems, eds., *Herrschaftsalltag im Dritten Reich. Studien und Texte* (1988), 54.
 92. Cf. AP 229. This claim clearly contradicts the critique often leveled at Critical Theory's work that they understand authoritarianism as primarily a working class phenomenon, and show class bias.

93. Gertrud Hardtmann, "Und Du bist raus . . .': Rechtsradikale Jugendliche—im 'Aus' der Gesellschaft?" *Rechtsextremismus: Ideologie und Gewalt*, eds. Richard Faber, Hajo Funke, and Gerhard Schoenberner (1995), 104.
94. Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (1973), 1–497, here 35.
95. Otto Fenichel, "Elements of a Psychoanalytic Theory of Antisemitism," in Ernst Simmel, ed., *Antisemitism: A Social Disease* (1946), 19.
96. Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community, and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (1992), 8 and passim.
97. Theodor W. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses* (2000), 52, n24.
98. Theodor W. Adorno, "Anti-Semitism and Fascist Propaganda," in Adorno, *The Stars Down to Earth and Other Essays on the Irrational in Culture*, ed. with an introduction by Stephen Crook (1994), 171.
99. Max Horkheimer, "Über das Vorurteil," in Horkheimer, *Gesellschaft im Übergang: Aufsätze, Reden, Vorträge 1940–1972* (1981), 105; trans. Kizer Walker.
100. This process of disciplining, controlling, and killing vital, flowing sensations has been more fully investigated by Klaus Theweleit (*Male Fantasies*, trans. Stephan Conway, Erica Carter, and Chris Turner, 2 vols. [1987–1989]). It leads to (anal-sadistic) fantasies of violence against women and minorities, the representatives of a derealized, objectivized counterimage perceived as threatening by the subject who has been militarized from childhood. In the phobic view of the "soldier male," women—in particular, proletarian women, communist women, Jewish women—represent terrifying and reviled chaotic "floods." They are the despised objects of rape fantasies, precisely because they represent sensual seduction, flowing subjectivity,

and the melting of boundaries; the fear of feminine eroticism must be deadened with abstinence and violence. The "female pleasure principle" (vol. 2, 292) stands in opposition to the authoritarian order of the soldier male. Theweleit traces the genesis of the "armoring" of the subject, which in the analysis of Critical Theory subverts and impedes ego development, and incisively identifies this process as the genesis of the "soldier male" (*passim*). At the core of this figure is the "battle against everything that constitutes enjoyment and pleasure" (vol. 1, 7). *Fear* of the "contagious lust" (vol. 1, 7) symbolized in women, bolshevism, and Jews is constitutive for the rigidly armored, ego-weak individual. In contrast to Freud and, ultimately, to Critical Theory, Theweleit, drawing on Melanie Klein, shifts the emphasis away from the Oedipus Complex as the setting for failed ego formation, localizing it primarily in pre-Oedipal relationships.

101. Cf. Adorno and Horkheimer, "Vorurteil und Charakter," 368.
102. Marcuse, "Obsolescence of Psychoanalysis," 114.
103. Horkheimer, "Über das Vorurteil," 104; trans. Kizer Walker.
104. Adorno's category of "stereopathy" refers to the connection between stereotypy in thinking and the pathological regression of the subject; cf. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," 148.
105. Cf. AP 233 and *passim*.
106. Cf. AP 629.
107. Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School*, 414.
108. Cf. FP 245.
109. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses*, 6 and *passim*.
110. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," 143.
111. Cf. Adorno, "The Stars Down to Earth," 53.

112. Ernst Simmel, "Antisemitism and Mass Psychopathology," in Ernst Simmel, ed., *Antisemitism: A Social Disease* (1946), 40 (emphasis in original).
113. Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, 74.
114. Cf. Else Frenkel-Brunswik and R. Nevitt Sanford, "The Antisemitic Personality: A Research Report," *Antisemitism: A Social Disease*, ed. Ernst Simmel (1946), 96–125.
115. Adorno, "Die revidierte Psychoanalyse," 33; trans. Kizer Walker.
116. *Ibid.*
117. Simmel, "Antisemitism and Mass Psychopathology," 50.
118. Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter," 112; trans. Kizer Walker.
119. Fromm, *The Working Class in Weimar Germany*, 209–210.
120. Institut für Sozialforschung, *Studien über Autorität und Familie: Forschungsberichte aus dem Institut für Sozialforschung* (1987), 123; trans. Kizer Walker.
121. Cf. Löwenthal, *False Prophets*, 307.
122. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," 140.
123. Institut für Sozialforschung, *Studien über Autorität und Familie*, 125; trans. Kizer Walker.
124. Freud cited in Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," 139.
125. *Ibid.*, 140.
126. The Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, *Aspects of Sociology*, 173.
127. Theodor W. Adorno, "Culture Industry Reconsidered," trans. Anson G. Rabinbach, in Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* (2001), 106.
128. *Ibid.*, 104.
129. *Ibid.*, 104–105.
130. Adorno, "Sociology and Psychology (part 2)," 80.
131. Cf. Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*.

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132. Adorno, "Sociology and Psychology (part 2)," 83–84.
 133. Simmel, "Antisemitism and Mass Psychopathology," 36.
 134. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1994) 31, 30, 80.
 135. Cf. AP 769. On antisemitism in Carl Schmitt see Raphael Gross, *Carl Schmitt and the Jews: The "Jewish Question," the Holocaust, and German Legal Theory*, trans. by Joel Golb (2007).
 136. The markedly positive connotation that Adorno gives here to civilization's "moulding" function is curious (although, in fact, this valuation recurs throughout the empirical antisemitism studies). After all, it is Adorno himself who in his social theory situates the unbridled authoritarian character with his weakened drive structure at the very origins of bourgeois subjectivity and the dialectic of the history of civilization: "As a rebellion against civilization fascism is not simply the reoccurrence of the archaic but its reproduction *in and by civilization itself*." (Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," 137; emphasis L.R.). The use of the obscurantist term "asocial" is also vexing; "antisocial" would, in any case, be more apt in this context. In the English-language original, it can at least be said in Adorno's defense that the term "asocial" appears within quotation marks (AP 763); in the unauthorized German translation, such care was not taken.
 137. Fromm, *The Working Class in Weimar Germany*, 226.
 138. Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter," 129; trans. Kizer Walker.
 139. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses*, 55.
 140. Gertrud Hardtmann, "'Und Du bist raus . . .': rechtsradikale Jugendliche -im 'Aus' der Gesellschaft?," 101; trans. Kizer Walker.
 141. Fromm, *The Working Class in Weimar Germany*, 227.

142. Kurt Lenk, "Jugendlicher Extremismus als gesamtdeutsches Problem," Richard Faber, Hajo Funke and Gerhard Schoenberger, eds., *Rechtsextremismus: Ideologie und Gewalt* (1995), 92.
143. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," 137.
144. Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter," 110; trans. Kizer Walker.
145. What is translated as "Vorurteilsfreie" in the German edition (Weinbrenner translation) appears as the less value-laden term "low scorers" (on the F-scale) in the English original. For example, the section title translated as "Syndrome der Vorurteilsfreien" is "Syndromes Found among Low Scorers" in the original. The term "free of prejudice" does occur in the "low scorers" section, but only once—used to describe three prostitutes who took part in the study (AP 778). In other chapters, the term "unprejudiced" appears frequently, but it does not occur at all in the chapter on "Types and Syndromes."
146. Lars Rensmann, "Auf den Spuren der Dialektik von Negation und Utopie: Zu Leo Löwenthal," *Perspektiven: Zeitschrift für sozialistische Theorie* 10 (Winter 1993/94), 49.
147. Cf. FP 220.
148. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," 133.
149. Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*, 113–143.
150. Only after their return to Germany in the aftermath of the Holocaust, Horkheimer and Adorno attributed theoretical significance to specific political legacies and the role of politicocultural contexts in shaping authoritarian societal conditions. This was triggered by enduring legacies of Nazism and a shockingly deep-seated Nazi mentality Horkheimer and Adorno faced and observed among members of post-Holocaust society. Löwenthal and Marcuse,

who remained in America, were more skeptical of and sensitive to specific authoritarian conditions in Germany during the war. Cf. Rensmann, "Returning from forced exile"; also Rensmann, "Das Besondere im Allgemeinen: Totale Herrschaft und deutsche Nachkriegsgesellschaft in den politisch-theoretischen Narrativen Adornos und Arendts."

151. Theodor W. Adorno, "On the Question: 'What is German?,'" in Adorno, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (1998), 206.
152. *Ibid.*, 208.
153. Among the Critical Theorists, it was indeed Herbert Marcuse—a student of Heidegger—who was among the first to dissect and analyze particular authoritarian features benefiting the rise of Nazism and its resilience in Germany. Marcuse had initially contributed the section on the history of ideas to the *Studies on Authority and Family*. Most importantly, however, Marcuse studied "German fascism" and the "new German mentality," recognizing an interplay between particular authoritarian legacies and the broad Nazification of German society under Nazi rule. Cf. Herbert Marcuse, "The New German Mentality," *Technology, War, and Fascism: Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse, Vol. 1*, ed. Douglas Kellner (2004), 139–190. On Marcuse's complex affinity to and encounter with Heidegger cf. Richard Wolin, *Heidegger's Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse* (2001), 134–172; John Abromeit, "Herbert Marcuse's Critical Encounter with Martin Heidegger, 1927–1933," in John Abromeit and W. Mark Cobb, eds., *Herbert Marcuse: A Critical Reader* (2004); Andrew Feenberg, *Heidegger and Marcuse: The Catastrophe and Redemption of History* (2005).
154. Cf. Douglas Kellner, "Technology, War, and Fascism: Marcuse in the 1940s," in Douglas Kellner, ed., *Technology,*

- War, and Fascism: Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse, Vol. 1* (2004), 1–38, 18.
155. Cf. Douglas Kellner, "Technology, War, and Fascism," 17.
156. Found in the Marcuse Archives, it was first published in German translation as *Feindanalysen* (Lüneburg: zu Klampen) in 1998, and subsequently in 2004 in the Marcuse volume *Technology, War, and Fascism* ed. Douglas Kellner.
157. Cf. Herbert Marcuse, "The New German Mentality."
158. Quoted in Vamik Volkan, *Blind Trust: Large Groups and their Leaders in Times of Crisis and Terror* (2004), 77.
159. Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (1987), 388.
160. Vamik Volkan, *Blind Trust*, 76.
161. *Ibid.*, 76.
162. *Ibid.*
163. *Ibid.*, 75.
164. *Ibid.*, 76.
165. This claim has been rather sweepingly applied in the work of historian Christopher Browning. Cf. Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (1998).
166. Cf. James M. Glass, *Life Unworthy of Life: Racial Phobia and Mass Murder in Hitler's Germany* (1997).

Chapter 4. Objectifying the Other

1. Schulze Wessel and Rensmann, "The Paralysis of Judgment: Arendt and Adorno on Antisemitism and the Modern Condition," 201.
2. Max Horkheimer, "Brief an Harold Laski," cited in Rolf Wiggershaus, *Die Frankfurter Schule*, 347.
3. Institute for Social Research, "Research Project on Antisemitism," *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*

- IX (1941), 124; cited in and cf. Jack Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism* (2015), 60.
4. Institute for Social Research, "Research Project on Antisemitism," 126.
 5. Theodor W. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," in Adorno, *Kritik: Kleine Schriften zur Gesellschaft* (1971), 113.
 6. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie: Die Frankfurter Schule im amerikanischen Exil* (2009), 187.
 7. *Ibid.*, 171.
 8. *Ibid.*, 171 and 185. Leo Löwenthal's selected and published qualitative contributions to the analysis of *Antisemitism among American Labor*, have later on been republished in Leo Löwenthal, *False Prophets: Studies on Authoritarianism* (1987), cited here as "FP." In this reconstruction, I only make occasional reference to the larger research report, that is: Institute for Social Research, *Antisemitism among American Labor: Report on a Research Project conducted by the Institute for Social Research (Columbia University) in 1944–1945*, May 1945, 4 vol., Max-Horkheimer-Archiv IX, 146.
 9. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 110; trans. LR.
 10. For the specific social scientific context in American exile cf. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, chapter 2; Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*; Anson Rabinbach, "The Frankfurt School and the 'Jewish Question,' 1940–1970," Ezra Mendelsohn, Stefani Hoffman and Richard I. Cohen, eds., *Against the Grain: Jewish Intellectuals in Hard Times* (2013), 255–274.
 11. For this and similar interpretations of Critical Theory as a reified antimodern ideology see also Moishe Postone, "Anti-Semitism and National Socialism," Anson Rabinbach and Jack Zipes, eds., *Germans and Jews since*

the Holocaust: The Changing Situation in West Germany (1986) 302–314; Lars Rensmann, *Demokratie und Judenbild: Antisemitismus in der politischen Kultur der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (2004); and more recently Samuel Salzborn, *Antisemitismus als negative Leitidee der Moderne: Sozialwissenschaftliche Theorien im Vergleich* (2010). See also chapter 5.

12. As pointed out, the *Authoritarian Personality* itself dedicates more than 100 pages to antisemitism and its analysis—offering significant material and insights that tend to be overlooked, despite the book's generally paradigm-changing character and broad influence on the social sciences since its publication. In addition to these sections, the focus here is on *Antisemitism among American Labor* and other writings by Löwenthal and Adorno on the subject of antisemitism. The large-scale labor study, *Antisemitism among American Labor*, remains unpublished and has until today only found marginal reception in the academic world. Three exceptions to the rule are Catherine Collomp, "Anti-Semitism among American Labor: A Study by the Refugee Scholars of the Frankfurt School of Sociology at the End of World War II," *Labor History* 52, 4 (2011), 417–439; Mark P. Worrell, *Dialectic of Solidarity: Labor, Antisemitism, and the Frankfurt School* (2008); and Eva-Maria Ziege, "Patterns within Prejudice: Antisemitism in the United States in the 1940s," *Patterns of Prejudice* 46, 2 (2012): 93–127.
13. "Exceptionally supportive" of the anti-Nazi forces in Central Europe, the Jewish Labor Committee (JLC) was a left-wing union umbrella organization founded in 1934. It was supported by Jewish labor unions, groups working among East European Jewish immigrants living in the United States, and Zionist socialists, that is, ideologically "Jewish organizations that were left of center, but non-Communist." Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 79.

14. *Ibid.*, 79.
15. The large-scale team project headed by Pollock, Gurland, Massing, and Löwenthal had at its disposal a large number of fieldworkers as well as the support of the trade unions. This work was scientific but with "motives . . . not purely scientific." Leo Lowenthal, cited in Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 182.
16. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 227.
17. Indeed, this theory-guided research had no naive illusion about the use of quantitative data and empirical social research. As the authors of the study point out: "It [antisemitism] is too complex a psychological phenomenon to be successfully compressed into the straight-jacket of rigid questionnaires of the 'check-one-out-of-five-answers' or the 'check-yes-or-no' variety. . . . Many individuals who feel, think and act as convinced antisemites can be expected to display considerable inhibitions when asked frankly to state their opinion on the 'Jewish question.' In consequence, the habitual method of gauging public opinion by polls seemed inadequate for measuring the nature, depth and extent of antisemitic feeling. New methods had to be introduced into the field. . . . The aim was to make people openly discuss their prejudice in relation to issues which they themselves felt to be of importance." Institute of Social Research, *Antisemitism among American Labor*, 16.
18. In fact, in America in the 1930s and 1940s authoritarian political movements were wide-spread, and they often formed a political synthesis not just with racist ideology but also prominently with antisemitic hate speech. In addition to the racist KKK, which gained mass attraction in this time, there were openly pro-Nazi organizations like the *Friends of New Germany* (FONG) and its successor *German American Bund*, which held a mass rally at Madison Square Garden in 1939 and mass demonstrations elsewhere. While these always remained at the margins of

American society at large, there have been quite influential authoritarian and antisemitic demagogues like the Detroit-based Roman Catholic priest Father Charles Edward Coughlin, who supported anti-Jewish policies by Hitler and Mussolini and whose antisemitic speeches Lowenthal analyzes and dissects (see chapter 7). On Coughlin, see Donald Warren, *Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin—the Father of Hate Radio* (1996). Add to this the powerful antisemitic industrialist and founder of the Ford Motor Company, Henry Ford, based in Dearborn, a suburb of Detroit. Already in the 1920s, Ford published many antisemitic articles about American life in his own newspaper, the *Dearborn Independent* (with a circulation of up to 700,000), later published in a cumulative four-volume edition, *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem*. Ford admired and was praised by Hitler and collaborated with the Nazis, whom awarded Ford with the Grand Cross of the German Eagle in 1938; see Albert Lee, *Henry Ford and the Jews* (1980), and Victoria Saker Woeste, "Insecure Equality: Louis Marshall, Henry Ford, and the Problem of Defamatory Antisemitism, 1920–1929," *Journal of American History* 91, 3 (2004): 877–905. Another indicator for the relevance of political antisemitism in America at the time is the widespread support for the popular folk hero and aviator Charles A. Lindbergh, who became the most important spokesperson of the America First Committee—an anti-interventionist and isolationist organization with 800,000 members by 1941, seeking to stay neutral vis-à-vis Nazism's genocidal war of destruction and to keep the U.S. out of the "European war." Lindbergh infamously attacked the Roosevelt administration, the British administration, and "the Jewish races." He did so especially in his anti-Jewish speech in Des Moines, Iowa, on September 11, 1941, when the nationalist Lindbergh blamed "foreign interests," a "small

minority of our own people" and particularly "the Jewish races" for being "war agitators" who represent "small groups" but "control a tremendous influence" while using "the power of their propaganda and money." Virtually stripping Jews from their American citizenship, he suggested—referring to "the British and Jewish races"—that "we cannot allow the natural passions and prejudices of other peoples to lead our country to destruction." At the same time, Lindbergh and his followers saw themselves as victims of a "smear campaign" and being unfairly labeled "antisemitic." Cf. Charles A. Lindbergh, "Des Moines Speech," PBS: The American Experience, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/lindbergh/filmmore/reference/primary/desmoinesspeech.html>. See also Max Wallace, *The American Axis: Henry Ford, Charles Lindbergh, and the Rise of the Third Reich* (2003), and Susan Dunn, *1940: Willkie, Lindbergh, Hitler—the Election amid the Storm* (2013). The writer Philip Roth has woven Lindbergh's enormous popularity, and the popularity of his ideological resentments as a leader of the *America First Committee*, into a largely counterfactual, yet partly facts-based and partly autobiographic novel, in which Lindbergh beats Roosevelt in the 1940 presidential election and subsequently nurtures an antisemitic climate—while collaborating with the Nazi regime. Providing an alternative history, Roth's work points to the antisemitic and authoritarian potential in American society at the time; it is, in the words of Paul Berman in the *New York Times*, a "creeping plausibly" political novel. Paul Berman, "The Plot Against America," *New York Times*, October 3, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/03/books/review/the-plot-against-america.html>. See Philip Roth, *The Plot against America* (2004). In reality, however, Lindbergh and Ford were publicly reprimanded for their hate speech against Jews by the American public and the political elite and

thus the antisemitic sentiments in America were held in check by political factors and actors. In contemporary America, to be sure, it is noteworthy that the isolationist right-wing commentator and politician Pat Buchanan vigorously defends Lindbergh's views and still sees him as the victim of a smear campaign by the "interventionists." See Pat Buchanan, *A Republic, not an Empire: Reclaiming America's Destiny* (1999). It is also noteworthy that Donald Trump won his presidential electoral campaign in 2016 by replicating Lindbergh's "America First" isolationist propaganda and conspiracy myths, and by mobilizing political resentments against minorities, immigrants, and Jews.

19. Cf. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 180 and 218; Ziege, "Patterns within Prejudice," 97–98. The fieldwork was conducted from spring 1944 to November 1944, while Adorno and Horkheimer completed their work on the "Elements of Antisemitism," and while the genocidal terror of the Holocaust in Germany reaches its peak.
20. According to polls carried out on behalf of the American Jewish Committee by the Opinion Research Corporation between 1938 and 1941, one-third of respondents believed that Jews had too much power in the United States. This rose to 56 percent during the war years, and to 67 percent in 1945, supporting Adorno's philosophical speculation that the weakest victim is always the most hated. Cf. Ziege, "Patterns within Prejudice," 97. Antisemitism, as indicated, was certainly not a fringe phenomenon in American society in the 1940s but widely shared. Its relevance was strikingly limited, however, by the public and political response to antisemitism and the condemnation of anti-Jewish hate speech. Cf. Louisa Thomas, "America First, for Charles Lindbergh and Donald Trump," *New Yorker*, July 24, 2016, <http://www.newyorker.com>

/news/news-desk/america-first-for-charles-lindbergh-and-donald-trump

21. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftskritik*, 186.
22. Ziege, "Patterns within Prejudice," 94 and 99.
23. On these data, the experimental design and problems in the research process cf. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 195–202.
24. *Ibid.*, 196.
25. Institute of Social Research, "Studies in Antisemitism: A Report on the Cooperative Project for the Study of Antisemitism for the Year Ending March 15, 1944, jointly Sponsored by the American Jewish Committee and the Institute of Social Research," August 1944, Max-Horkheimer-Archiv, IX, 121a.
26. Ziege, "Patterns within Prejudice," 94.
27. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 197.
28. Ziege points out that Adorno contradicts the idea of "community" or "action" research that may hope for immediate effects in the fight against antisemitism. In the face of the challenge of totalitarian antisemitism, Adorno argues instead, "we believe to be justified in giving our own study a completely different emphasis: that of 'cultural anthropology.'" Theodor W. Adorno, "Remarks," Max-Horkheimer-Archiv, VI I D.80, cited in Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 262. In *Antisemitism among American Labor*, Ziege sees the influence of Jewish social philosopher Horace M. Kallen, cofounder of the New School for Social Research in 1919, who promoted the idea of "cultural pluralism" and opposed the idea of a "melting pot" and "cultural assimilation." Kallen did not actively participate in the study but served as an advisor. Cf. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 182–183.
29. In May 1945, at the end of the war, the four volumes were finalized.

30. Institute of Social Research, *Antisemitism among American Labor*, 706. Attitudes toward Jews in the United States were to be seen in the context of the Allies' war against Nazi Germany and reports in the mass media about genocide against European Jews. Ziege notes that especially the study of American perceptions of World War II and the Nazi genocide of the European Jews peculiarly fulfilled what Horkheimer had declared as unattainable only a few years before, namely that (Jewish) emigrants of a world that produces fascism can be expected to hold a mirror to (capitalist) societies in those countries where they are still granted asylum. Cf. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 183; Ziege, "Patterns within Prejudice," 94. Cf. also Seyla Benhabib, *Dignity in Adversity: Human Rights in Troubled Times* (2011), 24.
31. However, there is a significant divide among different generational cohorts. Among workers age under 25, only 3.5 percent relate positively to the Nazi crimes. There are also noticeable differences between whites and blacks. Almost two-thirds of blacks unconditionally reject the Nazi genocide, and they are generally less hostile toward Jews and more sensitive to issues of social discrimination. They tend, the research suggest, to lack the "mythical concept of 'the Jew'." Cf. Institute of Social Research, *Antisemitism among American Labor*, 530, 710–719, 1135–1136. Cf. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 212–214, 220.
32. As indicated, for our purposes the fourth part, which analyzes and conceptualizes anti-Jewish imagery and its dynamics, is the most relevant. It was organized and written by Löwenthal, and edited and republished by Löwenthal later in FP.
33. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 81.
34. *Ibid.*, 82 and 94.

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35. "First Draft for the Project to be sponsored by Jewish Labor Committee," December 24, 1943, Max Horheimer Archiv IX 146, 4c, 2; cited in Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 170.
 36. Theodor W. Adorno, "The Meaning of Working Through the Past," in Adorno, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (1998), 101f.
 37. Theodor W. Adorno, "Anti-Semitism and Fascist Propaganda," in Adorno, *The Stars Down to Earth and Other Essays on the Irrational in Culture*, ed. with an introduction by Stephen Crook (1994), 168.
 38. *Ibid.*, 165.
 39. *Ibid.*, 168.
 40. On the critique of correspondence theories and interactionist models, see chapter 3.
 41. Recent attempts to employ approaches in the tradition of Mannheim's 'sociology of knowledge' for the analysis of antisemitic phenomena include Claudia Globisch, *Radikaler Antisemitismus: Inklusions- und Exklusionssemantiken von links und rechts in Deutschland* (2013); and Lars Fischer, *The Socialist Response to Antisemitism in Imperial Germany* (2007). Of course, the architecture of a racist "counterscience" that imitates scientific forms has the appearance of a logical system. Indeed, as a system of exclusion of the other, or the nonidentical, it has its origins in modern scientific rationality with its hardening against experience. Without a doubt, one can point to a "birth of racism from the spirit of positivism," as the Critical Theorists might have put it. Yet in racist antisemitism, scientific projections gave way early on to madness, set loose from reality and hermetically self-referential. There is no "purely" rational "antisemitism of reason," such as Hitler postulated; the agitator and the apologist are affected by madness, no matter how rationalistic the means by which they pursue their political

aims. From the perspective of Critical Theory, to believe that antisemitism constitutes a logical system concedes too much rationality and plausibility to those wildly incoherent antisemitic claims and takes them to some extent at face value.

42. Jay, "The Jews and the Frankfurt School," 142.
43. M. Fakhry Davis, *Internal Racism: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Race and Difference* (2011), 173.
44. Mortimer Ostow, *Myth and Madness: The Psychodynamics of Antisemitism* (1999), 176.
45. Cf. most recently Eva Horn's study of the antisemitic "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," in Eva Horn "Das Gespenst der Arkana: Verschwörungsfiktion und Textstruktur in den 'Protokollen der Weisen von Zion,'" Eva Horn and M. Hagemester, eds., *Die Fiktion von der jüdischen Weltverschwörung: Zu Text und Kontext der "Protokolle der Weisen von Zion"* (2012), 25: "Maybe this is a bizarre and quite terrible core of modern Jew hatred: that you can move around in a space of pure projection, of completely free phantasmagories without references which no longer even needs evil images or explicit defamation. It takes place comfortably in an empty space of pure claims, impossible to prove, incorrigible and thus irrefutable" (trans. LR).
46. I return to the conceptualization and problem of "ideology" in Critical Theory in chapter 5.
47. This is not to say that the Frankfurt School's and Arendt's account and understanding of antisemitism are similar in all respects. For instance, as is pointed out in the next section, Adorno and Arendt profoundly disagree on the relationship between racial antisemitism and nationalism. However, while the Frankfurt School provides a unique contribution to the subject, there are also some strikingly analogous assumptions and parallel findings. On both thinker's account of antisemitism cf. Julia Schulze

- Wessel and Lars Rensmann, "The Paralysis of Judgment: Arendt and Adorno on Antisemitism and the Modern Condition," in Lars Rensmann and Samir Gandesha, eds., *Arendt and Adorno: Political and Philosophical Investigations*, eds. Lars Rensmann and Samir Gandesha (2012), 197–225.
48. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, new edition (1973), 35–120.
 49. Cf. Heinrich von Treitschke, "Our Prospects" (1879), trans. Helen Lederer, excerpted in Marcel Stoetzler, *The State, the Nation, and the Jews: Liberalism and the Antisemitism Dispute in Bismarck's Germany* (2009), 314.
 50. Cf. John Weiss, *Ideology of Death: Why the Holocaust Happened in Germany* (1997); Shulamit Volkow, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation* (2006); Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria* (1988).
 51. Among others, see the instructive historical sociological account by William I. Brunstein, *Roots of Hate: Anti-Semitism in Europe before the Holocaust* (2003).
 52. There is a wide-ranging academic debate on how to conceptualize and define antisemitism, and Nazi antisemitism in particular. As pointed out in the introduction, I generally use antisemitism—the dominant term to describe phenomena of modern Jew hatred ever since it was created as a full-fledged modern ideology—and jud-eophobia interchangeably: the target of both are Jews, and only Jews. The still often used term "anti-Semitism" wrongly suggests something else, namely that "Semites" are the subject of hatred; it is a misnomer. An innovative recent account to define antisemitism and its scope can be found in Kenneth L. Marcus, *The Definition of Anti-Semitism* (2015). Unfortunately, Marcus also employs the misnomer. A noteworthy recent contribution to the debate comes from David Nirenberg, who wrote a history

of Western antisemitism. Nirenberg uses the term “anti-Judaism,” from which the Critical Theorists and myself abstain because it seems to imply that religious discrimination is at the core of antisemitism. At the very least for modern times, when antisemitism emerged as a paranoid world explanation, this assumption is misleading. See David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (2013). The theoretical debate about Nazi antisemitism displays some terminological innovations as well in order to grasp the specificity of the Nazis’ antisemitic program. Saul Friedländer speaks about “redemptive antisemitism,” pointing to the fact that the Nazis radicalized the idea that the extermination of the Jews on the planet would lead to, and be the key to, some sort of “redemption.” Daniel Jonah Goldhagen advances the terms “eliminationist” and “exterminationist” antisemitism. Goldhagen, whose study caused much scholarly and public controversy, was the first to talk about “eliminationist antisemitism” as a cultural horizon. It suggests that German antisemitism even before Nazism had an inherently radical tendency not only to discriminate and persecute but also to eliminate Jews from society, which the Nazis transformed into a program of extermination. See Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Extermination, 1939–1945* (2008); Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (1996).

53. On antisemitism as the ideological core of Nazism, see Saul Friedländer, “From Anti-Semitism to Extermination: A Historiographical Study of Nazi Policies Toward the Jews and an Essay in Interpretation,” François Furet, ed., *Unanswered Questions: Nazi Germany and the Genocide of the Jews* (1989), 3–31. Historiographic research over the past two decades illustrates with particular clarity the central role of antisemitism in the

- Nazi war of extermination and its deep entrenchment both in German society in general and in the attitudes of the “normal” German soldiers. See also Peter Longerich, Hannes Heer, and Klaus Naumann, eds., *War of Extermination: The German Military in World War II, 1941–1944* (1999).
54. Theodor W. Adorno, *Guilt and Defense: On the Legacies of National Socialism in Postwar Germany* (2010).
 55. Lars Rensmann and Julius H. Schoeps, “Politics and Resentment: Examining Antisemitism and Counter-Cosmopolitanism in the European Union and Beyond,” *Politics and Resentment: Antisemitism and Counter-Cosmopolitanism in the European Union*, eds. Lars Rensmann and Julius H. Schoeps (2011), 3–79. See also chapter 9.
 56. Adorno, “Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute,” 107.
 57. This is a problem reproduced by many contemporary studies of “latent antisemitism,” which tend to overplay the presumed difference between “stereotypes without prejudice” and an antisemitic “hostile ideology,” in the words of Bernd Marin, “Ein historisch neuartiger ‘Antisemitismus ohne Antisemiten’?,” *Antisemitismus in Österreich: Sozialhistorische und soziologische Studien*, ed. John Bunzl and Bernd Marin (Innsbruck: Inn Verlag), 173–192.
 58. Cf. Adorno, “Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute,” 110.
 59. Emphasis added.
 60. Cf. AP 610–611.
 61. Recent empirical studies of antisemitism in the tradition of the Frankfurt School’s authoritarianism model also reaffirm that differences in educational background are less significant. Cf. Andreas Zick, Beate Küpper, Andreas Hövermann, *Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination: A European Report* (2011).

62. Rather than simply a matter of individual or collective prejudice or antipathy, antisemitism is *also* a form of collective social resentment, or racism, as George L. Mosse points out, yet “with its own peculiar . . . mode of discourse.” George L. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (1985), ix.
63. On this distinction see Lars Rensmann and Julius H. Schoeps, “Politics and Resentment,” 22–24.
64. Cf. Adorno, *Guilt and Defense*, 107.
65. Cultural relativism reproduces the racial stereotypes that ethnic minorities or citizens of the Third World are incapable of rational reflection and decision-making, or of adhering to universal norms. To show sympathy and understanding for acts of violent terrorism against civilians, construed as an “understandable” response to Western power, in fact, denigrates citizens of the global South by suggesting they are only capable of insane, irrational actions of random terror. Cf. for an initial critique of Third World anti-Western nationalism see originally Adorno, “The Meaning of Working Through the Past,” 97. Cf. also chapter 7 of this book and Thomas Haurly, “Antizionismus: Antisemitismus von links? Zur Kritik des ‘anti-imperialistischen Weltbildes’,” Shelley Berlowitz, Elinor Burgauer, and Bea Schwager, eds., *Antisemitismus in der Linken* (1994), 37.
66. For examples of this “thought pornography” as a feature of anti-black racism see the chapter on Southern lynch mobs (chapter 3) in Jennet Kirkpatrick, *Uncivil Disobedience: Studies in Violence and Democratic Politics* (2008).
67. Associating Jews with being “filthy” and “debauched,” from which one wants to distance oneself as strange and foreign, is a main antisemitic theme according to Otto Fenichel, “Psychoanalysis of Anti-Semitism,” *American Imago* 1, 2 (1940): 31. Fenichel also explains this, and antisemitism in general, quite nicely in psychoanalytic

terms: "One can put it in one sentence: one's own unconscious is also foreign."

68. Cf. Karen Stögner, *Antisemitismus und Sexismus*; Warren J. Blumenfeld, "Homophobia and Anti-Semitism: Making the Links," in James Thomas Sears and Walter L. Williams, eds., *Overcoming Heterosexism and Homophobia* (1997), 131–140.
69. Cf. DE 147–165.
70. To give one example: Racists could not believe that the nineteenth-century African-American social reformer, abolitionist and intellectual Frederick Douglass could have written his antislavery autobiography (and subsequent books). Fanon describes similar reified social conceptions of a constructed lack of black intellect, which resonate until this day. Cf. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Mask* (1952). There are, to be sure, also wildly contradictory, mutable fantasies about blacks and especially black women that should also not be underestimated. Cf. Drucilla Cornell and Kenneth Michael Panfilio, *Symbolic Forms for a New Humanity: Cultural and Racial Reconstructions of Critical Theory* (2010).
71. Institute for Social Research, *Antisemitism among American Labor*, 510f; cf. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 219.
72. While this link between conspiracy myths and antisemitism has by now been widely established in historical research, it has recently been called into question by Matthew Gray, *Conspiracy Theories in the Arab World: Sources and Conflicts* (2010).
73. Theodor W. Adorno, "Education after Auschwitz," in Adorno, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (1998), 192.
74. Hannah Arendt, "The Seeds of a Fascist International" (1945), in Arendt, *Essays in Understanding, 1930–1954*, ed. Jerome Kohn (1994), 144.

75. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 107; trans Kizer Walker. Similarly, Jessica Jacoby and Gotlinde Magiriba Lwanga see modern nationalism, with all of its country-specific inflections, as a "sort of suture at which antisemitism and the various forms of racism meet." Jessica Jacoby and Gotlinde Magiriba Lwanga, "Was 'sie' schon immer über Antisemitismus wissen wollte, aber nie zu denken wagte," *Beiträge zur feministischen Theorie und Praxis* 27 (1990): 96.
76. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 107.
77. Leon Poliakov, *The History of Antisemitism*, 4 vols. (2003); Walter Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Antisemitism: From Ancient Times to the Present Day* (2006).
78. See chapter 7, and Lars Rensmann "Returning from Forced Exile: Some Observations on Hannah Arendt's and Theodor W. Adorno's Experience of post-War Germany and Their Social and Political Theories on Totalitarianism," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 49 (2004): 380–406.
79. Talcott Parsons, "The Sociology of Modern Antisemitism," Isacque Graeber and Steuart Henderson Britt, eds., *Jews In a Gentile World: The Problem of Antisemitism* (1942), 114.
80. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 113; trans. Kizer Walker.
81. Cf. FP 43–44.
82. See also Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses* (2000), 58.
83. Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923–1950* (1996), 232.
84. Jessica Jacoby and Gotlinde Magiriba Lwanga have pointed out how this Jewish "oversexualization" is distinct from other racisms. The image of the "horny Jew" is often linked to the phantasmagory of an old man with a crooked

- back, never to the image of a man with muscles. In crass opposite to that we find often the image of the beautiful Jewish woman, identified with "oriental" seduction and sexual—if dangerous—attractiveness, potentially bearing fatal consequences for men (Judith, Salome). Cf. Jessica Jacoby and Gotlinde Magiriba Lwanga, "Was 'sie' schon immer über Antisemitismus wissen wollte, aber nie zu denken wagte," *Beiträge zur feministischen Theorie und Praxis* 13 (1990): 95–105.
85. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 120; trans. KW.
 86. Cf. FP 60.
 87. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 118.
 88. Cf. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses*.
 89. Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History" (1940), trans. Harry Zohn, in *Selected Writings*, vol. 4, eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (2003), 393.
 90. Jacoby and Lwanga, "Was 'sie' schon immer über Antisemitismus wissen wollte," 96; trans. Kizer Walker.
 91. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses*, 126.
 92. Emphasis added, LR.
 93. Horkheimer, "Über das Vorurteil," 104; trans. Kizer Walker.
 94. Werner Bergmann, "Approaches to Antisemitism Based on Psychodynamics and Personality Theory," 15.
 95. Nathan W. Ackerman and Marie Jahoda, *Anti-Semitism and Emotional Disorder: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation* (1950), 55.
 96. Otto Fenichel, "Elemente einer psychoanalytischen Theorie des Antisemitismus," in *Antisemitismus*, ed. Ernst Simmel (1993 [1946]), 20; cf. Otto Fenichel, "Psychoanalysis of Anti-Semitism," *American Imago* 1, 2 (1940).

97. The 1987 Transaction edition gives this as "important rage," but "impotent rage" would make more sense in the context. This would correspond to the German edition of Löwenthal's writings (*Schriften*, vol. 3), which renders the phrase as "ohnmächtige[r] Zorn." Thanks to Kizer Walker for pointing to the error in the English translation.
98. Numerous authors, drawing on the insights of Critical Theory, have viewed the magnitude and the nature of the power attributed to the Jews as a distinguishing characteristic of antisemitism, one with no equivalent in other racisms. Cf. Werner Bergmann, "Politische Psychologie des Antisemitismus. Kritischer Literaturbericht," *Politische Psychologie heute*, eds. Werner Bergmann, Helmut König, et al. (1988), 221.
99. An excellent if brief early reflection on the link of hatred of modern urban culture and antisemitism is Arnold Rose, "Anti-Semitism Root in City-Hatred," *Commentary* 6 (1948), 374–378.
100. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses*, 81.
101. Cf. Reinhard Rürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus: Studien zur 'Judenfrage' in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (1975).
102. The complex dialectic of universalism and particularism cannot be treated at any length here. By way of clarification, however, I would note that the emergence of bourgeois society not only established the exchange society and the law of value, but also gave rise to the proclamation of universal human rights, which was informed, admittedly, by a homogenized, specifically bourgeois image of the human being. That these human rights remained largely a matter of ideology for the dependent classes, that their promises did not take on full and universal material force, is a function of the fundamental contradictions of the unjust and exclusionary social formation from which they emerged.

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103. Cf. DE 142–143.
104. In *Capital*, vol. 1, Marx describes the two-sided emancipation of the worker from the bondage of feudal relations to capitalism's "free" labor market: "The immediate producer, the worker, could dispose of his own person only after he had ceased to be bound to the soil, and ceased to be the slave or serf of another person. To become a free seller of labour-power, who carries his commodity wherever he can find a market for it, he must further have escaped from the regime of the guilds. . . . Hence the historical movement which changes the producers into wage-labourers appears, on the one hand, as their emancipation from serfdom and from the fetters of the guilds, and it is this aspect of the movement which alone exists for our bourgeois historians. But, on the other hand, these newly freed men became sellers of themselves only after they had been robbed of all their own means of production, and all the guarantees of existence afforded by the old feudal arrangements." Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes, vol. 1 (1990–1992), 875.
105. Moishe Postone has further developed the dialectic of fetishization of both the concrete and the abstract in antisemitism, which is further explored in the subsequent chapter on social theory. Cf. Moishe Postone, "Anti-Semitism and National Socialism," *Germans and Jews since the Holocaust: The Changing Situation in West Germany*, eds. Anson Rabinbach and Jack Zipes (1986), 302–314.
106. Theodor W. Adorno, "Anti-Semitism and Fascist Propaganda," 169.
107. On the historiography of this relationship in the German context, see Dan Diner, *America in the Eyes of the Germans: An Essay on Anti-Americanism*, trans. Allison Brown (1996).
108. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses*, 130f.

109. Cf. AP 622.
110. Cf. FP 226.
111. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 109; trans. LR.
112. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses*, 126.
113. Löwenthal, *Schriften* vol. 3, *Falsche Propheten. Studien zum Autoritarismus*, ed. Helmut Dubiel (1982), 207. This passage trans. Kizer Walker. The sentence has no equivalent in the 1987 English edition. Here it should be added that while a lack of real power, social impotence, doubtless represents a real basis for antisemitism, other aspects of societal power relations may also play a role for the authoritarian character. Birgit Rommelspacher points out that among groups that are seemingly altogether powerless and underprivileged, particularly women and social minorities, social powerlessness is, in fact, often associated with displays of solidarity. Rommelspacher proceeds from the assumption that a sense of entitlement to dominance is starkly higher among members of the (petty) bourgeois establishment and that this attitude can be mobilized against minorities that ostensibly threaten or put into question this dominance or prevailing norms and lifestyles. However, this analysis does not take into account the specific projection of omnipresent Jewish power, which distinguishes antisemitism from other racisms and which is virulent in all social classes. See Birgit Rommelspacher, *Dominanzkultur: Texte zu Fremdheit und Macht* (2006).
114. "Memorandum from T. W. Adorno re Evaluation of Participant Interviews (Labor Project)," p. 6, November, 3, 1944, Paul Lazarsfeld Collection, Box 20, Columbia University; cited in Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 81.
115. To the role of politics and political conditions I discuss in chapter 7.

116. Michel Wieviorka, *The Lure of Antisemitism: Hatred of Jews in Present-Day France* (2007).
117. I problematize Adorno's claim, tied to his argument about ticket thinking and later relativized by Adorno himself, in chapter 6 when I discuss Horkheimer and Adorno's "Elements of Antisemitism" in detail.

Chapter 5. The Societal Origins of Modern Antisemitism

1. Theodor W. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 120.
2. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 120.
3. Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, "Sociology and Psychology (part 1)," trans. Irving N. Wohlfarth, *New Left Review* 1/46 (November–December 1967), 73: "The divergence of individual and society is essentially social in origin, it is socially perpetuated, and it is in social terms that its manifestations are primarily to be explained. Even the vulgar materialism that sees down-to-earth profit-motives at the bottom of individuals, responses is closer to the truth than the psychologist who derives the economic behaviour of adults from their childhood; for they are governed by objective economic laws into which the individuality of the contracting parties does not enter in the least except, possibly, as a mere appendage."
4. Max Horkheimer, "Foreword," in FP 1.
5. Dan Diner, "Aporie der Vernunft: Horkheimers Überlegungen zu Antisemitismus und Massenvernichtung," in Dan Diner, *Zivilisationsbruch: Denken nach Auschwitz* (1988), 33.
6. Elisabeth Brainin, "Psychoanalyse des Antisemitismus nach 1945," in Alphonse Silbermann and Julius H. Schoeps,

- eds., *Antisemitismus nach dem Holocaust. Bestandsaufnahme und Erscheinungsformen in deutschsprachigen Ländern* (1986), 105–113; 106; trans. Kizer Walker.
7. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 346.
 8. Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (1984), 262.
 9. Cf. DE 43.
 10. Cf. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 344–349.
 11. *Ibid.*, 362.
 12. *Ibid.*, 346–347.
 13. Originating in ancient philosophy, where it denotes imitation and representation, the concept of mimesis has enjoyed a new career under the auspices of the Frankfurt School, taking on wide-ranging connotations. Through a process of rational self-critique, Horkheimer and Adorno trace the concept back to the prelogical mimesis of experiential impulses. Successful, genuine mimesis from the standpoint of Critical Theory can be understood as the spirit's embrace of the particular, a reaching out in solidarity. It is a process of becoming conscious of and making oneself like the nonidentical—or the living as such—without either objectifying nature as a set of abstractions, nor reverting to primal nature. In this view, mimesis represents a mediated reflection of its object, a "remembrance of nature within the subject" (DE 32), borne by a conciliatory impulse that is critical of domination. True mimesis in this sense would be a nonobjective imitation; it would refer to that which is inherent in things beyond their familiar existence. Mimesis of death is the just opposite; it represents the assimilation to the thing in a blind performance of life under the compulsion of self-preservation. It amounts to a leveling of the subjugated that conforms to the identical, hardened subject of domination. This leveling impulse gives itself up and goes blind in the process, since it comes to resemble mere

self-preservation, the natural, naked struggle for survival that comprehends the other only as an adversary that must be conquered or subsumed.

14. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 363.
15. Horkheimer, "Autorität und Familie in der Gegenwart," in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* vol. 5 (1987), 377–395; 389 trans. Kizer Walker.
16. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 311.
17. Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes, vol. 1 (London: Penguin, 1990–1992), 166.
18. Franz Neumann, "Anxiety and Politics," in Neumann, *The Democratic and The Authoritarian State: Essays in Political and Legal Theory*, ed. Herbert Marcuse, trans. Peter Gay (1957), 270–300, 272.
19. In the Fowkes translation, "objektive Gedankenformen" appears as "forms of thought which are . . . objective"; Marx, *Capital*, 169.
20. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (1971), 90.
21. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 90. Cf. also: "The atomisation of the individual is, then, only the reflex in consciousness of the fact that the 'natural laws' of capitalist production have been extended to cover every manifestation of life in society; that—the first time in history—the whole of society is subjected, or tends to be subjected, to a unified economic process, and that the fate of every member of society is determined by unified laws" (91–92). For Lukács, however, this atomization is ultimately only a matter of appearances, mere ideology. Critical Theory does not subscribe to this orthodox position, which is grounded in the theory of ideology. For Critical Theory, neither atomization nor reification is a false appearance; both are seen as aspects of real social relations.

22. Jephcott's translation is altered here; Jephcott has "class society" here, rather than "class history." However, "Klassengeschichte" ("class *history*") appears in the quoted passage in both the original 1944 mimeograph version of the text (published as *Philosophische Fragmente* by the Institute for Social Research) and the first printed edition of 1947 (published by Querido in Amsterdam), as well as the 1969 Fischer edition. "Klassengeschichte" is also the term that appears in this passage in the complete edition of Horkheimer's works on which the Jephcott translation is based; Cf. Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* vol. 5, *Dialektik der Aufklärung und Schriften 1940–1950*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (1987), 78. There are several small, but significant variations between the 1944 version of the text and subsequent editions. According to a commentary by Willem van Reijen and Jan Bransen included in the 2002 Jephcott translation, Horkheimer and Adorno's revisions reflect a distancing from certain Marxist concepts. "Class history" is one such term that disappeared from at least one passage of the revised text: a reference to "the predicament of the whole of class history" in the 1944 edition becomes "society's predicament" in the 1947 and subsequent editions (see DE 262). The term is retained, however, in the passage cited earlier and this continuity seems particularly significant in light of the fraught nature of "class history" for the text. On the subtle changes made by Horkheimer and Adorno between 1944 and 1947, see: "The Disappearance of Class History in 'Dialectic of Enlightenment': A Commentary on the Textual Variants (1947 and 1944)," DE 248–252. This footnote is owed to Kizer Walker.
23. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 18.
24. This crisp formulation of a central concept for Critical Theory and its "reification paradigm," as well as for the Marxian theory of the fetish character of the commodity

(the reflection of capitalist exchange relations in human consciousness) appears in the first 1867 edition of *Capital* vol. 1, in an appendix to the first chapter entitled “Die Werthform” (The Value-Form). The second edition of 1873 dispensed with the appendix and most of the content was integrated into the body of chapter 1. “Die Werthform” appears in the East German critical edition of the Marx and Engels complete works, *Marx Engels Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA), vol. 5, “Das Kapital und Vorarbeiten” (1983), 626–649. The appendix was first published in English translation in 1978 in the journal *Capital and Class* (“The Value-Form,” trans. Mike Roth and Wal Suchting, *Capital and Class* 2 (Spring 1978): 134–150; that translation is openly accessible from the Marxists Internet Archive: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/appendix.htm>. In this version, the passage cited above is rendered more literally from the German: “This *inversion* (*Verkehrung*) by which the sensibly-concrete counts only as the form of appearance of the abstractly general and not, on the contrary, the abstractly general as property of the concrete, characterises the expression of value.” The rather more easily graspable translation of the passage provided above appears in Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989), 32; the translation appears to be Žižek’s own (Kizer Walker).

25. Critical Theory’s notion of the individual as a social monad originates with Leibniz’s *Monadology*. It implies a concept of the reified individual as a blind atom, as a self-contained, “hermetically sealed” entity with no capacity for perceiving the other. Blindness and atomization of the individual notwithstanding, each monad, in this view, reflects the societal whole; for Leibniz, each represents a “concentrated universe.”
26. Jay, *Marxism and Totality*, 260.
27. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 63.

28. Ibid., 64.
29. Löwenthal, *Falsche Propheten. Studien zum Autoritarismus*, 270; trans. Kizer Walker. The paragraph where this passage appears has no equivalent in the 1987 English edition.
30. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 320.
31. Neumann, "Anxiety and Politics," 271.
32. Cf. DE 27: "Under the given conditions, exclusion from work means mutilation, not only for the unemployed but also for people at the opposite social pole. Those at the top experience the existence with which they no longer need to concern themselves as a mere substrate, and are wholly ossified as the self which issues commands. . . . The servant is subjugated in body and soul, the master regresses. No system of domination has so far been able to escape this price, and the circularity of history in its progress is explained in part by this debilitation, which is the concomitant of power."
33. "Yet stultification is caused not by the oppressed but by oppression, and it affects not only the oppressed but, in their essentials, the oppressors as well. . . ." Theodor W. Adorno, "The Sociology of Knowledge and Its Consciousness," *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (1983), 35–49; 41.
34. Brainin, "Psychoanalyse des Antisemitismus nach 1945," 107; trans. Kizer Walker.
35. Claussen, *Grenzen der Aufklärung*, 49; trans. Kizer Walker.
36. Theodor W. Adorno, "Marginalia to Theory and Praxis," in Adorno, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (2005), 262.
37. On the "loss of conscience," cf. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 79.
38. Cf. Martin Jay on "Theodor W. Adorno and the Collapse of the Lukácsian Concept of Totality" in Jay, *Marxism and*

- Totality*, 241–275; 261. See also Jay, “The Jews and the Frankfurt School.” Jay notes that Horkheimer and Adorno’s “critical attitude towards totality, a term that frequently appeared in their other writings in a more positive light,” first emerges in the “Elements of Anti-Semitism” chapter of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Jay maintains that this change is “indicative of a general shift away from what might be called the Lukácsian tenor of their early work.” Jay, “The Jews and the Frankfurt School,” 149n63.
39. Jay, “The Jews and the Frankfurt School,” 147.
 40. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 347.
 41. Cf. DE 162.
 42. Cf. Robert Fine, “Debating Human Rights, law, and Subjectivity: Arendt, Adorno, and Critical Theory,” 154–172. See also chapter 7 of this book.
 43. See Bronner, *Reclaiming the Enlightenment: Towards a Politics of Radical Engagement*.
 44. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 45.
 45. Theodor W. Adorno, “Bemerkungen über Politik und Neurose,” *Gesammelte Schriften* 8, *Soziologische Schriften* 1 (1972), 93; trans. Kizer Walker.
 46. Cf. Lars Rensmann, “Political Terror in the Age of Global Modernity: Adorno’s Critical Theory of Totalitarianism Revisited,” *Politics, Religion and Ideology* 12, 1 (2011): 3–26.
 47. Egalitarianism and hierarchy only appear to contradict in the concept of the “racial community.” The latter envisions a collectivity characterized, on one hand, by unconditional submission to the respective leader and a thoroughly hierarchal system of domination and obedience. On the other, it is marked by a “monadological” equalization of all subjections into an identical, uniformed mass, a community that aggressively sets itself apart from all “others.”
 48. Cf. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 149.

49. Cf. DE 164. For Critical Theory, the circulation sphere also played a key role in advancing modern domination and exploitation, and in this way it contributes to its own disappearance under conditions of state or monopoly capitalism. "The circulation sphere . . . is vanishing." In his writings during the National Socialist period, Horkheimer proceeds from the assumption that there is no longer any going back to liberalism and that the circulation sphere is being abolished. In "The Authoritarian State" (1940), Horkheimer writes that state capitalism has supplanted the market, at least "*for the duration of eternal Germany.*" Cf. Max Horkheimer, "The Authoritarian State," in Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, eds., *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (1982), 96–117; 97; emphasis in original. The Frankfurt School interpreted fascism as state capitalism or "integral statism" (Horkheimer, "Authoritarian State," 101 and *passim*), a form that had liquidated capitalist commodities from the realm of exchange and markets that Marx had analyzed as the circulation sphere. The totalization of instrumental reason, in this view, not only transformed subjective consciousness into delusion; it also had an analogous effect at a social-material level. The theory of state capitalism assumes that an ostensibly real demise of "Jewish power," that is, circulative capital personified in the image of the Jew, has an influence on the escalation of antisemitism. I am unconvinced by the theory in particular because of this suggestion that the real status of the Jews is germane to antisemitism. Yet the economic premises of the theory must also be viewed with skepticism. History has not substantiated Horkheimer's projection of an end of the circulation sphere; on the contrary, today banks enjoy more supranational power than ever, albeit in quasi-monopolistic structures. Even for National Socialism, the primacy of politics and state control, while at the core of antisemitic persecution, only

obtained to a limited degree in the economic sphere. For instance, when “Jewish” banks were cartelized, they were taken over by “German” banks, not transferred to state ownership. It is essential to understand that market capitalism in its “pure” form has been as rare as a “pure” state capitalism. The latter amasses surplus value as profit and that can partially revert to personal relations of domination (e.g., forced labor), occasionally suspending wage labor relations. See also Helmut Dubiel and Alfons Söllner, “Die Nationalsozialismusforschung des Instituts für Sozialforschung—ihre wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Stellung und ihre gegenwärtige Bedeutung,” *Wirtschaft, Recht und Staat im Nationalsozialismus. Analysen des Instituts für Sozialforschung 1939–1942*, eds. Dubiel and Söllner (1981), 7–32; and Avraham Barkai, *Nazi Economics: Ideology, Theory, and Policy*, trans. Ruth Hadass-Vashitz (1990). The potential for the transformation from mediated to unmediated domination, Critical Theory holds, is immanent in modern bourgeois rationality as a whole and in the development of capitalist society. Manifestations of the concentration of power and the constant, direct pressure of domination are seen as common to all forms of modernity, not only the extreme case of the fascist form. Cf. Horkheimer, “Authoritarian State”; also Max Horkheimer, “The End of Reason,” in Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, eds., *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (1982), 34: “The totalitarian order marks the leap from the indirect to direct forms of domination, while still maintaining a system of private enterprise. The National Socialists do not stand outside the pattern of economic trends.”

50. Nevertheless, it should be noted that antisemitism, as recent social research confirms, is not fundamentally tied to social class, although the working-class antisemite might be more likely to see “the Jew” as a capitalist than

- his or her lower- or upper-middle-class counterparts. More significantly, antisemitism appears to be motivated by a discrepancy between an individual's actual social status and the status that is desired at a psychosocial level, that is, by constraints on influence and upward social mobility, factors that are highly important for individuals with strong attachments to societal norms and authorities. Cf. AP, 759–760; also Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, *Anti-Semitism in Germany: The Post-Nazi Epoch since 1945*, trans. Belinda Cooper and Allison Brown (1997), 215–220.
51. Cf. DE 143. To some extent, Horkheimer and Adorno's reference to the Jews as involuntary agents of the circulation sphere, as intermediaries, seems to me a problematic generalization, itself an instance of unexamined ideology. This strand of argumentation echoes the early Horkheimer in his pronounced orthodox Marxist phase, with which Critical Theory breaks. Pointedly ignoring the impoverished, proletarian Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe and basing his analysis on the ostensible social position of Jews in Germany, Horkheimer in 1939 infers a certain shared responsibility on the part of the Jews—or at least some sort of rationale—for antisemitic paranoia, from the behavior of the Jewish bourgeoisie. The *real objects of persecution* in this account appear in a sense complicit in their own oppression. Here Horkheimer adopts the unreflected position of Marx. Cf. Horkheimer "The Jews and Europe"; Marx, "On the Jewish Question," *Early Writings* by Karl Marx, ed. Lucio Colletti, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (1992), 211–242; see also Jay's critical assessment in "The Jews and the Frankfurt School," 138–139.
52. Moishe Postone, "Anti-Semitism and National Socialism," 305. An earlier version of Postone's essay appeared in *New German Critique* 19 (Winter 1980): 97–115. Postone's observations can elucidate our discussion and it

makes sense to incorporate them; although Postone sees the matter differently, I am of the opinion that his work can be regarded, in essence, as an important fulfillment and extension of Critical Theory's work on antisemitism, rather than a repudiation of it. While Postone rightly indicts Critical Theory for at times eliding the particularity of antisemitism in its conception of authoritarianism, he is off the mark in claiming that the Frankfurt theorists merely reduce antisemitism to hatred of the Jews as representatives of the circulation sphere. In fact, along with many other aspects that are laid out in the present book, Critical Theory sees in antisemitism, as does Postone himself, a reified personalization of the abstract, of abstract rationality per se:

Calculating, so-called rationalistic thinking, has been developed chiefly by non-Jewish philosophers. Anti-Semitism, however, seeks to identify the Jews with this school of thought. As a matter of fact, the Jews historically have always had an affinity for dauntless, abstract thinking. . . . In any event, even if one assumes that "rationalism" is the main trend among Jews, one has no reason whatsoever to bow to the verdict which anti-Semites reach on the basis of that assumption. The leveling that results from abstract thinking is a prerequisite for the development of the world, in a truly human sense. . . . Jews have therefore always stood in the front ranks of the struggle for democracy and freedom. (Horkheimer, "Research Project on Anti-Semitism," 138-139)

Postone's concept of antisemitism as "foreshortened anticapitalist movement" (Postone, "Anti-Semitism and National Socialism," 313) deserves critical scrutiny, particularly its implication that an anticapitalist attack is truly at issue in the consciousness of the antisemite.

The explicit political distinction made by the Nazis between “productive” and “rapacious” *capital* (“schaffendes Kapital” versus “raffendes Kapital”) would seem to objectively counter Postone’s model. Postone elegantly reconstructs the historical and systematic fetishization of industrial capitalism and its splitting off in consciousness from finance capital, only to arrive at the extraordinary conclusion that the Jews are persecuted as the personification not only of the circulation sphere, but of “capitalism itself.” This follows, according to Postone, because capitalism was perceived in “fetishized form” and thus “did not *appear* to include industry and technology” (“Anti-Semitism and National Socialism,” 311; emphasis added). Yet it seems a glib use of Marxist epistemology to thus gloss over forms of ideological expression that take as explicitly positive a view of capitalism as the National Socialist celebration of “productive” capital. In view of the perpetrators’ identification with industrial capital, it requires some contortion to fully conceive an attack that is restricted to the Jews and Jewish financial capital as an “‘anticapitalist’ revolt” (312). Critical Theory’s account, which takes Nazi ideology’s split between “good” and “bad” capitalism as a point of departure, seems to me to be closer to the mark. The antisemite’s “anticapitalist” rebellion is better understood as the work of a “reformer” who wants to see capitalism “freed” of its “unfortunate excesses,” which he blames on the Jews. Finally, it should be noted that Postone, with his specific concept of “foreshortened” anticapitalism, seems to impute to the antisemite a rational, instrumental pursuit of interests; unlike Critical Theory, he does not cultivate the notion of a shift from reason into absolute senselessness.

53. Postone, “Anti-Semitism and National Socialism,” 313. In a critical essay, Hans See argues along very similar lines to Postone and his Critical Theory predecessors. However,

- See ignores both the Frankfurt School and Postone's more recent work at the University of Chicago, which has apparently escaped him, and blithely asserts that he has developed a "new theoretical approach." Cf. Hans See, "Der Antisemitismus als nationalistisch-rassistischer Antikapitalismus—Erprobung eines neuen sozialökonomischen Theorieansatzes," Gudrun Hentges, Guy Kempfert and Reinhard Kühnl, eds., *Antisemitismus—Geschichte, Interessenstruktur, Aktualität* (1995), 39–71.
54. Postone, "Anti-Semitism and National Socialism," 309.
55. Postone, "Anti-Semitism and National Socialism," 311. In the earlier version of the essay, Postone refers to a "transition from liberal to quasi-state capitalism" (*New German Critique* 19 [Winter 1980]: 111).
56. And yet capital is nothing other than "self-valorizing value" (cf. Postone 309 and Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, 255) that draws its value from the exploitation of labor power and "creates" nothing itself. Cf. Ulrike Becker, Frank Behn, Clara Fall & Matthias Küntzel, *Goldhagen und die deutsche Linke oder die Gegenwart des Holocaust* (1997), 85–88; 87.
57. Postone, "Anti-Semitism and National Socialism," 310.
58. *Ibid.*, 311.
59. *Ibid.*, 313.
60. Even the industrialization process—like the democratic tradition a belated arrival in Germany and particularly violent there because it was a matter of "catching up"—was carried out in a context of rigid dependency on the state. The establishment of democratic principles, the circulation sphere, as well as social and geographic mobility remained underdeveloped in comparison to other industrial states at least until the early years of the Weimar Republic. Certain authoritarian incrustations stemming from this development process have doubtless survived to the present day in Germany; political cultures change

- considerably more slowly than political systems. On the origins of this dynamic see, for example: Norbert Elias, *The Germans: Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Michael Schröter, trans. Eric Dunning and Stephen Menell (1996). Of course, the Sonderweg thesis has also been hotly contested over the past couple of decades, starting most famously with David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-century Germany* (1984). Thanks to Kizer Walker for this suggestion and reference.
61. Adorno, "On the Question: 'What Is German?'" trans. Thomas Y. Levin, *New German Critique* 36 (Autumn 1985): 121–131; 125.
 62. Postone, "Anti-Semitism and National Socialism," 313.
 63. *Ibid.*, 312–313.
 64. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 118; trans. Kizer Walker.
 65. This is an argument that can be traced back to the Frankfurt School's earlier analyses of authoritarianism in the 1930s.
 66. Cf. FP 150–151.
 67. Max Horkheimer, "Authoritarianism and the Family Today," Ruth Nanda Anshen, ed., *The Family: Its Function and Destiny* (1949), 359–374; 363.
 68. Fromm, "Der autoritäre Charakter," 130; trans. Kizer Walker.
 69. Cf. FP 27.
 70. Marcuse, "Obsolescence of Psychoanalysis," 112n1.
 71. Cf. Horkheimer, "Authoritarianism and the Family Today," 365–366. Subsequent research on socialization has borne out Horkheimer's contentions; for a summary, see Wolfgang Bergem, *Tradition und Transformation: eine vergleichende Untersuchung zur politischen Kultur in Deutschland* (1993), 45–49.

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72. Horkheimer, "Authoritarianism and the Family Today," 361.
 73. *Ibid.*, 365. It seems clear, in this passage, that Horkheimer has primarily the maturation of the male child in mind; to the detriment of the theory, Horkheimer ignores the gender-specific conditions of socialization and the potential differences that can result from them. Besides the orientation to the Oedipal model, what emerges here is the highly problematic tendency, to which Horkheimer in particular is prone, to idealize earlier, bourgeois lifestyles and familial structures and, in particular, to revere the high-bourgeois, patriarchal father. It might be questioned whether this state of affairs ever truly represented a protected sphere for ego development for most children; in any case, Horkheimer seems, at times, to underestimate the forms of violence extant in the liberal bourgeois family before the postliberal age.
 74. *Ibid.*, 364.
 75. *Ibid.*, 364–365.
 76. *Ibid.*, 366–367.
 77. *Ibid.*, 367.
 78. Adorno, "Bemerkungen über Politik und Neurose," 92 [KW trans.].
 79. Adorno, "Education after Auschwitz," 195.
 80. *Ibid.*, 193.
 81. Adorno, "Culture Industry Reconsidered," 104.
 82. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," 151.
 83. Cf. DE 141.
 84. Silbermann, *Der ungeliebte Jude: zur Soziologie des Antisemitismus*, 36; trans. Kizer Walker.
 85. Johanna Haarer, *Die deutsche Mutter und ihr erstes Kind* (1934). Under the new title *Die Mutter und ihr erstes Kind* Haarer's book remained a continuously published and reprinted best-seller in Germany until 1996 (sic!),

- selling more than a million copies. See for a critical discussion of the transgenerational educational impact of this education to coldness the psychoanalyst Vamik Volkan, *Blind Trust. Large Groups and their Leaders in Times of Crisis* (2004), 75 and 279. For early work on German authoritarianism Bertram Schaffner, *Father Land: A Study of Authoritarianism in the German Family* (1948). For the role of women as Nazi mothers reinforcing the authoritarian tradition see Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics* (1987).
86. Adorno, "Education After Auschwitz," 197–198.
 87. Adorno, *The Stars Down to Earth*, 47.
 88. Adorno, *Starrheit und Integration*, 376; trans. Kizer Walker.
 89. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 133; trans. Kizer Walker.
 90. For a critique of the resilience of authoritarian traditions hostile to autonomy and critique see Adorno's late essay "Critique," *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (1996), 281–289.
 91. Max Horkheimer, "Einige Betrachtungen zum Curfew," in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* vol. 5 (1987), 353; trans. Kizer Walker.
 92. This notion is particularly evident in Horkheimer's writings: "The order which set out as the progressive one in 1789 carried the germs of National Socialism from the beginning." Horkheimer, "The Jews and Europe," 89.
 93. Horkheimer, "The Jews and Europe," 77–94. In this essay, as pointed out earlier, Horkheimer has the unfortunate tendency of assigning "Jewish capitalists" partial responsibility for National Socialism; cf. Dan Diner, "Reason and the 'Other': Horkheimer's Reflections on Anti-Semitism and Mass Annihilation," in Seyla Benhabib, Wolfgang Bonss and John McCole, eds., *On Max Horkheimer: New Perspectives* [Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought] (1993), 335–363.

94. Hannah Arendt, "Social Science Techniques and the Study of Concentration Camps" (1950), in Arendt, *Essays in Understanding, 1930–1954*, ed. Jerome Kohn (1994), 232–247; 241. A German translation of this essay by Eike Geisel was published under the title "Die vollendete Sinnlosigkeit" ("perfected senselessness"). Although the phrase is frequently cited in the German literature, it does not appear in the body of the essay (where "complete senselessness" is translated as "vollkommene Sinnlosigkeit"). Cf. Arendt, "Die vollendete Sinnlosigkeit," *Nach Auschwitz: Essays & Kommentare 1*, by Hannah Arendt, eds. Eike Geisel and Klaus Bittermann, trans. Eike Geisel (1989), 7–30; 26–27.
95. Cf. Diner, "Reason and the 'Other'," 348.
96. Theodor W. Adorno, "Education after Auschwitz," 196.
97. Theodor W. Adorno, "Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America," 230.
98. Theodor W. Adorno, "Education after Auschwitz," 193.

Chapter 6. Power, Desolution, and the Failed Promise of Freedom

1. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 74. Jacobs also notes that most parts of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* had already been drafted before Horkheimer and Adorno turned to the "Elements." In the new Stanford edition, Gunzelin Schmid Noerr argues that the "Elements" essay was "originally written by Horkheimer and intensively revised by Adorno." Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, "The Position of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in the Development of Critical Theory," in DE 224.
2. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 120. "Gesamt-Theorie" can translate as "universal," "comprehensive," or "holistic" theory. These nuances

potentially affect the meaning of Adorno's claim (Kizer Walker). I return to the problem of a "universal" theory that Adorno may aspire at the end of this chapter.

3. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 75.
4. Rolf Wiggershaus, *Die Frankfurter Schule* (1986), 96; cf. Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School*.
5. In his youth, Adorno was largely unaware of antisemitism, Jacobs argues. And even as an academic Adorno was long disinterested in the problem, even when its significance had become obvious. Cf. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 61.
6. Theodor W. Adorno to Max Horkheimer, October 2, 1941, Max Horkheimer Archive VI.32.29, as translated in Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School*, 309.
7. Work published in recent years that returns to the "Elements of Antisemitism" and discusses its relevance includes Anson Rabinbach, "Why were the Jews Sacrificed? The Place of Antisemitism in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," *New German Critique* 81 (Autumn 2000), 49–64; Marcel Stoetzler, "Liberal Society, Emancipation and Antisemitism: Why Current Debates on Antisemitism need more Dialectic of Enlightenment," *Nostalgia for a Redeemed Future: Critical Theory*, ed. Stefano Giacchetti Ludovisi (2009), 145–160; Eva-Maria Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 123–135; Stefan Gandler, *Frankfurter Fragmente: Essays zur kritischen Theorie* (2013), 31–41; and, if only rather brief and focusing on the second thesis, the analysis by Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 74–78; the critical discussion of the "conceptual Jew" in the "Elements of Antisemitism" by Judaken, "Blindness and Insight: The Conceptual Jew in Adorno and Arendt's Post-Holocaust Reflections on the Antisemitic Question," 192–196, and Schulze Wessel and Rensmann, "The

Paralysis of Judgment: Arendt and Adorno on Antisemitism and the Modern Condition," 197–225. Also worth considering are the earlier work by Claussen, *Grenzen der Aufklärung*, and my original reflections on the subject that serve as the backbone of this chapter, namely Rensmann, *Kritische Theorie über den Antisemitismus*, 156–175.

8. As Adorno points out in 1968, the "Elements" also strongly influenced Adorno's theory-guided empirical research that was about to follow, including the "investigations carried out later with the Berkeley Public Opinion Study Group. They found their literary expression in *The Authoritarian Personality . . . The 'Elements of Antisemitism'* shifted racial prejudice into the context of an objectively oriented, critical theory of society. To be sure, in contrast to certain economic orthodoxy, we were not dismissive of psychology but acknowledged its proper place in our outline as an explanatory aspect. However, we never entertained doubts about the primacy of objective factors over psychological ones." Theodor W. Adorno, "Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America," 230.
9. The image of the crucified figure indicates the mythology of the sacrificial victim at the center of the Christian religion. The sacrifice and guilt assumed by Jesus Christ, which remain unfathomed and unexplained in their divine meaning, are transferred to the Jews in Europe's postmetaphysical era. Antisemitism is a postmetaphysical faith, one that does not escape the mythical spell by secularizing the Christian religion, but which, on the contrary, makes the spell into an absolute and does so in total blindness.
10. There is a problem with Adorno's and Horkheimer's use of "the liberal thesis," which seems to point to both ideological claims that dominate liberal capitalist society and

a certain brand of dominant “liberal theory” but does neither differentiate between the two, nor consider differences within liberal societies and theory. The problem is the claim’s overgeneralization, and it is partially due to the historical context in which Adorno and Horkheimer write. There are, however, certainly significant differences in the level of acceptance of different lifestyles between the monocultural, repressive conception of a “melting pot” and lack of diversity in, let us say, Eisenhower America’s dominant “liberal” mode of thinking and the pluralism in contemporary America—despite the recent rise of antiliberal populism and even though capitalist society continues to force its citizens to adapt to particular economic utilization pressures. If we think of the “liberal thesis” in reference to varieties of liberalism and liberal theory in the history of political ideas, the underlying forced assimilation pressure is discernable in a significant branch of liberal theory (especially in the 1940s, the time of writing). But the claims about the homogenizing nature and effects of the “liberal thesis” certainly do not apply to all liberal theorizing—especially not contemporary pluralistic liberal approaches, despite their limitations and (economic) blind spots. However, we need not turn to contemporary liberal theory—if we go back to John Locke, whose conception of democratic theory Adorno later defended, and Locke’s work on toleration, or John Stuart Mill’s radical conception of liberty in *On Liberty*, appreciated and defended by Herbert Marcuse, a more complex picture of liberal theory’s relationship to pluralism and diversity emerges. cf. Adorno, “Critique,” 281. The question of liberalism also becomes more complex if we consider the underlying idea of a liberal constitutional legal framework granting civil and human rights and public freedom that enables critical subjectivity. Adorno’s reflections, even if at times

problematic, show a rather ambivalent and often nuanced account of this legal dimension. Adorno, especially in his later work, strongly defends liberal and republican institutions, their checks and balances, and their potential to provide spaces of freedom: “[T]he conception of the separation of powers, upon which every democracy is based, from Locke to Montesquieu and the American constitution up to today, has its lifeblood in critique. The system of checks and balances, the reciprocal overview of the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary, means as much as that each of these powers subjects the others to critique and thereby reduces the despotism that each power, without this critical element, gravitates to.” Theodor W. Adorno, “Critique,” 281. Fine, “Debating Human Rights, Law, and Subjectivity: Arendt, Adorno, and Critical Theory,” 154–172. For the critique of “liberal society” and its blind spots cf. Stoetzler, “Liberal Theory, Emancipation, and Antisemitism.” See also David Berry, “Max Horkheimer: Issues concerning Liberalism and Culture,” in David Berry, ed., *Revisiting the Frankfurt School: Essays on Culture, Media, and Theory* (2012), 71–90.

11. Cf. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 75.
12. As pointed out before in this chapter and in chapter 5, this dialectical critique of liberalism does not imply a wholesale dismissal of liberal ideas and legal institutions. Even in one of the “darkest” texts Critical Theory has produced, the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno cling to the concept of enlightenment and, even if at times only implicitly and not forcefully, to the universalistic liberal promises it has helped to prominence—although parts of the argument they present seem problematic. Liberalism’s failure, in this view, lies primarily in its limitations and shortcomings, the lack of fulfilment of its promises, the apologia of still existing

unjustifiable domination, the deceptive claim that rights and justice have already been served. But nowhere in Critical Theory since the 1940s, not even in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, does this imply to throw the baby out with the bathwater and abstractly dismiss or negate liberalism altogether.

13. Cf. Horkheimer, "The Authoritarian State," 117.
14. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 78.
15. Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," in Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, eds., *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (1982), 133.
16. This image of a civilization process that is not fully realized might be construed as alluding, at least in part, to the specific German context in which bourgeois civilization did not fully unfold, in which a bourgeois revolution failed to materialize.
17. As Jacobs notes, later theory-driven empirical studies like Löwenthal and Guterman's *Prophets of Deceit* detect instantiations of this motif and others in speeches of American agitators, while Löwenthal and Guterman also use the "Elements" as an interpretative framework: "Work without hardship is identified with exploitation, and to the followers [of agitators] . . . the vision of people who enjoy life without paying for it is intolerable . . . Domination by intellect is experienced as usurpation because it is not backed by actual physical power and ultimately depends on the consent of the dominated or deception." Löwenthal and Guterman, *Prophets of Deceit*, 85. Cf. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 99.
18. The Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, *Aspects of Sociology*, 170.
19. Cf. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*.

20. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 76.
21. Cf. DE 142–143.
22. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 78.
23. Cf. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, 727–733. It is noteworthy that, contrary to Horkheimer and Adorno's diagnosis and analysis, religion celebrates an enormous global comeback that also affects the (post-) industrial West. With it, religious antisemitism, of Christian and Muslim origin, has also been reinvigorated and mobilized. In Europe, antisemitism among Muslim minorities and immigrants seems to be especially widespread, and a recruiting tool in Islamist milieus. See for a nuanced empirical analysis of anti-Jewish resentments among European Muslims, and particularly male Muslim youths, as well as the origins of these resentments see Günther Jikeli, *European Muslim Antisemitism: Why Young Urban Males Say They Don't Like Jews* (2015).
24. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 77.
25. The bracketed gloss appears in the Jephcott translation.
26. Bracketed annotation by LR.
27. Cf. Schulze Wessel and Rensmann, "The Paralysis of Judgment: Arendt and Adorno on Antisemitism and the Modern Condition," 201–202.
28. Simon Jarvis, *Adorno: A Critical Introduction* (1998), 192; Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 77. See also on critical conceptions of mimesis in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: Steven Helmeling, "'Immanent Critique' and 'Dialectical Mimesis' in Adorno and Horkheimer's 'Dialectic of Enlightenment,'" *boundary 2*, 32, 3 (2005): 97–117; D. Bruce Martin, "Mimetic Impulses: Adorno and Ecofeminism," in Renée Heberle, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of Theodor Adorno* (2006), 141–172.

29. Kenneth S. Calhoun, "Of Non-vital Interest: Art, Mimicry, and the Phenomenon of Life," *Konturen*, 6 (2014), 82–102.
30. "[C]ertain proof of the interconnection between antisemitism and 'oppressed mimesis' may be gleaned from the interviews." See "Memorandum from T.W. Adorno re Evaluation of Participant Interviews (Labor Project)," p. 6, November 3, 1944, Paul Lazarsfeld Collection; cited in Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 81.
31. As Joel Whitebook points out, this concept implies the possibility of non-pathological projection, just as "false projection" implies the idea of true projection. This understanding may lead to a "potentially crucial, yet unexplored area of research in Critical Theory." See Whitebook, "The Marriage of Marx and Freud: Critical Theory and Psychoanalysis," 99.
32. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 68.
33. Among other places, Stalin and the authoritarian Stalinist left soon adopted and iterated the old antisemitic resentment against "wandering Jews," by agitating against Jews as "rootless cosmopolitans." As I have discussed elsewhere, these images are also, inversely, reference points for Critical Theory's cosmopolitan vision, however reluctantly this is developed in their work; cf. Rensmann, "Grounding Cosmopolitics: Rethinking Crimes Against Humanity and Global Political Theory with Arendt and Adorno," 129–153; Lars Rensmann, "A 'Homeland without a Frontier': Adorno's Nonliberal Cosmopolitanism and the Critique of Global Inequality," *Midwestern Political Science Association (MPSA) 67th Annual Conference*, Chicago, April 22–25, 2010.
34. I have altered the Jephcott translation, which seems to confound subject and object in this passage. The original reads: "Jetzt werden die eben erst Emanzipierten den

mit dem Staatsapparat verschmolzenen, der Konkurrenz entwachsenen Kapitalmächten ausgeliefert." Here it is clearly the "capital powers" that have merged with "the state apparatus" and this combined political-economic force eclipses the influence that representatives of the circulation sphere and owners of commercial enterprises had exercised in the liberal economy. Jephcott translates the passage thus: "Now, no sooner emancipated, its owners are merged with the state apparatus and placed at the mercy of capital powers which have outgrown competition" (DE 164). This version seems to suggest that it is the owners of commercial enterprise, which the text clearly links to the liberal economy and circulation sphere, that have "merged" with the state (for this note, Kizer Walker).

35. Cf. DE 169.
36. Lowenthal, "I Never Wanted to Play Along: Interviews with Helmut Dubiel," trans. David Berger, et al., *An Unmastered Past: The Autobiographical Reflections of Leo Lowenthal*, by Leo Lowenthal, ed. Martin Jay (1987), 79.
37. For a critical discussion of the thesis of the "disappearance of antisemitism" and a parallel move by Hannah Arendt, cf. Schulze Wessel and Rensmann, "The Paralysis of Judgment: Arendt and Adorno on Antisemitism and the Modern Condition."
38. To be perfectly clear, after his return to Germany, Adorno thoroughly revised this assessment, albeit implicitly; not only did he return to analyzing specific aspects of antisemitism, he also started to examine specific dimensions of "secondary" antisemitism in post-Holocaust Germany. Cf. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute." See chapter 8 for a full exploration of "secondary antisemitism."
39. Stoetzler, "Liberal Society, Emancipation, and Antisemitism," 156.

40. Jonathan Judaken, "Between Philosemitism and Antisemitism: The Frankfurt School's Anti-Antisemitism," in Phyllis Lassner and Lara Trubowitz, eds., *Antisemitism and Philosemitism in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Century: Representing Jews, Jewishness, and Modern Culture* (2008), 23–46; see also Judaken, "Blindness and Insight: The Conceptual Jew in Arendt's and Adorno's Post-Holocaust Reflections on the Antisemitic Question," 196.
41. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 78.
42. Emphasis added, LR.
43. The phrase "antisemitism without Jews" has been in fairly regular and continuous circulation in Germany and the U.S. after 1945. For example, it was the title of a 1960 feature in *Die Zeit* by Hendrik van Dam (<http://www.zeit.de/1960/02/antisemitismus-ohne-juden>), and the title of a book by Paul Lendvai, *Antisemitism without Jews: Communist Eastern Europe* (1971). Thanks to Kizer Walker for these references.
44. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 78.

Chapter 7. The Politics of Paranoia

1. Max Horkheimer, "Research Project on Anti-Semitism," 125.
2. See, among many others, the canonical perception in the seminal studies by Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*, and Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance* (1994).
3. Politics is understood here comprehensively as all forms of collective behavior, including violent ones, seeking to influence, shape or change society and the laws,

principles, norms, and public policies governing it. This includes fascist politics and political movements, notwithstanding that they may also be defined as “anti-politics” with Marcuse and especially Arendt: in so far as these movements ultimately close the public sphere and destroy the very possibilities for genuine political action. As is shown in this chapter, fascist movements do not aim at changing society by means of persuasion and public policies but lack specific political goals. In the extreme cases of Nazi or recently Jihadist movements, political programs are entirely substituted by apocalyptic visions and the goal of total war against Jews and other “enemies.” Cf. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*; Hannah Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 205).

4. Jack Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism* (2015), 94. Here and in general, Jacobs fully recognizes the significant role Löwenthal played in advancing social research on antisemitism and its analysis, as well as the theoretical development of the Frankfurt School—in contrast to the partly condescending comments by Eva-Maria Ziege about Löwenthal that inexplicably try to downplay his influence. Cf. Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie*, 243. Ziege judges that Löwenthal’s contributions to *Antisemitism among American Labor* and *Prophets of Deceit*, both of which I view as central to understand Critical Theory’s analysis of antisemitism and its political mobilization, are rather “weak” and lack “theoretically reflected” categorizations. She considers the selection of evidence as partly “arbitrary.”
5. *The Prophets of Deceit* have been republished in vol. 3 of Löwenthal’s *Collected Writings*, namely *False Prophets*. Cf. Leo Löwenthal, *False Prophets: Studies on Authoritarianism* (1987). Henceforth cited parenthetically as FP.

6. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 96. Jacobs also notes that the book, clearly shaped by Critical Theory and European-trained academics, received several critical reviews. They problematized, among other things, methodological concerns about the lack of quantitative methods. But there were also positive reviews, including a short but glowingly positive one in the *New York Times*, praising it as “uniquely well organized,” “wholly convincing” and “beyond all doubt the most illuminating study of the techniques and the propaganda of the native American fascist which has yet to appear.” Cited in Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 100.
7. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 97–98.
8. See Philipp Lenhard, “An Institution of Nazi Statesmanship: Friedrich Pollock’s Theoretical Contribution to the Study of Anti-Semitism,” *New German Critique* 43, 1 (2016): 195–214.
9. Recognizing the unprecedented nature and scope of this crime, the Critical Theorists over time became weary of drawing oversimplified comparisons between the specific case of Nazi totalitarian policies against the Jews and social resentments in democratic contexts. However, despite growing sensitivity to this problem, Adorno and Horkheimer at times still fall back into such overreach. This is the case when, for instance, they erroneously point to similarities between Hollywood movies and Nazi propaganda as part of an alleged totalitarian culture industry. Some rather unfortunate passages in the “culture industry” chapter of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* allude to both American advertisement and Hitler speeches as seemingly equally repressive “entertainment businesses” (DE 174).
10. Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility: Second Version,” in Benjamin,

The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media, eds. Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Harry Zohn, (2008), 41 (emphasis in original).

11. Robert E. Babe, "Theodor Adorno and Dallas Smythe: Culture Industry/Consciousness Industry and the Political Economy of Media and Communication," in David Berry, ed., *Revisiting the Frankfurt School: Essays on Culture, Media, and Theory* (2012), 112.
12. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," 150.
13. Translated by Kizer Walker. Cf. Adorno, *Guilt and Defense: On the Legacies of National Socialism in Postwar Germany*, 158. Adorno's phrase "ambivalente Charaktere" is not directly translated in Olick and Perin's English-language edition.
14. Indeed Adorno, who initially neglected the role of politics, may in these cases overemphasize the role of political manipulation "from above." Mirroring remnants of orthodox Marxist thinking and employing the famous trope of antisemitism as the "socialism of fools," Adorno at times portrays authoritarians as the involuntarily manipulated "objects" of antisemitic politics. In dealing with, Adorno suggests, "these people, who are often by no means stupid, but merely hardened and intractable . . . one must demonstrate the entire spirit of antisemitism, as the well-known quote has it, truly is the socialism of fools, that it is sold to them a bill of goods in order to transform them into objects of manipulation." Theodor W. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 131; trans. Kizer Walker.
15. Cf. Franz Neumann: "The purpose of the theory is clear: potential anxiety—whose concrete significance still needs to be clarified—is actualized by reference to the

devilish conspirators. . . ." Neumann, "Anxiety and Politics," 284.

16. Cf. Michael Th. Greven, "Zur Kontinuität der 'Racket-Theorie': Max Horkheimers politisches Denken nach 1945," in Thomas Greven, *Kritische Theorie und historische Politik: theoriegeschichtliche Beiträge zur gegenwärtigen Gesellschaft*, Kieler Beiträge zur Politik und Sozialwissenschaft 8 (1994) 157–181. Borrowing an American colloquialism, Horkheimer posits the "racket" as the basic form of (political) domination, one based on the political violence of those groups that are capable of using it and prepared to foist themselves on society as extortionate "protectors." Various rival rackets behave as factions, competing against each other to appropriate the extorted political-economic spoils. All social-historical phenomena up to the present have borne the mark of the racket, according to Horkheimer. In the idea of genuine democracy, which survives in a repressed, subterranean state, the dream of a society free of rackets has never been entirely extinguished, Horkheimer maintains. But the racket form has been revived in modern society—organized capitalism—which is again constituted basically along the lines of the racket, particularly in the extreme case of fascism. In this form of social organization, it is rackets, not class contradictions that give rise, in essence, to the hierarchical structure of the society's internal workings. The mediation forms of bourgeois society, in this view, are partly replaced by a repressive collectivization of the human being that is politically determined, not economically mediated.
17. Horkheimer in FP 2.
18. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses*, 62–63.
19. Löwenthal, *Falsche Propheten. Studien zum Autoritarismus*, 223; trans. Kizer Walker. The passage where this appears has no equivalent in the 1987 English edition.

20. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 109; trans. Kizer Walker.
21. For instance, the section of the German criminal code dealing with "agitation of the people," which was recently strengthened, along with the ban on "incitement to racial hatred," established early legal instruments in the Federal Republic that made possible the prevention and/or state prosecution of aggressive antisemitic agitation. It must be noted, however, that these legal options are insufficiently and inconsistently utilized.
22. Theodor W. Adorno, "What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?" in Geoffrey H. Hartman, ed., *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective* (1986), 115.
23. Cf. for a detailed analysis of the changing legitimacy of antisemitism in the German public sphere Rensmann, *Demokratie und Judenbild*.
24. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses*, 30.
25. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 109, translated by Kizer Walker; cf., Stefan Müller-Doohm, *Adorno: A Biography*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (2005), 412 and 591 n.3.
26. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 109; trans. Kizer Walker.
27. The reasons for the use of innuendo in these two contexts are partly different, of course, but similarities are also striking.
28. Löwenthal and Guterman, *Prophets of Deceit*, 77.
29. As indicated, the Critical Theorists' analysis of this strategic shift in the context of liberal constitutional democracies was based particularly on empirical data from the United States.
30. Theodor W. Adorno, *The Stars Down to Earth and Other Essays on the Irrational in Culture*, ed. Stephen Crook (2001), 228.

31. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses*, 54.
32. Adorno, "Anti-Semitism and Fascist Propaganda," 135.
33. Ibid.
34. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish, and Antisemitism*, 98.
35. Löwenthal and Guterman, *Prophets of Deceit*, 88.
36. Adorno, "Education After Auschwitz," 203.
37. There is contemporary relevance to this argument and the impact of Critical Theory. Some authors suggest in both recent public and scholarly discussions that "islamophobia," fear of Islam and Muslims, may be a new global racist discourse that has "replaced" antisemitism in the twenty-first century. While dominant contemporary images and stereotypes of Muslim immigrants and minorities are often racist in nature, this claim is deeply problematic for several reasons. First, the term "islamophobia" is rather unspecific and potentially moves the debate from issues of racist exclusion—what I would call anti-Muslim racism—to shielding religion from criticism. Indeed, "islamophobia" has been utilized by countries at the UN and elsewhere—and by Islamist groups—to immunize criticisms of religious authoritarian rule (and thus to disable the public critique of social and political domination) taking place in the name of "political Islam." Political islam signifies a set of mostly twentieth- and twenty-first-century modern *political* movements and regimes built on Islamist political ideologies prescribing a specific form of religious rule. Moreover, in 57 countries, Islam is the dominant or official state religion; here other religions and religious minorities (including Muslim minority religions) as well as secular citizens tend to be discriminated against, and based on religious justifications gays are either persecuted or at least not tolerated on the domestic and international level (See James

Rothwell, "Muslim Countries ban gay and transgender reps from UN nations meeting on Aids," *Telegraph*, May 18, 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/18/muslim-countries-ban-gay-and-transgender-reps-from-united-nation/>). While attacks on "Islam" can be a source of subtle, cultural racist discrimination, more attention needs to be paid to racist exclusions of Muslims and other ethnic and religious minorities—rather than focusing primarily on religious beliefs, which can be subject to criticism in all religions (also within Muslim communities). Second, the suggested analogy between antisemitism and islamophobia suggests that both Jews and Muslims are discriminated against on religious grounds. This misses the point of antisemitism, which is not simply directed against a religious orientation, but also misconceives racism from which Muslim immigrants may suffer. Third, the "replacement" claim is dubious because while recently more Muslim minorities have arguably become the subject of racism, there are no indicators that antisemitism has declined anywhere. See the claim that islamophobia is the present danger, while antisemitism has "run its historical course" and islamophobia becomes a defining condition of the new Europe in Matti Bunzl, *Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Hatreds Old and New in Europe* (2007).

38. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, Antisemitism*, 98.
39. Max Horkheimer, "Letter to Zachariah Shuster, May 5, 1969," in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* vol. XVIII (1986), 722. Cf. Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 140. Alfred Rosenberg published *Der staatsfeindliche Zionismus* in 1922.
40. As Adorno writes in 1959: "Today the fascist wish-image unquestionably blends with the nationalism of the so-called underdeveloped countries. . . . Already during the war the

slogans about Western plutocracies and proletarian nations expressed sympathy with those who felt shortchanged in the imperialist competition and also wanted a place at the table. It is difficult to discern whether and to what extent this tendency has already joined the anti-Western undercurrent of the German tradition. . . ." Adorno, "The Meaning of Working Through the Past," *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (1998), 97. Cf. on the critique of antisemitic anti-Israelism among the Critical Theorists Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 111–148.

41. Löwenthal cited in Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination* 173.
42. Adorno, "Anti-Semitism and Fascist Propaganda," 130.
43. *Ibid.*
44. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses*, 32.
45. *Ibid.*, 28 (emphasis in original).
46. Cf. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," 148.
47. FP 21; emphasis in original.
48. Löwenthal and Guterman, *Prophets of Deceit*, 80.
49. Outbreaks of hysteria were experienced by thousands at National Socialist mass rallies; their submissiveness toward Hitler, even when they could only glimpse him from afar, suggests a dissolution of the boundaries of the self and illustrates the fascist potential of this libidinal cathexis.
50. The Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, *Aspects of Sociology*, 172.
51. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," 139.
52. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses*, 27.
53. Adorno, "Starrheit und Integration," 377; trans. Kizer Walker.

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54. Adorno, "Bemerkungen über Politik und Neurose," 437; trans. Kizer Walker.
 55. Laplanche and Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, 150 and 258.
 56. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," 140.
 57. *Ibid.*, 424–425.
 58. Douglas Kellner, *Critical Theory, Marxism, and Modernity* (1989), 119.
 59. Adorno, "Anti-Semitism and Fascist Propaganda," 132.
 60. Adorno, "Democratic Leadership and Mass Manipulation," in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften Vol. 20.1* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986), 267–286. Thanks to Dominik Nagl for redirecting me to this.
 61. Adorno, "Anti-Semitism and Fascist Propaganda," in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften Vol. 8*. (1997 [1946]), 400.
 62. To be sure, in the 1960s there has been a fierce controversy where to draw these boundaries among the Critical Theorists who had returned to Frankfurt, on the one hand, and Marcuse, on the other, in response to the publication of Marcuse's controversial essay on *Repressive Tolerance*. Cf. Herbert Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance," in Andrew Feenberg and William Leiss, eds., *The Essential Marcuse Reader* ([1965] 2007), 32–59.
 63. Accordingly, since the defeat of National Socialism, there are few or, as Horkheimer and Adorno put it in another context, "no longer any anti-Semites" (DE 165). Bernd Marin refers to an "antisemitism without antisemites" in contemporary society, which means, among other things, that even antisemites are obliged to act with restraint in this regard if they expect to achieve political significance. Cf. Bernd Marin, "Ein historisch neuartiger 'Antisemitismus ohne Antisemiten'?" in John Bunzl and Bernd Marin, *Antisemitismus in Österreich: Sozialhistorische und soziologische Studien* (1983), 177.

64. Hobbes endorses a strong Leviathan, a powerful ruler-state, to mitigate the anxiety and uncertainty of a perceived natural condition of mankind, conceived as total chaos and “war of all against all.” Reminiscent of the paranoid style in politics, Hobbes sees the political world imploding and therefore justifies his second “law of nature”: that people ought to be willing to renounce their right to all things because of the desire to avoid the “state of nature,” and thus to erect a representative sovereign with the authority to command them even when they disagree with the sovereign. Cf. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forme, and Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill*, ed. Ian Shapiro (2010 [1651]). I am grateful to the second reviewer of my manuscript for pointing me to Hobbes in this context.
65. The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran promotes antisemitic Holocaust denial in government-sponsored cartoon contests and speeches by its leaders who publicly declare the goal to annihilate the Jewish state of Israel. The authoritarian Erdogan government, persecuting dissidents and minorities in Turkey, also calls “Zionism” a “crime against humanity.” See “Iran’s Supreme Leader: There Will Be No Such Thing as Israel in 25 Years,” *cnn.com*, September 11, 2015, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/09/10/middleeast/iran-khamenei-israel-will-not-exist-25-years/>
66. Violent jihadist ideologies consistently carry antisemitism at their core and call for the murder of Jews. As Kamel Daoud points out, radical Islamism has hereby often successfully replaced ideas of political freedom and emancipation in parts of Muslim communities and states by otherworldly religious visions of an individual and collective paradise as a new utopia that could be achieved post mortem—through the killing of “infidels” and especially of Jews by suicidal self-destruction. This dynamic and intimate link of destruction and self-destruction

- Critical Theory deciphered early on. Cf. Kamel Daoud, "Paradise, the New Muslim Utopia," *New York Times*, August 2, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/02/opinion/paradise-the-new-muslim-utopia.html?_r=0
67. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 110.

Chapter 8. Guilt, Responsibility, and Post-Holocaust Democracy

1. Theodor W. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 108. The recent publication of Adorno's qualitative contribution to the Institute's empirical study "Group Experiment," may initiate more research in this area. Cf. Theodor Adorno, *Guilt and Defense: On the Legacies of National Socialism in Postwar Germany*, trans., eds. and with an introduction by Jeffrey K. Olick and Andrew J. Perrin (2010); henceforth cited as GD. Noteworthy is also the recent work by Jan Lohl and Sebastian Winter, who have initiated a research project in which they use the empirical material of the *Group Experiment* to reinterpret and further develop Adorno's hypotheses about secondary antisemitism "after Auschwitz" by psychoanalytic and hermeneutic means. See Jan Lohl, "'Die Deutschen wurden bestraft, die Juden nicht.' Zur Konstruktion des Antisemitismus nach Auschwitz im Alltagsdiskurs der 1950er Jahre," *Psychoanalyse: Texte zur Sozialforschung* 17, 2 (2013), 204–225.
2. Friedrich Pollock, *Gruppenexperiment: Ein Studienbericht* (1955).
3. Jeffrey K. Olick and Andrew J. Perrin, "Guilt and Defense: Theodor Adorno and the Legacies of National Socialism in German Society," in GD, 19.
4. Cf. Lohl, "'Die Deutschen wurden bestraft, die Juden nicht,'" 206.

5. For a brief overview of the study's empirical approach and results see Lars Rensmann, "Collective guilt, national identity, and political processes in contemporary Germany," in Nyla Branscombe and Bertjan Doosje, eds., *Collective Guilt: International Perspectives* (2003), 204–223.
6. Pollock, *Gruppenexperiment*, 34; my translation, LR. Cited in Lohl, "Die Deutschen wurden bestraft, die Juden nicht," 206.
7. Olick and Perrin, "Guilt and Defense: Theodor Adorno and the Legacies of National Socialism in German Society," in GD, 22.
8. Pollock, *Gruppenexperiment*, 21. Cited in Olick and Perrin, "Guilt and Defense: Theodor Adorno and the Legacies of National Socialism in German Society," in GD, 22.
9. Lohl, "Die Deutschen wurden bestraft, die Juden nicht," 206.
10. *Ibid.*, 206.
11. Pollock, *Gruppenexperiment*, 276; my translation, LR. Cited in Lohl, "Die Deutschen wurden bestraft, die Juden nicht," 206.
12. *Ibid.*, 60.
13. *Ibid.*, 206.
14. *Ibid.*, 207. Yet Lohl argues that even Adorno's work, as important as it is, ultimately falls short of achieving the goal of thoroughly researching individual collective and defense mechanisms. Adorno oriented his work at the categories that had been created by the preceding quantitative analysis, which arguably limits the open qualitative approach to the material. Moreover, for his qualitative analysis, Lohl points out, group discussions were not analyzed in their speech and social contexts, as the methodology of the study had envisioned. Only 25 protocols were read in context, and ultimately Adorno did not analyze group discussions in their entirety and dynamic but only short excerpts, which were interpreted with regard

to their latent meanings. Contrary to the scholars' methodological ambitions, Lohl argues, Adorno examined these articulations in isolation. This plausible objection, however, does not take into account that the empirical material of these group discussions, in themselves generated in social contexts, allows for findings that may be profoundly different from mere public opinion surveys.

15. Olick and Perrin, "Guilt and Defense: Theodor Adorno and the Legacies of National Socialism in German Society," 29.
16. Max Horkheimer, "Zur Ergreifung Eichmanns," in Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften* Vol. 8 (1985), 157.
17. Cf. Rensmann, "Returning from Forced Exile: Some Observations on Hannah Arendt's and Theodor W. Adorno's Experience of Post-War Germany and Their Social and Political Theories on Totalitarianism," 182–183.
18. To be sure, there is no unqualified, "straightforward relationship" between national consciousness and defense against guilt. Citizens who strongly identify as a member of the national collective may also accept its negative history, such as a woman who feels pride of Goethe yet also "burdened with guilt because of the crimes committed against Jews" (GD 182).
19. Adorno himself experienced, and was haunted by, the common phenomenon of "survivors' guilt." Not the perpetrators but those who were designated victims but survived the Nazi extermination campaign often felt guilty for, as Adorno puts it, being "spared": "But it is not wrong to raise the less cultural question whether after Auschwitz you can go on living—especially whether one who escaped by accident, one who by rights should have been killed, may go on living. . . . By way of atonement he will be plagued by dreams such as that he is no longer living at all, that he was sent to the ovens in 1944 and his whole existence since has been imaginary, an emanation

- of the insane wish of a man killed twenty years earlier." Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 363.
20. Adorno, "The Meaning of Working Through the Past," 90.
 21. *Ibid.*, 89.
 22. Theodor W. Adorno, "Schuld und Abwehr," in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften Vol. 9.2* (1975), 136; my translation, LR. Unfortunately, this important introduction has neither been translated nor included into the volume *Guilt and Defense*, eds. Olick and Perrin. In referring to one especially twisted and contradictory statement, Adorno comments that apart from "the telltale slip 'we are not at all ashamed of the Jews' (instead of: of the crimes against the Jews), apparently once again at the bottom of it is the opinion that guilt is so internal that it cannot be demanded from outside" (GD 75).
 23. Subsequent studies in postwar Germany have confirmed time and again the Frankfurt School's finding that the strongest call for a *Schlussstrich*, for drawing a line under the past and moving on, can be found among those who have never really confronted or processed the Nazi crimes in the first place. Cf. Klaus Ahlheim and Bardo Heger, *Die unbequeme Vergangenheit: NS-Vergangenheit, Holocaust und die Schwierigkeiten des Erinnerns* (2002). In 1985, Löwenthal still diagnosed the persistently broad public resentment, as old as the end of the war, that "it must finally stop" to talk about the Holocaust and "on what we have done in the past"—alongside the desire "to repress, relativize or even deny" the past. Cf. Leo Löwenthal, "Calibans Erbe," in Löwenthal, *Judaica, Vorträge, Briefe: Schriften Vol. 4* (1990), 140.
 24. Adorno, "The Meaning of Working Through the Past," 91.
 25. In a slightly milder variation, Germans and Jews are equally guilty and "both parties must be to blame" (GD 163). This is, of course, another way of distorting history, denying German guilt, and making Jews responsible for

the terror they suffered and their own extermination at the hands of Germans and their collaborators. If everyone is existentially "guilty," no one is. This trope of a universal guilt that is part of everyone's existence is present in Heidegger, and was later adopted by the German writer Martin Walser, among others, in his infamous *Paulskirchenrede*. Walser also employs the trope that guilt is an entirely subjective and internal matter, which Adorno describes as relativism and "false internalization" (GD 72). Cf. Rensmann, *Demokratie und Judenbild*, 367.

26. Adorno, "The Meaning of Working Through the Past," 91.
27. This attitude correlates, Adorno suggests, with a strong tendency to employ deep-seated resentments and collectivist perceptions of virtually every minority.
28. Adorno, "The Meaning of Working Through the Past," 96.
29. Cf. Lohl, "'Die Deutschen wurden bestraft, die Juden nicht'," 221.
30. Cf. Rensmann, *Demokratie und Judenbild*, 161ff.
31. Analyzing the empirical material of the *Group Experiment*, Lohl discovers what he views as a third dimension of secondary antisemitic guilt projection onto Jews in addition to guilt feelings and punishing parts of the superego. Participants also project aggressive and narcissistic self-representations, which are psychologically attractive but are later on experienced in the form of burdensome guilt. Cf. Lohl, "'Die Deutschen wurden bestraft, die Juden nicht'," 221.
32. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 108; my translation, LR.
33. Adorno, "The Meaning of Working Through the Past," 89.
34. Cf. Hajo Funke, "Bitburg und die 'Macht der Juden.' Zu einem Lehrstück antijüdischen Ressentiments in Deutschland," in Alphonse Silbermann and Julius H. Schoeps, eds., *Antisemitismus nach dem Holocaust: Bestandsaufnahme*

und Erscheinungsformen in deutschsprachigen Ländern (1986), 41–52.

35. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 109; my translation, LR.
36. *Ibid.*, 132.
37. *Ibid.*, 107.
38. In some countries, like France and Austria, Nazi collaboration has become the subject of public debates only as of late, while in others, like Hungary, antisemitic collaborators under the Horthy regime like Bálint Hóman, the author of anti-Jewish legislation and a Nazi sympathizer, are now even publicly celebrated with government-sponsored memorials.
39. On guilt and remorse as a constituent force in regressive binary thinking about America, the West and postcolonial societies see Pascal Bruckner, *The Tyranny of Guilt: An Essay on Western Masochism* (2010).
40. In 1959, the time had come for Adorno to put his accumulated frustration with the postwar German political climate, the cold or hostile behavior of his fellow citizens and professors, and the personal resentment he encountered into this single essay that dealt with Germany's failed coming to terms with the past. The essay became the possibly most radical and best known critique of post-Holocaust German society and its failure to deal with Nazism, society's repression of Holocaust memory and restricted public debate about German responsibility, as well as society's reactionary spirit of political and social restoration. Adorno criticizes a society in which there was apparently no place for émigrés, survivors, and "outsiders" that had not collaborated in the Nazi system and shared its value system or closely knit bonds. In his lecture and essay, Adorno observes a society in which "National Socialism lives on, and even today we still do not know whether it is merely a ghost of what

was so monstrous that it lingers on after its own death, or whether it has not yet died at all, whether the willingness to commit the unspeakable survives in people as well as in the conditions that enclose them." Adorno, "The Meaning of Working Through the Past," 89–91.

41. The literature on this belated dealing with the Nazi past and German guilt and responsibility is vast. As a stand-in for many others David Art, *The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria* (2006); Thomas U. Berger, *War, Guilt, and World Politics after World War II* (2012); David Bathrick, "Totems and Taboos: Debating Nazi Legacies at the Turn of the Century," in John A. McCarthy, Walter Grünzweig, Thomas Koebner, eds., *The Many Faces of Germany: Transformations in the Study of German Culture and History* (2004), 22–33; and Caroline Pearce, *Contemporary Germany and the Nazi Legacy: Remembrance, Politics, and the Dialectic of Normality* (2007). Pearce directly challenges my concept of "dialectic of closure" by employing the concept of "dialectic of normality." For her, Germany's dealing with the past is thoroughly and unambiguously a success story.
42. Saul Friedlander, *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death* (1993).
43. Rensmann and Schoeps, "Politics and Resentment: Examining Antisemitism and Counter-Cosmopolitanism in the European Union and Beyond," 3–79.
44. Rensmann, *Demokratie und Judenbild*, 334–481.
45. Adorno, "Education after Auschwitz," 201.
46. Hajo Funke calls the level of antisemitism the "central indicator for tolerance and democracy" in post-Nazi Germany. Cf. Funke, "'Bitburg und die, Macht der Juden,'" 51; see also Rensmann, *Demokratie und Judenbild*, 15.
47. Cf. Oskar Negt, *Der politische Mensch: Demokratie als Lebensform* (2010).
48. Cf. Adorno, "Critique."

49. Adorno, "Democratic Leadership and Mass Manipulation," in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften Vol. 20.1* (1986), 267–286.

Chapter 9. Why Critical Theory Matters

1. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1948), 12. The French original was published two years earlier.
2. For Zygmunt Bauman, this projection mechanism, attributing socially tabooed impulses to Jews, also points to the structuring ambivalences in the image of Jews: the dialectic of collective admiration and denigration. See Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (2001).
3. The origins of this claim can also be broadly traced back to discussions among earlier critics of antisemitism in the Weimar Republic, as examined in the recent dissertation by Franziska Krah, "*Ein Ungeheuer, das wenigstens theoretisch besiegt werden muss . . .*" *Antisemitismusforschung in Deutschland 1900–1933* (2015).
4. Cf. Rensmann, "Grounding Cosmopolitics: Rethinking Crimes Against Humanity and Global Political Theory with Arendt and Adorno."
5. As shown in chapter 3, historian Christopher Browning exemplifies the dominant understanding of authoritarianism as a general human disposition towards obedience vis-à-vis authorities and group pressure among peers causing conformist behavior and submission to dominant rules. Cf. Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*. The Frankfurt School does not deny these aspects of authoritarian conformism but ties it to specific conditions of modern society and provides a richer, more sophisticated analysis of the phenomenon and authoritarianism's aggressive and projective dimensions.
6. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 133.

7. For the history of this “longest hatred” see Robert Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad* (2010).
8. As developed in this book, understanding the distinctiveness of antisemitism does not imply that there are no similarities between judeophobia and other racist projections. This also applies to the matrix of misogynist resentments. In misogynist stereotypes women appear as the holy mother and as whore, as innocent and dirty. They are desexualized and oversexualized, often portrayed as too civilized and too uncivilized, lacking intelligence and being sneaky and manipulative, cowardly yet powerful—and sometimes it is claimed they seek to control the world. Yet they are not viewed as the power controlling the global economy and the personified force behind imperialism, capitalism and “rapacious capital,” Wall Street, or ISIS. Conspiracy ideologies tend to directly point to fantasies about Jewish power, media, and lobbies, just as antisemitic constructs portray Jews or “Zionists” as the main obstacle to human emancipation and world peace—something rarely attributed to women. At any rate, the discussion of Critical Theory opens up space for rethinking these relationships between antisemitism, racism, and misogyny. Cf. for instance Karin Stögner, *Antisemitismus und Sexismus*. On previous discussions on racism and misogyny see also Drucilla Cornell and Kenneth Michael Panfilio, *Symbolic Forms for a New Humanity: Cultural and Racial Reconfigurations of Critical Theory* (2010).
9. Modernized antisemitism often employs an equally stark dichotomy between the allegedly kind-natured, “good Palestinians” and the inherently “evil Israelis,” no matter what actors of each group are actually doing or not doing.
10. See, for instance, Andreas Zick, Carina Wolf, Beate Küpper et al., “The Syndrome of Group-Focused Enmity: The Interrelation of Prejudice Tested with Multiple

Cross-Sectional and Panel Data," *Social Issues* 64, 2 (2008): 363–383.

11. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 103.
12. New research on how authoritarianism is caused and expressed very much lines up with the Frankfurt School's early theorizing and empirical findings, yet insists that the early research designs were not accurate and claims that Adorno and others would simplistically categorize authoritarian respondents as inherently evil or dangerous—another misreading of the Frankfurt School and of the contributions by its collaborators. Just like Adorno et al., Stenner and other new researchers diagnose a significant authoritarian segment in American democracy, and they suggest the authoritarian mind-set and respective dynamics are “activated” or expressed once authoritarians feel threatened by social change—such as transformed dominant social values or increased diversity—and political leaders or media effectively mobilize this fear or perceived threat. See Karen Stenner, *The Authoritarian Dynamic* (2005); Marc J. Hetherington and Jonathan D. Weiler, *Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics* (2009).
13. Daniel Trilling, “Brexit and the Politics of Hate,” *International New York Times*, June 20, 2016, 9.
14. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 39.
15. The authoritarian mix of megalomania, paranoid delusion, hate speech and punishment fantasies against political opponents and collectivized “others,” brilliantly analyzed by the Frankfurt School, can today be studied in autocratic states like Putin's Russia or the Islamic Republic of Iran, which provide textbook examples. But it has also found entry in Western democracies, from European right-wing populist parties to the Donald Trump phenomenon and Trump's mobilization of authoritarian populism in America. It is certainly no coincidence that a modern

authoritarian demagogue like Trump, who won the US presidency in order to govern the world's oldest and most significant constitutional democracy, also promoted antisemitic conspiracy myths in his electoral campaign—in addition to aggressively displaying ethnocentric, racist, anti-intellectual, and misogynistic resentments, all characteristic for the “authoritarian syndrome” that link the president to his most ardent supporters. See Dana Milbank, “Antisemitism is no longer an undertone of Trump's campaign: It's the melody,” *Washington Post* November 7, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/anti-semitism-is-no-longer-an-undertone-of-trumps-campaign-its-the-melody/2016/11/07/b1ad6e22-a50a-11e6-8042-f4d111c862d1_story.html.

16. Cf. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992). On the authoritarian backlash against global social value change and self-expression values see Pippa Norris, “It's not just Trump: Authoritarian Populism is Rising across the West. Here's Why,” *Washington Post*, March 11, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/03/11/its-not-just-trump-authoritarian-populism-is-rising-across-the-west-heres-why/>
17. On Adorno's, Marcuse's, Löwenthal's, and Horkheimer's “solidarity and identification with Israel” (Marcuse) and their critique of radical, “anti-Zionist” hostility against the Jewish state of Israel see comprehensively Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 111–112, 117–123, 142–147, 225–226. Despite varying attitudes among the members of the inner circle of the Frankfurt School (varying also over time), they all had some misgivings about Israeli policies but all rejected “anti-Zionist” ideologies. Horkheimer claimed that purported anti-Zionism provided a thin screen for underlying antisemitism among neo-Nazis and Communists. Marcuse stated in Berlin in 1967 that “under all circumstances a new war

of annihilation against Israel must be prevented." Löwenthal expressed his hope that "Israel will not only survive but will grow and prosper in the years ahead." He later criticized those "who are apparently ready to sacrifice the State of Israel out of love for the Palestinian Liberation Movement" (all cited in Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism*, 118, 140, 143, 144). See also Clemens Heni, *Kritische Theorie und Israel* (Berlin: Edition Critic, 2014). It goes without saying that for the Frankfurt School thinkers, too, criticism of Israeli government policy was not and should not be conflated with antisemitism. Yet, while criticism of Israeli policies does not have to be antisemitic in nature, such criticism is not a priori free of antisemitism, either, but can also be a means for articulating resentments against Jews. To be sure, there is a history of nonantisemitic Jewish anti-Zionism before the Holocaust. But antisemitic anti-Zionism also has a long history: as early as the 1920s, for instance, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi propagandist Alfred Rosenberg agitated against a "Zionist state" and "Zionism"; see Alfred Rosenberg, *Der staatsfeindliche Zionismus* (1922). On Nazi anti-Zionism cf. Francis R. Nicosia, *Zionism and Anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany* (2008), 66f; and Jeffrey Herf, ed., *Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in Historical Perspective: Convergence and Divergence* (2006). As Jean Améry aptly put it in 1969, after the Holocaust "anti-Israelism or anti-Zionism" contained antisemitism "like the thunder in the cloud" and made antisemitism "honorable" again. Cf. Jean Améry, "Der ehrbare Antisemitismus: Rede zur Woche der Brüderlichkeit," in Améry, *Weiterleben—aber wie? Essays 1968–1978*, ed. Gisela Lindemann (1982), 163.

18. For a theoretical conceptualization of "second globalization" see Andrei S. Markovits and Lars Rensmann, *Gaming the World: How Sports are Reshaping Global Politics and Culture* (2010), 43–44.

19. Keohane, "Governance in a Partially Globalized World."
20. Cf. Lars Rensmann, "Adorno and the Global Public Sphere: Rethinking Globalization and the Cosmopolitan Condition of Politics," *Re-Imagining Public Space: The Frankfurt School and Beyond*, eds. Diana Boros and James M. Glass (2014), 163–190.
21. A popular yet also classical example of this is a meme widely circulated on social media across the world, which was even endorsed and disseminated by a professor at Oberlin College working on social justice issues, which reads: "My name is Jacob Rothschild . . . We own nearly all Central Banks in the world. We financed both sides of every war since Napoleon. We own the news, the media, your oil, and your government. You probably have never heard of me." Quoted in Colleen Flaherty, "Unacademic freedom?" *Inside Higher Ed*, March 1, 2016, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/03/01/does-academic-freedom-protect-falsehoods>
22. Adorno, "Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute," 131.
23. See for an excellent analysis of the "bad faith" construct and charge: David Hirsh, *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism: Cosmopolitan Reflections* (2007). See also Robert Fine, "Fighting with Phantoms: A Contribution to the Debate on Antisemitism in Europe," *Patterns of Prejudice* 43, 5 (2009): 459–479. For a recent example of outright downplaying of antisemitism as merely "imagined," an "accusation" by "new inquisitors" used to "stigmatize" and to "bludgeon opponents of the Israeli state and those who stand in solidarity with the banlieue youth," see Alan Badiou, Eric Hazan, and Ivan Segré, *Reflections on Anti-Semitism* (2013).
24. This may include resentments that are cloaked in hypermoralistic outrage—which has always been part of the arsenal of antisemitic and racist discourse. New modernized forms may also employ contemporary progressive

language, including the cosmopolitan discourse of universal human rights and dignity, that is used in a particularistic fashion. If the critique of actual or perceived human rights violations is selectively applied—used only if Jews or the “Jewish state” can be charged but ignored if, for instance, hundreds of Palestinian children are massacred in the Yarmouk refugee camp near Damascus, alongside hundreds of thousands killed in the Syrian civil war or by the “Islamic State”—it points to an underlying resentful anti-Jewish particularism and aggressive nationalism in the guise of universalism. The same applies if problems of globalization are identified as problems of “Jewish globalizers.”

25. This institutional antisemitism is, for instance, epitomized in the UN Human Rights Council, in which some of the world’s most egregious human rights violating regimes and dictatorships are active members that remain silent about their own crimes. Instead, a majority of UNHRC resolutions singles out and demonizes Israel, the only Jewish state and the largest Jewish community in the world yet comparatively tiny (roughly the size of Wales). They thereby reproduce ongoing domestic forms of institutional exclusions of ethnic minorities and Jews in many countries while simultaneously portraying them as disproportionately powerful—and old antisemitic cliché itself. Israel and its human rights behavior is the only permanent, standing item on the UNHRC’s agenda at every session. See, for instance, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Human Rights Council holds General Debate about the Human Rights Situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories,” March 24, 2014, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14432&LangID=E>
26. These include marches openly expressing hate and the desire to exterminate Jews with chants like “Jews, Jews,

cowardly swine" or " Hamas, Hamas; Jews to the gas," quoted in Deborah Lipstadt, "Why Jews are worried," *International New York Times*, August 22, 2014.

27. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 365.
28. On the one hand, representing contemporary critics, Raymond Geuss boldly claims that two main features of Adorno and Horkheimer's critical theory are, first, the "continuous cultivation of the metaphysical need" while, second, exhibiting "a paralyzing and paranoid fear of instrumental reason" that is similar to "archaic religions." Thus we should abstain from these esoteric philosophers if we want to avoid "choking while remasticating theological absurdities." See Raymond Geuss, *Outside Ethics* (2005), 151–152. On the other hand, some admirers of the Frankfurt School wrongly celebrate its allegedly deconstructive "critique of reason." In so far as they seek to use Adorno to promote the indeterminate negation of enlightenment reason, some poststructuralist and postcolonialist thinkers hereby abandon the enlightenment project and related critical categories altogether. They, too, place Adorno squarely in the midst of antienlightenment thinking. Yet rather than charging Adorno with irrationalism, like Geuss, they follow what Richard Wolin has aptly called the "seduction of unreason" in the tradition of Heidegger, while falsely attaching it to Adorno. In contrast to Adorno's plea for more self-reflective reason, they put the very idea of enlightenment under suspicion due to its Western origins, and reduce any and all claims grounded in reasonable arguments, the promise of freedom and progress, or universal rights to the mere expression of (colonial or Western) power relations. Amy Allen, for instance, praises Critical Theory's "deconstructive" qualities. Moreover, she wants to "decolonize" the Frankfurt School, suggesting that the very ideas of progress, enlightenment, and human rights

represent a “Eurocentric,” imperialist, “neocolonialist fallacy.” See Amy Allen, *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of the Frankfurt School* (2016). Referring to Critical Theory, Susan Buck-Morss goes even further: rather than understanding Islamism as a dangerous form of blind, authoritarian and oppressive religious zealotry directed against political and culture differences, freedom, individuality, Jews, gays, nonbelievers and “others,” she views “political Islam” as a somewhat authentic, legitimate, even welcome expression of a critique of modernity, a “critical contemporary discourse” and a rebellion against “Eurocentric” ideas of enlightenment, articulating “political resistance to the postcolonial order.” Cf. Susan Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror: Islamism and Critical Theory on the Left* (2003), 45ff. Adorno’s dialectical critique of enlightenment concepts, however, should not be conflated with the dismissal of the enlightenment promise, intimately tied to the idea of reason, which as of now remains to a considerable extent unfulfilled.

29. Cf. Gerard Delanty, “The Cosmopolitan Imagination: Critical Cosmopolitanism and Social Theory,” *British Journal of Sociology* 57(1): 25–47.
30. On this argument first Steven Eric Bronner, *Reclaiming the Enlightenment*.
31. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 29. See also p. 157: “None of the abstract concepts,” says Adorno about Kant’s cosmopolitan ideal, “comes closer to fulfilled utopia than eternal peace.”
32. On this discussion and the search for more robust conceptions in Habermas see also Martin Jay, *Reason after its Eclipse: On Late Critical Theory* (2016).
33. Theodor W. Adorno, *Can One Live After Auschwitz? A Philosophical Reader*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (2003), 452.
34. Wolin, *The Seduction of Unreason*.

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35. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 39.
 36. *Ibid.*, 34.
 37. *Ibid.*, 156.
 38. Horkheimer and Adorno radicalize Kant's critique of the unconditional "right of sovereignty." Kant criticizes this so-called right in *ius gentium* as a license for rulers to go to war as they please; cf. Immanuel Kant, "Perpetual Peace," in Kant, *Political Writings*, ed. Hans S. Reiss (1970), 93–130. See also Fine, "Debating Human Rights, law, and Subjectivity: Arendt, Adorno, and Critical Theory," 162.
 39. For work in this direction see Seyla Benhabib, *Dignity in Adversity: Human Rights in Troubled Times*; Rainer Forst, *The Right to Justification: Elements of a Constructivist Theory of Justice* (2012); Fabian Freyenhagen, *Adorno's Practical Philosophy: Living Less Wrongly* (2013); Lars Rensmann, "Critical Theory of Human Rights," in Michael Thompson, ed., *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Theory* (2017); Lambert Zuidervaart, *Social Philosophy after Adorno* (2007).

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PHILOSOPHY / HISTORY

Although the Frankfurt School represents one of the most influential intellectual traditions of the twentieth century, its multifaceted work on modern antisemitism has so far largely been neglected. *The Politics of Unreason* fills this gap, providing the first systematic study of the Frankfurt School's philosophical, psychological, political, and social research and theorizing on the problem of antisemitism. Examining the full range of these critical theorists' contributions, from major studies and prominent essays to seemingly marginal pieces and aphorisms, Lars Rensmann reconstructs how the Frankfurt School, faced with the catastrophe of the genocide against the European Jews, explains forms and causes of anti-Jewish politics of hate. The book also pays special attention to research on coded and "secondary" antisemitism after the Holocaust, and how resentments are politically mobilized under conditions of democracy. By revisiting and rereading the Frankfurt School's original work, this book challenges several misperceptions about critical theory's research, making the case that it provides an important source to better understand the social origins and politics of antisemitism, racism, and hate speech in the modern world.

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