

Dr Maryse TOUBOUL
Psychiatrist –Psychoanalyst, Paris
Founder of the “School of Aliveness and Adulthood”

**ISPP - July 2009
Dublin, Ireland**

The Unconscious and the Roots of Anti-Semitism: Are Anti-Semitism and Psychoanalysis Linked?

While Freud was making the world discover the existence of a very special place inside every man and woman—the Unconscious—a man in Germany, A. Hitler, was making his way up in people’s minds; a man who was going to use the voice of the Unconscious to start a rational and enthusiastic extermination of 6 million Jewish lives; children, women and men without “discrimination.”

WHAT RELATION IS THERE BETWEEN THE UNCONSCIOUS AND HITLER?

The link between the two is a Language, the Symbolic Language: that of beliefs, Ideas, Ideals of Purity, perfection, and absolutes; a language rooted in lack, suffering, violence and Hate of the Other; a language of persecuted-persecutor, Master-slave, dominator-dominated, which has been transmitted from generation to generation.

It is a paranoiac structure model, strongly imprinted in the minds, because the Laws of the Unconscious Language came from an Other and are directed to an Other. The Laws of the Other force everyone to be stuck within a logic of lack, leading to passion and drives toward the other. And no objectivity, no real love is possible based on lack.

When S. Freud discovered the Unconscious was our mind’s essential structure, and when later J. Lacan said, “The Unconscious is structured like a Language,” they also described a structure of lack, suffering, violence and hate in each and every one, all strongly stamped by the guilt of not obeying this parental and judgmental language present in all of us. The Unconscious is also the place of the “Need for love,” and of dependence. This position of “inferiority” is at the origin of all complexes and death drives. The Unconscious speaks a language of death and of impossible aliveness.

WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH ANTI-SEMITISM?

Fundamentally, anti-Semitism is to hate life!

And is it possible to transmit the hate of life from generation to generation? Yes.

Is it possible to transmit the hate of the other? Yes.

Because a way of functioning is passed on like a form of knowledge, from generation to generation, without being conscious of its existence, its “life.”

Jewish transmission has the unconscious memory of the story of anti-Semitism.

IS THERE A JEWISH OR AN ANTI-SEMITIC UNCONSCIOUS?

The story of anti-Semitism and of persecution through centuries most likely created a fear over time. But the Symbolic Language—always talking about morals, religion, and the other's power—may well be responsible for a heavy transmission of hate and violence toward the Jewish people.

WHAT DIFFERENCE IS THERE BETWEEN A JEW AND A NON-JEW?

No one is responsible for being born Jewish or not Jewish. There is no choice: Our Identity exists before our birth; it is transmitted through a language of either pride or shame, or both. Very early on, a Jewish child knows he is different, by name, Identity, ethnicity; very early on, he knows he will have to love his life, to defend it, to be strong against adversity. Non-Jews should also have this same desire to defend their lives, because Life is difficult; living is difficult; being courageous is difficult, for everyone on this earth.

But it may be that somehow, anti-Semitism led Jews to be closer to life and to its Laws, because they believe no danger can break their existence; while non-Jews may be farther from this necessity to be strong, since no enemy, no Other wanted their death as a people. Non-Jews may hate the Other; Jews, fundamentally, cannot let themselves go toward hate. Hate is made for people who are not conscious of the value of life!

No Power, no money, no possession can give value to Life. Only being Conscious of our differences, loving and respecting these differences, can procure real pride in life. Yes, it is difficult, but we can if we want to.

ANTISEMITISM AS AN OLD HABIT

Today, people are so used to hearing about anti-Semitism that being anti-Semitic seems less dangerous, a little more “normal” than it used to be, as if this language of hate was losing its strength and its meaning. If more people were conscious of their responsibility toward each other, the right to kill one life would not cross anyone's mind either. People everywhere need to be closer to life and farther from judgments and discrimination.

JEWISH IDENTITY'S PARADOX

Many people envy and admire this un-destroyed strength of the Jewish people, who survived so many persecutions. Yet, at the same time, they consider them a very low and ugly part of society.

These negative thoughts seem to become “old fashioned” though, in front of the greater dangers for all humans: epidemics, ecological problems, etc. Nature is rebelling against humans, and its strength and power of destruction are huge.

WHICH FUTURE FOR ANTI-SEMITISM?

It seems the anti-Semitic language, even if it still has too many adepts, is becoming old, worn down, tired and lacking energy. Before, being anti-Semitic was something to be proud of for many; today, after such enormous horrors, no meaning can be given to this hate of the Jewish people.

Today, there is more consciousness, and people start to realize the misery in their lives is not the fault of Jews as real individuals. What they represent as a people is what bothers them, a people with a strong Identity, seemingly impossible to destroy over time, and even, to the contrary, more and more present with time.

The attention has moved to, what future for Israel? Which peace can be envisaged between the two Semitic people: Jewish and Arab? Arabs and Jews are both Semitic races. Thus, no anti-Semitic logic should reach one without reaching the other, and nothing should prevent them from living together.

The West approaches the Middle East with a somewhat fearful and strange eye. Yet, the Middle East cannot move ahead based on a logic of fear, but rather based on a desire to find a solution to this conflict, out of choice, with Israel and with the other Arab countries.

Men will be forced to make peace because life, today, is increasingly becoming a real and essential value for everyone in the world. Perhaps Israel will be the first place in the world where peace will win on war and murder, because everyone can find an element of his own Identity in Israel, where the three monotheisms have their place, and the oldest is the guarantee of the two others.

ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE LANGUAGE OF INHUMANITY

The language of inhumanity's logic is rooted and located in the Unconscious, where all forms of racism are contained. This language cannot contain truth, only authority and judgment. Today, Life is the first value to defend, and its language has to be made consciously one by one.

Yesterday, hating the other "sounded good." Little by little, this wrong logic of hate, which justifies hate with the fear of a Symbolic language, is dying itself. It is slowly losing its power over the larger number. Anti-Semitism is an old word for another time, when men and women were manipulated and unconscious of the poverty and horror of their ideas of hate.

Today, Consciousness is growing, and with it, the possibilities to manipulate and to scare people are slowly disappearing everywhere in the world.

Yesterday, dictatorship and authoritarianisms created a mentality of hate and anti-Semitism. Tomorrow, a new democratic language based on freedom of thought will create a new mentality, based on the desire to love and to respect everyone, and all identities.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baum, Steven K., *When Fairy Tales Kill : The Origins and Transmission of Antisemitic Beliefs*, iUniverse, 2008