

Culture and Identity

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INTRODUCTION

Cultural identities are marked by a number of factors – ‘race’, ethnicity, gender and class to name but a few; the very real locus of these factors, however, is the notion of difference. The question of difference is emotive; we start to hear ideas about ‘us’ and ‘them’, friend and foe, belonging and not belonging, in-groups and out-groups, which define ‘us’ in relation to others, or the Other. From this we get ideas about communities, even imagined communities (Anderson, 1983) and ethno-national boundaries. A central question in this debate, however, is: who ascribes a cultural identity, to whom and for what reason? Do we choose our identity, or is it beyond our control? To further complicate this matter we could also ask whether identity is a social construction or part of a psychodynamic process. Or indeed, as I would argue, whether it is a complex amalgam of both of these. These are the questions that will be addressed in this chapter.

I start by examining the social construction of the self as a dramatic or performative role and in particular the way in which we

construct the self and convince other people that we are who we ‘appear’ to be. Goffman’s work in *Stigma* (1968) starts to give us a sense of how identity is constructed by others and the pathologization of certain identities by society. In examining how deviance from a societal ‘norm’ can lead to a certain stigmatized identity, Goffman’s work can be seen as a forerunner to the writings of Michel Foucault (1977, 1984, 1995) on the normalizing techniques of modern society. Foucault’s (1995) work on madness puts a unique spin on the creation of rational man and the modern self. In *Discipline and Punish* (1977) Foucault starts to analyse the intersections between power and knowledge that are constituted by the role played by particular forms of expertise in discourses that exert their own form of identity *normalization* on all of us. As we move on to the social construction of sexuality once again there is a strong argument that cultural identity is linked to dominant discourses and power. Although both Goffman and Foucault’s work provides a very clear history and analysis of the social construction of the self and identity, I argue that what is missing from

both their accounts is any sense of emotion, passion or motivation in the construction of self.

In looking at the work of the Frankfurt School, Franz Fanon (1986) and Slavoj Žižek (1993) we get to what I argue is at the crux of a cultural identity: that is, the notion of identity as shaped not just in relation to some other, but *to* the Other, to another culture. The notion of cultural identity becomes much stronger and firmer when we define our 'selves' in relation to a cultural Other. We start then to see ideas around 'ways of life', 'us' and 'them', and this is at the heart of racism, hatred and exclusion. In Fanon's writing we see the construction of colonial black identity and the powerful affectual dynamics of power and oppression. In Žižek we see the effect that the collapse of the nation-state has had on ethnic and cultural identities. In both cases we see how cultural identities are not only socially constructed, but psychologically constructed. I conclude this chapter by looking at the work of Zygmunt Bauman (1990, 1991) on strangers. The idea of the stranger, I argue, is an important conceptual tool if we are to understand the ambiguous nature of identity construction in contemporary culture. Finally, I argue that we have to take very seriously the constructions and perceptions of the human imagination and emotion – the way in which people imagine the world to be and imagine the ways that others exist in the world is central to the construction of identity. It does not matter that such beliefs may be based more on fiction than on fact, because the human imagination is central to identity construction; it is therefore concrete and has very real consequences for the world we live in.

WHO AM 'I'?

The dramatic self

For Goffman identity is a dramatic effect: the self is an effect of a performance, the way in which we present our selves in everyday life. So, if we turn to Goffman's (1969) classic

text *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, we have what has become known as the dramaturgical model. For Goffman life becomes a performance:

When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the tasks that he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be. (Goffman, 1969: p. 28)

Identity is therefore projected at the target audience in a theatrical performance that conveys self to others. On the one hand, the performer can be completely immersed in his own act and sincerely believe that the version of reality he is projecting is actually correct. On the other hand, the performer may be cynical, not quite taken in by his own performance, indeed in some cases fully aware that the impression being fostered is but a mere act. It is not always the case, Goffman argues, that this is done out of self-interest, but rather in the belief that it is for the audience's own good. Politicians do this all the time, while educators often project a cynical sense of self to get over a point, and we often talk about putting on a brave face in spite of adversity. These, for Goffman, are the two poles of performativity that are little more than a simple continuum:

Each provides the individual with a position which has its own particular securities and defences, so there will be a tendency for those who have travelled close to one of these poles to complete the voyage. (Goffman, 1969: p. 30)

So we have the idea of the presentation of self and identity as a performance. This, as Manning (1992) notes, is just but one of the six dramaturgical principles that Goffman outlines. Manning argues that we are provided with a bewildering array of definitions and classifications as the social world is reordered according to this theatrical perspective (Manning, 1992: p. 40). Goffman's basic argument therefore contains six principles: performance, the team, the region, discrepant roles, communication out

of character, and impression management. Each of these principles has subsections of devices that we use to portray our selves. So, for example, if we take the principle of performance, then we may use stage props – desks, academic attire, white coats for doctors – in order to manage a ‘front’. To convince people we really are who we are, we use certain mannerisms and project certain characteristics within a given setting that will convince people that we really are a doctor, dentist or teacher. A front, for Goffman, helps to induce or add ‘dramatic realization’ to a performance. There is, however, a paradox for Goffman, or at least a dilemma between expression and action. The dramatization of a part may well stand in the way of the action associated with that part. Goffman quotes Sartre’s example of the schoolboy who is so keen to seem attentive in the eyes of his teacher – ears and eyes wide open – that he exhausts himself playing the role and is no longer able to listen. This is why organizations often delegate the task of dramatizing the meaning of action to someone who does not perform it. So, for example, a sales representative may dramatize the role of the quality of workmanship in a particular firm promoting a product just as the marketing department may sell a degree course to a potential student rather than the worker or teacher performing these roles. Thus, for Goffman, performances are not only realized but idealized, shown in the best possible light to conform to cultural and societal norms. Where this is so, cultural identities are often idealizations that are set in opposition to stigmatized identities. As Manning notes:

The picture that emerges is this: performances are both realized and idealized as our all-to-human selves are transformed into socialized beings capable of expressive control. (Manning, 1992: p. 41)

In a performance certain things are played down while others are accentuated depending on the social context of the encounter. The performer will also often keep a distance from the audience to appear more interesting or

mysterious and, as Goffman notes, ‘the real secret behind the mystery is that there really is no mystery; the real problem is to prevent the audience learning this too’ (Goffman, 1969: p. 76).

For Goffman the real sites of successful performances are to be found not in individuals but in teams who perform in ‘front’ regions: for example, teams of doctors in hospitals may work together in the front region of ward and then retire to ‘back’ regions to review and revise their performance, or rehearse it for the next time. The back region is an essential area where the audience are not allowed which enables the performer to practise the techniques of impression management: ‘since the vital secrets of the show are visible backstage and since performers behave out of character while there, it is natural to expect that the passage from the front region to the back region will be kept closed . . .’ (Goffman, 1969: p. 116). Thus, doctors keep up the mystique of the medical profession by keeping their secrets in the back region. The fear of disclosing any disreputable information encourages performers to practise the art of impression management.

In *Stigma*, Goffman describes three types of identity – social identity, personal identity and ego identity. For Goffman society characterizes people and produces attributes that are normal in any given categorization. Social identity is about the category and attributes that a person is deemed to possess in relation to others. Often, when we meet a stranger, we make assumptions about the nature of this stranger and attribute to her or him what Goffman calls a virtual social identity. Stigma is based on a discrepancy between actual and virtual social identity, an attribute that we perceive as a shortcoming – ‘in the extreme, a person who is quite thoroughly bad, or dangerous or weak’ (Goffman, 1968: p. 12) leads us to discredit and stigmatize an individual. Goffman delineates three broad areas of stigma: physical deformities and disabilities; blemishes of the character that often arise from a person’s history of alcoholism or drug abuse, or from attributes associated with their sexuality, employment status or

political behaviour; and stigma that arises from notions of race, nation and religion. This final area is tied in with the notion of cultural identities that I'll explore in greater detail in the next section. So far as the concept of social identity is concerned, however, we see a form of identity that is ascribed by, and based in our relationship to, other people and to that which is considered normal and tied in with social categories such as age, gender and class.

Personal identity for Goffman is about a person's biography. It is about something that is unique to a person and makes that person an individual within the social. What Goffman is arguing is that we present certain signs that identify us as an individual in the past and the present, and that will continue to do so in the future. In other words, the signs that set us apart from others are our personal identity. This could be our biography, accumulated information about us, and even our fingerprints. It is important to note, though, that Goffman is not talking about our own sense of being, but about marks and signs that distinguish us from others and continue to do so:

By personal identity, I have in mind ... positive marks or identity pegs, and the unique combination of life history items that comes to be attached to the individual with the help of these pegs for his identity. (Goffman, 1968: p. 74)

So, this is not about our inner essence, about how we feel we are and exist in the world. Rather, it's about a complex and continuous profiling of who we are in relation to society that marks us as an individual. It's about our data trail, how society keeps tabs on us and ascribes or imputes a personal or individual identity to us. Goffman identifies a third form of identity – ego identity – but, as Tom Burns (1992) notes, he only mentions it to make it clear he is not dealing with 'ego' per se, but is more interested in socially constructed interactional identity. Ego identity is about our subjective sense of who we are and how we exist in the world, in other words how we feel about our self. Indeed, if we return to the notion of stigmatization, then Goffman clearly

differentiates between these three types of identity:

The concept of social identity allowed us to consider stigmatization. The concept of personal identity allowed us to consider the role of information control in stigma management. The idea of ego identity allows us to consider what the individual may feel about stigma. (Goffman, 1968: p. 130)

In the relations between these three senses of identity, then, we have quite a strong constructionist view of how the self and identity are both constructed by and maintained in parallel with societal norms (see also: Berger and Luckmann, 1971; Burr, 2003; Garfinkel, 1967; Gergen, 2000).

The first thing we could ask of this account is: where does the role of emotion reside in Goffman's model of self and identity? The emphasis placed on social and personal identity draws away from the feeling self and in some sense negates identity as a felt state of being. In largely affirming Margaret Mead's (1934) work, the idea of a sense of cultural identity from the position of the subject is rather overwhelmed by the normalization of self by society. If we look at the dramaturgical model then, as Manning (1992) notes, life is reduced to a set of performances. There is very little analysis of intention or motivation, or even of how the self is created. Identity becomes so performative we lose all sense of subjectivity and reflexivity. Indeed, for Manning (1992), 'Goffman's dramaturgical perspective over-extends the notion of acting or performing' with the result 'that it offers an inadequate account of the intentions of actors and that it imposes its solution onto the phenomena it purports to explain' (Manning, 1992: p. 54). Anthony Elliott (2001) also highlights the lack of psychic dispositions in the acting self, maintaining that an undue concern with impression management might actually be symptomatic of deeper concerns surrounding the self. Nor do questions of desire enter into Goffman's framework and, at the same time, argues Elliott, the notion of the self as performer throws doubt on any notion of a 'true' self that 'modern culture valorizes, and which is evident

in many forms of social thought' (Elliott, 2001: p. 36). Indeed, for Elliott, Goffman's idea of the performative self might actually be a precursor to post-modern ideas of the self.

Despite these criticisms, however, Goffman's model offers us some positive insights into identity formation and notions of the self. Although we cannot realistically see the whole of social life through the metaphoric lens of the theatre we also quite plainly do play roles, put on fronts and perform in different ways in different social contexts. Goffman's ideas around organization and normalization bear an uncanny resemblance to Foucault's later work on this subject, and indeed Tom Burns (1992) argues that it is almost as if Foucault had adopted Goffman's ideas and interpretations and expanded them into a much wider thesis on power and social control. It is then, to Foucault that I want to turn to next.

The ship of fools – self and other

As we have already seen, social and cultural identities are founded on difference and, as Goffman has showed us, they are shaped in relation to societal norms. In Foucault's exploration of the mad, the criminally insane, the history of the deviant and of sexualities we see how the self is created in relation to expert discourses that define normal and pathological as well as trying to drive us back towards a norm; to make our sense of self align with a rational model in a process of normalization. In *Madness and Civilization* (1995) Foucault takes us on a critical voyage from the 'ship of fools', a strange 'drunken' boat that glides along the calm waters of the Rhineland and Flemish canals, a time when madmen had a loosely regulated, wandering existence, to a very different existence in the context of the disciplinary society (Foucault, 1995: p. 7). In doing so, Foucault questions the very notion of what it means to be mad, to be a delinquent and, in his later work, probes the ways in which expert systems have tried to construct sexuality and identity. Foucault explores the processes and historical circumstances that

give rise to the modern person, to the creation of 'rational man' and the objectification of the Other.

Much has been written about Foucault's work on madness, deviancy and sexuality (see Clarke, 2005), but we can draw some strong themes from *Madness and Civilization* which give us a clearer picture of one of many forms of identity construction. The main themes of the book revolve around notions of unreason and reason, integration and exclusion, power and knowledge and the creation of Cartesian rational man. This is underpinned, Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) note, by Foucault's tracing the growth of 'scientific positivism as an overlay for the real explanation of the power to cure that lay behind objectivity' (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: p. 11). Scientific knowledge for Foucault, far from being objective, is a discourse from which the powerful dominate. Foucault is effectively showing us in *Madness and Civilization* that there is a discourse on madness in Western civilization that has four distinct stages. In the medieval period the madman was considered almost holy, whereas in the Renaissance the madman was in part venerated as the bearer of a higher form of reason. At the end of the seventeenth century madness started to become more clearly delineated from sanity and we saw the start of the confinement of the mad in hospitals. Yet still the mad were not so much excluded from society as confined. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the asylum was developed together with psychiatric discourse which further separated reason from unreason, leading to a more complete sequestration of the mad. Finally, argues Foucault, all nineteenth-century psychiatry converges on Freud, on psychoanalysis (Foucault, 1995: p. 277).

For Foucault, in the classical age rational man was created by locking away all the people who did not fit the picture of rationality and morality of the time. In the eighteenth century houses of confinement began to become the focus of concern and social anxiety. Unreason started to be associated with contagion and disease. This created a

fear, what Foucault describes as the *Great Fear*. People were forever aware of their own potential madness, and consequently of the risk that they too might become confined. This resulted in a double fear in the sense that, on the one hand, people were horrified by the disease and perversity seeping out of the asylum while, on the other, they were concerned that their own minds harboured thoughts and feelings that didn't quite align with the popular moral image of rationality. The actual walls of houses of confinement, of the madhouse and the asylum, created walls inside people as they feared the gap between the norms of rationality and their own potential madness. The discourse of psychiatry was a response to the fear of madness as a disease that might spread from the houses of confinement unless the doctors entered to control it. At the end of the eighteenth century, consequently, we saw the separation of the mad from criminals and the poor with the birth of the asylum.

In the asylum, the subject is objectified. The objectified subject would be described in greater detail later by Foucault (1977) in *Discipline and Punish*, but the principle remains the same. The subject is constantly observed and made aware of the error of his or her ways. The mad are made to see their transgressions and brought back to the rational norms of society by the restraint, retraining and disciplining of the body and mind (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: p. 9). It is perhaps the most significant development for Foucault that, when the doctor enters the asylum, we have the birth of the doctor-patient relationship and the expert discourses of psychiatry. Foucault shows us how expert discourses develop systems of knowledge that sustain power relations and domination in society. It is through the person of the doctor that madness becomes insanity, and thus an objectification for investigation in medical discourse. If *Madness and Civilization* gives us a clue as to the construction of the modern self and identity in relation to the Other, then *Discipline and Punish* describes in detail the processes through which this transformation is attained.

The gaze and I

In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault charts the history that leads from the exercise of sovereign power in the form of public spectacle to the exercise of disciplinary power in the prison or penitentiary – a transformation in the ends of punishment from the public mutilation of the offender to his private transformation. Again we see the development of an expert discourse of criminology that on the one hand identifies those who are deviant and on the other pulls us back to the norms of society. Prison becomes a transforming apparatus whose rules and processes Foucault argues also apply to most institutions and organizations. Schools, colleges, hospitals, factories all follow the principles of panopticism – of omnipresent surveillance – and the training of bodies that mark disciplinary society.

Foucault begins his analysis of panopticism by describing the measures taken when the plague appeared in a town. He does this to demonstrate some of the very basic principles of panopticism – the spatial partitioning of the town; the confinement of residents to houses; ceaseless inspections; observation posts and sentinels; and every day everyone is counted. This surveillance is based on a system of permanent registrations – *the plague is met by order*. We then move on to the prison – Bentham's Panopticon. For Foucault, the panoptic effect reverses the principle of the dungeon, it disposes of the deprivation of light, and the idea that you hide the prisoner, retaining only the function of incarceration. Visibility becomes a trap. Each inmate is confined to a cell, only the supervisor or inspector can see him, he cannot communicate with fellow inmates – 'he is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication' (Foucault, 1977: p. 200). For Foucault, this highly visible invisibility ensures there is no communication with fellow inmates and therefore no likelihood of further criminal dealing, or mass escape. If the inmate is a patient there is no possibility of contagion, if they are madmen, then no risk of violence,

if they are schoolchildren, then there is no hope of copying. Order is maintained through the gaze, and the elimination of noise, chatter and time-wasting, in the office, the workshop and the factory just as much as in the prison. Crucially, for Foucault the major effect of the Panopticon is to: 'Induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power' (Foucault, 1977: p. 201). This is achieved by making the prisoner think and feel that he is the object of constant surveillance, constantly under the eye of power.

The Panopticon, as Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) note, brings together power, knowledge, control (of the body, and of space, and time) in an integrated technology of discipline. Although the Panopticon was never actually built, the idea and ideas that surround it make up disciplinarity, and the techniques permeate the whole of disciplinary society, from the speed camera to the arrangement of timetables, rooms, examinations, students' records in the university, in the temporal, spatial and observational organization of our lives. For Foucault, panopticism is the general principle of a new political anatomy whose object is not sovereignty, but relations of discipline. Think of the gathering of official statistics, the monitoring of populations: these are all part of disciplinary society. The objectification of people led to the notion of a population. Government is impossible without a statistical population which can be quantified, categorized, normalized and therefore governed – this is the essence of what Foucault refers to as governmentality. We have a huge gathering of knowledge through political economy and discourses of psychiatry, welfare and criminal justice in a society where power and knowledge are inextricably linked (see also: Barry et al. 1996; Burchell, 1991). This is also the essence of Goffman's conception of social and personal identities where we are pulled back to the norm, and our personal identity is very much about information about us rather than how we feel. Famously we have Foucault's conception of 'the gaze', stressing the role of observation, judgement, normalization and

examination in the ordering of social life. This involved a shift from the memorable man to the calculable man, from individuality to normalization.

The social construction of sexual identity

The History of Sexuality (three volumes: *The Will to Knowledge* [1976], *The Use of Pleasure* [1984], *The Care of the Self* [1984]) contains at its heart three main themes: a rejection of the 'repressive hypothesis', the idea of the 'confession', and the notion of 'bio-power'. While not the first to do so, Foucault was among the earliest theorists to draw attention to the social construction of sexuality. Rather than taking it as a natural given Foucault sees sexuality as being constructed through discourse. He starts his examination of sexuality by questioning the role of repression, and particularly the extraordinary power that was attributed to it during the Victorian era. His purpose is not to call into question the historical existence of repression; rather it is to question the explanatory power that is accorded the repressive hypothesis when examining the relationship between power and sex. This has to be seen in the light of the emergence of perversion, homosexuality and other forms of sexual deviance as new categories that simply did not exist before they were organized into being by new discourses. Indeed, Foucault saw a 'discursive explosion' in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries around what constituted a legitimate alliance between people that were paralleled by the discursive construction of new forms of perversion and peripheral sexualities. The nineteenth-century homosexual first became a figure of discourse at this time (Foucault, 1976: p. 43). The psychological and psychiatric/medical category of homosexual was constituted from the moment it was characterized (in 1870) not as a type of sexual relation but as a certain quality of sexual sensibility.

We therefore start to see a veritable explosion of discourses around sexuality which were increasingly articulated in scientific

terms: *scientia sexualis*, procedures that, in seeking to tell the truth about sex, are geared to a form of knowledge-power (Foucault, 1976: p. 58). The central concept in the scientific study and increasing administration of sexuality was the confession. Although originating in the Christian confessional, confessional techniques were subsequently generalized to become one of the West's foremost ways of producing truth. For Foucault, the confession now plays a part in all our everyday lives – we have become a confessing society. We confess to our teachers, our friends, our doctor, in public, in private, we even pay to confess. Although the form of confession may have changed over the years, it is, for Foucault, still the general standard by which a true discourse on sex is produced. The confession has lost many of its ritualistic elements, and is no longer located only within the church or the torturers' dungeon. It has spread to wider society and exists in the relationship between doctors and patients, parents and children, delinquents and experts, and of course, for Foucault, in the very practice of psychoanalysis. Through technologies of the self there is the idea that with the help of experts we can know the truth about our sense of being, of self and identity. It was in this way that the scientific discourse on sexuality developed within the framework of the confessional in which the subject was transformed into an object of study – a case history. Just as disciplinary technologies exercised their power over the unruly working classes, bio-power and technologies of the self were applied to the bourgeoisie.

Bio-power, the exercise of power of life and bodies, constituted a specific modality of power. Foucault identifies four specific power-knowledge mechanisms centring on sex that emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: first, the *hysterization of women's bodies* whereby the feminine was analysed, quantified and qualified. Second, *a pedagogization of children's sex* in which there is an assertion that all children indulge in sexual activity, but at the same time this is condemned as unnatural, immoral and dangerous. Doctors, parents and psychiatrists

would have to take care of this dangerous potential. Third, we have the *socialization of procreative behaviour*. The couple became the locus of sensibility, just as responsibility for reproducing the social body was laid at the door of the family. Finally there has been a *psychiatrization of perverse pleasure*. A clinical assessment is made of all anomalies, and individuals are either normalized or pathologized with respect to all aspects of their behaviour, and appropriate corrective technologies are sought for and applied to those who err. Foucault asks us what this is all about. Is it a struggle against sexuality? An effort to gain control over sexuality? An effort to regulate sexuality? No, says Foucault, it is the very production of sexuality itself. No longer taken as a natural given but as a social construction produced through discourse (see Seidman, 2003; Wilton, 2004), sexuality operated as a tool for the infusion of bio-power into the social body. 'Through the deployment of sexuality', Dreyfus and Rabinow thus argue, 'bio power spread its net down to the smallest twitches of the body and the most minute stirrings of the soul . . . the body, knowledge, discourse and power – were brought into a common localization' (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: p. 169). As Barry Smart (2002) has noted, Foucault's work addresses the ways in which the application of power and objectification made human beings into subjects (see also Weeks, 1996).

Thus we have a strong argument that cultural identity is linked to dominant discourses and power. Judith Butler (1990, 1993) builds on this perspective in her notion of performativity, where a discursive practice enacts and therefore produces what it names. Performance, gender identity and sexual power are inextricably linked. Thus, the social construction of identity is tied in with notions of rationality, discourse and power. With the help of experts we can work on our self, change our identity or even discover who we actually are.

Now we have looked in some detail at who we are, we can pose the question: who are they? In other words, the analysis thus far

has been strongly centred on the construction of identity within a given culture and lacks any referent to passion or emotion. But we must also ask: how are identities constructed in relation to other cultures? This really is the crux of the notion of a cultural identity; the notion of the construction of identity in relation to some other becomes stronger when we start to define our 'selves' in relation to a cultural Other and is at the heart of racism(s), hatred and social exclusion.

WHO ARE 'THEY'?

In this second section of this chapter I want to introduce a psycho-social element to the analysis of the self in relation to the Other. My starting point is a discussion of 'race' and ethnicity and what has been termed the 'new racism', where emphasis is no longer placed on ideas of inferiority and biological difference but on cultural difference. There is the idea that cultural identity is so strong that it is impossible for two cultures to co-exist. In this analysis we start to see the development of a politics of fear which uses emotional and affective processes to pathologize others in a language of cultural difference. I then go on to look at a Freudian model of difference using the work of Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (1994) which is based in the notion of projection. This serves as an introduction to a post-Freudian reading of the construction of colonial identity with particular reference to the work of Franz Fanon. In the psychodynamic process of projective identification Fanon finds himself 'battered down by tom-toms, slave ships...'. I conclude this section by examining the implication for the construction of a cultural identity when a nation state collapses, as with the former Yugoslavia. Using the work of Žižek I look at the eruptive and often visceral nature of ethnic hatred and at the ways in which people come to hate each other as particular notions of self and identity are re-written in relation to Others and often imagined communities.

Cultural identity: From biologism to the new racism

The notion of 'race' was for many years a marker of both difference and identity. The word 'race' has been associated with ideas of inferiority and superiority, hierarchy and persecution. As Robert Miles (1993) argues, whatever the manner in which the term is used it implies: '... an acceptance of the existence of biological differences between human beings, differences which express the existence of distinct, self reproducing groups' (Miles, 1993: p. 2).

More than any other term race is associated with a dangerous assumption that the world is split into distinct dichotomies, that there is more than one human race, thus ignoring the wealth of cultural and ethnic diversity and, as Miles (1993) suggests, flying in the face of recent scientific knowledge which shows that the 'world's population could not be legitimately categorized in this way' (Miles, 1993: p. 3). We are heirs to a history in which scientific enquiry has developed the notion of 'race' or 'races' based, as Fryer (1984) suggests, on a form of enlightenment dualism of superstition and ignorance in which biological endowment and physical features were thought to have a causal relationship with cultural superiority. Banton (1970) locates the genesis of racism in Knox's *The Races of Men* (1850), Gobineau's *Essai* (1853) and Nott and Gliddon's *Types of Mankind* (1854), arguing that with the demise of slavery 'some people sought new justifications for maintaining the subordination of those who had earlier been exploited by being counted as property' (Banton, 1970: p. 19). Biological racism was espoused through social Darwinism and other pseudo-scientific theories of race. Darwin's theory of evolution was applied to human society by Herbert Spencer, who coined the phrase the 'survival of the fittest'.

The white Anglo-Saxon represented the culmination of the evolutionary process. Scientific racism has two key characteristics: the first, a biologizing of race in terms of 'colour' and 'stock'; the second, a ranking

of people in hierarchies of race implying gradations of inferior and superior beings. Mason (1995) and Fryer (1984) highlight the interaction between science and politics which led to the use of 'race science' as a justification for slavery. Miles (1989) also draws attention to the use of pseudo-scientific race discourse to justify both the use of Africans in slavery, and the notion that it would give 'them' (the 'other') a chance to escape from 'savagery'. However this view was not widely legitimated. The notion of the African as being biologically suited to slavery had only a minority status. The importance lies not in the link between race and justifications for both colonization and slavery, but in the way in which representations of the 'other' were narrowed down and clearly defined by scientific enquiry:

The sense of difference embodied in European representations of the Other became interpreted as a difference of 'race', that is, primarily *biological* and *natural* difference which was inherent and unalterable. Moreover, the supposed difference was presented as scientific (that is, objective) fact. (Miles, 1989: p. 31)

Clearly, what is important for Miles is not what notions of race were used to justify, but the power of scientific enquiry to define, classify, categorize and perpetuate ideas of inferiority between 'men' through the concept of 'race'. 'Race' itself becomes a product of scientific enquiry.

Mary Douglas (1966) argues in *Purity and Danger* that the boundaries of the body are symbolic of societal boundaries. Black or Jewish 'otherness' emphasizes difference to create order, and in doing so excludes Others in structures of discrimination. The Other is a crucial *symbol* in the definition of who 'we' are – our identity. If 'race' is about clinical definitions of difference, then the construction of the 'Other' is about both perception and fear of difference, a specific 'otherness' imputed by biological-racial inferiority. Highlighting the significance of pollution in relation to the body, Douglas parallels reactions to dirt with reactions to ambiguity, in some sense representing 'reaction to fear in another guise' (Douglas, 1966: p. 5). Race is about

containment of that fear. In this way, the exaggeration of difference creates a form of order, who we are, or perhaps more precisely, who we are not, by the stigmatization, marginalization and intolerance of Others. 'Pollution powers' are, for Douglas, an integral part of the structure of ideas. Pollution powers punish the breaking of things that should be joined and the joining of things that should be separate. Douglas is arguing that the notion of the 'polluting Other' defines the way in which boundaries are constructed. Pollution and dirt are associated with danger, which becomes associated with the Other. The Other then becomes dangerous. The power associated with the 'polluting Other' is central to the way in which the structures of society are maintained and protected. The physical crossing of a boundary has two implications: the Other is not only wrong for crossing that boundary, but she/he endangers the lives of others by subjecting them to the danger of difference.

The problematic around the idea of 'race' has led us to think about identity in terms of ethnicity. Cashmore and Troyna (1990) describe ethnicity as a way in which we try to encapsulate the responses of various different groups. Members of ethnic groups are 'people who are conscious of themselves as in some way united or at least related because of a common origin and a shared destiny' (Cashmore and Troyna, 1990: p. 146). These interpretations stress the notion of common descent, as well as incorporating some notion of common culture. There has been a tendency more recently for writers to focus on common cultures and belief systems as a basis for ethnicity, and hence there is a focus on cultural difference and the ways in which ethnic boundaries are drawn or constructed (see Hall, 1990; Mason, 1995; Miles, 1993). The problem with the concept of ethnicity, however, is that it still tends to pathologize certain groups – ethnicity is ascribed to troublesome minorities, which is why Stuart Hall (1990) has argued for the notion of 'new ethnicities': '... a recognition that we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular

experience, a particular culture ... We are all, in that sense, *ethnically* located and our identities are crucial to our subjective sense of who we are' (Hall, 1990: p. 258). Everyone has some form of cultural identity based in the notion of ethnicity, thus we get away from the idea that ethnicity only applies to non-white people and at the same time the concept of ethnicity is disengaged from ideas of 'race' and nation. The idea of ethnicity itself has been contested on other grounds too. Indeed Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) question the relationship between culture and identity, arguing that culture is just one ingredient among many that characterize ethnic groups. Ethnicity is not just about identity, but about partaking in the social conditions of a group, for example the division of labour and gender relations. This has led people to talk about the notion of diaspora, a strong sense of belonging and identification to a particular group that transcends national and international borders (see Anthias, 1998; Bhabha, 1994; Cohen, 1999; Gilroy, 1993; and Solomos and Back, 1996).

The problem, however, is that racism still exists. It is no longer possible either legally or politically to discriminate on the basis of biological difference or inferiorization, but this is not to say that people don't do this. However, there has been a noticeable sea change where ideas about difference between cultures have come to the fore. This has been described by Martin Barker (1981) as the 'new racism' (see also Smith, 1992) in view of the emphasis it places on cultural identity, 'us' and 'them', 'ways of life' and the exaggeration of difference. Barker (1981) identifies several components of the new racism. First, there is a notion that 'our' political and cultural systems are superior to those of others. There is an emphasis on the cultural aspects of human behaviour – language, beliefs, religions and custom – thus stressing 'ways of life'. Second, we have a strong attachment to 'our' way of life which creates an emotional boundary between 'them' and 'us'. There is a powerful language of cultural difference at work here, one which placing the stress on *difference*

rather than *inferiority* nonetheless identifies difference as a problem particularly when the members of more than one culture live in the same location. There follows from this a third point: other cultures are seen as pathological, in that they cause problems for the dominant culture. This gives rise to the notion of 'genuine fears'. People feel secure with their way of life. Genuine fears are about affective attachment. People share common values, beliefs with their 'own', and desire to keep things that way. Fear generates strong feelings of ambivalence towards other cultures: The 'rivers of blood' will flow, not because the immigrants are black; not because British society is racist, but because however 'tolerant' the British might be, they can only digest so much 'alienness' (Powell quoted in Lawrence, 1982: p. 81). Powellism influenced immigration policy in Britain through the 1950s and 1960s, and similar discursive logics manifested themselves in 'Thatcherism' in the 1980s. Using powerful emotional hooks, racism becomes about difference, about 'genuine fears' about 'us' and 'them'. This brings us to the final point: it is 'common sense' that people from different cultural backgrounds cannot live together. We have the notion that it is 'natural' for people to live with their 'own kind', this isn't racist, it is a perfectly natural response and of course 'foreigners' have their *natural* homes too so that 'stopping immigration is being kind to them' (Barker, 1981: p. 21).

Thus we have a very strong notion of the idea of a cultural identity and its incompatibility with other cultures. Rather than celebrate difference our cultural identity is used to pathologize other cultures whilst reinforcing who we are. This has been the case in the political realm and particularly in right-wing views on immigration policy. We also start to see an emotional side to identity construction and this is nowhere better illustrated than in the work of Franz Fanon and the colonial condition. In the next section I want to illustrate several psychosocial approaches to identity construction in which we move from simple projective models of the construction of the Other to

more complex post-Freudian ideas around projective identification.

Psychoanalysis, identity and racism

The first question to address is: why use psychoanalysis to think about cultural identity, othering and racism? We need to bear in mind that psychoanalytic interpretations of racism do not offer better explanations, but they do offer different ways of understanding. If we take socio-cultural analysis, for example, then sociologists in particular have been very good at identifying trends in practices of othering, difference and exclusion. This has particularly been the case in a structural sense through the role that sociological inquiries have played in pinpointing inequalities in housing, education, welfare, employment, etc. The problem is that since such studies don't really bother with the affective component of racism, they don't give us any indication of why people discriminate. They therefore offer no explanation of the ubiquity of racism, the explosive and eruptive quality of ethnic hatred. In other words the psychological structuring of discrimination is ignored. The emphasis on social structure is privileged over the psychological mechanisms that provide the impetus for people to hate each other. A psycho-social approach to identity and difference takes into account the social, cultural and psychological dynamics at work in the creation of self and others.

One of the first psycho-social accounts of identity and difference is Horkheimer and Adorno's (1994) *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. This is a critique of positivism, of science, of Enlightenment ideals and an exploration of the massive change in our relationship to nature. Horkheimer and Adorno interweave Freudian drive theory with Marxism and the Weberian notion of rationalization to explain the pathological nature of anti-Semitism. Endorsing Freud's (1969) thesis on civilization, Horkheimer and Adorno argue that civilization, the modern world, has slowly and methodically prohibited instinctual behaviour. They concentrate on the instinctual mechanism of mimesis, the ways in

which we mimic nature in order to survive – for example freezing when we sense danger – and argue that this has become perverted in modern times. Initially this came about by the organization of mimesis in the magical phase, through ceremony and rite. Religious practice outlaws the instinctual, rational practice banishes the display of emotions. People are taught behavioural norms in the school and workplace; children are no longer allowed to behave like children. Mimesis now takes a form in which society threatens nature; control equals self-preservation and dominance over nature. We no longer make our 'self' like nature to survive but attempt to make nature like us:

Society continues threatening nature as the lasting organized compulsion which is reproduced in individuals as rational self preservation and rebounds on nature as social dominance over it. (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1994: p. 181)

In other words, the instinctual mechanism of mimesis becomes sublimated in the practice of the rational control of the modern environment. Horkheimer and Adorno note that we often see signs of repressed mimesis – all religious devotion and deflection has a feel of mimicry.

In the modern world mimesis has been consigned to oblivion. For Horkheimer and Adorno, those blinded by civilization experience their own repressed and tabooed mimetic characteristics in others. Gestures, nuances, touching, feeling are experienced as embarrassing remnants from our pre-history that have survived in the rationalized environment of the modern world. It is at this point that Horkheimer and Adorno draw our attention to Freud's (1961) paper 'The Uncanny' (*Das Unheimlich*) – 'what seems repellently alien is in fact all too familiar' (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1994: p. 183). We start to see what Horkheimer and Adorno suggest when they talk about mimesis and false projection as Freud argues that the uncanny fulfils the condition of 'touching' the residues of our animistic mental activity and bringing them to expression.

How do we find a discharge for these frightening thoughts, thoughts that evoke a feeling of uncanniness, uneasiness, even repulsion? Freud is clear: we project them on others. Projection is a mechanism of defence in which material is projected outwards as if it is something foreign to the self. In the properly psycho-analytic sense this is an operation through which qualities, feelings, wishes or even 'objects' which the subject refuses to recognize or rejects in himself are expelled from the self and located in another person or thing (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1973: p. 349). Projection for Freud is symptomatic of paranoia. Distorted feelings of persecution are expelled from the internal world onto some Other. Internal perception is distorted and suppressed; in the case of persecution what should have been felt internally as love is perceived externally as hate. Paranoia is a general Freudian term that covers systematic delusions, grandeur, persecution, jealousy; it is a mechanism of defence. Projection is part of a process of recovery in which thoughts and desires that have been suppressed internally are projected outward. Thus we only see the repressed elements of our mimetic behaviour in others, but this is surely a projection of our own longing to return to a pre-social state of nature, to act and behave in accordance with our repressed impulses.

Anti-Semitism is based on what Horkheimer and Adorno describe as false projection which is related to a repressed form of mimesis. In mimesis proper, we see an imitation of the natural environment – a mechanism of defence which enables camouflage and protection; we make ourselves like nature in order that we may become one with nature. False projection, conversely, tries to make the environment like us – we try to control and rationalize nature by projecting our own experiences and categories onto natural things and making that which is not natural natural, through a reification of scientific categories and constructions. Inner and outer worlds are confused and perceived as hostile.

Central to this argument is projection. The product of false projection is the stereotype, the transference of socially unpalatable

thoughts from subject to object. This is also particularly alarming because Horkheimer and Adorno argue that the paranoid cannot help or accept his or her own instincts. In doing so he or she attacks others, experiencing his or her own aggression as that of the 'other', a classic case of projection. The implications of this are twofold. First the Jew or 'other' reminds us of the peace and happiness that we cannot have. The persecuted minorities of Europe form a receptacle for those betrayed by modern society. We cannot have it so we will eliminate or destroy it in an envious attack. Second, the 'other' stands as a direct reminder, either real but often imaginary, of our repressed longing to return to a pre-social state of nature – to return to our mimetic existence. In order to satisfy these socially banished instinctual needs we accuse outgroups of behaving like animals, because we long to behave like animals. This should not be taken too literally: what Horkheimer and Adorno mean here is that we yearn to act on impulse, on our instincts, without the constraints of rationalized modern society. It was in this way, though, they argue, that the Jew became the persecuted 'other'. The product of false projection, the stereotype is a product of evil, a product of the ego which has sunk into its own depths lacking any form of self-reflection.

It is this overriding issue of the domination of nature linked to the domination of people that leads Horkheimer and Adorno to suggest that scientific rationality is not always a good thing and that positivist methods are actually anti-Enlightenment. Rather than being free we are incarcerated within rigid frameworks of *self* and *selfhood* which are a projected image constructed through the urge to dominate and control. Fascism encapsulated this rigidity within what Horkheimer and Adorno describe as a system which promotes a rage against the non-identical. We have to be very careful indeed because, as they demonstrate in their thesis on the culture industry, this becomes transposed into our everyday life and existence and has implications for the way in which these construct our identity and that of others. It is only with a critical sociological

awareness that we can reflect on and point to these systems of domination and control.

There is no doubt that Horkheimer and Adorno's ideas are problematic, but what they offer in terms of their explanation of anti-Semitism does provide, as I have previously argued (Clarke, 2003), a theoretical basis for the explanation of racism, hatred and exclusionary practices by using a critical fusion of both structural and psychological factors. It also serves as an introduction to the application and limitations of Freudian thought in an examination of the massive substantive irrationality that has accompanied the development of modern society. By placing an emphasis on affective forces they produce a more complete picture of the ways in which psychological mechanisms support and perpetuate structural forms of racism. Martin Jay (1994) notes that Horkheimer and Adorno go beyond a purely psychoanalytic account of paranoid false projection to add an epistemological dimension. Projection per se is not problematic; we all use it in our everyday lives. A healthy projection preserves the tension between subject and object. Reflection on the dialogue between subject and object creates understanding; it is (after Kant) the key to Enlightenment. The 'morbid' aspect of anti-Semitism for Horkheimer and Adorno is not projection but lack of self-reflection: when the subject is no longer able to return to the object what she/he has received from it, she/he becomes poorer rather than richer. She/he loses the reflection in both directions: since she/he no longer reflects on the object, she/he ceases to reflect upon her or himself, and loses the ability to differentiate (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1994: p. 189).

In the next section of this chapter I offer a post-Freudian reading of Fanon using the work of Melanie Klein (1946), which goes beyond purely projective models of identity construction and othering by using the concept of projective identification.¹ Projective identification is a far more intense form of projection where feelings are forced onto an other to make them feel and behave in a certain way which can have a huge impact on identity and identity construction.

'I was battered down by tom-toms': Colonialization and cultural identity

In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1986) Fanon argues that the black person is both objectified and denigrated at a bodily level, and psychologically blinded, or alienated from his or her black consciousness and cultural identity by the effects of colonialism and racist culture. In *Social Theory, Psychoanalysis and Racism* (Clarke, 2003) I have argued that this is the premise of much of Fanon's writing and argumentation. The black person becomes a phobogenic object, in other words, a stimulus that causes anxiety. In a psychoanalytic interpretation of phobias, Fanon notes that there is a secret attraction to the object that arouses dread in the individual. Hatred and racism are a means by which the individual hides from and detracts from their own sexual perversity. Drawing heavily on Jean Paul Sartre's existentialist writings, Fanon likens this phobic response to that of anti-Semitism: the Jew is feared because of his potential for acquisitiveness. 'They' are everywhere. The banks, the stock exchanges, the government are infested with 'them'. 'They' control everything (Fanon, 1986: p. 157). If the Jew is feared for his acquisitiveness, then, for Fanon, the black person is revered for his sexual powers. Fanon elucidates:

As for the Negroes, they have tremendous sexual powers. What do you expect, with all the freedom they have in the jungles! They copulate at all times and in all places. They are really genital. They have so many children they cannot even count them. Be careful or they will flood us. (Fanon, 1986: p. 157)

Fanon argues that it matters little whether this image of the black man is real; the point is that it is cognate. In the same way that the Jew was perceived as a danger through the projection of a stereotype, the black person has suffered the same form of projection with an emphasis placed on sexual phenomena. In *Anti-Semite and Jew*, Sartre (1976) argues that it is not the Jewish character that produces or induces anti-Semitism, it is the anti-Semite who creates this image of the Jew; indeed for Sartre, if the Jew did not exist, the anti-Semite would have to invent him. Again, as with the

black person, the Jew becomes a phobogenic object – a stimulus that causes anxiety. This poses the question: why invent the Jew, why choose to hate? The anti-Semite constructs this phobogenic object to project both the misfortunes of his country and himself onto some other, a ridding of unpalatable thoughts onto a bad object. For Sartre, the anti-Semite is impervious to reason, to experience, and therefore to change. The anti-Semite is terrifying because his actions are based in irrational convictions, in passion; he is nothing but the ‘fear he inspires in others’. The anti-Semite is, for Sartre, a mediocre person, a ‘man’ of the crowds, lacking in any form of authenticity or individuality

Fanon argues that the white person has a secret desire to return to an era of ‘unrestricted sexual licence’ and ‘orgiastic’ scenes of rape and unrepressed incest; everything he sees, creates and projects in the image of the black person. This is reminiscent of Horkheimer and Adorno’s thesis in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1994). The fascist longs to return to a pre-social state of nature, seeing in the Jew what he really *feels* in his ‘self’. For Fanon, the white person projects desire onto the black person, the white person behaves as if the black person is the owner of these desires: ‘*what appears repellently alien, is in fact, all too familiar*’ (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1994: p. 182). The Jew is associated with wealth and power, the black person has been fixated at a bodily, biological, genital plane:

Two realms: the intellectual and the sexual. An erection on Rodin’s thinker is a shocking thought. One cannot decently ‘have a hard on’ everywhere. The Negro symbolises the biological danger, the Jew, the intellectual danger. (Fanon, 1986: p. 165)

The main feature of Fanon’s understanding of the psychology of oppression is that inferiority is the outcome of a double process, both socio-historic and psychological: ‘If there is an inferiority complex, it is the outcome of a double process: primarily economic; subsequently, the internalization, or better, the epidermalization of this inferiority’ (Fanon, 1986: p. 13). There is therefore a link between the sociogenesis and psychogenesis

of racism and these processes are violent and exclusionary. When Sartre talks of anti-Semitism as a passion it is not the Jewish person who produces the experience; rather, it is the (projected) identification of the Jew which produces the experience. Fanon illustrates this internalization of projection: ‘My body was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recoloured, clad in mourning in that white winter day. The negro is an animal, the negro is bad, the negro is ugly’ (Fanon, 1986: p. 113). If we understand the reference to the breaking up of bodies, to being sprawled out and distorted, in terms of more than mere metaphor, then these processes which have consequences on the sociogenetic level are the outcome of processes of projective identification. The white person makes the black person in the image of their projections, literally forcing identity into another, as Fanon notes:

... the white man has woven me out of a thousand details ... I was battered down with tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave ships ... (Fanon, 1986: p. 112)

The black person lives these projections, trapped in an imaginary that white people have constructed; trapped by both economic processes and by powerful projective mechanisms which both create and control the Other. This, of course, highlights the paradoxical nature of projective identification. White people’s fantasies about black sexuality, about bodies and biology in general, are fears that centre on otherness, but an otherness that they themselves have created and brought into being. This is what Fanon means when he says that I was ‘battered down’, ‘woven out of a thousand details’ – cultural identity is a stereotype of the black person constructed in the mind of the white person, and then forced back onto the black person as the black historical subject (see Dalal, 2002; Macey, 2000)). But this is indeed a false consciousness. Fanon, like Foucault, shows us how power is an important element in the constitution of our identities and how this is often an oppressive force. These kinds of projections can be seen in Slavoj

Zizek's (1993) analysis of the collapse of the former Yugoslavia and the way in which cultural identities are very much tied in with difference.

The theft of enjoyment: Cultural identity and ethnic hatred

Zizek introduces us to the idea of the *Theft of Enjoyment*. Zizek argues that the bond which holds a given community together is a shared relationship to a Thing – 'to our enjoyment incarnate'. The relationship we have to our Thing is structured by fantasy and is what people talk of when they refer to a threat to 'our' way of life. This nation Thing is not a clear set of values to which we can refer, but a set of contradictory properties that appears as 'our' Thing. This Thing is only accessible to us, but tirelessly sought after by the Other. Zizek argues that Others cannot grasp it, but it is constantly menaced by 'them'. So, this Thing is present in, or is in some way to do with, what we refer to as our 'way of life'; the way we organize our rituals, ceremonies, feasts, 'in short, all the details by which is made visible the unique way a community organizes its enjoyment' (Zizek, 1993: p. 201). However, Zizek cautions that this Thing is more than simply a set of features that comprise a way of life, there is something present in them, people believe in them, or more importantly 'I believe that other members of the community believe in this Thing'. The Thing exists because people believe in it; it is an effect of belief itself:

We always impute to the 'other' an excessive enjoyment: he wants to steal our enjoyment (by ruining our way of life) and/or he has access to some secret, perverse enjoyment. In short, what really bothers us about the 'other' is the peculiar way he organises his enjoyment, precisely the surplus, the 'excess' that pertains to this way: the smell of 'their' food, 'their' noisy songs and dances, 'their' strange manners, 'their' attitude to work. . . . (Zizek, 1993: p. 203)

Thus Zizek notes the paradoxical nature of this Thing; on the one hand the Other is a workaholic who steals our jobs and labour, on the other he or she is an idler, a lazy person

relying on the state for benefits. Our Thing is therefore something that cannot be accessed by the Other but is constantly threatened by 'otherness'. What Zizek's work highlights is the role of myth and fantasy in the construction of cultural and national identity, and more importantly the way in which this identity is imagined rather than grounded in some reality. As Zizek notes, what we cover up by accusing the Other of the theft of our enjoyment is the 'traumatic fact' that we never possessed what we perceive has been stolen in the first place. It is a fear of the theft of enjoyment, a fear of the theft of imagination, of fantasy, of myth. Every nationality, argues Zizek, has its own mythology which describes how other nations deprive it of a part of its enjoyment, the part which allows it to live fully. Zizek likens this to an Escher drawing where in a visual illusion water pours from one basin to another until eventually you end up at the starting point.

The basic premise of both Serb and Slovene nationalism, Zizek argues, is that we don't want anything foreign and we want what rightfully belongs to us. This, as Zizek suggests, is a sure sign of racism. A clear line of demarcation is drawn, and a psychological border erected, where in reality this clarity is mere fiction. The theft of enjoyment is not about immediate social reality, it is not about different ethnic groups living together, as we know this is possible and exists all over the world. The theft of enjoyment is about inner tensions and conflicts within communities and the way these are projected out onto others in the form of hatred and loathing; this in turn is justified in terms of something stolen, and/or the community being deprived by others. In some sense, in constructing our cultural identity both socially and psychologically we tend to construct, play with and destroy the identity of others (see also: Lane, 1998; Seshadri-Crooks, 2000).

What I think we can take from the work of both Fanon and Zizek is that cultural identities are not only socially constructed but psychologically constructed. They are filled with passion and emotion, and are multiple. As we construct the identity of Others, others construct our identity. Imagination and

passion are an integral part of our perception of self and others. In the final section I want to pose the question 'who are we?' and to argue that cultural identities are fluid and contingent and are developed in relation to particular social, cultural and historical circumstances. I think that Foucault has developed this argument well in relation to our ideas of what constitutes rational, or irrational, mad or sane, normal or perverse. What Foucault lacks is reference to the emotional and imaginative construction of the Other.

WHO ARE 'WE'?

Strangers, ambiguity and identity

In this final section I want to look at the idea of the stranger. The stranger throws identity construction into the land of ambiguity and, if we are to believe Zygmunt Bauman (1990), we now all live under the condition of universal strangerhood. The concept of the stranger has a psycho-social quality, partly fictive, partly real, partly a figment of our own imagination. Whereas identity often feels clear-cut, we know who 'we' are and we know who 'they' are, the stranger blurs these definitions and literally defies all contemporary rules that ascribe who we are. Bauman's concept of the stranger is based on Simmel's (1950) more positive portrayal of someone who brings something positive to a social or cultural group. Simmel's stranger is an ambiguous person, someone we find hard to identify, having something to do with a vague spatiality, of certain measures of nearness and distance. But at the same time, the stranger presents in some sense a unity for Simmel between 'wandering' and 'fixation'. The uncertainty associated with the potential for wandering leaves us in an ambiguous state of mind: is he one of us or one of them? The stranger has not belonged to the group from the start, but brings a certain something to it. The problem with this is that the qualities projected onto the group by the stranger do not stem from the group itself, which fuels the anxiety of ambiguity.

Thus for Simmel the stranger encompasses the nearness and remoteness of every human relationship: 'distance means that he, who is close by, is far, and strangeness means that he, who is also far, is actually near' (Simmel, 1950: p. 402). Simmel gives an example from the sphere of economics where the trader appears as stranger. If an economy is self-sufficient then there is no 'middleman'. The trader is only required when products are imported from outside the group or economy, or, if members of a group go elsewhere to buy goods, they themselves then become the transient stranger. In economic terms then the trader is stranger, and the stranger stands out more when he settles in a particular spatial locality. The stranger may become geographically fixated for some time, but is never the owner of either the physical or symbolic space that he occupies. This gives the stranger the characteristics of mobility which embrace nearness and distance within a closed group. For Simmel a trace of strangeness exists in every human relationship, from the most intimate to the most fleeting and general encounter (see also: Camus, 1946; Schutz, 1944; Stichweh, 1997). Bauman's stranger represents a far more complex and often sinister identity and Bauman has used it at length to describe and analyse the position of Jewish peoples in Europe. Quite simply, for Bauman, the 'universal stranger' is the Jew, in this post 'race', post Holocaust world. In Bauman's words: 'There are friends and enemies. And there are strangers' (Bauman, 1991: p. 53).

'Strangers' are not *unfamiliar* people, but they cross or break the dividing line of dualism, they are neither 'us' nor 'them'. There is a clear definition of the social and physical boundaries between 'us' and 'them', 'friends' and 'enemies', both are subject to the same structures and ideas, they define good and bad, true and false, they stand in polarity creating an illusion of order and symmetry. The stranger violates this structure and order. To quote Bauman: 'they (the stranger) bring the "outside" "inside" and poison the comfort of order with the suspicion of chaos' (Bauman, 1991: p. 56). The stranger is someone we

know things about, who sits in 'our' world uninvited. The stranger has the characteristics of an enemy but, unlike the enemy, is not kept at a safe distance. Neither 'us' nor 'them', neither friend nor foe, the stranger undermines order by straddling the boundary, causing confusion and anxiety, becoming a target of hatred:

By their sheer presence, which does not fit easily into any of the established categories, the strangers deny the very validity of the accepted oppositions. They belie the oppositions' 'natural' character, expose their arbitrariness, lay bare their fragility. They show the divisions for what they indeed are: imaginary lines that can be crossed or redrawn. (Bauman, 1990: p. 54)

The stranger is dangerous, known but unknown. In the same way that the concept of race exaggerates difference, the concept of stranger draws attention to the perception of what might be, rather than what is known. The stranger lives inside both our community and our own psyche – the person that persecutes us is a figment of our own fantasy and our imagination. We attribute these characteristics to other groups, to real individuals and are repulsed by what we see in them, as we see our self, our own fears and chaos, and we are confronted by our fantasies – the contents of our unconscious mind. This way in which we perceive others and ultimately view others has specific implications for basic human rights of the individuals concerned. The stranger has been persecuted as Jew, as Gypsy, as Muslim, as victim and as potential victimizer, and this is even before we start to think of indigenous peoples who have had their basic rights stripped from them by colonial powers and settlers, including their right to their own land, sacred places and their own sense of history (see Clarke and Moran, 2003). More recently the notion and actuality of a fortress Europe has created a rift between the 'West' and the 'rest' and I have argued (Clarke, 2002) this is nowhere better demonstrated than by the way in which refugees have been perceived in the UK and demonized in the popular press as outsiders who have penetrated the inside.

CONCLUSION – CULTURAL IDENTITIES

If cultural identities are essentially defined by difference then the concept of stranger brings a whole new set of rules and ambiguities into the equation. We are literally no longer sure who 'we' are and in some sense we have to learn to live with ambiguity. In one way the analysis of cultural identity brings quite a dark cloud over the question of identity in general. This is because it quite obviously focuses on difference and the negative connotations that stem from these perceptions. After all they are the basis of hatred, racism and social and cultural exclusions. Defining your own self by another often leads to a strong sense of who we are not, or more likely who we don't want to be. This necessarily leads to the denigration of the Other and the idealization of 'us'. Clearly a straightforward social constructionist approach to cultural identity is helpful; it shows how a common cultural identity is constructed in relation to 'norms' and, in the case of Foucault's work, to processes of normalization. It is, however, lacking in analysis of those powerful affective forces that make us feel a certain strong attachment to groups and ways of life. This is addressed in psycho-social explanations of identity and othering where I've argued that some psychoanalytic tools and perspectives can give us a greater purchase on the construction of colonial identity and the affective dimensions of racism. The reality may be that we have to learn to live with ambiguity. Certainly, as Hall (1990) notes, cultural identity is not just about being, but becoming (Hall, 1990: p. 223).

It could be argued then that cultural identity is fluid and contingent in relation to historical and cultural circumstances. As Stuart Hall has noted: 'We all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. What we say is always "in context", *positioned*' (Hall, 1990: p. 222). We may have multiple identities to choose from in a given context. So, it may be the case that our identity is chosen at a particular time for a political purpose, as in the example of the asylum-seeker debate

where British and 'white' ethnicities come to the fore. There is, however, a complex psychodynamic process at work here in which emotive and affective forces play on older ideas around community, nationhood and the idea of 'home'. These may also be mediated by class and gender differences and, as Foucault has shown us, by power, but we should acknowledge that while many people are in the privileged position of being able to choose their identity (Giddens, 1991) others are not. Finally, we have to take seriously the constructions and perceptions of the human imagination and emotion. We have to take them as concrete, even if they feel wrong. The way in which people imagine the world to be and imagine the way that others exist in the world is central to the construction of identity. It does not matter that belief may be more fiction than fact, because the human imagination is central to identity construction; it is therefore concrete and has very real consequences for the world we live in.

NOTES

1 Projection is a relatively straightforward process in which we attribute our own affective state to others; for example, we may feel depressed and view our colleagues in the workplace as being 'miserable', or blame others for our mistakes; whereas projective identification involves a deep split, a ridding of unpalatable parts of the self *into*, rather than *onto*, someone else. Projection *per se* may not be damaging as the recipient of the paranoid thoughts may be blissfully unaware as such. Projective identification, however, involves a forcing of such feelings into the recipient and is therefore interactional and communicative.

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