

BEFORE THE MEASUREMENT OF PREJUDICE: EARLY PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL PAPERS ON PREJUDICE

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Given its renown, many psychologists and sociologists likely consider the publication of Gordon Allport's (1954/1979) seminal book *The Nature of Prejudice* as the inauguration of the psychological study of prejudice. However, we have uncovered rarely-cited, published papers (starting in 1830) that provide a wealth of speculation on prejudice even before psychologists/sociologists attempted to measure it (circa 1925). Thus, this paper intends to discuss early published work on prejudice in psychology and sociology by focusing on three key questions: a) when did psychologists/sociologists recognize prejudice as a psychological phenomenon, b) when did psychologists/sociologists recognize prejudice as a phenomenon in need of study, and c) what were the historical and personal conditions that gave rise to the interest in prejudice? In short, the seeds of prejudice research were maturing for some time before Allport's seminal book and the first attitudinal studies on prejudice, although these earlier works are seldom cited. © 2010 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

“Slaves of our own prejudices, caprice, [and] ignorance, we would be lords of the understandings and reason of others.”

—William Hazlitt (1778–1830), *On Prejudice* (originally published 1830)

No citation is necessary to conclude that human history has been plagued by intergroup prejudice and conflict. What is surprising is how little—at least before the nineteenth century—historians, philosophers, and scientists observed how, or even why, the human race is inclined to develop and maintain prejudice, which often results in perpetual intergroup hostilities. Some psychologists and sociologists, both past and present, have suggested that because intergroup prejudice and conflict seemed such a natural part of human events, it did not garner the attention of scholars (e.g., Duckitt, 1992; Morse, 1907, 1912).

Gordon Allport's (1954/1979) seminal book, *The Nature of Prejudice*, is generally considered the preeminent tome on prejudice research (deCarvalho, 1993; Dovidio, Glick, & Rudman, 2005) because it synthesized all prejudice research to date and remarkably laid much of the groundwork for contemporary prejudice research. Indeed, *The Nature of Prejudice* was a product long in the making; even in his early career (c. 1930s), Allport was a “rebel” in academia for progressively challenging the orthodox views of his time and advocating a closer examination of social ethics and the rights of individuals in American democracy via the development of personality psychology (Nicholson, 1997, 1998, 2003; Pandora, 1997; Pettigrew, 1999). However, the seeds of prejudice research were maturing for

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sometime—for more than 120 years, in fact—before Allport's book and even before psychologists or sociologists attempted to measure prejudice (circa 1925). Surprisingly, this early work is rarely if ever cited, even by Allport.

“To study prejudice scientifically requires first of all . . . some sense of it as a phenomenon and one in need of study,” as Young-Buehl (2007, p. 219; see also Morse, 1907) sagely stated. Accordingly, this paper intends to discuss the earliest published work on prejudice in psychology and sociology by focusing on three key questions: a) when did psychologists/sociologists recognize prejudice as a phenomenon, b) when did psychologists/sociologists recognize prejudice as a phenomenon in need of study, and c) what were the historical and personal conditions that gave rise to the interest in prejudice? The current paper's focus was to seek out and examine early theoretical papers on prejudice, broadly defined, published in the psychological and sociological literature before psychologists or sociologists first attempted to measure prejudice (circa 1925). Thus, for the most part, we excluded discussion of published work that exclusively focused on race superiority or antipathy between whites and blacks (see Samelson, 1978). Nonetheless, we acknowledge that “prejudice” generally became synonymous with racial and ethnic prejudices in the 1930s as the study of “race psychology” (studies that investigated and maintained white superiority) evolved into studies on race prejudice (Samelson, 1978), that is, until other group prejudices were astutely examined starting in the 1950s (e.g., religious, gender, and sexual prejudices; see Allport, 1954/1979, for early discussions on this work). Further, we also exclude discussion of published work that focused more broadly on the concept of attitudes (cf. Danziger, 1997, chap. 8).

In any case, because how one defines his/her theoretical terms will inherently guide a program of research, this paper closely examines how various scholars defined prejudice. Indeed, the definition of “prejudice” has evolved over time. “Prejudice” is derived from the Latin word *praejudicium*, technically meaning a “precedent” or “a judgment based on previous decisions and experiences” (Allport, 1954/1979, p. 6). In English, the word “prejudice” (circa thirteenth century) took on an intellectual flavor: specifically, being prejudiced meant that a judgment was formed before “due examination and consideration of the facts—a premature or hasty judgment” (Allport, 1954/1979, p. 6). The first scholar, to our knowledge, to define and elucidate prejudice in this latter sense was not even a psychologist per se, but in effect provided a psychological perspective on prejudice.

WILLIAM HAZLITT ON PREJUDICE

While previous scholars and intellectuals noted the problem of prejudice in a tangential sense (Young-Buehl, 2007), William Hazlitt (2000; originally published in early 1830) wrote an entire essay—aptly titled *On Prejudice*—dedicated to examining the nature, functions, formation, and consequences of prejudice. Hazlitt, an Englishman, was an eminent humanist and literary critic, but his works are seldom read even by contemporary English students (Paulin, 1998b, 2003). Regardless, given Hazlitt's background, it is not too surprising that he tackled such a charged topic as prejudice. His childhood education at a Unitarian seminary (Hackney College) was comprised of contemporary dissenters' readings and replete with lively debates on the social and political revolutions occurring all around the world (Wardle, 1971). Hazlitt's early education spurred a lifelong dedication to promoting independent thought, respect for truth, and individual civil liberties in his writings (Wardle, 1971).

In particular, Hazlitt's visits to France (circa 1824) spurred him to (re)consider his own prejudices. In comparing the manners and habits of the French to the English, Hazlitt questioned whether the French really exhibited the conventional stereotypes at the time, that is, exhibiting

a “butterfly, airy, thoughtless, fluttering character” (Hazlitt, 1932, p. 114). After visiting France, he found that the French actually countered his preconceptions and concluded, “In judging of nations, it will not do to deal in mere abstractions” (Hazlitt, 1932, p. 101). Around 1830, Hazlitt wrote a series of articles popularizing presentations of his thoughts; among these works (which include “Common Sense,” “Envy,” and “Originality”) was his remarkable essay on prejudice.

To our knowledge, Hazlitt (2000) was the first scholar to propose a working definition of *prejudice*. In the very first sentence of the essay, Hazlitt defined his term: “Prejudice in its ordinary and literal sense, is prejudging any question without having sufficiently examined it, and adhering to our opinion upon it through ignorance, malice, or perversity, in spite of every evidence to the contrary.” Interestingly, this is very similar to the working definition proposed by Allport (1954/1979; note that this was Allport’s definition for both positive and negative prejudice, not Allport’s final definition of ethnic prejudice), “A feeling, favorable or unfavorable, toward a person or thing prior to, or not based on, actual experience” (p. 6). Allport also importantly noted that “*prejudgments become prejudices only if they are not reversible when exposed to new knowledge*” (p. 9, emphasis in original). Thus, Hazlitt, working more than 120 years earlier than Allport, provided a definition that largely anticipated empirical work conducted over a century later.

Hazlitt discussed many topics related to the study of prejudice, sometimes and unfortunately rather too briefly. He first commented on how “mere ignorance is a blank canvas, on which we lay what colours we please, and paint objects black or white, as angels or devils, magnify or diminish them at our option.” That is, he emphasized—both in his definition of prejudice and throughout his essay—that people are for the most part consciously aware of using their prejudices for their own means: “each sect, age, country, profession, individual, is ready to prove they are exclusively in the right.” Further, he argued that we manipulate information, whether by habit or willingly, to fit our existing impressions to suit our own purposes (similar to confirmation bias; Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979). However, at the same time Hazlitt stated that the “largest part of our judgments is prompted by habit and passion,” but we acquiesce—“whether conscious or unconscious—to our passions because humans are creatures of habit.”

Further, Hazlitt also provided a shrewd paragraph on the formation of “impressions” through the “principle of association of ideas by which certain impressions, from frequent recurrence, coalesce and act in unison truly and mechanically—that is, without our being conscious of anything but the general and settled result,” and that “Any impression . . . by being repeated and indulged in, becomes an article of implicit and incorrigible belief.” It appears Hazlitt recognized that individuals can develop, maintain, and apply deeply-seated, unconsciously learned beliefs about group members in daily life (see Banaji, Nosek, & Greenwald, 2004, for a contemporary perspective on implicit stereotyping).

What did Hazlitt mean by the terms “unconscious” and “conscious”? The earliest recorded use of these words was from the early 1800s, and referred to hypnotically induced behavior in which the hypnotized subject was not aware of the causes and reasons for his or her behavior (Bargh & Morsella, 2008). Further, at the close of the nineteenth century, most psychologists recognized “unconscious cerebration as not only real but of the highest importance” (Altschule, 1977, p. 199). Thus, Hazlitt’s use of the words “conscious” and “unconscious” in 1830 was quite notable, and likely denoted “intentional” or “unintentional” behavior, respectively. Overall, Hazlitt seemed to acknowledge that the expression of prejudice is determined by the interplay between conscious and unconscious processes (which anticipated the most accepted, contemporary view of prejudice; Banaji, Nosek, & Greenwald,

2004). However, Hazlitt may have endorsed the contemporary idea that unconscious processes are valuable and hugely adaptive (Bargh & Morsella, 2008). Hazlitt conceded that our prejudices, acquired from our own culture, are adaptations to a chaotic environment; prejudice helps as much as hinders the human race: “Without the aid of prejudice and custom, I should not be able to find my way across the room.” That is, Hazlitt likely would have agreed that prejudices and customs do aid in the prediction of others’ behavior (which provides us more of a sense of control), which helps guide our own; however, when abused, prejudices leads to deleterious consequences.

Further, Hazlitt posited that prejudices results in certain interpersonal and intergroup behavior. First, people like to affiliate with others who are most similar to them (which is sometimes dictated by physical appearances alone) because like-minded others validate what they already feel, think, and believe. Second, intergroup conflict stems from individuals’ prejudices of others’ different worldviews: “such violent antipathies and animosities have been occasioned by the most ridiculous or trifling differences.”

Moreover, and most interestingly, Hazlitt tried to dissociate himself from philosophy (much like later psychologists did), ridiculing atomism and also stating that “mass of knowledge and perception that falls under the head of *common sense* and *natural feeling*. . . . Many of these pass for instinctive principles and *innate* ideas, but there is nothing in them ‘more natural’” (emphasis in original). In the end, although acknowledging many types of prejudice (e.g., anti-black prejudice, unbridled nationalism) and humans’ incorrigible predisposition to be prejudiced, Hazlitt endorsed sexist stereotypes in his essay. Hazlitt commented that “Women are naturally physiognomists, and men phrenologists. The first judge by sensations; the last by rules.” Women, he argued, are too quick to judge, and men take too long to form an opinion. Thus, for all his wisdom and insight, Hazlitt could not detach himself from stereotypic beliefs about men and women in his lifetime.

There are few details on Hazlitt’s last years of life, and he died a relatively lonely man. His works fell out-of-print and even his gravestone fell into disrepair (Paulin, 1998b). However, in the late 1990s, with a resurgence of attention on Hazlitt and his works (e.g., Grayling, 2000; Paulin, 1998a), Hazlitt reclaimed his spot as one of the greatest essayists of the English language. Remarkably, it was another half-century before another scholar—in this case, a self-labeled psychologist—devoted an entire essay to prejudice.

THE FIRST PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL PAPERS ON PREJUDICE (1890 TO 1925)

When psychology and sociology were in their infancy (circa late nineteenth century), sociologists and psychologists also exhibited the prejudices fostered by the zeitgeists of their times (Duckitt, 1992; Glăveanu, 2009; Guthrie, 1976/2004; Jones, 1997; Richards, 1997; Samelson, 1978). Prejudice toward women and blacks was especially rampant in the history of psychology (as well as sociology) through the study of “race psychology,” that is examining individual differences between blacks and whites as well as between men and women.

1. For example, one can report dislike (i.e., negative affect) for a particular social group (e.g., gay men) that is justified by stereotypes (e.g., gay men are too effeminate), and this may ultimately affect behavior toward the social group (e.g., voting against same-sex marriage initiatives). Contemporary prejudice research has intriguingly shown that positive beliefs about social groups can have harmful effects too (e.g., Czopp, 2008; Czopp & Monteith, 2006), a finding that none of the luminaries in this historical analysis allude to. For example, holding “positive” stereotypes that blacks are athletic or women are “nurturing” can negatively impact these groups because, for one, people may be inclined to restrict their professional advancement (e.g., encouraging blacks to go into athletics in lieu of academics, or encouraging women to go into nursing in lieu of a pursuing an engineering career).

That is, many studies were conducted and interpreted to confirm the stereotypes that men were superior to women, and whites superior to blacks. Racist stereotypes decreased (but not entirely disappeared) from 1920–1940 among psychologists, and psychological inquiry focused more on “race prejudice” (examining prejudice toward blacks) in lieu of “race psychology” (promoting white superiority; see Samelson, 1978, for a succinct review). However, there were several psychologists and sociologists before the 1920s who broadly theorized on prejudice.

G. T. W. Patrick (1890). To our knowledge, G. T. W. Patrick (1890) was the first self-identified psychologist to publish a paper on prejudice.² Patrick stated that the paper’s goal was “to trace out some primary laws of psychic activity in their bearing on that condition of mind known as prejudice” (p. 633). In writing his exposition, Patrick was likely heavily influenced by the Functional School in psychology and Pragmatism in philosophy (e.g., William James’s writings) given that his treatise on prejudice is primarily based upon the functionalist principle of *apperception*: the process by which mental elements are consciously organized (James, 1892; see also Danzinger, 2001). This is not unsurprising; Patrick was likely very familiar with Wundt’s works because his graduate mentor, G. Stanley Hall, was a strong advocate of Wundt around this time (Fuchs & Burgdorf, 2008). Although we likely know the philosophical/psychological traditions that inspired his article on prejudice, what historical or personal conditions swayed Patrick to write a paper on such a unique topic for his time?

Patrick, one of the charter members of the American Psychological Association (APA, founded in 1892), penned his paper as Professor of Mental and Moral Science at the University of Iowa, and he was also the first to set up a psychological laboratory at Iowa in 1890 (Patrick, 1947). Patrick’s paper on prejudice was published right after completing his dissertation work (a translation of the fragments of Heraclitus of Ephesos; Patrick, 1889), but before his study on sleep deprivation (Patrick & Gilbert, 1896), for which he is likely most famous, despite having no formal experimental training (Fuchs & Burgdorf, 2008). Curiously, Patrick never returned to the subject of prejudice. Even in Patrick’s (1947) autobiography, he mentions his essay on prejudice once and in passing, but included the paper as a part of a series of 13 published articles on everyday “urges and activities by reference to psychological principles and laws” (which also included such topics as the psychology of profanity, play, football, alcohol, and war; p. 95). One article Patrick did not mention was his paper on the psychology of women (Patrick, 1895), in which he compares and contrasts women’s socio-political movement/advancement and the scientific study of individual differences between men and women. Patrick overall advances stereotypes about men and women (e.g., that “the woman’s mind is less adapted than man’s”; p. 215); however, Patrick ultimately cedes that his conclusions “are indicated, not proved. They must be verified, supplemented, and no doubt, in some instances, corrected by future studies along these lines” (p. 224). Perhaps Patrick did not mention this paper in his autobiography because such sexist stereotypes may not have been as transparent at that time in psychology (circa 1947).

In any case, Patrick’s interest in such social issues may have been sparked by his PhD mentor at John Hopkins University, G. Stanley Hall. Hall tried to incorporate diversity into his selection of students and faculty (e.g., including women and Jews; Tenenbaum, 2003), although he endorsed many of the stereotypes of the period, for example, in asserting that women were “functionally castrated” (Hall, 1904, p. 634; note that Hall cited Patrick’s [1895]

2. It must be noted that L. B. Hellenbach (1879/1880), a Viennese philosopher and politician (and thus not a psychologist or sociologist by tradition; Mulacz, 2000), “made a careful study of prejudice” in his book *Die Vorurtheile der Menschheit* (trans. *The Prejudices of Man*) as well (Morse, 1907, p. 490). However, given that there is no English translation of this book available, it cannot be adequately discussed in this paper.

paper on the psychology of women in this chapter) and that Jews had many “objectional traits” (as cited in Tenenbaum, 2003, p. 13). However, Hall believed that there were exceptions to these rules, and he did hire or mentor many women, blacks, and Jews (Sokal, 1990; Tenenbaum, 2003). (It is interesting to note that Hall likely recruited minorities and outsiders in part to maintain and assert his intellectual superiority in interacting with such—at least in his mind—lesser individuals; Sokal, 1990). Further, the most prolific writer on prejudice (Josiah Morse) after Patrick was also a student of Hall’s. Last, John Hopkins University, where Hall mentored Patrick until Hall’s departure to Clark University, was also a bastion of progressive education and research (Green, 2007), which may have also left a more liberal influence on Patrick. Patrick’s experiences with Hall and John Hopkins University may have then cultivated his interest in social issues, especially with regards to, broadly, the subject of prejudice.

With regards to Patrick’s (1890) paper on prejudice, Morse (1907, 1912) rightly asserted that Patrick’s definition of prejudice was not satisfactory: “individual deviation from the normal beliefs of mankind, taking as the standard the universal, the general, or the mean” (p. 633). Somewhat disjointedly, Patrick then asserted that prejudice results from incongruities in *apperception*, which is “really only another word for attention” (p. 633; see also Danzinger, 2001). Patrick explained that people can “perceive” the same object (e.g., “a tract of country”), but “apperceive” the object very differently. Patrick offered an example where a college student, a young girl, a speculator, and an undertaker would perceive the tract of country the same (as piece of land), but when apperceiving the tract of land, the college student “apperceives” it as a possible ball-ground; the young girl as a tennis court; the speculator as an addition for town lots; and for the undertaker, a possible cemetery. As Patrick stated, “You see things from the standpoint of your previously acquired groups of ideas; I from mine” (p. 634).

Outwardly, this is an insightful statement, but as Morse (1907) pointed out, “Prejudice is not apperception, but rather an arrest of it; a refusal or inability to perceive” (p. 494). Morse, commenting on Patrick’s tract-of-land example, explained that the college student would only be prejudiced if he could not admit that the piece of land would also be useful for a tennis court or a cemetery, and so on (p. 495). That is, “Apperception causes each to consider the ground from a particular point of view; prejudice disables them from considering it from any other point of view, even after it has been clearly pointed out” (Morse, 1907, p. 495). Morse’s qualification is remarkably similar to Hazlitt’s (1852) and Allport’s (1954/1979) condition that a prejudgment only becomes a prejudice if the prejudgment is not adjusted or corrected following contrary evidence (see also Morse, 1907, 1912). Nonetheless, Patrick asserted that no human being is free from prejudice: “Color-blindness is comparatively rare and limited to a few colors; psychical blindness [prejudice] . . . is a defect no man is free from” (p. 637).

Despite Patrick’s unsatisfactory definition of prejudice, he recognized and lucidly discussed other important issues related to the study of prejudice, including the contemporary form of confirmation bias (“we seek the mental food that our minds are prepared to digest—that, namely, is most clearly related to what we know already . . . [and] we indignantly refuse mental food that might serve as a corrective of our possible one-sidedness.” p. 635); the formation and maintenance of prejudices (due to “well-beaten path of association” and mental rigidity, p. 636); environmental and genetic influences on prejudice (p. 637); how prejudices can serve as cognitive-saving devices in daily life (pp. 641–642); and on how we can eradicate prejudice best by “growing broad-minded” via a liberal education starting in childhood. Last, after reading Patrick’s paper, it appears that he felt that people develop, maintain, and use prejudices both consciously (e.g., by seeking out confirming evidence) and unconsciously (e.g., the unintentional maintenance of paths of association). However, given that Wundt’s

explanation of apperception as an active, mindful process (Schultz & Schultz, 2008), Patrick may lean toward prejudice being more willful than reflexive.

Yet, like Hazlitt, Patrick exhibited his own prejudices in his 1890 paper. He, also like Hazlitt, tried to dissociate himself from philosophy, and argued that—unlike psychology—sociology, ethics, metaphysics, and theology are “evil” with “over-interpretation” because they are not “exact sciences” (p. 639). Nonetheless, Patrick was the first psychologist to recognize prejudice as a human phenomenon worth studying in published writing; however, his definition of prejudice (i.e., deviation from social norms) was less than satisfactory, and may have not fostered a program of research based upon this definition. More specifically, there is the sticky issue of defining social norms, as well as the problematic issue of labeling someone as prejudiced if one deviates from such norms. Just because a target does not share a majority opinion does not mean the target is by definition prejudiced.

In the end, Patrick never returned to the subject of prejudice (yet his works were referenced and discussed by Morse [1907, 1912], which we will soon discuss); but, as mentioned earlier, Patrick published on a wide variety of applied topics in psychology even after retiring from the University of Iowa in 1927. It was another 14 years until the next psychological or sociological paper on prejudice.

William I. Thomas (1904). William I. Thomas (1904; see also Weatherly, 1910),³ an American sociologist (with a social psychological bent; Coser, 1977) most famous for his examination of Polish immigrants in Europe and America (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918, 1919–1920), produced an article on prejudice (“The psychology of race-prejudice”) in the *American Journal of Sociology*, of which he was co-editor. It is interesting to note that it was only a few years before the publication of his paper on prejudice that Thomas, while studying classic and modern languages in Germany (1887–1888), immersed himself in the writings of German folk psychologists Lazarus and Steinthal (e.g., *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft*; Singer, 2002), with special attention to Wilhelm Wundt’s *Völkerpsychologie* (roughly translated as the psychology of social behavior; Greenwood, 2003). Immersion in these socio-psychological writings fueled his interest in the study of social behavior (i.e., interrelated interests in ethnography, sociology, and psychology; Coser, 1977), which likely led to his inquiries regarding race prejudice in America, and eventually, his interdisciplinary approach to studying the experiences of Polish immigrants.

Given Thomas’s title, it is not unexpected that he primarily references prejudice based on race differences while broadly theorizing on prejudice in his paper. Regrettably, Thomas never precisely defined prejudice in his paper; the closest definition he provided was “a predilection for those of one’s own kind” (p. 593). Thomas argued, for the most part, that prejudice develops out of evolutionary/biological processes to help “discriminate between different stimulations, to choose between the beneficial and prejudicial, and to obtain in this way a more complete control over the environment” (p. 593). The norm, Thomas asserted, is to distrust people until they have proven themselves “good fellows” (p. 594).

Thomas also more specifically discussed how attitudes are formed when a neutral object or stimulation is then associated with an emotion, and its recurrence strengthens that connection. He remarkably applied this to the favorable people and objects that compose one’s social identity (in what he terms the “intimate relation between man and certain portions of his environment”; p. 594), as well as to the dissonant and unfavorable others which do not share one’s

3. Jean Finot (1907, trans. by Florence Wade-Evans) also penned a book, *Race Prejudice*, that focuses more on race relations and debunking racial differences (specifically, his belief that refuting racial superiority would lead to a decrease in “internal and external hatreds,” p. 320), rather than being a general exposition on prejudice.

culture (i.e., “The usual is felt as comfortable and safe, and a sinister view is taken of the unknown . . . the signs of unlikeness in another group are regarded with prejudice,” pp. 599/601). Individuals primarily make judgments of favorability based upon, “namely, physical features, dress, speech, social habits” (p. 601).

Thomas provided pages of examples of cultural differences and the social consequences of deviating from cultural standards; some of these examples were quite appalling (e.g., a mother in a relatively developed section of Africa killed her baby because it was an albino, and the authorities turned a blind eye). Nonetheless, he posited that culture offers opportunities to make one feel a valuable part of the group (as long as you meet those standards; cf. Becker, 1973) and to foster group solidarity, which then increases the chance of the group’s survival (e.g., enhanced cooperation among members would lead to stronger defense against an attack). Thus, Thomas implies that there is some level of moral relativism in intergroup culture; that is, it is difficult to classify a cultural difference as a moral violation without then classifying the moral violation as a prejudice.

Thomas, like other scholars before him, sagely stressed that no one is immune from prejudice, and that it is reciprocal, for example, on reflecting how European white explorers and African natives respond “repulsively” to one another at first meeting. Thomas further asserted that prejudicial processes occur both at conscious (“deliberative”) and unconscious (“reflex”) levels (p. 607, but with a greater emphasis on the unconscious), and start very early in childhood, reinforced primarily by parental attitudes and behavior. Thomas also posited that prejudices are most likely to be used when “attention is relaxed,” (p. 600), noting that cognitive energy is needed to overcome the exhibition of ingrained prejudices. Thomas ultimately concedes that prejudice “cannot be reasoned with, because, like the other instincts, it originated before deliberative brain centers were developed” (p. 607), and further, that prejudice cannot “be legislated about very effectively, because it is connected with the affective, rather than the cognitive, processes” (pp. 610–611). This line of thinking is very similar to Allport’s (1954/1979) thoughts on wholly eradicating prejudice from the psyche: “Defeated intellectually, prejudice lingers emotionally” (p. 328).

Thomas’s solution to minimize the effects of prejudice overlaps with modern intergroup contact theory (see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, for a review): people should foster communication to bring interests and standards in common, while systems of education should bring about a “greater mental and social parity between groups” (p. 611). Regardless, Thomas’s paper (see also Weatherly, 1910) seemed to emphasize biological causes of prejudice to such an extent it was almost too deterministic and reductionistic, while concurrently almost giving credence to the studies and related theoretical papers perpetuating the “natural” superiority of whites prevalent in that time.

To our knowledge, Thomas’s paper appears to be not widely cited, but Samelson (1978) did cite Thomas’s paper in a footnote. Thomas never specifically followed up his paper on prejudice, but employed psychological and sociological approaches in his study of Polish immigrants (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918, 1919–1920). His work is widely respected today among academics, especially sociologists, highlighted by the fact he was made honorary president of the American Sociological Association in 1927.

Josiah Morse (Moses) (1907, 1912). Josiah Morse (1907, 1912) published two sophisticated papers on prejudice before researchers tried to measure it (circa 1925). Morse’s interest in prejudice was deeply personal. Josiah’s birth name was not *Morse*; it was *Moses*. To explain, Josiah Moses, Jewish by birthright, entered graduate studies in psychology at Clark University under Hall in 1899 (Tenenbaum, 2003). Despite a record of teaching and publication, Moses was unable to find a job after graduating with his PhD in 1904; indeed, future

Jewish psychologists would find it persistently difficult to land employment through the 1930s (Winston, 1996). Moses, clearly distraught about not finding employment for two and a half years, wrote to Hall:

“I have done nothing but wait, wait, wait. . . . It is written, ‘Ask and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.’ I have asked until my tongue is swollen, I have knocked until my knuckles are bare and still no answer. Are the gods asleep . . . ? But God has always been cruel to his chosen ones.” (cited in Tenenbaum, 2003, p. 12)

Hall offered little help in his recommendation letter for Moses; Hall felt compelled to disclose that Moses was Jewish, but tried to ease the brunt of this disclosure by asserting that Moses was not like other Jews in that he “has none of the objectional Jewish traits” (Tenenbaum, 2003, p. 12; see also Winston, 1996, for similar letters of reference). “He is sandy-haired, has no Jewish features, is genial, popular with students and colleagues, knows his place and keeps it and is extremely loyal to his superiors” (as cited in Tenenbaum, 2003, p. 12). After Josiah changed his last name to Morse around 1907 and still did not receive any job offers, he wrote despondently again to Hall:

“My birth-right and soul for a mess of pottage! Happy outlook, isn’t it? You cannot imagine how sorry I am there is no God. I feel the need of one in my adversity. I should very much like to tell him what I think of him and his creatures. But one can’t rail at abstract Law. . . . Very sincerely, Josiah Morse.” (underline in original text; cited in Tenenbaum, 2003, p. 13)

In 1909, Morse finally obtained a position at a Teachers College in Nashville before becoming the lone professor of psychology and philosophy at the University of South Carolina in 1911. In short, the anti-Jewish prejudices that hindered Morse’s securing employment more than likely fueled his interest and writing on prejudice. Further, Morse’s first paper on prejudice was also published under his modified last name. It would have been interesting to find out whether Morse submitted his papers to any other journals, in particular under his Jewish birth name. Further, he is generally reticent on Jewish prejudice in particular in his papers; indeed, Morse (1907) imbeds anti-Jewish prejudice among a longer list of examples and briefly mentions the case of a child raising the ancient accusation of “Christ killing” after watching a “Passion play.” (This appears to be the only mention of deicide in the pre-Allport literature.) Perhaps this was another indication of how Morse’s own experiences as a Jewish man sensitized him.⁴

Morse began his 1907 paper by stating how disappointed he was that psychology had ignored the study of “our most common, everyday mental experiences,” including prejudice. Prejudice, he stated, “because of its universality and ubiquity in the stream of consciousness, does not attract these psychologists’ attention even while more obscure mental processes are being carefully teased and analyzed” (p. 490). Morse argued that because prejudice is ubiquitous and its effects dire (indeed, Morse felt the effects of others’ prejudices personally), the study of prejudice is highly valuable from an ethical standpoint. Nonetheless, Morse stressed at some length that everyone suffers from prejudices because even with “his wonderfully developed nervous system and its end organs, [humankind] cannot respond to all the forces of nature, nor know it in all its fullness” (p. 492). Thus, there is a dynamic perception and construction of one’s mental life: “We recreate the universe, each in his own limited, imperfect way, and no two are exactly alike” (p. 493).

4. We thank an anonymous reviewer for highlighting and commenting on this example in Morse’s text.

Morse set his working definition of prejudice as “an *undue* prepossession [prejudgment] in favor or, or against an object, being, or thought . . . be that what it may, a man, or his doctrine, or the color of his hair” (p. 493, emphasis in original). Morse emphasized that prejudice can be an antipathy, but it can also include excessive “propathy or predilection” (i.e., positive prejudice, or undue positivity toward an object or person). Morse carefully explained what he meant by an “undue” prepossession. First, Morse argued that violation of cultural norms alone cannot be considered undue; thus, Morse criticized Patrick (1890) for stating that prejudice is a prejudgment deviant from “the universal, the general, or the mean” (p. 633). An *undue* prepossession is thus when one fails to adjust or correct one’s prejudgment in favor of contrary evidence: “The unduly prepossessed individual cannot or will not apperceive properly; he apperceives only as it suits his purpose, which has been determined by his will and desire” (p. 495). Morse related a story told by William James (in *The Will to Believe*; 1896) of a Christian man outright denying a statement made by an Arab just because he was Arab: “It does not fit with his system of beliefs . . . and therefore he immediately rejects it without stopping to examine its claims for his acceptance” (p. 495).

Morse asserted, then, that prejudice has deep “emotional and volitional” roots—roots which “penetrate and ramify the whole soil of subconsciousness, vitiating our thinking and determining our attitudes to the various phases of our environment” (p. 496). Morse also commented that these attitudes and prejudices become more available and accessible “because of frequent repetition, association, vividness, recency” and acquire “more than its normal share of dynamic energy” (p. 505) either by conscious or unconscious processes. Again, Morse’s use of the word “unconscious” likely denotes a non-deliberate act (Bargh & Morsella, 2008). Morse purposed that prejudicial processes start early in life, but not before the child reaches adolescence, that is, when children are “self-conscious and capable of perceiving differences as well as resemblances” (p. 503; however, we now know children start to develop prejudices as early as the age of two; see Levy & Hughes, 2009, for a review).

Further, Morse also recognized that prejudice affects our attention and perception of information; we are most likely to attend to and incorporate information that aligns with our extant beliefs. Nonetheless, like others before him, Morse conceded that prejudices have “proven necessary and valuable not only for our development from the lower forms of life, but for our continued development as human beings. . . . But, what is normal and beneficial in a certain measure, becomes abnormal and injurious when that measure is deficient or excessive” (p. 496).

Morse echoed many of these same assertions in his 1912 paper on “Prejudice, Education, and Religion,” but expanded on his 1907 paper by proposing two primary types of prejudices. Morse proposed that the first type of prejudices are “the deep-seated generic and racial prejudices,” and (likely being influenced by the *zeitgeist* of that time) continued to explain, “which have the important biological function of keeping the races separate and distinct, in order perhaps, that they might develop to the fullest their own peculiarities and native genius” (p. 324). The second type of prejudices has to do with sociopolitical differences (e.g., national, political, economical), which “have not a little sociological value, but when carried to excess have led to wars, feuds, cruelties, and injustices of every description” (p. 324). In short, Morse appeared to delineate prejudices based upon, first, physical differences and, second, ideological differences.

Finally, in both papers, Morse argued that the least prejudiced individuals are “broad-minded, liberal, and critical. . . . These are the highest products of a sane, broad, and liberal education” (1907, p. 505). Education’s aim should be “character-building and the increase of efficiency, it must sedulously weed out . . . prejudices as soon as they make their appearance

in the consciousness of the child” (1912, p. 330).⁵ However, Morse (1912) illuminated a dilemma in the eradication of prejudice: how can one eliminate prejudices without eliminating individuality—those attributes that make us special and unique, which contribute to our sense of self, self-esteem, and self-efficacy? “Not to eliminate every vestige of prejudice from the soul, for that would be to efface all individuality and enthusiasm, but rather to control it and so direct it that it will be a help instead of a hindrance” (p. 382). This is an especially evident problem in Western pluralistic societies. In his final chapter, Allport (1954/1979; see also Becker, 1973, Part III) also echoed this sentiment,

We have not yet learned how to adjust to our new mental and moral proximity. . . . [Yet] Democracy demands that the human personality in its course of development should be allowed to proceed without artificial forces or barricades, so long as this development does not violate the safety and reasonable rights of others. (p. 518)

Morse’s writing indicates, like Allport’s, that academics have a duty to inform and protect the public, guided by sound scientific research. As Allport asserted, academics “must be the contemporary custodians of such endearing values as justice—and that trained human intelligence is an important weapon in the ongoing struggle against ignorance, superstition, and injustice” (p. 516). Ultimately, Morse appears to have been the first psychologist to cogently define prejudice, as well as persuasively argue that psychologists should study this phenomenon for the betterment of human relations. Morse obviously had a deep, personal investment in trying to disseminate his ideas on prejudice; he knew too well the deleterious effects prejudice has on minority groups, including discrimination in employment. It is surprising to find that subsequent psychologists and sociologists have rarely cited his work.^{6,7}

Morse stayed at the University of South Carolina for the remainder of his academic career; in fact, he was the sole member of the department of philosophy until he expanded the curriculum to include psychology, in particular teaching courses on the psychology of religion and race problems⁸ in the South, which aligned with the content and outlets of his papers

5. The relationship between education and prejudice is quite complex. Overall, though, it appears prejudice decreases while education level increases, but evidence has shown that prejudices are weakened in more liberal arts fields, while prejudices are reinforced when entering more capitalist fields, like business (see Whitley & Kite, 2006).

6. To our knowledge, the first papers addressing the measurement of prejudice were published around 1925 (Jones, 1997). Thus, there is quite a gap in the literature on prejudice given that the last cited paper in this historical analysis was published in 1912 (Morse, 1912). The most tenable explanation is that during World War I (1914–1919), as during World War II, academic productivity decreased. Or, interest in the phenomenon of “prejudice” waned, as papers on “race relations” and individual differences between whites and blacks increased (Samelson, 1978). For a comprehensive overview of landmark psychology research on prejudice, see Plous (2009).

7. One may question what role Walter Lippmann’s (1922) landmark book *Public Opinion* had on prejudice research. Lippmann’s main contribution was to broaden the use of the word “stereotype” to include mental representations of ideas or attitudes (Newman, 2009). Further, Lippmann was an early pioneer in asserting that people are “limited capacity motivated processors of information who are prone to biases” which “led him to be extremely pessimistic about the ability of complex societies to effectively manage their affairs” (Newman, 2009, p. 15). Similar sentiments are echoed by many of the psychologists and sociologists discussed in the current paper. Lippmann also identified many other phenomena related to stereotypes and prejudice, including illusory correlation and just-world thinking. Newman’s (2009) paper provides a lucid discussion of these and other issues surrounding psychologists’ and sociologists’ use and misuse of citing Lippmann’s book.

8. It is important to note that Morse (1914) also published a *Popular Science* article discussing some of the first research investigating differences in white and black children’s intelligence using the Binet Scale of Intelligence. Although Morse concluded that whites outperformed blacks in certain intelligence dimensions (and that blacks outperformed whites in certain other dimensions as well), he is guarded in concluding that these differences are innate. Indeed, Morse highlights that “city children” are in general slightly more advanced than the “cotton-mill children”—both black and white, and that more research is needed on the etiology of these differences.

on prejudice. Morse finally retired from academia in 1946 after serving 35 years as department head (University of South Carolina, 2002).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

What strains of thought and speculation did early psychologists and sociologists share in thinking about human prejudice? First, most agreed that prejudice is an undue judgment, favorable or unfavorable, toward an object, person, or thing. Second, they believed that no person is free from prejudice, either at conscious or unconscious levels. Third, they believed that stereotypes and prejudice are “normal” human attributes resulting from naturally-occurring cognitive processes that—to a certain extent—help (e.g., conserve cognitive energy), but can also lead to dire consequences (e.g., bloody intergroup conflict). Fourth, because of the complexity and (typically negative) emotional valence of prejudice, prejudice is hard to eradicate or control; as Allport (1954/1979) concurred, “It is easier to smash an atom than a prejudice” (p. xvii). These early psychologists and sociologists also speculated on the formation, maintenance, and use of prejudices, and many provided compelling hypotheses; although, at the same time, these luminaries displayed their own prejudices in their writings (although this statement may reflect the influence of the current zeitgeist of tolerance in psychology).

It is a bit surprising that these pioneering essays, chapters, and papers are not widely discussed in the historical study of prejudice. Samelson (1978) did cite some of the work on prejudice published at the turn of the century (e.g., Thomas, 1904); however, Samelson’s focus was on *race prejudice*, not the study of prejudice on a general scope. Morse’s papers, to our knowledge, have not been cited in historical narratives of prejudice research (see, e.g., Allport, 1954/1979; Duckitt, 1992; Jones, 1997; Stangor, 2009; Plous, 2009; Samelson, 1978; Young-Bruehl, 2007). Who knows what, if any, impact Morse’s or Patrick’s papers had on early prejudice researchers; it is possible that early prejudice researchers read and were inspired by Patrick’s or Morse’s papers, yet did not cite them. Nonetheless, these early pioneers deserve explicit credit for recognizing prejudice as a phenomenon and one in dire need of psychological study, just as Gordon Allport’s *The Nature of Prejudice* is credited for writing the seminal book on prejudice research. The personal and historical conditions that gave impetus to these authors’ writings on prejudice are equally fascinating, especially in the case of Josiah Morse.

In short, this paper intended to examine early published work on prejudice before researchers attempted to measure prejudice (circa 1925), with particular focus on three key questions: a) when did psychologists/sociologists recognize prejudice as a phenomenon, b) when did psychologists/sociologists recognize prejudice as a phenomenon in need of study, and c) what were the historical and personal conditions that gave rise to the interest in prejudice? It appears that Josiah Morse (1907, 1912), a relatively unknown psychologist, was the first psychologist/sociologist to persuasively define prejudice and argue for its study among psychologists and sociologists. Morse also had a deep, personal interest in examining prejudice given that he could not secure employment for over five years after earning his PhD because of his Jewish ancestry. Ultimately, we hoped to underscore the richness of early scholars’ speculation and theorizing on prejudice as well as the personal and historical conditions in which these papers were written. Contemporary psychologists and sociologists who study stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination will hopefully have a renewed appreciation for these individuals who planted the roots of prejudice research in psychology and sociology.

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