
EDITORIAL

Editorial Introduction

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For the past fifteen years I have written almost exclusively about American warfare in some capacity. As a Communication Studies scholar, my interest in war stems from its exemplary failure. War is communication through force; it is a last resort. As I continue to think, write, and reflect on the subject, I recognize that at the heart of my fascination with war is its inducement. How do we arrive at a warlike mind? On top of that, knowing what we know about war's horror and trauma, why do we keep doing it? I'm not sure I will ever arrive at a satisfying answer to the latter question but speaking with colleagues in the field of hate studies is helping me understand the first. A historical survey of the zeitgeists surrounding America's most prominent wars highlights the conspicuous role of hatred. Hate is a response to a perceived threat and is linked to feelings of fear and a loss of control. Thus, war might be conceived of as an international expression of hate.

At the time of my invitation to guest edit this issue, and even now as I pen this introduction, hate abounds. In 2020, the festering wound of American racism bubbled to the surface, demanding our attention. Even before the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the run-up to the presidential election began agitating our nation's deepest wound. Conversations about statues, public memorials and how to accurately remember our past led some white Americans to mistakenly believe they were under threat. Then as the first cases of COVID-19 landed on American soil, Asian Americans became emotional punching bags for a nation overcome with fear and grief.

In my home state of Washington, a 41-year-old white man named Sean Jeremy Holdip attacked a Japanese language teacher, Noriko Nasu, as she was walking to her car in Seattle's Chinatown. Holdip knocked her out, fractured her nose and cheek, leaving her with a concussion and broken teeth. In a press interview following the attack, Nasu said the most painful outcome was the fact that the courts did not consider Holdip's assault a hate crime (Woods, 2021). Definitions of hate crimes vary from place to place, and methods of reporting and documentation are not always straightforward. Seattle police, for example, count hate and bias together. This includes hate crimes, other crimes where bias played a role, as well as noncriminal bias incidents.

Barriers to reporting and inconsistencies in prosecuting at state and local levels make it difficult to obtain meaningful national data. It could take years for the empirical evidence needed to prove the pandemic's relationship to a nationwide increase in attacks on Asian Americans. Still, it's hard to deny the lived experiences among Asian Americans this past year, which have included blatant and subtle microaggressions, social and economic exclusion, racism, and fear-based backlash. Some Asian Americans have reported that simply sneezing or coughing in public can trigger harassment and violence (Bosman, Stockman, & Fuller, 2020).

The United States has a long history of linking disease to ethnicity and race (Lee, 2019). Public fear surrounding epidemics and pandemics exacerbates this tendency. COVID-19 was not the first time the US encountered the spread of misinformation that leads to scapegoating and discrimination. For example, Americans have previously blamed Italians for Tuberculosis, Irish for Typhus, Africans for Ebola, Latinx Americans for H1N1, and Chinese for SARS. The propensity to demonize others in response to public health crises led the World Health Organization to issue guidance for naming novel human infectious diseases in 2015 recommending that they do not include geographic locations or reference to culture.

In 2020, despite such cautions from the World Health Organization, the Trump administration including the president himself, regularly referred to COVID-19 as "Chinese virus" and a host of other similarly themed nicknames. In response to a surge in reports of anti-Asian and Pacific Islander discrimination, newly elected President Biden signed a memorandum pledging to combat the harmful and ignorant link sustained by the former president. In a public address on January 26, 2021, President Biden said:

The Federal Government must recognize that it has played a role in furthering these xenophobic sentiments through the actions of political leaders, including references to the COVID-19 pandemic by the geographic location of its origin...Such statements have stoked unfounded fears and perpetuated stigma about Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and have contributed to increasing rates of bullying, harassment, and hate crimes against AAPI persons (Memorandum, 2021).

This themed issue of *The Journal of Hate Studies* focuses on hate during the COVID-19 pandemic. Not all the contributions are about AAPI hate. Some deal with matters of policing and reporting. One essay traces the historical roots of white supremacy; another explores the role of negative emotions like envy and resentment; two give hopeful analyses about best practices in listening and reconciliation. Overall, the issue seeks to connect fear and hatred to begin unpacking some of the baggage that allowed public health and hygiene to get mixed up with race and ethnicity.

More than marking the calendar year, 2020 is also about clear vision. Perhaps we are finally seeing all the work we have left to do. In this issue, I have cobbled together thinkers across the disciplines—law, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, religious studies, and communication studies—to help us make meaning of the socio-political mess we found ourselves in during the pandemic. Although I am an American scholar writing in the context of my own country, the voices in this issue come from all over the globe. I am humbled by the depth of their thinking and their commitment to understanding hatred in all its manifestations. Diagnosing and confronting hate is the first step toward countering it and transforming it, so we can move together toward a more loving, just, and equitable future.

The issue opens with an essay by philosopher Sara Protasi called “Envy and Resentment in the Time of Coronavirus,” which considers the role emotions played in interpersonal online dynamics during the COVID-19 pandemic. Protasi pays particular attention to online envy, distinguishing four different types. In so doing, she offers useful diagnostic language to help readers identify powerful and complex emotions so they can better cope with pain, fear, and grief in the future.

Building on the idea that our emotions can run wild online, digital humanities scholar, Tracey Hayes, writes about the way former President Donald Trump used “bombastic enthymemes” to activate his 88 million Twitter followers. The rhetoric of hate is also the subject of Ana Laura Bochicchio’s essay, which lends insight to current nationalist, white supremacist ideologies by tracing the roots of white supremacy to an extreme and nefarious strain of Calvinism espoused by Minister Wesley Swift. Bochicchio argues that Swift’s sermons position whiteness as a qualifier to salvation. In the end, she relates some of Swift’s discourses to those circulating among QAnon believers.

The next set of contributions examine hate as it exists and persists on a local level. An essay by Anish Dave called “#MassProtests” analyzes the efficacy of contemporary social movements and turns to Gandhi as an exemplar for his ability to meaningfully engage “the other side.” In “Making Hate Visible,” Irfan Chaudhry, Director of MacEwan’s Office of Human Rights, Diversity, and Equity, reviews the opportunities and constraints of an online hate incident reporting tool. His goal is to uncover the best ways to collect and track incidents to capture and share trends so that communities can understand hate and bias at the local level and begin to develop strategies that foster a more inclusive public social environment. And Lorretta Trickett’s and Timothy Bryan’s piece, “It’s Not Really a Hate Crime” is interview research with police officers to gather their perspective on policing hate. In their analysis they identify a gap between policy and practice. In part, police officers lack clarity on the extent to which “policing prejudice” should be part of their regular duties. They also seem to resent expanding definitions of hate because it adds to their workload. The last paper in this cohort is a critical personal reflection about place naming practices. In “No Honor in Genocide,” Spokane Tribal member and former Spokane Tribal Attorney and Coeur d’Alene Tribal Court Judge, Margo Hill considers decolonization strategies like re-naming streets as a way of reshaping indigenous-settler relationships.

The last grouping of papers deals with a particular type of hate occurring both on- and offline: anti-Asian and Pacific Islander xenophobia. “COVID-19: A Pandemic of Anti-Asian Cyber Hate” uses Twitter data to track Anti-Asian tweets along the pandemic timeline, identifying common keywords, trends, and spikes. “Kung Flu and Roof Koreans” by Julia R. DeCook and Mi Hyun Yoon analyzes internet memes that were popular during the summer of 2020, for the harmful narratives they perpetuate about Asian Americans. “‘Yellow Perils’ Revived” by Keisuke Kimura considers the Stop AAPO hate website and #IAmNotAVirus campaign as spaces of solidarity and resistance to what Kimura calls an “ideological epidemic.” And finally, “Predictors of Anti-Asian Xenophobia during Covid-19” uses national survey data to identify a set of characteristics common to AAPIX offenders with the goal of developing an AAPIX intervention campaign to counter hate crimes and race-based mistreatment while remaining sensitive to American free speech laws.

Collectively, this issue focuses on pandemic-related hate, highlighting the way naturally occurring emotions like fear, isolation, or envy can lead to prejudiced hostility and hatred. Each paper contributes a productive vantage point from which to consider the current climate of hate. Part of the academic response must involve debating and building on approaches and interventions like those discussed here. I encourage readers to continue this development by submitting papers to this important journal. To paraphrase the late cellist, Pablo Casals, we must all work to make this world worthy of its children.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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