

Preface

Fire and Ice

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

—Robert Frost

Most would agree that the transgression of simply going about our own business and ignoring the plight of others pales in comparison to that of committing open acts of violence and hatred. In his poem “Fire and Ice,” Robert Frost invites us to ponder a paradox.

On a literal level, fire might represent earth’s long awaited Biblical prophecy of retribution by fire and brimstone. From a scientific point of view, the image of ice conjures up the coming of another ice age. However, it seems likely that Frost is alluding to the symbols for which these elements stand: in terms of fire, conflagration, rage, war, and world destruction; in terms of ice, human indifference to others’ suffering caused by AIDS, poverty, hunger, ignorance, insensitivity, and intolerance.

We at the Institute for Action Against Hate have accepted the responsibility of monitoring the nefarious effects of hate on a world ripe with possibilities for peace and harmony. Let us never forget the message of Frost’s simple yet revelatory poem, “Fire and Ice.”

The beginning of this preface can be credited to my sister, Jeannie Dobson, a teacher of writing and English. She has always gifted me with a literary perspective on my work and my life. It seems only fitting to start with poetry because for the first time, we include poetry in the journal, in the knowledge that the arts touch us, remind us of basic emotional truths, in ways that academic thinking cannot. Thus we have selected a portion of Michael Gurian’s “I Am a Jew” to introduce this issue about hatred and culture.

The concept of culture carries many meanings and interpretations.

Tiedt and Tiedt (1990) describe culture as “a complex, integrated system of beliefs and behavior that may be both rational and nonrational. Each one of us is born into a culture. Our beliefs derive from these ethnic and family backgrounds, but they continue to be shaped by all our experience after birth. For the most part, family attitudes, language, and other behaviors are internalized without questions” Levine (cited in Bennet, 1995) refers to “world view or the way a cultural group perceives its environment, including stereotypes, role perceptions, norms, attitudes, values, ideals, and perceived relationships between events and behaviors, and . . . material or concrete culture which includes objects and artifacts of a culture.”

As we look at the concept of hate, we can see that historically, individuals or groups have been classified as “other.” In that way, they can be seen as less than human, demonized, and marginalized. In many cases, the “others” are victims of genocide, as was witnessed in the Holocaust, and in more recent events in Rwanda, Liberia, and Yugoslavia. Although these acts clearly come to mind when we think of hate, we are less prepared to see our own contributions to world misery when we fail to stand up for what is right, or simply ignore the presence of hate. This edition of the journal addresses hate in culture and highlights current experiences that threaten our world.

How is hate disseminated? What draws people into its web? These questions are addressed by Georgie Ann Weatherby and Brian Scoggins in “A Content Analysis of Persuasion Techniques Used on White Supremacist Websites,” an examination of the tactics used by racists on their websites to attract new recruits. Specifically, it examines the use of low-ball and foot-in-the-door techniques as they are used on four white supremacist websites. The authors conclude that these groups are moving toward the mainstream in their presentation in an effort to be perceived as acceptable and to draw people in. Furthermore, the authors suggest that it is essential that people be educated about these groups, the techniques they use to attract others, and the consequences of their actions.

We hear a great deal about human rights abuses, but seldom do we hear about them as they apply to lesbians. Susan Hawthorne brings this subject out of the shadows in “Ancient Hatred and Its Contemporary Misuses: The Torture of Lesbians,” a raw and well-documented paper about the abuse of women that takes place in many countries simply because of their sexual orientation. She calls for greater attention to be paid to this horrific subject, as lesbians have received little mention in human-rights struggles, and includes visceral first-person accounts from victims to buttress her

argument. She suggests that the “play” torture involved in certain pornographic circles is disrespectful to those who have actually been tortured and that it desensitizes people to the horror and lack of control involved in similar real-life situations. According to the author, lesbians should be accorded status as political refugees, since their very existence is punishable by harsh measures in certain countries. Until more attention is paid to this minority group, Hawthorne suggests, its members will continue to undergo savage treatment—a dark reflection on our society as a whole.

In “White Nationalism Revisited: Demographic Dystopia and White Identity Politics,” Steven Gardiner uses his own visit to a white nationalism conference to launch a discussion about and offer a definition of white nationalism as it currently manifests. Gardiner writes about the efforts of white nationalist groups to slow or stop the immigration of non-whites in their attempt to “preserve the white racial majority in the United States.” Gardiner argues for the importance of debate about identity, specifically what it means to be an American, and the role and impact of immigration upon our national culture.

“To Charge or Not to Charge?—That Is the Question: The Pursuit of Strategic Advantage in Prosecutorial Decision-Making Surrounding Hate Crime” by Beverly McPhail and Valerie Jenness is about the various factors prosecutors must take into account as they decide whether to categorize and charge a criminal act as a hate crime. The authors conclude that many cases that could be charged as hate crimes are not, partly because the standards of categorization are strict, partly because these concepts remain somewhat ambiguous, and partly because of the additional burden of proof required of the prosecutor, as he or she must prove motivation as well as the actual event.

Barbara Perry has us take a close look at our use of language in “A Crime by Any Other Name: The Semantics of ‘Hate.’” Dissatisfied with the term “hate crime,” she looks at “the conceptual limitations of the term ‘hate’ as a descriptor of the forms of bigoted violence to which it refers.” Because language shapes our perceptions and our interpretations, Perry argues that we must be careful to use it in a way that does not divorce bias-motivated violence from its cultural and political context. She also wants us to understand that “hate” refers here not to an individual psychological emotion, but to a sociological construct.

The third edition of this Journal contained an article by Ken Stern, based on a presentation he made at the International Conference to Estab-

lish a Field of Hate Studies held at Gonzaga University in March of 2003, called "Toward an Interdisciplinary Field of Hate Studies." Stern raised questions and offered suggestions about what such a field might look like, emphasizing the interdisciplinary aspect of such an undertaking. This article is followed up on in this year's Student Voices section. Jon Blitzer, a student at Columbia who interned at the American Jewish Committee, has written "Toward an Interdisciplinary Field of Hate Studies: Developing a Framework," in which he discusses the reasons for creating such an academic field, speculates about the purposes the discipline will serve, and reviews some of the strategies and content it might include. He notes that if a field of hate studies is to be generated and sustained, those involved must have a clearly defined framework in mind to give it shape. Blitzer argues that creating such a framework is worthwhile because "a unified, interdisciplinary field of hate studies may be the most direct and effective way for us as intellectuals to understand what hate and culture truly mean and why their pairing is so inevitable."

Finally, our book review section contains assessments of two books: Robert Kraft's review of *Do Unto Others* by Samuel P. Oliner, and Steven Baum's review of the *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*, edited by D.L. Shelton. Kraft notes that Oliner provides a complex yet straightforward examination of altruism, that state wherein we consider someone else's needs before our own. Kraft notes that the book discusses those elements that create an altruistic personality: empathy and a willingness to take action. The book divides altruism into eight categories and devotes a chapter to each kind. Ultimately, Kraft tells us, the book serves as a sort of beacon, showing us the way to the sort of goodness that makes us fully human and fully free.

Baum notes that that *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity* is an important and a valuable contribution to the field. While he questions some omissions and a leaning toward a legalistic as opposed to a sociological stance, he concludes that it is nevertheless a valuable and well-written resource, one that scholars in the field will find interesting as well as informative.

The Institute for Action Against Hate is thankful to our authors for contributing to this issue on Hate and Culture. We are hopeful that readers will be informed by these writings and inspired to share their messages.

The Institute continues to work to establish an academic field of hate studies. The need for an academic discipline on hate studies has been presented at the Annual National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in

American Higher Education (NCORE) for three years in a row. The Institute has been accepted to present a workshop at the NCORE conference in Chicago in June of 2006. The title of the presentation is "From the Face of Hate to the Face of Hope: An Academic Approach to Addressing Hate." Our intent is to formally continue the dialogue on developing the hate studies curriculum and to share course syllabi from current university courses addressing issues of hate. If you have a syllabus that relates to this topic, please send it to us. Information on our work can be obtained at our website, www.gonzaga.edu.againsthate.

As we continue to move toward a global community, full of diversity and difference, a united effort is required. The Institute for Action Against Hate, the *Journal of Hate Studies*, and the website for the Institute are venues for confronting hate, and ultimately, preventing it through education, research, and advocacy in collaboration with professionals of like mind. This is no small task in a world of competing cultures and ideologies, dwindling resources, and widespread poverty. It is the responsibility of educators, professionals, and people of good will everywhere to collaborate in the effort to combat hate with unyielding determination. We can never stop questioning acts of hatred, which are often initially expressed as discrimination toward, and stigmatizing of, marginalized peoples. Our work offers us challenge in moving toward community and inclusion for people in all cultures.

We are pleased to offer the fourth issue of the *Journal of Hate Studies*. As ever, it is our hope that you will find this edition of the Journal of Hate Studies an edifying and stimulating resource.

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