

# Applied Anthropology and Anti-hate Activism

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines my journey from activist, to educator, to researcher, and back, and the implications the journey has for developing effective anti-hate collaborations and educational practices. After being notified that my name and contact information had been posted on a white supremacist's website, I re-considered my role as an anti-hate activist and turned to teaching. Combining my activist experience with my anthropology background, I developed a course, "Hate Across Cultures." Using multi-disciplinary academic resources and featuring guest lectures from representatives of various government agencies, this class provides a space for students to learn and talk about the origins of hate, hate across cultures, and hate in their own region. Students apply their knowledge and develop strategies to combat hate in their everyday lives. This has inspired me to begin a research project on local hate practices with the ultimate goal of developing and implementing more effective local anti-hate strategies.

*Keywords: anti-hate activism; applied anthropology*

## I. COMMUNITY OVERVIEW: COUNTY, CITY, AND TOWN

Berks County, Pennsylvania, located in the southeastern part of the state, has experienced well-publicized acts of hate.<sup>1</sup> Criminal investigations into terrorism, harassment, intimidation, and vandalism have led to some prosecutions and convictions. Of national and legal significance was the injunction against Ryan Wilson, founder of Alpha HQ for the 1998 internet harassment of Bonnie Jouhari, a fair housing specialist in the city of Reading, the county seat. Wilson was ordered to pay Jouhari 1.1 million dollars (Southern Poverty Law Center [SPLC], 2000). Jouhari also won a judgment of intimidation against the late Roy Frankhouser, Jr., the well-known and oft-arrested local leader of the local Ku Klux Klan offshoot, the United Klans of America. The settlement required Frankhouser to pay Jouhari 10%

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of his annual income for a decade (SPLC, 2000). I do not believe Jouhari ever saw a nickel from either case.

The demographic, economic, cultural, and social diversity found in the city is not found in the outlying areas. Though culturally and linguistically diverse, the city has less economic and educational diversity, with higher rates of poverty and crime and fewer people who have completed high school or attended post-secondary school. The city is able to provide additional services that are not found in the outlying areas, including a city Human Relations Commission. There had been a county-wide Human Relations Council, for which Jouhari worked. During her tenure at the Council, Jourhari established a conflict resolution task force to monitor bias and hate activity in the county. In 1998, Jouhari fled Berks County as the result of threats made against her and her daughter, and the task force came under new leadership. In the same year, I became a member of the task force, representing the Boyertown Area Unity Coalition.

The task force was both proactive and reactive in its work; it was proactive by organizing, facilitating and conducting educational trainings geared toward specific community stakeholders, including elected officials, law enforcement, non-profits, the business community, and educators. Among the trainings held were a 1999 gang-related training for law enforcement, elected officials and non-profits; a 2001 symposium addressing safe schools for school administrators, student leaders, and law enforcement; and a 2003 Muslim, Sikh, and Arab cultural awareness training for law enforcement and elected officials.

The task force was reactive by responding to specific incidents that occurred within the city and county. The task force responded to city and suburban schools that were experiencing bias and tension by facilitating the SPIRIT program developed by the United States Department of Justice. The task force worked closely with local community groups, such as the Boyertown Area Unity Coalition, and state agencies, including the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission and its own Pennsylvania Inter-Agency Task Force on Civil Tension.

When the non-profit council folded in 2005, members of the task force, including local, state, and federal law enforcement officials, local educators, businesspeople, clergy, and elected officials, continued to meet and focus primarily on implementing training programs to increase cultural awareness and sensitivity in the various communities represented in the area. I assumed the chairperson position in 2005. Without a budget, a building, or administrative support, the task force continued to pursue its work, managing to pull off an immigration symposium entitled "Rights, Responsibilities and Realities in Diverse Communities" in 2007. Despite requests to the county for administrative support for a new Greater Reading Task Force

on Civil Tension, the task force was unable to find an administrative home and eventually disbanded.

The brief history of the Reading-Berks Human Relations Council and the Conflict Resolution Task Force are necessary to provide some context for understanding the collective efforts organized in the county seat. These efforts did not always reach the outlying areas. The issues facing the more rural areas reflected a different experience with hate and bias incidents. These communities and their affiliated school districts have experienced non-criminal acts such as the distribution of racist, anti-Semitic, and anti-gay literature; conflicts over symbols such as the Confederate flags; the public appearances of members of organized hate groups; and the criminal act of an attempted cross-burning. The more rural areas of the county respond positively to the proposition that local problems have local solutions. It is in these outlying communities that I have most of my experience as an anti-hate activist. I would also offer that it these types of acts, and not the higher profile acts, that more frequently affect small-town communities in the United States negatively (Levin & Nolan, 2011). I now turn my attention to one such small town.

## II. SMALL TOWN REALITIES

### A. *Ethnographic Context*

Boyertown is a small community of approximately 4,000 residents in southeastern Pennsylvania, about 20 miles from the county seat and 50 miles from Philadelphia. Originally settled by Germans and by Swiss and French Huguenots in the 18th century and later established as a center for forging iron ore, the town diversified and became known for its carriages and caskets. An economic downturn hit the area in the waning days of the 20th century with the closing of the Casket Company (1988) and the Auto Body Works (1990). Although the town is still facing an uncertain economic future, it has secured monies to revitalize the downtown and has invested in marketing itself for economic development.

It is an overwhelmingly white town. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 98.8% of the Boyertown population identified as white. Including the population of the greater Boyertown area, which encompasses the entire school district, there are approximately 17,000 people, with 96.9% of the population identifying as white and 2% of the population identifying as Black or African American.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the perceived homogeneity of the town, racial tensions do exist. What follows is a brief description of selected incidents that occurred over a fifteen-year period. In September

1994, following what is described as an altercation between a black student and a white student at the local high school, an estimated 65 to 75 males, or five to six truckloads of white men and boys, “went looking” for the black student, wielding baseball bats and uttering racist slurs (Bell, 1994). Police were contacted and the white men and boys were turned away, and the black student returned to school. It was this incident that inspired local community leaders, under the direction of the school district, to establish a coalition of stakeholders to band together to address the racism and intolerance that were gaining momentum in the area. Later during the same academic school year, Tom Blair, a self-professed member of the Aryan Nations, was appointed to a school board committee on class size; the committee was later disbanded. Mark Thomas, another person vocal in the local community and the leader of the Pennsylvania Aryan Nations, pleaded guilty in 1997 to plotting with the Midwest bank robbers to fund the work of the Aryan Republican Army in its attempt to overthrow the United States government (Devlin, 1998). And the Ku Klux Klan began public recruitment at the center of town, with robed members handing out literature and talking to drivers and passengers waiting for the lights to turn green. Members of the Klan appeared periodically at the main intersection in town during the years 1995-2002. Three members of the National Socialist Movement appeared on the same corner in May of 2005.

Perhaps the most alarming hate event occurred in late October, 2004, when a white man attempted to burn a cross on the lawn of an African American family. A white neighbor thwarted the suspect’s effort to ignite the cross. The hate crime caused great distress for the family, and concern was expressed in the school district and the community. After a three-and-a-half-month investigation, police arrested a 42-year-old white man who reportedly had ties to the Ku Klux Klan (Erdman, 2005). The suspect, Richard D. Rick, Jr., died of natural causes before the case could go to trial. Several events related to the cross-burning occurred in the area, including the appearance of threatening racist graffiti in a junior high bathroom (Van Dyke, 2005). The school district responded by establishing a Diversity Steering Committee to address racism in the schools, as recommended by the Philadelphia office of the Anti-Defamation League.

These events did not occur without public notice and concern. The 1994 event prompted the school district to spearhead the formation of a coalition of people representing various sectors of the community. This group became known as the Boyertown Area Unity Coalition. The Boyertown Area Unity Coalition responded to the growing number of hate and bias events that were affecting the local community. Among other activities and events, the Unity Coalition successfully implemented “Project Lemonade.” For this project, citizens of Boyertown and the surrounding area

pledge money for every minute that the Ku Klux Klan distributed literature in town, raising more than \$11,000 for pro-diversity and pro-tolerance groups such as the SPLC, the ADL, and the NAACP, as well as the local library (Schlegel & Stahl, 2006). The Unity Coalition also organized the first Martin Luther King, Jr. community service project and worked with the local religious association to establish a commemorative service. Along with the local library, the Unity Coalition organized a read-a-thon for children on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, featuring books recommended by the Coretta Scott King Foundation. The Unity Coalition, working hand-in-hand with the victims of an attempted cross-burning, established what is now an annual Unity Walk.

Response to pro-diversity, anti-hate activity was not always well-received. In 1997, a group of people associated with the Unity Coalition attended a Boyertown borough council meeting to ask the council members to support a resolution speaking out against what were then nearly weekly appearances of members from the local branch of the Ku Klux Klan. Several people associated with the Unity Coalition spoke passionately about the issue, including a Holocaust survivor. The council members sat behind their nameplates in complete silence while concerned citizens spoke. Following the public comment period, the solicitor for the council read a statement on the council's behalf recognizing the community's concern and the Klan's first amendment right to free speech. In other words, in order not to violate the Klan's first amendment rights to free speech (and open itself to a lawsuit), the council decided that the best course of action in response to the public presence of the Klan was to refrain from addressing the issue; they chose self-censorship. Following the meeting, Unity Coalition members and others gathered outside the borough hall in utter shock that the council could choose silence as a strategy for dealing with the Klan. This was my first foray into local anti-hate activism.

By the time of the borough council meeting, Boyertown was not in an economic or a social position to market itself as an opportune site for commercial or residential development. The very public silence performed by the borough council amounted to the disquieting silence of complicity: The hatemongers had the floor. Although the borough council's interest in self-censorship was not believed to have been aligned with the Klan's interest in speaking, it had the net effect of granting the Klan the discursive space to speak about whiteness, blackness, and racism in the town.

As Robin Sheriff (2000), an anthropologist who examines racism in Brazil, points out, "Different groups. . . have markedly divergent interests at stake in the suppression of discourse." She calls on anthropologists to deconstruct silence in such a way "that these interests are explicitly located

within a range of differentiated and opposed social positions in which both linguistic and nonlinguistic forms of power are distributed” (p. 114).

### III. THE COMPLICITY OF SILENCE: INDIVIDUAL, POLITICAL, AND CULTURAL CENSORSHIP

“Silence is the welcome mat for hate,” says Ann Van Dyke, assistant director of education and community services from the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission. Ms. Van Dyke uses this line frequently as she travels the commonwealth addressing communities that have felt the presence of organized hate. It is a line she has used in Boyertown on more than one occasion, and one that bears repeating.

Silence and censorship are areas of anthropological concern, and much is made of the relationships among silence, power, and contestation. Silence can oppress, liberate, shame; silence can be welcoming or, ironically, disquieting. Sheriff (2000) identifies a particular type of silence that she calls cultural censorship (2000). Sheriff notes,

While silence tends to penetrate social boundaries it is not seamless; different groups, whether constituted by class, ethnicity, racialized identities, gender or language, have markedly divergent interests at stake in the suppression of discourse. Silence, like discourse, may be deconstructed in such a way that these interests are explicitly located within a range of differentiated and opposed social positions in which both linguistic and nonlinguistic forms of power are distributed. (p. 114)

Sheriff is suggesting that we deconstruct silence as we do discourse to unveil its power. At the very least, anti-hate activists are already attending to the critical nature of silence.

Cultural- and self-censorship in Boyertown provide a discursive arena whose void is filled by those who are comfortable talking about hate and race. In this overwhelmingly white community, those who do choose to speak out include the members of the Unity Coalition and those opposed to the Unity Coalition. The Unity Coalition members recognize the history and presence of organized hate in the community and respond to it, whereas those opposed to the Unity Coalition blame the coalition for the presence of organized hate and accuse it of “promoting” the visits of such groups (Turchanik, 2003).

A third voice, legitimized by those opposed to hate activity, was that of the adult male victim of the 2004 attempted cross-burning. He became an authorized voice, allowed to speak on behalf of the unbiased citizens in the town, based on his victimhood and presumed ease in talking about race as a perceived black man (He identifies himself as Caribbean-American and was

referred to in the press as “African-American.”). He was invited to speak at the Martin Luther King, Jr. religious service. He became what Hill (2008, p. 23) identifies as an “honorary white.” He became the singular authority on race, hate, and the true good nature of the town. He did the work that the borough council and others chose not to do.

A day or two after the attempted cross-burning, I received a phone call from Ms. Van Dyke concerning the hate crime. She suggested that I mobilize community leaders to respond to the needs of the family and to publicly condemn the act. One of my first calls was to a leader with a local outreach association. I asked whether he had spoken with the family. He had not. I asked when he was going to call the family, and he said he did not have plans to do so. This type of vocal restraint, a “wait and see” approach, was reminiscent of the borough council meeting.

In the absence of any other leadership, the Unity Coalition, with the full participation of the family that was victimized, organized a Unity Walk with the dual purpose of publicly supporting the family and demonstrating that Boyertown would not tolerate such acts of hate. In a move whose symbolism still resonates with me, it was the family that was victimized that brought the sound system, including a microphone, amplifier, and speakers, to the walk so that others could speak loudly in response to the hate crime. Inspired by the family and conscious of the complicity of silence, I, as chairperson of the Unity Coalition, was able to address the crowd and began by saying, “If silence is the welcome mat for hate, then your presence here speaks volumes: that hate and prejudice have no place in the Boyertown area.”

The public voicing of anti-hate discourse is not the solution to the problem of hate. It can, however, be effective in combating hate, because it is the impact of self-censorship, a public silence, to which recruiters attend. Floyd Cochran, a former Aryan Nation youth recruiter turned anti-hate activist, recalls strategically recruiting in communities that remained silent following his own surreptitious acts of hate. He would locate a town and paint a swastika, for example, and wait. If the town remained silent, he stayed to recruit. If there were no letters to the editor condemning the graffiti, he stayed to recruit. Taken together, hundreds of acts of silence, of refusing to speak, come to exemplify communal censorship.

#### A. *Political Self-censorship and Cultural Censorship*

The 1997 borough council meeting is an obvious example of political self-censorship. Their decision directly counters the advice given to elected officials by Ms. Van Dyke. Ms. Van Dyke advises elected government offi-

cials to uphold the Constitution, as they swore to do upon entering office, by exercising their own rights to free speech.

Ironically, the very agency that employs Ms. Van Dyke has undergone its own recent self-censorship. What were formerly referred to as “hate groups” are now referred to by the hate groups’ own terms, such as “white supremacist” or “black separatist” groups in order that the agency appear to represent the entire commonwealth and remain unbiased in their work. By erasing the word *hate* from their discourse, the censors at the PHRC are legitimizing the groups that are most comfortable speaking out about race, among other things.

As is the case in many small, racially homogenous towns across the commonwealth and nation, there seems to be a tacit understanding that only activists, racist and anti-racist, are allowed to talk about hate, racism, and whiteness. The exception in these communities is perhaps those who are already “othered” by being non-white (see example above). The prevailing local ideology of who does and does not have a racialized identity is based on the Euro(white)-centric markedness or difference model; whites are not marked and have no racial identities, and all non-whites are marked and have racial identities.

### B. *Consequences of Censorship*

There are local consequences for censorship. As mentioned earlier, hate activists identify silent communities as those ripe for hate recruitment. When communities refuse to speak out about hate incidents, they deny the public, including residents, business owners, and potential investors, a truer sense of the impact of hate. Refraining from discussing hate activity can also potentially undermine small successes in combating hate. Accessing progress and touting successes fall victim to the censorship strategy, too.

Equally troubling is the belief that those who speak out against hate are the ones who motivate hate sympathizers to become active. In the summer of 2002, three members of the Kootenai County (ID) Task Force on Human Relations traveled across the state of Pennsylvania, stopping at five different communities to address what to do when hate comes to town. Marshall Mend, Norm Gissel, and Tony Stewart spoke in Boyertown, to a crowd of approximately 50 people. One of the persons in attendance was Roy Frankhouser, Jr., the aforementioned leader of the Keystone Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. During the comment period, a white man asked the three human rights activists why they had come to Boyertown, and didn’t they know that if they hadn’t come, there would be no (visible) presence from hate group members. This represents the perspective that anti-hate speech

antagonizes those who would publicly express their hate in symbolic or physical practices.

### C. *National Consequences of Censorship*

The choice by white people to refrain from speaking out in response to hate and racism moves beyond the local and affects the national when the discursive void is filled by white hate activists who are quite comfortable talking about the experiences of whites in America. They become the dominant participants in the discourse on whiteness and white racialized identities. The extent to which this white racial discourse is framed in terms of victim narratives is material for another paper. Whether it's coming from internet discussions on Stormfront or literature from National Alliance or the National Socialist Movement, the idea is propagated that the future of Aryans and whites is in peril. Especially frightening is the seepage of such conceptions of white peril into the more mainstream hatemongering discourse that can find the president of the United States, in the words of Glenn Beck, to be someone "who has a deep-seated hatred for white people or the white culture" (Pettersen, 2009).

But the inability to talk about hate in general and racism in particular can have far-reaching consequences. As one former hate activist described it to me, "Underlying all this supposed advancement is yet another circle of animosity and resentment that, barring public discourse, can only one day break out in violence" (D. Caines [this is his chosen pseudonym], personal communication, January 2, 2008). In Caines' view, muting different racial experiences under the mantle of "tolerance" will just create more tension that will result in violence unless these different racial experiences are publicly addressed. Of course the argument has been made; the violence has begun, in the form of the symbolic violence of the everyday language of white racism, documented so well by Hill (2008). Part of white linguistic ideology concerns who can talk about race. Hill recognizes silence as part of white racist discourse, though not in the way it is referred to here. This discourse on white identity controlled and manipulated by white supremacists while non-supremacist whites silence themselves is consequential for examining the construction of white racialized identities and further developing an applied anthropology of hate.

## IV. LESSONS LEARNED: GETTING PERSONAL

The Conflict Resolution Task Force and the Boyertown Area Unity Coalition were organizations peopled by extraordinarily committed, professional, compassionate, and kind individuals. I was fortunate and privileged

enough to work actively with many of them as a volunteer and occasional leader of these organizations. As a local community member serving with these organizations, I was at times identified as a point person and interviewed by the media. I had a minor public profile. One day, in the spring of 2005, I received a call from a representative of a state agency asking whether I was sitting down. She told me that my and my partner's personal information had been posted on Bill White's hate website, Overthrow.com. I had reached a turning point. Because I was the mother of two young children and just beginning my university teaching career, I decided to step down from my somewhat public, anti-hate activist role. I, too, chose self-censorship. More than anything, this particular event threw into stark relief for me the privileges I unknowingly experienced as a white, heterosexual, practicing Christian woman. My empathy for friends who were victims of hate changed; I became more compassionate and understanding, but discovered I was much less brave. I looked for an "out" and ultimately found it by melding my experiences in community activism with my academic background in anthropology.

#### V. APPROACHING HATE AS A PRACTICE

The successful collaborations with individuals representing different interests and agencies inspired me to develop what I consider to be an applied anthropology course, "Hate Across Cultures." I have taught the class a total of four times at two different universities and have been impressed with the interest in the course expressed by students, faculty, and administrators. We begin with a global look at hate, and then narrow the focus to the United States, to Pennsylvania, and ultimately to southeastern Pennsylvania.

As an anthropologist, and not in opposition to, but perhaps in triangulation with, psychological and legal definitions of hate, I propose addressing hate as a cultural practice. Influenced by sociologist Kathleen Blee's (2002) work demonstrating that hate activity can occur in the absence of a fully developed ideology of hate, and by linguistic anthropologists Marjorie and Charles Goodwin's work on the socially-situated nature of emotions that recognizes that "affect is lodged within embodied sequences of actions" (2001, p. 243), I take hate to be socially and culturally situated practices intended to elevate the actor and to minimize or dehumanize the recipient.

The emotional component of hate cannot be denied. It affects the class I teach in many ways. First, hate, as an emotion, may not be a cultural universal. Do all cultures have hate? Second, hate as an emotion is not a precursor for hate activity. Third, emotions are being examined as situated

activities, located in the social world. Finally, the emotional response to hate activity by anti-racists, and, more relevant to this section, my students, can be prohibitive; for emotions can and do complicate social scientific discussions about dismantling organized hate and decreasing hate activity. Students in classes on hate appreciate having a way to examine hate from a social scientific perspective that allows them to get beyond their own emotional responses to the subject material.

In her research, Blee (2002) found that women in organized hate groups engage in hate activity without having a fully developed ideology of hate beliefs. Hate, it seems, is something to do. It's a practice, and a cultural one at that. This distinction has implications for how a community is to respond to hate. I recall one telephone conversation I had with someone who, in my estimation, is quite passionate about and genuine in the quest to eliminate hate and prejudice. There had been recent reports of vandalism and theft at several sites, including two churches. Graffiti at these sites included a swastika and racial epithets. While discussing these reports, the other person repeatedly stated that it sounded as if the crimes were committed by "angry people" who "act out." Although I don't dismiss the hypothesis, I do question the limited focus. If hate is an emotion, linked to anger, frustration, feelings of inadequacy, the focus of our attempts to combat it is on the individual who has the feelings and commits the acts. If we include the implications associated with hate as a practice, then we also must address the impact of hate or bias acts upon the community. Those who are victimized by such acts must be considered as well.

Goodwin and Goodwin (2001) argue that emotions are socially situated practices, and that "the relevant unit for the analysis of emotion is not the individual, or the semantic system of a language, but instead the sequential organization of the action" (p. 239). Even when we regard hate as an emotion, the Goodwins' work demonstrates that emotion does not lie in the body, but in the course of interaction in which it is made manifest. Emotions are experienced in socially situated practices. This notion directs us to expand analyses of hate to go beyond interviews, life histories, and psychological analyses to think creatively about methodologically and ethically challenging approaches that capture hate as emergent phenomena in naturally occurring human interaction.

## VI. TEACHING HATE CLASS

I teach at Kutztown University, one of fourteen schools in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. The university is located in Berks County and in a historically Pennsylvania German community. Nearly 98% of the 4,500 residents of the borough of Kutztown are white.

The University has more than twice the population of the borough with approximately 11,000 full and part-time students. Of the students, 86% identify as white. The borough and the university have different demographic characteristics. Kutztown University actively recruits non-white students and first-generation students and boasts a Multicultural Center, a Women's Center, and a GLBTQ Center.

I first taught what is known as "Hate Class" in the spring of 2007. This spring (2011) I am teaching it for the fourth time, and the class has become a permanent addition to the Kutztown University curriculum. Sixteen students were enrolled that first semester, and the current class is capped at 20 students and filled shortly after registration began. Students want to take this course. It is not, however, an easy course to teach or to take.

The assigned readings come from a diversity of disciplines, and I have made good use of the *Journal of Hate Studies*. There are three assigned monographs (Blee, 2002; Levin & Nolan, 2011; Neiwert, 2004) and numerous articles and chapters from edited texts. In my opinion, LaFont's (2009) analysis of LGBT-hate in Jamaica is a particularly powerful example of what an anthropology of hate might look like. Students respond well to Blazak's (2004) work on women's roles in assisting men out of organized hate groups. I find that Coloroso's (2007) proposition that bullying is on the same continuum as genocide induces great classroom discussion. We watch several films and documentaries, and students tend to be thoroughly engaged by *Two Towns of Jasper* (Dow & Williams, 2003). There are (too frequently) opportunities to bring in local, regional, national, and international news stories for discussion as well. Of local interest is the recent sentencing of the young men convicted of the 2008 hate crime murder of undocumented immigrant Luis Ramirez in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania.

Earlier I identified forms of silence as "censorship." Silence is relevant in the classroom, too. Because of the relatively small class size, class discussion is possible and sometimes extraordinary. At other times, there are long, uncomfortable moments of silence. I allow those silences for students to be comfortable or become uncomfortable in them. Most students do not have a well-developed vocabulary for talking about heterosexism or anti-Semitism, for example. They are given the opportunity to develop this vocabulary not just through the readings and the documentaries, but through a series of 10 two-to-three-page response papers that address a topic from the readings. I find that these writing assignments allow students to start developing their own voice in a dialogue with me. My comments on papers for this class are more contemplative and deliberate than those on papers for other classes. As the semester progresses, I begin to ask students whether they are willing to read their papers aloud to the class. At this point, the dialogue expands to include the classroom community. Toward the end of

the semester, I ask the students to review their response papers in the order in which they were written, so that they can reflexively encounter the development of their own ideas and opinions.

The semester is 15 weeks long, so the students are able to opt out of writing a response paper several times a semester. Some students need to take a break from the material, when it hits too close to home or when they have difficulty responding. We have also, unfortunately, been able to follow nationally-known hate cases as they have occurred during a semester.

The class is not, however, “all hate, all the time.” I invite guest speakers to come speak to the class. These speakers have included human relations experts, survivors of hate, school officials, and representatives from law enforcement. The students have an overwhelmingly positive response to these guest lectures, as they see that there are individuals and agencies that are responsible for decreasing hate and bias activity in the commonwealth and in their area. Students are positively affected by the guest lecturers, who speak of their experiences as victims, activists, and professionals. The guest lecturers encourage students to get involved locally, identifying steps students can take to combat hate and decrease intolerance of individuals and populations who are “othered.” These guest lecturers also inspire hope and optimism when it seems the course material suggests reasons for despair and pessimism. Students become optimistic regarding the future, and some, who have since graduated, have pursued careers that enable them to join the effort to reduce hate and bias activity. Other students find hope in the experiences of those once victimized by hate. This is especially significant for students who have been targeted by perpetrators of hate in the past. Similarly to Dan Savage’s “It Gets Better” project, these encounters with victims allow students to see “the happiness, potential, and positivity their lives will reach” (Smith, 2010, para. 2). Indeed, students who have since graduated have contacted me to let me know how the class has influenced decisions they have made regarding their careers and community involvement.

## VII. RESEARCHING THE IMPACT OF HATE

My experiences as an activist and an educator have led me to propose ethnographic research on hate activity. This is a departure for me in that the majority of my research has been in the field of language obsolescence. As an anthropologist trained in ethnographic methods, I would like to merge my vocation and my profession. I have listened to what others have said. One human relations expert tells communities they must ask, “Why here, why now?” when hate comes to town. The Anti-Defamation League requires communities and school districts participating in the No Place for

Hate® program to complete “self-assessments.” Another human relations consultant argues that cultural problems are different from racial problems. Victims say that the perpetrators of hate are ignorant. All of these voices from the field support the need for ethnographic research that addresses the community context, the historical context, and the practices and beliefs that allow for hate to be encouraged or discouraged.

I have recently submitted a grant to begin a pilot study, “Community Identity in Response to Hate and Bias Activity.” The primary goal of this pilot study is to explore and identify the ideas of community membership, identity, and sense of place expressed in a local town prior to, during, and after the occurrence of bias and hate incidents. A secondary goal is to apply the results of the research to assist other Pennsylvania communities in becoming proactive by preventing hate and bias activity and enabling people to respond more productively to hate and bias activity when it does occur. Using participant-observation, interviews, and historical documents as data, I plan to examine both public and private expressions of bias that reveal local understandings of what types of people are “allowed” to be members of the community in question. This is a formulation of the classic focus of anthropological inquiry: the identification of “the other.”

This research will be a collaborative effort, allowing student researchers the opportunity to gain anthropological insight on the aftermath of hate and its consequences for a community. By collaborating with students and conducting ethnographic research in two different communities, I hope to acquire data that will shed light on how best to address a given community’s needs prior to and in response to acts of hate. By applying the research to solve practical problems, I hope to return once again to activism. By telling one community’s story, I hope to redress the censorship of the past.

#### VIII. CONCLUSION: APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY OF HATE

An anthropology of hate is long overdue. Stern’s (2004) call for the involvement of anthropologists in the development of the field of hate studies has not been heeded sufficiently. Some of the problem has been a matter of kind, and not a matter of degree. Research into inequality, discrimination, and subjugation have been fundamental to the development of anthropology as practiced in the United States, beginning with Franz Boas, a founding father of American anthropology. Though most of the cultural anthropology of the mid 20th century can be characterized as the chronicling of non-Western cultures, the last quarter of the 20th century saw a surge in research on underrepresented peoples in Western societies, on the systemic forces of economic and social injustices as they are experienced

locally, and on the hegemonic power of discourse to construct and perpetuate inequality.

What would an anthropology of hate look like? Anthropology is a four-field discipline, including cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology, archaeology, and biological anthropology. A biological anthropology of hate might address the impact of hate practices on the health and nutrition of a given population, or the genetic implications of genocide. An archaeology of hate might examine the material record for hate practices through history. A linguistic anthropology of hate might examine contemporary discourse to address the symbolic capital of hate speech and its circulation among groups that “other” and within groups that are “othered.” A cultural anthropology of hate might focus on the intersection of local, national, and transnational processes of hate within specific communities to uncover how hate is perpetuated and transmitted. My hope would be that the findings from an anthropology of hate, no matter the subfield, would be applied to solve the problems that arise from hate practices. Three recent and noteworthy contributions to what could be considered a nascent anthropology of hate might be Jane Hill’s (2008) *The Everyday Language of White Racism*; David A. B. Murray’s (2009) edited collection, *Homophobias: Lust and Loathing Across Time and Space*; and the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology’s* forthcoming theme issue, “Racializing Discourses.”

In addition to increasing research on whiteness and the discursive perpetuation of white racism (Hill, 2008), we must begin to address the specific problem of hate in small communities in the U.S. If talking about whiteness automatically begins to deconstruct its hegemonic power, then talking about racism should automatically begin to deconstruct its hegemonic power. The threat to the privileged in small, white communities like the one identified in this paper is that by talking about hate, community members acknowledge its presence in their collective history. A hidden danger of talking about hate, rather than white racism or whiteness, is its evasive power. It is much easier to be anti-hate than to be anti-racist. To be anti-hate requires one to be in opposition to those who engage in easily identifiable hate practices and speech. To be anti-racist requires one to be in opposition to practices that are so embedded within the privileged community that they are nearly invisible to those who claim to resist them.

The town I write about has made progress over the years and is committed to teaching the consequences of hate to its children through education and community programs. People are beginning to learn how to speak about hate, race, and racism with more insight and ease, though other forms of explicit discrimination and deep prejudices remain. As for myself, a white anthropologist, I must reflect and ask: Am I empowered to un-censor

myself because the issue is hate and not whiteness? Hate and not heterosexuality? Hate and not citizenship? Framing anti-racist activism in terms of hate gets more people on board, but it minimizes their responsibility, and indeed, their complicity in the underlying story of white racism.

#### NOTE

Most of the acts of hate and bias addressed in this paper are racist acts perpetrated by whites against (perceived) African Americans. This is not to diminish hate and bias activities directed toward people based on actual or perceived religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical disability, marital status, or housing status.

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