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The Journal of Hate Studies is published annually by the Gonzaga University Institute for Hate Studies. The purpose of the Journal is to promote the sharing of interdisciplinary ideas and research relating to the study of what hate is, where it comes from, and how to combat it. The Gonzaga University Institute for Hate Studies is operated under the auspices of Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. The views expressed in the Journal are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Gonzaga University Institute for Hate Studies, Gonzaga University, the institutions with which the authors are affiliated, or the editors.

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Conference Announcement and Call for Papers

The Journal of Hate Studies (JHS)
Volume 11, No. 1 (2012/13)
Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Hate Studies

Deadlines:
Full Final Draft Paper for Submission to JHS: March 1, 2013

- Conference Theme -

The Pursuit of Justice:
Understanding Hatred, Confronting Intolerance,
Eliminating Inequality

Sponsored by the Gonzaga University School of Law, the Gonzaga University Institute for Hate Studies, and the Washington State Task Force on Race and the Criminal Justice System

Gonzaga University School of Law
Spokane, WA USA
April 18-20, 2013

CONFERENCE DESCRIPTION

This conference brings together the leading interdisciplinary academic forum on hate and directly related social problems with the combined social justice leadership of the Gonzaga Law School and the Washington Task Force on Race and the Criminal Justice System.

This pairing provides opportunities to align interests in understanding and addressing fear and ignorance of the "other" with interests in how these conditions manifest in hatred, intolerance, and inequality. The conversation will center on how these problems affect the pursuit of justice, approached through the lenses of research, education, practice, and advocacy.

Select conference proceedings will be published in the Journal of Hate Studies, the international interdisciplinary peer-reviewed scholarly journal operated by the Gonzaga University Institute for Hate Studies.

We are particularly interested to receive conference paper proposals and article submissions that engage the conference theme, including but not limited to the following topics:

- The roots of "othering" in fear or ignorance, the manifestation of "othering" in hatred, intolerance, or inequality, and how these problems persist and are propagated within institutions, social dynamics, and areas of law and policymaking
- New, emerging, or time-tested theories, concepts, practices, and lines of inquiry for understanding and challenging hatred, intolerance, or inequality in pursuit of justice
• What various academic and professional fields teach us about the pursuit of justice in relation to hatred, intolerance, inequality, and bias, and how to integrate and utilize those insights in multiple contexts and callings
• Context-specific or comparative analyses of manifestations of hate or intolerance within or across cultures and countries, and processes or methods by which individuals or groups can evaluate, better recognize, and reject hateful or intolerant attitudes, actions, beliefs, and speech
• Comparative analyses of criminal justice systems within or across regions and countries in terms of racial bias, intolerance, or inequality, and knowledge-elevation on connections between racial bias, crime, and disparate treatment within those systems
• Innovative or demonstrably effective responses to acts of hate or bias (e.g. racial bias, homophobia, religious intolerance) committed within schools, businesses, local communities, national governments, or global structures as advancing peace, acceptance, tolerance, and justice
• The leadership role or potential of specific sectors and vocations (law enforcement, non-profit organizations, primary and secondary education, higher education, business, etc.) in challenging individual or organized activities, practices, or policies of hatred or intolerance (e.g. hate speech, hate/bias crime)
• Solutions and strategies for changing policies, laws, and practices that sustain or encourage hate, intolerance, or inequality (e.g. racial bias/race-influenced decision-making in the criminal justice system), and for building effective cross-sector relations for change/reform

PAPER PROPOSAL AND ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

All conference paper proposals, including a 250-word abstract, are due December 1, 2012. Notification of acceptance/rejection will be made by December 31, 2012. Full final draft articles submitted for publication consideration are due March 1, 2013. Articles should be 5,000-10,000 words, with formatting and citations conforming to APA (6th edition) or Bluebook (19th edition).

Paper proposals and articles may be either individually or jointly authored, and may be either academic (scholarship or other research) or practitioner-focused (e.g., technical or professional) in orientation. Paper proposals and article submissions should represent unique, original, or substantially original work not previously published elsewhere, and may include work in progress.

Selection processes for publication will be competitive and, due to space and resource constraints, it will not be possible to publish all submitted papers. Those whose articles the JHS selects for publication will work directly with the JHS editorial staff, subject to its publication policies and procedures. Review carefully the submission guidelines for the Journal of Hate Studies. (http://www.gonzaga.edu/hatestudies).

Full conference details, including how to register and how to submit a proposals or article, are available at http://gonzaga.edu/pursuitofjustice. Direct any question about the Journal of Hate Studies to Dr. John Shuford, Director, Gonzaga University Institute for Hate Studies (hatestudies@gonzaga.edu).
Preface

On behalf of the Gonzaga University Institute for Hate Studies, I am pleased to offer you Volume 10 of the *Journal of Hate Studies* (JHS), which is devoted to the theme “Hate and Political Discourse.” This is, in many ways, a special volume, and 2012-2013 is a special year too. We celebrate the 125th Anniversary of Gonzaga University, the Centennial Anniversary of the Gonzaga University School of Law, the 15th Anniversary of the Institute for Hate Studies, and the 10th Anniversary of the JHS. We mark these special occasions in three ways: the present volume; a special symposium held in Washington, DC in September 2012 to accompany this volume; and the international conference in April 2013 that will provide the contents of Volume 11.

*About the Present Volume*

This is the first volume of the JHS helmed by a guest editor. Robert L. Tsai, Professor of Law at the Washington College of Law, American University in Washington, DC, has performed this role exceptionally and assembled an excellent collection of peer-reviewed, original articles on our theme. Professor Tsai is an innovative, interdisciplinary voice in the areas of constitutional law, theory, and history, as well as wider currents of legal history and democratic theory. His first book, *Eloquence and Reason: Creating a First Amendment Culture,* “theorizes the rise of Americans’ modern First Amendment value system and the role of courts in sustaining that system.” His current research explores overlooked and failed constitutions as moments in the exercise of popular sovereignty within the American context. Of particular interest in Hate Studies, Professor Tsai considers racial constitutionalism in the Pacific Northwest, including the post-Aryan Nations tactical and philosophical movement to recover first principles of constitutional order and stake a claim to the American political tradition.

My deepest thanks go to Professor Tsai for all he has contributed to the growth of Hate Studies and to the advancement of the JHS as a primary venue for academic scholarship on hatred. This includes the special symposium on “Hate and Political Discourse,” held on September 27, 2012 at the Washington College of Law, American University. All of the authors published in the present volume were invited to Washington, DC to participate in this election-season event, which American University also made accessible worldwide through live and recorded streaming video. The symposium marks the first-ever JHS special event, the Institute’s first collaboration with another university, and thus the Institute’s first activity
ever to be held at another university. What a way to mark the first 10 years of the JHS and embark on the next decade!

Volume 10 begins with Professor Tsai’s Introduction and continues with two articles that attempt to trace origins or root causes of hatred. In “The Individual Psychology of Group Hate,” Willa Michener of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for International Studies seeks to advance understanding of one of the thorniest questions for Hate Studies: whether hate is an inborn capacity or some manner of learned attitude, emotion, or behavior. Focusing on the phenomena of group hate and the problem of revenge taken against members of the perpetrator’s group (rather than the original perpetrator), Dr. Michener points out that although groups are culturally defined, the tendency to relate to groups is universal. While the identity of the group, including the group regarded as “the enemy” is learned, the construct of “the enemy” is an inherited category. With reference to ingroup/outgroup behavioral dynamics and the context of attacking or being attacked, Michener argues that ingroup members are prepared to experience an entire outgroup as “the enemy” and to be similarly experienced by outgroups as well.

“Irrationalism: The Foundation of Hate Propaganda” by Robert Lanning of Mt. St. Vincent University in Nova Scotia, Canada, also seeks out root causes of hatred. Dr. Lanning turns to the thought of major figures in the Frankfurt School of Continental philosophy and critical theory to examine hate propaganda “in terms of its basis in irrationalism as a philosophical orientation.” The point is not that hate propaganda—its methods, strategies, and chosen targets—is irrational. Rather, hate propaganda’s reliance on irrationalism as a philosophical orientation both contributes to its effectiveness (as it appeals to and foments irrationality) and presents “a limitation to thought and analysis.”

Read side by side, Michener’s and Lanning’s theses support several important implications. While we might be able to address the problem of emnification by broadening the ingroup, the tendency to regard outgroups and their members as “the other” and “the enemy” is more persistent and difficult to address. When we scan world history and recent events, we see how cultural signifiers and political discourse may be manipulated effectively to either shrink or expand the ingroup, and to delineate outgroups either precisely or broadly. Anxiety over increasing pluralism and allocation of blame onto “minorities,” for example, reflect ingroup/outgroup and zero-sum game concepts, and perhaps nativist, nationalist or racist beliefs too. However, such beliefs and conceptualizations do not automatically give rise to hate-filled political response; rather, such response is the product of political and cultural activities that manipulate beliefs and conceptualizations by presenting both a threatening “enemy” and a proposed
solution—attacking the “enemy” (e.g., for protective, defensive, galvanizing, or purifying ends). By creating or enhancing the sense of “the other” as “the enemy” that seeks to attack, and therefore warrants attack, it is possible to mobilize oppositional identities and campaigns of violent hatred. Political and other social institutions often participate actively in these dynamics or at least accept them tacitly.

Hate propaganda is particularly effective transforming fear of “the other” into oppositional hatred of “the enemy,” and here we offer Marla Stone’s essay “Italian Fascism’s Soviet Enemy and the Propaganda of Hate, 1941-1943.” Dr. Stone, a Fellow of the Stanford University Center for Advanced Behavioral Studies and Professor of History at Occidental College, traces the use and development of terrifying anti-Soviet propaganda by Italy’s fascist regime within its efforts to mobilize Italian popular support for the Axis war against Soviet Russia. In her article, Stone argues that the fascists used “a barrage of images intended to terrify the Italian population and rally it in a deep hatred of the Soviet ‘other’” and drew upon “deep-seated stereotypes about Russian lack of civilization, immutable biological flaws, and more recent tropes about Bolshevik barbarism and immoral ideology.” The fascist government and party turned to these cultural signifiers to depict “the communist” as fascism’s historic enemy and, more terrifyingly, a “racially degenerate, godless peril from the East bent on the destruction of Western civilization and on the desecration of the Italian family and the Catholic faith.”

Whether “the enemy” is external or internal, its fearsomeness, and thus the hate to which “the enemy” is subject, reflects its construction as degraded, defiled, and destructive; a menace that cannot be subdued with less than controlling, triumphant engagement supported by political action and violence. In “Blood on the Tongue: Reading Abjection in Nationalist Blood Libels from Nazi Germany to Hamas and the British National Party,” Damon Berry of the Ohio State University offers a novel comparative lens for this set of political and politico-religious nationalist examples, which he reads through French feminist Julia Kristeva’s theorization of abjection. Berry brings out “more overtly politicized” contemporary manifestations of blood libel in nationalist contexts and, through Kristeva’s theorization, its malleability for affiliation to groups “signified as alien” within the majority/minority discourses of modern nation-states. In providing a discursive structure for relating “personal and communal fears about pollution and dissolution,” Berry contends, nationalist blood libel operates as “a folk reification mechanism which allows the segmentation of friend/enemy camps, rationalizes anxieties along lines of protectionism, and thereby mobilizes affects into political and often violent action.”

Continuing with the problem of anti-Islamism and contemporary Brit-
ish nationalisms, Jon Garland and James Treadwell, criminologists at the University of Leicester, England, contribute the article “The New Politics of Hate? An Assessment of the Appeal of the English Defence League Amongst Disadvantaged White Working Class Communities in England.” Garland and Treadwell focus on recent violent clashes in the United Kingdom involving “white and south Asian males, anti-fascist demonstrators, and the police,” surrounding the growth and activities of the English Defence League (EDL), a right extremist group that identifies as opposing “radical Islam.” Within Britain’s “post-politics” political and socioeconomic environment, mainstream political discourses have failed to reach out to “some segments of England’s marginalized and disenfranchised white working class,” the authors note. Garland and Treadwell find that some populations have turned to the EDL as a means in order to air their anger over socioeconomic and political disparities, which is focused on an “Islamic other” rather than on the classes and systems that give rise to and maintain such disparities.

An important area of inquiry for Hate Studies is the range of roles that non-political social and legal institutions play, or may play, in relation to hateful political regimes, including non-interference with such regimes, as well as intervention against them, within political order. Sometimes such regimes may depict the fearsome “enemy” not as a foreign, external threat, but rather as a racialized “other” within. In “Constitutionalizing Anarchy: Liberalism, Lynching, and the Law,” Daniel Kato, a political scientist at Kalamazoo College, finds in American legal history a powerful example of what he contends is the commensurability of liberalism and illiberalism within intersecting legal, political, cultural, and geographic spaces. Supported by a careful review and reassessment of specific case law, Dr. Kato contends that the U.S. Supreme Court once maintained an active policy of non-interference toward the particular racial violence of lynching. Although the Court did not strip the federal government of authority to enforce applicable law, it nonetheless acquitted lynchers and did not hold accountable those states where lynching persisted. Kato claims that the Court’s lynching jurisprudence carved out legally bounded regions or “zones” of lawlessness. The practice of lynching as racial terror received tacit acceptance (rather than explicit sanction) by law, and the Court’s non-interference stance in “zones” of lawlessness extended not only to illegal conduct and non-support for federal enforcement, but also to the specific geographic regions where lynching was prevalent, thus giving meaning to Kato’s construct of “constitutionalizing anarchy.”

Prevailing sociopolitical and economic conditions may influence the incidence, targets, and perpetrators of hate crimes, as well as the scope, dimension, and efficacy of legal responses to hate crimes. In “Defining
Characteristics and Politicising Victims: A Legal Perspective,” Jennifer Schweppé of the University of Limerick School of Law, Ireland, adopts a comparative approach to identify and discuss specific legislative challenges and problems involved in crafting or amending hate crimes law. With attention to the common law jurisdictions of England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland, and Canada, Schweppé problematizes political inconsistencies that shape legal systems and render hate crimes legislation and legislative activity discriminatory, exclusionary, and politically charged as to which crimes and victims receive coverage and which do not. In seeking to establish a normative platform for the development of hate crimes statutes in various common law systems, Schweppé turns to the recent legislative experiences of the United States and the specific examples of criminal defense of provocation and equality legislation.

Even if our tendencies to identify groups and regard “the other” as “the enemy” happen to be inherited rather than chosen, important questions remain regarding what to do with those tendencies and how to live in response to them. Hate crimes legislation and enforcement offer one important range of responses, but many others reside in realms such as moral theory, youth education, and cultural and artistic expression. These other realms may have much to offer in terms of bolstering and advancing civil discourse and democratic participation. In “Combating Hate Through Young Adult Literature,” Rachel Dean-Ruzicka brings together influences in moral psychology and imagination, normative ethics, metaethics, and moral development as she considers whether young adult literature, and specific subgenres that include Neo-Nazi characters, might help readers “look beyond tolerance toward a cosmopolitan ethics of difference as a more sophisticated position for discouraging and combating hatred.” Dean-Ruzicka, a Brittain Postdoctoral Fellow of Literature, Communication, and Culture at the Georgia Institute of Technology, points to the moral influence of narrative and literature in developing relational sensibilities, encountering varieties of moral personality, and discerning which values are—or are not—“worth living by.” On principled, consequential, and relational levels, Dean-Ruzicka questions a prevailing normative deference to tolerance (accompanied by a frequent association with cultural relativism) for its adequacy in combating hate, discouraging violence, and promoting values “worth living by.” Young adult literature that features Neo-Nazi and other white supremacist characters provides tools to “assess values that are not worth living by” and perhaps to develop a cosmopolitan ethics of difference, one that neither erodes “otherness” nor elides the distinction between “the other” and “the enemy.”

The volume concludes with a side-by-side review of two recent books, Thomas Pegram’s academically oriented One Hundred Percent American:
The Rebirth and Decline of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s and Arthur Goldwag’s journalistically pursued The New Hate: A History of Fear and Loathing on the Populist Right. The reviews come courtesy of Rebecca Barrett-Fox, Professor of Sociology at Hesston College, book review editor for the Journal of Hate Studies and noted expert on the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas. The texts are timely, as is Dr. Barrett-Fox’s lens for reviewing them. Barrett-Fox notes that the number of organized hate groups in the United States has increased over the past decade, contemporaneous with a rightward, more violent shift in American political discourse, both in rhetoric and tone. “The broad threat,” she asserts, is “the shift toward behaviors . . . and rhetoric that undermine democratic participation and civil discourse.” Reading Pegram’s and Goldwag’s new texts side-by-side, Barrett Fox draws an ambivalent set of conclusions. Those who are social targets of hatred may find no comfort in the predictability across time and region of the politics of hate and the political activism of hate groups. Similarly, those who measure social justice and social change progress in terms of eradicating longstanding phenomena of hate-based politics will likely find this predictability depressing. On the flip side, the predictability of the politics of hate and the political activism of hate groups may turn out to be “useful, for it provides a guide to the concerns of those who participate in hate groups, concerns that can then be defused via (anti-hate) activism.” Indeed, we can engage in in-depth and comparative studies of how hate movements begin, become politically organized and operational, and ultimately decline.

The Journal of Hate Studies: The First Decade, the Next Decade

The publication of Volume 10 and the special symposium on “Hate and Political Discourse” mark crucial steps forward in a journey begun 10 years ago, when the Gonzaga University Institute for Hate Studies (then the Institute for Action Against Hate) introduced the inaugural volume of the Journal of Hate Studies.

Professor George Critchlow of the Gonzaga University School of Law served as the Institute’s first director and later as the JHS’s founding editor. In his Preface to Volume 1, Professor Critchlow described the trajectory of the Journal as providing a “vehicle for sharing insights from diverse perspectives about what hate is, and what to do about it” and linking a multidisciplinary array of authors, including “academics, professionals, activists, (and) others who have something significant to contribute to the evolving field of ‘Hate Studies.’”

Since then, the JHS has published dozens of peer-reviewed articles coming from law, political science, sociology, religious studies, compara-
tive literature, education, philosophy, ethnic studies, American studies, criminology, psychology, anthropology, social psychology, history, international studies, critical theory, evolutionary psychology, Judaic studies, and other academic fields and disciplines. We have published the work of leading scholars on the study of hate, including Kathleen Blee, Barbara Perry, Neil Chakraborti, Randy Blazak, Steven Leonard Jacobs, and more. We have seen scholars engage an ever-widening scope of issues, questions, topics, problems, and methods. In recent years, we have seen marked increases in the number of articles submitted to the Journal, as well as the number of countries and continents from which submissions come to us. We take these trends as signs that many people worldwide are “doing Hate Studies” and that the impact of Hate Studies continues to grow.

In addition to promoting and bringing together leading academic scholarship on “what hate is, and what to do about it,” the JHS continues to provide a venue for the voices of leading practitioners, professional and policy experts, human rights activists, religious and spiritual figures, educators, and others. We have published interviews with Nobel Peace Prize nominee Izzeldin Abuelaish, human rights activist Nonie Darwish, Morris Dees of the Southern Poverty Law Center, anti-racism expert Jane Elliott, Holocaust survivor Eva Mozes-Kor, Geshe Thupten Phelgye of the Universal Compassion Movement and the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, and Carl Wilkens, the only American who chose to remain in Rwanda during the genocide and who saved hundreds of lives. We have brought our readers bibliographies, poetry, book and film reviews, and student scholarship. We have also published the proceedings from two International Conferences on Hate Studies. For Volume 11, we will again devote the pages of the Journal of Hate Studies to that endeavor. On April 18-20, 2013, the Institute for Hate Studies, the Gonzaga University School of Law, and the Washington State Task Force on Race and the Criminal Justice System will host “The Pursuit of Justice: Understanding Hatred, Confronting Intolerance, Eliminating Inequality.” This collaborative conference links the 3rd International Conference on Hate Studies and the 2nd Conference on Race and the Criminal Justice System.

In doing so, we bring together the leading interdisciplinary academic forum on hate and directly related social problems with the combined social justice leadership of the Gonzaga Law School and the Washington State Task Force. The pairing of the Institute for Hate Studies, the Gonzaga Law School, and the Washington State Task Force will provide presenters and attendees with opportunities to align interests in understanding and addressing fear and ignorance of the “other” with interests in how these conditions manifest in hatred, intolerance, and inequality. The conversation will center on how these problems affect the pursuit of justice. For more information
about “The Pursuit of Justice,” including conference registration options and the Call for Papers/Proposals, visit http://gonzaga.edu/pursuitofjustice. We hope to see you in Spokane in April 2013!

In Gratitude

The publication of JHS Volume 10 also marks another important transition, though this one is bittersweet. This is the last volume with which Joanie Eppinga will be directly involved in editorial production. Ms. Eppinga has worn many hats over the years, as everything from copy editor to editor to points in between. No matter what the role, she has always performed it with wisdom, skill, and surpassing grace. She will continue to contribute special interviews, and we hope to see her name in the bylines of book and film reviews too. For not only is Joanie Eppinga a talented editor, she is an excellent writer with a clear voice and keen insight for Hate Studies.

John Shuford, J.D., Ph.D.
Managing Editor, Journal of Hate Studies
Director, Gonzaga University Institute for Hate Studies
Introduction: The Politics of Hate

Robert L. Tsai
American University Washington College of Law

The interdisciplinary study of hatred, as a distinctive social phenomenon, is relatively new to the academy. In the past, one could expect the political ramifications of hate to be subsumed, and often dissipated, within the separate disciplinary machinery exerted upon the subjects of study. This special volume brings politics front and center. It does so by collecting essays that assess the psychology, motivations, organization, tactics, and ends of hate. The weight of the essays suggests that hatred possesses a deeply instrumental genesis, structure, and operation. Collectively, the articles insist that, whatever its origins or precise psychological mechanism, hate is driven by processes toward outward-directed ends. It is mobilized through politics and institutions, and its potency can either be contained or nurtured by the rule of law.

A working understanding of the dynamics of hate is helpful as a starting point, though agreement may not be necessary as to its precise origins. Taking an anthropological and psychological approach, Willa Michener roots hate in primitive behavior learned through early acts of group revenge. As time went on and the world became more complex, hate too acquired more intricate trappings without shedding its underlying function of identifying enemies as a self-defense strategy. Thus understood, hate emerges as a necessary byproduct of social organization, giving rise to an inherited set of emotions, mindsets, and responses arising in tandem with the formation and maintenance of social groups. If Michener is correct, human beings may have “a special propensity for learning hatreds from others,” and at some basic level hate itself may be ineradicable. One of Michener’s conclusions is that within a Western legal system predicated on “a marketplace of ideas,” the heritability thesis suggests that “prejudice may have its thumb on the scales in that market, and prejudice may be backed by adaptations for enmity.”

If Michener sees hate as a form of rational self-interest, Robert Lanning treats hate as an intellectual system prizing irrationality. Embracing the work of 20th century anti-fascist thinkers, Lanning argues that hate propaganda works because it rests on the foundation of irrationalism as its philosophical orientation. Yet irrationalism is more than the absence of reason. More precisely, irrationalism comprises a network of beliefs and moods rejecting a “scientific attitude,” adopting an unreflective experience and perception of social reality, and affirming tribal mechanisms such as race, family, and nation to guard against the consequences of Enlighten-
ment ideals. For Lanning, this ideological structure underlies the positions taken in contemporary debates to promote “genetic, separatist, and nationalist goals.” Thus stated, the politics of hatred can theoretically be harnessed by either the Left or the Right. Lanning’s work highlights the importance of studying the historical development of ideas. Like Michener, Lanning suggests that there may be more continuity than difference in how the politics of hate may be structured.

Whether the politics of hate is born out of a deep desire for revenge or a reaction against democratic reason, few would disagree that it has a distinctive structure. What, then, can we learn about the contours of hatred as a form of political discourse? The next series of articles reminds us that the state is an important participant in the marketplace of ideas—at times, it is even the leading producer of hateful ideas. Marla Stone treats hatred as a set of cultural constructs and images to be packaged and disseminated by state officials, and consumed by average citizens. Employing the propaganda of Italian Fascism in the 1940s as a historical case study, she analyzes how pamphlets, radio, and movies dehumanized the communist enemy as godless, brutal, and racially degenerate, and therefore worthy of extermination. The fascist politics of hate presented justifications for official policies at the same time they stoked private anxieties. These efforts to shape public sentiment not only mobilized Italians for war, but also created independent reasons to fight on even when Italy’s allies faced defeat. Stone’s piece suggests that, under the right circumstances, already deeply-seated values, fears, and cultural constructs can be harnessed for state-sponsored aggression directed at a dehumanized enemy. Stone’s work raises interesting questions: In what senses might war be a special case for the politics of hate? Beyond the circumstances of armed conflict, just what kind of conditions are necessary to create an environment in which propaganda can flourish?

Stone’s work points the way toward invigorated study of the interactions between political discourses and their cultural sources, as well as a greater emphasis on recurring tropes and tactics. Probing antisemitism, Damon Berry examines the persistent myth of blood libel: Jews who allegedly killed Christians to consume their blood or use it in dark rituals. Berry locates this legend, which arose in Europe, within the never-ending political interactions between political majorities and minorities. He analyzes how this myth has been used for nationalistic purposes, and for working through anxieties about insurgent minorities. Once unleashed in a society, this folk tale can simply be updated with new subjects of fascination and derision. Berry contends that the Islamist has replaced the Jew in narratives of national survival in Britain and the United States.

New tactics and social organizations comprise the subject of James
Garland’s and James Treadwell’s research. The authors chart the rise of the English Defence League, an ostensibly “human rights” organization with its genesis in the soccer subculture. Despite having a progressive agenda, it has nevertheless emerged as a vehicle through which disgruntled working-class white men have expressed their general political discontent, but primarily by blaming radical Islam. Since 2009, the EDL has joined other far-right groups in using technology to schedule “flash mobs” and protests against “Islamic extremism” and Sharia law. EDL activists, who sport a Crusader’s shield as part of their insignia, have been involved in clashes with other demonstrators, the police, and pro-Islam groups. This dissonance could simply be seen as a gap between the EDL’s leadership and its rank-and-file, but Garland and Treadwell argue that the group’s pro-equality official positions should be seen as tactical only, a way of posturing as a mainstream organization when in fact it is dedicated to defending the “Christian culture” and “way of life.” The authors suggest that EDL members oppose New Labor immigration policies, but choose to scapegoat its beneficiaries.

The more such an alternative organization appears to express authentic but latent attitudes and policies, the greater its potential for acquiring democratic influence. A question then arises about institutional transformation: Will the EDL remain an organization at the margins, content with expressing traditional values or contemporary fears, or will it try to become a mainstream movement and organization with enhanced political clout? Such questions of identity and goals echo in other democracies, but especially in the United States, where the Tea Party movement jousts with established organizations as it struggles with the competing desires for authenticity and influence.

Because social groups involved in practicing the politics of hate arise partly in response to legal and policy developments, then the role of law must also be investigated. The law can discredit the politics of hate and raise the costs on its practitioners, or the law can nurture efforts to demonize vulnerable communities. Turning to the American experience, Daniel Kato offers a withering criticism of the U.S. Supreme Court’s role in allowing the lynching of blacks to persist. Kato provocatively argues that the Court tried to manage competing concerns by “constitutionalizing anarchy,” tolerating lawless behavior while reserving ultimate juridical authority over the matter. Within such a legally demarcated zone, racial hatred and extra-legal justice continued unabated. The case over the justices’ motivations is complicated, of course, by their differing jurisprudential commitments concerning federalism, individual rights, and the proper scope of the Fourteenth Amendment. But Kato argues that, seen within a broader, more reactionary politics, the Court’s legal rulings simultaneously reflected
and fostered the federal government’s “fluctuating disengagement” with the problem of racial violence. For the most part, the issue of race was cast as a matter of local concern, leaving civil rights laws and constitutional protections dormant until the political climate became more congenial to federal civil rights enforcement. In Kato’s telling, the Supreme Court’s troubled jurisprudence is best explained by political conditions external to the justices, rather than by a purely philosophical disagreement.

As hate has increasingly been perceived as a major threat to the modern pluralistic nation-state, the people have increasingly turned to the law as an instrument for fostering new norms. Hate crimes statutes are a prominent manifestation of this recognition. But as Jennifer Schweppe observes, legislative debates over anti-hate crimes laws generate their own types of challenges. The definition of victim classes itself is politically fraught, subject to the idiosyncrasies of lobbying and drafting, and the process of codifying hierarchies of victims can induce resentment among those not included. To reduce such problems, Schweppe recommends that elected officials craft more generalized anti-bias laws that would define a hate crime as one in which the assailant was motivated by hostility towards a victim “because of [his or her] personal characteristics (or presumed characteristics), characteristics of which he or she shares with an identifiable social group.” Examples of such acts of hate (e.g., based on race or sex) would then serve as presumptive characteristics for the jury to consider, but not binding on decision makers.

Antagonistic exchanges in the arena of formal politics may be reduced through Schweppe’s proposal, or they might simply be displaced into other bodies. Prosecutors and juries would have enhanced powers to determine the actual scope of anti-bias statutes, and could very well do so in less transparent and accountable fashion. Whatever the case, Schweppe’s article suggests that in configuring legal strategies to deal with the politics of hate, the solution involves tradeoffs. Which approach will create legal sanctions for hateful acts while minimizing destructive cycles of resentment? And which institutions are most competent to assess the claims of democratic justice entailed in anti-bias laws? Turning the problem of hate over to the judicial domain ensures an ongoing deliberation and refinement of solutions. Surely there are efficiency gains to be had. But courts are not divorced from the political environment, and legal outcomes might still stoke outrage outside of the courtroom.

If Kato and Schweppe are correct that the law is a double-edged instrument in confronting the politics of hate, then other methods must be considered as supplemental antidotes. Rachel Dean-Ruzicka’s work explores young adult literature as a means of pushing beyond liberalism’s ideal of tolerance so as to more effectively attack hate. According to the author, the
foundational tenet of toleration teaches citizens a form of cultural relativism in which hateful worldviews are allowed to gain a footing as equivalent sets of ideals to live by. Through realistic depictions of young people faced with moral dilemmas, books can dramatize how socially divisive and violent ideologies have to be challenged rather than ignored, even at great personal cost. Community action and individual transformation can lead either to human misery or to the protection of human dignity, and literature can powerfully illustrate the benefits of democratic engagement. The pursuit of illiberal agendas, too, which can appear tantalizing to adolescents, nevertheless exacts a toll on family relationships, friendships, job prospects, and reputation. Assuming the effectiveness of literature in combating hate, the task then becomes determining when and how to expose students to these civic themes.

It would be foolish to summarize all of the potential lines of inquiry begun by this collection of essays. Yet a few preliminary observations are warranted. It would be a mistake to put all of one’s resources into reshaping the formal law. The rule of law, which does not trickle down to most of the human interactions in society, relies on other media and social organizations to reinforce norms of equality and participation. At best, the law in most democratic societies structures debates at the highest level of generality, leaving significant latitude for practitioners of hateful politics and their opponents to vie for dominance. And it is the exchanges in such spaces (both in public and underground) that ultimately determine the vitality of illiberal programs.
The Individual Psychology of Group Hate

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ABSTRACT

Revenge is often taken against people who were not perpetrators of the original offense, provided that they belong to the perpetrator’s group. People react as if they believed that if one member of a group attacked, then they all did or would. Groups are culturally defined, though the tendency to relate to them is universal. It is proposed that “the enemy” is an inherited category while the identity of the groups placed into that category is learned. Enemies are subject to hate, fear, and coldness (the inhibition of empathy). We are prepared to experience an entire outgroup as “enemy” if any of them attack us. We anticipate the same reaction in outgroups by experiencing them as “enemy” when any of us attack them. We mirror fellow ingroup members’ hatreds.

Keywords: hatred, ethnocentrism, racism, misia, xenophobia, hate crime

On September 11, 2001, after the South Tower at the World Trade Center fell and while the North Tower still stood burning, a caller to the Howard Stern radio program in New York City said this:

Howard, I’ll tell you what. The first second I hear on the news that it has anything to do with a towelhead or a dothead bastard I’m gonna go out there and start goin’ to those A-rab stores and I’m gonna start kickin’ ass . . . get those assholes out of the whole freakin’ neighborhood [here the hosts interrupt to say “Stop it, stop it . . . ” but the caller goes on] and I implore all Americans to get your arms together, baby, get out there on the streets and go to your local freakin’ deli [Here the radio host hangs up on him, saying to the audience “He’s just upset” and the co-host says “I know but he’s an idiot.”].

Another caller said:

Whoever claims this whether we have proof or not just freakin’ annihilate
the country. Don’t worry about the kids, the old people. Just freakin’ wipe the country out . . . You see how they wiped out the twin towers. Wipe out the country! Babies? Who cares about their babies?

One of the hosts responded:

Yeah no one cares about their babies. Not me! (From a recording of the September 11, 2001 broadcast)

The hosts went on to advocate annihilating the entire population of Afghanistan or any other country that might be harboring terrorists.

Four days later, Balbir Singh Sodhi was shot to death as he planted flowers outside his filling station in Mesa, Arizona. News accounts stated blandly that Frank Roque killed him in revenge for the attacks of September 11 (Gallegus, 2001). They did not explain why Roque had targeted a person who was not a perpetrator of the 9/11 crimes. It was assumed that readers would already know that people take revenge against innocents who belong to the same group as a guilty person. It was pointed out that Roque got his victim’s group membership wrong, since Balbir Singh Sodhi was neither Muslim nor Arab. On the same day, a Pakistani Muslim was shot to death in Dallas, Texas, and an Egyptian Christian was killed in San Gabriel, California (Mozingo, 2001; Vaishnav, 2001).

These murders could be called third-party revenge because the victims were not involved in the original offense, either as perpetrator or as victim. They were third parties. Third-party revenge has also been called “vicarious retribution” (Lickel, Miller, Stenstrom, Denson, & Schmader, 2006). It appears in many cultures.

In Rwanda, the Hutu genocide against Tutsis began hours after the assassination of President Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu (Des Forges, 1999). Hutu Power leaders blamed the murder on the Tutsi-dominated rebel force, though the accusation was never proved. When Straus (2003) interviewed self-confessed genocidaires in prison afterwards, 70% gave the Habyarimana murder as a reason for the genocide. One man put it succinctly: “We killed them because they were Tutsi and because the Tutsi had killed Habyarimana” (Straus, 2003, p. 8). Straus summarizes the logic of this as “all Tutsi had to be blamed for the killing of Habyarimana” (p. 8). Tutsi babies were killed too (Des Forges, 1999). Perhaps the Hutu Power leaders had anticipated these events; certainly they had prepared for the genocide in advance (Des Forges, 1999; Powers, 2002). It is possible that they killed Habyarimana themselves and accused the Tutsi of having done it in order to provoke the reaction (Des Forges, 1999).

On February 27, 2002, the Sarbamatı Express train stopped in the town
of Godhra in India. Its passengers were Hindu activists returning from a pilgrimage to the disputed Babri Mosque/Ram Temple site in Ayodhya. Some of the passengers taunted a Muslim vendor at the train station. The dispute escalated until local Muslims set fire to the train, killing 58 people. The next day, other Hindus conducted a pogrom against other Muslims. Hindu extremists of Ahmedabad raped Muslim women, then cut them and burned them to death. In all, hundreds of men, women, and children were killed. The Muslims of Ahmedabad were said to be surprised and uncomprehending (Human Rights Watch, 2002; ur Rahman, 1998; Varshney, 2002).

When David Blumenfeld was a schoolboy in New York, he was attacked by a gang of Gentiles he had never seen before. One gang member pushed a knife against his stomach, saying, “You son of a bitch. You killed Jesus! I’m going to kill you.” David escaped when his friends came to his aid (Blumenfeld, 2002, p. 178).

What is the psychological origin of the impulse for third-party revenge? Evidently the impulse is often thoughtless, but what feeling is it that comes before thought in these cases? After describing crimes against humanity in the former Yugoslavia, Ignatieff summed up:

The atrocities are held to reveal the essential identity—the intrinsic genocidal propensity—of the peoples in whose name they were committed. All the members of the group are regarded as susceptible to that propensity even though atrocity can be committed only by specific individuals. (1977, p. 197)

People seem to feel as if all the members of an outgroup are responsible for the misdeeds of any one member (Lickel et al., 2006). If one did it, then they all did it, or at least any of them might do it, or “that’s how they are.” In addition, people desire to take revenge against the miscreant outgroup: “one did it/they all did it/get them back.” We may call this the Roque effect after Frank Roque, the man who murdered Balbir Singh Sodhi.

It is curious that the rule of “one did it/they all did it” not only causes blame to jump from one individual to another, but also causes blame to jump across time. In 1915, Gourgen Yanikian lost 26 members of his family in the Turkish government’s genocide of ethnic Armenian citizens. Fifty-eight years later, he shot to death Consul Mehmet Baydar and Vice Consul Bahadir Demir of Turkey, in Santa Barbara, California. Before committing the murders, he mailed out a press release saying that he had a personal war against “the Turkish beasts and their government” because of the genocide. In court, he said that he had not committed murder because his victims were “not human.” He had not “killed two men” but had

“One did it/they all did it” applies only to hurtful deeds. Good deeds are not generalized with so much feeling (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1998; Hewstone & Cairns, 2001). Good deeds may be generalized in the way that any example is generalized back to its category (McCauley, Stitt, & Segal, 1980), or perhaps in the way that traits are generalized to every member of an animal species (Gil-White, 2001), but they are not given the special force and importance that bad deeds get. Christians do not have a 2000-year-old tradition of thanking Jews for redeeming the world because Christ was a Jew. Osama bin Laden did not thank Americans for Norman Borlaug’s work on the Green Revolution because Norman Borlaug was an American. The Green Revolution saved millions of lives, some Muslim, but what does that have to do with Americans generally?

It is evident that “one did it/they all did it” does not apply to one’s own group. Americans would be astonished if anyone said that Americans ought all to suffer for what Frank Roque did. The absurdity would be plain, to Americans.

These points demonstrate that “one did it/they all did it” is not a simple result of the ordinary tendency to generalize and simplify. What is it then?

I. IS “ONE DID IT/THEY ALL DID IT” AN EVOLVED
   PSYCHOLOGICAL ILLUSION?

From Darwin on, evolutionary psychologists have speculated that we evolved to compete, group against group (Alexander, 1987; Barkow, 1989; Darwin, 1871; Kurzban, Tooby, & Cosmides, 2001; Richerson & Boyd, 1998; van den Berghe, 1981; Wrangham & Peterson, 1996). The definition of group is obviously cultural, since some persons identify by nationality, some by tribe or ethnic group, some by clan or lineage, some by religion, some by party or ideology, some by village or region, some by race, and some by caste or social class. Nevertheless, the tendency to identify some one group as our own, and others as alien, may be an inherited species-wide trait. If we did evolve to compete group against group, then there are probably many separate inherited traits that enable that competition.

The most obvious test of whether a trait is inherited is heritability, the proportion of the variation in the trait that may be explained by variation in the genes. The tendency to have phobias is known to be heritable as concordance, for the trait is higher in identical than in fraternal twins. The specific content of the phobia is not (Kendler, Karkowski, & Prescott, 1999). Possibly the tendency to generalize hatred to all of an outgroup will
prove to be heritable even though the identity of the group to be hated can not be.

The heritability of a trait is zero either when the trait is not genetic, or when it is but there is no variation in the genes across individuals. Having two legs is genetic but not heritable: All the variation in number of legs is due to environmental factors. How can a species-wide genetic influence on a behavior be detected, when the genes involved are unknown? The problem is not simple (Barkow, Cosmides, & Tooby, 1992; Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1989; Rozin, 2000).

One test is whether the trait in question crosses cultural lines. For example, in most cultures, disgust is expressed by gestures for the rejection of food, such as curling the upper lip and extruding the tongue. These facial expressions are considered impolite in Japan, so the Japanese usually suppress them. However, they make the same expressions while watching disgusting films if they think no one will see. Japanese also recognize the meaning of the expressions in others. In every culture tested, people recognize these expressions as signs of disgust. Consequently, the use of food rejection gestures to indicate disgust is thought to be inherited (Ekman, 1982).

The example suggests that one should be able to identify traces of a species-wide evolved trait in any given culture, regardless of the culture’s overt evaluation of the trait. French culture generally favors individual responsibility, but the diarist H.C. Robinson recorded an exception to the rule. A French soldier had once been rescued by Englishmen just as he was about to be killed by Spanish soldiers. On encountering Robinson some time later, he said, “Oh, you are English, so I like you! If you were Spanish I would have slit your throat.” “What! Kill me when I have done nothing to you?” asked Robinson. “If it wasn’t you, it was your brother. If not your brother, then your cousin. It’s the same thing. One can’t find the individual, it’s impossible” (Fison & Howitt, 1967, p. 157, author’s translation). Fison and Howitt repeated Robinson’s story in an 1880 work on the South Pacific. They remarked on the fact that certain Fijian groups saw a community as “one body” so that if anyone were injured by an attack from outside the community, everyone in the community would feel himself hurt and entitled to strike back. Furthermore, since the other community would also be only “one body,” it would not matter which “part” of the other community one struck. Fison and Howitt supposed that the Frenchman’s spontaneous outburst and the formal Melanesian belief came from the same human feeling.

Many cultures have institutionalized and regularized third-party revenge. During the 1930s in what is now Sudan, the Nuer people maintained that revenge killing was right and proper as against any relative of a
murderer, provided that the relationship was through the male line ("your brother . . . your cousin . . . same thing"). Revenge could be taken against infants just as well as against adults (Evans-Pritchard, 1968). In southern Africa, among the !Kung San, the relatives of a murder victim may raid the murderer’s group, killing anyone they can (Wrangham & Peterson, 1996). Various traditional cultures of Melanesia made revenge for a murder a moral obligation for male relatives. The murderer would be the preferred target, but a different member of the outgroup would do (Trompf, 1994). Among the Yanomamo of Brazil, the key grouping is a kind of mobile village or band. A killing by a man from another village must be repaid by a killing of someone in the murderer’s village. A brisk anger against all of the other group accompanies these killings (Chagnon, 1992).

The idea of collective responsibility can take hold even in a modern culture. At the same time that Evans-Pritchard was studying the Nuer, Adolf Hitler was preaching notions of collective responsibility in Germany. "The Jews" were subjected to all sorts of fantastic accusations, which were widely believed. Jews, every individual Jew included, were blamed for Germany’s surrender in World War I, as well as for the evils of capitalism, communism, and disease. Eventually 6,000,000 Jews were murdered (Goldhagen, 1996; Lifton, 1986).

The doctrine of individual responsibility was reintroduced to Germany after the Nazi defeat. First, however, the newly liberated peoples of Europe avenged themselves by conducting an “ethnic cleansing” of the Volksdeutsch, the ethnic Germans living outside the borders of Germany. It is estimated that somewhere between 500,000 and 2,000,000 civilian Germans were murdered or died of hardships after being forced out of their homes (de Zayas, 1986).

American culture supports the idea of individual responsibility. Nevertheless, a sort of folk culture of group responsibility shows up in the United States from time to time. In 1969, a European American police officer named Henry Schaad was killed by African Americans in York, Pennsylvania in revenge for an alleged attack by European Americans on an African American youth. No one claimed that Schaad had taken part in the attack. A gang of European Americans then killed a young African American mother named Lillie Belle Allen. They pumped bullet after bullet into her body as she lay slumped and helpless against the side of her car. Allen had nothing to do with Henry Schaad’s death. She was a minister’s daughter visiting from out of town (Bunch, 2001; Robertson, 2001). The European American police officer at the scene, Charles Robertson, explained why no arrests were made: “Everyone knew who was involved. But everyone just thought it was even. One black had been killed and one white. Even” (Bunch, 2001, p. 29).
According to Pascal Boyer, third-party revenge shows up readily in children. “[A]fter being attacked by one member of the group one can retaliate by attacking another member,” he writes, and, “This elementary intuition is easily acquired by children the world over” (Boyer, 2001, 529).

Admittedly, evolutionary adaptation is not the only possible explanation for third-party revenge. One could argue that it appears in many cultures because it is, sometimes, a realistic approach to security. Political scientists Fearon and Laitin point out (1996) that third-party revenge gives all members of an outgroup an incentive to control even their most violent members. This incentive could improve the security of one’s own self and group (Prunier, 1995). However, if the rational pursuit of one’s own security were one’s only motivation, hatred would be unnecessary. Pity might be more appropriate, given that the victims are selected at random. But third-party revenge is often accompanied by a vivid hatred.

Rational self-interest (or rational group interest) and evolutionary adaptation are not mutually exclusive. If the tendency to commit third-party revenge is an adaptation, it is possible that it evolved because a show of the strength of one’s own group tends to deter the outgroup. In appropriate cases, inherited emotional preferences and rational considerations would reinforce each other. This means that one must ask whether “one did it/they all did it” also shows itself in inappropriate cases. If “one did it/they all did it” is due to an evolved mechanism, it ought to arise even when it does not actually add to one’s security.

Evolved patterns of feeling and behavior are not necessarily irrational, but they are a-rational. When the conditions that produced them are present, the strategies involved may appear rational, and when they are absent, they may appear irrational. For example, in humans and rats there is a simple rule for learning taste aversion. The animal becomes averse to any flavor that it consumed before experiencing nausea. A delay of hours would block the association of a sound with a shock, but it does not block the association of flavor with nausea (Garcia & Koelling, 1966). Human beings also come to dislike a novel flavor given to them before they are made nauseated by chemotherapy (Bernstein & Webster, 1980). Such inherited, channeled learning has been called “prepared learning” (Seligman, 1971; Seligman & Hager, 1972).

There is another well-known example. Human children raised together are sexually inhibited towards each other, whether they are genetically related or not (Shepher, 1971; Wolf & Huang, 1980). Sexual attraction between biological siblings raised apart has not been studied, but there is anecdotal evidence that it occurs (Herbert, 2001). The mechanism is evidently similar in other mammalian species in which adult siblings live in proximity to one another. Individuals who associated with each other in
infancy do not mate in adulthood, though actual siblings raised apart do (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1989). The function of the inhibition against familiares is obviously the avoidance of inbreeding, but the inhibition applies whether there is an actual danger of inbreeding or not.

These two simple rules of prepared learning appear rational or functional in some contexts and not in others, but they apply forcefully in both situations. A human being may know that it was chemotherapy and not food that made him nauseated, but he will still be repelled by the flavor of the food he ate just before the chemotherapy. Unrelated couples who were raised together on the same kibbutz are in no danger of inbreeding, and they face no cultural taboo, but they simply can’t feel much sexual attraction to each other (Shepher, 1971). Conscious thought has nothing to do with it.

Similarly, “one did it/they all did it” appears in conditions where it does not make sense. In particular, its tendency to skip blame across time is illogical.

Gourgen Yanikian did not improve his personal security when he murdered the two Turkish diplomats in California in 1973. Perhaps he improved his group’s security, if future attacks by Turks on Armenians are considered a realistic possibility.

The Gentiles attacking the Jewish boy in New York were under no security threat from him or from Jews generally. The victim they claimed to speak for, Christ, was beyond the need of their defense.

In Norway, 10,000 children were born to German fathers and Norwegian mothers between 1940 and 1945. After the war, Norwegian hatred of “Germans” was directed at these half-German children. One woman testified that a dentist intentionally drilled into her gums to show her the pain Norwegians suffered under Nazi torture (Mellgren, 2002). One can make sense of this, if at all, only by supposing that the dentist really felt that she was German and that she shared in other Germans’ guilt.

The writer Amos Oz recalls meeting a young nun on a train in France. On learning that he was Jewish, she asked about Christ: “He was so sweet; how could the Jews do it to him?” Her voice was so sad that he was tempted to answer, “It wasn’t me—I just happened to have had a dentist appointment on that particular Friday” (Oz, 2000, p. C1). Her question had nothing to do with her personal safety, or even her group safety. However, if she simply, really believed that “one did it/they all did it/they all would do it,” then it would make sense that she would ask the question. Surely if he would kill Christ, he would know why.

It is possible to experience “one did it/they all did it” as an emotion even when it contradicts one’s own conscious beliefs. Primo Levi experienced it in this way in Auschwitz.
In 1944, the camp of Auschwitz was supplying prisoner-slaves to nearby industry. Slaves were allowed to live for a while before being gassed, so assignment as a slave brought the hope of survival. Levi was sent to be tested in chemistry, to see if he could qualify to work in a laboratory. His examiner was one Doktor Ingenieur Pannwitz. Levi writes of his feelings as he entered the office of this man:

Pannwitz is tall, thin, blond; he has eyes, hair and nose as all Germans ought to have them, and sits formidable behind a complicated writing-table. I, Haftling 174517, stand in his office, which is a real office, shining, clean and ordered, and I feel that I would leave a dirty stain whatever I touched.

When he finished writing, he raised his eyes and looked at me. From that day I have thought about Doktor Pannwitz many times and in many ways. I have asked myself how he really functioned as a man; how he filled his time, outside of the Polymerization and the Indo-Germanic conscience; above all when I was once more a free man, I wanted to meet him again, not from a spirit of revenge, but merely from a personal curiosity about the human soul.

Because that look was not one between two men; and if I had known how completely to explain the nature of that look, which came as if across the glass window of an aquarium between two beings who live in different worlds, I would also have explained the essence of the great insanity of the third Germany.

One felt in that moment, in an immediate manner, what we all thought and said of the Germans. The brain which governed those blue eyes and those manicured hands said: “This something in front of me belongs to a species which it is obviously opportune to suppress. In this particular case, one has to first make sure that it does not contain some utilizable element.” And in my head, like seeds in an empty pumpkin: “Blue eyes and fair hair are essentially wicked. No communication possible. I am a specialist in mine chemistry. I am a specialist in organic syntheses. I am a specialist . . . ” (1986, p. 105)

“Blue eyes and fair hair are essentially wicked. . . ” He knows that it is not so, and yet he feels it.

Similarly, Fania Fenelon reported that she began to hate “all Germans” while she was imprisoned in Auschwitz-Birkenau (Fenelon, 1977). She considered that stereotyping was precisely the vice of the concentration camps, so she resisted her urge to stereotype.

When the civil rights leader Medgar Evers was shot, his brother Charles resolved to go and kill European Americans. He wanted to shoot or poison one white bigot in each county of Mississippi. He bought guns. But a voice in his mind kept saying to him that Medgar would not want it that way. He decided to continue the civil rights work that his brother was
killed for instead. He consoled himself with the thought that black voting would aggravate the bigots more than revenge killings would anyway (Evers, 1971).

An Israeli tank shell struck the house of Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish in Gaza as he spoke on the phone with a reporter. His three daughters and a niece died. He saw their familiar hands and feet torn from their bodies and scattered about the room. With effort he held to his previous abhorrence of hatred and his dedication to peace. He said that he had always worked hard not to attribute misdeeds of particular Israelis to all Israelis, just as he would wish Israelis to work hard not to attribute the deeds of suicide bombers to all Palestinians (Abuelaish, 2010; Berger, 2011).

A European American prisoner of war named Robert Knight died of starvation and abuse in a Japanese prison camp during World War II. Years afterwards, his sister, Anne Knight Ruff, found herself feeling dislike for an individual American of Japanese ancestry. She was applying for a job at the American Friends Service Committee, where this man would be her supervisor. She wrote, “I hadn’t realized I still felt prejudiced against the Japanese people. I blamed them for the death of my brother” (Ruff, 2001, p. 238). She knew that this man was an American citizen. She knew that he was a Quaker. She knew that he was a pacifist. She knew that his life’s work consisted of providing for the needs of impoverished refugees. She also knew that as a Japanese American, he was interned during the war, so that it would have been physically impossible for him to hurt her brother if he had wanted to. Still she blamed him for her brother’s death. Her feeling did not seem to be a consequence of her cognitions, since the feeling continued in effect even when she rejected it cognitively. Whatever this is, it is not rational self-interest. Ruff herself did not think it was rational.

There are two points to note here. One is that “one did it/they all did it” was irrational in the five cases. Levi and Fenelon knew that there were antifascist Germans, some with fair hair and blue eyes. Evers knew that there were white civil rights workers. Abuelaish personally knew Israelis who grieved with him over the death of his children. Ruff knew that the American Quaker had not harmed her brother. The other point is that Ruff, Levi, Fenelon, Abuelaish, and Evers personally thought that “one did it/they all did it” was wrong. Their feeling didn’t spring from their core beliefs; it opposed them. There was an automatic aspect to the emotion. “One did it/they all did it” may be best understood as a psychological illusion, comparable to an optical illusion—just as normal, just as convincing, and just as false.

An enduring inherited trait must serve a function; otherwise it would not have been conserved in evolution. An optical illusion produces a false perception, but it is a side effect of modes of perceiving that ordinarily
work well. The rule against mating with the people one lived with as a child does prevent inbreeding; it is simply “misapplied,” so to speak, in the kibbutz case. “One did it/they all did it” must also have a function if it is an evolved trait, or it must have had one in the evolutionary past.

“One did it/they all did it” might have evolved to give individuals precautionary fear (McDonald, Navarrete, & Van Vugt, 2012; van der Dennen, 1999). This hypothesis would explain the fact that bad deeds are generalized to an entire group, while good deeds are not. The point of evolution is survival, not truth. It would be more accurate to generalize good and bad deeds equally, but it is safer to generalize bad deeds more. If James Byrd had mistrusted all European Americans, he wouldn’t have gotten into a truck with European American men near Jasper, Texas, and he wouldn’t have ended up being dragged to his death at the end of a chain (Cropper, 1998). Too little trust is an error, but it is a less dangerous error than too much trust. Collective mistrust may even produce errors more often than not, and yet it may produce a net gain in fitness. Evolution may have erred on the side of safety.

A feeling of “one did it/they all would” can be beneficial to the individual who has it if it induces a precautionary fear. However, the discussion cannot end here. The rule can be beneficial only if there is a body of hostile or potentially hostile others, an enemy. It may produce errors often, but it must also produce accurate fears sometimes or else it is useless. It would have been useful if group violence was the usual social environment as humans evolved. It is also significant that “One did it/they all did it” involves more than fear. It involves hate. Presumably hatred is a motivation for initiating attacks on others. One must ask how attacks might serve the interests of the individual’s genes.

It seems likely that the feeling “one did it/they all did it” is an inherited trait. However, if we are to understand its function, we must consider it in its social context, now and in the evolutionary past.

II. IF “ONE DID IT/THEY ALL DID IT” IS AN ADAPTATION, WHAT IS ITS FUNCTION?

We cannot be certain of the course of evolution of a behavior. We can’t observe the behaviors of the prehistoric past. However, we know that capacities for behavior evolve along phylogenetic lines just as structures do. Chimpanzees are our cousins and not our ancestors; nevertheless, their behavior is suggestive evidence of what our ancestors may have done. Their behavior is more likely to reflect an ancestral form where there is still something in common between their behavior and ours.

Chimpanzee males go out in groups to raid neighboring communities.
Young males are especially eager to take part in raids. They enter the other community’s range quietly. If they find an isolated individual, they attack, screaming with excitement. A mother and baby are often targeted, since mothers often forage without other adults nearby. The invading males seize the baby and kill it by biting it and tearing it apart. They may kill the mother in the same way. If they encounter a stronger party, they turn and run. If the invading males do not flee fast enough, the native males may kill them (de Waal & Lanting, 1997; Goodall, 1986; Wrangham & Peterson, 1996).

It is thought that destroying individuals in foreign communities serves the reproductive advantage of the males because it removes competitors, or future competitors. Male chimpanzees remain in the group of their birth and so have few close relatives in the outgroups, but many in the ingroup. The removal of competition benefits the male and his ingroup, which contains many of his genes. By contrast, female chimpanzees migrate to new groups at puberty or soon afterwards. Females do not ordinarily take part in raids. Their close kin would not be favored if they did (de Waal & Lanting, 1997; Goodall, 1986; Nishida & Hiraïwa-Hasegawa, 1986; Wrangham & Peterson, 1996). In the Belding’s ground squirrel, the sex roles are reversed. It is the males who migrate out, and the females who remain in their natal territory. Females make forays to unrelated neighbors’ burrows to kill the young (Sherman, 1981).

It is important to note that chimpanzee raids occur in the absence of any specific dispute over resources, territory, or mates. Apparently, the animal’s psychological goal is the attack itself (Wrangham, 1999). We do not know if the chimpanzees experience a subjective hatred. Perhaps they simply enjoy the violence. We do know that they attack forcefully without provocation. Typically, some of the raiders hold down the victim while others hit, stamp, bite, and tear. Sometimes the raiders twist off limbs, or drink the victim’s blood. These techniques are similar to those that chimpanzees use against large prey, rather than those they use in intracommunity fights. In all observed cases, the attack continues until the victim stops moving (Goodall, 1986).

Chimpanzee males also fight each other for status within the community, but the behavior is different. Group killing of an individual within the community occurs, but it is unusual (Wrangham, 1999). Typically, intracommunity fights involve threats and blows rather than biting, twisting off limbs, and so forth. Fights usually end when the loser indicates submission by groveling or presenting sexually, and the winner accepts by a friendly touch or gesture. The combatants have an ability to reconcile that is surprising to human observers (de Waal & Lanting, 1997; Goodall, 1986; Wrangham & Peterson, 1996). Blair concludes that chimpanzees must have
a “violence inhibition mechanism” or “VIM” that is activated by gestures of submission. He suggests that normal human beings also have a VIM (Blair, 1995, p. 3).

A chimpanzee who has been attacked by foreign invaders will attempt to placate the intruders by showing submission, but the attackers typically ignore these attempts at appeasement (de Waal & Lanting, 1997; Goodall, 1986; Wrangham & Peterson, 1996). Apparently the violence inhibition mechanism does not engage in this circumstance.

Chimpanzees form factions within the community. These are frequently changed. The course of chimpanzee politics—who is aligned with whom, who remains loyal, who has betrayed whom, or who has rebelled—is a matter of great interest to the chimpanzees themselves and to the human observers (de Waal, 1982; de Waal & Lanting, 1997; Goodall, 1986; Wrangham & Peterson, 1996). Chimpanzees have politics in a sense quite similar to the human sense. As noted, in intracommunity fights, gestures of submission are often accepted peacefully, but they are rejected in intercommunity fights. Clearly, for chimpanzees, war (or raiding) is not the continuation of politics by other means. It has different causes and it involves different behaviors. It must depend upon different proximate, psychological rewards.

In their book *Demonic Males* (1996), Wrangham and Peterson draw a parallel between chimpanzee raids and human behaviors, especially the raids and counter-raids of small, hostile human groups. We may ask whether the analogy works.

Human wars are different from chimpanzee raids. Usually there are resources in dispute. Most pogroms also involve motives in addition to the violence itself. Pogroms against Jews in Europe and Armenians in Turkey involved rape and plunder as well as unprovoked slaughter (Morgenthau, 2000; Strom & Parsons, 1982). Rape and plunder were significant factors in the genocide against Tutsis in Rwanda (Des Forges, 1999). In many traditional societies, raiding would also involve the taking of slaves, especially women and children (Keeley, 1996). Women’s hostility to enemy groups may be related to the fear of rape (Navarrete, McDonald, Molina, & Sidanius, 2010).

Certain crimes in the United States do seem to resemble the chimpanzee raids. In some cases, coalitions of young men travel together to find strangers to kill (Ranalli & Belkin, 2002; Manly & Nealon, 1992). For example, in 2009, four teenaged boys in New Hampshire picked an isolated house. On finding a sleeping mother and daughter, they slashed both with machetes until their screaming stopped (MacQuarrie, 2010). There have been reports of young men going out to find homeless people to beat and
murder (Ellement & Levenson, 2007; Lewan, 2007). In these incidents the victims were not hated. The killings were done for fun.

In other cases, groups of men pick out a member of another ethnic group to kill. There is no robbery (Levin & McDevitt, 1993). Such hate crimes are often marked by overkill, that is, by torture before death and continued attacks on the body after death (Allen, Als, Lewis, & Litwack, 2000). Women sometimes go along to watch, but rarely participate (Blee, 2002).

In 1981, three members of the Ku Klux Klan went hunting for an African American to kill. There was an element of third-party revenge: Klan leaders had asked for a killing of an African American because there had been a hung jury in the case of an African American accused of killing a European American (Smith, 1997). The three Klansmen selected a passerby and forced him into a car at gunpoint. They asked his name, and he told them: Michael Donald. They drove him to a secluded place and then attacked him. At first he fought back with all his might, but finally he gave over and lay still. They hit him more than 100 times with a tree limb. They strangled him with a rope, slit his throat, and stomped on his face with their boots. Then they hung his body from a tree. He was 19 years old (Smith, 1997; Toronto Star, February 5, 1988).

The prolongation of the killing suggests that the killers enjoy what they are doing. Participants in some hate crimes have told investigators directly that they enjoy the violence (Blee, 2002; Levin & McDevitt, 1993). The men who killed Michael Donald had previously beaten a gay man at the same spot (Smith, 1997). Like the prolongation, the repetition suggests that the young men found the activity enjoyable in itself. The two motivations of hatred and enjoyment of violence may add to each other; certainly, they are not mutually exclusive.

The chimpanzee and human killings are similar in form: A group of young males go out together, find an individual they do not know, and kill him or her. We do not know if they are homologous, that is, derived from the same ancestral trait. If they are homologous, then violent conflict between groups would have been the norm from the time of our common ancestors with the chimpanzees, five to seven million years ago, until the present day, as Wrangham and Peterson (1996) have argued. It would mean that conflict is humankind’s baseline condition. In fact, the historical record, the ethnographic record of nonliterate peoples, and the archeological record all indicate that raiding has been all but universal (Keeley, 1996).

It may be the case that human raiding behaviors are an evolutionary holdover. Where the relevant communities are not small, male kinship groups, antiforeign violence may no longer confer a significant evolutionary advantage in and of itself. Since small patrilineal clans persisted well
into historical times, it may be that there simply has not been enough time for the behavior to be selected out in response to the change. Or, it may be that raids produce some other benefits often enough so that the trait is not disadvantageous to the individual even now. Such benefits might include incidental opportunities for rape and robbery that the sought-after violence produces (see McDonald et al., 2012).

There is an obvious and significant difference between chimpanzee raids and third-party revenge. There is no known provocation for the chimpanzee raids, while third-party revenge is precisely a response to provocation. It is worthwhile to distinguish two points in this connection: (1) Human males may still retain a chimpanzee-like disposition towards unprovoked raiding; and (2) Third-party revenge could result from a refinement or redirection of the raiding genes. Evolution does not have the option of starting fresh and most often achieves its results by reworking existing traits. It may have done that here. We will return below to the questions of how and why evolution might have redirected the raiding genes.

There is nothing in evolution that makes group-on-group violence inevitable, even for species that live in groups. Such violence is actually rare among vertebrates. The bonobo (*Pan paniscus*) is more closely related to the chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) than the human is. The hominid line diverged from the chimpanzee line about five million years ago, while the bonobo line diverged just three million years ago (de Waal & Lanting, 1997). Bonobos live in communities, much as chimpanzees do. Neither sex goes to raid foreign communities, so far as we know (Wilson & Wrangham, 2003). This may be because bonobo females do not forage alone, unlike chimpanzee females, and therefore do not present an easy target (males do not forage alone in either species) (de Waal & Lanting, 1997).

Perhaps human evolution would have taken a different path if human ancestors had resembled present-day bonobos. But once evolution starts down a given path, the steps it takes constrain the steps it can take later. Once a behavior has evolved, the individual must adapt to the presence of that behavior in its conspecifics, whether or not the original reason for the behavior still exists. Once group-on-group conflict evolved and became widespread, individual human beings faced selection pressure to adapt to it.

If conflict was the norm in the environment of evolutionary adaptation, individuals would have been selected for their ability to flourish during conflicts. Starting or ending enmity between groups would be important, but unusual. Most of the time the primary task for the individual would be to find his place in an ongoing conflict. He would need to know his ingroup and his outgroup, and he would need to have appropriate feelings for each. If the enemy is going to treat him as part of a group regardless of what he does, then he will bear the cost of group-on-group conflict no matter what
he does. If he is to bear the cost anyway, then he might as well reap the benefits of group defense, and offense.

Among chimpanzees, just being unfamiliar is enough to draw hostility. Kohler found that a stranger female he attempted to introduce to his captive group at Tenerife was attacked viciously (Goodall, 1986). Other primatologists were forced to abandon an attempt to release captive chimpanzees into the wild in Senegal, because the rehabilitants were attacked and almost killed by native chimpanzees (Goodall, 1986; Wrangham & Peterson, 1996). In the wild, young females usually change communities while they are in estrus. This earns them a reprieve from the males. The resident females are unfriendly, but they do not inflict serious injury.

Humans have a natural mistrust of the foreign and strange, but unfamiliarity by itself is not enough to label an individual an enemy alien. People didn’t anticipate the strength of the reaction of the chimpanzees to a stranger, as they should have done if they had similar feelings. Evidently this is a point in which humans and chimpanzees differ. The chimpanzee knows every individual member of his group, which usually numbers fewer than 60 (Nishida & Hiraiwa-Hasegawa, 1987; Goodall, 1986). The human doesn’t know every member of his group, which can number in the hundreds of millions. Lacking familiar/unfamiliar as the rule, humans must employ other means of distinguishing ingroup from outgroup.

Familiarity is a necessary condition for a chimpanzee to be identified as “one of us” by other chimpanzees, but it is not sufficient. Chimpanzee communities can split into factions that travel about separately. In such a case, one faction can attack the other, killing known and familiar individuals (Wrangham & Peterson, 1996). In this humans are similar to chimpanzees. During the genocide in Rwanda, teachers killed their students, doctors their patients (Gourevitch, 1998), and pastors their parishioners (Lacey, 2001). In Bosnia, friends killed friends (Hewstone & Cairns, 2001). Familiarity is not a sufficient condition for belonging in humans, either.

Human groups can form alliances with foreign groups. Chimpanzees never do. While it is true that among humans, the allied “others” may not be fully trusted, they are not necessarily hated either. For male chimpanzees, a foreign group, like a foreign individual, is always the enemy. For humans, a group can be “other” without being “enemy.” This suggests that “one did it/they all did it” might serve to indicate when an “other” group is “enemy.” In humans, the identity of the outgroup is learned. It is possible that “the ones who attack us” is a defining characteristic of “enemy group” in the human mind, at the level of emotion. That is, an attack by a member of a recognizable group may cause people to consider that entire group “enemy,” even if they did not before. Or, if the group was already felt to be
“enemy,” the attack may intensify the feeling (see Bar-Tal & Labin, 2001, for an example). The definitional limits, “who is in the other group,” must be handled separately—maybe by explicit cultural belief, maybe by behavior, maybe by place of residence, or maybe just by association. Dentan (1992) suggests that attacks from other groups can also affect how one defines one’s ingroup; peoples who are threatened en masse may begin to see themselves as a unit even if they did not do so previously.

For the most part, the problem of how groups are defined is outside the scope of this essay. However, it is worth noting that humans seem to have a remarkably free hand in making up the definition of groups. Once a group is defined it may come to be seen as a possible faction that could act in unity against other factions (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Tajfel, 1981; Kurzban, Tooby, & Cosmides, 2001). Humans readily favor the group that includes the self, even when they are aware that an assignment to groups has been made randomly (Tajfel, 1981). Nations are not the only communities that may be imagined (Anderson, 1983; Chirot, 1997).

Not all outgroups (groups to which one does not belong oneself) are enemies, but once an outgroup is recognized, it can potentially be placed into the emotional category “enemy.”

This general approach is not new. Barkow, among others, has suggested that we inherit a predisposition for learning the hatred of other peoples with ease (Barkow, 1989; McDonald et al., 2012). The hypothesis of particular triggers for feelings of enmity is simply a more specific form of a general hypothesis that has formed a part of the ethnocentrism literature for some time. The underlying idea is that there is a constellation of emotions for the “enemy.” These include hate and fear, as well as a kind of coldness or shutting down of the empathy that might otherwise be available (Bar-Tal, 1989). Subjectively, the enemy is experienced as the source and cause of the hatred and fear (Allport, 1954; Blee, 2002). Most people do not introspect enough to consider that the first cause of the hatred might ever lie in themselves; it is specifically located in the others in their imagination (Bar-Tal, 1989). As the inhibition of empathy is preconscious, it would not ordinarily be the subject of reflection either.

The feeling for the category “enemy” is inherited, and the set of emotions that accompany it is inherited, while the specific content of the category is learned. An attack may be enough to bring up the entire set of emotions, hate, fear, and coldness, or at least to lower the threshold for them such that a cause for hate that would not be sufficient before the attack would become sufficient afterwards. The emotional category could have come down to us, with changes, from some antecedent feeling for outsiders held by our common ancestor with the chimpanzees.

“The ones who attack us” is not usually enough to settle who is in the
other group and who is not. But if the other group is already defined as a
group of some sort, with some kind of boundary, then it may get the emo-
tional label “enemy,” and the emotions of enmity may extend out all the
way to the cultural boundary of the group, with or without cultural permis-
sion. The suppression of empathy towards the outgroup may share an
ancestral origin with chimpanzees’ refusal to relent in the face of submis-
sion gestures from an enemy. In Blair’s terms, the “violence inhibition
mechanism” would be suppressed (Blair, 1995).

We may distinguish between the defensive and the offensive aspects of
“One did it/they all did it.” The function of the defensive reaction, fear, is
clear. If another group is likely to be seeking to harm your entire group
including you, then it is to your advantage to fear them all at the first sign of
hostility, without waiting for experience with each individual. It may even
be to your advantage to anticipate the same type of harm that was inflicted
before, if whole groups do have customary methods of attacking.

The evolutionary advantage of the offensive reaction, the revenge
attack, is less clear. There are two benefits: the physical destruction of
competitors and the intimidation of the surviving outgroup members. These
benefits are spread over the avengers’ entire ingroup, while the risk is con-
centrated on the avengers themselves. How can the trait persist? Why
aren’t the individuals who don’t go on revenge raids favored over the ones
who do?

There is also a potential cost to the ingroup in that the outgroup may
be provoked to attack back, beyond whatever its baseline level of attacking
had been. It may seem contradictory to claim that the revenge attack both
intimidates the other group and provokes it to attack again. However, the
theory specifies only that the placement of a particular outgroup into the
category “enemy” produces hate, fear, and coldness. It does not specify the
ratio among them. Fear may be adjusted according to the perceived
strength of the enemy. People who want to strike back may decide not to,
either because of conscious deliberate thought or because of fear.

In the case of the unprovoked chimpanzee raids, the risk is small and
males do not go unless other males go with them, thus both diminishing and
spreading the risk. The preferred targets for raids are babies and isolated
females (Wrangham & Peterson, 1996). Perhaps in human third-party
revenge helpless third parties are also preferred targets, and group attacks
the preferred mode (Wrangham & Peterson, 1996; Des Forges, 1999).

The group that is assisted by a chimpanzee raid is a small group of the
males’ close kin. The attacker’s genes are benefited not only in his self, but
also in his kin. In the environment of evolutionary adaptation, humans
probably also lived in small kin groups, so this factor may have been strong
at the time revenge raiding may have evolved. Still, the behavior has per-
sisted into the present, when the relevant group is often not a small kin group. It may be possible to explain the persistence of genes for the behavior by appealing to cultural selection. To this day, many cultures reward people, or just men, who take revenge, and punish those who refuse to do so. This would be true, for example, in the Southern U.S. culture (Nisbett & Cohen, 1966), in the revenge culture of Albania (Blumenfeld, 2002) and Montenegro (Djilas, 1958), in traditional Melanesian cultures (Trompf, 1994), and among the Yanomamo of Brazil (Chagnon, 1992). These rewards and punishments could make it more profitable for an individual to take part in a revenge raid than not to, even where the profit is measured in terms of the number of children a man is likely to have. Cultures that were known to strike back may have survived better than cultures that were known not to. Selection among cultures may have acted on the evolution of genes.

To be clear, this is only an argument that revenge raiding may still be adaptive, not that unprovoked raiding is. The idea is that a liking for raiding might have been conserved because it is functional when it is combined with the desire for group revenge. Sexual lust and love can occur together or separately. Perhaps bloodlust and hatred can also occur together or separately, and the separate trait of bloodlust may be conserved in part because the combination was adaptive.

The eagerness to strike back against a group that has harmed the ingroup is suggestive of the conflict between factions within a group. Chimpanzees strike out against any alien group. It is not a question of revenge. But, like humans, chimpanzees engage in extensive reciprocity within their own communities. They tend to pay back help with help and harm with harm. It is like revenge. Behaviors that our ancestors employed towards intracommunity factions might gradually have come to be applied across communities. If there was such a transformation, that would explain why humans can ally with foreign groups; they have come to be treated like factions, which can become allies even after they have been enemies.

One could ask how the transition could ever have been made, if our common ancestor was like the chimpanzees of today. For a chimpanzee, any lone outsider is subject to attack. How could a species have made the jump from that position, to a position of accepting outsiders as allies? It would be a surprising development, but not an inexplicable one. Chimpanzees already show that they do not keep intra-community fighting and inter-community fighting perfectly distinct. If a subgroup of males withdraws and moves out, it is subject to being treated as “enemy” later on. Perhaps ancestral hominids could treat a former faction as “enemy,” yet later accept it back in as an ally in factional strife. If domestic factions pass the border of the group in both directions, if a “new” enemy can become an ally, then
it may not be so great a step to let in “old” enemies as allies, particularly if
language permits explicit bargains to be struck. There is an implication in
this for peacemaking: However intense the status of “enemy” while it lasts,
the status itself is not immutable. In theory, a given group that was once an
enemy could become an ally, as many do in fact.

If factional fighting played a role in the evolution of third-party
revenge, that would help to explain why women feel the emotions of third-
party revenge. Both female chimpanzees and female humans engage in fac-
tional fighting (Goodall, 1986; Pusey, Williams, & Goodall, 1997).

With this analysis in hand, we are in a better position to explain third-
party revenge. The explanation requires two steps. The first is that the
initial offense by members of another group causes ingroup members to see
the entire alien group as “enemy.” Respect and empathy are inhibited or
withdrawn towards individual enemies. The second step is that the emo-
tions of reciprocity are engaged: hurt and fury and vindictiveness. These
are emotions that had their evolutionary origin in encounters between indi-
viduals and small factions (de Waal, 1982). Oddly, the attack on innocent
and helpless members of another group is accompanied by an emotion of
moral self-righteousness (Lickel et al., 2006). The oddness consists in the
conflict with ordinary moral codes that are applied within the group. Some
cultures have noticed the oddness and proscribed third-party revenge, or
directed that it cannot be used against children, or against women, or
against unarmed persons caught unaware. Nevertheless, the impulse
towards it, righteousness and all, can often be detected in people from these
cultures (de Zayas, 1986; Ignatieff, 1997). Thus, third-party revenge raids
could have evolved from the combination in humans of two behavior pat-
terns that are separate in chimpanzees and may have been separate in our
common ancestors, as seen in deadly unprovoked raids on foreign commu-
nities, where revenge is not an apparent motive, and fighting between fac-
tions in the home community, where it is (see McDonald et al., 2012). The
intrusion of factional feeling into enemy relations would account for the
subjective moral indignation that accompanies these attacks on the
innocent.

If we intuitively feel as if all of another group is “enemy” when any of
them attack us, it seems logical to ask whether we also feel as if all of
another group is “enemy” if any of us attack them.

III. THE ONES WE ATTACK ARE ENEMIES

A second defining characteristic of enemy in the human mind might be
“the people we attack.” That is, seeing members of one’s own group
attacking members of another might lead one to identify the other group as
“enemy.” Of course, if the other group also feels that if “one did it/they all did it,” then they will be made into enemies by the attack itself even if they were not enemies beforehand. In that case, it is quite accurate to see “the people we attack” as enemies. Note that the reason for the attack is irrelevant. All that is necessary to invoke the response is the violent attack itself. It might have been ordered by leaders to secure some advantage in power or resources, without the leaders’ experiencing any particular animus towards the victims at first, but if the hypothesis is correct, then the leaders and the fighters would begin to hate after the fact.

The Semai-Senoi people of Malaysia are one of the most peaceful cultures known. They deal with conflict with other peoples by retreating. They have extremely low levels of individual violence within the culture. Nevertheless, in the 1950s the British recruited some Semai men into the army. The anthropologist Robert Knox Dentan wrote about the result:

Many people who knew the Semai insisted that such an unwarlike people could never make good soldiers. Interestingly enough, they were wrong. Communist terrorists had killed the kinsmen of some of the Semai counterinsurgency troops. Taken out of their nonviolent society and ordered to kill, they seem to have been swept up in a sort of insanity which they call “blood drunkenness.” A typical veteran’s story runs like this, “We killed, killed, killed. The Malays would stop and go through people’s pockets and take their watches and money. We did not think of watches or money. We thought only of killing. Wah, truly we were drunk with blood.” One man even told how he had drunk the blood of a man he had killed. (1968, pp. 58-59)

It is not clear whether the men had begun to hate the communists, or whether they were simply swept up in the violence. Since communists had killed their kinsmen, there could have been an element of third-party revenge. In addition, if it is true that “the people we attack” are experienced emotionally as enemies, then the fighting itself would have tended to make them hate. This example is ambiguous since it is not clear whether the Semai-Senoi began to hate the communists or whether they came to like the violence; certainly they reached the point of coldness towards those they killed.

The hypothesis implies that an attack by a few ought to stir the emotion of hatred in the many. Osama bin Laden’s 2001 attack on the United States should have increased hatred of the United States among people who considered bin Laden a member of their ingroup. The effect might not show in averaged results from questionnaires since it might have been counteracted by increases in sympathy for Americans on the part of some, but it should be detectable. There should be at least a segment of the popu-
lation(s) among whom hatred of Americans began or intensified. That is, either the average should show increased hostility, or the population should diverge, with some moving towards sympathy from their prior position, and some towards antipathy. Of course, for a test of the hypothesis it would be necessary to have given questionnaires immediately after 9/11/01, before the United States’ attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq could provoke a Roque effect.

The attacks against German Jews on Kristallnacht may have inflamed German antisemitism by their very occurrence. For this reason the effect may be called the “Kristallnacht effect.” The reaction can be summarized as “we did it/they deserved it/hit them again.”

Similarly, in the communist revolution in China, the peasants’ attacks on landlords may have increased hatred of the landlord class (Hinton, 1967).

This analysis would suggest a double danger in hate crimes. Hate crimes might create new hate in the criminal’s group as well as in the victim’s. The injustice is complete: We are to hate people because we have attacked them. As far as evolution is concerned, the injustice is beside the point. Evolution is concerned with survival, not justice. To act as if the group that has been attacked is “the enemy” would contribute to individual and group survival.

This approach can explain the otherwise surprising fact that members of powerful majorities sometimes feel fear of the very minorities that they have been victimizing. It is not just that they have a realistic fear of reprisals. They have unrealistic fears too. Blee found members of antisemitic hate groups who had little or no contact with actual Jews, but who believed nevertheless that powerful Jews were doing them harm by damaging their health, undermining their marriages, and preventing them from getting jobs. They seemed sincere (Blee, 2002). It is not possible to imagine that these antisemites derived these fears from evidence, and then derived their hatreds from the fears. It is more likely that they felt hatred and fear and produced these “reasons” for them after the fact.

Hatred serves to motivate attacks, and possibly to motivate a more ferocious defense. Since it is safer to attack weak groups, there may be more hatred against weak groups than against strong ones. Numerically weak groups with economic resources have historically been subjected to violence by stronger groups (Chua, 2003; van den Berghe, 1981). Even a weak group without resources offers an opportunity for control of labor and sex, so weakness rather than wealth may be the critical point (Human Rights Watch, 1999; Varshney, 2002). The fear is there for two reasons: First, outgroups are in fact often powerful and hostile; second, even a weak outgroup that is not yet hostile may fight back if it is attacked. Once it is
attacked, it will act like an enemy. Fear should accompany the wish to attack, so that the attackers can be prepared for retaliation. This anticipation of payback may be an effect of our having evolved to expect reciprocity between factions in a society. The evolutionary incentives in dealing with another faction are either to treat it well, so that the reciprocity will be beneficial, or else to damage it so badly that it does not have the strength to repay in kind. This may perhaps account for the extraordinary viciousness with which lower-caste people are punished when they step out of line, as well as for the energy that upper castes put into drawing the lines so as to confine the lower castes as tightly as possible (Dray, 2002; Human Rights Watch, 1999; Totten & Wagatsuma, 1966).

The idea is that the algorithms for hatred normally operate below the level of consciousness, just as the neural mechanisms for constructing a mental image of space do. It is not a question of repressing knowledge of the triggers for hatred out of guilt. Since the mechanism operates outside of consciousness anyway, there is no knowledge to repress.

The conscious explanations for the fear are extra. The mind assembles acceptable conscious reasons to explain why a hated group should be hated, regardless of the causative, unconscious reasons (see Gazzaniga, 1992). A cleverer hater might come up with more convincing conscious reasons for the fear than Blee’s informants did, but the reasons would still be secondary to the emotion. Of course, when there is actual retaliation, then the retaliation can be given as the reason for the fear, correctly enough.

In short, the mechanisms for producing hatred in the individual mind may be exquisitely sensitive to the presence or threat of violent conflict. That would explain the observation that “essentialist” concepts of the enemy surface at times of violence, making negotiation and reconciliation ever more difficult (Rothchild, 1997). The “essentialist” concept of evil in an enemy group is the idea that the enemy is hostile in its very essence and thus not susceptible to ordinary incentives for peace or compromise.

Cognitive dissonance could be appealed to as a supplementary or alternative explanation of “we did it/they deserved it/hit them again.” If one of our (good) group attacks one of the outgroup, then we feel the victim must have deserved it. A good person wouldn’t attack an innocent. It isn’t clear that the entire outgroup should be hated and feared from cognitive dissonance alone, however. They might or might not be. The cognitive dissonance could be resolved by any of a number of thought patterns, including blaming only the individual victim or victims. In contrast, the adaptationist theory predicts group-wide hate and fear specifically. Nazi Germans would be expected to hate and fear Jews more after Kristallnacht than before, and European Americans to hate and fear African Americans more after a lynching than before, because hate and fear are appropriate to the category
“enemy.” The difference in prediction in the two theories is that the adaptationist theory predicts regularity in the emotional response to an attack across times and places, while cognitive dissonance theory predicts variability. In practice, the test will be difficult to make because both theories allow for some variability. Both theories admit that reality occasionally intrudes into thought and feeling. In reality, Jews were less powerful after *Kristallnacht* than before, and African Americans probably less powerful after a lynching than before, and therefore less to be feared. Both theories admit that human reactions can be modified by culture. The adaptationist theory predicts a stronger regularity than the dissonance theory does, but it doesn’t predict perfect regularity.

IV. **The Ones We Hate Are Enemies**

It may not be necessary to participate in or even to observe an actual attack on the enemy to induce new hate. The enemy may be “the people that we hate” or “the people that we want to attack.” Fears can be learned by observing fear in others. Perhaps hatred can be learned in the same way. Researchers have demonstrated that monkeys can learn fears from other monkeys. Most laboratory-reared rhesus monkeys are not afraid of snakes, although wild-caught rhesus are terrified of them. Cook and Mineka (1989) found that eight minutes of viewing a videotape of a rhesus monkey screaming in the presence of a snake would leave a previously naive laboratory monkey with a permanent fear of snakes. In another experiment (Ohman & Mineka, 2001), the researchers edited out the image of the real snake from the videotape and edited in a toy snake, a toy crocodile, a toy rabbit, or artificial flowers. The monkeys in the audience learned fear of the toy snake and crocodile, but not of the rabbit or the flowers. It seems that what the rhesus inherit is not a fear of snakes as such, but an algorithm for learning the fear of snake-like things (perhaps long and scaly things) from other rhesus.

Barkow (1989) has suggested that we inherit a special capacity for learning the hatred of other groups. Perhaps humans have an inherited tendency to acquire an attitude of hatred by imitating others’ hatreds. Obviously we do imitate others’ hatreds, especially in the case of children imitating parents (Allport, 1954; Blee, 2002). Both innate and acquired fears depend on activity in the amygdala nucleus of the temporal lobe of the brain (Phelps & LeDoux, 2005). Activity in the amygdala during viewing of an outgroup face correlates with implicit measures of fear or tension towards an outgroup (Phelps et al., 2000).

Pathological fears, or phobias, develop towards threats that existed in the environment of evolutionary adaptation, such as snakes and spiders, but...
not to threats that came into existence more recently, like guns and knives. Consequently phobias are thought to stem from evolved fears (Seligman, 1971; Seligman & Hager, 1972). Our inherited tendency to hate groups may also be overexpressed in some cases (Poussaint, 2002; Dunbar, 2004; Sullaway, 2004). An uncontrollable hatred could be called a *misia*, from the Greek word for hatred, *misos*. The uncontrollable hatred of a group could be called *genomisia*. As with fear, the level of hatred could be either normal or pathological. People who suffer from pathological hatreds could be termed *misics*. The study of *misias* may help us to understand normal hatreds, much as the study of phobias has helped us to understand normal fears.

Presumably there were originally simple markers that indicated who the other group were. If our ancestors were like the chimpanzees, then the first marker would have been unfamiliarity. Later it might have been something else, possibly physical strangeness or difference. Visual markers could have become less and less important and cultural learning about “who is the enemy” more and more important. Even if there is, or was, an inherited tendency to learn the appearance of one’s own group, it would not necessarily apply only to faces or bodies. A general tendency to look for familiar appearance would also apply to clothing, body markings, and the like (C. Surowiec, personal communication, 2001). This could be one means by which a cultural group could be substituted for a biological one. Language would be another (Kurzban, Tooby, & Cosmides, 2001), and cultural moral systems yet another (van der Dennen, 1999). “The ones my people hate” may also be a defining characteristic of “enemy”; this may also apply as people choose up sides to form factions. In humans, the concept of the “loyal opposition” may be obtainable only with a diligent cultural effort.

If our evolution has prepared us to learn group hatreds with ease, then the “free marketplace of ideas,” as Americans like to call it, is not a fair market. Prejudice may have its thumb on the scales in that market, and prejudice may be backed by adaptations for enmity.

The intensity of group hatred is sometimes attributed to the effects of centuries of conflict, but this view is suspect. No person has more than a single lifetime in which to learn to hate. The question is how the lesson takes place. If we have a special propensity for learning hatreds from others, then hatred could spread quickly through a population. This idea could help to explain the paradox of German history. At the time of the First World War, Germany was not more antisemitic than Russia or France (Bauer, 2001), yet it was Germany that created the Holocaust of 1941-1945. An antisemitic minority party came to power in 1933 and used the weapons of totalitarian propaganda and political control to teach an extreme, nonsen-
sical antisemitism (Bauer, 2001; Dawidowicz, 1975). Hitler may have been such an effective purveyor of hatred not because of his eloquence, which was average, but because of the vividness of his emotional displays, which was unsurpassed. His teaching could take hold in less than a generation partly because a more moderate cultural antisemitism had prepared people for the message, partly because the removal of Jews from social contact with Gentiles removed the most obvious reality check, and partly—on this hypothesis—because hatred is an easy lesson. If people feel as if hatred makes sense, they may fail to notice when it doesn’t.

V. DO WE NEED TO FIND AN ENEMY?

If we do have a prepared emotional category for “the enemy,” then the very existence of that category may predispose us towards conflict. Adapted emotions permit us to anticipate. The hungry child looks anxiously to see whether her brother has more food than she does, though her mother has given them both the same amount. The jealous husband is suspicious of his wife’s sexual opportunities, though she doesn’t have any. Perhaps we also look to find enemies.

If we have an innate tendency to identify an enemy group, we might also have a psychological need to identify one. As George W. Bush put it in the year 2000:

When I was coming up, it was a dangerous world, and we knew exactly who the “they” were. It was us versus them. And it was clear who “them” was. Today, we’re not so sure who the “they” are. But we know they’re there. (Kornblut, 2000)

Van der Dennen (1999) remarks on the seeming affinity that people have for the idea of an enemy. He raises the possibility that people enjoy their “red-blooded” hatreds. Another possibility is that people already have a sense of apprehension towards others, and feel more oriented when they know who their enemy is. People seem slower to take on new enemies when they already have old ones. Varshney found that when Shias and Sunnis in India hated each other, they were slow to anger against Hindus; and where lower-caste Hindus hated upper-caste Hindus they were slow to anger against Muslims (Varshney, 2002). Perhaps the psychological need for an enemy had already been satisfied.

It is generally true across species, that if the appropriate object for a given evolved behavior is not available when an animal is primed for it, the animal will treat the next-closest object as if it were the real thing (Tinbergen, 1969; Lorenz, 1970). A pregnant mouse that is ready to build a
nest will carry soft wood shavings to one corner of her cage. If nothing soft
is available, she will carry whatever is there and deposit it, and if nothing at
all is available, she will carry her tail to the corner of the cage, and drop it,
and do it again. A cat that has no mouse to chase will pounce on a piece of
string. It isn’t going to eat the string, it just needs to hunt.

The English kept up a vigorous literary tradition of antisemitism for
400 years after the Jews were expelled from England (Goldhagen, 1996). A
story that is repeated for 400 years has to be a “good story” in the sense of
being emotionally satisfying. Apparently it is satisfying to have an enemy
to hate.

If we need to locate an enemy, then there is a danger that people lack-
ing obvious enemies will begin to treat any group other than their own as if
it were the enemy. When no one else is available to be the enemy, co-
resident groups might be cast in the role no matter what they do. The trag-
ey of the Jews and the Roma in Europe may be explained in some part by
this dynamic.

VI. Conclusion

From prehistory onwards, most humans have been born into a setting
of violent conflict between groups. Consequently, humans may be
expected to be adapted to group conflict. One of the adaptations may be
anticipation of an enemy group. The mind may be prepared to treat ene-
mies with hate, fear, and the preconscious inhibition of empathy, or cold-
ness. Chimpanzees likewise have raiding against other groups. For male
chimpanzees, all groups except the natal group are enemies. Unlike the
male chimpanzees, humans must learn which outgroups are enemies. It is
proposed that we utilize three simple algorithms for this learning: (1) If any
members of an outgroup attack us, then that outgroup is enemy. All the
members of that group are suspected of being inclined to repeat the same
pernicious behavior. At the level of emotion, they are considered already to
have done it. Since the boundaries of the group are defined socially, they
vary by culture. Whatever the boundaries are, hate, fear, coldness, and the
specific accusation extend out to them, encompassing everyone within.
This explains the desire for third-party revenge. (2) If any member of the
ingroup attacks any member of an outgroup, then that outgroup is enemy.
If the first algorithm is correct, then the second one must be adaptive. We
would hate those we attack without being aware that the attack itself is a
cause of the hatred. (3) If other members of our ingroup hate an outgroup,
then that outgroup is enemy. These hypotheses describe only the psychol-
ogy of individuals, but they can account for considerable unity of action in
groups. The proposed algorithms would allow the individual to identify
likely sources of attack against himself and his group. At the level of the individual, they facilitate the anticipation of danger. At the level of groups, they sustain the cycle of violence.

If human feelings of enmity are innate and spontaneous, they are not infinitely strong. It is possible to overcome them, but people need a reason to do it. Conscience may provide a reason; but it must be admitted that there are moral systems that require hatred as well as moral systems that condemn it (Djilas, 1958; Lifton, 1986). Compassion may provide a reason, especially in cases of personal acquaintance (Des Forges, 1999). Occasionally the conflict between feeling and reality that the evolved mechanisms set up provokes people into noticing the absurdity of human feelings towards other groups (Lee, 1983; Levi, 1986; Oz, 2000; Twain, 1981). The psychological mechanisms behind hatred are not usually evaluated at all, because people have no conscious awareness of them. One may hope that an understanding of these mechanisms will foster compassion and reason, or, at the least, an appreciation for the absurd in human behavior, in opposition to the serious and unquestioning hatreds that are so common in human affairs.

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Irrationalism: The Foundation of Hate Propaganda

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Abstract

This article proposes that hate propaganda be examined in terms of its basis in irrationalism as a philosophical orientation. In the first part of the paper, irrationalism is discussed from the perspectives of various 20th century philosophers engaged against the rise of fascism or responding to it. In the second part, selected examples of contemporary propaganda are discussed, demonstrating continuity in the use of irrationalism as a limitation to thought and analysis.

Keywords: irrationalism, antisemitism, Frankfurt School, Vienna Circle, Max Weber, Karl Popper, Georg Lukács, Leo Löwenthal, Max Horkheimer, Norbert Guterman, critical theory, Continental philosophy, anti-immigrant, xenophobia, eugenicism, separatism

Many of the ideological sources of contemporary hate propaganda lie in the history of racism, antisemitism, and the legacy of fascism in Europe, although their roots are much lengthier and lie deeper. While the object of antisemitism is an obvious single population, its classic statement of the modern period, Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion, projects its message more broadly than the immediate intended target and thus has served as a model for hate groups of the contemporary period. In that document, claims about Jews were strengthened by additional objectives, such as the hatred of democracy, liberalism, and modernity (Bronner, 2000). In the contemporary period, the Klan, Aryan Nations, and racist skinheads, among others, broadcast hate to build movements, drawing on the possibility of violence against ethnic minorities, gays, and lesbians. Other propagandists, such as those examined in the second half of this essay, are less oriented to violence; they ground their pronouncements in immediate experience and what they consider to be the reasonable interests and expectations of their audience in preserving their social positions and the status of the group to which they belong, or recovering those preferred relations they perceive to be lost. Like the Protocols, the object of these contemporary hate propagandists extends beyond a target group to include law enforcement and judicial personnel, liberal politicians, and others perceived to be blocking the return of more stable, natural, and “diverse” societies. Tolerance, legal due process, multiculturalism, and democracy have, in the view of such
propaganda, opened the door to the dissolution of the rightfully dominant culture.

Researchers of hate groups and propaganda often explain the means by which propagandists draw people to their cause by identifying communication techniques employed as persuasive or deceitful, a soft-sell approach or one that is guilt-inducing, to prod the listener or reader to accept a group’s message and purpose. Variations of this approach have been used by researchers over time, beginning with members of the Frankfurt School and those on its periphery studying the rise of fascism in the 1930s. Leo Löwenthal and Norbert Guterman (1987), for example, sought out “themes of agitation” in their analysis of antisemitic and profascist communications in their *Prophets of Deceit*, while Theodor Adorno (2000) identified a series of “devices” used in the radio speeches of Martin Luther Thomas. In the contemporary period, Weatherby and Scoggins (2005) examined techniques of hate groups such as the “foot-in-the-door” and the “low-ball” techniques. McNamee, Peterson, and Peña (2010) identified four themes by which to understand the communication strategies of hate groups over the internet. Messner and her coauthors (2007) cited “tactics” evident through linguistic analysis by which writers and singers of hate-inspired country music hoped to attract and seize an audience; Futrell, Simi, and Gottschalk (2006) analyzed white power music through the interconnections of spatial typologies.

Identifying such techniques or devices has value for understanding some of the mechanisms hate propagandists use to persuade audiences of the power of their guiding principles, and the viability of their group for addressing perceived social problems and the frustrations of potential adherents. However, communication requires more than specifying its structure and techniques. Techniques that are identified and labelled must be treated in a way that not only exposes their persuasive or coercive character, but also provides a critique of the dominant mode of thinking that the messenger and the audience alike have internalized from their social environment. It is this philosophical orientation in both speaker and audience that is the greatest facilitator of adherence to a cause, whether as activity in a group or as isolated individual acquiescence.

It is argued here that the success of propaganda rests on the ground of irrationalism, as the underpinning of propaganda and as the political uptake of it as it supports the actual or perceived historical foundations of the social order. Founding propaganda on irrationalist orientations attempts to establish a greater legitimacy for hate communications and the development of reactionary social movements. What is promoted as a rational assessment of a social problem is a means of making a perspective acceptable to the consumer of hate propaganda where the more volatile or violent message might be rejected as too extreme. The latter, of course, might well be
the future goal of the more subtle agitator or the academically-clothed propagandist.

While marginal to the mainstream of democratic societies, hate propaganda nevertheless exists in large measure in such societies because of their relative openness and their philosophical orientation to common sense as the dominant mode of appropriating and responding to reality. This is the means by which large proportions of a population acquiesce to distinct structures of power: the existing liberal political and economic institutions, for example, or the alternative racially-motivated groups whose power lies primarily in their capacity to claim insight into personal dilemmas related to the perceived disintegration of the social order.

It was during the late inter-war years, when fascists were able to acquire state power in Europe, that antisemites and pro-fascists were widely evident on the radio airwaves in North America, in pulpits, on speaking tours, and in their publicly-distributed publications. Their efforts were rooted largely in claims of American freedom and individualism, while haranguing against the encroachments of modernity, the liberal state, and the purported loss of security and status for the individual. The concentration on irrationalism in hate propaganda came about during this period primarily as a means of assessing the rise of fascist politics and the seeming ease by which its measures against a range of distinct social groups dominated not only the actions of such politics, but also the mode of their communication. Similarly, in the contemporary period, hate propaganda relies on a communication form intended to build sustainable organizations and ideas that can be promoted as suppressed and in need of re-kindling. In both cases irrationalism serves as the foundation and the structure of the communication of hatred.

I. DEFINING IRRATIONALISM

Any attempt to define irrationalism must acknowledge its relation to rationalism, or rationality, for it is in arguing against irrationalism that the “rational attitude,” as Karl Popper called it, is necessarily illuminated. This relation of rationalism to irrationalism is a common element of the theorists discussed in the first part of this essay.

Writing in the post-war period but motivated, in part, by the attack on reason by all forms of totalitarianism, Popper (1966) saw the necessity of the rational attitude, at base, as a “readiness to listen to critical arguments and to learn from experience.” Such an attitude required a degree of intellectual modesty and was closely related to the “scientific attitude” (p. 225). To say that irrationalism is the opposite kind of attitude is the beginning of a definition, provided it is noted that irrationalists do not reject the rational
attitude entirely, but argue that it is possible for only a small proportion of people—the elite of the propagandists in this instance, or, in the case of philosophers such as Plato, a belief in the limited distribution of “intellectual intuition” (Popper, 1966, pp. 227-228; see also Plato, 360 BCE). In Popper’s view, irrationalism is founded on the belief that the majority of people are weak in intellectual skills, a division that extends the foundation of irrationalism to a belief in the natural inequality of human beings applicable within any group as well as comparisons of distinct groups. Such intellectual weakness allows irrationalism to take root in the emotions and passions of persons against the capacity to reason (Popper, 1966, pp. 228, 234-235).

Despite the obvious political and philosophical differences between Popper and Georg Lukács, their views of irrationalism contain some similarities by which they can be, at least at some level, reconciled (see Kelemen, 2008, and, for a less supportive view, Rockmore, 1992). Lukács regarded irrationalism as an “international phenomenon,” a “campaign” against Enlightenment philosophy and the ideas of the French Revolution, a response to class conflict, as opposition to modernity, against the bourgeois notion of “progress” and against movements toward socialism. The crisis in the bourgeois idea of progress, reached in Germany by mid-19th century, concerned the population’s normative dependence on authority. Irrationalism was expressed, in part, as a “disappointment” in the masses’ capacity to understand the gradualism of democracy: namely, their response to insufficiently realized expectations of equality of opportunity and participation in democratic societies (Lukács, 1980, pp. 16, 18-19, 68ff.).

There are a number of components of Lukács’ meaning of irrationalism: its rejection of the notion that the external world can be known, its claim of limits to the scientific method, and its denial of social progress—in short, its rejection of Enlightenment values (see also Wolin, 2004, p. 3). The communicative style of hate propaganda, then and now, centers on what Lukács (1980) considered the “decisive hallmark” of irrationalism: the avoidance of answering questions raised by science and progress, but viewing such questions and the problems raised as unable to be resolved (p. 104). On this point he and Popper shared a belief in the positive relation of the rational and scientific attitudes, and the irrational as a rejection of them. But the most fundamental element of irrationalism, for Lukács, was its equation of understanding with reason, as if cognitive action need not go beyond the immediacy of understanding that is deemed to be legitimately self-limiting, but nonetheless of sufficient substance with which to conclude the process of thinking. Opposing this perspective, reason treats contradictions and limits to thinking as “problem[s] to be solved” (Lukács, p. 97) and
as “the beginning and sign of rationality” (Hegel, cited in Lukács, p. 98). Lukács noted,

Irrationalism, on the other hand . . . stops at precisely this point, absolutizes the problem, hardens the limitations of perception governed by understanding into perceptual limitations as a whole, and indeed mysticizes into a ‘supra-rational’ answer the problem thus rendered artificially insoluble. (pp. 97-98; see also Hodges, 1970, p. 67)

The crucial point is the decision to cease inquiry and settle for an emotionally satisfying explanation of reality. Lukács asked the question, what happens “if thought . . . stops short of the difficulties and shies away from them . . . [or] hypostasizes the inability of specific concepts to comprehend a specific reality into the inability of thought . . . to master the essence of reality intellectually?” What happens, he continues, “if a virtue is then made of this necessity and the inability to comprehend the world intellectually is presented as ‘higher perception,’ as faith, intuition . . . ?” (p. 100).

Adorno and Löwenthal analyzed the irrationalist basis of antisemitic and pro-fascist propaganda in the inter-war and post-war periods. Like Popper and Lukács, they insisted that irrationalism was compounded with rationality, the central organizational principle of modernity (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1982, pp. 309-310; Adorno, 2000, p. 29; Löwenthal, 1986, p. 185; Seymour, 2000, p. 301): that is, irrational in substance and effect, but nevertheless calculated, planned, and organized. On the other hand, Adorno (1994) remarked that fascist propaganda “builds up an imagery of the Jew, or of the Communist and tears it to pieces without caring how much this imagery is related to reality,” using an oratorical style that “might be called an organized flight of ideas” (pp. 222-223). He referred in 2000 to irrationalist propaganda as a kind of “emotional planning” (p. 29) that Löwenthal and Guterman (1987) argued was facilitated through the rationalization of values (p. 28).

For these theorists, as well as for Lukács, neither Nazism in Europe nor pro-fascist activities in America were spontaneous expressions of social outcasts, but manifestations of ideas that had long been present. Irrationalism in mainstream philosophy and social science served to create a social atmosphere conducive to promoting racism and the support of fascist politics. American propagandists such as Martin Luther Thomas, Gerald B. Winrod, and Gerald L.K. Smith, among others, grounded their hopes for a reactionary movement on social and economic insecurities widely experienced during the Depression period. Löwenthal called this atmosphere a “social malaise,” a condition which, as Adorno saw it, was of unquestioning dependence on a type of authority central to the legitimization of intolerance.
Such a dependence was, in effect, a self-imposed constraint on knowledge by an unreflective belief in a perception and experience of reality, and by dependency on the authority of the leader or the legitimacy of existing social relations, such as the division of labor and the hierarchy of social classes and status positions (Adorno, 2000, p. 45; Horkheimer & Adorno, 1982, p. 153; Löwenthal & Guterman, 1987, p. 117; Adorno, 1994, pp. 110, 159ff.; Horkheimer, 1982, pp. 53-55, 68-97). Dependence on authority requires no further investigation of reality beyond awareness that it is sustained, in part, by existing, normative relations (economic, political, and cultural), and partly on the preferred relations that once existed or might again in the future. In racist or pro-fascist agitation, dependence is manifested psychologically and socially in that leaders, listeners, group members, or loose adherents to a cause will give priority to eliminating the identified enemy rather than advocating changes in the social structure (Löwenthal & Guterman, 1987, p. 16). For Adorno, this problem of dependence was at the heart of the Enlightenment’s hope for the liberation of the individual (Adorno & Becker, 1999).

Propagandists and agitators attempt to make their ideas popular as a new normative frame of meaning and social interaction, and as the sustaining values of institutional arrangements. To achieve this, agitators exploit the feelings of dissatisfaction, dislocation, instability, and insecurity. While the social theorists discussed in the first part of this paper focused on the public efforts of specific ideologues, the constant background to their analyses was the ideology of individualism, the competitiveness central to economic development and interpersonal relations, exploitation as a source of wealth-production, and the reduction of language and thought to the communication strategies of advertising. Many irrationalist philosophers and pro-fascist agitators held occupations of status in academia, politics, and religion, and as such Adorno and Löwenthal viewed them as some of the personnel underpinning capitalism’s “culture industry.”

In one of his most incisive literary critiques, Löwenthal (1986) identified irrationalism as “the pagan awe of unlimited and unintelligible forces of nature, the mystique of blood and race . . . the abrogation of individual responsibility [and] anti-intellectualism” (p. 185). Adorno regarded the limiting of knowledge to the immediate and existent as a “defamation of the intellect,” a “resentment against” the intellect that throws the consumer of propaganda back to a perceived security of common sense (Adorno, 2000, p. 96).

Irrationalist propaganda arises from interests that are opposed to historically established and developing ideas, and social policies of equality and tolerance. Such opposition, however objectionable, also exists as a matter of public discussion in various media and established educational
contexts, as well as in the communication of groups dedicated to halting and reversing such progress. Thus, irrationalism, historically and in the present period, is a complex of rationality and irrationality premised on a limited historical perspective and a rejection of reason for a simplistic and passive common sense. Its practical focus is on attitudes, ideas, and proposals for action on issues deemed by propagandists as persistent or recurring and are, therefore, considered unsettled matters of public interest worthy of continued debate. This is especially true in contexts in which social and economic problems and personal insecurities can be explained in subjectivist and experiential terms rather than subjected to comprehensive, historical, and ethical examination by virtue of which such discussion would be of a different character. Research into contemporary hate groups has confirmed this (Cf. Blazak, 2002; Blee, 2002; Lanning, 2004). A way of thinking about and responding to such problems, irrationalism has the potential to create an affirmative atmosphere for hatred, even in philosophical approaches considered to be in the academic mainstream. Hence, Lukács (1980) warns

that no philosophy is “innocent” or merely academic; that everywhere and always, the danger is objectively at hand that some global fire-raiser will again spark off a devouring conflagration à la Hitler with the philosophical tinder of “innocent” salon conversations, café discussions, university lectures, literary supplements, essays, and so on. (p. 90)

Following a brief account of aspects of critical theorists’ analyses, I discuss selected communications of contemporary agitators. I am concerned here with groups that form their attitudes and proposals for action around the rationality/irrationality complex that allows their ideology to encroach upon, or reduce the parameters of, tolerance presently accepted by mainstream attitudes.

II. THE RATIONALITY-IrrRATIONALITY COMPLEX IN HATE PROPAGANDA

Theorists of the Frankfurt School emphasized consumer ideology and the culture industry as social phenomena that provided a critical guide to irrationalism’s attempt to account for the problems of modern society. For Löwenthal and Adorno, a major point of distinction between Europe and America was the different level of economic development, especially in the American context where individualized active participation in mass consumption was a stronger feature of the economic system. In America, the dominant social authority became the market and, ideologically at least, the individual consumer herself who internalized market rationale as the legitimate motor of social stability and progress, and as a necessary means of
constructing a self-image. On the one hand, it was necessary to attempt to manage the authority of the market; on the other was a claim about the individual as a fully independent entity exemplified through his or her consumer-related decision-making. From an irrationalist perspective, competitiveness, even in its most brutal form, is a natural feature of human society (Lukács, 1980, p. 375; see also Marcuse, 1968; Mills, 1963). Thus, the competitive atmosphere of a society sustains more than the structure of the market; it also generates differences among social groups.

Reliance on what the individual experiences and what she can learn from it reinforces the belief that sufficient knowledge is obtained through one’s defense of existing social relations, and that a fundamental condition of truth is the absence of an imperative to discover it (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1982, p. 144). This means that people need not extend their interests beyond what they think they know of immediate circumstances or advocate alternatives to social conditions. Adorno referred to this as the adoration of the existent, the unreflective reverence for what is deemed factually existing at any moment in the minds of the consumers of propaganda. He considered this a psychological process that “may set the stage for the more obvious effects” (Adorno, 2000, pp. 44-45) such as the need to advocate for re-establishing social conditions that affirm a state of affairs perceived to have been the natural foundation of society, but which have been lost or usurped by others. In the period of Adorno’s and Löwenthal research, these “others” were Jews, New Deal advocates, and European exiles, while in the contemporary period hate propagandists cite legal and undocumented immigrants, visible minorities, homosexuals, and advocates of multiculturalism.

The employment of irrationalism in hate propaganda contains an expected contradiction. The agitator gives priority to social relations relevant to an earlier or founding period: namely, conditions dominant social groups (of race, ethnicity, or class) established, the reasonableness of which the agitator projects forward to the present. The agitator also claims that the presence of and/or concessions to subordinate, inferiorized groups has already diminished or diluted those relations. The object of the agitator’s concentration is a call for adherence to an imagined, ideal arrangement of culture that once existed, that was a pre-condition for social and personal stability, and that acquired its validity and reasonableness from the separation of social groups. Thus, a national or racial myth is created. For Lukács, creation of myths was an expression of irrationalism since myths were claimed to stand above reason and to represent truth only by way of analogy or symbol; the subjective character of myth allowed the believer to retreat into immediate experience as the primary source of knowledge (Parkinson, 1977, p. 69; Lukács, 1980, p. 414).
It is not merely an appeal to a selective tradition, but is moreover an attempt to constrain autonomous thought and action. Richard Wolin makes a similar point in his discussion of the new right in contemporary Germany, citing Botho Strauss’ reassertion of myth as the essential antidote to modern society, its technology, consumerism, and formal rejection of violence. Consistent with the interests of fascist agitators discussed by Adorno and Löwenthal, Strauss argues against the autonomy of the individual and society as a whole to open a space for, as Wolin puts it, a “return to the values of the sacred and ‘myth’;” for, according to Strauss, the “self-determined individual is the most blatant lie of reason.” Wolin remarks that for Strauss, “Myth, conversely, provides us with an experience of the ineffable” (Wolin, 2004, p. 145). Adorno (1994) addressed this theme, arguing that a major purpose of syndicated astrology columns in newspapers was “to satisfy the longings of people who are thoroughly convinced that others (or some unknown agency) ought to know more about themselves and what they should do than they can decide for themselves” (p. 52). The astrologist’s and the agitator’s message “rarely if ever adequately express social or psychological reality, but manipulate the reader’s [or listener’s] ideas of such matters in a definite direction” (p. 74). The astrology advice suggested to readers that they experienced situations they could not manage on their own; nor could these situations be explained beyond the level of understanding imputed by the astrologist.

This is consistent with the irrationalist denial of the knowability of the external world. The status of the individual is not determined or conditioned by specific and identifiable social conditions, but by fate. Giving priority to fate over relative autonomy facilitates the irrational dependence on an authority and on existing social relations, neither of which, it is claimed, has a knowable origin other than tradition or the immediacy of experience. To the agitator and his or her audience, social scientific investigation and explanation are of no help (Hodges, 1970, p. 89; Adorno, 2000, p. 43).

Löwenthal and Guterman (1987) discovered that while pro-fascist agitators argued for the dependence of the audience on the leader’s message, the latter also encouraged the audience to accept that they required leadership to function adequately in society. The belief that people were incapable of developing comprehensive knowledge was a measure to legitimate dependence on the leader’s claims to knowledge based on traditional relations. Adorno (1991) argues that the internalization of this dependence was a deception desired by the audience itself as a form of personal satisfaction (p. 89).

Reliance on the immediacy of experience is central to the success of propaganda, as it negates the need to reason through particular problems.
The experience of personal or social problems is not denied, but is appropriated for its “truth-functional” (Steiner, 1997, pp. 82, 86) value that affirms the dilution of or threat to traditional relations of a culture. Language that functions in this way is directed at the present, the immediate emotional experience, while an abstract of the past trims away aspects of history incompatible with the message. In this way experience is sufficient to identify and affirm the knowledgeable insiders whose expertise and whose cultural and ethnic backgrounds are consistent with the historical myth projected by the agitator.

One way in which the rational and the irrational in propaganda were connected was through the essential form of communication in modern society, the advertisement, “the elixir of life,” which, according to Horkheimer and Adorno, facilitated economic and status competition. Advertising is a truth-functional mode of communication through which, in the case of propaganda, conformity to the prevailing ideology and emerging movements of reaction is managed. Hate propagandists employ the central features of this mode of communication: monotony, repetition, and a concentration on the essentials required to make a commodity marketable or an idea palatable to their audience of consumers. The advertising style replaces the potential interest for more comprehensive knowledge with the experience of consumption. As Horkheimer and Adorno (1982) argue, “Advertising today is a negative principle, a blocking device: everything that does not bear its stamp is economically suspect” (p. 162).

Communication or ideas that do not conform to the form and purpose of advertising to establish a relation of immediacy, factuality, and simplicity between the message and the market goal is treated as distrustful. A highly rationalized form of communication, the language and style of advertising is viewed not as an outright deception or manipulation of the audience or consumer, but as a manifestation of, as Adorno put it, the “borderline between advertising and reality [that] has become so fluent” in modern society. He cites Martin Luther Thomas’s fundraising strategy as an example, an appeal “to the American sense of a good bargain, that everything has its price, that everything can be expressed in terms of its financial equivalent” (Adorno, 2000, p. 21). Löwenthal noted that advertising facilitates the identification of the message with reality—with the claim, for example, of specific quantities of adherents to the agitator’s movement, in the same way the advertising executive promotes the product by citing the number of satisfied customers. As Löwenthal and Guterman (1987) explain, “The most obvious purpose of such assertions is to instil in the listeners the feeling that, just as they can’t be wrong about a nationally advertised product, so they cannot be wrong when they represent a general political trend” (p. 118).
Similar to the advertising slogans and techniques that offer the public justification for consumer behavior, propaganda also communicates images and messages that appear rational in the context of a perceived threat to preferred relations. The common-sense rationale of the message attracts the attention of the person able to appreciate an argument (or a sales pitch) that makes a connection between its professed logic and the consumer’s perceived needs and experience, such as frustrated opportunities and the encroachment of others onto previously secure social terrain.

The irrationalism of racist or pro-fascist ideas often involves an accommodation of normative, rational behavior consistent with social expectations, but simultaneously housing the intolerance, even ruthlessness of agitators. Adorno’s analysis of astrology as an irrationalist backdrop to popular culture shows how superficial reasonableness of argument and the claimed neutrality of a crude sociology at once argue for social conformism and acknowledge at least two aspects of irrationalism discussed here, the limits to knowledge and the appeal to an authority, as noted earlier, who knows more than people do about themselves—

an all-pervasive sense of self-alienation. It is in this connection that the concept of “understanding” crops up in the [astrology] column. Sociologically the stress on understanding, being understood as well as understanding others, probably reflects social atomization, the reverse and concomitant of collectivization (Adorno, 1994, pp. 130-131). (See also Lukács, 1980, p. 412.)

It is not that Adorno rejected the notion of understanding in the sense, for example, of standing in another’s shoes—something unlikely to be promoted by hate propagandists. Rather, understanding, in this context, is equated with common sense, with the immediate moment, and is the threshold of knowledge, not its full realization. That goal is reason. Thus, propaganda gives priority to individually generated meaning consistent with Max Weber’s original sociological definition of understanding: the “direct understanding” of the subjective meaning a person gives to an act, or the “explanatory understanding” of the subjective motive in relation to conditions under which it is pursued (Weber, 1978, pp. 8-9). So long as the causes of these conditions are not sought or the individual’s own meaning not subjected to critical scrutiny, propaganda remains on the safe ground of common sense.

III. IRRATIONALISM IN CONTEMPORARY PROPAGANDA

It is not the intention here to create a direct relation between pro-fascist propaganda of the 1930s and ‘40s and the organized racism of the con-
temporary period; nor is it the intention to show a direct analytical relation between the theorists discussed previously and the substance of propaganda in the present period. It is possible, however, to illustrate the continuity of irrationalist thinking with earlier theorists’ critiques as a backdrop to the present problem.

What is it in the irrational that can be communicated or demonstrated to have some degree of “reasonableness” with which to capture truth-functional experience? In contemporary hate propaganda, one factor is its dual focus on authority. One aspect of this focus is the emphasis on the knowledge leading spokespersons claim to possess about social and individual problems that is intended to explain the audience’s alienation, while the second is the historical authority of the white, European race in specific national settings, its rightful dominance by way of history, myth, and genetics. Leadership knowledge is ostensibly demonstrated by the level of education, expertise, and experience held by authors of relevant publications. Although I have not extensively detailed this matter here, of importance are their academic or professional credentials, particularly the status of some as university faculty that lends a degree of legitimacy for the consumer of their views. Two organizationally connected publications surveyed here are Citizens Informer, the quarterly newspaper of the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC), and American Renaissance of the New Century Foundation (NCF). Both are publicly accessible on the internet and/or through subscription. The CCC has several chapters around the United States and a foundation that produces occasional papers, the Confederate Monument Project, and a video series. The New Century Foundation markets books by its founder, Jared Taylor, and others; Taylor is frequently featured in conservative and other media. A third publication, The Occidental Quarterly (TOQ), is, apparently, unaffiliated, although some authors of its articles appear in one or both publications noted above.

The CCC, the NCF, and TOQ have been classified as “hate groups.” American Renaissance (NCF) promotes what are essentially eugenicist views and racial separatism; the CCC has reinvigorated a mainstream representation of racial intolerance with its promotion of the Old South and, with American Renaissance, shares a preoccupation with legal and “illegal” immigrants, particularly people of Hispanic background, as problems for American society (crime, welfare, etc.) and a threat to its national cohesion. In 2008, TOQ’s statement of principles included concerns for the decline of the white race, the loss of America’s uniqueness, and threats to the nations’ European character. A clearly irrationalist principle is TOQ’s statement that the “perfectibility, let alone equality, of man is not possible and is not a legitimate political aspiration” (www.theoccidentalquarterly.com), an affirmation of Popper’s view of the irrational limitation to cognitive ability.
Löwenthal suggested that irrationalism encouraged an identification with similarly situated others willing to ignore the traditional proscription against voicing private troubles publicly and admit openly that they “are disillusioned, ignorant and cheated” (Löwenthal & Guterman, 1987, p. 32). Such presumed common experience lent understanding to one’s self-limiting practice and to a self-consciousness of what Löwenthal identified in pro-fascist radio as “the eternal dupe.”

The leader of a movement must first convince his audience that its ideas are inadequate for coping with the situation that produces its discontent. He cannot win adherents without in a sense humiliating them, that is, suggesting that they are inferior in knowledge, strength, or courage and that they need him more than he needs them. (Löwenthal & Guterman, 1987, p. 29)

The attribute of “dupe” is used not in order to alienate that audience, but to convince them that certain political ideas and social arrangements—liberalism and multiculturalism, for example—are promoted for sinister purposes, and that the solution to the problem is the genetic and historical right to a national space. This theme is illustrated in the contemporary propagandists’ claim of superior knowledge, buttressed by credentials and occupational status. While claiming superiority, they clearly do not treat their knowledge as exclusive, but as something to be widely disseminated. Such knowledge can be internalized more effectively when their readers or listeners are at least curious about having been fooled or deceived about historical events or the rationale for social policies. The agitator raises problems—immigration, intermarriage—likely experienced by or known to the audience, but which they have been led to consider acceptable as social progress. Having raised problems in this way, the propagandist does not propose solutions; rather, the focus becomes exposing the falsehoods of liberals and radicals, and promoting the common sense myth of genetic nationalism and racial separation.

Propagandists argue that the deception developed over time, beginning at the point when liberal white people believed it necessary to extend Enlightenment values to others. Jared Taylor (2005a) argues that views of race in the early period of colonialism were characterized by confusion because there was a difference in experience between colonizers on the ground and observers in the colonial home who “were full of false piety, mouthing high-sounding nonsense they did not believe.” In the period of colonialism, white people “who spent the most time overseas and who knew non-whites best were the ones who were least sentimental about them” (p. 1). One group, for example, were those who attempted to rationally organize South African society around apartheid (‘perhaps the single
least understood issue of the 20th Century”), nationalism and ethnic pride, not only, so William Flax (2005) argues, for the sake of the white settlers, but for Africans as well. The common sense approach to the problem is to recognize that

human history is that of people born into specific families, tribes and nations—sharing experiences in each generation among those whose ancestors had shared experiences and common achievements during many prior generations: people, moreover, whose first concern had always been the well-being of their own posterity. (p. 7)

Thus, Enlightenment ideas are not wholly dismissed or denied to colonized people. Rather, ideas that drove Western sentiments were better developed and experienced by the colonized on their own terms and in their own time. Again, a problem is raised and immediately “solved” by the reduction of its cause to the belief that interaction and integration serve common interests of different peoples so long as, in the end, distinct groups remain separate. One should think of one’s race, Taylor argues, as if it were one’s extended family, for it is normal and natural to consider the well-being of one’s family before the family of another, and so it is natural to extend the same kind of consideration to one’s race. This common sense is intended to illuminate the misinformation to which much of the public has succumbed:

Can any of you imagine emigrating to, say, Cambodia, or Nigeria or Pakistan, and assimilating seamlessly to the point where you were indistinguishable from the natives? . . . It can’t be done, and yet, the theory is, Cambodians, Nigerians, Pakistanis . . . can come here by the hundreds of thousands and assimilate without moving a muscle! (Taylor, 2005b, p. 21)

This is the irrationalist “racial doctrine” noted by Popper (1966) whereby “we ‘think with our blood’ or . . . we ‘think with our race’” (p. 243).

As the argument goes, sentimental Westerners have allowed themselves to be deceived by the possibility of multiculturalism (the latter is assumed, generally in these arguments, to be synonymous with assimilation). Thus, the deception of those who thought equality and democracy could be taken to the colonized has been transformed over time into self-hatred. In modern liberal society, self-hatred manifests itself in the compulsion to avoid close bonds between people of European heritage. Sam Dickson (2005, p. 21) remarks, “Indeed, the liberal establishment dins it into the heads of everyone from infancy that the worst thing any White can do is to connect” with other white people. This attitude has been promoted by liberals, Marxists, and even wayward conservatives who have fooled people into
internalizing as normative an open approach to ethnic groups and cultures other than their own. Taylor (2003), reviewing Paul Gottfried’s 2002 book *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt*, regards this internalized attitude as a “poisoned state of mind that makes whites not only hate their own history and identity, but commands them to glorify and feel inferior to ‘victims’ of all kinds: homosexuals, non-whites, foreigners, women, AIDS carriers, and essentially anyone unlike themselves” (p. 8). Taylor (2005c) laments that every ethnic or national group except whites or people of European descent take for granted the biological connection of people of the same heritage (p. 21).

This kind of argument is intended to confirm that which the audience already understands and which there is no need to think it through. It is an inward-looking affirmation of blood, race, and national soil intended to draw a focus on the failure of Enlightenment values and the mis-directed application of ideas and policies of social progress, such as the notion that the values of equality and freedom could be universalized and integrated so thoroughly into human societies that the rebirth of genetically defined national cultures would be counterproductive to progress. Rather, all attempts at universalizing progressive principles have only proven how gullible Westerners are about human improvement and responsibility.

An example of such gullibility is the Western value of altruism when enacted across racial or ethnic lines. The competitive feature of capitalism is not absent in this consideration. Europeans have, for the last couple of centuries, been caught up in “competitive altruism” and “competitive philanthropy” (Jobling, 2003a). Jobling (2003a) argues that “altruism is linked to social status” and “reputation-building;” it has been valuable for promoting charity and consideration for others and in affirming the Christian ethic (p. 3). However, for the “new class” that formed out of the well-educated and altruistic New Left of the 1960s and ‘70s, “What better objects of generosity than those groups who were furthest from the mainstream: non-whites, homosexuals, criminals and deviates of all kinds?” (p. 5). But, especially because this new class was highly socially conscious, they were deceived by their own altruistic values into addressing problems they thought were social in origin such as poverty, war, and low educational performance, but which were, according to this argument, genetic or biological in origin. Bill Gates is cited as an example of such self-deception: “Predictably, the richest man in the world has poured money into the most futile and therefore the most admired causes: eliminating the racial gap in educational achievement and eradicating AIDS in Africa” (Jobling, 2003b, “A New Form of Moral Superiority”). Gates’ philanthropy and that of wealthy African Americans are peculiar forms of social interest among the upper class which, as a class, “separate themselves from the larger society
and could not care less about what goes on outside the walls of their gilded ghettos” (Nelson, 2005, p. 8).

Underlying this argument is its reversal of racial or ethnic self-hatred that has been a powerful psychological and political tool of dominant groups since the beginning of the colonial era, but having its historical origins in antisemitism. The basis of Gilman’s 1986 definition of self-hatred is that it “results from the outsiders’ acceptance of the mirage of themselves generated by their reference group—that group in society which they see as defining them—as a reality” (p. 2). Historically, the “outsider” in this sense has been the colonized or otherwise subordinated group, while the “reference group” has been the colonizer, the imperialist, the overseer, the white European who possesses the financial and cultural power to aspire, to achieve, and to oppress. In the logic of contemporary propagandists, minority groups, “deviates of all types,” and other historically subordinated groups have now become the reference group, while the propagandists and their audiences have become the outsiders. The propagandists’ readers or listeners identify with the reversal of these positions, for it explains why their neighborhoods are, to them, less white than two generations ago, why the crime rate has soared and the welfare rolls have grown.

The backdrop of such discussions is the biological/genetic differences among people of distinct ethnic and national groups, and the extent to which these differences demand rigid boundaries and constraints on group interactions. Salter includes competitive altruism as one of the reasons people of European descent are losing their once-dominant status. He uses the term ethny to refer to a race, nation, or ethnic group; conceptually, these are meant to be identical terms. Like Taylor’s race and family analogy, one’s ethny can be compromised, diluted, fragmentated only at the peril of the group itself. While intermarriage and adoption of children of different racial or ethnic backgrounds may be described as altruistic behaviors, they are excessive, misplaced indiscriminate acts that threaten one’s ethny. Salter explains, “Indiscriminate altruism such as foregoing reproduction to aid nonkin to reproduce will weed out genes that code for such behaviour [i.e. the natural genetic interests of a race], if maintained over many generations” (cited in Taylor, 2005d, p. 8). The loss of genetic interests, it is argued, becomes increasingly detrimental to native populations and to the culture they have developed. Irrationalists will not articulate the motivation and complexity of relations attended by altruism; instead they shift the emphasis “from a defense of ethical values to a biological self-defense” (Löwenthal & Guterman, 1987, p. 106).

The use of science is conditioned by the prior interest of the genetic-nationalist myth, the idea that there is something distinctive and special about any national group that it is worth employing protective measures
against the dilution of its genes. In “A Letter from a Grandfather to His Genes,” Anthony Hilton (2005), a retired academic from Concordia University in Montreal, attempts to draw the attention of younger generations to the destruction of their race. Like one branch of the KKK, Hilton cites “today’s quasi-ideology of ‘bio-diversity,’” a component of the more rational, less volatile racism that promotes a kind of inter-racial, inter-ethnic set of relations. According to Hilton and the Klan, true diversity occurs when all racial and ethnic groups accept their genetic uniqueness and separation becomes the chief means by which to guarantee racial survival and sustain a viable culture. Like others such as William Flax, Hilton’s interest is not in the destruction of other ethnic groups or their cultures. The argument is a protective or defensive one. That is, protection of “ethnies” is possible not through policies of open immigration and the modernist acceptance of intermarriage; rather, the longevity of the group is secured through endogamy based on genetic necessity. What is good for one ethnic group is good for another. As Hilton expresses it,

One never knows when or how another culture or ethny may turn out to benefit one’s own, but if they go extinct, they are lost forever. Maybe there are some cultures you detest, but maybe you should hold your nose and hope they survive, too–someplace. (p. 53)

Such an approach redefines equality among races or ethnic groups (Boggs, 1993) so that equal treatment comes about through their separation as the only means to secure the conditions for longevity. In this way, there is not a direct assault on specific groups as in the “‘problem’ idea” promoted by more directly racist propaganda. Adorno noted the difference in some of the interviewees for the authoritarian personality study who expressed ambivalence or indifference about the Jewish problem in contrast to earlier Nazi propaganda that directly cited Jews as the problem, or in the present case, the more volatile line of attack directed at immigrants and visible minorities. Adorno argues that this approach was a “pattern of conformist ‘sensibleness’ [that] lends itself very easily to the defense of various kinds of irrationality” (Adorno et al., 1982, pp. 312-313).

One means by which contemporary propagandists promote their ideology is to exploit aspects of minority group histories as an illustration of how to best accomplish genetic, separatist, and nationalist goals. Here, again, a seemingly positive focus serves the irrationalist purpose. Kevin MacDonald, a professor of psychology at California State University, has written extensively on Jewish history in order to demonstrate, among other things, how Jews have enhanced their position in Europe and North America by asserting their self-interests. Properly understood, MacDonald claims, the
“Jewish model” of ethnic self-promotion can serve Euro-ethnic groups in their attempts to survive the encroachment of others. Jewish ethnic pride, hyper-ethnocentrism, Zionism, even the political radicalism of Jews have been successful means of securing their elite status in the West (MacDonald, 2004). For white, non-Jewish communities, the “Jewish model” is an exemplar of endurance of which, under present conditions of self-deception, people of non-Jewish European background can only dream. His analysis of the sources and consequences of Jewish activism at once acknowledges Jewish power and argues it is responsible for political ideas and social policies most detrimental to the security of other ethnic groups and elements of culture that have sustained traditional authority relations within the ethnic group.

Other minority groups have benefited equally through programs of self-promotion. While whites have promoted multiculturalism through values of inclusion and pluralism, other ethnic groups have exploited it to assert “an explicitly racial, Afro-centric or Hispanic history” (Taylor, 1992). Whites, according to Boggs (1993), were fooled into helping organize the Civil Rights movement only to find that after working together to achieve equality and integration, they were gradually excluded. For Boggs (1990), the lesson is that whites diluted their own racial (i.e. genetic) interests for the equality of all races; blacks, on the other hand, took advantage of the “waning white consciousness [that] left a clear field for the growing demands . . . of black consciousness” (p. 4). Like MacDonald, Griffin (2002) argues that whites should take their survival cues from minorities who are attuned to their ethnic (genetic) interests. He elaborates a 9-point self-help program for “living white” that focuses not only on the obvious “racial identity and pride,” but also on such other characteristics as “courage,” “positive mental attitude,” and “personal happiness” (p. 35).

The contemporary hate propaganda discussed here concentrates on the special knowledge spokespersons possess that exposes a long historical project of deception, illuminates the application of misguided values to social policies, and conveys to the audience the social and psychological manipulation that has undermined its security and cultural well-being. The dissemination of such knowledge is intended to make consumers of hate propaganda authorities over a destiny forced upon them by those who have failed to adhere to the natural priority of racial and national exclusiveness. This propaganda is successful to the extent that understanding at the level of immediate experience is accepted as the path to the solution of perceived problems.
What happens when there is a refusal to extend the pursuit of knowledge beyond what is claimed to be intuitively understood as a legitimate expression of experience? Such problems are expected and normal in the pursuit of knowledge. Goldmann (1997) made precisely this point in his sociological analysis of communication. It is only in the freezing of the refusal to develop further knowledge that communication turns toward the irrational, as it does in the contemporary hate propagandists cited here, as well as the pro-fascists and antisemites of an earlier time. It is, perhaps, the personal disappointments and insecurities, the crisis of declining economic opportunities, and a worldwide resurgence of nationalism that cause the concerns over the increased presence of racial and ethnic minorities to halt the process of thinking where emotional satisfaction can be secured immediately outside the complexity of the issue. Then and now, the failure or the refusal to go beyond immediate experience and simplistic sociological analyses is precisely the anchor upon which hate propagandists rely for an adequate reception of their messages.

Analyzing hate propaganda through its irrationalist basis makes sense if one first shares the philosophical orientations of Popper, Lukács, Adorno, and Löwenthal, that social issues and personal problems have historical origins and trajectories of development, and objectively possible solutions can be implemented through progressive humanist values and social policies. Their perspective is valuable as a critical approach to hate propaganda if irrationalism is accepted as consciously limited thought. Exploring critical approaches to irrationalism in propaganda and relating its premises to the present period is a further effort to move research toward knowledge of why attitudes of hatred can be appropriated by some with comparative ease and relative impunity. Historically, irrationalism has led to the affirmation of the complex of race, family, and nation as a guaranteed refuge against the intrusion of modernist behavioral expectations and progressive values. The exploration of irrationalism goes some way toward addressing this problem because it draws attention to the protected common-sense solutions buttressed by relatively open debate, limited historical perspective, and superficial understanding.

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Notes

1. Some factions of the Klan and other organizations, such as the imprisoned Matt Hale’s Creativity Movement, and Women for Aryan Unity (a part of Stormfront), among others, are committed to community-building around racial separatism, creating children’s and youth groups, providing parental advice, and so on. See, for example, Lanning, 2004.

2. Relevant to Adorno and Becker’s discussion is their source, Kant (1784).

3. Löwenthal used this term to distinguish reactionaries and fascists (or pro-fascists) from reformers and revolutionaries; see Löwenthal and Guterman (1987), pp. 15-21.

4. I recognize that it would be erroneous to include Lukács as a critical theorist if that term referenced only those of the Frankfurt School. Here the meaning is intended to be more of a general critical orientation to social analysis. I am also aware that writing of Frankfurt theorists and Lukács as if their orientations were entirely compatible will not hold. Nevertheless, the present context attempts to show similarities in their orientation to irrationalism and its manifestations.

5. Although I have not developed it here, this idea is clearly related to Herbert Marcuse’s (1965) concept of “repressive tolerance.”

6. Back issues of Citizens Informer were formerly included on the CCC website, http://www.cofcc.org but these have now been removed.

7. One video production titled The Frankfurt School Story purportedly reveals the way Marcuse and Adorno managed to “destroy the moral and social fabric of America” with their critical theory and leftist politics. The advertisement was retrieved from http://www.cofcc.org/foundation/frankfurt_school.html in 2006, but has since been removed.

8. Both the Council of Conservative Citizens and The Occidental Quarterly are identified in the Intelligence Files of hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center as White Nationalist. The SPLC once listed the New Century Foundation as a hate group, but no longer does; however, Jared Taylor, the Foundation’s founder and most prolific author, is listed as a White Nationalist.

References


Italian Fascism’s Soviet Enemy and the Propaganda of Hate, 1941-1943

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ABSTRACT

In conjunction with the war against the Soviet Union which began in June 1941, the Italian Fascist regime promulgated a virulent brand of anti-communism and oversaw a campaign of hate-mongering propaganda targeted at its Soviet enemy. This propaganda produced to justify the war highlighted the Manichean struggle against the Soviet Union and the special horrors of the Soviet communist enemy. Using longstanding stereotypes about a Russian lack of civilization, 19th-century ideas about racially expressed biological difference, and more recent tropes about Bolshevik barbarism and immorality, official representations of Fascism’s historic enemy—the communist—put forward a racially degenerate, godless peril from the East bent on the destruction of Western civilization and on the desecration of the Italian family and the Catholic faith.

Keywords: Soviet Union, enemy, Fascism, Bolshevism, Second World War, propaganda, culture, Italy

The Italian mobilization for the war against the Soviet Union, with the first Italian troops arriving on the Eastern Front in July 1941, unleashed a wave of cultural production highlighting the Manichean struggle against Russia and the special horrors of the communist enemy found there. The involvement of the Italian military on the Second World War’s Eastern Front produced a virulent brand of Italian Fascist anti-communism and led to a campaign of hate-mongering propaganda designed to terrify Italians into support for the Axis invasion of the Soviet Union. From the beginning of Operation Barbarossa in the summer of 1941 until the defeat of Axis armies on the Eastern Front in 1943, official representations of Fascism’s historic enemy—the communist—put forward a godless, racially degenerate peril from the East bent on the destruction of Western civilization and on the desecration of the Italian family and the Catholic faith.

There was nothing novel in Fascism’s interest in mobilizing Italians against an absolute enemy. The designation of enemies and the mobilization of fear and hatred against them has been central to politics for centuries. Yet in the 20th century the pursuit of an enemy at home and abroad defined national politics, and the expulsion of that enemy from the body politic
often determined national health. In some cases the murderous crusade against enemies of the nation ended in genocide, as in Armenia and Nazi Germany. As Omer Bartov (2002) argues, the declaration of enemies of the nation, the people, or the race lies at the heart of modern politics, creating “a mechanism of self-definition and legitimization based on two mutually dependent conceptual and material requirements, namely the need to define enemies and the urge to make victims” (p. 91).

From its founding as a movement in 1919, Italian Fascism defined itself against an array of internal and external enemies. Between 1919 and 1945, Fascist ideology and politics targeted a number of enemies of the people, the state, and the nation as its domestic and foreign policies shifted. (On Italian Fascism’s practices of enemy formation and its anti-communist politics, see Stone, 2008). The most consistent enemy of the Fascist revolution, from its post World War I beginnings to the regime’s final days, was the internal and external Left in all its manifestations. In the language of Fascist politics, that historic enemy, first, internal, and, later, external, was “the Red enemy”: the red or communist or Bolshevik stood interchangeably in Fascist rhetoric and imagery for all leftist opposition, from anarchists to socialists to Bolsheviks.

Before we can understand the enemy central to Fascist wartime propaganda, we must see its roots in the belief in an absolute and destructive enemy from Fascism’s earliest days. In its movement phase between 1919 and 1922, Fascism’s violent crusade against the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) and its members constituted its central purpose and created a climate of instability and terror (Albanese, 2006). The Fascist squads’ attacks on the leaders and institutions of Italian socialism, and the political “cleansing” it brought about, would hold a proud and pivotal place in Fascist identity and politics (see d’Orsi, 1985; Albanese, 2006; Consentini, 1923). Mussolini and the Fascist movement declared socialism and then, after 1921 with the founding of the Italian Communist Party, communism, the great menace to the continued existence of the nation and to the Italian body politic. In its violent, revolutionary struggle to take power, Fascism represented itself to a nation in crisis as all that was national, Italian, and organic, while Socialism and Communism were portrayed as signifying collapse, disorder, and foreignness. According to the Fascists, where they offered protection, stability, and meaning to the Nation, the left promulgated chaos, foreign allegiance, and class war.

In enemy images from Fascism’s movement phase (1919-1922), Socialists and Communists were depicted as the “shirkers” and “cowards” who had defiled the nation in its time of need during and after World War I. In this first period, the Red enemy was disembodied—represented by a symbol, most commonly a trampled red flag or a smashed hammer and
sickle. These early enemy images established a framework that would remain consistent: Fascism depended upon polarization and a clear set of dichotomies: Nation/Anti-Nation, order/chaos, good/evil, and us/them. For the Fascists, socialism represented the base material antagonistic to Fascism’s spiritual revolution. Against the backdrop of the post-World War I Italian socialist radicalism and revolutionary politics, the Fascist movement, and then party, presented itself as the only force able to save Italy from a domestic version of the violence and disorder taking place in Russia (Drake, 2003, p. 133).

Decades later, in the midst of World War II and in what would be the last days of the Mussolini dictatorship, the regime mobilized “the politics of hate as part of the program . . . to demonize and dehumanize the other as the enemy” (Davison, 2007, p. 38). Demonization and hatred of the communist enemy played a key role in Fascist ideology and propaganda, in part as justification for the total war on the Eastern front. A close reading of Italian Fascist images and descriptions of its communist enemy during the war against the Soviet Union reveals how the regime represented and manipulated the fear of the loss of all that Italians held dear and used that fear to forge a deep hatred of a barbaric enemy.

From summer 1941 to summer 1943, two Italian armies participated in Operation Barbarossa: first, the Italian Expeditionary Corps (Corpo di Spedizione or CSIR), which arrived on the Eastern Front in July 1941 and consisted of three divisions (about 62,000 men); second, in July 1942, at Mussolini’s insistence, Italy increased its presence and the CSIR became the Italian Army in Russia (Armata Italiana in Russia) or the Italian Eighth Army, with a total of 10 divisions (Rochat, 2005, p. 378). By November 1942, the ARMIR numbered 235,000 men. Lured by the potential spoils of war attendant on victory in the East, despite the limited preparedness of Italian troops, the lack of war materiel, and German disparagement of Italian participation, Mussolini committed more men and arms (DiNardo, 1996). Motivated as much out of fear as desire, Mussolini demanded that Italy “demonstrate its worth” to the Germans and insisted that Italy could “not be less present [on the Eastern Front] than Slovakia” (Knox, 2000, p. 81).

In November and December 1942, Soviet troops launched a counteroffensive at Stalingrad, and on February 2, 1943, the German Sixth Army surrendered to the Soviets. The Italian lines along the Don River collapsed, bringing the final rout of the Italian Eighth Army, the death of 30,000 Italian soldiers, and the capture of another 54,000 men (Knox, 2000). The defeats of the winter of 1943 confirmed what Italians already knew—that the “parallel war” was really a “subaltern war” and that the Germans considered the Italians more a liability than an ally. Those defeats, combined with
Allied bombing and food shortages, catalyzed existing discontent on the Italian home front, leading to widespread strikes in Northern Italian cities such as Milan and Turin (Colarizi, 1991). It was an unpopular war, and the regime met growing domestic discontent with a propaganda campaign that elevated the war to Italy’s “life or death” crusade.

Beginning in the heady summer and fall of 1941 with its German-led victories against the Soviet Union, the Fascist regime bombarded a listless home front with images of a Russian enemy outside the confines of Western civilization and determined to destroy Italian life at its most basic familial level. As the Italian military campaigns failed in 1942 and 1943, and as Italy’s subordination to Nazi Germany grew more obvious, depictions of the ferocity, godlessness, and barbarism of Fascism’s enemies intensified, becoming the central official explanation for the war. The character of Bolshevik crimes grew ever more primal, with Fascist propaganda during the last year of the war in the East focusing on a communist plot to steal Italian children for slave labor in Russia. The enemy images at the center of Fascist wartime culture imply that the regime hoped that by stoking fear and hatred it could maintain the support, or at least suppress the dissent, of an increasingly anti-war population. Rather than focus on the strengths of the Nazi-Fascist New Order or the glories of Fascist empire, government and party propaganda depended on the specter of a brutal and primitive enemy. Official culture, from pamphlets to films, from the fine arts to popular culture, dipped into historical tropes about “the Russian and Eastern other” and offered a clash of civilizations—a war between the virile Fascist warrior descended from the Romans and the racially degenerate and weak Slavs and Jews locked in a conspiracy against Western Civilization.

Three key phenomena coincided to fuel the hyperbolic and dichotomous character of enemy images. First was the rise of racial politics and ideology in Fascist Italy in the middle 1930s: When the Fascist imperial project came to fruition with the conquest of Ethiopia and the declaration of Empire in 1936, Mussolini “thought [racism] would strengthen the consciousness of Italian identity, remind them of the imperial might of their ancestors, and foster the ardent desire to conquer new territories” (Gillette, 2002b, p. 53). By 1938, Fascist racial theorists argued that modern-day Italians were directly descended from the Romans and that, as declared in the Racial Manifesto, there “exists by now a pure Italian race” (Manifesto della razza, 1938; Gillette, 2002a, 2002b, p. 358). The Racial Laws of November 1938, partially modeled on the Nazi Nuremberg Laws of 1935, defined Italian Jews as a separate race, forbidding them to attend public schools, to own businesses, to intermarry, to serve in the military, or to hold government or party positions. The antisemitic Racial Manifesto and Racial Laws, with their biologi-
cal antisemitism, poised the regime for the transformation of its Bolshevik enemy into a racial enemy and a biological “other” (Sarfatti 1994, 2000). Increasingly after 1938, Fascist arguments about the racial degeneration of Jews and Communists were expressed by the era’s racial theorists such as Guido Cogni and by inflammatory publications, most infamously *The Defense of the Race (La difesa della razza)* (Pisanty, 2006; Servi, 2006).

Not surprisingly, this foe whose political differences were expressed biologically overlapped with Nazism’s primary enemy, the Judeo-Bolshevik, who, the Nazis asserted, conspired to destroy German civilization. (On the relationship between antisemitism and anti-Bolshevism in Nazi Germany, see Herf, 2006, and Waddington, 2007).

Through the 1990s, both the general public and scholars of Italian Fascism minimized the place of race in Fascist ideology and practice. While racial politics functioned very differently in Fascist Italy than in its Nazi counterpart, it was far more central than either scholars or the Italian public had been willing to face. For much of the postwar period, the dominant interpretation held that the dictatorship adopted antisemitism as a result of German pressure in 1938. Most notably, Renzo De Felice (1993) argued that Fascist antisemitism was the product of Nazi influence, that Mussolini and the Fascist leadership used racial antisemitism only strategically. Today the myth of Italian detachment from racism, antisemitism, and genocide, sometimes called the Myth of the Good Italian (*il mito della brava gente*), is challenged from a number of directions (see Del Boca, 2005; Israel & Nastasi, 1998; Sarfatti, 2000; Centro Furio Jesi, 1994; Zimmerman, 2005).

Second, the dictatorship raised the stakes of the struggle against communism by its shift away from a focus on internal or domestic subversion. Beginning with Italian military participation on the Nationalist side in the Spanish Civil War in 1936, the enemy to be hated was an external enemy bent on global domination. With the war in Spain, the regime introduced the idea that “international communism’s” goal was the destruction of the Catholic Church and desecration of the faith. During the war in Spain, the Fascists called the Republicans solely by the name “the Godless,” or senza dio. The propaganda campaign that accompanied Italian involvement in Spain (1936–1939) primed the population to adopt a polarized worldview based on absolute enemies who were racially other and morally compromised. By 1941, total war, and an increasingly losing total war at that, made enemies pivotal to the Fascist worldview; it was critical that they be perceived as constituting civilization-destroying threats.

Third, the official fantasy of a Fascist “parallel war” helped to move anti-communism front and center. The argument put forward in 1940 by Mussolini that Fascist Italy could fight and win its own battles separately from Nazi Germany shaped the character of its anti-Soviet propaganda. The
idea that Italy could carve out its own sphere of influence in an Axis-dominated Europe drove the search for Fascism’s unique contribution to the Axis. Mussolini, as of June 1940 officially commander of all branches of the Italian military, insisted on Italy’s role in the war against the Soviet Union as a way to “demonstrate Italy’s usefulness as an ally” and to guarantee a place in postwar Europe (Knox, 2000, p. 77), even though Operation Barbarossa was a surprise to Mussolini and the Fascist hierarchy (Knox, 2000, p. 7). The regime privileged its presence on the Eastern Front despite the reality of Italy’s military vulnerability and the fact that Hitler did not want Italian troops involved in the war against the Soviet Union (Schlemmer, 2009, pp. 9-11). The regime was deeply invested in its partnership in the anti-Bolshevik coalition consisting of a number of nations, including Romania, Spain, Finland, and Japan.

In fact, one of the remaining ideological weapons that Mussolini could hold over Hitler was Fascism’s origins and primacy as an anti-communist political force. Increasingly after 1941, the regime linked Fascism’s assumption of power in 1922—the March on Rome—to the then-advancing Axis march on Moscow; Mussolini hoped to both invigorate Italians for the crusade against Bolshevism and appropriate some of Nazism’s dominance in the war against the Soviet Union. In 1941, Mussolini tried to one-up Nazi anti-Bolshevism, declaring: “Today there would be no inevitably victorious March on Moscow, if twenty years ago there had not been the March on Rome” (Parodi, 1941, p. 5). The propaganda accompanying the Italian forces in the East repeatedly emphasized Fascism’s “impressive title with respect to history” because it “before all the other contemporary right-wing movements, anticipated the need to strike at the roots and branches of the insidious Bolshevik monster” (Parodi, 1941, p. 5). Moreover, Parodi (1941) added that “the Fascist revolution was born precisely for the purpose of stemming the communist tide” (p. 5). A medallion designed by sculptor Publio Morbiducci and minted in celebration of Fascism’s 20th anniversary in 1942 highlights the pride of place given to anti-communism. This Winged-Victory wields a gladium, a Roman short sword, which she uses to rend the chains attached to a hammer and sickle.
Thus, with the Second World War the Fascist party returned to anti-communism as its *raison d’etre*. This wartime anti-communism depended upon strict dichotomies and life or death choices. The rallying cry of “Rome or Moscow,” a long-standing component of Fascist politics, was now translated into a cataclysmic struggle with the Soviet Union (Sciola, 1989, pp. 43-48).

Now the two forces . . . meet and clash: one with the idea of social disintegration and a return to the state of nature, and the other with the idea of social order and an always greater and deeper affirmation of human potential, through a hierarchy of values and a simultaneous valorization of the people’s energies,

wrote Francesco di Pretorio in *Fascism and Bolshevism in Europe and the World* (*Fascismo e Bolscevismo nell’Europa e nel Mondo*). “One is the darkest and most primitive country,” he added, “and the other, the brightest and most productive civilization in Europe” (p. 42).

Within the dichotomies of good/evil, civilized/barbaric, and us/them, two sets of attributes shaped Fascist anti-Soviet propaganda. The first was that the enemy was godless and immoral, bent on the universal destruction of Christianity and determined to put the defeated in states of mortal sin.
The second reason to hate the enemy was its insidious nature as a racial "other"—degenerate and biologically inferior. Such attributes drew from the ideologies of colonialism, eugenics, and "racial science," as they evolved in Europe from the mid 19th century forward. These race-based depictions stressed the enemy's barbarism, criminality, and degeneracy. The images of the communist enemy appeared across the cultural spectrum from the fine arts to mass culture and carried both sets of attributes—that is, the enemy as a threat to the moral, religious, and social order, and as menacing because of its racial and biological traits.

Fascist propaganda declared the enemy's worst crimes to be its war on the Church and the family. Pamphlets, published in series such as Victory Notebooks (Quaderni della Vittoria) or individually as in Bolshevism Against God, Against the Family (Il Bolscevismo contro Dio, contro la famiglia) (Parodi, 1941), appeared just prior to and during the war on the Eastern Front, and listed in lurid detail Bolshevism's past and future crimes against the Church and its followers. These publications reproduced images of churches desecrated or destroyed during the Spanish Civil War and during the Soviet invasion of Romania and Poland in 1940 (Centro di Studi e di Azione per l’Ordine Nuovo, 1942). Declaring Fascism the protector of Christianity, Fascist propagandists presented the war against the Soviet Union as having “all the characteristics and values of a true and valid religious crusade” (Parodi, 1941, p. 6). They evoked the crusades against Islam, claiming,

Taking up the Duce’s orders these [warriors] departed with the passion and Faith of the ancient Crusaders . . . ready to give their last drop of blood, happy to contribute to the victory of civilization over the blackest barbarism, of Christianity over an absurd atheism. (Centro di Studi e di Azione per l’Ordine Nuovo, 1942, p. 87)

The reliance on and enlistment of Catholicism in Fascist attacks on its communist enemy may seem surprising given its anti-clerical origins and the anti-religion stance of its ally Nazi Germany. In fact, Fascist politics and culture had forged an ever closer relationship to Catholicism from the signing of the Lateran Pacts in 1929. With the Lateran Treaty, Mussolini settled the conflict between the Pope and the state of Italy and recognized Catholicism as Italy’s state religion. This agreement, very popular among Italians, removed any contradictions that had existed between being a “good Fascist” and a “good Catholic.” The Fascist cult merged in many aspects with the Catholic cult, and the two ideologies reinforced each other. Thus, in addition to enlisting the allegiance of Italians to the Church in the name of Fascism and Italy, the regime borrowed many of its ideological impulses, such as the integration of the population into the institutions of the state or
the merging of public and private life, from the Catholic Church. The regime aspired to a “political religion” that mirrored the language and rituals of the Church and that emulated the relationship of the individual to the Church (Gentile, 1998). Moreover, anti-communist Fascist politics and Vatican politics overlapped completely, although Vatican anti-communism was rooted in communism’s official and militant atheism and the anti-Church policies of the Soviet Union and Fascist anti-communism drew from Fascism’s anti-materialist and anti-internationalist politics and geopolitical considerations.

Communist determination to corrupt the Italian family through the imposition of immoral practices, from abortion to illicit sex, and to destroy the Church, through the physical destruction of churches and the murder of clergy, was a dominant theme in wartime pamphlets, books, film, radio, posters, and the fine arts. Pamphlets such as Bolshevism Against God, Against the Family and Bolshevism, Shame of Man (Bolscevismo obbrobrio dell’uomo) and feature films such as Odessa in fiamme (Odessa in Flames) and L’Uomo dalla Croce (Man of the Cross) told harrowing tales of the social and moral disintegration that came with communism. Under communism, proclaimed Bolshevism Against God, “humans are satanically made prey to unbridled lust and the most coarse materialism” (Parodi, 1941, p. 11). This vision of the enemy argued that communism’s anti-religious character was part of a larger plan to destroy humanity: “Slaves to materialism, the Bolsheviks seek only to lower mankind to the level of animals, destroy the purifying religious feelings which are innate to all men” (Di Pretorio, 1940, p. 42).

In fact, went the argument, the Bolshevik’s core purpose was the destruction of the faith and the faithful. “To understand Russia today – the massacres committed with its own borders, the essential shape of its politics, its arts, the goals of its foreign propaganda – one must,” insisted Mario Parodi (1941), “recognize that the dominant and immutable characteristic of Bolshevism is hatred of God and hatred of Christ and his Church” (p. 6). Godlessness stood at the center of Bolshevism and it was the reason to hate the enemy: “Bolshevism is first of all and above all a struggle against God and religion,” urged Parodi in the pamphlet Bolshevism Against God, Against the Family (p. 24).

The enemy’s godlessness was inseparable from its racial degeneracy. Many wartime representations of the Soviet enemy were steeped in a racial ideology that argued that the enemy bore immutable biological characteristics—that that the enemy, while marked as a foe for ideological reasons, carried that identity in a racially-determined manner. Racial inferiority and otherness was written on the body, and the body itself also manifested ideological difference, which in turn was revealed through immorality and apos-
tasy. Because this godless enemy was essentially and biologically programmed, only its absolute physical destruction could protect Italy. The biologically/racially-motivated hatred of the enemy often expressed itself in disease and germ metaphors. As Bolshevism, Shame of Man, warned, “Bolshevism, like a cancerous cell, has begun to invade the world. Like neoplastic cells, it will destroy the host organism” (A.R.L., 1941, p. 5). But defensive surgery will save the day, reassured Bolshevism Against God, Against the Family, as “Europe jumps to its feet and marches against the greatest shame of the century, and together with the German army will cleanse the old continent of the Moscovite leprosy” (p. 24).

Fascism’s Bolshevik enemy of 1941 to 1943 was fully embodied, distinctly biologically differentiated from Italians—gone were the Red flags and hammer and sickles that stood in for the enemy in the 1920s. In their place, this enemy was a racial other—swarthy, with beady eyes or distorted physiognomy, and was always contrasted with the classical, fine-boned features of the model Italian. All Soviets, ran the argument, were racially identifiable, from Lenin with his “Mongolian profile” down to the Soviet foot soldier (Parodi, 1941, p. 7). The Bolshevik soldier was identified by his bulkiness, high cheekbones, and unintelligent and confused gaze. He was also often marked in Fascist propaganda by unruly dark hair or a beard.

The racialized propaganda argued that the Bolshevik foot soldier was more animal than human, driven by instinct, rather than intelligence or morality. As Mario Giacomelli argued in 1942 in The Russian Soldier: Heroism or Animal Instinct (Il soldato russo: Eroismo o istinto bestiale), “Their actions are devoid of all ethical considerations” (p. 250). The Soviet political commissars, a central figure in Fascist enemy images, manipulated the Soviet foot soldier, forcing him into battle. Fascist propaganda argued that these wily, cunning, but physically small, political operatives controlled the Russian soldier. The commissar was often coded in ways drawn from antisemitic propaganda to imply that he or she was Jewish; this caricature involved small stature, a large nose, glasses, and kinky hair. According to the propaganda, these commissars forced the soldiers, who are disabled mentally, into battle. The Soviet master plan to “kill God in the hearts of men” would never had succeeded if not for “the Soviet commissar’s pistols pointed at the soldier’s heads (Parodi, 1941, p. 30).

Fascist biological anti-Bolshevism of the war years intersected and cross-fertilized with racial antisemitism—Fascist physical stereotypes of Bolsheviks had, by 1941, significant overlaps with the National Socialism’s Judeo-Bolshevik enemy, as well as with modern racial antisemitism in general (Gilman, 1991; Herf, 2003; Lindeman, 2000). Fascist propagandists copied some post-1941 Italian anti-Soviet propaganda directly from the Nazis, such as a January 1941 Difesa della razza antisemitic caricature.
showing “the Jewish Spider” waving a red flag and weaving a web over the map of Europe (Pisanty, 2006; Waddington, 2007)

The racial/biological explanation for the need to defeat the Soviet Union drew heavily on longstanding, pre-Fascist arguments about the Russia people’s uncivilized and barbaric nature. It also tapped into pre-existing Western European prejudices about “the East.” In this vein, Fascist depictions of the Russian enemy mobilized centuries old tropes about an East/West conflict. The regime articulated the clash of civilizations as one of Europe against Anti-Europe, with Italy shutting the door on the invading forces of Anti-Europe. A postcard printed and distributed by the Italian armed forces in 1942 and 1943 for soldiers at the front to communicate with loved ones at home shows an Italian soldier keeping the demons at bay by closing on them the door marked “Europe,” while protecting a mother and child who are in a Madonna and child pose. Deep xenophobic tendencies in Italian culture, stemming from centuries of foreign occupation and foreign rule, shaped Italian Fascist approaches to enemy formation.

Fascist wartime culture described an enemy fueled by its hatred of Christianity and a battle in the East in which Fascist forces held the line between civilization and barbarism. *Legionnaires’ Christmas (Natale Legionario)*, a 1942 radio play, offered a sanitized description of battle conditions on the Eastern Front and explained the character of the enemy found there. Set on Christmas Day 1941, *Legionnaires’ Christmas* tells the story of the Tagliamento battalion of volunteers awaiting a Soviet attack. The soldiers open packages from home, pray, and sing. They know that “the enemy will attack first because it is logical and obvious that the Godless Bolsheviks want to sanctify the Birth of Christ with a day of massacre.” The radio play then moves to the family home of one of the soldiers, Annuccelli, as the family sets his place at the Christmas dinner table. The family listens to Mass on the radio and the daughter reminds them all: “I am sure that they are listening to Mass there too because this is what they fight for.”

Back at the front, another soldier, Vanozzi, sits alone in his tent. Annuccelli, his commanding officer, asks why he is not drinking and singing with the others. Vanozzi’s problem is that he does not have a family; he volunteered for the Eastern Front only from a sense of duty. Annuccelli explains that “in this war you have to know how to hate, to hate the evil that is on the other side” (p. 16). He continues,

I saw Bolshevism in Spain . . . I saw churches blown up by a mine placed at the altar by the Reds. The church was full of women and children gathered there to pray after the city was taken. The Bolsheviks lit the candles at the altar because they knew the people would come looking for
Fig. 2. “Europe Against Anti-Europe,” Italian armed forces postcard, 1942.
God’s comfort. It was a cowardly massacre. For we are here because of that! (p. 17)

Annuccelli recounts that the current war really began “when I was a baby . . . when my father went with his squad . . . because someone had to defend the Patria, the family, and our home.” Here Annuccelli gives voice to the regime’s position that the anti-Bolshevism of the Second World War had its roots in Fascism’s founding days and the war against Russia represented the culmination of a generation of anti-communist struggle.

As dawn breaks, the battle begins. Vanozzi, now prepared for martyrdom, dies valiantly. In their farewell prayer to him, the legion recites: “God who lights every flame and stops every heart . . . Make your Cross the sign which precedes the banner of our Legion and save Italy” (p. 20). The broadcast, set on Christmas Day 1941, reminded listeners that their sons and fathers were at the front to protect them from an enemy determined to destroy their homes and their churches. It reassured Italian mothers that wherever their sons fought, they also prayed. The radio play seamlessly intertwines commitment to Catholicism and the Fascist cause, as in the final prayer which asks that “the sign of the Cross precede the banner of the Legion” (p. 21).

As scholars of Italian Fascism and culture have established, film represented a privileged mode of communication between the regime and its public (Argentieri, 1998; Reich & Garofalo, 2002; Ricci, 2008). Beginning in the regime’s period of consolidation in the middle 1920s and escalating from the mid 1930s forward, Mussolini ordered the party and the government’s direct involvement in film and newsreel production and exhibition. In 1925, the regime, keenly aware of the power of cinema, founded the Istituto Luce as “the state’s own newsreel and documentary agency” (Ricci, p. 59). The state supported domestic film production, found new venues for the showing of films, such as the Venice Biennale Film Festival, and, with the coming of the war, limited the distribution of foreign films. Mussolini had always understood film as “a fundamental tool in the expansion of the Fascist reformation of culture” (Ricci, p. 58). In other words, the Fascist government saw film as a critical tool in binding Italians to it and in forging an Italian identity in sync with Fascist priorities.

The Second World War deepened the regime’s commitment to the production of films with a Fascist message. Feature films, approved and censored by the Ministry of Popular Culture, continued to be produced and distributed in Italy through the summer of 1943, when the Fascist Grand Council and King Victor Emanuel III removed Mussolini from office, ending the Fascist regime. Film production, in fact, increased during the war years, making feature films, in genres from combat films to melodramas,
critical to the government and party’s propaganda effort. Production increased from 83 films in 1940 to 119 in 1942, and the Italian film industry found new markets and co-producers among occupied and friendly regimes, such as those of Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania (Ben-Ghiat, 2002, p. 276).

In these wartime films, depictions of Fascism’s enemies pervaded. In these films set on the various Axis battlefronts, the communist enemy received much cinematic focus, with a string of Italian films in 1941-1943 highlighting its terror and provoking in audiences a special hatred. These included Marcello Albanki’s Redenzione (Redemption), Romolo Marcellini’s Inviaiti Speciali (Special Envoy), Gottfredo Alessandrini’s Noi Vivi (We the Living), Carmine Gallone’s Odessa in Fiamme (Odessa in Flames), and Roberto Rossellini’s L’Uomo dalla Croce (Man of the Cross). These films stressed narratives of triumph over the enemy and its immutable evil.

Two films of 1942 in particular—Odessa in Flames and Man of the Cross—offered a compelling visual embodiment of Fascist enemy images. Carmen Gallone’s Odessa in Flames, a joint Italian-Romanian production, is set against the Soviet invasion and occupation of Bessarabia and Bukovina in June 1940 and the subsequent Axis conquest in July 1941. It recounts the tale of a family separated and persecuted during the Soviet occupation and focuses on Bolshevik attacks on the family, the social order, and religion. Carmen Gallone is best known for his 1937 Scipio, the African (Scipione l’Africano), a re-invention of the conflict between Rome and Carthage as the battle of authoritarianism against democracy and as action against debate and irresolution. In Scipio, the African, Gallone introduced a racialized enemy, presenting the Carthagians as uncivilized and “semitic”—an enemy image he developed further in Odessa in Flames (Nowell-Smith, 1984, p. 154; Hay, 1987, p. 15; Brunetta, 1975, p. 77).

Through the example of Romania, Odessa in Flames offers an explicit lesson about what Soviet occupation might mean. That Italian audiences were to identify with the occupied Romanians is established in the first scene when the protagonist Maria Teodorescu, an opera singer played by the famous Romanian soprano Maria Cebotari, puts her son, Nico, to sleep with the tale of the Roman defeat of the Dacians in the First Century. “We are children of the Romans,” she tells him, “the children of justice and civilization.” This opening scene establishes the dichotomy of civilization against barbarism around which the plot unfolds.

When Soviet forces arrive, Maria is in the countryside singing at a folk festival, her estranged husband is in Bucharest with his mistress, and their child is in Kishinău, Bessarabia. Maria returns home to find that Nico has been stolen by the Soviets, who have taken thousands of boys and hidden them in an underground cellar. Soviet commissars assign the boys numbers
and hide them in preparation for the boys’ deportation to Russia for work and reeducation. When Maria begs for her son’s release, Commissar Smirnoff, a close friend turned traitor, forces Maria to sign an oath to the new regime and to agree to sing Russian songs for the occupiers. That the Bolsheviks force Maria to sign a false oath further demonstrates their disregard for Christian morality.

The film uses dichotomization and polarization to stoke hatred of the enemy and to give desperate urgency to the battle against the Bolsheviks. The social order, piety, and civilization of the Romanians contrasts with the inhumanity, detachment, and violence of the Soviets. In a number of scenes, Romanian peasants are summarily executed for being caught praying or for possessing religious objects, such as icons of the Virgin Mary. Trembling peasants whisper about “black cars” “that look for bodies.” The idea that Bolshevism brought gender inversion and sexual immorality plays a central role in Odessa in Flames, embodied by a ruthless and masculine woman commissar who, dressed in black leather, demands ever more executions. The dark-haired, swarthy commissar repeatedly occupies the frame with the maternal, blond, and feminine Maria to make the point about the insidious effect of Bolshevism on women. The opposition between the healthy social world of the Romanians and the distorted amoral one of the Bolsheviks is coded on the bodies of Maria and the female commissar.

Odessa in Flames plays on the deepest of fears—fears of the loss of a child. As in a number of Fascist films focused on the communist enemy, such as Augusto Genina’s Siege of the Alcazar (1940) and Goffredo Alessandrini’s We the Living (1942), the communists are always men and women without family or sentimental attachments. The plot of Odessa in Flames pivots on the Soviet kidnapping and mistreatment of Romanian children. The film repeats scenes of desperate parents begging for news of their stolen children, only to be told that “they are now property of the state.” Evoking Soviet labor camps, and perhaps subconsciously hinting at the Nazi death camps, the children in the film are given numbered arm-bands and referred to by their numbers. One of parents is told by the Commissar, “Your son is now number 778.” The film climaxes in a dramatic last-minute rescue of the kidnapped boys by the advancing Romanian forces; the Romanian troops free the boys from a cave that has been rigged with explosives by the Soviets. The penultimate shot offers a close-up of the reconstituted Teodorescu family. And the last shot of the film is news-reel footage of Romanian troops toppling a hammer and sickle from a building in Odessa. The diegetic edit between the reunited family and the destroyed hammer and sickle connects the individual and the political.

The harrowing threat of children being stolen from their mothers appeared repeatedly in Fascist accusations against the Soviet enemy. A
pamphlet produced in late 1943, after the Nazi invasion and occupation of Italy, warns of children “torn from their mothers.” The pamphlet’s cover shows a caricatured British soldier taking a baby from a distraught mother, only to hand it to a grinning, menacing Bolshevik. “Mothers of Italy,” cries the text, thousands of children are taken from Sicily by “the claws of the Soviet monster, just as they were in Spain and Poland.” But its real message comes in the final sentence, with the command: “Against the savage ferocity of such an enemy there is only one choice: struggle.” This pamphlet, the product of joint Nazi-Fascist propaganda directed at an Italy under brutal Nazi occupation and coming in the wake of the Anglo-American invasion of Sicily and Southern Italy, testifies to the Fascist belief up to its final days that accusations of the enemy’s outright, planned destruction of the family could mobilize Italians.

Other crimes attributed to the enemy in Odessa in Flames represent acts of displacement, in that they attribute to the Soviets behavior being committed by the Fascists. The reconquest of Romania by the Axis is celebrated in the film’s conclusion as a liberation, repeating, as Patrizia Dogliani argues, Nazi and Fascist propaganda’s habit of “manipulating images in such a way as to present acts of conquest as acts of liberation”; a prime example is the infamous aerial bombardment of Guernica on April 26, 1937 (Dogliani, 1999, p. 406). Are the numbered armbands of the captured boys transferred from the numbered prisoners of Nazi concentration camps? The displacement involved in the Fascist articulation of conquest as liberation mirrors the larger discourse of victimization at the hands of the Allies present in both Fascist and Nazi propaganda. Hitler’s repeated argument that the Nazi war of expansion was in self-defense and that the Germans were really the victims of an international Jewish/Bolshevik conspiracy are examples of a similar phenomenon (Herf, 2006; Waddington, 2007).

Odessa in Flames contains all the elements of Fascist wartime enemy images: anti-religion, anti-family, anti-traditional gender roles, representations of the enemy as racially inferior, and depictions of crude and unintelligent Russian soldiers and wily commissars. The film, through identification with the threatened Teodeorescu family, telegraphed to Italians at home that this could be their fate too, were it not for an Axis victory; that the deprivations and violence they suffered at home in 1942 and early 1943 were nothing compared to the destruction the enemy might bring.

Roberto Rossellini’s Man of the Cross of 1942, released shortly after Odessa in Flames, presented a similarly hateful enemy, one racially degenerate and morally bankrupt, but open to Christian salvation. One of Rossellini’s least known films, Man of the Cross was filmed north of Rome in the summer and fall of 1942, as the Axis advance on the Eastern Front began to slow. It was screened in the spring of 1943, after the final defeat of the
Fig. 3. Pamphlet warning of the destruction of the Italian family by Bolsheviks.
Italian Eighth Army and the massive casualties, missing persons, and prisoners that accompanied it. In the context of Fascism’s defeat and imminent collapse, it offers a double-edged portrait of the hated enemy and a multi-valenced explanation of the war’s purpose. During the Second World War, Rossellini, the director later known as a founder of neo-realism and the apogee of anti-fascist filmmaking, directed and collaborated on the scripts for three combat films funded by the Italian armed forces: *La nave Bianca* (Hospital Ship, 1942), *Una pilota ritorna* (A Pilot Returns, 1942), and *Man of the Cross*. (For more about the war trilogy’s relationship to Rossellini’s career, see Ben-Ghiat, 2000, pp. 20-35.) The last film in the trilogy, *Man of the Cross*, set on the Eastern Front in the summer of 1942, presents a bleak, charred world of violence and ideologically fuelled war. Asvero Gravelli, a Fascist ideologue and editor of *Gioventù* and *Antieuropa*, wrote the script, along with Rossellini and Alberto Consiglio (Liehm, 1986, p. 326).

*Man of the Cross* uses the backdrop of an Italian tank division operating on the Eastern Front to bring the audience into contact with the enemy. After a clash with the Soviets, the tank division temporarily retreats (Rossellini, 1943). One of the wounded cannot be moved and the chaplain (Alberto Tavazzi) remains behind to nurse him. The following day, the Russians capture the chaplain and the wounded soldier; the Russians bring their prisoners to the local political commissar. During the interrogation, an Italian air raid creates chaos in the Russian lines, giving the chaplain and his charge a chance to flee to one of the burning village’s huts. Here the chaplain encounters pious peasant women and children refugees from the Steppes. As the battle rages, a group of Russians, led by another political commissar, Serge, and a female soldier, Irina (Roswitha Schmidt), take refuge with the chaplain, the refugees, and some Italian soldiers. The long night, during which a baby is born and baptized, allows the chaplain to spread the gospel among the enemy. He converts Irina and saves the wounded, the women, and the children. But in the gunfire of the Italian advance, he is mortally wounded, along with a Russian officer. As they lie dying, one across the other, together they recite the Lord’s Prayer.

*Man of the Cross* challenged official pronouncements of inevitable victory and both embodied and rejected dominant Fascist tropes about the enemy. Rossellini’s film divides into three primary and, at times, contradictory, themes or subplots. First, it shows the Italians at war, presenting a well-organized and technologically superior military in the midst of an advance. Second, it portrays a monstrous, terrifying enemy, subhuman and determined to exterminate its foe by any means possible. Third, it offers Christian redemption and a universal humanity under Catholic salvation as the only route out of the devastating conflict and violence.

From the film’s opening frames, the audience is asked to identify with
Italian soldiers at the front who are homesick and up against a terrible enemy. The young Italian soldiers are listless; they sing in dialect (despite the fact that the government forbade the use of dialect in films), and dream of home. As they await the return of their tank division from the front, the soldiers seek out the chaplain for advice. His answer reveals the meaning of the war for these foot soldiers: “Always write home,” counsels the chaplain; “your loved ones in Italy need to hear your voices always. For the rest, God will take care of it.” The film establishes early on that what matters to these young men from Naples or Venice (the regionalism is signaled by various characters speaking in dialect) is their families back home.

Man of the Cross’s initial focus on the personal and familial impact of war is shattered by the chaplain’s confrontation with the enemy. This enemy fits the ideologically determined characterization and is scripted to incite terror and hatred in the audience. The chaplain and the wounded soldier he is protecting are captured by the Red Army. In a schoolhouse adorned with a painting of Stalin and a drawing of a naked woman (simultaneous markers of political and moral deviance), a political commissar interrogates the chaplain. The filthy, unshaven, and bandaged commissar grabs the chaplain’s crucifix; taunting him, he says, “He is a sorcerer, a conjurer of the dead, a Catholic witch doctor, and that is his amulet.” In response to the dirty and scratching commissar, one of the Soviet soldiers jokes, “Have him exorcize you. Maybe it will cure your eczema.” This scene takes up the wartime admonition that the “godless” are hell-bent on the destruction of Catholicism, its flock, and its instruments of faith. By cursing the chaplain’s crucifix as an instrument of witchcraft, the Russians declare themselves to be devils and demons fated for eternal damnation.

The commissar is diseased and a carrier of infection. This enemy bears a broad array of visual markers of degeneracy, criminality, and racial “otherness.” As already noted regarding biologically-based hatred of the Soviet enemy, this commissar and the other Russians in the interrogation scene share a physiognomy taken from racist propaganda about Jews and degenerate races: They have broad faces, high foreheads, sunken eyes that are far apart, and protuberant noses. For most of the eight-minute scene, the commissar and the chaplain occupy the same frame, each in profile, highlighting the physical comparison between the bandaged, smoking, and unwashed commissar and the classically-proportioned, fine-boned, clean, and well-groomed chaplain.

In the same scene, the commissar’s discovery of a Fascist Party card on a captured Italian soldier reveals the enemy’s exterminationist ends. The commissar explains, “For us, you are not a regular soldier. We consider you an agitator, an instigator; thus we have the right to exterminate the enemies of communism.” The commissar continues: “Unless you would like to
recant? Do you want to sign here?” he taunts, like the devil asking for a man’s soul. The soldier refuses and is executed. This exchange demonstrates the crusade character of the war: It tells the audience at home that surrender is not an option. Finally, the abandoned and barren landscape that makes up the film’s background also signals a kind of racial degeneration and “otherness.” The undeveloped or “primitive” landscape, as Robin Pickering-Iazzi has written, evokes “the discursive naturalization of the racial other, who is frequently associated with . . . a territory to be conquered and cultivated” (Pickering-Iazzi, 2002, p. 195). The Italian forces, shown moving aggressively forward with their heavy firepower, appear in this context as the more “civilized,” offering a precondition for a “form of mastery.”

Despite its emphasis on Italian victory on the battlefield and on the diseased and demonic enemy, the second half of the film rejects the racial determinism proposed by the beginning and questions the value of military conquest itself. Rossellini located Christian universalism and the idea of a single humanity under God at the core of Man of the Cross. The film’s dramatic and emotional center is the Christian community forged from the Russian refugees, Italian and Russian soldiers, and the chaplain trapped overnight in the semi-destroyed hut. The camera shifts from broad, long shots to close-ups inside a hut of rubble and straw—an archaic, timeless interior evocative of the manger in which the newborn Christ was laid. The Italian soldiers and wounded Russian fugitives pass the night suffering together in a collective that is neither Fascist nor Soviet. Here, the unarmed chaplain, physically the smallest of them all, becomes the leader and spiritual guardian. The film’s dramatic climax is signaled by the arrival of Irina, the female Russian soldier, and Sergei, a political commissar and her lover. Irina’s military attire, her ripped khaki clothing, her gun, and her devotion to a man who is not her husband mark her as a fallen woman and a lost soul, in contrast to the pious and modestly clothed peasant women.

In the film’s long night of the mortal soul, during which most of the sacraments of the Church, from baptism to confession to last rites are given, the chaplain brings the group to salvation. When a baby is born, the chaplain risks his life to get water for the baptism, saving the baby from the risk of purgatory. “At dawn the battle will begin again—what will become of him?” explains the chaplain. “It is my duty to baptize one of God’s creatures.” The baby, in his innocence and purity, symbolizes Christ among the sinners. Soon after, Sergei, the commissar, is shot by Irina’s husband, Ivan. A saved soul is born and an infidel dies. But, Sergei’s death opens the door to Irina’s confession and redemption. She excoriates Ivan, saying, “You have killed a political commissar in front of the enemy.” The chaplain ministers to her:
I am not an enemy; I am a man of God, who is father to all men. Even if they are hostile, they are all brothers in his presence. I know that they have made you hate, but you are not lost. The lights don’t go out, just because you close your eyes. God will not be lost to you, if you could feel him, as I feel him now in my heart. Then, you would not be dead. Now you are more dead than your Serge. When you have an empty and tired heart out of desperation, all of a sudden it can happen that you feel “un accovamento” less crude. This is Him, God, who slowly enters your empty and tired heart.

This sermon brings Irina to confession: She confesses her sins of idolatry and apostasy. She is lost, but redeemable. She suffered under communism—her mother died, her father remarried a woman “only three years older” than her, she was forced into marriage with a barbaric man. She leads an immoral life because the system itself is immoral and degrading to women.8

Rossellini uses the barren landscape of his imagined Eastern Front to bring the audience a night of meditation over the destiny of the human soul, or as a contemporary review described it, Rossellini draws “attention to the most intimate shifts in the human spirit” (Calcagno, 1943). The film searches for a point of human understanding and finds Catholicism and the reunification of peoples through faith. The director transforms an infidel collective into a community of salvation in Christ’s body. This Christian humanism rejects the racial determinism of much Fascist propaganda; the enemy is not predestined to evil, but it has souls primed for salvation, through suffering. In the middle of an ideological crusade, the film rejects the world of enemies, battles, and victories, in favor of one of individual spiritual redemption. The chaplain dies a martyr during the act of converting the infidel. The blood on the dying chaplain’s face connects him to the suffering body of Christ.

In *Man of the Cross*, Rossellini transforms hatred into identification with an enemy that has renounced its evil ways. He proposes that bravery is the abandonment of a false system in the name of salvation and faith. The pro-Nazi and racist journal *Il Tevere* interpreted the film and the figure of the chaplain as scandalously unpatriotic. “There is no *Patria* in him, there is no Italy. There is simply faith in the universal justice and mercy of God,” wrote Giorgio Almirante, the postwar leader of the neo-fascist party, *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI). “All of this is undeniably very nice from a purely Christian standpoint,” he continued, “but not from the standpoint of our war film propaganda, which, in my opinion, should not be spreading universalist ideas, but should be stressing our differences with the enemy and intensifying our hatred (sacred e sancrosanct) against the enemy.”9 As Almirante noted, a propaganda film that failed to have the audience leave
the theater hating the enemy was no propaganda film. He identifies the mechanism at the heart of Fascist wartime enemy images: that the enemy had to be represented as so unredeemable as to forge a hatred equal to total ideological war.

Fascist propaganda produced to justify the war against the Soviet Union entailed a campaign to terrify the population and rally it in a deep hatred of the Soviet/Bolshevik enemy. To accomplish this politics of fear, the regime turned to culture, hoping that a barrage of images of a barbaric and immoral enemy might mobilize the population. Using deep-seated stereotypes about Russian lack of civilization and racial degeneracy, and more recent ideological tropes about Bolshevik barbarism and godlessness, Fascism promoted a complex wartime enemy to be hated for both immutable biological flaws and an immoral ideology. Recruiting these two sets of anxieties, the Fascist government and party enlisted language and visual culture in a variety of forms to provoke the greatest fear possible of what might accompany a Soviet victory.

NOTES

1. On the complete unpreparedness of Italy’s military, industry, and economy in the face of total war, see Knox, 2000.
2. Regio Decreto – Legge, November 15, 1938, no. 1779. See also Gillette, 2002a.
4. A translation of the radio play in its entirety can be found in Marla Stone, The Fascist Revolution (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2012).
5. On the Italian film industry during World War II, see Mino Argentieri, Il cinema in Guerra (Riuniti: Rome, 1998). Films such as Augusto Genina’s Bengasi and Goffredo Alessandri’s Giarabub had plots focused on the heroic Italian resistance to the nefarious British enemy in North Africa; Una pilota ritorna (A Pilot Returns) and Quelli della montagna (Those From the Mountains) took their plot lines from the Fascist wars in Albania and Greece.
6. Odessa in fiamme (Odessa in Flames) 1942, directed by Carmine Gallone, screenplay by Nicolai Kiritescu and Gherardo Gherardi, starring Maria Cebotari, Mircea Axente, Carlo Ninchi (83 minutes). Produced by the Scuola nazionale di cinema and the Centro sperimentale di cinematografia, in collaboration with the Ufficio nazionale della cinematografia, Ministero della propaganda romeno.

8. Noi Vivi (We the Living), the Italian film adaptation of the Ayn Rand novel of the same name, highlights the notion that one of communism’s greatest crimes is its degradation of women.


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Blood on the Tongue: Reading Abjection in Nationalist Blood Libels From Nazi Germany to Hamas and the British National Party

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ABSTRACT

The blood libel is usually known as the Medieval European legend about Jews killing Christians to consume their blood or otherwise use it in rituals. However, in this paper I explore more recent instances of the blood libel that have emerged in nationalist contexts. What I call the nationalist blood libel is more overtly politicized than its predecessors, as there is a relationship between the accusatory portrayals of groups signified as alien and what Arjun Appadurai in Fear of Small Numbers (2006) called an “anxiety of incompletion” inherent in the modern nation-state as a result of the political discourses of majority and minority. In this article I discuss specific instances of the nationalist blood libel in a Nazi publication and in a cartoon aired in 2010 by Hamas wherein “the Jew” is signified as an agent of abjection; of transgression and dismemberment. I also examine an example from contemporary Britain in which “the Islamist” has replaced “the Jew” in the narrative, as this subject is imagined as an existential threat to the British people and the nation. In reading these examples through Julia Kristeva’s theorization of abjection, I contend that the telling of the nationalist blood libel relates personal and communal fears about pollution and dissolution, and that this fear, though fundamentally threatening to subjectivity, nevertheless works to establish it. I therefore argue that this reveals the nationalist blood libel as a folk reification mechanism that allows the segmentation of friend/enemy camps and rationalizes anxieties along lines of protectionism, and thereby mobilizes affects into political and often violent action.

Keywords: abjection, Al-Aqsa TV, antisemitism, Arjun Appadurai, blood libel, British National Party, Der Stürmer, Hamas, immigration, Julia Kristeva, nationalism, taboo

The symptom: a language that gives up, a structure within the body, a non-assimilable alien, a monster, a tumor, a cancer that the listening devices of the conscious do not hear, for its strayed subject is huddled outside the paths of desire.

—Julia Kristeva, Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection
I. Introduction

When one hears mention of the blood libel it is usually in reference to Medieval European legends of Christian children allegedly murdered by Jews who seek their blood for ritual use or to consume with matzo. The touchstone example, regarded as one of the earliest of such tales, was that of William of Norwich (Dundes, 1991). This young English boy was found murdered in the woods near Norwich in 1144, and his death was later attributed to the Jews who lived in the area. This story came to be recorded by Thomas of Monmouth in his volumes titled The Life and Passion of Saint William the Martyr of Norwich, which he completed by 1172/73 (Langmuir, 1990). In this work, Thomas blames the death of the boy on the Jews who he says killed the boy in a mockery of the crucifixion (Langmuir, 1990). Such accusations against the Jews of England persisted from 1150 to 1235. Then, as Langmuir (1990) describes, a “second type of ritual murder accusation appeared . . . that Jews killed a Christian child to acquire blood they needed for their rituals” (p. 240). This version of the libel was recorded as the story of St. Hugh of Lincoln, which became as important to the emergence of the libel in England as was the tale of William of Norwich (Holmes, 1991). So influential was this particular account that it was mentioned in Chaucer’s “Prioress’s Tale” from Canterbury Tales, which gave a fictionalized description of Jews who hired a murderer to kill a young Christian boy and then were themselves killed in retribution by order of the magistrate. Chaucer then tells the reader in an epilogue, “O yonge Hugh of Lincoln, slayn also with cursed Jewes, as it is notable, for it is but a litel while ago” (p. 49). Such accusations endured through the Medieval period in Western and Central Europe. However, these legends have persisted into the present and have emerged in places other than Europe.

The blood libel has been the subject of scholarship from historians and folklorists, using approaches as diverse as literary studies and Freudian projection theory. However, as one may suspect from a glance at the bibliography of this scholarship, most of the work done thus far is concerned primarily with the Medieval, Western, and Central European sources rather than modern instances or those from other locations. As a consequence, most of the scholarship has focused on the blood libel against the Jewish people. My contribution in this article is meant, in part, to address these omissions by drawing attention to instances of the blood libel that emerged in the context of relatively recent nationalist propaganda campaigns in various locations, and one example in which people other than Jews are signified as the offenders. I call such instances nationalist blood libels, as they have the nationalist concerns at stake in their deployment wherever and against whomever they appear. The specific examples I examine here are a
special edition of the Nazi newspaper *Der Stürmer* dedicated to the blood libel, a Hamas-sponsored cartoon that aired on Al-Aqsa TV in 2010, and an ongoing leaflet campaign conducted by the British National Party titled “Our Children are not Halal Meat,” in which Muslim men are accused of the “sexual grooming” of young British girls—an accusation that emerged in response to charges that one of these young girls was murdered, put through a mincer, and served to the public.

In examining the instances mentioned above, I seek also to identify anxieties that recitations of the nationalist blood libel narrate and identify how these anxieties are associated with what Appadurai (2006) described as “forces of social uncertainty” that are “allied to other fears about growing inequality, loss of national sovereignty, or threats to local sovereignty and livelihood” in the modern nation-state (p. 7). For this purpose I emphasize a combination of psychoanalysis and Saussurian semiotics adapted from an engagement with Julia Kristeva’s work on abjection. Following this line of analysis, I emphasize two related points. The first point is that the signification of the “the Jew” as the villain of the tale is dependent upon socially conditioned semic codes and is therefore arbitrary. In other instances of the blood libel “the Islamist” or “the Christian” may signify the enemy, as we will see in the cases from contemporary Britain and ancient Rome respectively. The identification of threat in the blood libel, as Bill Ellis (1983) has argued, is predicated on anxieties over groups regarded as foreign and therefore dangerous, and not on the essential identity of any group in particular. To the second point, I want to demonstrate that these tales disclose personal and communal anxieties about perceived aliens written through the modern versions of the blood libel. I therefore argue that recitations of the nationalist blood libel are psychodramas that narrate deep anxieties emergent from the discourses and structures of the nation-state.

II. ABJECTION AND/OR THE ANXIETY OF INCOMPLETENESS

In *Fear of Small Numbers* (2006) Appadurai discusses the pressures of modern globalization, which he describes as conditioning the emergence of what he calls an “anxiety of incompletion” that precipitates acts of nationalist or ethnic violence (p. 8). For Appadurai, this arises in part from tensions in modern liberal societies typified by discourses of majority and minority, and in which numbering and normalizing populations are crucial structural processes. This of course tips into Foucault’s theorization of the biopolitical, especially as it relates to defense of society from certain “abnormal” or ill-fitting persons, such as is detailed in his lectures collected in *Society Must Be Defended* (2003) and *Abnormal* (2004). However, I am not concerned here with regimes of surveillance and discipline of populations, but
with the anxieties that provoke such regimes. For that reason I turn to Kristeva’s adaptation of semiotics and psychoanalysis in her conception of the abject to read these blood libel narratives.

In *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Kristeva (1982) describes the abject as neither subject nor object, but nevertheless something: It is not me and not that, but not nothing either (p. 2). Kristeva defines the abject as having one quality: “that which is opposed to ‘I’” (p. 1). But the abject is also crucial in subject/object distinctions that emerge later in subjective development—a clear adaptation from Jacques Lacan’s (2002) analysis of the “mirror stage.” This has direct implications for the formation of the “I,” or one’s subjectivity, which is imagined to be stable and distinct from others. This sense of self emerges in relation to the abject even as the abject constantly assails one’s narcissistic attachment to self-hood. The abject then is fundamentally an ambiguity in the dialectical relations of subject/object that form one’s subjectivity and notion of self (Kristeva, 1982, p. 9). By this ambiguity the abject threatens the desired stability of the ego by transgressing the boundaries of the subject, reminding one of the ego’s unstable subjectivity. The abject as such stands as a sign, as a reminder of the perpetual danger of de-subjectification and the tendentiousness of objectification required in the dialectics of subject/object, of self/other.

The abject, according to Kristeva (1982), continually imperils subjectivity and establishes it. But the abject is not itself material. It is only represented in materials that are signified as abject. To put it another way, the abject is visible only when materials or objects become abjected. Examples of abjected materials provided by Kristeva (1982) are substances that are of the body but cannot be regarded as the body, such as urine, feces, blood, semen, and pus (pp. 3, 48). For Kristeva (1982), these materials share a common quality: They transgress the body’s limits, leaking from the assumed stability of the skin, and thereby signal an inherent instability of the embodied subject (p. 8). These materials impose upon the subject the recognition of ambiguity in the supposed firm boundaries of the subject, such as the skin of the body, by which one has come to understand the self as distinct from that which is other. Abjected materials pass from the interior, through the membrane separating the body and the non-body, and then stand as some other—as an alien from within the intimate spaces of one’s self. It is “not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection,” Kristeva explains, but that which “disturbs identity, system, order” (p. 4).

Kristeva (1982) locates the abject before signification within the symbolic order, before the symbolic order can “make sense” of it. It is “pre-nominal, pre-objectal,” which is to point out that it is actually “trans-objectal” (p. 11). To state it more strongly, the abject is before and stands
outside of meaning. Thus, to become visible to the subject, the abject requires an imposition of the symbolic order to bestow upon it a position therein from which meaning can be derived. The feelings generated by the abject (affects described as anxiety, nausea, and revulsion) are given meaning in part as a defense against its disruptive power. Kristeva’s example from childhood memory of the non-object/non-subject something is of the skin of the milk touching her lip when she drank it, which produced in her a “sensation” of revulsion and “spasms of the stomach,” though she knew well that the skin was harmless “as a nail paring” (pp. 2-3). These responses occurred before her conscious awareness could grasp the feeling and convince her of the object’s benignity. This is because these affects emerge before consciousness in both her development as a being and in that moment of experience. The affective response is not to the material, which is known to be harmless. The reaction is not to something that has transgressed boundaries. Rather, the anxiety and revulsion emerge from the crossing of the boundary itself, which stirs within the subject the fear of being undone, of the leaking out of one’s self, and thereby signaling a loss of one’s self as distinct from other objects in the orderly world of subject/object.

The abject is experienced, and then that experience is ascribed to the agency of some object that then becomes abjected by being signified as the offending and offensive object. The abject is made familiar to the subject by its placement within a given symbolic order: by signifying it as the skin on the milk, blood, urine, feces, the alien, the criminal, the monster. This references a looping effect in which the locus of the feeling is lost in the ascription of blame for the feeling to some object. The fear of de-subjectification provoked by the abject is assigned a causal agent, allowing the formerly un-named anxiety to be addressed, shunned, and destroyed. The subject’s self-security can then be reestablished as its person can be realigned within the contours of a body with stable borders, restoring the subject/object distinction. Kristeva (1982) argues that in this way, however frightening or unsettling it may be, the abject has a generative function in that it produces the “I” and acts as “my safeguards” and “the primers of my culture” (p. 2). The personal and the communal function of the abject is of course represented in these two statements. The pre/non-objectal disturbs the boundaries of the bodied subject—communal and personal, but by doing so it also brings forth boundaries through the establishment of taboos and laws developed to keep it at bay.

In religion, the demarcation of “defilement, taboo, or sin” is where the abject “breaks in” (Kristeva, 1982, p. 48). The boundary-making function, observes Kristeva (1982), “accompanies all religious structuring and reappears, to be worked out in a new guise, at the time of their collapse” (p. 17).
It is identified as firmly other and therefore acts to re-establish and reaffirm the boundaries of community that are perpetually assailed and threatened by destabilization. The abject then takes on culturally prescribed codings according to various symbolic systems. That is to say that, as with the personal experience with the abject, the primordial non-object/non-subject which is yet not nothing either, is forced into the realm of the symbolic order, into representation, via the operation of boundary mechanisms such as taboos and notions of defilement. These mechanisms work through signification to establish causality in the feeling of anxiety by depositing anxiety provoked by the abject into the agency of some imagined other—a fictive object. The fear of pollution, horror at transgression, anxiety over dismemberment, and penetration of the communal body by some foreign element—all of which are aroused by the abject—can then come into expression through the signification of some other which pollutes, transgresses, dismembers, and penetrates. It is the predator among the children, the stranger in the community, the “non-assimilable alien” who lives among us (Kristeva, 1982, p. 11). In this way the abject establishes and polices the community subject as well as the bodied subject. Narcissistic attachment to stable identity and the imperilment to this presented in the ambiguity of the abject work in the individual and communal subjects to establish these subjects, a function completed in acts of signification.

Abjection can then be read in various significations of the transgressor, the polluter, the dismemberer, the alien—abjected agents who perform abject horrors. In the blood libel legend of the Medieval Christian West, “the Jew” was thus signified. “The Jew” cannot, however, be confused with an actual Jewish person or the historical Jewish people. The object so named is fictive and only indicates that which came to signify what was otherwise unnamable. The abjected figure of “the Jew” comes to signify the threat of defilement and dismemberment by an alien presence in that particular semic code. But this fictiveness is hidden from the signifying agent. This is why “signifying is worse than lying,” as Charles Long (2004) reminds us, “because it obscures and obfuscates a discourse without taking responsibility for doing so” (p. 1). The blood libel legend of the Christian West sutured the abject to the constructed social and religious subjectivity of the Jew according to the signifying Christian as that which both produced and rejected the foundational object of Christian subjectivity: Jesus. The abjected Jew became the focus for the Christian community as at once an object to be drawn into the fold via conversion and punished for being too close. The Jew in the Christian imagination was both envious and repulsive, loved and hated. Signification in conversion stories of the Medieval Christian romance and hideous libels organized communities along the lines of clean insider/outsider relations. In the play between these two
forms of narrative, “the Jew” who could not be subsumed into the signifying community was destroyed or ghettoized. The same could be said of the use of “the Infidel” as a signifier in the calls for crusade throughout Christian history. Even if this call to revenge upon the abject happens only in narrative form, as with Chaucer’s fictional tale, the resolution is the same: elimination of the abjected object.

Suturing the abject to some entity enables the libel’s cathartic function, which promises a re-bounded, secure identity in the destruction of the abjected being(s). It may be said then that violent representations inform acts of violence upon the body such as Appadurai (2006) describes. The story authorizes, rationalizes, and encourages participation in “bodily violence” that “becomes the vivisectionist tool to establish the reality behind the mask” in establishing “sharp lines between normally mixed identities” (p. 89). In logics of the purity and pollution, aggression and extermination become rational self-defense in an effort to protect the community or the state against intractable and vile enemies without, and very often within. But the story comes before the violence; signification precedes action, and abjection precedes them both.

III. “To Jew or Die” Revisited: The Libel and Abjection in Der Stürmer

The first example of the nationalist blood libel for this study comes from the infamous Nazi Party paper Der Stürmer, and specifically from the special Ritualmord-Nummer, or “Ritual Murder Issue,” released in May 1934. Der Stürmer attacked Jews throughout its years of publication with various allegations with which anyone acquainted with the history of antisemitism in Europe may be familiar. Jews were accused of lecherousness, deficient hygiene, and excessive greediness. However, the issue under consideration here expressly focused on that most pernicious of charges: the accusation that in their rituals, Jews used gentile blood that they obtained through murder. After some contextualization of this issue and a brief outline of the history of the publication, I will examine the text and images produced for the issue. This brief history and contextualization is intended to establish the nationalist character of the publication, and thereby demonstrate the departure of the nationalist blood libel from older religious moorings. Of special concern for the purposes of my analysis here is the front-page image of the special edition, which has gained some international recognition since it was translated into English and redistributed by an American antisemitic organization called Christian Vanguard in 1976 (Bytwerk, 2001, figure 16).

Der Stürmer was established as an organ of the völkisch movement in
1922 under the guidance of Julius Streicher, who was also the editor of Deutscher Sozialist at that time (Showalter, 1982). Streicher was a veteran of World War I and was awarded the Iron Cross First class, along with a score of other decorations, for his service. However, it was an invitation to a nationalist political meeting in the summer of 1919, one of many of such meetings of right-wing parties, that marked the beginning of his political career in antisemitism and inaugurated his public activity in the völkisch movement. After some experimentation in the various parties, and having navigated the shifting relations between the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NDASP) and other nationalist parties, Streicher was established as a member of the Nazi regime. Shortly after establishing himself as a loyal party member, Streicher was appointed regional commander of Franconia in 1925. Streicher, though a controversial person even within Nazi circles, was deeply influential and was important to the popularity of the Nazi ideals and antisemitism. He even enjoyed a favorable reference in Hitler’s opus Mein Kampf, where he was praised for his steadfastness and loyalty to Hitler and the völkisch movement (Bytwerk, 2001).

Publication of Der Stürmer, as mentioned, began in 1922, but it ran into financial trouble in 1923 after the failed Beer Hall Putsch. However, Streicher was able to resurrect the paper in 1924, and by 1927 it was circulating 14,000 copies per week (Bytwerk, 2001, p. 52). Circulation continued to increase through 1934, the year the special ritual murder edition was published, and during which time circulation was 113,000 copies per week (Bytwerk, 2001, p. 57). This public success was matched by statements of approval from no less than Heinrich Himmler, who wrote, “Julius Streicher and his weekly newspaper the Stürmer [sic] were responsible for a good part of the education about the enemy of mankind” (as cited in Bytwerk, 2001, p. 171). Streicher’s influence via his publication was even compared favorably with that of Goebbels by the minister of finance under Hitler, Lutz Graf Schwerin von Krosigk (Bytwerk, 2001, p. 172).

The popularity and social impact of Der Stürmer has been accounted for by Randall L. Bytwerk (2001) and Dennis E. Showalter (1982) in terms of the paper’s focus on the emotionally charged pleas that were an important part of Streicher’s rhetorical strategy. According to Showalter (1982), Der Stürmer’s appeal “to psychic realities and visceral images,” using the Jew as “the focal point for a broad spectrum of social, economic, and psychic anxieties calculated to evoke responses from respectable people,” accounts for its success (pp. 168, 234). Bytwerk (1982) repeats this thesis in some ways in writing about Streicher’s simple and direct appeal to emotion in dramatic propaganda that was “armed with tantalizing charges and amazing stories” (30). For both authors the emotional content of the paper explains its influence and popularity, but they also rightly understand that
attraction did not occur in a vacuum. The popularity of the paper grew at a
time of national crisis. Economic and demographic pressures are identified
in both studies as contributing factors, but especially significant was the
immigration of Ostjuden, or “Eastern Jews,” into German cities. The fear
of alien influence in the midst of relative hardship and national insecurity as
the result of financial distress and the loss of WWI, not to mention per-
ceived and actual governmental failures, was sutured in the antisemitic
imagination to the fictive person of the Jew, who could be construed as
being to blame for any misfortune that the German people suffered.
Nowhere was this more apparent than in the pages of Der Stürmer.

According to Showalter (1982), the pervasive anxiety over the influx
of Eastern European Jews was used successfully by Der Stürmer to alienate
Jews who had been a part of German life for many centuries and who had
integrated into German society (p. 85). Streicher also referenced a deep
reservoir of antisemitism in Germany, making “extensive use of fear propa-
ganda, focusing on the Jew as the concrete object of whatever diffuse anxie-
ties might be current in Nuremberg and Germany” (Showalter, 1982, p. 58).
Showalter argues that the Jew in Der Stürmer was an abstraction that
“could be offered as totally alien, totally evil, a symbol of everything evil,
there remained the . . . [Jewish] people one knew” (p. 59). In this way the
paper worked to further demonize the Jewish Germans as the enemy by
situating Germany and Germans as imperiled by this internal alien. The
Jew was therefore continually cast in a variety of roles in such propaganda.
He was caricatured to embody everything from a failing government system
to the financial precariousness of everyday life. The caprice of fortune, so
often imagined to be going ill against the German and by contrast well with
the Jews, was linked to the fictive Jew as the causal agent for German suf-
fering. The Jew was caricatured as a powerful and corrupting influence in
national life as any distinctions between the “Eastern Jews” and German
Jews were diminished.

The relevance of reading abjection in relation to Der Stürmer should
be to some degree self-evident. If we understand abjection as a psychic
operation that describes a pre-conscious anxiety of destabilized subjectivity,
recognized through elements of the body that become signified as an alien
object outside the body, and that abjection “links the lived experience of the
body, the social and culturally specific meanings of the body” (Grosz, 1994,
p. 192), we can easily see Der Stürmer’s abjecting function. It identified
the agent of unease and precariousness for the anxious German reader. It
identified the pollution of the national body as the Jew, and thereby signi-
fi ed what was felt by suturing the fictive Jew to this anxiety. One can even
see this narratizing of pollution in stories that drew attention to the presence
of foreign hops mixed with German hops for making beer, which was of
course blamed on unscrupulous Jewish hop dealers (Showalter, 1982). That which passed into the German body was feared tainted by foreign elements, a pollution caused by Jewish agents. Here the signified Jew is responsible for contaminating the German’s personal body even as he pollutes the national German body itself—he’s doubly abjected.

A reading focused on abjection is relevant to the whole of Der Stürmer, but especially so in the case of the special ritual murder issue under consideration here. The title of the issue reads, as translated from the German, “Jewish Murder Plan against non-Jewish Humanity Revealed.” On the cover page there is an image that is somewhat iconic in which two figures bear the typical stereotype of the Der Stürmer Jew. The text in this edition is unremarkable to anyone familiar with the history of the libel in European history. The majority of the writing is dedicated to recounting specific cases of Jewish ritual murder. The narrative of the piece is occasionally embellished with excerpts from antisemitic statements from Voltaire, von Molkte, and Martin Luther’s Von den Juden und ihren Lügen, or, The Jews and Their Lies. Additionally, there are reproductions from across European geography and history of various images of ritual murder from woodcuts, and even postcards accusing Jews of such acts. Collectively these images are meant to bolster the argument through these roughly chronological vignettes of cases of alleged murder of non-Jews by Jews. However, the image on the cover read through Kristeva’s abjection allows one access to the anxiety of incompleteness that Appadurai (2006) recognizes as precipitating nationalist violence like the Sho’ah (pp. xi & 8-9).

In many ways the chapter from Powers of Horror titled “Ours to Jew or Die,” wherein Kristeva (1982) assesses the antisemitism of the novelist Louise-Ferdinand Céline, does much of the work necessary to connect abjection to antisemitism. Kristeva (1982) wrote that in antisemitic discourse “an object appears—an object of hatred and desire, of threat and aggressivity, of envy and abomination”: The abjected object, the Jew, is produced as he is evoked and performs his function in antisemitic discourse (p. 178). “That object, the Jew,” she writes (1982), “gives thought a focus where all contradictions are explained and satisfied,” allowing the therapeutic ascription of anxiety to some guilty agent (p. 178). The same can be said for the depictions in Der Stürmer, as the Jew is represented simultaneously as massively powerful and feeble, enviable and reviled. He is the object of envy for his supposed racial solidarity and cunning and is simultaneously reviled for his alleged dirtiness and huckstering. Kristeva (1982) writes of “Céline’s pamphlets” that they “are the avowed delirium out of which the work emerges to venture into the obscure regions at the limits of identity” (p. 180). Thereby the work of writing comes face to face with that which disrupts identity. It evokes and confronts the thing that disrupts the
clean, delineated sense of self by exposing the rifts in self-narrative and desire. And so operates Der Stürmer, and especially the image produced for the cover of the special issue under consideration here. As with the discourse from Céline, “when a scription on the limits of identity comes face to face with abjection, it enters into competition with biblical abominations and even more so with prophetic discourse” (Kristeva, 1982, p. 186).

In the illustration, the biblical imagination plays on the ritual prohibition against consuming blood in Jewish religion as well the Christian tradition of the Eucharist—the taking in of the body and blood of the savior. The ritual-murder abomination is imagined as one committed against Christian bodies to be sure, but as Mary Douglas reminds us, it is a mistake to “treat bodily margins as isolated from all other margins” (as cited in Kristeva, 1982, p. 69). The connection to the communal is the interpretive key to reading the portrayal of the Jew as a murderer and blood drinker in the nationalist blood libel. Surrounding this particular image is script describing the suspicion “the world over” that Jews commit “ritual murder.” The text around the image, including the common banner running across the bottom of each issue, “The Jew is Our Misfortune,” signifies profound anxiety over the presence of this abjected other who is the causal agent of suffering. The Jew is further described as a “devil” that has “for millennia” conducted “secret rites” with human blood. And above the image is written the title of the illustration: “Judenopfer,” or “Jewish Sacrifice.” Thus we have what Kristeva describes in her assessment of Céline’s pamphlets: a confrontation with biblical abomination. In this case we see the accusation of consumption of blood, which is forbidden in the Scriptures, and allegedly authorized through the Talmud. In coding the alleged murders as ritual acts, the signification follows and confirms the boundaries as established by taboo and not simply by morality in some abstract sense. The murders are perpetrated against individuals, but they have communal implications. In reminding the reader that “the Jews are [their] misfortune,” the authors establish the Jews as utterly other, signified as “Mördervolk” (“The Murder-Folk”) and murderers of the Folk. The fictive Jew and Jewish community evoked in the publication are sutured to death and thereby signified as death itself.

In some ways the portrayal of the Jew in this image is novel in relation to the other images reproduced elsewhere. This is important to notice insofar as we are dealing with different kinds of imagination at work in the production of the abjected Jewish object in the context of nationalist aspirations. This presentation of the blood libel is one that reflects anxieties over demography as the Jew’s offense is not centered on the crucifixion of the Lord, but an assault on the people. There is an effort to keep the crucifixion, a staple in the European libel legend, in the picture; but it is drastically
Figure 1: A scan of the cover of Der Stürmer’s blood libel issue provided by Randall Bytwerk. (Permission to use this image was not granted. Follow this link to view the flyer: http://www.bnp.org.uk/news/%E2%80%9COur-children-are-not-halal-meat%E2%80%9D-%E2%80%93-dramatic-new-leaflet-launched)
minimized in the frame. One may read this as an attempt to keep the historical narrative intact or in some sense present while shifting the signification of the Jew from a hater of Christianity and cursed of God to a predator of the population who is alien to the nation. The subjects evoked as the victims in the illustration are clearly Aryan children and young women who are drawn with thin, light hair and angular features. In this image the blood flows not from the Cross, but from the necks of the babes and potential mothers. The illustration is one that tells a particular story of the blood libel centered on demographic precarity rather than religious offense. This dynamic is demonstrated by the minority of two Jews dominating the multitude of Aryans taking the center rather than the crucifixion, as we have in the narratives of William of Norwich and Hugh of Lincoln.

In the illustration the communal stakes of the Nazi blood libel are most apparent in the portrayal of the Jewish characters working together to dominate the ethereal Aryan children and young women. The figural Jews are solid, contrasting each other in white and black solid shapes. One holds the knife that has cut the wispy necks of the victims while the other catches the blood. They are on the Earth with only the miniature crosses in the background to challenge their dominant presence. They act in the world and on the helpless Aryan subject(s). That the Jew in this illustration is monstrous is obvious, but his monstrosity comes not from the hideous visage of the face, here contorted by hate and scorn. It comes rather from his commanding presence and power over his victims. The Jews act in unison, which adds to the terror they evoke and further marks them as everything the Aryan is not in the illustration: powerful, united, solid.

The Aryans, on the other hand, are floating, unable to act on the ground. These ghostly organisms have no solid being comparable to the figural Jew. They melt into air. The cuts on their necks and the blood pouring onto the plate have more substance than they themselves can enjoy. It is not incidental that in the illustration, the line work used to outline the Jew is similar to that used to mark the blood. A parallel is drawn between the abject substance of the blood and the abjected Jew; but there is also a contrast between the powerful and terrible presence of the Jew and the soft, nearly shapeless Aryans. This highlights the simultaneous repulsion and envy that Kristeva notices (1982, 1986) in Céline’s literature, as well as the anxiety that the abject invokes: the fear of dissolution, the loss of selfhood. In other issues of Der Stürmer the Aryan man is illustrated as the liberator who forces the Jew into a subordinate position by acts of violence. But that virile Aryan figure is missing here. The Aryan male can only be a child in the nationalist blood libel. He is helpless, unable to protect the women and children, or even himself. One can imagine that this absence of the protective masculine figure expresses the fear of what may befall the women and
children in his absence. That reading is too simple. As I read it, this assumed absence actually signals the presence of that very masculine figure in impotent form.

The image on the cover of the blood libel issue read in this way is then not working simply to mobilize resentment against the Jew, but to work toward a catharsis as it puts the unnamable anxiety of the abject into meaningful and recognizable form so that deliverance from the threat now named can be promised. The primary function of the tale is to name the abject, allowing the identification of anxiety along the lines of the culturally situated coding of the Jew. Kaja Silverman (1983), in following her analysis of the work of Roland Barthes, writes in *The Subject of Semiotics*,

> The cultural codes organize linguistic segments of novels, short stories, and poems in the form of proverbial statements and commonplaces, but they also dictate the range of possible narratives, character types, and conflicts, as well as sorts of knowledge likely to be repressed, and the conditions under which that knowledge will ultimately divulged. (p. 251)

The visual sign, following Peircean semiotics, likewise operates as semic code, and therefore functions to define “person and place in ideologically symptomatic ways” (Silverman, 1983, p. 255). Here the conjunction between semiotics and psychoanalysis, so important to Kristeva’s work, unpacks the very anxieties that Appadurai (2006) regards as causal in instances of ethnocidal and nationalist violence, of which the Sho’ah/Holocaust remains a paradigmatic example. However, as we proceed we will see that this anxiety is coded similarly even as it appears in different nationalist contexts. In the next example we see the blood libel against the Jew differently situated in the setting of contemporary Palestine/Israel.

### IV. “I SMELL JEWS”: THE LIBEL AND ABJECTION ON AL-AQSA TV

A cartoon aired on Al-Aqsa TV by Hamas on January 1, 2010, demonstrated without doubt that the blood libel is far from extinct from political discourse. This instance even got attention from Jon Stewart on *The Daily Show*. However, this cartoon was not an anomaly for the region. Several such cartoons have been aired since the medium has been available. Scholars have done work on the use of the blood libel tropes, detailing instances of Stürmeresque representations (Stav, 1999). But to extend the reading of the image from the ritual murder issue of *Der Stürmer*, I will focus on this 2010 cartoon, wherein we find similar demographic anxieties that map onto the anxiety of incompleteness described by Appadurai (2006). However different the contexts may be, the abjected Jew stands in a similar position as the signified transgressor, the taboo breaker, the alien, and the murderer of
children. The Jew is imagined as the misfortune of the people, an infectious presence that pollutes one’s very subjectivity.

The cartoon opens with a crow perched on a sign that bears the insignias of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). The cartoon’s main plot actually serves to demonstrate the subservience of the PA to Israeli military power over and against the wishes and lives of Palestinians. A series of vignettes throughout the cartoon establishes the narrative of the PA’s impotence to protect the Palestinian population in the face of Jewish aggression. After the caricatures of the IDF and a PA border guard are established, the scene shifts to an old Jewish man and his son, both of whom are settlers. The father is old, bent over with age, with a long white beard and a black suit. His ears are pointed and he has a sharp, vampiric tooth that comes over his top lip when his mouth is closed. His son is lanky, with payot dropping alongside his face. And he carries an Uzi. In a menacingly gravelly voice the father says to his son, “Son, the five most delicious things in this world are three . . . ” The son interrupts, “I know.” They then say in unison, as with a single voice, “Palestinian blood.” The father commands the son, “Go, son. Drink their blood, and come back safely.” The son then agrees to do this in compliance with the father’s wishes. Upon receipt of a map of Hebron, he goes to the border checkpoint where the PA and IDF characters await.

The settler then wanders through the border area, firing his Uzi randomly, saying, “I am getting loooost! [sic].” The IDF guard commands the PA guard to “get him.” However, the guard is too late. The settler fires his Uzi into a crowd of playing Palestinian children with a grin on his face. The next frame shows the dismembered and bloody bodies of Palestinian children formerly at peaceful play. One pigtailed girl has had her head completely removed, severed from her body, which still clutches a teddy bear. The settler stands with a satisfied grin, blood dripping from his lips. When the PA guard arrives he exclaims in horror, “You Jew who got lost, you’ve killed my people before my eyes. I will respond with . . . “, as he pulls a dove from behind his back and holds it aloft, “more peace. Are you done?” The abject criminal licks the blood from his lips, consuming the last drop of Palestinian blood. The guard then bears the settler safely upon his back through the checkpoint and back to his home, singing all the way, “Salma, oh Salma, we’ve returned in one piece.” After the Jew is deposited back in his house, the guard receives a sharp kick from inside the house that sends him off screen. We meet the PA guard again, later, as he beats a Palestinian child for stone-throwing. The cartoon then ends with the young boy saying to this PA guard, “I smell Jews. Are you going to turn me in to the Jews, man? You are no kin of mine. You are a spy.” The final scene closes and “to be continued” is spelled out on the screen.
The blood, the severed head, the taboo of drinking blood, the abjected Jew passing through territorial boundaries, the ambiguous identity of the guard sensed in the olfactory of the Palestinian child, the live settler returning in one piece, bleeding and dismembered Palestinian children—all abjection. The narrative here, though there is an absence of ritual directly, references a more diffuse blood libel that is anchored not in Christian references, but in nationalist wishes and anxieties. As such the libel is still tied to space and notions of belonging to a place or, one might say, citizenship. The geography, as with the ghetto in Chaucer’s tale, is segmented with multiple subjects: the PA, the IDF, the children-Palestinians, the settler-Jews. The Palestinian is stuck in the socio-political landscape, pierced through with an overpowering relation to an imposed geography of stateless nationhood that keeps him in the land but gives him no power over it; he is whole, yet not happy. This unhappiness is compounded by the passing through of “the Jew” who seeks blood in a taboo act, revealing the powerless and permeable state of the Palestinian personal and communal subject.

This fixedness of the Palestinian is contrasted with the mobile Jew who is feared and envied for his power, a power that the Palestinian aspiring to nationhood desires. The wanderer, this armed settler, this alien presence, receives the urging of the father to drink the blood of the Palestinians and obeys. It could be that the lack of the father for the Palestinian children in the cartoon emphasizes the intactness of “the Jew” who operates in relation to the father. The armed settler easily passes through the boundary and enters the space of the Palestinians, freely shooting his Uzi. He rends the bodies of the children, and then in an expression of jouissance consumes the taboo substance, culminating the drama of the libel vignette. The severed neck of the Palestinian girl signifies that the children are cut off, voiceless, as they leak their life into the dirt. There is no song here, no praise of the martyr—only the subservient voice of the PA guard inquiring whether the consumption enjoyed by “the Jew” is complete. The permeation of the children’s blood into the dirt on the ground and into the mouth of the Jew figures the permeation of “the Jew” himself, who is unclean both in presence and in act. He is doubly abject, as he is abjected in deed and in being.

The leaking and severed bodies of the Palestinian children stand opposite the returning settler, who is safe and “in one piece” (perhaps he is safe because he is in one piece), with his subjectivity intact and therefore content. The Palestinian children never know this feeling. But it is not just “the Jew” who is constructed as whole, but also the PA guard who proclaims, “We’ve returned in one piece.” Here, in the ambiguous subjectivity of the guard, the threat of “the Jew” as abject reaches its height. The abject becomes most dangerous in infecting whole subjectivities, making them
foreign to themselves. The horror of the abject is not simply that it crosses 
over boundaries, but that it crosses through you.

In the scene after the murders, the PA guard puts on a mask to assail a 
house occupied by a boy accused of stone-throwing. Both his activity and 
and his mask thrust him into ambiguity as the Palestinians observe his action 
and attire and are puzzled by him. Is he a thief? Is he from the security 
forces? Can he be from the resistance? This ambiguity is pushed further 
when the guard apprehends the small boy. The boy yells, “The Jews hurt 
my arm yesterday.” The guard responds to the complaint by grabbing the 
boy’s hand and gnawing on his arm. The guard proclaims, “The Jews broke 
it, I will finish it off.” The ambiguous identity of the guard is established as 
the boy exclaims, “I smell Jews. Are you going to turn me in to the Jews? 
You are no kin of mine. You are a spy.” The horror of “the Jew” is 
matched only by that PA guard whose ambiguity allows even more detailed 
suture to abjection—the fear of corruption to the point of a loss of identity, 
community, and kin. The abject severs and discontinues; indeed, it rends 
and causes leakage. But the abject can also make you serve it, and trans-
form even you to become it. You can lose yourself to it.

The consumption of the abjected fluid serves to demonstrate the 
degree to which “the Jew” has come to signify as abject; and, as a conse-
quence, how fully the abject has been made manifest and then can be sig-
naled and, perhaps, eventually overcome with the assertion of one’s identity 
over and against the alien enemy. That is, of course, if you are not lost to it. 
The various subjects in the cartoon demonstrate all these possibilities—the 
traitor, the alien, the criminal, the monster. What remains is the fear of 
being overwhelmed and losing one’s self.

As we saw in the special issue of Der Stürmer, the Jew here is abjected 
so that the abject may be identified and then militated against, and perhaps 
overcome in violent struggle. Thus the cathartic function of these narra-
tives emerges as signifying the enemy. In this way the abject functions, as 
Kristva (1982) notes, as a mechanism of subjectivity (p. 208). As the illus-
tration and cartoon coded the abject along the lines of the Jew and the trai-
tor, it also produced the authentic German and Palestinian as not the Other. 
I am authentically this and not that, one could now say, because I know the 
enemy and therefore myself. Subject and object are firm here. But this 
declaration of authenticity is not simply a mechanism over and against “the 
Jew” as some essential being. The function of the abject is ubiquitous, as it 
“assumes specific shapes and different codings according to the various 
‘symbolic systems’” (Kristeva, 1982, p. 68). This opens the possibility for 
signifying the abject as other than “the Jew” in the blood libel. In the next 
example, deployed by the British National Party, the imagined “Islamists” 
is coded as abject in the narrative. This affirms not only Kristeva’s state-
ment above, but also Appadurai’s (2006) statement about “the forms in which global dramas of war, peace, and terror arrive at different national and regional locations in different guises and take on highly specific synaptic connections to local anxieties and images” (p. 101). In other words, not only is it appropriate that we should expect different signifiers emerging in recitations of the nationalist blood libel, it is also almost inevitable that this would be the case across disparate national political conditions.

V. A SLIGHT INTERREGNUM: SIGNIFYING “THE CHRISTIAN” ABJECT AND LESSONS DERIVED

If we think of “the Jew” as a sign standing in representation of the abject in reflection of semiotic theory, we can see that any object could be signified within the structure of the blood libel narrative as the offender. This is of course the point of semiotics in general—to understand signification. Further, since the abject can never be directly described as a non-object in discourse, it must be sutured to an object. In the cases above it was sutured to “the Jew”; but this does not need to be the case, as if Jews cause abjection. Folklorist Bill Ellis (1983) points to the broader application of the blood libel in his article “De Legendis Urbis: Modern Legends in Ancient Rome.” In this article he discusses the libel’s deployment against early Christians. What is particularly helpful for my point here is that Ellis notices that besides the antiquity of this libel and its use against peoples other than Jewish people, in each case the accusation played on the “anxieties and taboos of the existing majority rather than knowledge of the scapegoated group,” and the accused were in each case “ethnic or religious minorities” (p. 201).

Most of the rumors about Christians involving themselves in obscene rites were circulating between 112-200 C.E., a time when the central and regional governing authorities were having difficulty “keeping the Pax Romanorum” (Ellis, 1983, p. 204). Ellis (1983) comments that it was the “conservative classes,” the religious majority, who sought to scapegoat the “newly insurgent minorities” for the troubles facing the Empire (p. 204). This of course should remind one of the socio-historical context in which Streicher’s paper appeared: social instability coupled with a suspect alien among the population. In this regard, Ellis makes two points concerning the libel against Christians. First, these “urban legends” are not new, and second, what is “modern” about these legends is only the “identity of the culprit” (p. 207). Those viewed as foreign in society are regarded as threatening or somehow responsible for or capitalizing on social and political instability and disintegration. This is true for “the Christian” in second-century Rome and “the Jew” in the period from 1144 to the present. It is
especially true in nationalist regimes in which the presence of others within national geographical spaces is viewed as an intrusion and a violation of law and sovereignty. The abject, which is of course the true source of that anxiety, is then sutured onto whatever object, and all too often excised through social rituals of violence. In any case we must begin by analyzing the practice of naming the abject onto an other as a symptom of subjective and communal anxieties. This is of course where psychoanalysis is most useful. In this regard, when we speak of the blood libel we should not speak of “modern legends,” as Ellis admonishes, “only modern texts” (p. 207).

VI. Reading the “Islamist” Abject: The Libel From the BNP

The assertion that Islam is a “cult” and that “Islamists” are dangerous is unfortunately common since the events signified as “9/11,” and in Britain’s “7/7.” Such statements resulted in the rejection of Rod Parsley, Pastor of World Harvest Church in Ohio, to be a McCain ally in 2008 (Ross, 2008). But there is a lesser-known story that goes a bit closer to the point at hand. It comes from a report in The New York Times detailing the events of August 31, 2010, in which acts of harassment and violence were perpetrated against the worshipers inside the small town of Waterport, New York. It was noted therein that one of the young men charged as a result of the police investigation claimed in questioning that he thought the Islamic Center was a “cult house” where people “drank blood” (Otterman, 2010, para 10). However one case of accusation against Muslim men has captured the imagination of nationalists in England more than any other case.

The disappearance of a British teenager named Charlene Downes generated much tabloid interest, some mainstream media attention, and specific public activities on the part of the British National Party. Soon after Miss Downes was reported missing, she was thought to have fallen prey to “grooming” for sex with older men, then murdered and ground into the kebab meat at the shop of the accused murderer, one Mr. Albatikhi. The following trial was a fiasco, and Mr. Albatikhi, a man of Jordanian extraction, was set free (Smith, 2009). This drew the attention and anger of those who felt that justice had not been served. Subsequent reports were made about groups of “Asian” men sexually exploiting young British girls. One recent case reported by SKYNews in 2012 referred to the trial of five men in Liverpool tried on charges of facilitating prostitution. The reporter speaking about the case emphasized that “all of the men were Pakistani in origin” and all the girls were “white and vulnerable” (McCarthy, 2012).

The right-wing British National Party, however, took the reaction to these reports further than most in its ongoing campaign to expose “Muslim
pedophiles,” and to proclaim “our children are not kebab meat.” In this effort, the reference to the Downes case and the anxieties that young, white British girls are being sexually exploited were combined into one message. In a pamphlet launched in 2011, the Downes case that inspired the activity in the first place was obscured by the general reference to Halal meat—a clear reference to practices that links the feared religious minority to scriptural abominations. It is worth noting that there was a similar recurrent theme in Der Stürmer of Jews sexually enslaving and exploiting German girls, and treating them as kosher meat (Schowalter, 1982, p. 99). The BNP flyer sublimes the fear of consumption into a dramatic silhouette of a girl weeping. The image is overdetermined by the verbosity around it which, according to an article titled “‘Our Children are not Halal Meat’—Dramatic New Leaflet Launched!” (n.d.), proclaims that “young white girls” are being “exploited for sex by Muslim men” (para. 4). To bolster this claim, a quote is added from Chief Detective Inspector Alan Edwards stating, “These girls are being passed around and used as meat” (pull-out quote). The specter of the biblical abomination merges again with the claim, “Young girls and their families in Oldham are sacrificed on the altar of Political Correctness” (para. 8). And though the language is highly metaphorical in this case, the message carries similar anxieties found in the examples from the Der Stürmer and the Hamas cartoon. The abominable Muslim alien preys on the life of the feminine youth, the very life-bearers of the people.

Here the libel touches most deeply on the erotic as the flyer reveals the sexualized aspects of the blood libel. As the Christians were imagined to be engaging in orgies in their feasts, and the Jew was imagined by Streicher to be sexually expert and unusually well-endowed, so the Muslim male is imagined to be sexually voracious as he allegedly satisfies his pedophilic lusts upon young white girls. “The erotic cult of the abject,” writes Kristeva (1982), “makes one think of perversion” (p. 55). The taboo consumption of the blood is displaced by the anxiety over forbidden, miscegenist sexual enjoyment as the girls are transformed into morsels of ritually pure meat fit for Muslim pleasure. And, as with the narratives from Der Stürmer and Hamas, there are overt references to anxieties of impotence related to these crimes. In the quote at the bottom of the pamphlet from the leader of the BNP Nick Griffin, he asks readers to consider how they would “feel” if their child fell prey to these “perverts” and the authorities “refused to lift a finger” (“‘Our Children are not Halal Meat,’” n.d., para. 10). The eroticized Muslim pedophile is a means to evoke authentically British, masculine action and self-identification. The anxiety over sexually and religiously taboo activity becomes a call for reaffirmed borders between “us” and “them,” of affirming belonging with a vote, or perhaps more. Mr. Grif-
fin claims at the closing of his quote, “That’s why I’m asking you to vote for Derek Adams . . . help us get justice for the victims of Muslim grooming” (para. 10).

Such expressions of anxiety about the presumed disruptive Muslim presence in Britain are of course not unique to far right parties and tabloids. Almost contemporary with the beginning of the BNP’s campaign against “Muslim pedophiles,” the Royal United Studies Institute, or RUSI, published a controversial study by Robert Salisbury, the Marquess of Salisbury and Privy Councilor, and Professor Gwyn Prins (2008). This paper focused on what they regarded as national security threats from British Muslims as a result of a “mis-placed [sic] deference to multiculturalism” that has “failed to lay down the line to immigrant communities” (p. 23). This article was reported as the “consensus” from a series of private meetings convened between 2006 and 2008 (p. 22). Given the participation of high officials in the military, Royal government, and the academy, the authors concluded that Britain was at risk because of a “loss in the United Kingdom of confidence in our own identity, values, and constitution,” coupled with “a lack of self-confidence” that stands in stark contrast to the presumed confidence and firm identity of “Islamist terrorist enemy, within and without” (p. 23). In response to this threat they make many proposals, but these suggestions are preceded by this statement: “Our common understanding of and allegiance to the United Kingdom must be restored” (p. 26).

In the face of dissolution of the normative British subjectivity, described in the RUSI report (Prins & Salisbury, 2008) as a loss of identity, and the precarity imagined to be produced by the presence of the internal/external Islamist enemy, British citizens are urged to reify their nationalist subjectivity. This of course was the move the BNP made in their flyer in calling upon British citizens to vote. The motivation for this effort in both cases is the presence of the abjected Islamist who allegedly has the very self-confidence desired by the RUSI authors and the BNP. This makes “the Islamist” all the more monstrous, as he is at once envied and reviled for his self-confidence. As was the case with the abjected Jew in blood libel discourse from Der Stürmer and Hamas, the abjected Muslim for RUSI is simultaneously envied and feared for his firmness of identity. “The Islamist” is signified as abject and thereby made to stand in for the anxieties intrinsic to modern British liberal society, especially in reference to pressures that are the result of post-colonial demographic shifts. “The Islamist” is imagined by the BNP and other nationalists as the cause of, as Appadurai (2006) has articulated it, the “exacerbated uncertainties” and “new incentives for cultural purification” that have been produced as a result of the loss of the “illusion of national economic sovereignty or well-being,” as well as “uncertainties about identity” produced by “global flows” (p. 8).
In this article I set out to read anxieties of incompletion described by Appadurai (2006) as they present, like symptoms, in instances of what I call nationalist blood libels, and to tie these anxieties to “forces of social uncertainty” in the modern nation-state that are “allied to other fears about growing inequality, loss of national sovereignty, or threats to local sovereignty and livelihood” (p. 7). In engaging with Kristeva’s theorization of abjection, I sought to demonstrate that the signified object of anxiety can be described along various cultural codes of the outsider or alien: “the Jew” in Der Stürmer and the Hamas cartoon, “the Christian” in court cases in Rome, or “the Islamist” more recently in the United States and Britain. In this way I intended to contribute something to understanding factors that inform acts of hate speech in general. More specifically, I wanted to draw attention to the relationship between hate-speech and the “darker sides of globalization” that run through the social relations of the nation state by demonstrating connections between personal uncertainties and the “insecurity in the affairs of states” amid global mobility (Appadurai, 2006, p. 101).

In this context, individual acts of injurious speech are not divorced from high level and high stakes discussions of policy, as we see very clearly in the case of “the Islamist” in the RUSI report (Prins & Salisbury, 2008). In this way we can see that “predatory identities” described by Appadurai (2006) developed in tense relation to uncertainty can easily become the basis for savage acts of violence (p. 51). This is unfortunately a familiar problem to those who observe the history of genocides and inter-ethnic conflicts. This violence, Appadurai argues, “can create a macabre form of certainty and can become a brutal technique (or folk discovery-procedure) about ‘them’ and, therefore about ‘us’” (pp. 6, 8). That is to say that this violence contributes to subject formation, which is of course the function of the abject as described by Kristeva (1982, 1986). I therefore argue that the nationalist blood libel operates as a folk reification-procedure that allows the segmentation of friend/enemy camps, rationalizes anxieties along lines of protectionism, and translates affects via signification into speech acts that in turn facilitate acts of violence. The eroticized and horrifying tales of the consuming enemy connect the personal crises of subjectivity to the larger communal identity as it is writ large as a national drama. Therefore, following Kristeva (1986) in “Psychoanalysis and the Polis,” I assert that my task here was not to “make an interpretive summa in the name of a system of truths,” but to “record the crisis of modern interpretive systems” and to affirm that there is a crisis “inherent in the symbolic function itself and to perceive as symptoms all constructions” (p. 319). I will
venture a bit further than Kristeva by offering a possible response to the problem presented in nationalist blood libel by citing Butler (2005):

We must recognize that ethics requires us to risk ourselves precisely at moments of unknowingness, when what forms us diverges from what lies before us, when our willingness to become undone in relation to others constitutes our chance of becoming human. (p. 136)

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The New Politics of Hate? An Assessment of the Appeal of the English Defence League Amongst Disadvantaged White Working-Class Communities in England

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Abstract

Since the summer of 2009 in the United Kingdom there have been a number of violent clashes amongst white and south Asian males, anti-fascist demonstrators, and the police. These disturbances have centred around the activities of a new far-right grouping, the English Defence League (EDL), which claims to oppose ‘radical Islam’. This article charts the growth of the EDL and examines its motivations and ideologies. It argues that the increasing influence of this organisation reflects wider socio-economic and political processes, and in particular needs to be understood in light of the contemporary state of ‘post-politics’ in which the UK is embroiled. Drawing on our own empirical research, we argue that the growth in popularity of the EDL amongst some segments of England’s marginalised and disenfranchised white working class must be understood in the context of the failure of mainstream political discourses to reach out to these communities, who have instead turned to the EDL as an organisation through which they can vent their anger at the ‘Islamic other’ rather than at the political and financial classes that are the real source of their disadvantage.

Keywords: extremism, Islamophobia, class strife, British ethnography, soccer hooliganism, anti-racism, anti-Islamism, religious intolerance, British politics

I. Introduction: The Birth and Growth of the English Defence League

In this article we examine the spectacular recent emergence of a new form of far-right street-protest movement in England: the English Defence League (or as it is more commonly referred to, the EDL). The EDL is a collective of largely marginalised, white, working-class men who have used the EDL’s marches to become involved in violent and hostile forms of
direct action against what the group terms ‘Islamic extremism’ (Garland & Treadwell, 2010; Bartlett & Littler, 2011). Since 2009 we have employed an extensive ethnographic methodology, and utilised both participant observation and interviewing, to study the EDL and its core support. The research has involved numerous conversations and life history interviews with EDL members, attendance at a number of EDL protests and events, and the monitoring of websites and discussion forums and other social media, in an attempt to gain an insight into the EDL and the motivations of those drawn to it (see Treadwell & Garland, 2011).

Our interest was sparked initially as a result of the EDL’s involvement in disorder during the summer of 2009, when several major urban centres in the UK, including Manchester, Birmingham, Luton, Stoke, Leicester, and Bradford,1 witnessed a number of violent disturbances involving a range of new, seemingly ‘far-right’ activist groups. Positioning themselves in vocal opposition to ‘radical Islam’ and ‘Islamic extremism’, these groups organised a series of protest marches in the latter half of that year that on several occasions erupted into clashes amongst the protesters, counter-demonstrators, and the police, and resulted in significant arrests for public order offences.2 Incorporated amongst the marchers were several related factions, including Casuals United, the English Defence League, Welsh Defence League, Scottish Defence League, March for England, United British Alliance, British Citizens Against Islam Extremists, and Stop the Islamification of Europe (Gable et al., 2009). The most prominent of these have been Casuals United and the EDL, two overlapping and interlinking groups that have emerged out of the fringes of England’s domestic soccer hooligan subculture that has long been associated by commentators (although only occasionally accurately—see Armstrong, 1998; Stott & Pearson, 2007) with the politics of the extreme right (see Garland & Treadwell, 2010; Goodwin, 2011).

Utilising 21st century methods of social networking and protesting (organising ‘flashmobs’ and using mobile phone and internet technologies to communicate and facilitate physical and third-space campaigns) and functioning in a world where domestic football banning orders and prohibitive ticket pricing make the spectator experience of soccer a less attractive arena in which to seek physical confrontations, these two groups have been portrayed in the press as 21st century harbingers of far-right extremist politics (see, for example, Kerbaj, 2009; Allen, 2011). There is some doubt, however, regarding the accuracy of this assessment, for, as has been shown, there is a suggestion that such crude characterisation ignores the complex differences and continuities that this anti-Islam movement has with traditional far-right ideologies (Copsey, 2010; Jackson, 2011).

The mainstream leadership of the EDL has repeatedly highlighted
what it sees as the group’s anti-racist and inclusive credentials. One of the
distinctive and peculiar aspects of the EDL’s politics is its emphasis upon
anti-racism and its vocal opposition to the far-right British National Party
(BNP) and neo-Nazi Combat 18. Apparently in an effort both to distance
itself from the BNP and other far-right groupings, and to create a united
‘front’ with those from minority ethnic groupings that may oppose aspects
of Islam, the EDL has displayed ‘Black and White Unite’ banners at many
of its demonstrations and stressed its opposition to racism, fascism, and
Nazism. The EDL has also championed women’s and gay rights in an
attempt to prove its democratic, non-extremist credentials while at the same
time trying to show that Islam is an anti-modern, anti-progressive religion
that is opposed to homosexuality and women’s equality. Some of its sup-
porters also apparently have a pro-Israeli stance, evidenced by the appear-
ance of Star of David flags at some of their marches (witnessed by the
authors at a number of demonstrations during fieldwork from 2009 to
2012). These viewpoints are at odds with many of those normally associ-
ated with far-right parties that have long championed the ‘traditional’ ideas
of the family and of the role of women within it, whilst being vocal in their
opposition to homosexuality. Anti-semitism has, of course, been a feature
of many of these extremist groupings since the 1930s (Copsey, 2008).

However, accounts have also shown how this ‘legitimate’ front is often
at odds with the crass and overt racism of its rank and file membership who
have been open about their use of targeted violence against Muslims and
ethnic minorities with the authors (Treadwell & Garland, 2011; Treadwell,
2012). EDL supporters have been reported as attacking an anti-fascist music
concert in Yorkshire, being jailed for physically attacking staff at office
buildings that had hosted anti-EDL meetings, and having attacked a book-
stall in Sandwell near Birmingham (Bellamy, 2011; Halesowen News,
2011). Perhaps most concerning were the actions of EDL activist and for-
mer soldier Simon Beech, who in late 2011 was one of two men jailed for
10 years for an attempted arson attack on a mosque in Stoke that involved
trying to cause an explosion by sabotaging gas supply lines. When sentenc-
ing the convicted men, Judge Mark Eades stated: ‘It seems to me your pur-
pose was not to get at extremists, but to get at Muslims in general and your
purpose can only have been to destabilise community relationships’ (British
Broadcasting Corporation, 2011a).

It is therefore difficult to take the supposed ‘tolerant’ facets of the
EDL’s thinking at face value. It could well be the case that many of these
more moderate aspects of their ideological framework are simply adopted
in order to be seen to be in opposition to the tenets of what they believe
constitute ‘extremist Islam’. This may well explain the adoption of Star of
David flags, which may in reality be deployed by EDL marchers in order to
provoke a reaction from Muslim observers who object to Israeli policies in the Middle East. Similarly, the championing of the rights of women and of gay and lesbian people could merely be an attempt to persuade the public (and media) that the EDL is, in fact, a mainstream movement in the face of an intolerant religion (Islam) that grants little freedom to women or those of minority sexualities. The EDL may well be hoping that by embracing ‘liberal’ causes they will be cast by the media in a moderate light and, in turn, Islam will be cast in a bad, extremist light.

However, the true nature of the EDL’s politics may have inadvertently been given away by the organisation’s self-appointed leader, Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (who uses the pseudonym ‘Tommy Robinson’) in his speech at an EDL demonstration in the English midlands city of Leicester, and recorded in field notes in October 2010:

“We’re not Nazis, we’re not fascists—we will smash Nazis the same way we will smash militant Islam. We are exactly about black and white unite, every single community in this country can come and join our ranks, fill our ranks. We don’t care if you arrived here yesterday; you’re welcome to protect our Christian culture and our way of life. (S. Yaxley-Lennon, personal communication, October 9, 2010)

However, evident in this discourse is Yaxley-Lennon’s reference to ‘our Christian culture’ and ‘our way of life’, which reveals his narrow view of an English society and Englishness that is exclusive of those of different cultures and religious backgrounds. Indeed, in the same speech he went on to say: ‘We will combat militant Islam wherever it raises its ugly, paedophilic, disturbed, medieval fucking head’, in an act that must come precariously close to inciting religious hatred, as defined by the U.K.’s Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006. Certainly, if the leader of the EDL is stressing conformity to ‘our culture’ on the one hand, and condemning aspects of Islam in such brutal terms on the other, then he is undermining the organisation’s own claims to moderation and tolerance of difference.

In this article we trace the development of what we call Britain’s post-political ‘stupor’, in which ideology has largely become absent from mainstream political policies and debates. We suggest that this has created a vacuum within politics, and especially of the left of the spectrum, which has prompted, at least in part, the growth of the EDL. The absence of an authentic working-class political discourse and wider political processes in the UK has left disadvantaged and marginalised white working-class communities that traditionally supported the Labour Party, with no natural political ‘home’. The relative poverty of many of these communities, coupled with the presence of resentment and anger at what is seen as the comparatively prosperous position of ‘undeserving’ Muslim populations, has seen ele-
ments within them view the English Defence League as the only legitimate output for their anger and disillusion. Unless these issues are recognised, there is a real prospect of the continued growth of the EDL.

II. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT TO THE RISE OF THE EDL: BRITAIN’S POST-POLITICAL STUPOR

That the EDL have come to the fore at this particular moment is doubtless significant, and while it would be inaccurate to suggest that the emergence of the organisation is symptomatic only of a crisis in mainstream politics, or that this is a sole, or even the most salient feature in explaining the materialization of the group, that is the issue to which we will focus our attentions here. However, we would suggest that any understanding of the growth in popularity and influence of the EDL must be connected to the backdrop of widening inequality that reflects, for the first time perhaps in nearly two decades, the very real fall in living standards that has affected many of those in the lower economic orders in the UK.

The political and economic conditions that have enabled the EDL to flourish are not likely to disappear quickly, and it seems likely that even more acute feelings of marginalisation will become the reality of many people’s lived experience for the foreseeable future (Dorling, 2010). After extremist Anders Behring Breivik’s murderous spree in Norway in the summer of 2011 there was a recognition of the dangers of the far-right amongst the European political elite, with many of its leaders overtly condemning his actions. Yet since that time there has been little or no condemnation of some of the politics and ideas that underpinned his actions. The paranoid and Islamophobic rantings found in Breivik’s thousand-page “manifesto” were not created in a vacuum, but rather were indicative of how across Europe we have seen the growth of political intolerance and the ‘othering’ of ‘alien’ communities, threats of tightened border controls and clampdown and deportation of illegal immigrants, and an increasing acceptance in both media (Gilroy, 2004) and political circles that multiculturalism has ‘failed’ (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2010; 2011b). That has gelled with a commonly shared axis of media-fuelled Islamophobia that has spread across the European Union. Many of Europe’s political leaders, including the UK’s David Cameron, Germany’s Angela Merkel, and France’s Nicolas Sarkozy, have been denouncing multiculturalism in sometimes the crudest of terms, in part due to a growing fear of seeing their political position lose ground to fringe far-right parties. They show no signs that they are going to back off or adopt a more tolerant position, and arguably, for example, in Britain this ‘pin-striped xenophobia’ is now part of the political centre
ground, which, though generally intolerant of ‘racism’, has little challenged Islamophobia.

The EDL cleverly plays upon the present ‘risky’ status assigned to British (and particularly Muslim) Asians in the popular press over the course of the last decade in a way that appears to have resonance with marginalized white working classes. Much of the dominant discourse surrounding Islam has therefore centred on issues of its supposed anti-British, anti-modern, anti-liberal, and dangerous nature (Fekete, 2009; Williamson & Khiabany, 2010). Moreover, the twin elements identified by Law (2010) that are often conflated within the umbrella term ‘Islamophobia’—anti-Islam sentiment and hostility directed at Muslim people—have been adeptly exploited by the EDL. In particular, the leadership of the EDL has been clever in the way that it has tapped into the frustrations of a disenfranchised section of the white working class whose grievances arise from a dense tapestry of social, economic, and cultural conditions and neglects, including being sidelined almost totally from mainstream politics. So while the EDL have not grown solely due to a process of political marginalization and non-representation of the white working class, both aspects have provided key impetus to the organisation’s momentum.

To contextualise this, and by way of developing further the political backdrop and context that explains the emergence of this group, we intend to argue that the United Kingdom is embroiled in what could be termed a post-political period, a term we feel accurately demarcates the apathy, disinterest, and scepticism with which many of the populace, and particularly many of the marginalised segments of the white working class regard domestic, parliamentary democratic politics.

We use this term to demarcate a range of processes (arguably the public loss of faith in mainstream politics is complex and multifaceted), but also to capture the spirit of a time where there exists a messy cohesive centrality where political ideology is concerned. What we are suggesting is that the traditional ideological divisions that demarked British politics between the political left and right have, with the collapse of communist east and the ‘triumph of neo liberal orthodoxy’ (Fukuyama, 1993), largely been eroded, leaving only a centrist, cynical middle representation that seeks predominantly to encourage more affluent members of the working and middle class to vote while cutting loose a large swathe of the electorate (Shaw, 2008).

Perhaps a key event in ushering this new era in is the adoption by the British Labour Party of its moderate and centrist ‘third way’ that is best read as an attempt to resolve the problems of the traditional Labour Party, and most especially its failure to cultivate electoral success during the decade of the 1980s. From 1979 to 1997 when it won a landslide election vic-
tory, the Labour Party had been in opposition, struggling to present a challenge to Conservative and right-wing politics. Indeed, electoral success resulted only from Tony Blair’s campaign to rebrand and remake the Labour Party after his election to position of party leader in 1994 (Rawnsley, 2001). Under Blair’s headship the party adopted the term ‘New Labour’ as a conscious exercise in moving away from its traditional left-wing position towards a political centre ground, in accordance with the arguments of Blair’s favourite sociologist, Anthony Giddens, a leading advocate of the spread of ‘Third Way’ thinking (Giddens, 1998; see also Shaw, 2008; Rawnsley, 2001).

Arguably, that shift in Labour political ideology serves as a defining moment in ushering in the contemporary post-political moment that could be regarded as characteristic of the political terrain in many advance capitalist social democracies (Fukuyama, 1993), but it also follows the growth of neo-liberalism in the UK. After all, in the UK it has become something of a trend for politicians to deny any specific ideological affiliation and instead to encourage the electorate to regard them simply as pragmatic administrators and trustworthy representatives; indeed this became a core part of Labour’s political strategy for a decade (Lees-Marshment, 2001; Rawnsley, 2001). There is now an almost universal belief in this new political class that the electorate’s best interests are met via the promotion of the free market (Žižek, 2007; Harvey, 2006; Shaw, 2008). In this respect there is nothing to divide mainstream British parties in terms of actual policy, as all seemingly accept without reservation the value of neoliberal economic policy (Harvey, 2006, 2011). Elsewhere, these politicians often seem quite relaxed about talking of how comfortable they are with a capitalist system which many would argue has reached its capacity (Žižek, 2007). Indeed history all too starkly shows us the character of Labour’s economic and social policies for the period they held power in Britain, and an apparent behavioural culture of greed and corruption was exposed amongst British elected representatives and the corporate elite between 2008 and 2011. Firstly there was the parliamentary expenses scandal amongst Members of Parliament, and then in its wake the vast bonuses given to financial traders and bankers despite the widespread perception that their irresponsible lending had triggered the global economic downturn. Here the elites, who seemed immune from the law, were caught with their hands in the till (Žižek, 2007, 2011; Harvey, 2006, 2011). Yet for a sceptical electorate, there is no alternative on offer, no serious traditional left-wing proposal to tax the rich more or to regulate the market in anything more than a tokenistic way (Harvey, 2011).

It is now widely accepted that a political party which owes its very origin to trades unionism, collective solidarity, and representation of the
average man and woman of the working class actually presided over a free market-driven boom that did little for those at the lower rungs of the social ladder. Now examined with the advantage of hindsight, ‘New’ Labour’s record looks decidedly shaky, and it is now generally acknowledged that their time in office witnessed a growth in income inequality and worsening social equality, while benefitting the wealthy and elite sections of the populace at the cost of those in other sections of the social strata (Dorling, 2010).

Now in the UK, Prime Minister David Cameron has led a revanchist Conservative government (albeit perhaps tempered from its worst excesses by the fact it is tied to a coalition with centrist Liberal Democrats) slanted towards ever greater public sector retrenchment, austerity, and welfare cuts, again arguably shifting the burden of the ‘double-dip’ recession ever more squarely onto the backs of those who had little hand in the financial crisis, yet are subject to the kinds of austerity measures that really hurt the poorest strata of society the most (Harvey, 2011; Dorling, 2010).

Instead, many British people believe their politicians to be corrupt, just as they believe the system to be tilted toward the interests of elites. For some, the very act of even participating in parliamentary elections has simply become pointless and, as our research has uncovered and is discussed below, this disillusion with the mainstream parties and the parliamentary process has caused many from the white working class to turn to an organisation they think is listening to their needs: the English Defence League. Indeed, there is evidence that a similar situation is increasingly the norm in Europe, where the seeds of dissatisfaction are already feeding burgeoning far-right political discourses. Of course, in the UK the relatively small-scale resurgence of far-right parties like the British National Party does not represent mass sentiment, and thankfully, it is likely that these types of parties will remain just as politically unsuccessful in Britain as they have ever been. There has never really been much appetite for flirting with the far-right amongst the majority of the British working class (Gitroy, 2004), and indeed, if anything the opposite is true, and ever since the battle of Cable Street in 1936, when British fascists were driven from the streets of East London by local communities, endorsements of political far-right extremism in the UK has remained sidelined and peripheral to the mainstream body politics (Standing, 2011). While there is, of course, an ugly racist undercurrent in English culture that can be stirred up and result in harmful individual and collective acts of violence on occasion (as the EDL well demonstrate), it has failed to prompt a political and electoral swing to the far-right anywhere near large enough for them to gain even a slim national political foothold, although such parties have enjoyed relative success at local and European levels (Goodwin, 2011).

However, that is not to suggest that the emergence of the English
Defence League should be neglected, as the discourse endorsed by the group may well influence the forms of everyday hate violence that are perpetuated routinely in areas of intense economic competition. In the void left within traditional politics, groups such as the EDL emerge to target not the ideological system that causes the marginalisation of the working class, but instead the other and different communities that often live cheek by jowl alongside the disadvantaged white working class, entrapped by similar poverty and exclusionary processes.

III. FROM THE MACRO POLITICS TO THE MICRO HATE VIOLENCE: VIEWS FROM THE FRONTLINE OF THE EDL

We might want to consider why it is that now, in the contemporary post-political moment, there is a palpable sense of an increasingly explicit tone of cultural, religious, and racial hostility between white communities and Islamic communities that similarly are often economically marginalized. One such answer might be that it has been ever thus, and the experience of prejudice and hostility for minority communities is long enshrined in the English way of life (Hiro, 1992). However, we would suggest that such a view is naïve, and indeed, alternative commentaries have recognized the industrialized working class as the prime source of the country’s often neglected and unvalued, unruly, yet vibrant multiculturalism that has evolved organically and unnoticed, but often successfully in its urban centres (Gilroy, 2004). For that reason we might tentatively suggest that the new flourishing culture of ‘them and us’ that replaces these successes might be best understood as an extension of the extreme objectless anxiety and cynicism that has afflicted the unemployed and those in precarious forms of unemployment from the 1980s onwards, exacerbated by the advent of more individualistic forms of neo-liberal centrist politics.

Indeed, we surmise that a significant perception within some disadvantaged, former white working-class communities is that the main political parties have prioritized service provision towards minority ethnic residents, migrants, and asylum seekers (and the individual accounts of EDL members certainly seem to be predicated upon such concerns), and that this sense is the very product of life in a socio-economic milieu in which increasingly atomised and depoliticised individuals and socio-cultural groups are turned against each other in an unforgiving competition. While our research evidence is by no means conclusive, we wish to draw on it here as a means of illustrating how within a climate of the perception of a lack of political representation, individualistic competition provides a useful conceptual framework for examining the role and function of the EDL.

For more than three years our ethnographic fieldwork has taken us to
EDL meetings and demonstrations and into pubs, snooker halls, nightclubs, and boxing tournaments with members of the EDL. Space prohibits a full descriptive account of the methods employed, and that task is better tackled in more detail elsewhere; suffice to say here we have conducted numerous interviews with EDL supporters. Since the advent of Chicagoan Sociology, the ethnographic method, taken from anthropology into sociology and criminology, has provided academics with what Clifford Geertz (1973) called the ‘thick description’, without which we cannot even begin to analyse cultural meanings and motivations. Here we see the nuances of desire, meaning, and human relations in operation in their everyday contexts. It is just such material generated with EDL members that we now seek to draw on to make our case on the erosion of traditional politics as being a useful framing device for understanding the EDL.

Kenny (all names are pseudonyms) doesn’t hate his British-born black equivalents, and describes himself as a non-racist, and he has black friends and knows black lads from school and even recalls the class solidarity between them, but admits that he doesn’t count a single Asian (or in his parlance ‘Paki’) amongst his social circle. He has been attending EDL gatherings in a piecemeal fashion since the demonstration in the north midlands city of Stoke in 2010 with several of his mates. Kenny is avowedly working class by his own self-admission, periodically employed laboring in the building trade, doing bits and pieces of gardening and as something of an occasional self-starting entrepreneur, buying and selling, ‘wheeling and dealing’. He is well enough off to comfortably pay the rent and enjoy the occasional foreign holiday with his partner, but a few weeks without wages every now and again are a fact of life, and he continually claims welfare benefits whether he is working or not. Indeed, for Kenny, a prime reason for turning to the EDL is the perception that this welfare system that he depends on is swamped by ‘incomers’, be it ‘asylum seekers’, ‘illegal immigrants’, ‘African bloody Somalis’ or more commonly ‘Pakis’. For Kenny, the key issue is not ‘race’ but religion, in that it is ‘Muslims’ who ‘talk no English . . . [who are prioritized] ahead of British people, black and white, in the queue for benefits and social housing’.

For Kenny, and reflecting the disillusion with the Labour Party among the disadvantaged white working class discussed above, the EDL are correct, and a sinister project to Islamise Britain is about to succeed:

It all started with the fucking politicians mate, I would shoot them with all the scum Muslims. The Conservatives never gave a fuck cos they know they don’t have to live with dirty Muslims in their big London houses, but Labour, they are worse than them. I remember Labour sticking up for blacks, and that was fair enough because they [black people] came here and got on with it, they didn’t rock the boat . . . but Labour
didn’t give a fuck when the Muslims came in and started taking the piss, they did nothing. They should have capped immigration, they should have protected the working class, but those cunts, they opened the floodgates. I don’t like the BNP, I am not racist but immigration now, it’s Muslim immigration, Somalia, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, that is where they are coming from.

Clearly Kenny’s quotes reflect the dominant dissatisfaction of many rank-and-file EDL members with ‘New’ Labour’s immigration policies. It also seems that ‘British Muslim’ or ‘English Muslim’ is clearly regarded as an unacceptable identity by many of the EDL’s supporters, an assertion that is given further evidence by the types of discussions with white male EDL members witnessed by one of the authors when conducting covert ethnography on EDL demonstrations. However, in keeping with that there is a sense of acute frustration at the perceived abandonment of lower-status white groups by political elites, as Kenny states:

The EDL basically, well they are willing to tell these Muslims we have had enough of them, it’s that basically, if they can’t live with us then get out, go back to wherever, you know.

Interviewer: So what is it that gets you about Muslims?

Kenny: Where I live, they are the ones with the nice cars, the big houses, their kids running round like jack the lads in Mercs and beemers [BMW cars] that have been bought by ripping us off in their shops for a pint of milk while they look after their own.

In his study, Jackson described the EDL as part of the ‘new far-right’ of European politics (Jackson, 2011) and suggested that, while they are genuinely anti-Nazi, they remain in conflict with liberal democratic principles. Rather than promoting the ‘expulsion’ of minority ethnic populations favoured by the ‘old far-right’ however, the ‘new far-right’ such as the EDL seeks to promote assimilation to some notional ‘English culture’. In many ways our research confirms such a contention, as typical expressions from EDL members demonstrate, but so too some reveal older, simplistic racism:

I am not a racist, but the country is broke, and I cannot see why I should pay for fucking interpreters for lazy Muslims who can’t be bothered to learn English but are happy to take our benefits. I can’t see why when I have paid taxes all my life some newly arrived Muslim should get the same treatment as me on the NHS. I cannot see why we should pay benefits for “Abu al fucking hatespeaker” . . . whatever his name is, so he can raise his ten kids and slag off my country. That isn’t racist, that’s realist,
and now, why is no fucking politicians saying that? I will tell you why, it’s cos they couldn’t give a fuck so long as they are all right.

They [Muslims] can’t live like us cos they are not evolved for it, they are simple, made for backward villages in the mountain where they can sit around eating stinking curries and raping chickens. They come over here and ruin England, I mean, would you want to live next to them? I don’t, but they are taking over. That is why I want them gone. (Leicester EDL demonstration, 2010)

Interestingly however, rather than showing a frustration with politics or politicians, many EDL members we interacted with claimed little real interest in politics; more common was a cynicism towards politics and a political detachment. They also little regarded the marginalisation that they experienced as predicated by a wider socio-structural system, and saw the ‘everyday’ experiences of their lives without recourse to wider socio-economic political drivers. Indeed this has been suggested overtly by those EDL members we have spoken to:

Steve: I have to rely on benefits yes, and when they fucked mine up the other day and I have to go down and see them, what do I get, some Paki looking down their nose at me. I am entitled to get benefits in this country, it’s my fucking country. You see them, the Paki staff, they are all right with other Pakis, but a white man like me, they fucking treat me disrespectfully, in my country! Now I cannot understand why a Paki can get benefits in England, if they do not work here how are they entitled, and you see them pulling up in their Lexuses and Mercs [Mercedes, both luxury cars] at the dole office. Try telling me this country isn’t fucked.

Chris: I am a maintenance worker, right; I work hard, put in effort. But when you work for our lot, you do contract work for the council. You see what the Pakis get, and it properly fucks you off mate, 10 of them in a big house, one of them working as a taxi driver, the rest on benefits. I see their places, and they always have better tellies than what I have. Three or four cars on the drive, and I see that and I think, “I was born here, and I work, and I am paying for these smelly lazy cunts, when they can’t even speak English?” I hear these politically correct cunts tell me it is good for England, well I see it every day, and I can’t see how it is. All I see is my Gran lives in a shit flat while some of these cunts are given every luxury, only to treat them like trash anyway. These Pakis lads, right, they like our benefits, but not our laws.

Like Steve and Chris, poor white men struggling to get by and residing in large, inner-city milieus, much of the EDL’s support appears to stem from communities that are situated where a large Asian and Islamic population is found (e.g. the likes of Birmingham and Luton). It is often in these areas that poor, socially excluded white communities live in close proximity
to large Asian populations, where there can often be very little interaction between these groups and where mutual suspicion and hostility can develop (McGhee, 2008). It is within such areas, where pre-existing tensions are stoked by agitation and aggression from the EDL, that its members’ hate violence is all too real, as two stated:

It’s just the way they are, taking the piss. It’s the double standards we have in this country towards them, how they get everything given to them that they want. The lads are all arrogant little pricks that reckon they are hard, they are nothing. Honestly mate, I love hitting Paki youths, I love it when you get Paki lads that think they are hard. I will feel better today when I have hit a Paki lad. (from an interview with EDL member Tim)

Yes, ok, some people might not like it, but at the end of the day if a Paki lad is out when the EDL land and doesn’t fuck off pretty quickly, he is going to get slapped isn’t he. So he was on his own, big deal, I was the only one who hit him, as far as I am concerned, that is fair. (Ricky, EDL member, to others after assaulting an Asian youth)

It has been argued that many of these ‘politically pointless detonations of violence that occur among the young men who wander the streets, pubs and clubs of the de-industrialized zones are often triggered by the frustrations experienced in struggles over inadequate material resources’ (Hall, 2002, p. 53). Rather than blaming an inherently unfair system, or the processes that marginalized them, some of those we spoke to justified violent enactments of hate on the streets as a reaction to the decline of tenured jobs and the corrosion of legitimate opportunity. It was the ‘other’, demonised as a threat to jobs, housing, and the future of the area, that becomes the target for such violence (see, inter alia, Sibbit, 1997; Iganski, 2008; McDevitt, Levin, Nolan, & Bennett, 2010).

Despite the fact that the greed and corruption of political elites were exposed so spectacularly by the Daily Telegraph newspaper in 2009 in stories relating to the fiddling of parliamentary expenses by elected representatives, or brought into view in the return of vast bonuses to bankers and financial traders after their irresponsible lending had triggered the credit crunch more recently, these were not sources of anxiety for our subjects. Instead, those we studied associated the illegitimate practices of ‘Muslims’ with whom they often lived in close proximity (even if their lives were almost wholly segregated) with their day-to-day struggles (see Allen, 2011). In contrast, the global wealthy and advantaged who comprise neo-liberalism’s plutocratic elite remained largely immune from such associations. Despite the fact that the corruption and the macro-political manoeuvres made in the service of the tycoon capitalists’ project of economic and cul-
tural restructuring have become ever more transparent, spectacular, and crude in the last decade, and their role in the impoverishment and disenfranchisement of so many young people more obvious, these factors were largely missed by those EDL supporters with whom we have interacted, as our field notes show:

Author: I know David as a Midland-based banned soccer hooligan who admits he hates what he calls ‘Pakis’. He is on the theme when I meet him, telling others about a fight on a train station platform over a football. In all it was meaningless, but he didn’t hurt the lad he assaulted too badly, because ‘well, he wasn’t a Muslim’. This is almost delivered as a punch line to his joke. However, towards the end of the evening I have a drink with him and he begins to tell me something of why he likes the EDL:

David: I left school with no qualifications and that, 15, nothing right, now I see all these Muslim kids, all these Pakis and they think they can rub my face in things, they can treat me like a cunt, look down on me. They all wear Armani, they all have nice cars, they all have money, but they don’t want England to be English anymore, because they want to be in power, they want to take over the world, they fucking do. They have come in and sneakily, now, they are taking over. You look at who is buying the big houses, it’s Muslims, you look at who owns the businesses, it’s Muslims. The blacks hate them too, because when they get into an area, they take it over. They are buying churches and building mosques on them. What hope is there for white English lads like me now, none, the Muslims are taking it all away . . .

(From field notes) Author: Marcus is ranting now, as people laugh around him, and although I find it uncomfortable, I feel I have to laugh too . . .

Marcus: The fucking Muslims are scum, paedophiles, rape young white girls, sell heroin to white and black kids, rip off your mum in their shops, and they will blow you up too given half a chance. I say we do a flash mob, all get off the bus, go down and bash a few taxi drivers, smash a kebab shop, it will be great, go out and do some vigilante justice against those thieving, lying stealing Muzzie cunts.

Dale interjects: Marcus, don’t fucking talk about kebabs mate, I am starving.

Marcus responds to a chorus of laughs: If you are taking the Muzzies’ side, I will have to drop you [slang for ‘knock you out’] . . . it’s dog-eat-dog out there mate, and the Muslim fuckers use dogs in their kebab shops.
IV. CONCLUSIONS: UNDERSTANDING THE EDL’S POTENTIAL

We have argued that the existence of the new far-right is in part a consequence of a contemporary mainstream political climate in the UK that is devoid of an alternative or cohesive left-of-centre political doctrine that could appeal to those from the disadvantaged white working class. We have suggested that, while the liberal left in British politics had always seen themselves as the champions of progress, the defenders of the poor and marginalised, in fact the new political ‘left’, epitomised by the advent of ‘New Labour’ and its endorsement of the ‘Third Way’, endorse the same free market policies as the right, and are happy to appropriate much of the rhetoric of the right when it comes to the solutions to the global economic downturn. Indeed in many ways there is no better illustration of the situation than the social chasm that has opened up between the old, working-class, union-based left, and affluent cosmopolitan liberals in the public sector and cultural industries who are loath to criticise the damage wrought by promotion of the interests of a few over the many. The latter group is now undoubtedly the more politically erudite and powerful (Shaw, 2008).

While it might seem an anathema to suggest that the EDL are in some sense representative of the absence of politics, they neatly articulate, albeit in often a less than articulate manner, the palpable sense of frustration at the way they perceive their communities have been fundamentally altered by immigration in a way that has been detrimental to them. Our research shows that in the absence of an alternative ideology or political mechanism for re-organising socioeconomic relations and subjects in a way that economic or social equality can become an ethical goal or a practical possibility, the venality, exploitation, and corruption practiced every day by those who inhabit the top strata will continue unopposed. With current centrist and neoliberal ‘doctrines’ seen as irrelevant by many of those ‘lost’ and disenfranchised at the lower-reaches of the socio-economic ladder, there exists instead a growing anger with, and resentment of, those similarly located near them at the bottom of the social ladder–Muslin communities.

Worryingly, though, recent opinion polls conducted in the UK reveal that many of the EDL’s ideas and values may be more mainstream and widely held than is often acknowledged. For example, Ford (2011, p. 149) cited surveys that indicate that a majority of the public believes that minority groups should assimilate into existing British cultures rather than maintaining their own customs and cultures, and that assimilation is preferable to multiculturalism. Authoritarian responses to threats of terrorism are also endorsed in these surveys, prompting Ford to suggest that:

The authoritarianism of the extreme right, while “extreme” in the sense
that it is threatening to the values of modern British democracy, is not
“extreme” in the sense of being the position of a small minority of voters.
Instead, such ideas could easily pass into law if put to the public via
direct referenda.’ (p. 150)

Therefore the EDL’s presentation of itself as an organisation of ‘moderation’
that champions the issues and values that are important to ordinary
people, may have more resonance than some would like to think. If many of
its key campaigning ideas are not seen as being extreme by large swathes of
the British public, then this may explain why it has had made such rapid
progress since its inception in 2009, and why it could continue to grow. For
the moment, though, its focus seems to be on its core target audience: the
socially marginalized, angry and poor segments of the working class that
have little representation. Whether there will be a counter to the current
political impasse remains to be seen, but if there is not, our fear is that the
contemporary economic downturn will push working-class voters further in
the direction that some have recently taken, from the ballot box and onto
the streets.

NOTES

1. Cities that often have large Islamic and minority ethnic communities
living in close proximity to white working-class communities, and in
several cases, have been the site of previous race-related urban
disturbances.

2. The EDL has had less presence internationally, but some members
did travel to the USA in 2010 on the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks to
protest against the building of an Islamic cultural centre and mosque near to
the Ground Zero site. On that occasion the EDL’s leader, Stephen Yaxley-
Lennon, was refused entry at JFK airport, taken into custody, and flown
straight back to the UK, but other members of the group were present at the
protests. There is also some evidence that the group have previously sought
connections with some of the more outspoken members of the US Tea Party
movement.

3. ‘Asian’ in the British context refers to those whose heritage is from
south Asia: commonly Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, or Sri Lanka.

4. The term the Third Way refers to various political positions that try
to reconcile right-wing and left-wing politics by advocating a varying
synthesis of right-wing economic and left-wing social policies, created as a
means of capturing political centre ground. The Third Way began as a re-
evaluation of political policies in the Labour Party in response to the
ramifications of the collapse of a wider belief in the economic viability of
the state economic interventionist policies, and the corresponding rise of support for neo-liberal and the New Right free market philosophies.

5. The 2010 ‘British Social Attitudes Survey’ (NatCen, 2010) demonstrated that four in 10 people stated that they ‘almost never’ trust governments to put the national interest first, six points above the previous all-time high of 34%, and around four times as high as the readings obtained in the late 1980s. Only a third of all people (31%) say they have ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of interest in politics, suggesting that disinterest and apathy is a more standard condition.

6. The Battle of Cable Street took place on Sunday 4 October 1936 in the East End of London. It was a clash between the Metropolitan Police, overseeing a march by the British Union of Fascists, led by Oswald Mosley, and anti-fascists, including local Jewish, socialist, anarchist, Irish, and communist groups, and working-class people more broadly who rejected the fascist politics of Mosley. Mosley planned to send thousands of marchers dressed in uniforms styled on those of Blackshirts through the East End, which then had a large Jewish population, but even with police support could not break through the amassed ranks of counter demonstrators and was told he must leave the area by the police. It stands as the definitive defeat of fascist political ideology in Britain.

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Constitutionalizing Anarchy: Liberalism, Lynching, and the Law

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Abstract

Overall review of Supreme Court cases regarding racial violence suggests that while the Court did rule in favor of acquitting lynchers of federal prosecution, it did not completely strip all authority for federal rights enforcement. This essay reassesses the Supreme Court’s handling of racial violence and formulates a theory of law that can account for how lynchings could exist as a tacitly accepted practice without being explicitly sanctioned by the law. Rather than cracking down on lynchers and/or the states that failed to deal with lynchers, the Supreme Court decided to create “zones” wherein questionable activities like lynchings could occur unhampered. Lynchings for the most part were situated within a constructed zone of permissiveness that was contingent not upon the sanctioning of political authorities per se, but rather upon political authorities choosing to maintain an active policy of non-interference. Drawing from Ernst Fraenkel’s model of the dual state and Gerald Neuman’s concept of anomalous zones, constitutional anarchy illuminates how the U.S. carved out legally bounded regions of lawlessness. Implications of existentially demarcated spaces can be seen in a variety of arenas and highlight the commensurability of illiberalism and liberalism via the distinction between content and scope of law.

Keywords: lynchings, federal rights enforcement, Supreme Court

The Supreme Court’s handling of lynching is both misleading and bewildering. Even though the Supreme Court ruled in favor of acquitting lynchers during Reconstruction, it did not completely relinquish authority to prosecute lynchers to the states. Subsequent decisions illustrate the Court’s reversal. Be that as it may, lynchers, during the late 19th century to the mid 20th century, were nevertheless able to operate fairly unencumbered by the law. A theory of law is needed for how lynchings could exist as a tacitly accepted practice without being explicitly sanctioned by the law. When it comes to lynching, we need what Leon Friedman described as a “framework of contrived anarchy.”1

In regard to lynchings, I have come up with this concept of constitutional anarchy in order to elucidate how and why this suspension occurred. Drawing from Ernst Fraenkel’s model of the dual state and Gerald
Neuman’s concept of anomalous zones, constitutional anarchy illuminates how the U.S. carved out legally bounded regions of lawlessness. Implications of existentially demarcated spaces can be seen in a variety of arenas and highlight the commensurability of illiberalism and liberalism via the distinction between content and scope of law.

I. PART 1: OUTLINING CONSTITUTIONAL ANARCHY

With respect to lynchings, the Supreme Court created a framework that relieved itself of any culpability for what might happen under its sovereign eye while simultaneously reserving to itself sovereign authority. The federal government deliberately stopped short of total jurisdiction, albeit with the proviso that it could, if it chose, intervene. Because the bounding was self-imposed, the federal government could not only unbind itself whenever it wanted, but it could also set the line of where its jurisdiction started and stopped. Rather than cracking down on lynchers and/or the states that failed to deal with lynchers, the Supreme Court instead decided to create “zones” wherein questionable activities such as lynchings could occur unhampered. These “anomalous zones” were essentially legally bounded regions of lawlessness that operated semi-autonomously under the overarching framework of a constitutional regime. These racialized spaces of exception served to insulate and unadulterate the norm from the vicissitudes that the lawlessness of the anomalous zone could and did engender. Race served two functions. In regard to segregation, race was reflected in the law in that it provided for the orderly differentiation for the separate-but-equal doctrine. In regard to lynchings, however, race formed the shadow demarcation that provided the contours wherein an anomalous zone could emerge. Without ever sanctioning or prohibiting lynchings, the Court narrowed their attention to issues of containment. Lynchings for the most part were situated within a constructed zone of permissiveness that was contingent not upon the sanctioning of political authorities per se, but rather upon political authorities choosing to maintain an active policy of non-interference. The term I will use to capture this framework is constitutional anarchy. Derived from Fraenkel’s (1941) framework of the dual state, constitutional anarchy is a modified version of the dual state that allows for legally bounded regions of lawlessness.

German legal theorist Ernst Fraenkel (1941) formulated a theory of duality that helps illuminate the Supreme Court’s handling of lynching. Although in many ways opposite of what happened in the United States, much can be gleaned by Fraenkel’s formulation of a state that created a dualistic system via the active withdrawal from a certain range of activities.
Fraenkel conceived of what he called the dual state in order to understand how capitalism could have paradoxically functioned in Nazi Germany:

We must then resolve the paradox of a capitalistic order continuing within a system under which there is no possibility of rationally calculating social chances. Rational calculation is not consistent with the rule of arbitrary police power which is characteristic of the Third Reich.4

By illustrating how capitalism was accommodated within the Nazi regime, Fraenkel qualifies the totalitarian nature of the Nazi regime.

In the case of Nazi Germany, Fraenkel differentiates between two jurisdictional states: the Prerogative State and the Normative State. They both operate within a single polity. He defines the Prerogative State as a government system which exercises unlimited arbitrariness and violence unchecked by any legal guarantees, and the Normative State refers to an administrative body endowed with elaborate powers for safeguarding the legal order as expressed in statutes, decisions of the courts, and activities of the administrative agencies.5

There is “constant friction between these two states since they are competitive and not complementary parts.”6 This “friction,” while not necessarily resulting in the elimination of either state, does nevertheless negate the possibility of equilibrium between the two states.7 This “friction” thus results in one of the states’ necessarily having what Fraenkel calls “jurisdiction over the jurisdiction” of the other state. Having “jurisdiction over the jurisdiction” entails at the very least for Fraenkel “a guarantee of priority” that is predicated upon the higher state “self-restraining” itself, thereby allowing the other state to function.8 In the case of Nazi Germany, Fraenkel argues that the Prerogative State had jurisdiction over the jurisdiction of the Normative State.

Having jurisdiction over the jurisdiction reflects Fraenkel’s attempt to affix a certain degree of independence and autonomy to both jurisdictions while at the same time providing for a hierarchical ordering of the two. For the dual state to function properly, both states have to have a certain degree of independence and autonomy. Although one state has jurisdiction over the jurisdiction of the other state, it is not the case that one state completely manages the other. With respect to Nazi Germany, Fraenkel states that legally the Prerogative State has unlimited jurisdiction. Actually, however, its jurisdiction is limited . . . Although the Third Reich reserves for itself the power of regulating every aspect of social life, it deliberately limits its use of this power . . . These self-imposed restraints of the Pre-
rogative State are of cardinal importance for the understanding of the Dual State.\textsuperscript{9}

Although this concept of self-imposed restraint raises the question of whether the Third Reich’s jurisdiction is truly limited if it reserves for itself the power to remove its own restraint, the fact that the Third Reich does commit to restraining itself creates the existence of another body that could step in and fill the void that is being created.

For the lower jurisdictional state to be autonomous meant that it was given the legal authority to make decisions regarding issues over which it had jurisdiction. To use Fraenkel’s wording, “Its discretion can be exercised only within the limits of its clearly defined jurisdiction.”\textsuperscript{10} But whereas its autonomy was presumed by its existence, its existence was nonetheless dependent on the higher jurisdiction. The hierarchical ordering of the two jurisdictional states meant that there was no guarantee that the lower jurisdictional state would continue to exist. Because the higher jurisdictional state had “jurisdiction over the jurisdiction” of the lower jurisdictional state, the very existence of the lower jurisdictional state was dependent on the self-restraint of the higher jurisdictional state.

Thus, the Prerogative State of the Third Reich bounded itself in order to make room for the Normative State. Rather than the Prerogative State trying to encapsulate the Normative State within itself, the Prerogative State provides for the autonomy of the Normative State by stopping itself short of total jurisdiction. The Prerogative State could extend itself if it wanted to, but it explicitly chose not to. It was the autonomous nature of the lower jurisdictional state that provided the crux of Fraenkel’s argument against classifying the Nazi regime as a pure totalitarian regime. By demonstrating the qualitative nature of the Nazi regime via a legal analysis of the self-bounding of the Prerogative State, Fraenkel detailed how capitalism could and did exist within a totalitarian regime.

With respect to lynchings in the United States, it might at first appear to be the same kind of paradoxical coupling that occurred in Germany, but there are enough differences to suggest that the dual state operating in the United States was of a qualitatively different kind than the one that operated in Nazi Germany. In the United States, there was nothing analogous to the Führer’s will being law in the United States. Even during the worst period of lynchings, the United States operated as a “normal” constitutional regime with checks and balances, separation of powers, federalism, an independent judiciary, and political parties that alternated power. The United States was never a totalitarian regime akin to that of Nazi Germany.

Also, unlike in Germany where the government instituted a dual state in order to restore a qualified degree of normalcy during an exceptional
time, in the United States, the dual state was instituted in order to create a qualified degree of exceptionality. In the case of the American South, this exceptionality took the form of lynch mobs. The acts of violence perpetrated by lynch mobs in the United States were somewhat comparable to what the Nazis were doing in Germany. But even though the practices of lynch mobs resembled the practices of the Third Reich in that they both “exercised unlimited violence” on their victims, it is important to note that lynch mobs had neither the organizational unity nor the monopoly of political power of the Third Reich. Eric Foner, the preeminent historian of Reconstruction, states that the “acts of violence were generally committed by local groups on their own initiative.” Ku Klux Klan historian Allen Trelease notes that “the Ku Klux Klan was so decentralized that it is hardly proper to refer to it in the singular number.” Only the Third Reich had unlimited jurisdiction to do what they wanted. Lynch mobs in the American South did not have the same license and freedom as the Third Reich had in Nazi Germany. Although lynch mobs seemingly had an inalienable right to lynch, it was limited. There were certain restrictions or understandings as to whom they could terrorize and whom they could not. For example, black suspects under federal custody were regarded as beyond the reach of lynchers. Although they could not indiscriminately pick victims, lynchers wreaked havoc on those they could and did pick. Thus, whereas the Third Reich had both unlimited arbitrariness and unlimited jurisdiction, lynch mobs possessed unlimited arbitrariness but limited jurisdiction.

Although the differences between Germany and the United States are significant, these differences do not indicate a complete repudiation of the dual state. In Germany and the United States, the state maintained a measure of its own integrity and autonomy, standing apart from society, by splitting itself into two. Taken abstractly, the dual state is illuminating in four different ways: 1) It offers a way to conceptualize the coexistence of two different normative orders, hence going beyond the legal/illegal dichotomy; 2) it situates these orders in a hierarchy, hence going beyond the strong/weak dichotomy; 3) the self-restraint of the higher state also goes beyond the strong/weak dichotomy and provides a way to understand how the choice not to act can be legally regarded as an active will of the sovereign; and 4) the idea of friction or antagonism between the two legal orders illustrates how the state can strengthen itself by creating something it does not necessarily condone, at least for some time. But the empirical evidence in regard to lynchings necessitates a different kind of dual state than the one Fraenkel had posited.

In this Americanized version of the dual state that I am calling constitutional anarchy, it is the Supreme Court that chooses to limit the constitutional order short of total jurisdiction. To use Fraenkel’s words, whereas the
Nazi dual state represented “a rational core within an irrational shell,” this Americanized model of a dual state that I am proposing represented “an irrational core within a rational shell.”\textsuperscript{16} This American type of dual state has the constitutional order as the higher jurisdictional state. The constitutional order is defined as a government system that exercises sovereign authority over a bounded area of land under the aegis of a written body of laws. Like Fraenkel’s Prerogative State, the constitutional order has “jurisdiction over the jurisdiction” of the lower jurisdictional state, thereby entailing “a guarantee of priority” that is nevertheless predicated on the constitutional order “restraining” itself in order for the lower jurisdictional state to emerge.\textsuperscript{17}

The qualities of limited jurisdiction and lack of state-sponsored violence are why I am characterizing this American version of the dual state as constitutional anarchy. The constitutional part refers to the “higher” jurisdictional status of the constitutional order. I purposefully chose the word \textit{constitutional} instead of \textit{legal} because I wanted to highlight the behavior of the federal government. Even though both the federal government and the respective state governments played a role in the active enforcement and non-enforcement of the law in regard to lynchings, I have found the fluctuating nature of the federal government more relevant than the behavior of the respective state governments. It is the active withdrawal of the federal government that allowed for the respective state governments to be neglectful. With regard to lynching, the federal government had ultimate jurisdiction; they could and did choose to intervene and not intervene, above and beyond whatever the respective state governments wanted.

The “anarchy” part refers to the decentralized, non-state-sponsored nature of the violence that was occurring in the post-bellum South. Anarchy is not meant to connote a complete absence of any order.\textsuperscript{18} Contra the concept of chaos, I use the term \textit{anarchy} as many political economists and international relation theorists have defined it: “Anarchy is defined as a system in which participants can seize and defend resources without regulation from above. Anarchy is not chaos but rather a spontaneous order that can constitute a stable system.”\textsuperscript{19}

If the violence is in any way construed to have been state sponsored, the dividing line separating the two jurisdictions collapses and there is no dual state. But just because violence was decentralized and non-state-sponsored, it would be a mistake to assume it was random. It had “a unity of purpose.”\textsuperscript{20} As the \textit{Atlanta Constitution} urged in 1893: “It may be hard to draw the line, but it must be done somewhere. The stern justice administered by the people in their sovereign capacity must not be made too common.”\textsuperscript{21} The reason this “line” was so important was because it was the key
to constituting a stable system. This line connotes a degree of containment; it is what made the system anarchic and not chaotic.

Building upon the work of legal theorist Gerald Neuman, I argue that the anarchic conditions took the form of anomalous zones. Neuman conceived of anomalous zones to capture how a state provides a spatialized suspension of the law. Anomalous zones refer to “a geographical area in which certain legal rules, otherwise regarded as embodying fundamental policies of the larger legal system, are locally suspended.” In the American version of the dual state, the lower jurisdictional state of this American dual state was composed of anomalous zones that operated via the racialization of space. Nestled as they were within the politico-legal rubric of constitutional anarchy wherein the constitutional order maintained the “higher” jurisdiction, these anomalous zones were demarcated racially and spatially. Within particular localities, race became the marker that contoured the “borders” wherein an anomalous zone could emerge. Race not only provided a convenient discursive framework to discern demographic boundaries, but it also served to insulate and unadulterate the “civil” order from the vicissitudes that lawlessness could engender. In other words, race/racism was a non-temporal way of distinguishing the exception from the norm, buttressing sovereignty in that it marked the parameters of lawlessness pre-ordained by the sovereign to be exceptional.

The next section re-assesses the Supreme Court’s handling of racial violence, utilizing this framework of constitutional anarchy. Contrary to the standard account that suggests the Court gave a “green light to terror,” I will argue that the Supreme Court during Reconstruction gave a yellow light to terror by negatively sanctioning lynching. In providing a yellow light to terror, the federal government suspended its responsibility without necessarily relinquishing authority.

II. PART 2: REFramING THE SUPREME COURT THROUGH THE LENS OF CONSTITUTIONAL ANARCHY

The conventional account has been that during Reconstruction, the Supreme Court halted the possibility of federal rights enforcement for racial violence. Analysts such as Eric Foner concluded that the Supreme Court “render[ed] national prosecution of crimes committed against blacks virtually impossible, and gave a green light to acts of terror where local officials either could not or would not enforce the law.” Critics have concluded that the Slaughterhouse Cases “rendered the attributes of national citizenship all but meaningless to blacks,” thereby inaugurating a “judicial coup d’Etat” against Reconstruction. Legal scholar Leonard Levy provides the standard interpretation of U.S. v. Cruikshank: “Cruikshank paralyzed the
federal government’s attempt to protect citizens by punishing violators of their civil rights and, in effect, shaped the Constitution to the advantage of the Ku Klux Klan.”

This claim for a Court-induced paralysis has been subsequently legitimated and perpetrated mainly through the state action doctrine. State action doctrine is often understood as locating all private action as beyond the scope of the federal government. As stated in the Civil Rights Cases, “individual invasion of individual rights is not the subject-matter of the [Fourteenth] Amendment.” Unless there was a provision in state law that explicitly discriminated against blacks, it would seem to be the case that the federal government relinquished and/or delegated complete authority to combat racial violence to the states.

There has, however, been a significant upsurge of accounts by legal scholars that have subtly challenged this interpretation of state action and the Supreme Court’s role during Reconstruction. Robert Kaczorowski exhumes the original intent of federal rights enforcement and finds that it was actually expansive in nature. Pamela Brandwein revisits judicial interpretations of state action and discovers that it included a broader notion of “state neglect.” In an article entitled, “The Tragic Legality of Racial Violence: Reconstruction, Race and Emergency,” I argue that the Supreme Court skirted around the concept of state action by invoking a racialized emergency. Critiquing the narrow confines of the conventional understanding of state action, these revisionist accounts not only provide a more reactionary account of the Supreme Court during Reconstruction, but more importantly salvage a semblance of national sovereignty for the federal government. This salvaging is critical because, had the narrow conception of state action been in fact correct, then some new law should have been needed to re-install the legal capacity for the federal government to intervene. But the Supreme Court was able to defend federal rights enforcement without additional legislation. It simply “reinterpreted old statutes.” The Supreme Court ruled in United States v. Price and United States v. Guest that Section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment empowered Congress to enact laws punishing conspiracies with or without state action. Writing in 1966, Arthur Kinoy pointed out:

The executive branch of the Government still has at its disposal a panoply of existing Reconstruction statutes which could have been, and still can be, invoked to provide for federal protection against violence inflicted upon citizens, black and white, engaged in activities designed to achieve political and economic freedom for the race of black men. New legislation is always helpful, but this is simply not the crux of the problem.
The fact that federal rights enforcement was resurrected without Congress passing any new legislation, the Court having overturned any law, and/or the President proclaiming any executive decree suggests that the federal government retained its authority to engage in federal rights enforcement. Instead the Court suspended this authority and provided space for informal actors to engage in nefarious activities.

The Court’s inconsistency in these matters had less to do with legal maneuverings than with the fluctuating political support for federal rights enforcement. When the federal government wanted to combat racial violence, it simply resurrected old laws that were always there but rarely used. Even though the legal principle of state action was subordinate to the political calculus of engaging in racial violence, when political support for engagement was lacking, the state action doctrine was conveniently raised as a rhetorical ploy used by political actors to obfuscate their responsibility and accountability. By couching political inaction in terms of jurisprudential restrictions in a federalist system, political officials successfully mischaracterized what actually was a political arrangement made by politicians as a matter of state rights that was to be resolved by the courts. Robert Dahl eloquently describes the political nature of such exclusion:

Suppose that x is existing policy, and y is an alternative to it requiring governmental action, e.g., x is a policy of non-interference by the federal government in lynching cases and y is legislation requiring the federal government to intervene . . . If no governmental action is taken, then in fact x is government policy.  

Dahl purposefully describes it as a “policy of non-interference” in order to emphasize the explicit choice not to act. The active policy of non-enforcement was more of a political agreement mired in comity than a legal principle of incapacity. In other words, the federal government’s inaction regarding racial violence was less an institutional matter of resources or legal capacity and more of a sovereign decision not to act. The federal government never abdicated its sovereign authority. As U.S. Attorney Herbert Brownwell declared, “Whenever mob violence is involved, that certainly comes within the federal authority.” But for the first half of the 20th century, the federal government did in fact fail to act, and it is in the concealment of that failure that sovereignty is found. Although revisionist accounts accurately critique the narrow character of the conventional depiction of state action, no one as of yet has provided a schema by which to frame the maintenance of federal sovereignty in the face of inaction, and this schematic lack has contributed to the mischaracterization of political inaction as primarily an issue of legality. Constitutional anarchy is meant to frame the federal government’s fluctuating disengagement with the rights
enforcement of blacks in a way that accurately subordinates the legal complexities of such enforcement to the more pertinent question of political will formation.

Hence, the Supreme Court’s handling of racial violence during Reconstruction needs to be revisited. There are two cases during Reconstruction that primarily deal with racial violence: U.S. v. Cruikshank and U.S. v. Harris. Both render decisions that suggest the federal government lacked the capacity to quell racial violence. But careful examination suggests something more complicated. Although both cases led to the acquittal of lynchers, each did so in a way that did not necessarily preclude the possibility of prosecution. It was done in a manner similar to that described by legal historian Charles Mangum in which the Court disposed of disenfranchisement challenges “on some technical or subsidiary point, leaving the merits of the real issue untouched.”

Couple these cases of acquittal with the later cases that result in the prosecution of lynchers, and it would seem to be the case that the Court could rule in favor of prosecuting lynchers, but at times chose not to.

U.S. v. Cruikshank is in response to the Colfax Massacre. The Colfax Massacre of 1873 occurred in Colfax, Louisiana, after the escalation of a series of incidents following the failed coup attempt made by the Fusionists against the Republicans in the 1872 elections. Tensions heightened to the point where a few white Republicans and many blacks occupied a courthouse in Grant Parish in order to prevent another coup. A mob consisting largely of Confederate veterans attacked the courthouse on April 13. The mob surrounded the occupied building and not only hunted down and shot blacks who tried to retreat, but also shot blacks who were waving white flags of surrender. Three whites and anywhere from 62 to 81 blacks died. General Sheridan described the event in Colfax as an act of “terrorism.” On June 16, 1873, the federal grand jury in New Orleans indicted 97 defendants. Each defendant was accused of 32 violations of the Enforcement Act of 1870. Out of the 97 defendants, nine were selected to go to trial. The jury acquitted one and failed to reach a verdict on the rest. The remaining eight were retried; three were found guilty and five were acquitted.

The Supreme Court, under the auspices of Chief Justice Morrison Waite, reversed Bradley’s circuit court opinion based primarily upon its interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment. In his decision, Waite acknowledges one aspect in which the federal government has expanded its power:

The right to vote in the States comes from the States but the right of exemption from the prohibited discrimination comes from the United
States. The first has not been granted or secured by the Constitution of the United States, but the last has been.\textsuperscript{42}

Unfortunately this is all for naught, according to Waite, since this “right of exemption” was not explicitly articulated by the prosecutors: “We may suspect that race was the cause of hostility, but it is not so averred . . . Every thing essential must be charged positively and not inferentially.”\textsuperscript{43} The connotation of this quote is that race was an essential legal category and had it been averred, the Court might have ruled differently. According to legal historian Pamela Brandwein, “It is plausible to conclude from [Waite’s] statements that he would permit prosecution on racial motive, as long as that motive could be established.”\textsuperscript{44}

If Waite had not made those remarks regarding race, then that would have meant that his comments regarding private action covered all acts of one citizen against another. By mentioning race, he made an exception out of it. Parsing out Waite’s argument illuminates the ways in which he makes very definitive statements regarding constitutional interpretation while nonetheless subtly leaving open the possibility of federal action if there was racial intent. By no means does he indicate exactly what federal action would look like or how it would be executed, but even within his narrow interpretation of the scope of federal action, he nonetheless does provide an exception when it comes to issues regarding racial animus.

In \textit{U.S. v. Harris}, the Court formalized the informality of lynching.\textsuperscript{45} The case involved R. G. Harris, who led an armed lynch mob that included at least 19 people. They had broken into a Tennessee jail, captured four black prisoners, and subsequently beat all four of them, lynching one. They were indicted under the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871, otherwise known as the Force Act of 1871. Writing the majority opinion, Justice Woods threw out part of the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871, explaining that because

the section of the law under consideration is directly exclusively against the action of private persons, without reference to the laws of the states, or their administration by the officers of the state, we are clear in the opinion that it is not warranted by any clause in the fourteenth amendment to the constitution.\textsuperscript{46}

Unlike the Civil Rights Cases, which provided a positive sanctioning for racial discrimination in that they allowed for states to make laws that explicitly allow for segregated facilities, Harris does not explicitly sanction any right. Harris simply declares that section two of the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871 is unconstitutional and hence federal protection from violence based upon this particular section is not warranted. Is federal protection from violence always unwarranted? Is there another law that can justify
federal protection? Does Harris invalidate all previous federal prosecutions of violence? Although Harris appears to signal an end to federal rights enforcement for blacks, Harris nonetheless left these questions unanswered. Woods’ decision should not be read as invalidating all federal efforts to ensure the right to life for blacks; it invalidated federal efforts under the rubric of only one particular statute, which by no means exhausted the gamut of what the federal government could do.

Couple these cases with Plessy v. Ferguson and we begin to see the kind of spatialized logic under which the Court was operating. In Plessy, the Court allowed local communities to determine the reasonableness of actions. Plessy was decided in 1896 and involved the constitutionality of a Louisiana statute requiring railroads to provide separate and equal accommodations for black and white passengers. The Court upheld the constitutionality of segregation partly because it was deemed congruent with the customs and traditions of the people:

By situating reasonableness in this fashion, the Court does not mandate or sanction segregation per se. Rather, it is more accurate to say that if segregation so happens to be part of “the customs and traditions of the people,” then the Court will allow it. In so doing, the Court thus provided constitutional cover for localized acts of segregation. Although contemporary analysts have derided the Plessy decision as backward and racist, the decision at the time was understood as “embodying conventional wisdom” and it so closely “mirrored the spirit of the age . . . that the country hardly noticed.”

The Plessy case provided what legal theorist Jeremy Waldron referred to as a legal “archetype” for selective law enforcement and local autonomy. Waldron defines an archetype as “a particular provision in a system of norms which has a significance beyond its immediate normative content [and] . . . operates in a way that expresses or epitomizes the spirit of a whole structured area of doctrine.” Whereas Waldron argues that the fairly narrow proposition of Brown v. Board of Education would later provide the “archetype” for a broader dismantling of segregation and discrimination, I would use a similar argument to suggest that Plessy was the archetype through which a degree of racialized localism could flourish.

Plessy was archetypal not because it sanctioned segregation per se. Rather, Plessy was archetypal for outlining a broad mandate for racialized localism with segregation as one instantiation. Lynching was another. By
leaving questions of reasonableness to “the customs and traditions of the people,” the Supreme Court opened itself up to the various interpretations of what customs and traditions are. By being so vague, even if the Court might have had in mind the legally constituted state authorities exercising their police powers, the Court nonetheless left itself open to a more populist, mob interpretation of the people. Perhaps the article in the Spring 1966 edition of the *Duke Law Journal* summed it up best: “It is arguable that [the lynch mob] invades this province of the state and, acting in loco reipublicae, displaces the state organs as political ‘sovereign.’”54 Rather than creating clear legal principles that avoided any semblance of sanctioning mob rule in the South, the Court in *Plessy* seemed to be more interested in securing its retreat. Whether intended or not, the ambiguous and vague formulation made in *Plessy* regarding the “established usages, customs and traditions of the people” gave tacit legal sanction to whoever could plausibly act in the people’s name.

Although *Plessy* served as an archetype for both lynching and segregation, it is nonetheless important to distinguish lynching from segregation. Although there is no denying the social and cultural imbrications of Jim Crow segregation and lynching, to conflate these two phenomena legally would be mistaking correlation for causation. Like segregationists, lynchers were seemingly “at liberty to act with reference to the established usages, customs and traditions of the people, and with a view to the promotion of their comfort, and the preservation of the public peace and good order.”55 But unlike segregation, lynchings consisted of acts that were not formally sanctioned and/or administered by local officials. That is to say, segregation had been voted on, passed as law, and legally enforced. There was no formal “lynch law” that outlined the crimes, trial mechanisms, and means of punishment. However anarchic Jim Crow was, it was not as anarchic as lynching. It is one thing to mandate different schools for blacks; it is altogether something else to sanction the murder of blacks. Segregation at least justified itself as consistent with equality before the law—separate but equal. That is partly why it could be positively sanctioned as consistent with constitutional law. Lynching simply could not make that claim. There was no law and/or Supreme Court case that positively sanctioned lynching. As Judge Emmons notes, the “right of the negro to see the ballet dance” could be formally outlawed, while the right to “pillage and murder” was a “more precious and beneficent privilege” and therefore could not.56 Although segregation and lynchings both operated under the broader rubric of racialized localism as established in the archetypical case of *Plessy*, it is nonetheless important not to lump one within the other.

A further feature distinguishing lynching from segregation is that lynchings tended to be spontaneous acts that were either retroactively legiti-
mated and/or covered up. While segregationists were clearly operating under a legal order that explicitly sanctioned segregation, lynchers maintained a more tenuous relationship with the law. This is partly why those who describe lynchings use the term *extralegal*. The term connotes a degree of ambiguity as to how to situate lynchings vis-à-vis the law. It is not quite legal; it is not quite illegal.

Although segregation was positively sanctioned, lynchings seem to be negatively sanctioned in *Cruikshank* and *Harris*. Although Reconstruction cases like *Cruikshank* and *Harris* acquitted lynchers in a non-exhaustive manner, it nevertheless signaled to lynchers that they could operate without repercussion. Historian Eric Foner points out that “unlike the Klan’s depredations a few years earlier, violent bands in 1875 operated without disguise, as if to flaunt their lack of fear of legal reprisal.”

Case in point is the lynching of Claude Neal. On October 27, 1934, a mob lynched Claude Neal. The mob had removed Neal from a Florida jail where he was awaiting trial for the murder of Lola Cannidy. This was all done in broad daylight, in front of thousands of people. Local newspapers had even advertised the lynching beforehand to make sure anyone who wanted to come could attend.

Legal theorist Gerald Neuman’s conception of anomalous zones illuminates how the federal government could provide for such negative sanctioning. Neuman points out how “governments occasionally suspend fundamental norms within a territorially limited enclave in response to perceived necessity.” Perceived necessity includes regions where “uniform implementation of the policy is impracticable or even impossible.” Suspension of this kind can take the form of an anomalous zone, which refers to “a geographical area in which certain legal rules, otherwise regarded as embodying fundamental policies of the larger legal system, are locally suspended.” In an attempt “to accommodate perceived local preferences from the top down,” anomalous zones are “sites where the law expressly authorized insuperable barriers to its own enforcement.”

Anomalous zones are those “certain limited enclaves” that are allowed to operate under their own distinctive customs and traditions. These zones are not completely self-referential. It is only in terms of a certain range of activities that these enclaves are to be regulated from within and not from above. Because they operate under their own inner logic for certain activities, they can be said to be partly self-referential, which makes them lawless to a certain extent. Historian Allen Trelease alluded to the peculiar situation of anomalous zones in the arena of lynching: “In all other respects the laws operated and the courts functioned as usual, but in Ku Klux cases the judicial process broke down completely.” Although these zones were selectively lawless, the Supreme Court made sure that these selective zones of
lawlessness were legally bound. In other words, these zones were legally bounded regions of lawlessness. Without ever dictating or judging the content of this self-referential logic, the Court nonetheless provided the space for this self-referential process to take place. During this period in the South, there were several concurrently existing anomalous zones, operating under different variations of a “lynch law” that was mainly predicated on whatever customs and traditions prevailed in any given “enclave.” This term *enclave* can take on several connotations, but the exact definition of an enclave is not as crucial as understanding the Court’s permission for something like an enclave to be the determining factor of whether a lynching is deemed “reasonable.” By delegating judgment to the people without ever defining who the people were, the Court enabled racist local customs and practices to decide what qualified as murder versus what fell into the category of a lynching. As Walter Royal Jones Jr., a Unitarian clergyman, stated in the trial of Collie Leroy Wilkins, “Murder is not murder except in the community that regards it as so.”

It would thus seem to be the case that the Court somehow signaled its disinclination to prosecute lynchings without necessarily relinquishing its ability to prosecute lynchings. Unlike most analyses of the period that have concluded that the federal government gave a “green light” to the more extreme acts of racism, it is more accurate in light of the *Price* and *Guest* cases to say that the Court gave a yellow light to racialized terror. In other words, the Court merely suspended its authority. The metaphor of a green light is meant to suggest a repudiation of sovereignty and even encouragement for the South to embark on racial acts of terror. The Court’s behavior, however, is better understood as a kind of “yellow light,” or a decision to temporarily suspend and qualify national jurisdiction, without revoking this authority in principle or intention. Lynching thus seemed to be less a matter of legal incapacity and more a matter of active non-enforcement of the law. The active policy of non-enforcement was more of a political agreement mired in comity than a legal principle of incapacity. In other words, the federal government’s inaction regarding racial violence was less an institutional matter of resources or legal capacity and more of a sovereign decision not to act.

### III. Part 3: Maintaining the Boundaries of Constitutional Anarchy

However loose the Court may have been with definitions, it was nevertheless concerned about insulating the federal government from the vicissitudes of Southern violence. In order to insulate the federal government, it was essential to maintain strict boundaries. Although the anomalous zones
operated under the overarching auspices of the federal law, they functioned autonomously; hence the phrase *jurisdiction over the jurisdiction*. As aforementioned, having jurisdiction over the jurisdiction entails a guarantee of priority for the lower jurisdictional state that is predicated upon the higher state self-restraining itself, thereby providing the lower jurisdictional state with a qualified degree of autonomy. By having anomalous zones operate autonomously, the federal government ensured that it was not directly responsible for what occurred within these zones.

Any time these activities impinged on and/or directly related back to its own sovereign authority, the federal government intervened. The Court engaged only in cases that directly implicated the federal government. The Court seemed primarily interested in minimizing the direct collusion of law enforcement officials with lynch mobs and not with administering the letter of the law. The Court’s reluctance to engage in federal rights enforcement for blacks was clearly evidenced in *Giles v. Harris*. In this 1903 case involving racial discrimination, Justice Holmes wrote in the majority opinion, “It seems to us impossible to grant the equitable relief which is asked . . . the court has little practical power to deal with the people of the state in a body.” The defeatist tone that Holmes takes not only is indicative of the disappearance of the revolutionary potential that was Reconstruction, but also illuminates that however sympathetic different Supreme Court Justices may have been in combating racism, there were the “practical” impediments that restrained the Court from acting on such concerns. These impediments are perhaps best summed up by the chairman of the Kansas’ Republican state committee after the election of Samuel Hayes to the presidency: “I think the policy of the new administration will be to conciliate the white men of the South, Carpetbaggers to the rear, and niggers take care of yourselves.” During this time when white supremacy was firmly embedded, the Court’s narrow focus on containment reflected its efforts at trying to keep the rule of law from getting tainted by the lawlessness of lynching.

In each case of federal intervention, Southerners were either directly challenging national supremacy and/or trying to further implicate the federal government in the racial happenings of the South. Each time the federal government intervened, the intervention was regarded as an isolated and temporary departure. In that federal intervention at this time was to be considered an exception to the norm, these instances of federal intervention did not suggest any alteration of the normal operating procedure. For the most part, the racial agreement was intact. It was only when Southerners tried to further insinuate federal complicity on Southern race relations that the federal government intervened.

In *Moore v. Dempsey*, the Court reversed the convictions of six blacks on the ground that their trial was mob-dominated. In the majority opinion,
Supreme Court Justice Holmes stated that “if in fact a trial is dominated by a mob so that there is an actual interference with the course of justice, there is a departure from due process of law.” Logan v. U.S. is another instance of the Court’s ruling against lynch mobs. The situation involved six black men under federal custody who were eventually taken by a mob and lynched. The Supreme Court agreed with the decision made in the district court of Texas that when a citizen of the United States is committed to the custody of a United States marshal, or to a state jail, such citizen has a right to be treated with humanity, and to be protected against all unlawful violence. The Supreme Court takes the district court decision one step further. In the majority opinion, Justice Gray quotes a passage of Justice Miller from a previous case:

It is argued that the preservation of peace and good order in society is not within the powers confided to the government of the United States, but belongs exclusively to the states. Here again we are met with the theory that the government of the United States does not rest upon soil and territory of the country. We think that this theory is founded on an entire misconception of the nature and powers of that government. We hold it to be an incontrovertible principle that the government of the United States may, by means of physical force, exercised through its official agents, execute on every foot of command obedience to its laws, and hence the power to keep the peace to that extent.

In U.S. v. Shipp, the Court found a sheriff and one of his deputies guilty of contempt for aiding and abetting a lynch mob. Chief Justice Fuller stated in the majority decision: “It is apparent that a dangerous portion of the community was seized with the awful thirst for blood which only killing can quench, and that considerations of law and order were swept away in the overwhelming flood.” He concluded that “this lamentable riot was the direct result of opposition to the administration of the law by this Court.”

In United States v. Classic, the Supreme Court affirmed the Justice Department’s claim that applies to the actions of law enforcement officials. This case involved five election officials from Louisiana who were indicted for altering cast ballots by qualified voters and falsely certifying the number of votes cast in the primary election. They were charged with conspiring to deprive citizens of their constitutional rights as voters to have their ballots counted as cast in a Congressional primary and to deprive candidates for federal office of their right to have ballots cast in their favor counted honestly. Although this case might at first appear tangential to lynchings, it is important because it outlined the extent of the federal government’s reach. In the majority decision, Chief Justice Stone states: “Misuse of power, possessed by virtue of state law and made possible only
because the wrongdoer is clothed with the authority of state law, is action taken under color of state law.”

By clothing the actions of state officers as such, Stone affirms the use of Section 242 as a weapon for prosecuting official deprivations of civil rights.

In 1943, this interpretation of Section 242 was applied to a lynching. In June 1943, a black man was hunted down and shot to death by a mob of Indiana farmers led by a sheriff and his deputies. In United States v. Trierweiler, the officers were indicted under Section 242. This lower federal court case ended in nolo contendere (no contest) pleas from the nine defendants, and in 1946, they were fined $200 and costs. This “technically successful prosecution” confirmed the federal government’s authority to act against local officials who participated directly in a lynching.

In 1945, the Supreme Court, in Screws v. United States, upheld the conviction of a Georgia sheriff and his two accomplices who had beat up a handcuffed Robert Hall, a black citizen of the United States and of Georgia, with their fists and a solid-bar blackjack until he was unconscious and then dragged him to jail, where he was left for dead. Many at the time, including Robert Carr, who served as the Executive Secretary of President Truman’s Committee on Civil Rights, hailed this ruling as “profoundly important to the cause of civil liberty.” These cases demonstrate a Court that clearly wanted to distance itself from the vicissitudes of lynchings. Any positive sanctioning of lynch mobs would have brought the two entities closer and thus have unduly marred the “steady, upright, and impartial” nature of the Court that is essential if it is to administer the law.

Highlighting these cases is in no way meant to exaggerate the federal government’s role in combating racial violence. It is simply meant to suggest that the legal capacity to deal with racial violence was never eliminated. Instances of federal intervention were considered at the time as “isolated and temporary departures from a general policy of leaving the problem of racist terrorism to the states.” The majority of lynchings failed to elicit any formal investigation. In the few instances in which there were formal investigations, the conclusions were often “death at the hands of persons unknown.”

The Supreme Court rulings in Moore and Logan operated under this pretense of exception. As mentioned earlier, in Moore the Court did not find lynch mobs as inherently troubling. It was only when lynching mobs started to interfere directly with trials that the Court found their conduct worthy of prosecution. Following this line of reasoning, it could be presumed that as long as lynching mobs do not directly interfere with jury trials, they are not necessarily interfering with justice or representing a departure from the law. As for Logan, the fact that the lynching mob lynched somebody in federal custody directly implicated the federal government. If the
Supreme Court did nothing, then the federal government could be considered wholly complicit with Southern lynchings. The fact that the Supreme Court chose to intervene in these cases and not the thousands of other lynchings that had occurred in the South at the time suggests that the Supreme Court was not as interested in combating lynchings as it was concerned with insulating the federal government from the racial violence taking place in the South at the time.

Each intervention by the federal judiciary during this period was not only further evidence that the federal government could intervene when it chose to, thereby evincing proof of national supremacy, but also further indicated that the federal government was keen on maintaining a distinction between how Southerners managed racial affairs and the federal government’s responsibility. In terms of constitutional anarchy, the federal government, during this period, was intent on maintaining a strict boundary of where the jurisdiction of Southern anomalous zones stopped and started. When activities of the anomalous zones began to spill over into the higher jurisdictional state, the boundaries were blurred; hence, these activities began to directly implicate the federal government. By blurring the lines, Southerners were trying to further insinuate the complicity of the federal government with the racial violence erupting in the South. When activities were strictly contained within the anomalous zones, the federal government could claim no direct responsibility, and hence not be wholly implicated in what occurred within these anomalous zones. In blurring the line, Southerners forced the hand of the federal government, and the federal government reluctantly acted. Whereas the federal government had been pursuing an active policy of non-enforcement, white Southerners compelled the federal government to pursue an active policy of enforcement.

IV. PART 4: ENDING CONSTITUTIONAL ANARCHY

Once it became clear that racial violence against blacks in the South was no longer going to be tolerated, the Court proceeded to change course. Unfortunately, there was historical precedent, dating back to the end of Reconstruction, for the federal government not to get involved in racial violence in the South. For the Court to reverse such historical precedent, one would think a new law passed by Congress, an executive order by the President and/or the court would be necessary. But in regard to lynchings, the Supreme Court took none of these approaches. The Court seemed to simply change its mind, or as legal historian Michal Belknap more eloquently states, “reinterpreted old statutes.”

There were two cases in particular that reflect this change in the Court. On June 21, 1964, three Mississippi law enforcement officials and fifteen
private individuals conspired and murdered three civil rights workers: Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, and Andrew Goodman. The conspiracy involved releasing the victims from jail at night; intercepting, assaulting and killing them; and disposing of their bodies. The District Court sustained the substantive counts against the three law enforcement officials, but dismissed the indictments against the fifteen private individuals. The case was then appealed to the Supreme Court. In *United States v. Price*, the Supreme Court reversed the dismissals against the fifteen private individuals.88

Justice Fortas delivered the opinion of the Court in this case. The key to the Court’s decision was what constituted actions “under color of law,” and Fortas concluded that “to act under color of law does not require that the accused be an officer of the State. It is enough that he is a willful participant in joint activity with the State or its agents.”89 Without delving into more recent applications and interpretations of 241, Fortas notes how

Section 241 was left essentially unchanged [from its original formulation] and neither in the 1874 revision nor in any subsequent re-enactment has there been the slightest indication of congressional intent to narrow or limit the original broad scope of 241.90

This then raises a question: If section 241 was originally broad in scope and has gone “essentially unchanged” through the years, then why had it been interpreted so narrowly for so long?

On July 3, 1964, Klansmen from Georgia shot and killed Lemuel Penn, a black citizen. On September 4, an all-white jury acquitted two of the Klansmen, Joseph Howard Sims and Cecil Myers, of any wrongdoing. The case then went to District Court, where the indictments against six private individuals were dismissed. In *United States v. Guest*, the Supreme Court reversed the District Court ruling.91

From the outset, Steward states in the majority opinion that the Court’s decision in *Guest* is not overturning past decisions and is in fact in line with past court decisions.92 Justice Stewart clearly wants to maintain a degree of constitutional continuity. But then he goes on to elaborate a very novel conception of state action. It is enough for the participation of the State to be “peripheral, or its action was only one of several co-operative.”93 Law Professor Alfred Avins points out the inconsistency with past cases: “The United States Supreme Court has turned history inside out . . . the Guest case is so wide of the mark that it would be necessary to burn all the Congressional Globes in the nation to support it.”94

Is it possible to square the Guest decision with past decisions, in particular *Cruikshank* and *Harris*? In particular, is there a way to interpret section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment broadly and still maintain a degree
of continuity with past cases that seemed to have interpreted section 5 more narrowly? Yes, only if one takes a very narrow reading of cases such as *Cruikshank* and *Harris*, which I have done. If in fact it was the case that section 5 remained broad in nature this whole time, it was nonetheless imperative for the Court to downplay it for the “good of the institution.” When the federal government provided southern states the autonomy to deal with racial affairs in the South, it was prudent for the Court to not interfere. Otherwise it risked constitutional nullification, institutional impotency, and/or outright violence. The broad scope of section 5 and the Court’s avowal of that broad scope need to be separated. Although the broad scope of section 5 has endured through the years, the Court’s avowal of the broad scope of section 5 hinged directly upon the strength and vitality of the political arrangement set up by the Southern states and the federal government following Reconstruction. The lack of avowing the broad scope of section 5 amounted to an active policy of non-enforcement. In other words, it was not the law itself that became narrow when the Southern states were strong. Rather, it was the enforcement and adjudication of the law that narrowed.

Here is where my concept of constitutional anarchy helps illuminate matters. Constitutional anarchy provides a way of understanding how an active policy of non-enforcement can operate and function. After Reconstruction, when the federal government provided white Southerners the autonomy to manage racial affairs in the South, the Supreme Court responded accordingly through cases like *Cruikshank* and *Harris* that it was going to rule negatively on issues relating to racial violence. In so doing, the Court did not repudiate and/or strip the federal government of its authority to engage in federal rights enforcement. Rather, the Court tended to dispose of lynching cases on some technicality. In other words, even though the Court clearly signaled that it was not going to uphold claims of rights violations of blacks in the South, it did so without ever making a substantive decision on Sections 241 and 242. Sections 241 and 242 were in effect placed into suspended animation, and it was only when President Lyndon B. Johnson was willing to lead the federal government back to the arena of rights enforcement that the Court resuscitated Sections 241 and 242.

V. PART 5: CONCLUSION

Framing lynchings in this manner illuminates how illiberal acts can be accommodated within a liberal regime by unpacking how the enforcement of law can be spatially and existentially differentiated. This selective enforcement of the law is observable in many areas where a marginalized
group is spatially demarcated. In describing Chinatown in New York City, Asian American Studies professor Peter Kwong noted how Chinatown “is maintained by the informal political structure in Chinatown, with the tacit agreement of outside government officials . . . Lack of government intervention has meant de facto rule of the community by a traditional Chinatown elite.”

In his investigation on homelessness, political scientist Leonard Feldman uncovered how homeless people have been “consigned to a subordinate legal and political status: the outlaw-citizen.” This consignment is actualized spatially: Homeless people “become the constitutive outside of the consumptive public sphere, a blockage—both physical and ideological—to the free movement of goods and consumers but a blockage that simultaneously constitutes the boundaries of public space.” Although the two instances vary widely, the fact that the law is differentially applied to certain areas and certain inhabitants within that area suggests that constitutional anarchy could help in uncovering the legal operationalization occurring in both situations.

In his examination of British rule in India, anthropologist Partha Chatterjee notes how British authorities apportioned “the space of governmental action into what may be called a domain of the ‘civil’ and a domain of the ‘other.’” In British India,

there were real distinctions between a domain of the “civil,” mainly located in the cities and consisting of Europeans and educated and propertied Indians, and a domain of the “country” (mufassal), populated by rural landlords, peasants and labourers . . . Civil liberties were meant to apply only to the former domain and not to the latter. The distinction between the two domains was signified by various criteria, depending on the context. It could be geographical—the difference between town and country. Sometimes, the difference could be racial—a European living the country could not be denied his or her civic rights.

This racial and geographical distinction between the “civil” and the “other” was primarily instituted to insulate and keep unadulterated the domain of the “civil.” Furthermore,

There was a strong tendency to trace the effective source of terrorism to some element outside the domain of the “civil.” This could be an element of a non-civic “other” culture that had not been tamed and domesticated by the “civil.” If the effective source of terrorism could be identified as lying outside the domain of the “civil,” one could draw the comforting conclusion that the civic was safe from threats from within . . . the locus of these emergency restrictions should also be, as far as
Partha Chatterjee thus points to how the active withdrawal of the state can occur racially and geographically through this notion of emergency.

African Studies professor Mahmood Mamdani also postulated a set of laws that were differentiated across identity and space. In what he terms “decentralized despotism,” Mamdani describes the African colonial experience

as Janus-faced, bifurcated. It contained a duality: two forms of power under a single hegemonic authority . . . Direct rule was the form of urban civil power . . . Indirect rule, however, signified a rural tribal authority . . . Urban power spoke the language of civil society and civil rights, rural power of community and culture. 

This indirect rule relied on customary law to regulate nonmarket relations. Customary law was defined, according to Mamdani,

in the plural, as the law of the tribe, and not in the singular, as a law for all natives. Thus, there was not one customary law for all natives, but roughly as many sets of customary laws as there were said to be tribes.

He was quick to note, however, that this framework of customary law was buttressed by the state: Decentralized despotism “encapsulated the individual in a set of relations defined and enforced by the state as communal and customary.” Thus, even though chiefs primarily administered customary law, the state buttressed and sanctioned their authority. Because the state indirectly ruled through the chieftains, it was able to “barricade the ‘savages’ from the world of the ‘civilized.’” This bifurcation of law rendered members of the subject population “containerized.” People became subject to the whim of their corresponding chieftain: “Customary law was not about guaranteeing rights; it was about enforcing custom. Its power was not to limit power, but to enable it.”

Even though lynchings appear to represent the outright failure of liberal democracy to live up to even its most minimalist requirement, I hope that I have demonstrated how a liberal democracy internally dealt with its seeming contradiction. Not only does this new political typology of constitutional anarchy provide a way of reconciling the paradoxical co-existence of the enduring legacy of liberalism and racism, but it also resituates how liberalism is defined and measured. The extent to which a polity is considered liberal should not be determined solely by the content of the law (e.g.
freedom of speech, women’s rights, due process, etc.), but also by the scope of the law. To what extent is the United States liberal? Is it liberal everywhere for everybody? Constitutional anarchy adds the element of range to the discussion of what it means for a polity to be liberal.

By adding this element of range, constitutional anarchy illuminates how liberalism can at times be a “fighting creed” against itself. The very fact that the United States claims to be a liberal country deters from the actualization of further liberalization. In his book Law and Irresponsibility: On the Legitimation of Human Suffering, legal scholar Scott Veitch writes, “Legal institutions are centrally involved in organizing irresponsibility.” He goes on to note that “officials are able to rely on their legal obligations as a way of evading the very question of responsibility for their decisions and their consequences. The officials could, in effect, put themselves in a zone of non-responsibility.” In other words, the very existence of liberalism deters from the further expansion of liberalism.

It was easy for the federal government to wash their hands of lynchings, yet hard for them to dirty their hands when they wanted to re-engage. Constitutional anarchy evaded sweeping gestures when it was instituted, but sweeping gestures were required to end it. The subtlety added to its enduring quality. But this subtlety of accommodating something that was anything but subtle reveals the dark side of the constitutional flexibility Roosevelt had mentioned in his inaugural address. If it is the case that “our Constitution is so simple and practical that it is possible always to meet extraordinary needs by changes in emphasis and arrangement without loss of essential form,” then what exactly is left?

Notes

5. Fraenkel, xiii.
6. Fraenkel, 46.
7. When Fraenkel states that “martial law as such does not necessarily clash with the rule of civil law,” he is arguing against the claim of mutual exclusivity. (Fraenkel, 91).
10. Fraenkel, 70.
12. Fraenkel, xiii.
17. Fraenkel, 71.
18. See Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism and Beyond*, third edition (Allyn and Bacon, 1999), 68.
22. Neuman, 1201.
23. Foner, 531.
24. Foner, 531.


32. In Price, Justice Abe Fortas writes in the majority decision that “to act under color of law does not require that the accused be an officer of the State. It was enough that he was a willful participant in joint activity with the State or its agents.” United States v. Price, 383 U.S. 787, 794. In Guest, Justice Stewart writes in the majority decision that “no determination of the threshold level that state action must attain . . . allegation of state involvement is sufficient.” United States v. Guest, 383 U.S. 745, 755.


41. As quoted in James Hogue, Uncivil War: Five New Orleans Street Battles and the Rise and Fall of Radical Reconstruction (Claitor’s, 1969), 150.


47. Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S., 537 (1896).
52. Waldron, 1724.
53. Waldron, 1725.
56. These are the words Judge Emmons used to qualify his sympathy for blacks. Charge to Grand Jury-Civil Rights Act, 30 F. Cas. 1005, 1006-1007 (C.C. W.D. Tenn.) (1875) (as quoted in Brandwein, 354-355).
60. Neuman, 1197.
61. Neuman, 1224.
63. Neuman, 1202.
64. Neuman, 1207.
65. Trelease, 205.
67. Historian Eric Foner has argued that the Supreme Court decision in Cruikshank has “rendered national prosecution of crimes committed against blacks virtually impossible, and gave a green light to acts of terror where local officials either could not or would not enforce the law.” Eric Foner,

80. United States v. Trierweiler, Department of Justice, Division of Communications and Records, Case No. 144-24-5, 52 F. Supp. 4 (1943) (as quoted in Carr, 172).
83. Belknap, xi.
84. The 2005 Senate Resolution Apologizing for Lynching states “that 99 percent of all perpetrators of lynching escaped from punishment.” http://landrieu.senate.gov/priorities/Resolution-Apologizing-for-Lynching.cfm.
85. Philip Dray, At the Hands of Persons Unknown: the Lynching of Black America (Random House, 2002).

87. Belknap, xi.
97. Feldman, 44.
99. Chatterjee, 4-8.
100. Chatterjee, 9-10.
102. Mamdani, 17.
103. Mamdani, 22.
104. Mamdani, 51.
105. Mamdani, 51.
106. Mamdani, 61.
107. Mamdani, 51.
108. Mamdani, 110.
111. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, “First Inaugural Address, Washington
Defining Characteristics and Politicising Victims: A Legal Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Legislatures worldwide experience the same problem in drafting or amending hate crimes statutes: How is it possible to discriminate between victim groups, and which groups are worthy of legislative protection? This article explores some of the experiences of legislatures, highlighting the political inconsistencies which go on to shape the legal system. It focusses on the experience of a number of common law jurisdictions, and seeks to establish a normative platform from which hate crimes statutes can be based, drawing on the legislative experiences of the United States. This platform draws on two other areas of law, particularly the criminal defence of provocation and equality legislation, and shows that the determination of victim groups for hate crimes legislation need not be the politically charged, discriminatory, and exclusionary process that it is today.

Keywords: victims, legislation, legal approaches, equality, comparative

I. INTRODUCTION

Legislatures worldwide experience the same problem in drafting or amending hate crimes statutes: How is it possible to discriminate between victim groups, and which groups are worthy of legislative protection? This article seeks to explore some of the experiences of legislatures, highlighting the political inconsistencies which go on to shape the legal system. It focusses on the experience of a number of common law jurisdictions, and seeks to establish a normative platform on which hate crimes statutes can be based, drawing on the legislative experiences of the United States. This platform will draw on two other areas of law, particularly the criminal defence of provocation and equality legislation, and show that the determination of victim groups for hate crimes legislation need not be the politically charged, discriminatory, and exclusionary process that it is today.
II. VICTIMS, THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM, AND HATE CRIMES LEGISLATION

Traditionally, the only role for the victim in the criminal justice system was as a witness for the prosecution. However, the discipline of victimology has developed prominence in recent years, and as a result of calls for change in the role of the victim, many accommodations have been made for victims in the system. When considering the role of victims in the context of hate crimes, the perspective is a little different. Rather than considering the role of victims in the criminal justice system as a whole, we are instead considering a more contentious issue: the ranking of victims. As Chakraborti and Garland note:

The increased standing for victims clearly has implications for the development of hate crime, for it is within this context that we have begun to appreciate the differential impact of certain forms of crime upon particular groups of victim. Indeed, this would appear to be one of the key underlying premises of hate crime: that crimes motivated by hatred or prejudice against certain groups of people deserve particular attention.

In terms of the victims’ movement, hate crimes could be considered the ultimate victim-led offence. While generally speaking, crimes are ranked in severity by assessing the objective severity of the offence (for example, assault, assault causing harm, assault causing serious harm), hate crimes are punished more harshly due to the motivation of the offender, the subjective experience of the victim, and the impact the crime has on the community with which the victim identifies.

III. TWO DEFINITIONS

Barbara Perry defines hate crimes from a criminological perspective in this way:

Hate crime . . . involves acts of violence and intimidation, usually directed toward already stigmatized and marginalized groups. As such, it is a mechanism of power and oppression, intended to reaffirm the precarious hierarchies that characterize a given social order. It attempts to recreate simultaneously the threatened (real or imagined) hegemony of the perpetrator’s group and the ‘appropriate’ subordinate identity of the victim’s group. It is a means of marking both the Self and the Other in such a way as to reestablish their ‘proper’ relative positions, as given and reproduced by broader ideologies and patterns of social and political inequality.
More concisely, she encapsulates her definition later as ‘violence motivated by negative interpretations of difference and the demonization of the Other.’ What is very useful about this definition, as Chakraborti and Garland observe, is the recognition that hate crime is not a static problem, but is ‘historically and culturally contingent, the experience of which needs to be seen as a dynamic social process involving context, structure and agency.’ For the purposes of enacting legislation, however, the concept of ‘othering’ is rather too vague to withstand judicial scrutiny. Nonetheless, the definition is useful for legal purposes, including as it does the key elements of any hate crime: violence, or some form of criminal conduct; against a victim; who was targeted due to his affiliation with a stigmatised and marginalised group.

In the United States, Frederick Lawrence sought to determine which status characteristics should be included in hate crimes statutes and which should not. He proposed a two-stage process: first, to determine the characteristics which are appropriate for consideration; and second, how the legislature should, or could, distinguish between these groups for the purposes of enacting hate crimes legislation. The first question asks whether the members of the group self-identify as such members. Lawrence admits that this stage will identify a great many number of groups, some of which have no place in a bias crimes statute. He argues, however, that in this stage, ‘where we seek characteristics that yield self-regarding groups, we should be expansive.’

The second stage, then, requires the legislature to determine which of these self-identifying groups should be included in the bias crimes statute. These, he states, ‘are the characteristics that implicate social fissure lines, divisions that run deep in the social history of a culture.’ In the context of the United States, for example, he highlights race and racial discrimination: ‘the greatest American dilemma has its roots in slavery, the greatest American tragedy.’ He further observes that ‘race, color, ethnicity, religion and national origin’ are all examples of such national social fissure lines. Having established those national fissure lines, he goes on to note that particular states may include characteristics particular to the social and historical context of that state. While this approach has merits, it lacks a normative basis, and allows politicians to discriminate, for valid or less meritorious reasons, between victim groups. It also potentially requires politicians to be purely reactive in their approach to hate crimes legislation, without the capacity to proactively protect new vulnerable groups.

Thus, while there are clear theories as to how the legislature should determine victim groups, in practice, the process is not as well thought-out as Lawrence would require, nor as objective as it could be. Many hate crimes statutes are created, not out of an evidence-based objective
approach, but rather as the result of sustained lobbying on the part of particular interest groups.\textsuperscript{14} While there is little cause to question their entitlement to be afforded the protection of a bias crimes statute, one must immediately ask: Are there other groups who simply do not have the resources required to sustain a lengthy battle to be afforded such protection?

IV. The ‘Breadth of the Protected Classes’

Hate crimes differ from ‘ordinary crimes’ in a number of ways, but perhaps one of the most compelling differences, from the perspective of victims, is that they were chosen as a victim, not because of who they are, but rather because of their membership of, or perceived membership of, a particular group. As Perry notes, for the perpetrator of such violence, the specific victim is immaterial, and the victims interchangeable.\textsuperscript{15} Blake observes that central to bias crimes is the ‘fungible’ or interchangeable nature of the victim.\textsuperscript{16} This deindividualisation of the victim plays a central role in bias crimes. That said, the group that the individual is from, or is perceived to be from, is deliberately chosen because of the ‘hatred’ of that group. Bowling and Phillips remark that this targeting, rather than being picked at random from the population as a whole, creates feelings of hostility and tension, which make both the victim and the community feel vulnerable to future attacks.\textsuperscript{17}

Determining which victim groups should be protected by legislation, however, is a highly problematic process. Grattet and Jenness observe that including a group within the legislation serves to demarcate the ‘enhanced vulnerabilities’ of some people, and inscribe victim statuses to some minority groups and not others.\textsuperscript{18} Further, as Perry notes, the definition is relative, and historically and culturally contingent—what, she says, is a hate crime today could be ‘standard operating procedure’ in another time or place.\textsuperscript{19}

Chakraborti further notes that limiting the application of hate crimes legislation to certain groups and not others ‘is a process fraught with danger, as this requires difficult judgements to be made regarding who should be deserving of ‘special protection.’\textsuperscript{20} Jacobs and Potter note that while offenders probably have conscious or unconscious prejudices against people who are, for example, rich, poor, successful, or drug addicts, these prejudices would not turn an ordinary crime into a hate crime.\textsuperscript{21} ‘By contrast,’ they note, ‘racial, religious, and gender prejudices are widely and vigorously condemned.’\textsuperscript{22} By choosing those crimes which are more widely condemned, we as a society are making a judgment on which victims deserve more protection, or which ground of discrimination is more
heinous. It is this process, preferring one ground of discrimination over another, which is the problem faced by legislatures.

If we examine hate crimes legislation across a broader category of jurisdictions, it is clear that the range of victims of hate crimes is much greater than those included in any one statute. Those common to most jurisdictions include race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability. Perry describes the ‘breadth of the protected classes,’ which are culturally and socially dependent. A list of protected classes across a wide range of hate crimes legislation in the United States includes:

- Age
- Citizenship
- Class
- Colour
- Disability
- Economic status
- Ethnicity
- Family responsibility
- Gender
- Matriculation
- Membership of Labour organisation
- Marital status
- National origin
- Personal appearance
- Political orientation or affiliation
- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Social status

Grattet and Jenness observe that there have been two ‘tiers’ of categories of hate crimes in the United States. The first (or core) tier, they note, in 1988 ‘represented a legal response to the most visible, recognizable, and stereotypical kinds of discriminatory behavior,’ including crimes against individuals on the basis of their race, religion, colour and national origin. The so-called ‘second tier’ of hate categories, emerging in the late 1990s, included sexual orientation, gender, and disabilities. The authors explain the movements:

The respective unfolding of these clusters of statuses—the core and the second tier—reflects the history of various post-1960s civil rights movements in the United States. Race, religion, color, and national origin
reflect the early legal contestation of minorities’ status and rights . . .
Because the gay and lesbian movement, the women’s movement, and the
disability movement reflect a ‘second wave’ of civil rights activism and
‘identity politics,’ sexual orientation, gender and disability, respectively,
have only recently been recognised by policy-makers responsible for the
formulation of hate crime law as legitimate axes around which hate crime
occurs.24

The range of potential protected classes is thus potentially very broad, rang-
ing from the traditionally protected groups (race, colour, national origin),
developing into Grattet and Jenness’ second wave, with the capability of a
third wave of potential protected groups emerging today. The remainder of
this paper will assess how, if at all, we can distinguish normatively between
potential victim groups to determine which are deserving of legislative pro-
tection through hate crimes legislation.

V. The Politics of Victimhood

Determining victim classes in hate crimes legislation is an essentially
political process—controversially, Jacobs and Potter go so far as to say that
the primary purpose of hate crime laws is to ‘bolster the morale and strate-
gic position of certain identity groups.’25 Thus, the problem is not simply
one of categorisation of victims, but is exacerbated by the politics of this
categorisation. However, there is much more to this issue than simply
politics. By singling out specific groups, the legislature is sending a clear
message that these groups are deserving of more protection than others.
This means that the legislature is classifying distinct victim types as more
worthy of legal protection—legal protection which has an enormous impact
on the offender during the sentencing stage. When the legislature chooses to
discriminate between offenders, placing certain offenders into a category,
any offence against which automatically requires an enhanced sentence, it
must do so carefully, and with the principle of equality for offenders and
victims in mind.

Critics of hate crimes legislation argue that once a single group is pro-
tected under the statute, there is no end to the number of groups who will
seek protection in this way. As Dickey notes, referring to the growth in
hate crimes legislation in the United States:

As the laws raced through the legislatures around the country, there were
few voices of dissent. In the lexicon of magic political words, being
against hate is abracadabra. Can you imagine a candidate trying to defend
against a 30-second commercial accusing him or her of being ‘soft on
hate’?26
Hall observes that the mere process of creating categories of protected groups is problematic. The exclusion, he states, of any one group gives the message that their victimisation is of less importance than any single group included; while including every single possible group renders the legislation meaningless. Jacobs and Potter observe that hate crime laws are enormously appealing to politicians:

> Except for the inclusion of sexual orientation, politicians faced a no lose proposition. By supporting hate crime legislation, they could please the advocacy group without antagonizing any lobbyists on the other side (there were none) and without making hard budgetary choices. The hate crime laws provided an opportunity to denounce two evils—crime and bigotry—without offending any constituencies or spending any money.

There are two ancillary problems here: first, as identified by Garland, groups which are socially marginalised and stigmatised often lack recourse to political power. Without this access, they will be further marginalised in any legislative measure introduced to combat hate crimes. Secondly, whilst oftentimes legislators will be happy to expand the ambit of hate crimes legislation for political purposes, they can also limit its extent for the same purposes. This occurred a number of times in the United States, where politicians argued against the inclusion of sexual orientation in hate crimes legislation. Excluding groups for political purposes can have the effect of further marginalising the individuals and reinforcing public prejudices against the group.

This is not all to say that popular mobilisation for legislative change is necessarily a bad thing. It is not suggested that any of the groups protected by hate crimes legislation are not deserving of such protection, nor that politicians act only in a self-serving and politically expedient way. It is argued here, however, that in considering the expansion or creation of hate crimes legislation, the determination of protected victim groups must be done in a manner which is objective and considered, ensuring that all groups are protected in accordance with human rights standards.

### VI. Mutability and Marginalisation

Oftentimes, in seeking to differentiate between victim groups, legislatures will seek to establish which characteristics are so fundamental as to be ‘immutable.’ In seeking to determine the ‘moral fault lines’ in hate crimes—that is, where we draw the lines between protected and unprotected identities—Blake first refers to the United States Federal Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. The Act identifies the following as deserving protection: race, colour, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gen-
der and sexual orientation. These, he argues, are significant because they ‘represent aspects of the person which are either immutable or, at the very least, exceptionally difficult or costly to change.’\textsuperscript{32} These, he argues, reflect to some degree, those classifications in ‘constitutional law.’\textsuperscript{33} However, O’Keefe argues that ‘immutability’ is not the sole factor in determining protected groups in hate crime legislation—religious belief, marital status and political affiliation, which are all protected to some degree in legislation are, she argues, arguably mutable.

In the United States, Lawrence examines both gender and sexual orientation as characteristics which are often considered by State legislatures in the context of hate crimes. His discussion on the latter is interesting: He notes that the argument for excluding sexual orientation ‘has been couched in terms of whether homosexuality is an immutable characteristic the way race, color, ethnicity, or national origin are.’\textsuperscript{34} He finds this argument to be flawed in a number of ways, not least because:

\begin{quote}
The problem is that this same argument could be made with respect to religion, one of the classic bias crimes characteristics . . . The reason that religion . . . is protected by virtually all bias crimes statutes is that we deem it unreasonable to suggest that a Jew or Catholic might just choose to avoid discrimination by giving up her religion.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

Thus, while immutability of characteristic seems to be one way of determining the characteristics which ought to be included in bias crimes statutes, as it would be quite impolitic for a legislature to suggest that religion is mutable, it will not be used as a solution for determining victim characteristics for bias crimes statutes.

Blake takes a broader perspective. Rather than being persons who are merely linked by ‘some personal attribute,’ social groups rather ‘offer their members means by which they might understand their place in the social world.’\textsuperscript{36} ‘These groups are then in this way differentiated from ‘mere aggregates.’\textsuperscript{37} However, when he explores this ‘self-identification’ aspect in more detail by reference to two social groups—‘geeks’ and homeless people—he observes that this definition is no longer feasible. Because these individuals are identified as members of the group from the outside, they will be targeted as such, regardless of whether they in fact identify with the group, or even want to be associated with it. He argues:

\begin{quote}
Reducing someone to a single aspect, making them a fungible victim in virtue of one characteristic, would seem as morally problematic when the victim does not identify with that characteristic as when the victim uses that characteristic as the foundation of how they see their place in the world.\textsuperscript{38}
\end{quote}
These remarks are particularly applicable in the context of the ‘disabled
community’: while individuals may be labelled as ‘disabled’ for the pur-
poses of the legislation, they may not in fact view themselves in this way,
seeing themselves rather as ‘differently-abled.’ Blake rejects the narrow
conception, preferring instead to favour a wider categorisation of hate
Crimes. This approach, he argues, would include attacks based on the per-
ception of social difference and vulnerability more generally and acts of
violence based on stereotyping and hierarchy whether from within or
outside a group. This, he argues, would not require the victim to identify
with the group in order for the crime to be considered as one which reflects
and perpetuates bias.

Chakraborti notes that another solution is to restrict the ambit of the
protection to minority groups. While he accepts that this solution as a
whole has some merit, he argues that if we accept this position, it would
mean that members of majority groups could not be protected under the
legislation, no matter how persuasive the evidence that an attack was based
on prejudice or hate.

Others prefer to determine the ambit of hate crime laws to include only
those who, historically, have been the victims of oppression—again, in the
United States, it is argued that ‘violence against gays and the disabled, for
example, is not a badge or incident of slavery.’ Whether the history of
racism should be determinative, however, is questionable. As Jacobs and
Potter argue, first, on this basis, anti-white prejudice would not be treated as
a hate crime; and secondly, they ask why history of a condemnable motiva-
tion should be the basis for more punishment, and other criminal motiva-
tions, such as greed, lust, or politics not be regarded as being politically
based.

Further, if we limit the protection afforded by the legislation to only
those classes of traditionally marginalised groups, it could be argued, as
Jacobs and Potter do, that it would be possible

\[\text{to exclude from the definition of hate crime those crimes motivated by}
\text{minority group members’ prejudice against whites on the ground that}
\text{such prejudices are more justified or understandable, and the crimes less}
\text{culpable, or less destructive to the body politic than crimes by whites}
\text{against minorities}.\]

However, to do so, they argue, would be difficult to construct, and would
arguably violate the constitutional guarantee of equal protection. Wolfe
and Copeland refer to ‘groups of people who generally are not valued by
the majority society, who suffer discrimination in other arenas, and who do
not have full access to remedy social, political and economic injustice.'
This definition, however, fails to account for crimes motivated by hate against the majority population—and again, requires a politically subjective assessment as to the relative merits of individual social groupings.

It is argued here that the case of Sophie Lancaster, a Goth, represents the cornerstone of any analysis of protected groups. Garland refers to the murder of Lancaster, who the trial judge believed was targeted ‘solely because their appearance was different’ and whose murder was labelled a hate crime by the judge. Sophie and her boyfriend, Robert Maltby (who survived the attack) had been targets of abuse before the fatal attack and it was quite clear that the perpetrators of the offence were motivated by prejudice against the Goth community when attacking their victims. Garland notes that the trial judge stated, ‘This was a hate crime against these completely harmless people targeted because their appearance was different to yours.’

As to the social identity, or defining characteristics of Goths, Garland notes that Goths have both created and sustained a distinctive and tight-knit subculture which ‘permeates almost every aspect of their daily lives and that stays with them for decades.’ He states:

Contemporary Goth activity therefore operates mostly autonomously from mainstream and other stylistic subcultures, reinforcing the significant sense of collective affiliation between Goths and their distance from ‘conventional others’. Further, he notes that due to their appearance, which makes them easily identifiable as ‘other,’ they are an ‘outgroup’ prone to victimisation. In summary, Garland notes:

- Goths are members of a distinct social outgroup
- Goths are repeatedly targeted as victims of abuse
- The attack in question here was a stranger-crime
- The crime had an impact on the social confidence of the victim’s community

These four elements satisfy most tests of victimhood in the context of hate crimes. While Garland accepts that there may be difficulties in how these issues are defined at law, he concludes:

To be targeted due to one’s difference, in whatever form this may take, and the fear this may cause, could well be the most important facet of these discussions. If this is the case, then some academic definitions of hate crime may need to be rethought.

This argument is very compelling. Agreeing with Garland, I propose a rethinking of hate crimes which de-politicises the process, allowing juries (or
triers of fact) to determine whether, on the basis of the evidence before them, a hate crime was committed, rather than curtailing the operation of the legislation to a limited number of (albeit fully deserving) victim groups.

VII. WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

Prior to detailing the proposed new definition, a quick examination of the ambit of hate crimes legislation in some key jurisdictions is required. Jurisdictionally, the definition of hate crime victims differs enormously in three ways: first, the inclusion of different victim groups in the various pieces of legislation (ranging from hate speech to the more usual ‘hate crimes’); second, the manner in which hate crimes are defined and the manner in which hate crime statistics are gathered; and finally, whether hate crimes are punished at all through statute or the common law.

In England and Wales, sections 29 to 32 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 define a number of offences as racially aggravated offences. All of them are offences already known to the law in their non-racially aggravated condition. For the purpose of the sections, ‘racial group’ is defined as ‘a group of persons defined by reference to race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins.’

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 provides that where a court is considering the seriousness of an offence other than one provided for in sections 29 to 32 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and the offence is racially aggravated, or where it involves hostility towards the victim on the basis of their sexual orientation, disability, or religion, the court must treat that as an aggravating factor, and state in open court that the offence was so aggravated. In Scotland, the Offences (Aggravation by Prejudice) (Scotland) Act 2009 builds on the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003 by including disability, sexual orientation, and trans-gendered identity within the protected classes of hate crimes legislation.

Article 2 of the Criminal Justice (No 2) (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 provides that where an offence was aggravated by hostility, the court must treat that as an aggravating factor in sentencing which increases the seriousness of the offence, and must state in open court that that is the case. The offence is aggravated by hostility if the hostility is based on membership in a racial group, a religious group, or a sexual orientation group, or on a disability of the victim.

Ireland is quite different, prohibiting only hate speech, albeit encompassing a wider category of victims in this limited context. Section 2 of the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act makes it an offence for a person to publish or distribute material if that material is ‘threatening, abusive or insulting’ and is either intended to, or is likely to, stir up hatred. Section 1
of the Act defines hatred as being against a group of persons in the State or elsewhere on account of their 'race, colour, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origins, membership of the travelling community or sexual orientation.'

The sentencing system in Ireland is a discretionary one, with few limitations and even less guidance given to the Courts on sentencing issues. The Courts have yet to find that where an attack appears to have been motivated or aggravated by hate, that fact should be treated as an aggravating factor. Indeed, they have explicitly stated that such a motivation is not one which should be treated as an aggravating factor in sentencing. In DPP v. Jones and Derwin, the Director of Public Prosecutions appealed the sentencing court’s decision on the basis that it was unduly lenient, under section 2 of the Criminal Justice Act 1993. The first defendant was charged with the manslaughter of a 30-year-old Chinese national. Prior to the incident which resulted in the victim receiving his injuries, a number of racial insults were exchanged between Derwin and two Chinese men, one of whom, Zhao Liu Tao, was the victim. The Court was asked to consider that the sentences were unduly lenient on the basis of the need to condemn racially motivated attacks or attacks in which race plays any part. While the Court admitted that it did condemn such attacks, it went on to state that as the Director criticised only the ‘context’ in which the crime occurred (that is, the fact that it was racially aggravated), that context did not require a custodial sentence as a matter of principle, and further, that the sentence was ‘fully in accordance with the principles of sentencing.’

VIII. RETHINKING HATE CRIMES: BORROWING FROM THE SUBSTANTIVE CRIMINAL LAW

In the OSCE report Challenges and Responses to Hate-Motivated Incidents in the OSCE Region, the problems around defining the protected class in hate crimes legislation are skipped over, by including ‘other similar factor’ after the traditional list of victims. This approach, while arguably simplistic, has merit. If creating categories of protected groups is so fraught with difficulties, the logical solution is to simply frame the legislation to provide that any individual who commits a crime based on hate against a member of an identifiable group should be prosecuted under the legislation. This approach has a number of problems associated with it. First, as Jacobs and Potter quite rightly point out, prejudice is pervasive, and plays a role of some kind in a large percentage of crimes. Further, if the sole basis of a hate crime is the prejudice itself, then it could be argued that anyone could claim that he or she was a victim of a hate crime, and thus, the application of the term is limitless. As Hall observes, there is a danger that the very
concept of such an offence would lose its meaning. This approach, prioritising the ‘hate’ or prejudicial element of hate crimes offences, could lead to a situation where prejudice on the basis of any identifying characteristic or personality trait could justify the prosecution of a hate crime. If we consider the traditional targets of playground bullies—rich, poor, clever, stupid, fat, thin, ugly, and pretty—where would the line be drawn between a crime and a crime motivated by hate? It is argued here, however, that by re-prioritising hostility, as opposed to victim characteristics, as the core foundation of hate crimes statues, we will have hate crimes which are inclusive and protective, rather than exclusive and discriminatory.

It has been said that, by discriminating between victims and treating crimes motivated by prejudice more harshly, we are seeking to promote social equality through the criminal justice system. While legislation which penalises discriminatory behaviour from the perspective of the civil law is useful, hate crimes ‘reflect the increasing acceptance of the idea that criminal conduct is “different” when it involves an act of discrimination.’ It is argued here, however, that it is possible to criminalise such behaviour and retain the message that is central to hate crimes, whilst simultaneously avoiding the creation of hierarchies of victims on the statute book.

The criminal law has proven itself capable of identifying core personal characteristics through the operation of the defence of provocation. Traditionally, when the defence of provocation was argued, law in England and Wales required the ‘reasonable man’ (against whose temper the provoking remark will be tested) to be endowed with the characteristics of the accused that the jury thought would affect the gravity of the provocation to him, and that the question is not merely whether such a person would in like circumstances be provoked to lose his self-control but also whether he would react to the provocation as the accused did.

Characteristics which were found to be relevant in this context include:

- Age
- Gender
- Race
- Ethnic origin
- Sexual orientation
- Religious affiliation
- Physical infirmity
- Drug addiction
- Criminal record
Thus, no matter how distasteful or socially unacceptable the ‘personal characteristic,’ the jury would consider the provoking event from the perspective of an individual endowed with such characteristics. Juries were entirely capable of determining which characteristics should be considered, and it was accepted that we have faith in them as triers of fact to do so. As was stated in \textit{R v. Smith (Morgan)}: \textsuperscript{75}

\begin{quote}
The jury is entitled to act upon its own opinion of whether the objective element of provocation has been satisfied and the judge is not entitled to tell them that for this purpose the law requires them to exclude from consideration any of the circumstances or characteristics of the accused. \textsuperscript{76}
\end{quote}

Using this approach, the law is then capable of adapting to social and cultural changes. The question as to which characteristics should be taken into account or not is unclear: it is arguable that morally questionable characteristics should be taken into account, such as paedophilic tendencies. Ashworth states:

\begin{quote}
Does this mean that there are not boundaries at all to what personal attributes may be taken into account in assessing the gravity of the provocation? What about the case of a racist who believes that it is gravely insulting for a non-white person to speak to a white man unless spoken to first? . . . [T]he judgement of such matters must be left to the jury without much guidance . . . [T]hat is unsatisfactory: there ought to be a normative element that excludes attributes and reactions \textit{inconsistent with the law or inconsistent with the notion of a tolerant, pluralist society} that upholds the right to respect for private life without discrimination. \textsuperscript{77}
\end{quote}

This normative element was not introduced in the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, section 54 of which replaced the defence of provocation with the partial defence of loss of control. Section 54(1) provides that where there was a loss of control resulting from an act or omission of the defendant, which loss of control had a qualifying trigger, and a person of the defendant’s sex and age, ‘and in the circumstances’ of the defendant would have reacted in the same way (i.e., lost control), the defendant can rely on the defence. The circumstances of the defendant are defined in section 54(3) as ‘all of [the defendant’s] circumstances other than those whose only relevance to [the defendant’s conduct] is that they bear on [the defendant’s] general capacity for tolerance or self-restraint.’

It is argued here that this manner of assessing defining or personal characteristics from the perspective of the defence of provocation can be
easily applied in a context where the jury (or judge) determine whether a bias crime was committed against the accused on the basis of a ‘defining characteristic’ or ‘personal characteristic.’ The legislation could be framed as depending on

whether the jury believe that the motivation behind the criminal offence was based on hostility towards the victim, hostility which was directed at the victim because of their personal characteristics (or presumed characteristics), characteristics of which he or she shares with an identifiable social group.

This approach, I believe, would allow courts broad discretion in determining whether a bias crime occurred in a particular instance, thus allowing crimes against the homeless, Goths, and the elderly to be considered hate crimes, while simultaneously avoiding the problem whereby a ‘hate crime’ is said to occur where prejudicial language is used in the course of an attack, where that attack was not in any way motivated by bias. It could be argued that this definition is too wide, or that it will protect victims who are not morally or socially entitled to such protection. However, if the true purpose of a bias crime statute is to seek to deter crimes which are motivated by bias against a group, then this approach seems logical. It is an approach which is known to the law, and which juries are capable of applying.

In order to provide Ashworth’s normative element, it is argued that the legislation should include the nine protected characteristics included in equality legislation as indicative characteristics, or presumptive characteristics, but allow the jury or trier of fact to include other characteristics where it deems it appropriate—or, to use the language of the OSC—include the ‘other similar factor’ element. Thus, the legislation would define ‘personal characteristics’ as those protected in the equality legislation ‘or any other similar factor.’ This approach is commendable as it includes an element of consistency in the law, while simultaneously avoiding the politics of assessing which characteristics should be considered protected or not by bias crime statutes. It will also provide Ashworth’s ‘normative element’ to the legislation, allowing the trier of facts to determine whether, after considering all aspects of the case, a hate crime was in fact committed, without being hamstrung by politicised and narrow categories of victims.

In Ireland, equality legislation deals with discrimination on nine grounds:

- Gender
- Civil status (i.e., marital status or civil partnership status)
- Family status
- Age
• Race
• Religion
• Disability
• Sexual orientation
• Membership of the travelling community.\textsuperscript{78}

The Equality Act 2010 in Great Britain similarly recognises the following as protected characteristics:\textsuperscript{79}

• Age
• Disability
• Gender reassignment
• Marriage and civil partnership
• Pregnancy and maternity
• Race
• Religion or belief
• Sex
• Sexual orientation.\textsuperscript{80}

In this sense, the law already recognises and protects categories of individuals; it seems logical to extend the breadth of these categories to hate crimes victims. Other classes could be included where the trier of fact deems it necessary: Goths, geeks and the homeless could all be victims of hate crime using this broad definition. This approach also deals with inter-group and mixed-group hate crimes.

Admittedly, the solution proposed is not perfect. It does not, however, deal with attacks on the basis of an absence of a characteristic, such as religion. Similarly, it does not deal with individuals who are attacked due to their association with a group; an offender may well target such an individual, not because the attacker mistakes the person as a member of the group (for example, a straight woman with a gay man; a white woman with a black man), but because they are associating with that group. Further, people can belong to many difference communities, and thus have multiple identities and, as Chakraborti notes, ‘be prone to multiple forms of victimization.’\textsuperscript{81}

IX. Developing the ‘Similar Factor’ Element

While this approach does have merits, the Canadian experience highlights a potential problem for such a legislative development. Section 718.2(a)(i) of the Criminal Code provides that where there is evidence that an offence was motivated by bias, prejudice, or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical
disability, sexual orientation, or any other similar factor, that this should be considered an aggravating factor in sentencing.

Roberts and Hastings speculated on how the ‘any other similar factor’ element should be interpreted, referring to the media example of a criminal attack on a physician who was engaged in performing abortions. They first determined the ‘common element’ in the enumerated characteristics in section 718.2(a)(i), and noted that as both ascribed and choice-based factors are included, ‘the only common element is that they relate to groups or communities rather than individuals.’ Thus, they argued that the provisions in question apply where the attack is aimed at ‘an entire community’ rather than at an individual: ‘It matters little whether the community is defined by occupation belief or lifestyle.’ This approach seems sensible, being sufficiently broad to incorporate a Sophie Lancaster-type attack, while simultaneously limiting the application of the section to only those crimes which would truly be considered ‘hate crimes.’

In the context of the application of section 718.2(a)(i) in the Courts, there have been very few cases concerning the meaning of ‘other similar factor.’ Indeed, Lawrence and Verdun-Jones note that, with one exception, no ‘other similar factor’ has been recognised. The exception they mention is in one of two related cases, R v. JS and R v. Cran where the Court considered whether section 718.2(a)(i) applied. In the first case, the Crown had stated that there was no way of establishing that the case constituted a ‘hate crime’ for the purposes of the section. Romilly J disagreed. He stated:

It strikes me that this section contemplates hatred against ‘peeping toms’ and/or ‘voyeurs’ as being within its purview, since in my opinion such activity represents a sexual lifestyle which some may consider deviant, but it is a sexual lifestyle all the same.

On this reasoning, then, Romilly J believed that (deviant) sexual lifestyles were of a ‘similar’ nature to one’s (immutable) sexual orientation. However, he went on to state that, as a gay man was attacked in an area frequented by gay men (a fact which was known to the defendant), ‘I fail to see why it cannot be regarded as a “gay bashing.”’ This reasoning does not sit easily with the earlier statement: On this basis, the defendant knew (or ought to have known) that the victim was gay, and that the motivation for attacking him was his homosexual orientation, rather than the fact that he was a peeping tom.

In Cran, the Court was faced with exactly the same facts, and the question again was whether the defendant should be subject to the enhanced penalty provisions. Humphries J first observed that the Crown did not rely
on or refer to section 718.2(a)(i) in either the instant case or either of the cases before the youth court. She observed that there was no evidence before the Court that the motive for the attack was the sexual orientation of the victim. In fact, she stated that the motive for the attack seems to have been the defendant’s desire to attack ‘peeping toms.’ Humphries J stated, ‘There is . . . no basis on the evidence before the court to equate ‘peeping toms and voyeurs’ to gay people in the mind of Ryan Cran in the absence of evidence and in the face of evidence to the contrary.’

Lawrence and Verdun-Jones note that, whilst Romilly J articulated ‘an analogous ground’ for the application of the legislation, Humphries J applied a ‘strict construction’ of the language used in the section, as she was unwilling to extend the protection in the legislation to a group ‘in the absence of evidence linking the group targeted by the accused to one of the groups listed in the section itself.’ Neither of these approaches is particularly useful. To say that ‘peeping toms’ are an ‘analogous group’ to the gay community is both offensive and harmful to that latter community. However, to restrict the ambit of the legislation as narrowly as Humphries J did means that the section will have rather limited application.

Perhaps a more appropriate way for Humphries J to assess the question was to, first, ask if Cran attacked the victim because of his perceived membership of a group, regardless of whether that group has protected status. Second, then, the court should ask whether that group is deserving of inclusion in section 718.2(a)(i)–or to use Roberts and Hastings’ approach, to determine if peeping toms constitute a community. However, determining if a group should be protected by asking if they are the same as, or even analogous to, a protected group (the ‘equation’ of peeping toms and gay people) is not, it is argued, an appropriate approach. Rather, once it is established that the individual was attacked due to some characteristic he or she shares with an identifiable social group, the presumption should be that the case falls within the ambit of section 718.2(a)(i).

In what could be called the ‘sister’ provisions to hate crimes legislation, section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms provides for the guarantee of equality and ‘in particular’ prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability, and the development of the ‘analogous grounds’ provision is useful in this context. In Andrews v. Law Society of British Columbia the Court noted that the enumerated grounds applied to ‘the most common and probably the most socially destructive and historically practised bases of discrimination.’ While of some utility, this test could be considered quite narrow: arguably, the Sophie Lancaster case might not be considered to fall within the parameters of the test. Unsurprisingly, the Supreme Court of Canada took a different approach to the test in
Miron v. Trudel. Here, the Court rejected the ‘historical disadvantage’ test, and while recognising the utility of what the Court in Andrews said, McLachlin J stated:

[A]nalogous grounds cannot be confined to historically disadvantaged groups; if the Charter is to remain relevant to future generations, it must retain a capacity to recognize new grounds of discrimination. Nor is it essential that the analogous ground target a discrete and insular minority; this is belied by the inclusion of sex as a ground enumerated in s. 15(1). And while discriminatory group markers often involve immutable characteristics, they do not necessarily do so . . . All these and more may be indicators of analogous grounds, but the unifying principle is larger: the avoidance of stereotypical reasoning and the creation of legal distinctions which violate the dignity and freedom of the individual, on the basis of some preconceived perception about the attributed characteristics of a group rather than the true capacity, worth or circumstances of the individual.

Thus, rather than restricting the application of section 15 to only those groups which are determined to have been the subject of historical discrimination, the development of ‘analogous grounds’ is quite open, and instead has at its heart the human rights and civil liberties of individuals.

While Roberts and Hastings’ early analysis is persuasive, the jurisprudence from the courts on this issue in relation to section 15 would lead to a narrow interpretation of the ‘similar factor’ provision. If the approach suggested in this article is adopted, some guidance on the interpretation of ‘any other similar factor’ should be given in an interpretation section. The term could well be defined as ‘any community, social, or organised group with identifiable and shared characteristics.’ Again, this would provide for a test which places the concerns of the discipline of hate studies at its core, that is, the desire to combat the dehumanisation of the other, while simultaneously being inclusive and non-discriminatory.

X. Conclusion

By creating hierarchies of victims in hate crimes statutes, the criminal justice system discriminates arbitrarily between social groups. It is argued here that there is no logic in including sexual orientation as a defining characteristic, but excluding transgendered or transsexuals. The law is slow to change, and the criminal law even slower: It is a blunt instrument which should be applied with care and due regard to principles of equality and
respect for the private life of citizens. By allowing juries or triers of fact to establish if a hate crime actually occurred on a case-by-case basis, we will ensure that all victim classes are equally protected by the law, and that no hate crime will go unpunished.

**Author’s Notes**

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**Notes**

1. England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland, and Canada are all considered.
2. England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland, and Canada are all considered.
7. Ibid., 11.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.

14. This is not to say that no hate crimes statues emerge from an evidence-based approach to the issue: rather, that many are, and an objective approach is required in order to ensure equality of protection.

15. Barbara Perry, In the Name of Hate: Understanding Hate Crime (Routledge, 2001) 10.

16. Michael Blake, ‘Geeks and Monsters: Bias Crimes and Social Identity’ (2001) 20(2) Law and Philosophy 121. He notes, ‘A hate crime committed against a gay man . . . is a crime committed not in virtue of any particular aspect of the victim in question, but simply in virtue of his sexuality; for the purposes of the biased criminal, one gay man is as suitable as another . . . [He] is attacked not because of who [he] is, but because of what [he] is.’ At 123-124.


19. Barbara Perry, In the Name of Hate: Understanding Hate Crime (Routledge, 2001). An example of such a protected class might include people living with HIV or the AIDS virus who, in the 1980s and early 1990s may well have been seen as deserving of protection under the legislation, but are relatively less “othered” today.


22. Ibid.

23. Barbara Perry, In the Name of Hate: Understanding Hate Crimes (Routledge, 2001) 7-8.


25. James Jacobs and Kimberly Potter, Hate Crimes: Criminal Law and Identity Politics (Oxford, 1998) 73. It would also appear that, certainly in those jurisdictions with limited victim categories, those included are not necessarily done so on the basis of any policy reasons, but rather on the basis of political judgment and lobbying. In Northern Ireland, for example, MENCAP lobbied for the inclusion of the disabled community in the 2004 Order. Most ironically from a policy perspective, in Ireland 1989 when it
was illegal to engage in consensual homosexual acts, sexual orientation was included in the categories of victims in the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989. Similarly, the travelling community was so included despite the refusal of the Irish government to recognise the community as a separate ethnic group.


33. Ibid.


35. Ibid., 19.


37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., 134.

39. This would include groups to which the victim does not identify, such as the homeless, and groups whose only identifier is social oppression.

40. This would include, for example, African-American students who seek scholastic achievement and are subject to attach on the basis that they are ‘acting white.’


43. Ibid., 18.

44. Ibid.


46. Ibid., 17.
47. Ibid.


50. Ibid., 47.

51. Ibid., 46.

52. Ibid., 43-44.

53. Ibid., 44. (Emphasis added.)

54. Ibid., 45.


56. Ibid., 47.

57. Ibid., 54.


59. This is provided for under section 146 where the offence was motivated by hostility on the grounds of sexual orientation or disability.

60. ‘Racial group’ means means a group of persons defined by reference to colour, race, nationality, or ethnic or national origins, and references to a person’s racial group refer to any racial group into which he or she falls. See Art 2(5) and Art 5, Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (SI 1997/869, NI 6).

61. ‘Religious group’ means a group of persons defined by reference to a religious belief or lack of religious belief.

62. ‘Sexual orientation group’ means a group of persons defined by reference to sexual orientation. While transgendered persons would not usually fall within this category, the Northern Ireland Criminal Justice Inspectorate considers hate crimes against transgendered persons to fall within the ambit of the legislation. See, Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, Hate Crime: A Follow-up Inspection of Hate Crime by the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland (July 2010).

63. Disability for the purposes of the legislation means any physical or mental impairment, Art 2(5).

64. The Act was quite progressive for its time, but contains some alarming internal inconsistencies in light of the political and legal situation.
at the time and even now. For example, when the Act was passed, it was still a criminal offence for gay men (though not lesbians) to engage in consensual sexual behaviour. It was not until 1994 that this situation was rectified in the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1993, following an unsuccessful challenge to the legislation in the Irish Supreme Court in \textit{Norris v. Attorney General} [1983] IESC 3 and a successful application to the European Court of Human Rights in \textit{Norris v. Ireland} 10581/83 (1988). Members of the travelling community, a traditionally marginalised group in Ireland, are protected by the legislation, but despite constant calls from the international community, they are still not recognised by the State as a distinct ethnic group. See for example, Committee of the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination \textit{Concluding Observations: Ireland} (CERD/C/IRL/CO/3-4, 2011).


66. In \textit{DPP v. O’Driscoll and Moore}, the defendants were charged with assault causing harm, but also charged under section 2 of the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989. Here, the defendants made racist remarks towards the victim during the course of the assault and after the assault in the presence of An Garda Síochána (the police force). Here, the court sentenced the defendants on the more serious count of assault, with the 1989 prosecution being ‘taken into account.’ Thus, while hate speech is criminalised in Ireland, the Courts did not take the opportunity to declare a hate motivation an aggravating factor in sentencing, despite the clear evidence presented in the case that the offence was motivated by hate. For further details, as well as an examination of the merits of introducing ‘hate crimes’ legislation in Ireland, see Jennifer Schweppe and Dermot Walsh, \textit{Combating Racism and Xenophobia with the Criminal Law} (NCCRI, 2008); Séamus Taylor, \textit{Responding to Racist Incidents and Racist Crimes in Ireland} (Equality Authority, 2011).


71. Ibid., 273.

72. The defence of provocation was abolished by section 56 of the
Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and replaced with the partial defence to murder of ‘Loss of Control’ in section 54 of the Act. However, the discussion on the development of the defence, and some of its criticisms are relevant in this context.


75. *R v. Smith* [2001] 1AC 146. The ratio of the case has since been rejected, but the statement remains compelling in this context.

76. Ibid., 166.


79. The Act does not extend to Northern Ireland.


83. Ibid., 123.

84. Ibid. They ultimately argue that section 718.2(a)(1) should apply in the context of the attack against the doctor, as the attack was ‘directed at the group of physicians’ and thus carries ‘a threat to other individuals.’ Ibid., 124.

85. Michelle S. Lawrence and Simon N. Verdun-Jones, ‘Sentencing Hate: An Examination of the Application of s. 718.2(a)(i) of the Criminal Code on the Sentencing of Hate Motivated Offences’ (2011) 57 Criminal Law Quarterly 28. I am indebted to Professor Simon Verdun-Jones at South Fraser University for sending me the article.

86. [2003] BCPC 442.

87. [2005] BCSC 171. See also, Sean Robertson, ‘Spaces of Exception in

88. In one further case, *R v. Cornakovic* [2004] OF No 4081; 67 WCB (2d) 340, the Court stated that an ‘abiding bias or prejudice against Judges’ was ‘closely allied to the aggravating factor identified in section 718.2(a)(i) of the Criminal Code.’ However, the Court did not elaborate on why it believed this to be the case, nor does it appear to have taken this prejudice into account in the actual sentencing of the defendant.

89. [2003] BCPC 442, para 50.

90. Arguably, on this basis, paedophiles would similarly be protected by the legislation.

91. Ibid., para 10.


94. Ibid., 175. In determining which ‘analogous’ grounds should be protected, the Court referred to the judgment of Huggessan JA in *Smith, Kline and French Laboratories v. Canada (Attorney General)* [1987] 2 FC 359. Here, the Court stated that, in determining whether discrimination is based on analogous grounds, the question was whether the group was stereotyped, or the subject of historical disadvantage.

95. [1995] 2 SCR 418.

96. Ibid., para 149.

Combating Hate Through Young Adult Literature

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Abstract

Young adult literature can help readers look beyond tolerance toward a cosmopolitan ethics of difference as a more sophisticated position for combating hatred. In popular discourse, the ideal of tolerance is generally presented uncritically and deployed as the best response to a perceived difference in another. However, the ideal of tolerance presents many problems. Rather than discouraging hatred, tolerance merely asks us not to act upon related feelings. Additionally, tolerance is often deployed not only as an idealized set of behaviors, but also as a moral imperative. Thus, tolerance encourages cultural relativism where we are expected to be tolerant of all views, no matter how troubling. This essay argues that to discourage hate and violence, we must criticize underlying values that evoke them. Young adult fiction that deals with white supremacist characters creates an interesting lens for evaluating how neo-Nazis can be seen as standing at the very limits of tolerance, as well as how texts with neo-Nazi characters can be used as tools to assess values that are not worth living by. Reading these fictional texts may help to discourage in young adults the development of hatred while fostering a cosmopolitan ethics of difference that stands in opposition to the presumed morality of tolerance.

Keywords: young adult literature, tolerance, hate, cultural relativism, values, ethics of difference

Tolerance is often deployed as the ideal response to a perceived difference in another or the best way to combat hatred. In popular discourse, tolerance is generally presented uncritically as it has assumed such a prominent position in contemporary theories of justice. However, as theorists such as Catriona McKinnon and Wendy Brown have argued, tolerance itself presumes a potentially powerful dislike, or even hatred, is already in place. Instead of acting to discourage hatred, the ideal of tolerance merely asks those who experience dislike or hatred not to act upon those feelings. Additionally, it is often deployed not only as an idealized set of behaviors, but also as a moral imperative. Assumptions about the morality of tolerance reinforce its association as the appropriate response to any perceived difference. I illustrate these problems because I firmly believe we can take steps beyond advocating for tolerance that have the potential for more transform-
ative ethical responses. Instead, I advocate for the power of a cosmopolitan ethics of difference, an argument that needs to be defined in opposition to the presumed morality of tolerance. In this essay, I look at how young adult literature can help readers look beyond tolerance to a more sophisticated position on discouraging and combating hatred, rather than tolerating an imagined “other.” Wendy Brown’s 2006 text *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* points out how tolerance is often accompanied by a sense of moral superiority. To be tolerant, asserts Brown, “conjures seemliness, propriety, forbearance, magnanimity, . . . universality, and the large view” (p. 178), all ideals that allow one to express some sense of superiority over those who cannot claim that same sort of tolerant worldview. It is perhaps this connection with viewing tolerance as the most enlightened way to deal with difference that encourages an overriding sense of cultural relativism where one is expected to be tolerant of all views, no matter how troubling.

Young adult fiction that deals with white supremacist characters creates an interesting lens for evaluating how neo-Nazis can be seen as the very limits of tolerance, and also how texts with neo-Nazi characters can be used as a tool to assess values that are not worth living by and therefore may discourage the development of hatred itself. The books in this essay illustrate problematic values largely in two ways. First, there are texts featuring neo-Nazi protagonists and the values they choose to embrace, which eventually lead to violence: Laura Williams’ *The Spider’s Web* (1999) and Han Nolan’s *If I Should Die Before I Wake* (1994). Second, there are books that discuss the impact of violence inflicted by neo-Nazis on other characters, such as Carol Matas’ *The Freak* (2007) and Mats Wahl’s *The Invisible* (2007). The idea that there are, in fact, values that are not worth living by is potentially unpopular, as relativism has been taught so heavily in conjunction with tolerance initiatives. While actively discouraging violence is generally admired or encouraged, criticizing underlying values that lead to hate and violence is not always so easy in a society that promotes relativism and tolerance. I recognize, too, what Brown (2006) reminds readers in her book: “that tolerance is preferable to violent civil conflict is inarguable”; yet it can also be a “discursive function” that can serve to legitimate “violent imperialism” (p. 202). For these reasons I think that we can do better in formulating ways to talk about and discourage hatred.

One of the fundamental problems behind making claims about values tends to be the way that cultural relativism, or moral relativism, can be deployed to defend all practices, even those that harm others. Philosophy professor Chris Gowans (2008) defined one facet of moral relativism in the following manner:
The term “moral relativism” is sometimes associated with a normative position concerning how we ought to think about, or behave towards, persons with whom we morally disagree. Usually the position is formulated in terms of tolerance. In particular, it is said that we should not interfere with the actions of persons that are based on moral judgments we reject, when the disagreement is not or cannot be rationally resolved. (2008, para. 16)

The characters in this essay often exhibit values that are morally disagreeable—they are violent, destructive, and hateful. They also help readers see how sometimes interference, even in a moral judgment, is warranted. The challenge to relativism can also aid in the creation of a cosmopolitan ethic—a position that argues for the acceptance of values, but those values must be worth living by, according to philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah. Defining what that means, exactly, is perhaps easier than it seems, as it comes down to simply looking towards values that support human well-being. What these fictional texts have the potential to do is help readers reject moral judgments that limit human well-being. Ultimately, I wish to challenge the connection between tolerance and relativism, arguing that both are stumbling blocks to a world of cosmopolitan ethics that actively discourages hatred as an acceptable value.

I argue that adolescent literature featuring neo-Nazi characters has the potential to exemplify the problems with moral relativism in the ways in which the characters learn from their experiences with neo-Nazi violence. The texts in this essay show the possibility for an ethical framework that does not rely only on relativism. The books demonstrate the need to act in opposition to hatred, they emphasize the importance of human well-being, and they can help readers recognize more progressive decisions about lives other than their own. In this way, they help to discourage the development of hatred. Characters in The Spider’s Web and If I Should Die Before I Wake both discover the ways in which neo-Nazi values are ultimately incompatible with their desires for friendship and a sense of belonging. The Freak and The Invisible both show the results of neo-Nazi violence as well as the importance of community responses to these events. I begin with a brief discussion of the connections between relativism and tolerance, and some arguments to counter the presumed usefulness of these two terms. This section is followed by an analysis of the fictional texts dealing with neo-Nazi characters illustrating how ethical frameworks that do not rely on moral relativism can be developed. All these texts highlight how sometimes one should and must interfere to make a judgment that promotes human well-being rather than maintains relativistic attitudes. In this way, literary engagement, rather than censorship, can be a powerful tool for discouraging hatred.
The framework for modern relativism lies in the characteristic split between the concept of facts and the concept of values. One common presumption is that facts and values occupy entirely different spectrums of human understanding, and therefore have no joint role in human behavior, and if one were to make the connection between facts, values, and corresponding behavior one would be committing the “naturalistic fallacy.”

Kwame Anthony Appiah, in *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (2006), calls this notion Positivism, which he frames in terms of beliefs and desires. According to Appiah, beliefs are ideas that are based on evidence, and desires are feelings that “are satisfied or unsatisfied,” but there is no way to determine which desires are right or wrong (pp. 18-19). For Appiah, beliefs “are supposed to reflect how the world is” while desires “reflect how we’d like it to be” (p. 18). So while beliefs are still connected to some level of experience or emotional resonance, they are also indicative of the world as it is, rather than the world that one would like to see. Throughout this essay, when I refer to beliefs or desires, I am using Appiah’s sense of the words. As a specific example, one might believe the events of the Holocaust are real because there is documented evidence that supports this belief. However, based on this Positivist approach, one would never be able to claim the desires leading to the Holocaust were either good or bad, because it is impossible to determine right or wrong desires as one can presumably desire any sort of world at all, entirely separate from judgments about what sort of world may be created through those desires. Yet to claim that values and facts occupy significantly different realms ignores the way that values and facts are both forged within existing systems of power and privilege. In this essay, I argue that texts for adolescent readers featuring neo-Nazi characters can help to challenge the idea that all values are equally worth acting upon. There are genuine connections between the facts of discrimination and oppression and the values these choices express. Young adult fiction can help draw attention to the connection between how the world is and what an individual ought to do when faced with difficult decisions.

The notions of cultural relativism and tolerance are deeply connected, and in popular opinion are often assumed to have some form of moral superiority or enlightenment over those who judge values on a scale other than relativism. As Appiah (2006) asserts,

People often recommend relativism because they think it will lead to tolerance. But if we cannot learn from one another what it is right to think and feel and do, then conversation between us will be pointless. Relativ-
ism of this sort isn’t a way to encourage conversation; it’s just a reason to fall silent. (p. 31)

If there is nothing to be said on the subject of values because all values are equal, then what is the point in consuming narratives dealing with anyone outside the limited “norm”? This is particularly important in terms of fiction and what it can offer young readers in terms of a conversation about hatred. We must conceive of ethical frameworks that do not rely strictly on a structure of relativism. Neo-Nazi characters, particularly those in The Spider’s Web and If I Should Die Before I Wake, are excellent sites for evaluating how relativism is inapplicable when looking at certain values held by literary characters. This process, in turn, has the potential to encourage readers to assess the necessity of making solid value judgments. However, this is often an uphill battle in societies that have been encouraged to embrace tolerance as a value that offers both a sense of moral superiority and a notion that facts cannot impact values. While Catriona McKinnon (2006) acknowledges that in contemporary society tolerance is central to “liberal conceptions of justice,” she notes that it is also problematic because “without further specification of what toleration demands and how it is to be understood, this commitment gives no practical guidance whatsoever” (p. 16). Tolerance, as a value, offers little guidance for how to behave when faced with discrimination and hatred. In fact, the combination of relativism and toleration often leads to arguments for why one should tolerate even the intolerable.

I suggest, along the lines of Sam Harris’ 2010 book The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values, that what values worth living by have in common is a focus on improving human well-being. It is this notion of well-being that the books in this essay do an excellent job of highlighting as they show how various values held by the characters can negatively impact the well-being of others. Lexi and Hilary, of The Spider’s Web and If I Should Die Before I Wake respectively, both initially embrace neo-Nazi values before they recognize the violence is too destructive for them. Jade and Hilmer, from The Freak and The Invisible respectively, both are on the receiving end of neo-Nazi violence. Their lives are clearly and negatively impacted by the values and actions of white supremacist characters. Harris’ (2010) basic premise is that “it is good to avoid behaving in such a way as to produce the worst possible misery for everyone” (p. 39). For Harris, determining a scientific argument for human values can help individuals overcome the limitations of both relativism and rigid universalism. While we may not “personally care about the experience of all conscious beings,” it stands to reason “that a universe in which all conscious beings suffer the worst possible misery is worse than a uni-
verse in which they experience well-being” (Harris, 2010, p. 39). Harris’ claims seem nearly impossible to disagree with, largely due to the generalized phrasing here, and may seem to merely state the obvious. However, it’s the further definition of what well-being is that’s worth emphasizing here. He defines well-being in part as safety, health, and intellectual engagement that allow for life to thrive. To find examples of Harris’ “worst possible misery” one could point directly back to the experiences of other characters in young adult literature, particularly in texts for younger readers that deal with the Holocaust. Characters in Jane Yolen’s *The Devil’s Arithmetic* (1988), Art Spiegelman’s *Maus I and II* (1986, 1991), and Ruth Minsky Sender’s *The Cage* (1986) have their safety, health, and ability to live (let alone thrive) taken from them by a regime bent on their ultimate destruction. Without the acknowledgement that this sort of experience is inherently bad, there would be no reason for the cry “Never again!” Of course, creating a universe where everyone, with the possible exception of those promoting the misery, suffers the worst possible misery is to be discouraged.

In terms of my argument in this essay, discouraging human misery comes in the form of recognizing existing systems of power and privilege and working to challenge those systems, rather than uphold them. I believe literature can help young adults begin to make connections between oppressive power structures that limit human well-being and their own capability to make progressive decisions about the lives of those other than themselves. Harris’ claims about a moral landscape where well-being is to be promoted above the worst possible misery for everyone also aligns with Judith Butler’s arguments in *Frames of War* (2010). The issues regarding cosmopolitanism and human rights from Butler, Harris, and Appiah are not merely theoretical and limited to metaphysical abstraction. Rather, Butler (2010) reminds us that life “is precarious [and] the possibility of being sustained relies fundamentally on social and political conditions and not only on a postulated internal drive to live” (p. 21). For human beings to thrive, the social and political conditions must be focused on well-being rather than human misery. The problem is that all too often the encouragement of tolerance as a near universal value allows for the continuation of practices that limit the social and political conditions that allow for human well-being. My argument, developed in conjunction with Harris and others, stands in opposition to relativism. It encourages individuals to view how facts and values can and must be connected in order to promote a future where well-being is encouraged. Literature, particularly literature that helps create memories for young adults, can help them connect the facts of oppression to a more cosmopolitan ethics regarding the acceptable treatment of those different from themselves. In order to encourage a world-view where values
are connected to the “well-being of conscious creatures,” it is important to look beyond the limitations of consigning values to particular populations or nation-states (Harris, 2010, p. 180). If individuals are to allow for recognized and publicly grieved populations, “the social cannot be separated from cosmopolitan principles” and “national interests have to be balanced with other kinds of interests” (Delanty, 2009, p. 7). These interests can and should incorporate notions of well-being—life sustained by political and social conditions that allow for safety, health, and care.

II. REPRESENTATIONS OF THE EXPERIENCES OF NEO-NAZI CHARACTERS

There are fewer books for young adults featuring neo-Nazis than there are on the topic of the Holocaust, or even books that explicitly feature Jewish or German characters as protagonists. However, there are three fairly popular and well-received texts featuring neo-Nazi main characters for adolescent readers, two of which I discuss in detail here. I have identified the audience of adolescent literature as roughly from the ages of 12 to 21, and these three texts are targeted toward more or less sophisticated readers within this spectrum. The first, Laura Williams’ *The Spider’s Web*, is targeted to the youngest readers with a message about the results of parental neglect that one reviewer calls “heavily overstated” but still acceptable for grades 7-9 (Rochman, 2011, para. 1). The second is Han Nolan’s *If I Should Die Before I Wake*, a narrative that intertwines the stories of its neo-Nazi protagonist and a young Polish Jew during the Holocaust itself. Interestingly, these texts also all feature characters that have lived in Nazi-occupied Europe, either former Nazis or Holocaust victims. This combination serves to underscore the concept that some values are not worth living by, as the books illustrate both contemporary characters who are struggling with their problematic ideas about difference and the resulting violent behaviors.

The plot of Williams’ 1999 novel involves Lexi Jordan, a troubled young girl, and her brief friendship with a group of skinheads. While participating in minor acts of vandalism, she meets an elderly woman who was once in the League of German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*). The interactions she has with Ursula help her realize some of the problems with her newfound friends. Eventually, Lexi turns away from the skinhead group as their actions escalate from vandalism to violence. The book begins as Lexi is frustrated with her broken home and neglectful mother and has found a new “family” instead—a group of local skinheads who adopt her as a new member of their group and whom Lexi comes to regard as family. Lexi implicitly trusts the Nazi skinheads with whom she has found herself involved. However, the book ultimately illustrates how violence fractures
the group and Nazi ideologies are ultimately not to be tolerated. Lexi’s embracing of her newfound family comes from an insistent desire for friendship and attention. She truly believes the group cares about her and denies that they are in any way “hard and ruthless” (1999, p. 88). Her devotion to the group has led her to shave her head and adopt the classic accoutrements of a skinhead: heavy boots, black clothes, and pegged jeans. By getting a tattoo of a swastika on the side of her shaved head, Lexi has gone above and beyond the normal skinhead trappings. Lexi refers to it as her “spider” and considers it to be a “good luck charm” because “it keeps [her] safe” (1999, p. 10). While Lexi sees it as “just a pattern,” it is definitely one that her new friends appreciate greatly, as “Mick and the others had praised her and said that getting it done showed her loyalty, and they had treated her like she was their sister, like family” (1999, p. 21). For Lexi, the swastika becomes a symbol for belonging, rather than a symbol of fear or hatred. She embraces it without recognizing the symbolic nature of the mark, seeing only the sense of belonging and praise that it gets her from her newfound friends.

In fact, Lexi’s knowledge regarding the facts and beliefs of the neo-Nazi movement are muddled at best. She refers to herself as a member of the “Aran race [sic]” which is “the white race. The strongest race. We’re going to rule the world” (1999, p. 17). Yet when pressed as to why the white race is the strongest and has the potential to rule the world, her response is a weak: “We’re smarter . . . and stuff like that” (1999, p. 18). Lexi’s values have almost no basis in evidence or belief, as she has no idea why she is supposed to dislike the “bla—niggers and—spicks and kikes and people like that” (1999, p. 18). In fact, no-one in her gang seems to know much about the basis for their actions. When she asks Mick, the leader of the group, why “White is might! White is right!” he responds angrily with “Because it is!” (1999, p. 22). Her naïveté as to the basis of her actions potentially allows readers to be sympathetic towards her, as Williams heavily employs Lexi’s poor home life as a blanket explanation for her behavior. The Spider’s Web creates a portrait of neo-Nazism as a choice wildly divorced from any fact, with a bunch of inexperienced children acting out against their broken homes. Their values are based strictly around the desire to rebel, and therefore are easier for Lexi to turn her back on once things go too far. Her eventual rejection of the group is spurred on by the character Devon, a member of the group who Lexi discovers has a long-absent African American father. Upon this discovery, Lexi’s only reaction is to say, “I don’t care that you’re part black. No one would really care” (1999, p. 95). She assumes the family dynamic that holds the band of skinheads together is stronger than the underlying ideology that they all purportedly follow.
If their friendship were stronger than their neo-Nazi ideals, then the book would seem to support the notion that hatred spawned by white supremacy is merely another set of values worth living by. Of course, this is not the case, as Mick, Serge, and the rest of the gang attempt to kill Devon when they discover his family background. When Lexi finds Devon in the woods, she finally has an epiphany about her friends:

Tears spilled onto her cheeks, and she brushed them away. How could they have hurt their friend? Why? So what if he was part black? Did it really matter?

The knot in her stomach told her that yes, it did really matter. To them. Being a Nazi skinhead wasn’t just a place to go to hang out with friends. They weren’t a big happy family with relatives all over the country, all over the world. It wasn’t a game to them. (1999, p. 120)

The attack on Devon finally helps Lexi to realize that the friendship she so desired is based on shared values that she ultimately does not have. The larger message reminds readers that what Lexi ultimately values is friendship, a concept that would generally promote well-being in a variety of ways. When she faces the reality of her friends’ actions (taunting the blind, threatening old women, beating up Devon, and burning down a synagogue), she is forced to recognize that their actions only promote human misery. In this way, the text clearly illustrates how Lexi’s white supremacist values are not worth living by. The book ends with one of the gang’s leaders blinded by the fire he started in the synagogue and a tearful reunion between Lexi, her mother, and her younger sister Shelby. Williams asks readers to reflect on the events of the novel as Lexi questions the idea she overhears: “Blame the parents. Kids are kids, and they don’t know what they’re doing” (1999, p. 134). However, Lexi wonders about the veracity of this statement: “Did they know what they were doing? Serge did. And Mick. What about Karen and Billy and Devon? And what about herself and Shelby? What did they really know about what they were doing? Who was to blame?” (1999, p. 134). While these are somewhat complex questions with which to end the narrative, the text is incredibly straightforward and didactic, including a tidy resolution. Lexi has learned her lesson, and the only ones permanently harmed are the blinded Serge and another arsonist who may not survive her smoke-inhalation injuries. The blame in the situation is ultimately placed in the hands of the kids who committed the white supremacist acts, and took their rebellion too far. The blame can also be assigned to those who have violent behaviors based on fabricated desires. This final resolution in the novel underscores that although broken homes may garner the compassion of readers, if characters maintain their focus on promoting human misery, they will be punished. Lexi’s story shows how simplistic
misunderstandings of the “Other” ultimately lead to poor choices. By engaging with Lexi’s character, readers may see the dangers in oversimplifying identity itself. This, in turn, can ideally ask readers to learn how to engage with and appreciate difference, rather than misname, ignore, or merely tolerate it.

Han Nolan’s 1994 *If I Should Die Before I Wake* provides a more complex portrait of the internal processes of a young neo-Nazi. The main character, Hilary, is in a coma throughout the book, meaning all of the neo-Nazi representations are directly filtered through Hilary’s thoughts. She is involved with a local group of skinheads, whom she sought out because of her loneliness and anger. These emotions are her response to her father’s accidental death and mother’s alternating neglect and religious outbursts.  

Hilary’s coma has been caused by a motorcycle accident involving her neo-Nazi boyfriend, Brad. While Brad comes away unscathed, Hilary is trapped in a liminal space between life and death throughout the story. She views this development as troubling in part because she recognizes she is being treated in a Jewish hospital. Hilary finds this ironic: “What a joke on me, huh? Having a motorcycle accident in some Hebe town and coming here to the freakin’ Jew Hospital” (1994, p. 2). Hilary’s character early in the book is defined by this passage. She is angry, at both herself and the external world, and is comfortable expressing that anger in antisemitic slurs. During this time, a vision of an old, silent Jewish woman comes to her, and through seemingly supernatural abilities causes Hilary to go back in time by 50 years to inhabit the body of a young Polish Jew named Chana.  

When Hilary inhabits Chana’s body, she experiences the worst possible misery of Nazi Era Europe, including deportation, ghettos, and concentration camps. However, when Hilary is trapped in her own immobile body, she continually expresses vitriolic antisemitism and idolizes her white supremacist friends.

Much like Lexi in *The Spider’s Web*, Hilary comes from a broken family with an often-intoxicated single mother as the only family support structure. Hilary holds a great degree of hatred for her mother, who left her “all alone for three freakin’ days when [she] was only five years old” (1994, p. 22). Her mother experienced some sort of breakdown after Hilary’s father was killed in an accident. Hilary, in accordance with her beliefs, blames her father’s Jewish boss for his death. She views him as a “greedy Jew boss” who is probably “living in some fancy mansion, bought with his blood money” (1994, p. 92). As with Lexi, readers are encouraged to be somewhat forgiving of Hilary’s antisemitic sentiments because of her broken home. However, the book gives the overall impression that no matter who caused her father’s work accident, her subsequent actions are not worth living by. Initially, her acts are limited to verbally attacking the vision of
the older woman who appears during her coma and telling stories of how she interacts with her newfound family of neo-Nazis. After relaying her fascination with Brad and the rest of his white supremacist friends, she addresses the silent woman: “Only a Jew would stand here like a dummy and listen to someone insult them and then look at the person like she’s the one to be pitied. Only a Jew would do that. Only a dumb Jew” (1994, p. 9). Hilary’s interaction here with her elderly Jewish visitor is immediately followed by her first experience of living in Chana’s body. The narrative encourages the interpretation that her Jewish friend pities Hilary and is attempting to use the experience of the greatest possible misery to challenge Hilary’s hatred.

Because the books command complex emotional reactions, a close look at the concept of compassion is essential for understanding these two stories. Regardless of the situation, the main characters may provoke compassionate responses in readers. The interaction between Hilary and the old woman calls attention to an interesting facet of both *The Spider’s Web* and *If I Should Die Before I Wake*: the ways in which compassion is required for both the victims of antisemitism and the lost girls trying to recover from broken homes. In both of these cases, as Lauren Berlant (2004) suggests, compassion “is a term denoting privilege: the sufferer is over there” (p. 4). In Nolan’s narrative, Hilary is defined as “over there” both by her appearance as a shaved-headed neo-Nazi and as a girl trapped in a coma. However, Berlant notes the compassionate person also has “a resource that would alleviate someone else’s suffering,” often the resources of power and privilege that could be used to create political and social conditions that promote human well-being (2004, p. 4). It is also important to recognize that compassion should require individuals to take steps that promote action, rather than merely assuming an attitude of tolerance. Compassion must be more than a sense of moral superiority directed at the suffering of others as

the obligation to recognize and alleviate suffering is more than a demand on consciousness—more than a demand to feel right as Harriet Beecher Stowe exhorted of her white readers—then it is crucial to appreciate the multitude of conventions around the relation of feeling to practice where compassion is concerned. (Berlant, 2004, p. 4)

Berlant’s connection between feeling and practice is similar to the cosmopolitan ideas of challenging the fact/value separation. Merely responding to oppression by “feeling right” in terms of the sympathetic responses evoked by a sense of compassion does nothing to challenge systems that allocate the social and political conditions for well-being differently. Instead of “feeling right” in regard to Hilary’s situation, readers can and should recog-
nize this situation as warranting action and interfering with hateful moral values. Actions, in both *The Spider’s Web* and *If I Should Die Before I Wake*, are attached to the values of the characters. These values need to be recognized as not worth living by and possible to change. This can happen even while perhaps having compassionate responses to the broken homes of the main characters.

In terms of *If I Should Die Before I Wake*, the actions of Hilary’s friends quickly escalate from vandalism and insults to actual violence. She and her group of neo-Nazi friends, particularly her boyfriend Brad, have intensified their white supremacist behavior and kidnapped one of the area’s Jewish adolescents:

[Vandalizing a Jewish graveyard is] nothing compared to what Brad and Billy H. and Chucky B. did last night or yesterday or whenever the hell this accident happened. Hey, picture it. They dress up like Bozo the Clown, all three of them, and kidnap this Jew boy . . . . So, they stuffed him in one of the big orange lockers they got in the boys’ locker room at school. He’s pint-sized anyway, just like all Jews. Tiny little monkeys, what they are. Tiny little crooks . . . . Even if we are on spring break, Brad said, he was screaming loud enough to wake the dead. (1994, pp. 3-5)

The group has trapped Simon in the school for at least a week with no food or water and most likely no access to anyone who will hear him call for help. It is Hilary’s concern for Simon throughout the book that marks her gradual shift away from promoting human misery to expressing concern for well-being. Her hesitance is evident even in this first passage, where she notes that “even if we are on spring break” there should be a way out for Simon (1994, p. 5). While Brad’s statement merely implies that Simon was screaming loudly enough that he may have been heard outside the school, Hilary’s reflection on this piece of information is readers’ first clue that she might not want Simon stuck in that locker for the entirety of spring break. She wonders repeatedly about Simon’s status: “Do they leave the heat on over vacation? . . . . How long can a person live without food? . . . . Get Simon out, Brad. Okay? I never expected it to go this far. I never wanted it to go this far” (1994, pp. 28, 93, 119). Hilary’s hatred is mediated by her (supernatural) experiences as a Holocaust-era Jewish girl, and she gradually becomes more and more concerned for Simon’s well-being.

After Hilary lives Chana’s life during the Holocaust, including the humiliations the Germans forced the Jews to face, the forced deportations and endless starvation and illness of the ghettos, and the horrors of living in a concentration camp, she is forced to face her former values armed with a new set of facts. Hilary, seeing the world through Chana’s eyes, has faced
the worst possible misery, as defined by Sam Harris (2010) in the *Moral Landscape*. However, having faced that historical experience, Hilary is unwilling to maintain the values that promote suffering for others. She instead has to look towards a life where human well-being outweighs human suffering, and embracing this value requires not only a change of mind, but also a course of action. Hilary could have learned merely to tolerate the “Other” during her time in Chana’s head. However, as she begins to come out of her coma, the silent older woman finally speaks. Hilary realizes that the “dumb Jew” she has been insulting throughout the book is the much older version of the same Chana whose life Hilary lived alongside during the Holocaust. The elderly Chana encourages Hilary to “use what you know to change things. You can change the world, Hilary” (1994, p. 281). Although Hilary says, “I can change me, but nothing else,” Chana disagrees:

> “You were an Aryan Warrior, a neo-Nazi. People will listen. Students will listen. Your past will be your gift.”
> “I’m afraid. I don’t think I can do what you ask of me. I can’t go back.”
> “You have to. You are part of the chain, Hilary. We are connected now. In hearing me, in understanding me, you have given my past new meaning. It will change the meaning of your past as well, and someday your life as an angry child who has turned her hate to love will change still another life. You’re part of the chain, one you cannot break.” (1994, p. 282)

Hilary’s first action after regaining consciousness is to tell her mother where to find the Jewish boy, Simon, whom Brad and the others had locked in the school. Hilary is forced, through her rather supernatural experience of the Holocaust, not only to question her values, but also to take action in a way that promotes Simon’s well-being. While Hilary has certainly worked at changing herself, she also has changed Simon’s life, and perhaps saved an innocent life. Her life as an “angry child” is forgiven as she sees the neo-Nazi values as desires that only promote human misery and are therefore not worth embracing any longer.

### III. Responses to Neo-Nazi Violence

Beyond books that deal with neo-Nazi protagonists and their eventual transformations, there are several other stories that offer accounts of suffering at the hands of white supremacists and the importance of community response to such violence. Both Carol Matas’ *The Freak* (2007) and Mats Wahl’s *The Invisible* (2007) deal with characters impacted by neo-Nazi vio-
lence. *The Freak* uses a plot device similar to the one that initiates the events of a story like Stephen King’s 1982 novella “Apt Pupil.” Jade and her family discover there is a war criminal living in their suburban Winnipeg neighborhood. Jade’s Jewish and Indian family would like to see the criminal extradited for “the murder of an entire town of Jews during the war” (2007, p. 51). Her aunt’s partner, Sahjit, is a lawyer currently working with the B’nai Brith to deport the man, and this job has brought Sahjit to the attention of local hate groups. Jade, the “freak” of the story’s title, has recently recovered from a case of meningitis that nearly killed her. While Jade is happy to be back in the land of the living, she has come back with psychic powers that often lead to her intervention in antisemitic attacks. Jade gets a distinct sense of forthcoming dangers to her friends’ and family’s well-being, which in turn helps illustrate how terrifying neo-Nazi violence can be not only to those who directly experience it, but also for the larger community. No one ever directly attacks Jade, but the antisemitic threats and violence against her family show how hatred of this sort becomes a form of terrorism for those involved. Looking at the ways in which white power literature functions to terrorize characters such as Jade and her family can help encourage an understanding of how even those actions that ostensibly are separate from one’s activities are signs that values have impact—and no-one’s best interest is served by hate speech.

After Jade’s newfound crush is beaten up on the way home from a poetry reading, rash es of hate-speech leaflets begin appearing at her high school. The first follows the common threat of Holocaust denial:

*The Jewish Conspiracy is not over.*
*Who really caused WWII?*
*Hitler was a great Leader!*
*Did the Holocaust really happen?*
*No. It is,*
*Propaganda from the Jews to make Hitler look bad.*
*Jews who kill little Christian babies and bake them into their bread.*
(2007, p. 64)

This troubling flier incorporates classic antisemitic claims about Jews stealing Christian babies and eating them, as well as Holocaust denial and Hitler worship. The school, to its credit, responds by declaring Holocaust Awareness Week and gets students to read a variety of Holocaust literature, including *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Jade reacts by feeling “really sick inside” and pays close attention to her peers:

I feel all these pitying looks all day. There are quite a few Jewish kids at Kelvin, but we certainly aren’t the majority. I can feel that everyone
Jade unpacks the various reactions of her peers with the help of her newfound psychic abilities. The embarrassment and pity that she senses in others point back to problems in tolerating difference rather than engaging with it. Students react with pity and embarrassment because the antisemitic fliers have called attention to difference in a way that they are not comfortable with. They react less with anger and more with bewilderment due in part to the problems with tolerance discourse. Teaching tolerance, coupled with cultural relativism, results in the inability for many of the students to act against the antisemitism in any sustained manner. Rather, they react by reinforcing the most problematic aspects of tolerance and compassion: They feel right, as Berlant puts it, but they are able to go only that far (2004, p. 4). Although readers come away from the encounter with the sense that for the most part Jade’s fellow students have their hearts in the right place, their compassion ultimately gives them very little guidance on action. Since Jade can literally sense their feelings, she knows that largely her fellow students are “feeling right.” Although the students know that the antisemitic discourse is wrong, they are unable to take those feelings any further. As McKinnon notes in her evaluation of tolerance, the ideal often “gives no practical guidance whatsoever” to what sorts of action one must take in reaction to intolerant behaviors (2006, p. 16). For the most part, the bulk of the school feels sympathy for all the Jewish kids faced with the accusation that they will “kill little Christian babies and bake them into bread,” yet they have no idea what else to do besides feel right (2007, p. 64).

The most important aspect of *The Freak* is in the actions of the larger community. Instead of tolerating the white supremacists in their community, town members join together to interfere with neo-Nazi behavior. The dispersal of hate mail in the book continues, the next time arriving at students’ homes. Again, the letters involve classic claims of Jewish barbarism: “Jews kill little babies so they can drink their blood on the Sabbath. For centuries this practice has been going on unchallenged but it is time for civilized people everywhere to put a stop to it” (2007, p. 93). However, violence in *The Freak* extends beyond the threatening letters sent to members of one high school. Sahjit’s son and Jade’s crush, Jon, is beaten up by “skinhead types” (2007, p. 59). Then Jade begins having premonitions that Sahjit is in danger, and eventually saves him from a car bombing (2007, p. 78). It appears that the Nazi war criminal has been attracting followers who are willing to defend him against deportation by murdering those against him. Like the characters of Lexi and Hilary, the Nazi war criminal attracts
troubled youth like Roger, who Jade knows comes from a broken home and has moved in with an uncle who is a “bad influence” on him (2007, p. 83). Unlike Lexi’s and Hilary’s stories, however, the violence in The Freak is better directed and more sophisticated. It all culminates in an attack on Jade’s synagogue on Yom Kippur, an incident she has been having nightmares about for months. Because of those dreams, Jade is able to spot the bomb that has been brought to the synagogue and dispose of it in the river before it has a chance to explode in range of anyone. She is particularly horrified by the way the attack happened because “it wasn’t enough for them to leave the bomb in the fridge so it would go off there. After all, with an empty kitchen maybe no one would die. They brought it to a room full of children. Children! Every time I think about it I feel sick” (2007, p. 156). Jade saves the day, and is fortunately backed up by a law enforcement system that tracks down the source of the hate mail and the bombings. Although the students’ response is lacking, Matas creates a portrait of a larger community of teachers, parents, and law enforcement willing to stand up against the neo-Nazi menace in their community.

Mats Wahl’s The Invisible12 (2007) shows how a refusal to deter behaviors that promote human misery can lead to terrible results. As the characters value profit and the image of “normalcy” above all else, the book illustrates how human misery and violence are supported by a larger community. In contrast with a cooperative system that works to solve the antisemitic attacks that Jade experiences in The Freak, the ways in which neo-Nazism is dealt with by those with power and privilege in The Invisible are much more troubling. The title’s namesake, Hilmer Eriksson, awakes one morning to find that no one can see him. He tries to discover what happened to make him invisible and follows Harald Fors, the detective assigned to his missing person’s case. The investigation delves into the troubling neo-Nazi presence in their small Swedish town. It also demonstrates the frustrating reticence of anyone to cooperate with Fors, as locals fear the town’s image will be tarnished by accusations of neo-Nazism. Fors eventually tracks down the visible Hilmer, who has been beaten to death for standing up for the rights of the immigrant Muslim population. Wahl hints at the terrible things that have happened to Hilmer throughout, such as when he finds himself “upset that he had such a hard time breathing. Something was bubbling in his throat. Blood” (2007, p. 57). Later, the author poses the question of what one can know “about the person who lies bleeding, whose mouth is stuffed with rotting, wet leaves” (2007, p. 84). The implication that Hilmer is lying somewhere bleeding and choked with rotten leaves encourages readers to feel frustrated by the slow pace of the investigation, as it is continually hampered by those only looking out for their own best interests. Ultimately, those with power and privilege in the
town of Vallen prove the ways in which their values distance them from concern for human well-being.

It is the neo-Nazi youth who are causing the trouble in Vallen, a problem that has been going on for some time, leading to the murder of Hilmer. The group targeted by the Swedish supremacists is the immigrant Muslim population. Marked as “Other” by their language, skin tone, and religion, they are easy targets for the neo-Nazi youth and the disdain of the Swedish citizens. Repeatedly, they are referred to in terms of their failings. Mahmud, one of Hilmer’s fellow students, is described by the soccer coach as speaking horrible Swedish, “even though he’s lived in this country for an eternity. In a few years he’ll be unemployed. Then the rest of us will have to support him” (2007, p. 25). Thoughts like these on the minds of average townspeople do nothing to discourage attacks on the immigrant areas of town, including cross burning and regular threats to students like Mahmud (2007, p. 37). Some of the town’s youth have picked up on these attitudes and taken them further, dressing in traditional neo-Nazi boots and threatening black, and referring to the Muslims as “migrant scum” (2007, p. 3). The sense of hatred for anyone different is palpable throughout the town, even though many of the immigrants are there seeking asylum, running from one persecution to another. The neo-Nazis in Hilmer’s school have been painting swastikas and participating in minor acts of violence and vandalism for a while, but it is when Hilmer steps in to speak up on behalf of the immigrants that they become incensed. When three of the most notoriously violent kids in town find Hilmer alone, they attack him, screaming about how “he was a traitor and he sided with the immigrants and that he shouldn’t give a damn about them,” and they want to know “why the hell Hilmer was defending the darkies.” This is followed immediately by the attack that kills Hilmer: “Both Anneli and Bulterman kicked him. They yelled the whole time that he was a traitor” (2007, pp. 164-165). The skinheads’ anger is taken out on Hilmer, one of the few people in the town who would stand up for the immigrant population. In Vallen, hatred and fear of the migrant population are normalized to such an extent that kids like Anneli and Bulterman are shocked and angered to the point of murder when someone stands in opposition to their behavior. Their actions are only underscored by the town’s larger reluctance to do anything about the racism in their community.

The local population turns away from concerns about human well-being in favor of selfish concerns about their own individual success. In contrast to the reactions of authority figures in The Freak when neo-Nazi literature shows up in the school, officials in The Invisible refuse to even acknowledge that the skinheads, the swastikas, or the threats add up to anything other than kid stuff; as the principal claims,
We don’t have any neo-Nazis here. We have some troublemakers who do what they can to scare adults. No one gets anywhere by calling them neo-Nazis . . . . If I start labeling kids as neo-Nazis based on a few tussles they’ve had with other students, things will go to hell in a hurry. (2007, p. 67)

There is no real indication of what the principal means by things going to hell, as he gets distracted and his conversation with Detective Fors ends. However, local councilman Berg makes it a bit clearer:

“This thing with the swastikas is sensitive business,” said Berg.
“What do you mean?”
“It can be misunderstood.” . . .
Berg leaned towards Fors again and drove his hands into his jacket pockets. “You don’t think Fritz and Hans from Berlin will want to come here and fish with their kids if the place gets known as a hangout for Nordic Nazis, do you?”
“Is that what this is?”
Berg shook his head. “Of course not. See you.” (2007, p. 50)

Berg has been counting on German tourist revenue to carry the town through difficult economic times and is terrified that any bad press will discourage tourism. He actually goes so far as to tell Fors, “I think it would be best if you didn’t find [Hilmer]” (2007, p. 94). It is only when Fors reminds Berg, “What will happen if it gets out that a council chairman hindered the investigation of a child’s disappearance—a disappearance that could very well be criminal?” that he finally caves and gives the detective key information that leads to the arrest of Anneli and Bulterman (2007, p. 94). Berg and the Vallen elders hold values that maintain their power and privilege; they are never concerned for the well-being of others, whether they are kids like Hilmer or the people attempting to take asylum in Sweden.

Fors reflects on the ways in which the townspeople’s attitude is in some ways less forgivable than the actual actions of the young adults involved. Many of the neo-Nazis, again, come from broken homes and unhappy backgrounds. When Fors meets with the mother of Marcus, one of the ringleaders of the Vallen skinheads, he finds himself contemplating his feet, thinking, “You tiptoe respectfully at the victim’s home but not around the possible culprit’s mother. Do you think one of these two mothers is less a victim than the other?” (2007, p. 87). Both women have “lost” sons—one to violent death and one to committing violent acts. This draws attention to the wide effects of spreading human misery and ignoring values and actions that express only hatred and violence. Wahl’s book makes it clear that
there is something fundamentally broken in the ways that values are expressed in Vallen, and that has trickled down to Marcus, Anneli, and others in ways that tear families apart and ultimately kill Hilmer. There is no attempt on the part of school officials or town leaders to quell or discourage the activities of the neo-Nazi kids in town. Vandalism is concealed, threats and bullying are overlooked as minor troublemaking, and public perceptions of the town’s non-white population are nearly always discriminatory. Hilmer’s death is caused by years of looking the other way and the community’s failure to intervene when hatred and violence are expressed. His death therefore illustrates the importance of having a larger culture that is willing and able to stand up to hate speech and oppose the promotion of human misery.

Conclusion

Books for young adults that feature neo-Nazi characters are potentially powerful sites for illustrating values not worth living by. In texts like The Spider’s Web and If I Should Die Before I Wake, the protagonists clearly learn that their participation in skinhead organizations often clashes with the very values they were hoping to find: Friendship and love both evaporate in favor of hatred and violence. Lexi and Hilary, at the end of the novels, have learned valuable lessons about what is actually feels like to promote human misery over human well-being. Finally, The Freak and The Invisible both illustrate the importance of community reaction to neo-Nazi behavior. Both books illustrate how values that promote human suffering can be dealt with in ways that either limit or exacerbate violence.

Harris (2010) asks readers in The Moral Landscape to consider how “in practice, relativism almost always amounts to the claim that we should be tolerant of moral difference because no moral truth can supersede any other” (p. 45). Yet all of these books for young adults illustrate how there are moral truths that can supersede others. These moral truths must also involve intervention and challenges to hatred and violence, particularly when done in service to a set of values like the neo-Nazis’ discussed here. These books not only help readers engage with those that may be different from themselves, but also evoke responses that go beyond cultural relativism or tolerance. In showing that certain behaviors are, in fact, not to be tolerated, these books can help promote an ethical foundation that demands action in the light of persecution. This is one of the powerful ways in which literature, and young adult literature in particular, can help intervene in and discourage practices of hatred.
1. Gowans also explains that philosophers often reject this definition, as it is quite simplistic. For the sake of my argument regarding tolerance and toleration, however, this definition holds true.

2. One explanation of this fallacy comes from 20th century British philosopher G. E. Moore, who accused anyone who infers that X is good from any proposition about X’s natural properties of having committed the naturalistic fallacy. Assuming that being pleasant is a natural property, for example, someone who infers that drinking beer is good from the premise that drinking beer is pleasant is supposed to have committed the naturalistic fallacy. The intuitive idea is that evaluative conclusions require at least one evaluative premise—purely factual premises about the naturalistic features of things do not entail or even support evaluative conclusions. (Ridge, 2008, para. 8)

3. I maintain Harris’ language of basic values here because I find it interesting and accessible. However, this does not indicate that I condone his recent encouragement of racial profiling found on his blog in April 2012: http://www.samharris.org/blog/item/in-defense-of-profiling. For an excellent challenge to Harris’ problematic claims on profiling I recommend Chris Stedman’s Huffington Post article “Sam Harris, Will You Visit a Mosque With Me?” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/chris-stedman/sam-harris-racial-profiling_b_1472360.html.

4. There are a good number of films that feature neo-Nazi characters, often featuring very well-known actors. Some examples are Edward Norton in American History X, Russell Crowe in Romper Stomper, Ryan Gosling in The Believer, Will Farrell in The Producers, and Brad Renfro in Apt Pupil.

5. Stephen King’s novella “Apt Pupil” is another text that is well-suited to the sort of analysis I create here, although I do not cover it in detail in this essay.

6. These characters deserve close attention as well; however, since they are secondary to the neo-Nazi characters in the book, I do not cover them in great detail here.

7. For another text that covers the connections between belonging, symbols, and fascism see Todd Strasser’s 1981 book The Wave. Strasser’s novel covers a high school history experiment illustrating to students how fascism emerges and eventually leads to violence. The book was also made into an early-1980s Afterschool Special and a 2008 film in Germany.

8. The book highlights how ironic it is that Serge ends up blinded after
the arson attempt. Earlier in the text he had encouraged the gang to harass a blind kid in the neighborhood, brushing aside Lexi’s logical concern that “Maybe he wasn’t born blind. Maybe he got it from an accident or something” (p. 70). Serge’s violence has left him outside the circle of his own ideals, a now “impure” person (p. 70).

9. Hilary actually sees her mother’s relationship with religion as similar to her relationship with the skinheads: “Mother found religion and I found Brad. We’re both looking for something to fill us up” (p. 55).

10. Chana’s story in Nolan’s book is actually a quite accurate representation of the events of the Holocaust for Polish Jews. Again, because I am focused on Neo-Nazi characters here, I will not delve too deeply into this half of the narrative.

11. A number of texts in this study deal with a variant of inherited Jewish mysticism. Nolan’s text and Matas’ text both involve the psychic abilities transmitted through Jewish families.

12. *The Invisible* was originally published in Sweden in 2000 and was produced as a Swedish film in 2002. It was translated to English in 2007 and shortly after that made into a Hollywood adaptation.

REFERENCES


BOOK REVIEWS

Arthur Goldwag’s *The New Hate: A History of Fear and Loathing on the Populist Right*
[New York, NY: Pantheon, 2012. 368 pp. $27.95]

Thomas R. Pegram’s *One Hundred Percent American: The Rebirth and Decline of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s*
[Lanham, MD: Ivan R. Dee, 2011. 281 pp. $27.95]

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As reported by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), the number of hate groups in the United States has continually risen since 2000 in response to three factors: the election of the nation’s first African American president, economic turmoil, and undocumented immigration (Potok, 2011). While these structural changes might feel painful for those native-born white Americans who view signs of increasing pluralism as worrisome and who believe that their economic losses are due to the gains of minority groups, they are not new challenges—nor are the hate-filled responses to them new. In both *One Hundred Percent American: The Rebirth and Decline of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s* by Thomas R. Pegram and *The New Hate: A History of Fear and Loathing on the Populist Right* by Arthur Goldwag, the authors make the point that hate groups and the conspiracy theories that circulate within them are deeply rooted in American culture and that, while they are, in the details, constructions of their own times, they are also responses to problems seen as long-standing threats to American security and prosperity, responses that are consistent across time. Indeed, writes Goldwag, “The New Hate is the same as the Old Hate—only now it’s hiding in plain sight” in a way that is “beyond Orwellian” (pp. 26-27) as haters adopt the language of populism, espouse claims of discrimination, and depict themselves as victims in politics and political entertainment. While the work of Pegram, a professor of history at Loyola University Maryland, focuses narrowly on the 1920s Klan movement, his careful detailing illustrates a broader trend: that the methods used by hate groups are embedded in the culture of the moment. In contrast, Goldwag,
author of *Cults, Conspiracies, and Secret Societies* (2009) and *'Isms & 'Ologies* (2007), demonstrates, in his investigation of conspiracy theories, antisemitism, anti-Masonic activism, anti-Catholicism, and Islamaphobia, pseudo-conservativism, and white supremacy and black separatism, that the animating forces of hatred are similar across hate movements. Taken together, the two books—the first written by an academic, the second by a journalistic writer—provide a picture both broad and deep of how hate movements start, organize, and decline.

Much scholarly work on the Klan of the early 19th century has focused on local histories and subtopics, such as gender or religion, or taken a narrow methodological approach. (See, for example, Michael Newton, *The Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi: A History* or Mark Paul Richards, “‘This Is Not a Catholic Nation’: The Ku Klux Klan Confronts Franco-Americans in Maine” in *The New England Quarterly* for examples of recent local histories; see also Kathleen Blee, *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s* and Kelly J. Baker, *Gospel According to the Klan: The KKK’s Appeal to Protestant America, 1915–1930* for examples of explorations of subtopics, or Rory McVeigh, *The Rise of the Ku Klux Klan: Right-Wing Movements and National Politics*, for scholarship with a narrower methodological approach.) Pegram respectfully engages such scholarship, drawing from it, as well as from innumerable primary sources, including Klan publications and newspaper commentary, in his story of the Klan’s meteoric rise and fast fall. In synthesizing information about individual klaverns and Klansmen, Pegram effectively shows the diversity across Klan experience and thinking—fragmentation that would contribute to the organization’s downfall in a few years.

Pegram’s depiction of the Klan of the 1920s intimates that the organization and the motivations of its members were more complex than history books suggest. While the “first rising” of the Klan, which occurred during the Reconstruction Era and was confined to the former Confederacy, was established as a terrorist organization to maintain the superiority of whites over formerly enslaved peoples, the 1920s Klan addressed a mishmash of goals, including the denigration of African Americans, Jews, and immigrants, in an effort to bolster the privilege of white native-born Protestants. It also saw itself as—and was seen in many communities as authentically participating in civic life as—a moral police force, promoting sobriety, marital fidelity, respectful intergenerational relationships, patriotism, and the Protestant work ethic. By promoting itself not primarily as a bigoted organization (though this theme certainly resounded in many Klan strongholds) but as a pro-American values organization, the Klan grew in its appeal, particularly in the Midwest and Northwest but also in Mid-Atlantic states,
where the violence that inflected Southern and Southwestern klaverns was less acceptable.

The 1920s Klan was successful because it tapped into the underlying sense of white Protestant privilege that many white Protestants shared, as well as into their fears about changing demographics due to large-scale immigration from Jews and Catholics. At the same time, it depicted itself as a fraternal organization, one that stressed brotherhood and unity—values shared by other fraternal organizations also popular at the time. (Indeed, many Klansmen were members of both their local KKK and the Masonic lodge or other fraternal group.) The Klan thus put into play fears about masculinity as well as whiteness, the same concerns that drove the development of the Boy Scouts and U.S. military and political incursions into Latin America and the Philippines. In this way, the 1920s Klan was very much a product of its time, “historically distinctive” from other manifestations of racist movements (p. 220).

The Klan was situated in the 1920s in other ways, too, though. When the 1920s Klan failed to emerge as a powerful organization as quickly as founder Hiram Evans desired, he hired a marketing duo—Elizabeth Tyler and Edward Young Clarke—to promote the organization, though the marketers were careful to downplay the role of Tyler because of her sex. Using marketing techniques that were increasingly common in the commercialized 1920s to sell all kinds of new products to overextended consumers, they continued to develop the intricate system of Klan culture—the secret handshakes and code words that Evans saw as central to developing “klannishness”—but expanded the appeal of the group by layering over the fraternal aspects further claims to patriotism, law and order, and family values. Perhaps as importantly, they created a pyramid-scheme-like system of recruitment, with professional “kleagles” serving as Klan salesmen. Each new recruit paid $10 to join, plus more for the necessary robes and associated fees. A cut went to the kleagle, and allotments went to the local chapter and national office. The Klan, then, was as much an ideological fraternal organization as a business, and it was, at first, highly successful, enforcing moral behavior through vigilante violence, organizing boycotts, supporting Klan-owned businesses, electing candidates at nearly all levels of government, infiltrating churches, funding local charities, and running charitable organizations such as orphanages.

The central paradox of the Klan, though, is that it failed, despite its appeal to nativist, antisemitic, racist whites who wielded so much power at the time. And here Pegram makes one of his most valuable contributions to scholarship on the Klan, by showing that the intensive efforts that the Klan made to appear mainstream in 1920s society were also evidence of the outsider status of the Klan. Internal factors contributing to its downfall include
the revelation of morally hypocritical behavior, including drinking and illicit affairs, among Klansmen and their leaders; differing ambitions among local and national leaders that caused tension as “the Klan organization pushed beyond the grassroots support that had made the Invisible Empire a social movement of national consequence” (p. 183); and the inability of leadership to control the violent behavior of members. Additionally, the Klan’s appeal as a fraternal organization disappeared as internal tensions about leadership and organizational direction built; Klan members looking for fraternal community had other, better options—ones that did not subject them to potential anti-Klan backlash, including violence, or endanger them or their businesses. As Pegram notes,

Although compelling and exciting for many native white Protestants, especially during the boom years of the early 1920s, neither the public nor the secret, insular manifestations of the Ku Klux Klan community won the permanent loyalty of the hooded multitudes it had attracted into its ranks. (pp. 44-45)

External factors contributed to the decline of the organization, too. The Klan avoided running a third party in politics, but it did have success in electing Klan members and those who supported the Klan’s goals; however, in politics, the newly-elected Klansmen, while ambitious, were often inexperienced and incompetent in governing. For those politicians who were not Klansmen, Klan endorsement was often damaging, as the group was a “divisive and therefore unwelcome presence in national party politics” (p. 212). Backlash came not just from the increasing number of Jewish and Catholic Americans who were targeted by the “one hundred percent American” activism of the organization, but also from those who feared the consequences of the extra-legal operations that came to define the Klan during this era. As Pegram notes, Klan members were more likely to be victims of anti-Klan violence (though they sometimes provoked such violence and certainly celebrated it as evidence of the poor character of their attackers) than perpetrators, but the brutal and highly publicized instances of Klan violence, much of it directed at other white Protestant members of their own communities who were disciplined for their moral failings, guaranteed the Klan’s association with violence—an association that the hoods, paramilitary drills, and other traditions reified. “By accepting the tainted currency of white vigilante violence and the mass support it attracted, the Klan thereby collaborated in the construction of its own violent image,” Pegram notes (p. 159). This was especially likely in the South and Southwest, where violence and vigilantism were cultural forces in effect before the Klan arrived and where legal policing was weak. However, as the Klan tolerated and even romanced its violent elements, it soon found itself controlled, to
an extent, by them—or at least by the image of them. Consequently, “Many observers by this time understood violence to be an essential component of Klan strategy and behavior” (p. 178). The Klan, in other words, could not put the genie of violence back in its bottle. The consequences were damaging, not just for those members who wanted no part of violence, but also for the public image of the Klan. Such violence, whether committed by Klansmen or by anti-Klan activists against Klansmen, “severely tested the commitment of its own members and alienated the American mainstream in the postwar years” (p. 181). Membership dropped as public criticism mounted.

Pegram artfully blends stories from across the country to illustrate the multiple problems that beset the Klan by the mid-1920s, and the strength of his writing is in its attention to details that both make for compelling, interesting reading and forward his thesis. If his argument fails to make a provocative claim of its own, readers nonetheless owe him a debt of gratitude for his ability to synthesize the many narrower studies of the 1920s Klan into a general history that will interest scholars, activists, and general readers.

If Pegram’s analysis of the Klan is firmly grounded in the 1920s, Arthur Goldwag’s lively history of hate groups is all over the chronological map, though he brings every hate group and conspiracy theory into the current moment—especially as it relates to the emergence of Tea Party politics, what Amarnath Amarasingam (2011) has termed “Baracknaphobia,” and the general climate of partisan politics that afflicts the U.S. today. Irreverent, witty, and at times nearly frenetic, Goldwag’s analysis relies on scholarly secondary sources as much as the writer’s own primary scholarship, which includes correspondence with his living research subjects: people who self-identify as Holocaust deniers, are members of paramilitary organizations, and organize their politics around hate. In this way, Goldwag’s research is both more dangerous than Pegram’s and more unstable—since, after all, insufficient time has passed to allow scholars to evaluate the conspiracy theory that Barack Obama is the anti-Christ or to reflect on the place of Islamophobia in post-9/11 America.

At the same time, Goldwag’s historical grounding of even these contemporary themes suggests that, despite differences in technology, hate is relatively consistent across time. The joke of The New Hate is how much new hate is like older forms of hate, and Goldwag is effective in connecting the past and present, often drawing from Enlightenment-era documents to illustrate how hateful ideas about, say, Jews or Masons or African Americans, came to circulate then and continue to circulate today—no small accomplishment given the wide range of Godlwag’s subjects and his broad time frame. Goldwag’s analysis repeatedly returns to hate groups’
responses to the election of Barack Obama, but the mistrust of the president is used as an illustration of how hatred finds its object more generally. Perhaps more importantly, Goldwag argues that this kind of thinking harms not just a political leader or party but also, more broadly, America; it damages the body politic, civil discourse, and democracy.

At times, Goldwag is insensitive with his language, invoking psychological analysis (the word “paranoid” is used frequently) without full consideration of its consequences and without an evidence base for assigning psychological disorder or at least disturbance to believers. (For a fine counterargument to the claim that right-wing religionists are mentally ill or unreasonable, see Clyde Wilcox, Ted Jelen, and Sharon Linzey, 1995.) Similarly, further sociological analysis of the pull toward hate groups would have provided a more humane and sensitive telling of the story—similar to the attitude adopted by Kathleen Blee (1993) in her research on contemporary Klan membership. Further consideration of the sociological rather than ideological factors that draw people to hate groups would have contributed to a deeper understanding of the sociology of hate. At times, Goldwag does adopt this perspective, suggesting for example, that in “times of great stress and transition,” when people are “breathing an atmosphere . . . toxic with fear and anger and confusion,” they seek “not just a comprehensible explanation for their very real problems but a scapegoat, a villain” (p. 23). Thus, hate is not simply an individual psychological response, but a collective, sociological phenomenon, one that is predictable.

The predictability of hate is a comfort for readers of both Pegram’s and Goldwag’s books. As reported in The Atlantic by Richard Florida (2011), hate follows a particular geography, and demographics such as educational level, income, occupation, regionalism, and religiosity are correlated with hateful beliefs and actions—which explains why Klan membership rose during a period of immigration, just as hate group membership swelled again in the early part of the 21st century, and why conservative Protestantism then and now corresponds with higher degrees of hate group affiliation. (As Goldwag notes, “For many religious Americans, ‘evil’ is not just an adjective but also a noun” (p. 81).) Taken together, One Hundred Percent American and The New Hate effectively illustrate that, as Goldwag observes,

The most salient feature of . . . the New Hate is its sameness across time and space. The most depressing thing about the demagogues who tirelessly exploit it—in pamphlets and books and partisan newspapers two centuries ago, on Web sites, electronic social networks, and twenty-four-hour cable news today—is how much alike they all turn out to be. (p. 14)

However, for anti-hate activists, predictability is not so much depressing as
useful, for it provides a guide to the concerns of those who participate in hate groups, concerns that can then be defused via activism. One of these concerns is that

there are those of us who are really “us” and those of us who are essentially “other”—aliens, interlopers, pretenders, and culture distorters, parasites and freeloaders, who bear the blame for the fact that being a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant American no longer suffices to make one the cynosure of the world,

as Goldwag describes how the objects of contemporary populist hatred are viewed (p. 310), but also how Pegram could have described Klan attitudes toward immigrants, Catholics, Jews, and moral reprobates of the early 20th century. That this fear of the other is deep-rooted and reappearing is discouraging, on one hand, but, on the other, it also means that hate studies scholars can predict when, where, and among whom spikes of hateful behavior are likely. Additionally, it provides a strategic focus for anti-hate activists, who can “normalize” despised populations in order to facilitate public acceptance of them (as many same-sex marriage advocates have effectively done, resulting in a significant shift in popular opinion about gay marriage over the previous 10 years).

For those who find themselves the objects of hatred, of course, knowing that they are part of the historically predictable trend of hate is little solace. Thankfully, despite the increase of hate groups in the U.S. since 2000, violent hate crimes as a category have actually not risen—though, again, this is no comfort to those who have been victimized. What has changed, though, is the tone of political discourse, which has been pushed rightward, adopting more violent rhetoric. This includes visual images of Tea Party activists brandishing handguns at rallies (Associated Press, 2011), the use of racial and sexual epithets against members of Congress who supported the president’s health care reform bill (Douglas, 2010), and the threat by rock musician and right-winger Ted Nugent at a 2012 National Rifle Association meeting that “if Barack Obama becomes the president in November again, I will either be dead or in jail by this time next year. . . . We need to ride into that battlefield and chop their heads off in November” (Glor, 2012). The examples are innumerable, from statements made on the floor of statehouses (where Kansas state representative Virgil Peck suggested that undocumented immigrants be shot like “feral hogs” (Carpenter, 2011, para. 19)) to comments made in Congress (where, in 2009, South Carolina Republican Congressional Representative Joe Wilson interrupted President Obama’s address to Congress when he called the president a liar—an act that earned him a rebuke from the House, but also earned him increased donations (“Rep. Wilson shouts, ‘You lie’ to Obama during
speech,”, 2009)). The broad threat, then, of an increase in hate groups in both the early 20th and 21st centuries is the shift toward behaviors, from whippings to lynching, and rhetoric that undermine democratic participation and civil discourse.

REFERENCES


