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Hate Speech or "Reasonable Racism?" The Other in Stormfront

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Hate Speech or "Reasonable Racism?" The Other in Stormfront

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We use the construct of the "other" to explore how hate operates rhetorically within the virtual conclave of Stormfront, credited as the first hate Web site. Through the Internet, white supremacists create a rhetorical vision that resonates with those who feel marginalized by contemporary political, social, and economic forces. However, as compared to previous studies of on-line white supremacist rhetoric, we show that Stormfront discourse appears less virulent and more palatable to the naive reader. We suggest that Stormfront provides a "cyber transition" between traditional hate speech and "reasonable racism," a tempered discourse that emphasizes pseudo-rational discussions of race, and subsequently may cast a wider net in attracting audiences.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the advent of the multicultural millennium, the expansion of the white supremacist movement in contemporary America signals an invigoration rather than dissolution of the racial paradigm. The Southern Poverty Law Center reports a 33% increase in the number of new hate groups since the turn of the millennium (*Intelligence Report: The Year in Hate, 2005*, 2006). Reports indicate that the FBI as well as local law enforcement have frustrated more than 60 domestic terrorist plots by white supremacists and other extremists since

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the Oklahoma City Bombing in 1995 (Copland, 2005; Knight, 2005). Knight reports that "while homeland security and intelligence officials understandably focus today on terrorism threats from abroad, hate-group experts say the danger from homegrown extremists ... shouldn't be ignored" (p. 1c).

The face of contemporary hate continues to transform. White supremacists are economically advantaged, socially heterogeneous, and well educated (Daniels, 1997; Ross & Mauney, 1997). "As American society becomes more diverse, so, it would see, have the leaders and followers of racialist movements" (Schafer, 2002, p. 71). The hate espoused by white supremacist discourse is often diminished and dismissed as representing extremist ideals. Yet white supremacists are sophisticated in using "wedge issues" of mainstream politics, such as immigration and the Iraq war, as a rallying cry for their cause (Anti-Defamation League, 2006; Johnson, 2006; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2006). Scholars caution us that "racists are now having a catalytic effect by tapping into the prejudices of the white majority" (Ross & Mauney, 1997, p. 552). The fundamental concepts of the rhetoric of hate can be found in legitimate arenas such as the media, advertising, and academia and serve "to sustain privileges of race, class gender, and sexuality which are endemic to white supremacist context" (Daniels, 1997, p. 7).

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HATE IN CYBERSPACE

While pamphlets and public rallies are a traditional mainstay of white supremacists, a new frontier, that of cyberspace, has materialized to be exploited by the racial paradigm. The technological, geographical, and economic advantages of the Internet have proved to be a boon to the white supremacist movement in terms of promotion, recruitment, and expanding their base to include younger audiences (ADL, 1997; Leets, 2001; Schafer, 2002; Williamson & Pierson, 2003). The Web is beneficial for pursuing individuals from a variety of life styles who do not fit the stereotypical image of the movement (Bostdorff, 2004, p. 342: Ross & Mauney, 1997, p. 556). Hate in cyberspace targets youth as well as adults, with links to racist rock (ADL, 2006; Childress & Johnson, 2004), games, and other activities that promote hate (McKelvey, 2001; Waltman, 2003). However, even those who do not seek out these materials may be exposed to hate speech by unsolicited e-mail or misleading links on Web sites (ADL, 1997, p. 9).

Scholars are beginning to examine the abundance of on-line racist rhetoric (Bostdorff, 2004; Duffy, 2003; Lee & Leets, 2002; Schafer, 2002; Stern, 2001; Waltman, 2003; Williamson & Pierson, 2003). We suggest, however, that white supremacist discourse situated in cyberspace varies from traditional hate texts in distinctive ways. We should first consider the ubiquitous nature of the Internet and new generations of information consumers that have come to depend on it. A study by Pew Internet and the American Life project reports that 94% of

college students surveyed rely exclusively on the Internet for research (Jones, 2002, p. 3). While students may enjoy the convenience of the Internet, they are not equipped with critical skills necessary to evaluate the legitimacy of such information. In the tradition of McCluhan's the "medium is the message," the Internet imbues information with a seeming legitimacy that may not be earned (Stern, 2001, pp. 87–88).

Further, Bugeja suggests that the media convergence of cyberspace—the blurring of distinct identity, ownership and authorship between print, radio, and television—presents new challenges in critical thinking for audiences of all ages (2008, p. 2). He suggests, "Our social conscience is being dulled by the proliferation of media lies that the typical person no longer can distinguish between truth and falsehood" (p. 139). In the era of multitasking, the Internet allows users to consume more information in less time and with less attention (p. 138). The democratic promise of the Internet allows anyone to become a potential publisher, producing an "orgy" of information (Koch, 2005, p. 170). However, publication ethics associated with traditional media dissipate in the conflux of media integration, or what Bujega calls "moral convergence." He cautions that "the digital doppelganger of 'new media convergence' has confused the best ethical minds whose moral boxes no longer apply to either audience or media discipline because the audience multitasks and the disciplines have combined" (p. 8).

In this context, we suggest that hate in cyberspace may prove more insidious than historical discourses of white supremacy. Web hate is enabled by the collapse of discourse genres and discursive integration located in a multimedia environment. Williamson and Pierson suggest that "Internet texts are uniquely intertextual. The devices they employ resonate, reflect, and extend tropes, artifacts, and topoi borrowed from several other texts" (2003, p. 251). The notion of intertextuality acknowledges the porosity of texts and their relative reading in the social and political organization of discourse (Clark & Holquist, 1984, p. 297). The obscurity of Internet contributors, veiled by screen names or simply absent, presents options for authorship lacking in traditional discourse (Williamson & Pierson, p. 252; Singer, 1996, p. 103). As such, Internet audiences are active participants—co-authors in a sense—who, unintentionally or not, share in the meaning-making process. "Cyberspace, where one has anonymous sources and the ability to use parts of diffuse texts to construct a single message, makes it much more difficult to determine culpability or clearly define the sphere of influence" (p. 255).

STORMFRONT

We explore how hate operates rhetorically within the virtual conclave of Stormfront, credited as the first hate Web site (Schafer, 2002; Stern, 2001). Stormfront

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is an appropriate choice for rhetorical analysis of cyberspace hate when we consider both its legacy and influence in the contemporary white supremacist movement (Kim, 2005; Schafer, 2002, p. 70). Mark Potok of the Southern Poverty Law Center identifies Stormfront as the nexus of contemporary hate movement. "... in many ways, Stormfront is becoming a real group, not just a Web site. One of the scary things is how it has been able to bring together and energize people from very different parts of the white supremacist movement" (Potok, 2005).

However, as compared to previous studies of cyberspace hate (Bostdorff, 2004; Waltman, 2003; Williamson & Pierson, 2003), as well as traditional white supremacist texts (Daniels, 1997; Ferber, 1998), Stormfront discourse is less virulent and more palatable to the inexperienced reader. Though a gateway to other on-line white supremacist organizations, creator Don Black dissuades promoting violence, as well as the use of blatant racist or otherwise inflammatory rhetoric regarding contributions specific to Stormfront. Rather, he favors "quasi-scientific or pseudo intellectual identifications of racial differences" (Abel, 1998). We suggest that Stormfront provides a "cyber transition" between traditional hate speech and "reasonable racism," a tempered discourse that emphasizes pseudo-rational discussions of race, and subsequently may cast a wider net in attracting audiences. Morris Dees, co-founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center, cautions us:

> Hate Web sites today are cast in such a way that it comes off as very believable. Those that just say "nigger, nigger" or "hate the Jews" turns people off right away, and only the most hard core racist would like that. But their sites are much more subtle than that. Most of them are pretty slick stuff, well written. And these people that write these sites are not the beer belly Klansmen of the 50s, who are operating out of the back of an auto mechanic shop. They are usually well educated and smart. (personal communication, January 23, 2007)

IDENTITY, SELF AND OTHER

We use the construct of the "other" as a tool for rhetorical analysis of white supremacist discourse. Conceptualizations of the "self" and "other" are noted in intellectual inquiry as far back as Plato (Riggens, 1997, p. 3). According to Hall, the "doubleness" of discourse inextricably links identity of the self with that of the other. "As a process, as a narrative, as a discourse, it is always told from the position of the other" (2000, p. 147). Critical race scholars posit that in lieu of a firmly established white identity, white American society perpetuates a racial polarization or a "binarism" to fill the void (Davis, 1997, p. 231). Flagg links the racial binarism with the lack of white cultural identity, writing. "Whiteness attains opacity, becomes apparent to the white mind, only in relation to, and contrast with, the "color" of nonwhites" (1997, p. 220). Scholars subsequently

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suggest that this "void around whiteness" promotes the construct of "othering"; that white identity can only be determined in the juxtaposition to other colors or other cultures (Davis, p. 231).

Manifestations of the other have frequented our nation's development since the Civil War. Paradoxically, the emancipation of the slaves encouraged rather than suppressed the racial paradigm, most notably with the emergence of America's first white supremacy group, the Ku Klux Klan. Legal strategies of othering materialized as well, such as the resurgence of anti-miscegenation laws, which were "given a new, independent emphasis, and put in service as a symbol of white resistance to 'social equality' with former slaves" (Van Tessel, 1997, p. 155). Statutes banning miscegenation and enforcing the "one drop rule" were advanced as maintaining the racial "purity" of the white race, disavowing those of mixed race and reinforcing the framework of the other (Wright, 1997, p. 165). In the first half of the twentieth century, geographic, economic, and rhetorical approaches to othering were promulgated through Jim Crow segregation laws regarding public spaces, such as transportation, lodging, schools, and restaurants. In addition, financial institutions reinforced "residential segregation," withholding loans to black families who wished to integrate into white communities (Mahoney, 1997, p. 273).

Contemporary scholars of postmodernism and cultural studies emphasize the critical dimension of the "other" in examining hierarchal structures of oppression pursuant to the struggle for political and social power (Bhabba, 1995, 1996, 1998; Riggens, 1997; Said, 1978, 1994). "These perspectives intervene in the ideological discourses of modernity that have attempted to give a hegemonic "normality" to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, races, communities, and peoples" (Bhabha, 1995, p. 47). The naming of cultural differences is particularly salient when actual or perceived resources, including power, are being threatened (Bhabba, 1996, p. 16). In a multicultural era, historically physical boundaries of race, such as segregation and miscegenation statues, are replaced with linguistic spaces in which "we" and the "other" co-exist. Blee notes that the fluidity of "whiteness" regarding historical and national markers; subsequently, "whiteness" is always subject to challenge (2004, p. 53). Language becomes the primary agent for racists in the re-construction, or re-invention, of racial differences, necessary, according to Ferber, because "binary oppositions are always hierarchized, difference is equated with inequality" (1998, p. 69).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This scholarship examines issues of identity and power dialectically, focusing on the dominance of the "in group" relative to the suppression of the "out group."

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The other offers a scapegoat not only for the ills of society but also for the ills within each of us (hooks, 1992, p. 170). Lacy suggests that white supremacists function as "medicine men," who quickly diagnose the symptoms of a larger national or regional illness by using a causal design and cataloging series of unpleasant conditions, or signs of anarchy and social unrest" (2008, p. 22). The homosexual is identified by white supremacists as responsible for the onslaught of the AIDS epidemic and the sexual molestation of the nation's innocent. The African-American is similarly held responsible for crime, both its immediate cause, and the consequences of affirmative action and the loss of jobs to the white community (Ridgeway, 1995, p. 130). The racialized other constructs a reality that confirms the alleged victimage of white culture, discursively organizing the chaos of an unordered world. As a "projection device," the other offers the mechanism by which white supremacists can cleanse themselves of the nation's ills, providing catharsis or "purification by dissociation" (Burke, 1941, p. 203). However, Daniel's notes the dualistic nature of white supremacist identity in the presence of the other as simultaneously victims and heroes. As "race warriors," white supremacists' discursive role is to rearticulate the "superiority" of white culture and white civilization (1997, p. 37). According to Lacy, "These narrative structures offer deeply dissatisfied, lost and fragmented publics a coherent framework or worldview that explains who they are as a 'chosen people' " (p. 7).

The Stormfront Web site provides 115 articles applicable to the rhetorical analysis of othering. Stormfront most frequently targets the Jewish population in 55 articles, or 44.35% of the discourse. Thirty Stormfront articles, or 24.20%, focus on nonwhite, or "mud" populations. The African-American culture is the target of 24 articles, or 19.35% of Stormfront discussion. Liberals comprise the remainder, six articles, or 4.83% of the discourse. The most frequent category is the other as tyrannical, occurring in 31 articles, or 25% of Stormfront discourse. The category of the other as manipulator accounts for 21.77% of Web site discussion, or 27 articles. The other as genocidal occurs in 22 articles, or 17.74% of Stormfront discourse. The other as inferior, specifically targeting African-American and other nonwhite cultures, accounts for 16.93%, or 21 articles. The other as false martyr is the focus of 14 articles, or 11.30% of Stormfront discussion.

THE OTHER AS TYRANNICAL

The category of the other as tyrannical in Stormfront Web pages depicts an oppressor who subjugates the privileges of whites for the promotion of a multicultural society. Daniels notes that "white men depict themselves as victims of racial discrimination, of class oppression, and as the special victims of race,

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gender, and class oppression, at the hands of the racial state" (1997, p. 37). The Jew as the tyrannical other is evidenced in the alleged suppression of constitutional rights such as freedom of expression. Stormfront warns readers of "secret police agencies" such as the ADL and the Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC), which are launching on-line campaigns of hate designed to persecute the white racialist voice. The right to due process is also threatened, authors speculate, as the "Zionist Occupational Government" (ZOG) promotes unjust hate crime legislation, which punishes whites more severely than other races. The exploitation of whites, authors argue, is further seen in the unfair racial quotas and economic practices. "Minority Recruiting Service" is representative of author Yggdrasil's strategy, consistently reframing reputable sources, in this case the *Wall Street Journal*, with interpretative headlines and text. The authors' screen name, taken from Norse mythology, simultaneously conceals and constructs his identity. "Yggdrasil" alludes to the myth of the "World Tree," an ash tree around which all of the worlds of the cosmos congregate (Lindow, 2001). In this context, Yggdrasil discursively situates himself at the "center of the universe."

His commentary is one in a series of articles on "Race Bias," alleging a pattern of tyranny of the other as "anti-White" prejudice in the United States. Though minorities are conspirators of oppression, the author suggests that the system itself subjugates white culture. In this context, minorities are a pawn of the omnipotent Jew, perpetrators of the ZOG (Dobratz & Shanks-Meile, 1997, p. 48). Yggdrasil suggests that the tyrannical other not only confines whites economically but also controls freedom of information. In asserting that the Jew-controlled media "generally propagate our national myths—myths intended to hide the ball from the majority," Yggdrasil then presents his commentary as an "accurate" depiction of society. The *Wall Street Journal* article is actually about the success of an on-line recruiting service due to the economic recession of that period. Rather than race, as the author claims, the focus of the article is on the operation and clients of the company. Only half a sentence in the second paragraph specifically addresses minority hiring. However, Yggdrasil's main headline combined with his preface to the article recontextualizes a newspaper clipping about the benefits of on-line business practices to a white supremacist commentary about economic favoring of minorities at the expense of whites. He further attempts to mislead the reader by placing the subheading "Business and Race" just above the article, making it appear as if the caption is part of the *Wall Street Journal* text rather than his own words.

In "Minority Promotion Networks," Yggdrasil asserts there are employment "preference schemes" which give promotion opportunities for executive jobs to minorities at the expense of white personnel. The *Wall Street Journal* clipping, however, warns that the efforts of women and minorities in breaking the "glass ceiling" in business are still unsuccessful, reporting that "Senior Jobs For

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Minorities Remain Scarce." The other as tyrannical is advantageous to white supremacists as a discursive strategy of victim/victimizer reversal, shifting the label of racists from themselves to the other (Wodak, 1997, p. 74).

THE OTHER AS MANIPULATOR

The category of the other as manipulator in Stormfront Web pages is characterized as a hustler who uses trickery and deceit in influencing society. The Jewish culture is portrayed by Stormfront contributors as an all powerful presence that unfairly manipulates the press to the detriment of white nationalism. According to white supremacists, the masses are deceived as to the virtues of multiculturalism and depravity of white pride. Authors warn that the Jewish monopoly of the media unjustly influences the outcome of political elections and public policy. "Jews are depicted as the behind-the-scenes manipulators of Blacks and whites on the stage of race relations.... Their true power is seldom revealed because Jews also control our major source of information in this country, the news media (a.k.a., the "jewsmededia")" (Daniels, 1997, p. 108).

"Brainwashing Our Children" explicates the other as manipulator through the alleged brainwashing of school children about black history. The first headline introduces the discussion as "anti-white history" in contrast to black history, immediately suggesting an adversarial relationship where the other is manipulative in appropriating historical progress belonging to whites. Somehow, the article claims, a rich cultural history of both races cannot coexist. Wodak notes that racists rely on a discourse of dichotomy to sustain "we-they" illusions (1997, p. 72). The byline of Dr. William Pierce prefaces the article with an air of legitimacy due to the author having a doctorate. Although Pierce's Ph.D. is in physics, the reader has no idea that the degree gives Pierce no authority on the topic being discussed. In addition, Pierce's reference to his administration of the National Alliance also attempts to provide legitimacy, particularly as he does not identify the doctrine of his organization as racist.

Pierce's argument advances that fourth grade children are the alleged targets of brainwashing through a trip to an African-American museum. This dimension of the manipulative other is particularly offensive because children are a vulnerable population in accepting the validity of information. Pierce emphasizes that the museum is federally funded with white tax dollars, under control of the ZOG occupation, magnifying the threat of the deceitful other. Harriet Tubman is also individually accused of manipulation in her alleged use of a revolver to "coax" slaves to escape. The rhetorical translation of slaves forced by gunpoint to escape slavery negates the offensiveness of the practice, a strategy of distortion. If slavery were really so appalling, Pierce is intimating, then manipulation through such means would not have been necessary to prompt them to flee.

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Pierce supplies the reader with a list of black inventions supposedly provided by the museum. The author then states that black claims regarding these inventions are so absurd that "most of us get a good chuckle when we read it," implying that the "informed" reader acknowledges black accomplishment as unlikely. The leap in Pierce's argumentation occurs when he contends that the little girl not only believes in the achievements of blacks but also somehow has antithetically processed this knowledge into the white race as achieving nothing. Subsequently, the child's father was "pretty steamed about this effort to brainwash her against her own race." His narrative "illustrates" to the reader both the process of manipulation, as well as the end result. The strategy of story telling is favored by Stormfront authors to aid the reader in "bearing witness" to the alleged conversion of individuals. Lee and Leets note that the "power of story telling lies in its ability to make an argument without eliciting mental resistance" (2002, p. 928).

The manipulative other as a hustler or cheat is common in Stormfront discourse addressing the African-American culture. In the Stormfront article "The Truth About Martin Luther King, Jr.," Kevin Alfred Strom implies that King's Ph.D. was the result of plagiarism of other scholars. Strom writes, "King cheated because he had chosen for himself a political role in which a Ph.D. would be useful, and, lacking the intellectual ability to obtain the title fairly, went after it by any means necessary." Thus, Strom argues that King could only attain a doctorate, an accomplishment traditionally reserved for white men, by appropriating the work of other scholars. The other as manipulator is a benefit to white supremacists in rationalizing why an African-American, revered by blacks and whites alike, achieved such extraordinary prominence in white society. In addition, Strom's allegations attempt to taint the legitimacy of the civil rights movement, of which King was an established leader.

THE OTHER AS GENOCIDAL

The category of the other as genocidal in Stormfront Web page discourse presents the Jewish and African-American cultures as assassins of the white race through the appropriation of white history and the advancement of multiculturalism. Stormfront authors argue the other is engaged in symbolic genocide of the white culture by destroying the past. White supremacists contend that blacks are the minions of Jews, who conspire to revise glorious white history, condemning white heroes and promoting black charlatans. The deliberate and calculated alteration of the past, Stormfront authors assert, is a scheme to sever white society from its cultural history, values, and identity.

In the article "By Way of Deception Thou Shall Do War," the author argues that the other wages a covert war against the white race through domination

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of world affairs. The author uses the title and image of a book by former Israeli agent Victor Ostrovsky as evidence in portraying Jews as the genocidal other, using the maxim to represent the entirety of the Jewish culture. In using only the title, the author effectively limits the speaking space of the other to offer legitimacy for his claim. According to the writer, a pattern emerges where the Jew "must break down the structure of the society, corrupt its institutions, undermine its solidarity, weaken its sense of identity, obliterate its traditions, destroy its homogeneity." Gun control legislation disarms unsuspecting citizens and weakens privileges guaranteed by the Constitution. Acceptance of homosexuality and feminism allegedly deny the propagation of the white race. The agenda of the other, rather than egalitarian, is a weapon in the alleged cultural "destruction" of the white race.

The rhetoric of the "bloodthirsty" Jew echoes the anti-Semitic myths of "blood libel." According to Mosse, "The accusations of ritual murder—the so called blood libel—had medieval roots in the legend that Jews murdered Christian children and drank their blood during the feast of Passover" (2000, p. 195). Allusions of vampirism illustrate the demonic nature of the Jew, who is the alleged offspring of Eve's mating with the devil (Ezekiel, 1995, p. 123). The genocidal other, however, is also guilty of "draining the blood" of the nation through the integration of the races. Lacy writes:

> White absolutism exploits dystopian fears of the body to arouse deep public fears of death by racial invasion. Aryans, for example, argued that their pure blood and racial superiority were being "mixed," diluted, contaminated, or polluted with an inferior stock (through immoral sexual intercourse, producing inferior offspring), which had weakened their "God-given" and "natural" supremacy. (2008, pp. 14–15)

The author warns that "bringing hordes of non-Whites across our borders, breaking down the barriers to racial mixing in our society" will result in the poisoning of white blood through miscegenation and mongrelization. Myths of the habitually pregnant black welfare mother, accepted in mainstream political thought, support claims of white supremacists that such behavior will result in procreation of the mud races to the point of the white race's extinction. Conversely, because of the ability to bear children, white women are viewed by white supremacists as potential "saviors" to the white race (Daniels, 1997, p. 54).

THE OTHER AS INFERIOR

The other as inferior in Stormfront discourse targets the African-American and other nonwhite populations. In "Equality: Man's Most Dangerous Myth," Pierce

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warns readers of the dangers to civilization regarding the "myth" of equality among races. Minorities, white supremacists claim, are the results of whites mating with animals (Ezekiel, 1995, p. 123). They argue that equality among the races is actually a fiction promulgated by Jews to undermine the social order and contaminate white society. In this context, minorities are doubly oppressed, both by their alleged inferiority to whites, as well as subject to the whim of the all-powerful Jew.

Initially, Pierce does not raise the specific claim of the African-American as inferior. Rather, he establishes a context for his argument by examining the "racial differences" between black and white cultures. In discussing "cultural traits," Pierce's portrayal of African-American, "who distort their earlobes or lips with huge wooden plugs or plaster their hair with liquid cow dung," emphasizes the savage nature of the other—a discursive assault on the senses of the reader. He writes that even blacks brought up in tribal Africa "can be trained to adopt White standards of personal cleanliness and grooming." His rhetoric suggests that African-Americans are both less than white, and less than human. Like animals, African-Americans can be "trained" to achieve "appropriate" grooming habits by their white masters.

The urbane, educated African-American is, according to Pierce, but an illusion, a reflection of the "alien influence" of white society. The more factual portrayal of the African-American is in his "natural state," with a "cow-dung hairdo" and "a bone through his nose." Descriptive language reinforces the image of the primitive other. Thus, African American culture is not "merely DIFFERENT from White culture; it is a LESS ADVANCED culture and, by practically any standard, INFERIOR." The use of all caps, or "shouting" in computer-mediated discourse, signals to the reader both the culmination of his argument and the force of his claims.

Pierce explicates further, stating "the disparities between black and white cultures are "much more than skin deep . . . they are the products of millions of years of separate evolutionary development." His evidence, excerpts from an outdated eleventh edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, simultaneously provides obsolete, yet to the naive reader, legitimate information. The strategy of importing seemingly valid facts into the discourse "may be sufficient to convey a sense of objectivity to readers and listeners, especially who are somewhat inattentive" (Riggens, 1997, p. 11).

Pierce attempts to neutralize historical black achievement as propaganda, "the product of wishful thinking by proponents of racial equality who are willing to ignore all facts which conflict with their equalitarian mania." He contends that the primitive other can only impersonate the image of equality with whites by their ability to mimic. True intellectual prowess, so obviously a white attribute, is denied to African-Americans due to the "physical inadequacy of the Negro brain." College degrees and subsequent employment are awarded to African-

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Americans, Pierce states, only as a result of liberal-enforced college admission and affirmative action quotas. This discursive tactic provides a scapegoat for the disappointments of contemporary white society, and a rationale for any success of minorities. The term "mimic" rhetorically defines the boundary of the savage other's ability to imitate, or "ape" human action. Such rhetoric further dehumanizes nonwhites, validating historical and contemporary oppression of minorities.

THE OTHER AS FALSE MARTYR

The category of the other as false martyr is portrayed in Stormfront Web pages as phony victim who recasts the facts of the past to privilege the other in the present. White supremacists argue that the tale of the holocaust was contrived to covertly wage war on Germany while concealing the propagation of communism in Eastern Europe. They report the holocaust as profitable to modern Jews in elevating them spiritually as God's chosen people, as well as financially thorough billions of dollars in reparations. The other as false martyr, Stormfront authors warn, has resulted in the Jewish appropriation of the land of Israel, the political, economic, and spiritual capital of the world.

In his article "George Washington: Politically Incorrect," author David Duke suggests that the wrongdoing of slavery has been largely exaggerated in an effort to vilify white American icon, George Washington. Readers will be familiar with Duke's seemingly legitimate position in mainstream politics. His strategy of softening white supremacist rhetoric resonates with conservative concerns such as reverse discrimination and affirmative action (Daniels, 1997, p. 19). Duke insists that the "liberal" denunciations against former slaveholder Washington are merely politically correct. The African-American as false martyr serves to promote black pride and political power at the expense of white culture, any challenge of which results in the label of racist. His invites the reader to participate in a narrative that recounts the "authentic" history of African-American slavery. His rhetorical strategy deliberately frames the correctness of slavery as one of tradition rather than one of morality; that the historical use of oppression in no way ethically supports the practice becomes irrelevant.

Paradoxically, however, though the institution of slavery is supposedly perfectly legitimate, Duke is opposed to its practice. He asserts that American slavery was actually beneficial to blacks, saving them from certain exploitation at the hands of crueler masters in Africa. The real injustice, he argues, is to white society in the contamination of America by an inferior race. Subsequently, his rhetoric argues that whites are in fact the saviors of blacks, blacks are the oppressors of blacks, and slavery is destructive to whites. Slavery was problematic for white society, Duke asserts, as inexpensive slave labor put the

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80% of plantation owners who did not own slaves at an economic disadvantage. Thus, he negates the impact of slavery as not as widespread as previously believed, while simultaneously supporting his argument that whites rather than blacks were the true victims. He attempts to further minimize the offense of white colonial America by placing slavery in the larger context of a "socially accepted institution" that has been practiced by "99% of the history of mankind." This includes the enslavement of blacks by other blacks in Africa, again shifting the other from oppressed to oppressor. Such rhetoric pardons white supremacists as to their past and present oppression of African-Americans.

The Jew as false martyr is manifested in Stormfront Web pages through the framework of the holocaust. The holocaust, authors contend, is a fraud that serves to benefit Jewish aspirations while camouflaging a propaganda war against the heroes of the Third Reich. White supremacists wage an education campaign in a series of "fact files" that are "intended to present facts of history, free from the polemics and misinformation so often presented." In the article "Nazi Testimony Regarding Exterminations," the author's introductory paragraph states: "This fact file presents the actual words and opinions of various members of the Nazi leadership as well as numerous Nazi war heroes." The author attempts to provide legitimacy to the article by framing it as an educational endeavor crucial in disputing misinformation regarding the extermination orders of Hitler. That the article contains the "actual words and opinions" of Nazi leadership also appears to be an appeal to authority. However, the author primarily relies on the testimony of individuals who claim no knowledge of an official manifest concerning the annihilation of the Jewish culture. The author's approach is particularly interesting, as one might argue that Nazi leadership on trial for genocide would simply lie about knowledge of such a plan.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The rhetorical analysis of messages of the Stormfront Web site reveals that the strategy of othering promotes a racist hierarchy not only between the white race and other cultures but also among the targeted outgroups. While both the Jewish and African-American races are portrayed by Stormfront members as dangerous to the white race, the African-American is explicated as the pawn of the all powerful Jew. The African-American, for example, is portrayed as genocidal through the threat of miscegenation. They are made more menacing, however, under the influence of the manipulative Jew, who promotes the acceptance of multiculturalism through the government, education, and the media. The framework of the other also reveals the arguments white supremacists use in promoting the acceptance of their ideology. Each of the categories of the other provides some opportunity for white supremacists to recast themselves as sufferers of the

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alleged assault of the target outgroup. The racist becomes the freedom fighter in opposition to the tyrannical other; the Stormfront author becomes the voice of reason above the noise of the others' manipulation. Subsequently, these strategies function as the rationale for the promulgation of racist behavior against other cultures.

We find the approach of "reasonable racism" appropriated by Stormfront authors as particularly disturbing. Stormfront messages benefit from the "intertextuality" of Web authorship, the porosity of contemporary texts, and their relative reading in the political organization of hate discourse. Importing legitimate publications such as the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, *Newsweek* and the *Encyclopedia Britannica* allows contributors to frame white supremacist doctrine as well-researched, valid sources of information. Though misquoted or taken out of context, these publications provide comfort to the uncritical eye, particularly in age where critical consumption of information is lacking. In addition, the tactic of softening racist language and speaking to polarizing issues of mainstream politics may resound with larger audiences. This combination of elements makes the Stormfront Web site particularly hazardous in spreading messages of hate. We urge continuing scholarship examining online racist organizations that appear to take their cue from Stormfront, such as American Renaissance and The Council of Conservative Citizens, to further our understanding of linguistic practices that mainstream hate and attempt to normalize social inequities.

Though scholars make strong arguments as to restricting hate speech via the first amendment (Leets, 2001; Nemes, 2002), we hesitate to advise such a course of action. The ideals of free expression allow for even the most abhorrent speech in the marketplace of ideas to ensure a democratic society, even if these ideals are sometimes abused. While we clearly recognize the hazards of white supremacist rhetoric, Leets' study in particular reports that participants recognize hate sites as "an unpleasant byproduct of free speech that citizens must tolerate" (p. 314). There is also, of course, the question of constructing standards that can be applied consistently in regulating hate speech. Our study suggests discursive strategies of "reasonable racism" might elude such restrictions.

Rather, in acknowledging our dual roles as scholars and educators, we believe the focus of mitigating hate speech rests in new pedagogical approaches in critical ways of reading, seeing, and thinking for students of all ages. Avoidance of hate texts through regulatory structures may impede our progress as educators to inoculate those who may be exposed to them. As Waltman notes, "When our children understand the nature of these rhetors and the nature of their messages, they will be prepared to critique the speech of a variety of hatemongers" (2003, p. 23). This raises questions we must be willing to address. Have our roles as educators kept pace with our insights as scholars? Does our commitment to social justice effectively translate to curriculum development in institutions of

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higher learning? With an increased intolerance of the "other" in contemporary society, it is our obligation as educators to investigate new avenues in challenging intolerance, and to traverse those roads with our students. Bruna echoes our concerns, charging us to set aside the "sterile script" of diversity and attend to social justice as a living entity (2004, p. 696). Perhaps we should consider social justice a new "skill" appropriate for navigating the multicultural landscape of the new millennium. According to James Truslow Adams, "There are obviously two educations. One should teach us how to make a living and the other how to live." These two goals, however, need not be mutually exclusive. While we frequently focus on social justice as a moral issue, perhaps we should exploit its pragmatic dimensions in "training" college graduates entering the workforce.

Finally, we point to the "other" as an effective framework in generating student dialogue of racism, the construction of whiteness, and the potential for an anti-racist identity. In examining hundreds of pages of Stormfront discourse, no new types of othering occurred. While illustrations of categories varied, the categories themselves remained constant. We acknowledge that the unstable nature of cultural identities and subsequent privileges are always subject to challenge. Ferber suggests that "these identities are always at risk and never secure. The endless repetition through which they are constructed suggests that they require this repetition for their existence," (1998, p. 72). This confirms that it is not the outgroup that prompts hate; rather, the hater targets the "other" to construct his or her "superior" identity. In other words, "not all insecure people are haters, but all haters are insecure people" (Schafer & Navarro, p. 3). In subjugating the "other" to elevate us, we avoid any authentic evaluation of ourselves. Subsequently, in attending to hate in contemporary society, we must first attend to our own insecurities, both as a nation, and as individuals.

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