1-1-1999

Amerikan dreams: Dialogues with white supremacists

Pete George Simi
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/rtds
Part of the Higher Education Commons

Repository Citation
https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/rtds/1031

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Scholarship@UNLV. It has been accepted for inclusion in UNLV Retrospective Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.
INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI®
Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
AMERIKAN DREAMS: DIALOGUES
WITH WHITE SUPREMACISTS

by

Pete Simi

Bachelor of Arts
Washington State University
1994

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Master of Arts Degree
Department of Sociology
College of Liberal Arts

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
August 1999

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Thesis Approval
The Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

August 5 1999

The Thesis prepared by

Pete Simi

Entitled

Amerikan Dreams: Dialogues with White Supremacists

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Examination Committee Chair

Dean of the Graduate College

Examination Committee Member

Examination Committee Member

Graduate College Faculty Representative
ABSTRACT

AMERICAN DREAMS: DIALOGUES WITH WHITE SUPREMACISTS

by

Pete Simi

Dr. Simon Gottschalk, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of Sociology
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The following is an ethnographic study of white supremacy. Using a cultural studies approach, I focus on ideology and how members of the openly white supremacist Army of Israel (AOI) practically accomplish aspects of their ideology on a daily basis. Further, I juxtapose the articulations of white supremacy by members of the “extreme” right with more “mainstream” culture, situating the AOI’s virulent form of white supremacy within a pattern of thinking and behavior that exists on a continuum embedded within the larger culture, including our political and economic institutions, everyday practices and unconscious (Ansley 1997; Feagin and Vera 1995; Kovel 1970; Fanon 1967).
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ABSTRACT** ............................................................................................................................... iii

**CHAPTER 1  INTRODUCTION** ........................................................................................... 1
  The First Meeting ................................................................................................................ 1
  The Patriot Right in America .............................................................................................. 7
  The White Supremacy Movement ...................................................................................... 10
  The Ku Klux Klan ................................................................................................................ 12
  Nazis in the U.S. ................................................................................................................... 15
  Christian Identity ................................................................................................................ 18
  Skinheads ........................................................................................................................... 20
  Militia Movement ............................................................................................................. 21
  Social/Political/Economic Context ................................................................................. 24
  Economic Transformations .............................................................................................. 26
  Social and Political Transformations ............................................................................... 27
  Ruby Ridge ........................................................................................................................ 29
  Waco................................................................................................................................. 31

**CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW** ............................................................................... 34
  Ideology ............................................................................................................................. 34
  Louis Althusser .................................................................................................................. 35
  Antonio Gramsci ............................................................................................................... 39
  Birmingham School ............................................................................................................ 42
  Classical Research ............................................................................................................ 52
  Pluralist Theory ................................................................................................................ 53
  Contemporary Research ................................................................................................... 59
  Macro Examinations ......................................................................................................... 59
  Content Analysis ............................................................................................................... 65
  Ethnographic Approaches ............................................................................................... 67
  Journalistic Accounts ....................................................................................................... 77

**CHAPTER 3 METHODS** .................................................................................................... 81
  Getting Started .................................................................................................................. 84
  The Tools ........................................................................................................................... 86
  Interaction and Fieldwork ................................................................................................. 92

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Somehow we cannot hate the racist, for most of us do not how or when we left his ranks, if we have left them at all"
Rev. Will D. Campbell, director, the Committee of Southern Churchmen

"Domestic terror rising—extremist and race-based terrorism is on the rise" (Associated Press, 4/17/98).

"I am one of the chosen ones, this is the chosen race, look at this earth and what's been created upon it, this is the chosen race, it is me, my blood, my people" (Dave Dalby, Army of Israel, 1998).

"Skinhead Confesses to Colorado Killing" (Associated Press 1997)

"Nobody's going to take my baby and if they ever tried to do that, there's going to be death—promised to you" (Mary-Lynn Bangerter, Army of Israel, 1998).

"U.S. arraigns alleged racist revolutionary, killer" (Reuters 1998)

"It's not we the people anymore it's them the tyrannical authoritarian bastards, we the little poor peasants that have had our mouths taped shut, we the ones that want to speak are we the ones that lie dead in graves and prison" (Johnny Bangerter, Army of Israel, 1998).

The First Meeting

Thoughts flash through my mind as I'm driving to my first meeting. I'm in emotional overdrive; nervous tension coupled with an eerie excitement is rushing through my body.

Finally the project is no longer some idea in my head but is actually materializing. I'm not sure what will come of my "luncheon" with Dave, one of the
Israel, a white supremacist, Christian Identity group, but I know it will be a learning experience.

The weather is gloomy; slight drizzle accompanies low-lying dark clouds, as I speed along the freeway. I finally make it to St. George, Utah and find the "spaghetti factory" parking lot where Dave has suggested that we meet. I'm running late and afraid that he's gone. After finding a parking space, I step out of my car and survey the area, looking around, uncertain of what or who I'm looking for. I turn and see two men leaning up against the front bumper of a mid 1980s two-door burgundy sedan. They're in their twenties, heads shaved; wearing black "flight" jackets and jeans—"that must be them," I say to myself. I begin walking slowly toward them, feeling uncertain. "Hey," I say as I move closer, "sorry I'm late." "No problem," the shorter man responds, "we thought you might get lost." I extend my hand as they extend theirs. "This is Robert" the shorter man says, "And I'm Dave". "Nice to meet you," I respond. Dave is short and slender; his face is babyish, yet rugged. A neatly trimmed beard covers his jaw and chin. Robert is taller, close to 6-feet, but also very slender. His Italian heritage that he indicated later is apparent, as is the swastika tattooed on his right hand between his thumb and index finger.

The above is only a small fragment of my first meeting with members\textsuperscript{1} of the Army of Israel, during which I spent hours with the two of them that day eating lunch, drinking beers and playing pool. And after the first meeting I eventually conducted more than two years of fieldwork with them. The following text is an ethnographic study of this small

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{1} The term member is somewhat misleading, as the AOI has no formal membership process; therefore it is difficult to distinguish between members and associates. Because there is no formal organizational structure, similar to the larger white supremacist movement, the AOI is more accurately described as a loose network of like-minded individuals. I will discuss these issues further in chapter 4.
\end{quote}
"rag-tag" group who call themselves the Army of Israel (AOI). Using a cultural studies approach, this project focuses on ideology and on how AOI members practically accomplish aspects of their ideology on a daily basis. Further, I also examine the "materiality" of ideology through an analysis of members' practices including the use of symbols as well as written and spoken texts (Hall 1996).

The focus for this project was of course not always that clear. My initial decision to engage in research with this population stems from years of interest in the white supremacist movement. As a small child I can remember the anger I felt watching a Klansman on television smugly comment that: "we should boat all the niggers back to Africa". But, I can also remember my fascination; who were these people-the Ku Klux Klan, skinheads and neo-Nazis? Where did they come from? What drove them to their beliefs? But most of all I wondered what would it be like to talk with "one"?

After deciding that I would study some aspect of the white supremacist movement for my Masters Thesis, I felt that it was imperative to conduct fieldwork with members. Thanks to the internet and the vast amount of printed publications, there is ample opportunity to do secondary text analysis, and although I utilize secondary sources, this project relies most heavily on participant observation and unstructured interviews. As Blumer (1969) states, this approach allows researchers to "see the situation as it is seen by the actor, observing what the actor takes into account, observing how he [sic] interprets what is taken into account" (Blumer 1969: 56).

The remaining part of the introduction seeks to familiarize the reader with the different sectors that constitute the "patriot right", primarily focusing on the white supremacist movement. I also contextualize the patriot right within recent economic/social/political
developments. Chapter 2 reviews two distinct literatures. The first one concerns the literature on the patriot right, which I divide into two sections: 1) classical research and 2) contemporary research. Secondly, I also review the sociological literature on ideology drawing heavily from cultural studies especially the Birmingham School’s approach to this topic. After reviewing this approach, I also discuss how I intend to use it in the present project.

Chapter 3 explores my methodological approach and reviews a variety of methodological issues that have arisen during the course of my project. More specifically, I discuss my use of participant observation, unstructured interviews, and secondary analysis. After discussing postmodernism and how this relates to ethnography, I propose my strategy of data presentation.

Chapters 4 and 5 are directly grounded in the ethnographic data obtained during the course of fieldwork. In chapter 4 I present the historical background of the Army of Israel through an intertextual approach, using segments of life histories gathered through interviews, newspaper articles, televisual documentaries and news reports, candid journal entries and autobiographical "drifts". Chapter 5 includes an evocative presentation that juxtaposes the AOI's articulations of the "Other" with fragments selected from the mass media and my personal biography. Chapter 5 builds upon the notion that among the AOI and the larger culture as well constructions of race is a "focal concern" (Miller 1958). Following Hebdige's (1979) suggestion that rebellious styles are "pregnant with significance", I explore how AOI members accomplish race through daily practices. However, rather than solely focusing on "spectacular" rebellious styles, I also scrutinize the more routine aspects of daily life. Combining spectacular styles and these more
mundane aspects, I decode the AOI's ideology through an analysis of practices, including written and spoken texts. By using an intertextual, multivocal approach, I hope to illustrate that ideology is more than just a set of political beliefs, but is articulated in concrete material practices. I do this not for stylistic playfulness, but to communicate the webs of significance through which all ideology circulates. Further, by juxtaposing members of the "extreme" right with more "mainstream" culture, we can better see, hear, and feel how we all participate in systems of oppression and domination.

I conclude this text with a summary of its' limitations as well as a discussion of the importance of this research for increasing our understanding of "extreme" right ideology in the United States. Finally I propose directions for future research.

The social science literature tracing the historical and ideological development of the white supremacy movement is substantial and growing (Kaplan 1997; Bennett 1995; Diamond 1995; Barkun 1994; McClean 1994; Blee 1993; 1991; Chalmers 1987), and so is the literature on the contemporary white supremacist movement (Mitchell forthcoming; Mitchell and Charmaz 1996; Blee 1998; 1996; Ferber 1998; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997; Blazack 1996; Daniels 1997; Bessant 1995; Ezekiel 1995; Barkun 1994; Hamm 1993; Harper 1993; Aho 1990; Anderson 1987). However, much of this literature focuses on the macro-level or manifest ideology, and is detached from the everyday lives of white supremacists (Blee 1998). While this literature produces insightful descriptive and analytical interpretations of the broader movement and its corresponding ideology, and often suggests provocative explanations of the causes and processes leading to membership, there's a paucity of research conducted at a more micro-level (Blee 1998; Himmelstein 1998). Although Dobratz and Shanks-Meile (1997), Blazack (1995),
Hamm (1993), and Aho (1990) all significantly rely on first-hand interviews and/or participant observation, each of their more macro foci prevents the reader from gaining a better understanding of the daily lives of white supremacists. In other words, little ethnographic data exists describing and analyzing the everyday lives of white supremacists. Fine (1993) also points to this shortage: the examination of disparaged groups—groups that one begins the research expecting to dislike—does occur in the social sciences, although not as often as one might expect (p. 270). . . . this has been a particularly salient issue in social movement research, in which there are 'good' and 'bad' social movements which are often studied differently. Civil rights groups, gay rights movements. . . . are treated quite differently and with more frequency than are groups that are racist. . . . (p. 290—footnote #2). Certainly there are good reasons for this neglect. In her dissertation examining the construction of race and gender in white supremacist publications Suzanne Harper (1993) indicates the following ethical reasons for not doing participant observation or interviews with white supremacists:

Interviewing and ethnography both require that I represent myself to respondents or participants as an 'objective,' or at the very least impartial, social science researcher. . . . To begin with I am not 'impartial' when it comes to white supremacy, holding myself out as disinterested requires a deception of the respondents which is unethical. In addition, conducting interviews or ethnography in which I combine a claim to no particular opinion regarding white supremacy with social science credentials runs the risk of lending credibility to a movement whose aims I fundamentally oppose (Harper 1993: 64-65).

In chapter 3 I address some of these ethical dilemmas and propose the tentative resolutions I am using to guide my fieldwork with white supremacists.

While I think it is accurate to conclude that there is a paucity of research focusing on the interactions of white supremacists, I do not want to overlook the efforts by some researchers to investigate white supremacists' daily experiences and the way(s) members make sense of their world. Blee (1998; 1996), Shook, Delano, and Balch (1998), Ezekiel...
(1995), Mitchell (forthcoming; 1996), Bessant (1995), and Anderson (1987) all provide the closest to what can be called an "insider's account" of white supremacists' lives. Following these works, I examine the daily lives of the Army of Israel. By using in-depth qualitative methods, I hope to re-present aspects of this phenomenon that have been neglected by macro approaches. Further, rather than producing another text documenting what white supremacists believe, I intend to examine how these beliefs are concretely articulated in everyday material practices. Constructing a text that is self-reflexive, intertextual, and polyvocal, I resist the temptation to describe the Other. Instead, I evoke discourses of race that are not solely situated as marginal extremist rhetoric but as reproductive and resistant of more "mainstream" and dominant discourses.

The Patriot Right in America

There is a religious war going on in this country for the soul of America. It is a cultural war as critical to the kind of nation we shall be as the cold war itself, for this war is for the soul of America (Pat Buchanan, quoted in Diamond 1995: 1).

AOI is a white supremacist group that is part of the larger umbrella that is often referred to as the "radical right", "far right", "extreme right", and "patriot right" (Himmelstein 1998; Abanes 1996; Bell 1963). The terms "radical", "far", and "extreme" right are arguably the most frequently used. The usage of extreme, far, and radical as well as terms like "lunatic fringe" or "right-wing zealots" reflects the tendency to employ "pejorative descriptors" or stigmatic labels rather than careful adjectives to delineate the complex distinctions; and convergence between political ideologies and social
movements (Berlet 1997). Further, the use of these terms also articulates a theoretical perspective that is referred to as the "Pluralist" or "centrist/extremist" theory. Briefly, centrist/extremist theory contends that dissident movements on the left and right are composed of outsiders who maintain a marginal status politically, socially, and economically. The next chapter will discuss the Pluralist School and its theoretical perspective at greater length, however, suffice to say that since this is not the perspective I choose, I will refrain from using these terms. Instead, I use the term "patriot right" because it subverts the conventional notions of a strictly “lunatic fringe on the margins” (Himmelstein 1998; Lyons 1994). To minimize repetition, I will, at times, use "extreme" right politics or "extreme" right group. While I do this, Berlet’s (1997) words remain as a constant reminder:

Centrist/extremist theory ignores real power struggles in the society...allows individuals to ignore their own complicity in oppressive behavior, and obscures the supremacist forces woven into our society's central institutions. Racism, sexism, homophobia, and anti-Semitism along with other forms of supremacist ideology—are not the exclusive domain of marginal and militant organized hate groups, but are domiciled in mainstream culture and politics (Berlet 1997: 2).

Although the patriot right is only one of several right wings in the United States (e.g. neo-conservatism, Christian Right, Libertarian Right etc.), it is the focus for this project. As noted above, throughout this text, I will use patriot right a term which includes a range of different sectors. Specifically, I use patriot right to refer to the individuals/groups/organizations who espouse white separatist and/or white supremacist beliefs (including Christian Identity), individuals who endorse citizen militias, other

---

2 For a further discussion of labeling and the relationship to the white supremacy movement see Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997: 4-9.
Birch Society), and survivalists (Coates 1995; Aho 1990). This categorization is inspired by Berlet (1995) who defines the "patriot" right as:

- militant right-wing gun-rights advocates, anti-tax protesters, survivalists, far right libertarians; elements of racist, anti-Semitic or neo-Nazi movements; advocates of "sovereign" citizenship; the confrontational wing of the anti-abortion movement; apocalyptic millenialists; and the most militant wing of the anti-environmentalist movement (Berlet 1995: 9).

It is also important to remember that there is an overlap between the different right wings in the U.S. For instance, Pat Robertson's book _New World Order_ has been influential among his Christian Right base as well as others, such as, the John Birch Society and various militia groups (Ross 1995). At the same time we should also remember that various factions of the patriot right are often hostile towards each other. For example, the John Birch Society has referred to the Posse Comitatus as "wild-eyed wackos", while the Posse Comitatus has likened the John Birch Society to "a bunch of letter-writing senior citizens" (George and Wilcox 1996). Another split seems to surround issues of race. Some constitutionalists and survivalists claim that race is not important and that the Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazis are misguided, while other constitutionalists see "true" citizenship applying to white men only and some survivalists await an apocalyptic "race-war".

---

3 For broader examinations of the various right wings in the U.S. see Diamond 1995; Himmelstein 1990; Liebman and Wuthnow 1983.

4 There is some disagreement over whether the term white supremacist or white separatist is more accurate. Dobratz and Shanks-Meile (1997) concluded that the term white separatism "best reflected the contemporary core ideology of much of the movement, especially the more militant part (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997: 9). However, Langer (1990) concluded that neo-Nazi was the best term to describe the movement although she warned that this term has "varying degrees of applicability (Langer 1990:83). I tend to think that the term white supremacy has the most applicability when referring to the broader movement, while white separatism or neo-Nazi are useful terms to refer to elements within the white supremacy movement.
There are a variety of concerns that characterize the far right including: governmental intrusion and abuse of power, increasing globalization—especially the perceived growing influence of the United Nations, challenges to the second amendment, and attempts by traditionally oppressed people to decrease inequities. Berlet (1995) summarize the patriot right as a “diverse right-wing populist movement ... composed of independent groups in many states, unified around the idea that the government is increasingly tyrannical” (Berlet 1995: 10).

Before continuing with an examination of the Army of Israel it is necessary to briefly discuss some of the various aspects of the white supremacy movement, including the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, Christian identity, and skinheads. Additionally, I will also briefly discuss the militia movement, as the AOI has "ties" to several militias throughout the U.S. and claims to increasingly style itself as a militia.

The White Supremacy Movement

14 WORDS
"We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children."
—David Lane, Order Member

"Those who control the once-White nations deny us White nations, White schools, White organizations and everything necessary for racial survival. We resist this deliberate and malicious genocide. Is that hate? If Whites do not immediately establish an exclusive White nation, then the beauty of the White Aryan woman will soon cease to exist on earth forever. We are taught to dread the extinction of spotted owls, so why is it a hate crime to love and preserve one's race? Is that hate?"
(14 Words Webpage, 1999).

The white supremacist movement has a long history. Some contend that an ideology of white supremacy has fueled western civilization for centuries and eventually led to the colonization of the Americas (Zinn 1995). Others emphasize that "white racism" is one
of the central organizing principles in U.S. society—fully embedded in our institutions and our very way of life (Feagin and Vera 1995). However, for the purposes of this chapter, I intend to limit my focus of white supremacy to the variety of individuals/groups/organizations that we commonly refer to as the “white supremacist movement”.

The white supremacist movement is a *loosely* organized network of individuals/groups/organizations that to varying degrees believe in “Aryan” supremacy and support a variety of measures aimed at either restoring whites to their rightful position of dominance or establishing a separate white homeland (Bennett 1995). The number of hardcore members in the white supremacist movement is thought to be around 25,000, with an additional 150,000 sympathizers who buy movement literature, send contributions to groups, and attend rallies, and another 450,000 who read movement literature (Ezekiel 1995; Ross 1995). Between the-mid 1980s until about 1992 the number of white supremacist groups increased dramatically (Blee 1996). More recently though the number has begun to decline from 300 in 1992 to 241 in 1996 (Klanwatch 1997). However, these numbers are misleading for a variety of reasons, including: 1) many groups are vigilant about maintaining the secrecy of membership numbers; 2) some groups have high “turn-over” rates of members; 3) membership in some groups is fluid which makes the traditional notions of organization, structure, and membership not very applicable; and 4) many people who sympathize with various aspects of the white supremacist movement never become “actively” involved (Simi 1998; Blee 1996; Ross 1995). Furthermore, paralleling the decline in organized white supremacist groups has been a troubling increase in independent and/or underground forms of terrorism.
perpetrated by white supremacists (e.g. the Aryan Republican Army bank robberies, a number of bombings and the plot to assassinate Rodney King and spray a black church in Los Angeles with machine gun bullets to name only a few) (Klanwatch 1998).

The white supremacy movement consists of various pockets of sometimes distinct, but more often than not overlapping groups. Some of these include: Christian Identity sects, neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klan organizations, and skinheads⁵. In some cases, groups, such as Aryan Nations, combine elements of Nazism and the Identity religion. Some of the Klan groups use Nazi symbols and revere Hitler as a great leader. Other Klans profess a belief in Christian Identity, while others actively recruit skinheads. These various combinations make typologies of the groups difficult and it is simplistic to think that clear distinctions exist.

However, for purposes of clarity in this section I will examine the Klan, neo-Nazis, Christian Identity and skinheads separately, as well as provide a short discussion of the "new" citizen militia movement and its relationship to the white supremacy movement.

The Ku Klux Klan

Brethren, this flag bears the red stain of the life of a southern woman, a priceless sacrifice on the altar of an outraged civilization. Here I raise the ancient symbol of an unconquered race of men, the fiery crosses of old Scotland's hills...I quench its flames in the sweetest blood that ever stained the sands of Time! (*Birth of A Nation* 1915 quoted in Shrock, 1997).

"...like writing history with lightening...my only regret is that it is all so terribly true"

President Wilson's comment after a private viewing of *Birth of a Nation* (1915) that re-

⁵ While there are non-racist skinheads such as Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice (SHARP) among others, I use the term skinhead to refer to racist skinheads exclusively.
presented the ravages of Reconstruction including the attempted rape of a white woman at the hands of a former slave (Klanwatch 1997, 21).

Because the Ku Klux Klan's history in this country is the longest and arguably the most complicated of the various white supremacist groups, I use an abbreviated chronological list highlighting important dates and events.

- 1865—what is now referred to as the Reconstruction Klan (or the 1st era Klan) is born in Pulaski, Tennessee
- 1867—white supremacy is officially established as Klan doctrine at a meeting in Nashville, Tennessee
- 1869—As internal strife, and a governmental "crackdown" continue to increase, the Klan's first Imperial Wizard Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest orders the Klan to officially disband
- 1915—2nd era Klan born in Stone Mountain, Georgia led by William J. Simmons
- responding in part to the massive migration to the U.S. between 1890-1910, the 2nd era Klan emphasized the threat of Catholicism along with rapid anti-black and anti-Jewish sentiments. In addition, to the above mentioned "usual suspects", the Klan also turned their attention toward bootleggers, drug dealers, night clubs and road houses, abusive husbands and insolent wives who dared to challenge traditional gender roles, pre- and extra-marital sex and the violation of the Sabbath
- beginning in the early 1920s the Klan experienced a rapid growth in membership and political strength

---

6 For in-depth treatments of the Klan see Sims 1996; MacLean 1994; Moore 1991; Chalmers 1987; Trelease 1971; Jackson 1967.
• 1925—Klan membership totals somewhere between 2-5 million people nationwide—many of the states where Klan strength is greatest include New York, Pennsylvania, California, Indiana, Ohio, Oregon, Texas and Colorado as well a number of states in the "deep south"

• by the latter half of the 1920s Klan membership begins to plummet as various scandals including stories of Klan-sponsored terrorism and harsh brutalities tarnish the Klan's self-righteous image

• in the 1930s and 1940s the Klan is all but inactive, except for Florida, which maintains a membership of some 30,000 as well as "nightriders" who intimidate blacks attempting to vote

• subsequent to the 1954 Supreme Court decision throwing out the "separate but equal" creed, Klan membership once again begins to increase, spawning a third era Klan often referred to as the "Civil Rights Era Klan"

• the Civil Rights Era Klan, like its predecessors engage in numerous acts of violence including an untold number of bombings and murders—one of the most notable is the murder of three civil rights workers in Philadelphia, Mississippi in 1964 which became the topic for the full-length motion picture Mississippi Burning

• 1965—Klan violence prompts President Johnson and Georgia Congressman Charles Weltner to call for a Congressional probe of Klan activities resulting in the House of Representatives voting to cite seven Klansmen for contempt of Congress

• in the latter part of the 1960s the Klan's strength under increasing Federal enforcement and public backlash against their violent attacks begins to seriously decline
• by the 1970s some students of history proclaim the "death of the Klan", however between 1974 and 1979 Klan membership jumps from 1,500 to 10,000 with an estimated 75,000 active sympathizers heralding yet another era of the Klan, the "new Klan"

• the Klan in the 1970s and 1980s was marked by two divergent trends, on the one hand people like David Duke and Don Black tried to establish a more respectable, business-like Klan (hate with a pretty face) yet, at the same time other prominent Klansmen like Glen Miller and Louis Beam sought to lead the Klan in a paramilitary direction ("robes to combat boots")

• like previous eras the resurgence of the Klan brought increasing violent attacks, including the 1979 confrontation in Greensboro, North Carolina where 5 anti-Klan protesters were killed.

• by the late 1980s the various existing Klans were in financial and organizational disarray—today there are over 60 splintered Klans in the U.S. and membership is well under 10,000, nonetheless, this trend is not completely promising, as many Klans are jointly associated with other white supremacist organizations making traditional notions of membership less applicable, further the future of the Klan appears headed for small, secretive "cells" that have little in the way of a structured organization (Simi and Parker 1998; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997; Klanwatch 1997; Bennett 1995).

Nazis in the U.S.

The most precious possession on earth is our own people, and for these people, and with these people, we will struggle and we will fight, and never slacken, and never tire, and never falter, and never doubt! Long live our movement! Long live our people!"—Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, 1924
George and Wilcox (1996) argue that the term Nazi and increasingly neo-Nazi is used too “freely”. Not all racists and anti-Semites identify with Nazism and combining different racist groups together prohibits greater analytical clarity. Following George and Wilcox (1996) I define Nazi and neo-Nazi as,

an organization or party that generally adopts or advocates traditional Nazi symbolism, including the swastika or approximate equivalent;...the use of the terms 'Nazi' or 'National Socialist'...and a demonstrated reverence for or appreciation of Adolph Hitler and the Third Reich (George and Wilcox 1996: 323).

Prior to and during World War II a number of different Nazi parties and leaders surfaced in the United States (Bennett 1995). After WWII the Nazi movement in the United States continued, but failed to ever gain much mass appeal. Groups have remained splintered and marked by relatively low membership (George and Wilcox 1996).

In 1958 George Lincoln Rockwell formed the American Nazi Party (ANP), headquartered in Arlington, Va., which attracted the most attention among fledgling Neo-Nazi groups. In the 1960s, membership was estimated at no more than twenty individuals. Rockwell's message was anti-black, anti-Semite, and anti-Homosexual. In 1967, fellow Nazis in a battle for control of ANP murdered Rockwell. Although Rockwell's position as leader of the American Nazi party was short-lived (literally), his legacy to the U.S. white supremacy movement is significant (Simonelli 1996). First, Rockwell discarded the Nordic exclusionism of Hitler's Aryan race and transcended the limitations of earlier nativist and anti-Catholic limitations of traditional American racists by expanding what constitutes a true "Aryan". Second, Rockwell popularized Holocaust denial revisions

---

7 For examinations of U.S. Nazis prior to WWII, such as the German American Bund see Canedy 1990; Remak 1957, and for examinations of other "proto fascist" groups in the U.S. during this period, such as the Silver Shirts and the Black Legion see Bennett 1995.
among the American racist right in the 1960s, and third, Rockwell encouraged his followers to establish contacts with Christian Identity churches (Simonelli 1996).

Rockwell's death left Matthew Koehl as the organization's leader. Koehl quickly changed the group's name to the National Socialist White People's Party (NSWPP). His efforts to unite the splintered-Nazi groups failed, and in 1985, he moved the organization to New Berlin, Wisconsin, where he changed the group's name to the New Order. During the 1980s, Nazi groups, such as Koehl's, were highly "balkanized", but nonetheless remained prolific in producing and distributing hate literature (Parker and Simi 1998; George and Wilcox 1996).

Currently one of the most prominent Nazi organizations in the United States is the National Alliance, which was founded in 1974 by Dr. William L. Pierce following his breaking from the NSWPP. A former physics professor at the University of Oregon, Pierce became involved with Rockwell and the American Nazi Party in 1966. As the author of the now infamous *Turner Diaries*, which depicts a racist guerrilla war and a Ryder truck bombing of a federal building, as well as the more recent novel *Hunter*, Pierce remains an inspirational figure in the white supremacist movement. The National Alliance is headquartered in Mill Point, West Virginia, where Pierces' 346 acres of mountain property is located and used as a gathering spot for many like-minded allies, such as the Toronto-based Holocaust denier, Ernst Zundel (Whitsel 1995). The National Alliance base of operations has also reportedly been used to conduct paramilitary training exercises (Suall and Lowe 1995). In recent years the National Alliance has increased recruitment efforts with some success, as the organization now claims chapters in nine states across the country including multiple chapters in Ohio and New York (Nationalist Observer
The National Alliance adheres to a philosophical and spiritual belief system referred to as Cosmotheism, which is an eclectic patchwork of philosophy, science, and mythology. Drawing on Nietzsche, Darwinian evolution, early racial theories, and Teutonic mythology, Cosmotheists await the "white revolution and the Aryan path to Godhood" (Whitsel 1995, 117).

Other contemporary Nazi groups in the U.S. include Tom Metzger's White Aryan Resistance (WAR), NSDAP/AO, National Socialist Vanguard, and National Socialist League/World Service (George and Wilcox 1996).

Christian Identity

"WE BELIEVE that the Cananite Jew is the natural enemy of our Aryan (White) Race. This is attested by scripture and all secular history. The Jew is like a destroying virus that attacks our racial body to destroy Aryan culture and the purity of our Race. Those of our Race who resist these attacks are called "chosen and faithful." John 8:44; 1 Thessalonians 2:15; Revelations 17:14" (Aryan Nations, 1998).

"It is the spirit of Jewish Bolshevism all over again! It is tyranny, not the tyranny of strength, but of meanness and darkness. It is the spirit which produced the Irgun terrorism, the Jewish hatred, malice and vengeance which lurks for all critics of Jewry and opponents of Zionist ambitions" (Henry Ford, The International Jew 1921).

The precise number of Identity churches is uncertain, but experts estimate it to be the low hundreds (Barkun 1997). Christian Identity's roots can be traced to British Israelism, a 19th century English theology that posits that the true Israelites were Anglo-Saxons. However, Christian Identity, the American derivation of British Israelism, made major changes in this theology, namely in contending that Jews are the literal children of Satan, and also accuses them of being communist conspirators determined to control the world. Not surprisingly, Identity Church members see white Christians as God's chosen people and African-Americans as an inferior breed of being, "pre-Adamic"—"mudpeople"
(Barkun 1994). Identity church doctrine also maintains that blacks are pawns used by Jews and white liberal "race traitors" and that the United States is under the control of a Zionist Occupational Government (ZOG). However, it is important to note that Christian Identity does have a multitude of strands and offshoots (Shook, Delano, and Balch 1998).

Established by Richard Butler in 1973, Aryan Nations (AN) is one of the largest Christian Identity organizations in the U.S. A former aerospace engineer at Lockheed Aircraft in southern California, Butler owns and resides on the property where the AN "headquarters" are located in Hayden Lake, Idaho. AN boasts chapters in 26 other states with Louisiana, New Jersey, and Ohio all having multi-chapters (Parker and Simi 1998; Klanwatch 1997). In an effort to build alliances within the supremacist movement, Butler has hosted a number of annual gatherings including the Aryan Nations World Congress (though attendance at recent meetings has steadily been decreasing). The 1997 Congress attracted less than 100 people the lowest turnout in years (Simi 1998), although in 1998 the turnout was slightly higher and reached approximately 125 people (Balch 1998). At the most recent "World Congress", longtime Identity preacher, Neuman Britian, was named as Butler's replacement (Balch 1998).

Aryan Nations has been actively working at establishing connections with other white supremacist groups, including the KKK and neo-Nazi skinheads (ADL 1995).

---

Skinheads

Are we going to sit and let them come
Have they got the white man on the run
The multi-racial society is a mess
We aren't going to take much more of this
What do we need?

White power, for England
White power, today
White power, for Britain
Before it gets too late" (White Power skinhead band, Skrewdriver)

The question is, why do these kids feel this way? What has brought them to this position? What is wrong with this system that white kids across the country are joining up with people like me (Tom Metzger, White Aryan Resistance quoted in Coplon 1989: 89).

Beginning in the late 1960s in Great Britain, the skinhead movement was one of several working-class youth subcultures to emerge following World War II\(^\text{10}\). Following the mods, the first wave of skinheads were not necessarily racist, but were predominantly characterized by their attempt to "magically retrieve the sense of community that the parent working-class culture had lost" (Clarke 1976: 99). In fact, the first wave of skinheads were explicitly influenced by the West Indian "Rude Boy" subculture, including the trademark shaved head, which was emulated after the Rude Boy short cropped hairstyle (Anderson 1987; Hebdige 1979). This adoption of style doesn’t mean that the early skinheads were not ethnocentric and racist in other ways. "Paki-bashing" and "queer-bashing" were both favorite pastimes for those early skinheads seeking to demonstrate among other things their masculinity (Hebdige 1979). The skinheads re-emerged as a youth subculture in Great Britain.

\(^\text{10}\) Discussions of the emergence of the skinhead subculture include: Moore 1993; Anderson 1987; Knight 1982; Hebdige 1979; Clarke 1976; Hall and Jefferson 1976; Taylor and Wall 1976; Brake 1974.
Britain in the late 1970s and became associated with the far-right National Front in the

In the U.S. skinheads first appeared in San Francisco between 1983-1985 (Moore 1993),
although other sources date their beginning back to 1979 in Sacramento, California and
1984 in the Los Angeles area (Simi 1999; Sacto Skinhead Homepage 1997). The U.S.
skinhead movement peaked in the late 1980s with perhaps 10,000 members (although
others estimate that their numbers never exceeded 3,000 to 5,000) (ADL 1995). Skinheads
are younger than most supremacists, and their associations are usually more transient than
members of more established supremacist organizations. Aryan Nations, White Aryan
Resistance, and various Klan groups have all actively attempted to enlist skinheads. In
addition, such efforts seem to have been successful as skinhead "crews" are increasingly
developing official associations with larger white supremacist organizations (Dobratz and
Meile-Shanks 1997).

Militia Movement

"YOU GOT A BIG TARGET ON THERE... SAYS ATF. DON'T SHOOT AT THEM
BECAUSE THEY GOT A VEST ON UNDERNEATH THAT. HEAD SHOTS. HEAD
SHOTS... KILL THE SONS OF BITCHES!"
(G. Gordon Liddy quoted in Abanes 1996)

Estimates of total membership in the militia movement range from the low ten
thousands to several million (Abanes 1996). It seems clear from the disparity in
estimates that we currently do not have a very good idea of how extensive the militia
movement has become.

Although militia rhetoric appears to depart from earlier nativistic groups, one of its core
tenets is the belief in a complex web of conspiracy theories long familiar to observers of
supremacist groups. These "new" paramilitary agitators are not just adopting a conservative philosophical position against a government they see as out of control, they claim to resist a government they perceive as dominated by liberals, communists, and increasingly the United Nations. For some, government subversion by "foreign" entities results from an international conspiracy of elite politicians and business owners, while others claim that the culprits are a small "cabal" of Jewish bankers. Militia members are almost exclusively white males (over 90% of militia membership is thought to be white) who sometimes have connections with well-established supremacist groups (e.g. John Trochmann has been a featured speaker at Aryan Nations events) (Simi and Parker 1998; Abanes 1996).

Several researchers of the far right contend that connections between the white supremacist movement and militias are tenuous and unclear (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997; George and Wilcox 1996). Dobratz and Shanks-Meile (1997) for example, correctly advance that, "there is currently no consensus about the relationship between racist groups and militias..." (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997: 152). However, their skepticism about an alliance between white supremacists and militias resulting in "one unified above ground movement" is questionable since even the white supremacist movement does not represent a "one unified above ground movement". Further, Dobratz and Shanks-Meile (1997) also distinguish between the white supremacist movement and militias on the grounds that during the Senate hearings following the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 many militia members denied having any racist sentiments. While this may point to a tendency among militia members to be less willing to openly advocate white supremacist beliefs, we should also remember that white supremacists themselves
often deny charges of racism, offering “creative” interpretations (e.g. I’m not a racist—I’m a racialist or I don’t hate anybody—I just love my people).

During the course of my fieldwork, I have found intimate connections among those who endorse white supremacist beliefs and individuals who support citizen militias. For example, one predominant aspect of the militia ideology, which points to an affinity with white supremacy, is the belief some militias espouse regarding citizenship. Within the militia ideology, there are typically two types of citizenship: state and 14th Amendment citizens. State citizens are those individuals whose rights are irrevocable, whereas 14th Amendment citizens are individuals whose rights have been granted by Congress and are thus subject to revocation. This view of citizenship has played an important role in more traditional supremacist ideology as well. For instance, after the Civil War, white supremacists began differentiating between "White Common Law Citizens of the state" and citizens whose rights were conferred upon them by the 14th Amendment (Abanes 1996).

Patriot leader, Richard McDonald's comment in 1995 exemplifies the underlying racism that is apparent in much of the militia ideology:

the U.S. government hasn't flown the civil flag since the Civil War, as that war is still going on. Peace has never been declared, nor have hostilities against the people ended. The government is still operating under quasi-military rule (Abanes 1996, 33).

During one of the interviews I conducted a self-proclaimed patriot and supporter of the militia movement indicated the following regarding race and the militia movement:

Nathan: I don't agree with race mixing, uh, you probably don't either, there's a lot of people who don't agree with race mixing

Me: uh yah, do you think most militia groups are against race mixing?
Nathan: Well it's sort of an undertone there you know on most of 'em, whether they come right out and say it or not it's still their basic belief is that too

Me: What about some groups want to set up a separate white homeland what do you think about that?:

Nathan: Well it's fine with me, I don't see nothing wrong with it if you want to do it, [pause] the Khasars[Jews] have been trying to set up a grey race, they don't like the white people because we're not controllable...and Negroes are manageable, you know and whites aren't manageable so they want a grey race so they can handle everybody [pause] so they want integration—we had a white nation it was set up as a white nation and there's no reason why we should have to get our own.

In spite of these obvious similarities, the extent of the relationship between the militia movement and the white supremacist movement is not completely clear. There is also evidence that some segments of each movement view the other somewhat unfavorably. Thus, although there does seem to be connections between the militia movement and the white supremacist movement, it will be important for future research to delineate more precisely the relationships between these two movements.

Social/Political/Economic Context

There are reasons to suspect that there might be a Third Reich in every industrializing society... We need only look again at the world around us, a world of disintegrating patriarchal societies, of revolutionary ideas, of non-ethnic borders, of commercially active minority groups surrounded by partly agrarian and partly proletarian majorities to question the prudence of forgetting history altogether (Bessant 1995: 94)

The revolutionary hopes of the 1960s, which culminated in 1968, are now blocked or abandoned. One day they will break out again, transformed, and will be lived again with different results. I mean only that; I am not prophesying the difference (John Berger, 1975)

The patriot right does not exist in a vacuum, but rather articulates and shapes the social/political/economic context in which it is embedded. As religious scholar Gordon Melton (1995) indicates, "each time the national political mood shifts either to the right or to the left, a similar shift occurs at the fringes..."(Coates 1995: 274). In this section, I
merely want to situate the patriot right within recent macro-sociological trends. I neither intend to argue that there is a causal relationship between economic downturns and increased membership in the patriot right, nor do I view the patriot right as a strictly "irrational" reactionary agent rising against progressive social movements or liberal political programs (Blee 1996; Diamond 1995; Rogin 1967). Both of these issues are questions that deserve further exploration but are beyond the scope of this project.

Instead, I argue that the Patriot Right like all political sectors are in dialogue with preceding social movements including and especially those that signify opposing interests. As the Patriot Right began to re-vitalize itself during the 1980s, influential movements associated with the left-wing (Civil Rights, Feminist, Environmental, Gay/Lesbian etc.) provided important targets for the Patriot Right to situate their collective and specific grievances. Lyons' (1994) comment about the tendency to view the "extreme" right as simply a marginal movement without any institutional, elite, or more conventional ties is insightful

"the image of right-wing extremism as an irrational popular movement obscures the fact that such movements generally embody 'rational' concrete interests, and that elites often play a key role in them..." (Lyons 1994: 3).

The targeting of progressive groups on the left during the last couple of decades is not a tactic reserved by the "fringe right", instead it has been a favorite pastime among many political sectors and has fueled a number of successful national political campaigns among mainstream "corporate Republicans" (Diamond 1995).
Economic Transformations

1973--U.S. recession grips nation—worst since the second World War. By the mid-1980s, farm crisis worsens; farmers displaced by the hundreds of thousands (Gibson 1994; Harvey 1989).

The 1970s and 1980s were marked by important economic transformations. Sectors like manufacturing declined while trade and budget deficits soared shifting the U.S. from a creditor to debtor nation (Gibson 1994; Harvey 1989). Since the 1970s traditional labor jobs have been replaced by an ever-burgeoning service industry and high unemployment rates along with underemployment (including part-time and temporary work) are now accepted by-products of a supposedly "leaner" economic landscape (Parker 1994; Harvey 1989). Labor unions have suffered serious setbacks especially under the Reagan administration and continue to face significant erosion (Hall 1996; Parker 1994; Harvey 1989). Additionally the 1980s and 1990s have been marked by an unprecedented increase in the disparity of income. Economic analysts contend that 39.3% of America's wealth is owned by one-half percent of the American population (Rothchild 1995).

Beyond the economic downturns since the 1970s, there have also been a number of other important changes in our economy. Technological innovations have occurred at unparalleled rates, leading some to suggest that we've entered another stage of capitalism referred to as late-capitalism (Jameson 1991). Nuclear power and computerization have profoundly altered the world in which we live. The global economy is no longer a vision, as international economic systems continue to expand. In addition, economic competition from the Far East has resulted in great frustration and added to America's sense of demise. The World Bank, International Monetary Fund, GATT, the European Union, NAFTA among other things all point to the reality that business and industry are
no longer primarily organized at the national level. Harvey’s (1989) discussion of what he calls a “casino economy” in the United States, characterized by “financial speculation and fictitious capital formation (much of it unbacked by any growth in real production)” articulates an economic moment that for many is tense and unpredictable (Harvey 1989: 332).

Social and Political Transformations

Along with economic transformations, the U.S. has been shaken by a number of other important changes. Post World War II society witnessed the powerful expansion of the Civil Rights Movement and other ethnic pride movements; the emergence of the second wave of the U.S. Feminist Movement; the Anti-War and Student Movement; the Environmental Movement; the Gay and Lesbian Movement; and many others that actively sought to challenge the status quo and demand fair and equal treatment. Major legal and political reforms occurred during this period as well as the beginning and end of the Vietnam War and the resignation of a President over something called Watergate. And in recent years many other emotionally charged social and political issues have captured America's attention including: “family breakdown”, “urban decay”, a panic-ridden fear of crime, growth in international and increasingly domestic terrorism, “assault” on the right to bear arms, immigration, affirmative action and abortion to name a few.

By the 1980s the social and political climate had increasingly turned hostile as the “Reagan Revolution” began to sweep the nation. Faludi (1991) comments that, “by the mid 1980s as resistance to women’s rights acquired political and social acceptability it
passed into the popular culture” (Faludi 1991: xix). Further, people’s frustration with welfare “handouts” grew as Reagan and others called for a crack down on “welfare queens” and others who were undeserving and irresponsible (Faludi 1991). During the 1980s, people began referring to Lyndon Johnson’s “Great Society” as the “great failure” which culminated in the project of dismantling much of the existing social safety net. The intolerance that marked the 1980s continued into the 1990s as a number of anti-gay, anti-affirmative action, and anti-immigration initiatives have met with an alarming amount of electoral success.

The last couple of decades have also seen a growing resentment, lack of trust and an overall dissatisfaction with the U.S. government, illustrating what some have referred to as the "legitimation crisis" (Habermas 1975). Anti-tax sentiments and a “throw the rascals out” perspective in the general populace parallels much of the rage on the patriot right.

Many of these changes have encouraged some scholars of the far right to conclude that a growing sense of economic anxiety has left many searching for easy answers to complex questions. Center For Democratic Renewal researcher Noah Chandler contends:

With all these economic agreements—GATT, NAFTA, and European economic boundaries coming down—things are moving very fast. These are people who are in rural areas, they are less educated, and they have romantic ideas of the good old days. They want states’ rights. The sheriff is the highest law of the land. They are close to the Constitution. They want a “well-regulated militia (quoted in Abanes 1996: 9).

Some of these researchers point to the militias and their propensity for conspiracy theories as well as the openly white supremacist groups’ theories of "the genocide of the white race" as easily digestible to a growing number of alienated white Americans (Blazack 1995, Zellner 1995). While the assumption that people on the far right are less
educated and economically disenfranchised is debatable (see Kaplan 1998; Blee 1996; Aho 1990), it is indisputable that the current economic/social/political moment is a cause of great concern among the general public including those on the patriot right.

Increasingly, many people perceive the current transformations as a clear indication that the "real" America is only a faded memory, and that having lost their sovereignty, U.S. citizens are quickly becoming prisoners in their own country.

For those on the patriot right, two recent events crystallize this vision. The first critical event took place in Ruby Ridge, Idaho where a F.B.I. assault and capture of survivalist and white supremacist Randy Weaver, resulted in the death of his wife and son who were killed by federal agents. Pastor Carl Franklin of Church of Aryan Nations viewed the assault at Ruby Ridge as:

the government coming four-square against a Christian, American white family. When the feds blew the head off of Vicki Weaver, I think symbolically that was their war against the American woman, the American mother, the American white wife. This is the opening shot of the second American Revolution (Real 1992).

Less than a year following the tragedy at Ruby Ridge on April 19, 1993, the F.B.I. began an assault upon David Koresh's compound in Waco, Texas that has been perceived by members of the patriot right as an "American holocaust" where "Americans were being pressured, intimidated, and coerced into believing that Gestapo and KGB tactics are par for the course and are thus to be accepted as every day occurrences in our once Christian nation" (Minges 1998).

Ruby Ridge

Randy Weaver and his family lived in a small cabin, snuggled away in the heavily wooded mountains of rural Idaho. After failing to appear in court for weapons charges, a
bench warrant was issued for him. For 18 months, Randy Weaver, his spouse Vicki, and their three children remained holed up in their cabin. On August 21, 1992 Weaver’s fourteen-year-old son, Sammy and a family friend Kevin Harris spotted federal deputies conducting surveillance on Weaver’s property. Gunfire ensued between the officers and Harris and Sammy, leaving Sammy and one of the federal officers dead. The tragedy of Sammy and the officer’s death was compounded by a fatal communication error on the part of federal officials. After the gunfire, the Justice department was notified that there were “...others stuck on the mountain” which was mistakenly interpreted as “still trapped under fire” (Abanes 1996: 46). This misinterpretation along with other misinformation led the FBI to alter their standard rules of engagement. The new orders instructed snipers to shoot on-sight: “If any adult in the compound is observed with weapons after the surrender announcement is made [to the Weavers], deadly force can and should be used to neutralize this individual” (Abanes 1996: 46). The decision resulted in the death of Vicki Weaver, Randy’s spouse. Ten days later Weaver and Harris surrendered, facing charges ranging from assault to murder. A jury in Boise, Idaho acquitted Harris of all charges and convicted Weaver of only failing to appear on the original firearms charge (Abanes 1996)^11.

The Ruby Ridge incident constituted a significant catalyst for the patriot right. It gave them a concrete example of what “the U.S. government does to its own citizens”. Ruby Ridge was the impetus behind the 1992 Rocky Mountain Rendezvous in Estes Park, Colorado, where about 150-175 “Christian men” gathered to discuss the Weaver killings and an appropriate response. A year later another tragic event occurred which would

---

^11 For an in-depth treatment of the Ruby Ridge siege see Walter 1995; for the Weaver’s account of what happened see Weaver 1998.
again be seized by the patriot right as further proof of our government’s tyranny. This event was the Waco Siege.

Waco

The tragedy and destruction that took place at the Branch Davidian religious commune in Waco, Texas is well documented and has received such a large amount of media coverage that I will only briefly recount what occurred\textsuperscript{12}.

On February 28, 1993 Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) agents attempted to serve a search warrant at the premises of the Davidian commune. A gun battle left four agents dead and twenty wounded, while six Davidians were also killed. A fifty-one day standoff ensued which eventually ended in an inferno that engulfed the Davidian compound, leaving more than 80 dead, including David Koresh, the Davidian leader, and two dozen children (Dees and Corcoran 1997; Abanes 1996). The impact of the Waco Siege spread quickly and intensely. According to some researchers, Waco significantly increased militia membership (Dees and Corcoran 1997; Abanes 1996; Stern 1996), and also led to an onslaught of conspiracy theory about the government’s conduct during the operation. Particularly influential were two videos produced by Patriot leader Linda Thompson (an Indiana attorney): \textit{Waco: The Big Lie} and \textit{Waco II: The Big Lie Continues}. Each of these videos rather vaguely attempts to reveal the hidden cover-up of what really went on during the Waco siege. Waco provided anti-government adherents with another example of abusive federal enforcement and left a bitter taste in many

\textsuperscript{12} For further discussions of the Waco Siege see Abanes 1996; Stern 1996.
people's mouths. One of my informants once stated with a harsh, unforgiving tone that "I can't wait to get those bastards back for what they did in Waco" (Simi 1998).

Needless to say Ruby Ridge and Waco have contributed to a growing anti-government hostility among the patriot right. Many perceive both instances as concrete examples supporting far-fetched conspiracy theories, such as the belief that urban gangs are being trained by the Federal government in a plot to "confiscate law-abiding citizen's firearms" (Stern 1996). Consider the following warning:

Guns are being provided to street gangs in major areas of America's largest cities. Upon receipt of orders, the street gangs will initiate riots in major metropolitan areas. These riots will be waged upon citizenry and resisting police officers and will include house-to-house sweeps, violence, murder and destruction (National Alliance Homepage, n.d.).

The AOI, like many on the Patriot Right, was enraged and disgusted with the government's actions at Ruby Ridge and Waco. Ruby Ridge hit close to home for the AOI as one member is a cousin of Randy Weavers and other members are close friends with the Weaver family. During the standoff at Ruby Ridge members of the AOI participated in the vigil protesting the government's presence. The AOI points at both tragedies as emblematic of the increasing attack white people face in this country. In the next chapter I review research on the Patriot Right and discuss the cultural studies approach that informs my project.

Before I move on to chapter 2 I want to mention another event that although I wouldn't classify it as precipitating, has nonetheless had profound effects on the patriot movement as well as the nation-at-large: this event is of course the Oklahoma City bombing. This tragedy illustrates the depths of rage that lies within some individuals who are aligned with the patriot right. At 9:02 a.m. on April 19, 1995 at least one blast
emanating from the parking garage of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City killing 169 people and injuring some 600 more making it this country's worst case of domestic terrorism (Abanes 1996). Some claim that in the aftermath of the bombing and the ensuing congressional investigation of the militia movement that membership in patriot organization declined, while others claim it had the opposite effect. And according to others the bombing neither decreased nor increased membership, but rather sent groups to begin operating as underground, highly secretive "cells". Unfortunately, the Oklahoma City bombing appears to have had another effect; it has "opened the door" so-to-speak to more and more cases of domestic terrorism (Klanwatch 1997).

\[^{13}\text{For an in-depth discussion of the Oklahoma City bombing see Hamm 1997; Abanes 1996; Stern 1996.}\]
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The first section of this chapter reviews the concept of ideology using a cultural studies approach that emphasizes the Birmingham School's work. Second, I review the literature on the Patriot right, discussing classical and contemporary research. My review of classical research focuses on the pluralist model or theory, which has provided one of the more influential explanations of right-wing movements. I examine the emergence, contributions, and the weaknesses of the pluralist theory. Reviewing contemporary research, I divide this work into four types: 1) macro; 2) content analysis; 3) ethnographic; and 4) journalistic accounts.

Ideology

There is an extensive sociological literature analyzing ideology, however, my review is not intended to be exhaustive, but instead focuses on the cultural studies approach to ideology, namely the one developed by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) or the Birmingham School. The Birmingham School is not the only important approach in cultural studies, as there are cultural studies programs throughout the world. As Hall (1992) says "cultural studies has multiple discourses; it has a number of different

---

14 For instance, sociology's long tradition of studying ideology arguably begins with the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1970 [1932]), followed by other noteables such as: Karl Mannheim (1936, 1952); Daniel Bell (1960); Herbert Marcuse (1964); Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966); Louis Althusser (1969, 1971); Antonio Gramsci (1971); Jurgen Habermas (1971); and Clifford Geertz (1973).
I use the CCCS because the scholars associated with it have spent a considerable amount of time studying subcultures, emphasizing the intersections between style, everyday practices and ideology. Before reviewing the Birmingham School, I will briefly discuss Louis Althusser and Antonio Gramsci’s work, as both were influential to CCCS’s theoretical approach to ideology (During 1993).

**Louis Althusser**

Louis Althusser’s structural Marxism and his continual attempts to refine an understanding of ideology influenced much of the Birmingham School’s thinking on this concept and their aim to develop cultural studies (During 1993; Agger 1992). Althusser’s personal life, however, was marked by tragedy. Spending close to five years as a prisoner of war in Schleswig Holstein during WWII, Althusser experienced the onset of depressive illness (Elliott 1993). Hospitalized in 1946, Althusser was eventually diagnosed with manic-depression and underwent a range of treatments from drugs to ECT (Elliott 1993). In 1980, Althusser confessed to murdering his companion of 35 years and was subsequently admitted to St. Anne's Psychiatric Hospital in Paris (Benton 1984). Althusser died at St. Anne's in October 1990 (Elliott 1993).

Despite (or perhaps in part because of) these tragedies, Althusser possessed a keen insight toward the workings of ideology and other social phenomena. In constant dialogue with Marx, Althusser aimed to reconfigure the relationship between economics and ideology that Marx advanced in *the German Ideology* (Hall 1996; Marx 1970). As Hall (1996) points out an economic reductionist approach to ideology leaves ideas "without specific effects; a realm of pure dependency" (Hall 1996: 29). Althusser (1969)
contended that Marx's reductionism leaves ideology as an "expressive" structure where the economic sector directly determines all others, resulting in effects that are reproduced (i.e. expressed) correspondingly (Althusser 1969).

Specifically, Althusser (1970; 1969) sought to revise Marx's conceptualization of the base-superstructure relationship, by arguing that superstructures have their own specific "relative autonomy" not reducible to a direct correspondence with the economic base (Hall 1996; Hebdige 1996; Benton 1984). Neither a static set of ideas, nor one imposed upon subordinate classes by dominant classes, ideology is a dynamic process constantly reproduced and reconstituted through practice (Fiske 1996). This is what Althusser means when he says, "ideology is lived practice" where people are constantly engaging in the process of ideological internalization (Hall 1996; Agger 1992: 147). Althusser reveals, however, that this process is not created at the individual level, individuals engage in ideological discourse through categories that exist outside of individuals or as Hall (1996) says "...which can more accurately be said to think us..." (Hall 1996: 30). These categories are the basis for one of his most influential essays “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” (Althusser 1971).

In this essay Althusser discusses how different sectors (e.g. educational, family, mass media, and political institutions) or what he calls "ideological state apparatuses"--ISAs serve to perpetuate submission to "dominant ideology" (Hebdige 1979; Althusser 1971). These institutions do not pursue this function through the "direct transmission of ruling ideas," but rather, "they work together in what Althusser calls a teeth-gritting harmony that the ruling ideology is reproduced precisely in its contradictions" (Hebdige 1979: 133). While, ISAs produce their own ideas, which at times contradict each other, they
also operate at a level of implicit cooperation. This cooperation is not necessarily to each other, but rather to the larger function of reproducing the dominant ideology. Although the ISAs are not the direct product of an economic base, Althusser's theory of "overdetermination" argues that ISAs are part of a network of ideological interrelationships, where their "autonomy" from each other is more apparent than real (Fiske 1996). These institutions exist and operate under the assumption of autonomy, yet are connected by an "unspoken web of ideological interconnections, so that the operation of any one of them is 'overdetermined' by its complex, invisible network of interrelationships with all the others" (Fiske 1996: 118). Althusser's ISAs generate what Gramsci refers to as "commonsense", which functions to naturalize the social norms the ISAs produce (Althusser 1971; Gramsci 1971).

Another important aspect to Althusser's theory of ideology is his contention that ideology is beneath consciousness, "ideology has little to do with consciousness…It is profoundly unconscious" signifying the influence of Freud and Lacan on Althusser's conception of ideology (Balibar 1993; Althusser 1969). By emphasizing the unconscious condition of ideology, Althusser does not mean that ideology lacks consciousness, but rather ideology produces forms of consciousness which are already interwoven with "non-representative" elements (hopes, fears, values, morality) (Balibar 1993). These forms of consciousness result in "…sets of social relations—ways of organizing the world that appear to us as if they were universal and timeless" (Hebdige 1979). Following Althusser's location of ideology beneath consciousness, I examine how AOI members articulate ideological categories that are taken as "natural" (e.g. race) and the way(s) in which these are expressed through daily practices. Further, I also discuss
AOI's ideology as part of the production of subjective identities, where white supremacy "interpellates" or "the act of recruitment which positions as a subject" who "utter[s] ideological truths as if [he/she] were the authentic authors" (Larrain 1996: 49). This reflects Althusser's (1969) contention that ideology is the unity between "the real relation and the imaginary relation...that expresses a will...a hope or a nostalgia, rather than describing a reality" (Althusser 1969: 233-234). In this sense the AOI's articulations of a "genocide of the white race and a Jewish cabal who controls the world etc." are more than simply conspiratorial descriptions of a concrete reality. They express a will to change the status quo, a hope for a better future, and a nostalgia for a lost past. However, contrary to Althusser who assumes individuals are necessarily "recruited and constituted" as subjects of the dominant ideology, I follow Hall and Laclau both of whom argue that individuals are also interpellated by resistant ideologies (Hall 1996; Laclau 1986). In this case white supremacy is an ideological system that is simultaneously a dominant and resistant ideology. Like fascism it provides an opportunity for individuals across class-lines to experience ideological unity in various way(s) and at various levels (Laclau 1986).

Before discussing the Birmingham School's eventual move away from Althusser, it is important to emphasize his continuing importance. Hall (1996) contends that Althusser opens "the gate to a more linguistic or discursive conception of ideology" (Hall 1996: 30). However, although Althusser's emphasis on the "relative-autonomy" of culture and ideology led the Birmingham School to resist a cultural studies that is mechanically beholden to a purely orthodox Marxism (Agger 1992), ultimately as Hall (1996) argues Althusser's approach to ideology was still "too orthodox", and in the final analysis...
Althusser's "relative autonomy" ironically opens the backdoor for a more reductionist view of ideology (Hall 1996). Further, Althusser's contention that ISAs unquestioningly reproduce the dominant ideology has been considered inadequate to account for "subversive ideas or for ideological struggle" (Hall 1996: 30). In other words, Althusser fails to account for the "pockets" of resistance that emerge from time to time. This departure from Althusser led Birmingham scholars to embrace what they saw as a more sophisticated social/cultural/political analysis in the work of Antonio Gramsci (Fiske 1996; Hall 1996; Agger 1992; Hebdige 1979).

Antonio Gramsci

In the "post Hoggart/Williams" phase Antonio Gramsci was the thinker the Birmingham School turned to most (Forgacs 1993; Aggar 1992). Gramsci is arguably most noted for his *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1971) written while imprisoned during Mussolini's fascist regime (During 1993). Informed by Marx and Engels' analysis of the relationship between class and ruling ideas, Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* offers an account of how dominance is sustained in advanced capitalist societies (Hebdige 1979; Gramsci 1975 [1971]). As he sees it, dominance is sustained through hegemony which is most often referred to as a:

situation in which a provisional alliance of certain social groups can exert total social authority over other subordinate groups, not simply by coercion or by the direct imposition of ruling ideas, but by winning and shaping consent so that the power of the dominant classes appears both legitimate and natural (Hebdige 1979: 15-16; Hall 1977)

Although not the first person to use the term hegemony, Gramsci is probably most associated with it (Hall 1993). Using the term hegemony in several contexts, Gramsci
initially uses the term in 1920 in his "Notes on the Southern Question" where he argues the proletariat in Italy could only become the "leading" class in so far as it, succeeds in creating a system of alliances which allows it to mobilize the majority of the working population against capitalism and the bourgeois state...[which] means to the extent that it succeeds in gaining the consent of the broad peasant masses (Hall 1996: 425).

Later Gramsci expands this conception of hegemony, moving forward from an essentially "class alliance" to a conception that can be more generally applied to the strategies of all classes. For example, the pre-Mandela South African state sustained its power through alliances between white ruling class interests and the interests of white workers against blacks, gaining consent of certain disenfranchised classes and groups, such as "tribal blacks"—in the strategy of forging alliances against the mass of rural and industrial blacks" (Hall 1996: 426). Hall's example of an expanded conception of hegemony illustrates the complexity of how the state and different classes align themselves attempting to secure their interests. Another development in Gramsci's conception of hegemony is the difference between a class which "dominates" and a class which "leads". Gramsci emphasizes the importance of "winning consent" versus coercion, however, he argues there is no "pure case of coercion/consent—only different combinations of the two dimensions" (Hall 1996:426).

This distinction is important as it highlights that hegemony constitutes a consent by groups, which departs from other way(s) of viewing dominance that solely stress coercion or false consciousness. Thus, rather than elites strictly ruling the "masses" through an "iron fist", hegemony assumes that dominance is successful to the extent that it does not appear as dominance. Hegemony involves the power to frame alternatives and opportunities, "so that the granting of legitimacy to the dominant classes appears not only
spontaneous but natural and normal" (Hall and Jefferson 1976: 38). However, hegemony, according to Gramsci (1971) should not be taken as a given, it is a "moving equilibrium" that needs to be won, worked for, reproduced and sustained (Gramsci 1971). Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (1976) use the following example to illustrate hegemony during different historical periods in England. During the 1930s, high levels of unemployment and economic crisis "disciplined rather than led" the working classes into subordination. However, "hegemonic domination" during the 1950s appears to be a more accurate characterization as affluence became positioned as an ideology which worked to dismantle working-class resistance and win "spontaneous consent" of the working class to the authority of the dominant classes (Hall and Jefferson 1976: 40).

Following Gramsci, the Birmingham School derives a more sophisticated and delicate interpretation of hegemony and culture (Agger 1992). Gramsci’s notion that there are no such things as norms or values apart from the material practices which encode them has encouraged the Birmingham School to investigate how ideology is articulated through material practices (Agger 1992). Gramsci’s emphasizes that ideology is more than just grand philosophical statements, but rather everyday conceptions of the world. These conceptions are fragmentary, incomplete, episodic, and internally contradictory chains of thought, which ordinary people utilize in everyday discourse to make sense of their world (Donald and Stuart 1986). Gramsci’s notion of ideology as everyday conceptions or "common sense" parallels Althusser’s view of ideology as "naturalizing". Each was aware of ideology as embedded in everyday material culture, not simply in grand philosophical statements. This notion of ideology influences my analysis, as I try to illustrate how white supremacy is articulated through everyday practices and as common-
sense. The Birmingham School and various other versions of cultural studies are indebted to Gramsci's work, which has left students of culture better equipped to analyze culture as a dynamic process rather than a static entity.

Birmingham School

The CCCS's practice of cultural studies has been unique, resisting on the one hand the inflexibility of orthodox Marxist approaches to culture, yet maintaining a rigorous pursuit of theoretical concerns and a critical perspective, which is lacking in much of the American study of "pop-culture" (Agger 1992). On the one hand, the Birmingham School was responding to the economic reductionism of orthodox Marxists who saw culture as purely determined by economic forces, while on the other hand they were responding to American interactionists, who were often seen as a-structural. Influenced, especially by Howard Becker's work in *Outsiders*, Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson commented about their engagement with interactionist theory in their introduction to *Resistance Through Rituals* (RTR) (1976):

...our engagement with the perspective in general was always, however, double-edged: both a sense of exhilaration about the importance of some of the ideas...and a sense of unease: a feeling that these...were not comprehensive enough: a feeling, particularly, that deviant behaviour had other origins besides public labeling (Hall and Jefferson 1976: 5).

*Resistance Through Rituals* then is emblematic of the Birmingham School's initial foray into developing a coherent position for cultural studies, expanding and developing a dialogue with Marx, Gramsci, Althusser, Williams, Hoggart, and engaging in the debates surrounding "high" and "low" culture, ideology and domination, and the relationship between structures and agency. Continuing to refine previous theorists' ideas while
developing their own analysis of contemporary culture, Birmingham scholars like Stuart Hall (1996) offer a "Marxism with hope but without guarantees" (Hall 1996: 25-46). Hall's phrase captures the growing recognition that a Marxist workers' revolution is unlikely and the accompanying criticism that such a project is ultimately exclusionary. However, as Hall and others have revised, reformulated, and refuted much of the Marxist project, they continue to strive, envision, and work for a future that is driven by the old Marxist spirit of egalitarianism, democracy, and solidarity.

In RTR, the CCCS use an approach heavily influenced by Marxism and semiotics, focusing primarily on the meanings working-class subcultural members give to the world around them. For example, Clark (1976) contends that Britain's first wave of skinheads were responding to socioeconomic challenges by trying to magically retrieve the sense of community that their parent working-class culture had lost (Clark 1976: 99-102).

The publication of Resistance Through Rituals was followed by an enormous body of writing, which makes a review of the entire work originating from the Birmingham School well beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead I provide an overview of some of the school's shared features, their basic approach to ideology, and discuss several individual works that are especially relevant to my project.

There are a number of different features that characterize the Birmingham approach. One of the more important ones is their broad definition of culture (Agger 1992). Rather than solely focusing on "high" cultural works and accomplishments, Birmingham scholars conceptualize culture as a whole range of lived experience and a process of learning values, identity, and behaviors. Not satisfied with merely examining cultural
artifacts, the CCCS analyzes "the practices and processes of production, distribution, and reception comprising the cultural totality of a society" (Agger 1992: 84).

Another important component to the CCCS is their more complex conception of dominant culture. In RTR, Hall and Jefferson explain that dominant culture is not a "homogenous structure", but is comprised of multiple interests that exist within the dominant classes (Hall and Jefferson 1976: 12). This emphasis on the multiplicity of interests in the dominant classes (versus a strictly monolithic conception) characterizes much of their thinking in regards to ideology and culture. Consider the following definition of ideology:

By ideology I mean the mental frameworks—the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation—which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works (Hall 1996: 26).

Hall reveals that through ideology different groups in hopes of resisting or reproducing a "reality" that makes sense to them act upon various interests. This conception of ideology is further elaborated by Hebdige (1996), who argues that "ideology is articulated (constructed) through language but it is not equivalent to it...practices do not intrinsically belong to any political position or social identity; they must be articulated into it" (Hebdige 1996: 158). Thus wearing a white sheet is not inscribed with a particular political position, however, when the wearing of a white sheet is articulated as part of a white supremacist agenda, the white sheet takes on a political relevance. If the practice of wearing a white sheet is articulated enough times with a white supremacist agenda, then a political position may become inscribed within the white sheet. In this case simply wearing the white sheet evokes a political position. But, the inscription of political positions is never final, and as Hebdige (1979) contends, these practices are often the
sites of ideological struggle. A cross that is set on fire illustrates this. For anti-Klan
activists and many others this is a "cross-burning"—a practice used to instill fear among
"non-whites", whereas for white supremacists the cross is not being "burned" only merely
"lit", and rather than a tactic to instill fear, it is a religious ceremony that is derived from
an ancient Scottish ritual.

Another important development in the Birmingham thinking on subcultures and
ideology is informed by Walter Miller's (1958) conception of focal concerns (Hall and
Jefferson 1976). Focal concerns are central to the inner life of the group, including
rituals "which underpin their collective identity and define them as a 'group' instead of a
mere collection of individuals" (Hall and Jefferson 1976: 47). As a means to express
these concerns, the group uses material objects, reorganizing them into distinctive styles.
Increasingly, after World War II, subcultures began to employ "subcultural solutions" to
the social problems of unemployment, underemployment, poor educational opportunities,
and low pay (Hall and Jefferson 1976; Brake 1974). Clarke (1976) says the first-wave of
skinheads tried to "magically" retrieve their parent's lost sense of working-classness
through subcultural clothing styles (Doctor Marten work boots, suspenders, jeans etc.),
fighting to display toughness, and high levels of group solidarity (Clarke 1976).

However, "subcultural solutions" that working-class subcultures employ can not
resolve the structural dimensions of these problems. This inability results in strategies
that "reproduce the gaps and discrepancies between real negotiations and symbolically
displaced resolutions. They solve, but in an imaginary way, problems which at the
concrete material level remain unresolved" (Hall and Jefferson 1976: 47-48). Because
these resolutions are "pitched largely at the symbolic level," they are "fated to fail" (Hall and Jefferson 1976: 47).

This argument seems to have a large degree of applicability to various subcultures and social movements. In many ways the AOI attempts to resolve structural problems such as increasing economic inequality, a rapidly declining middle-class, and an expanding realm of international decision-making. These resolutions are often attempted through symbolic rhetoric, including argot like "ZOG"--Zionist Occupational Government and "NWO crowd" (New World Order), the collection of guns, uniforms, and other items necessary to survive the full wrath of a "Jew-inspired race war" and the eventual "One World Government". The AOI's "magical" attempts at resolution include the "NWO" argot, pictures of Hitler, swastika tattoos, etc. resembling what Hebdige (1979) refers to as "bricolage" where objects, practices, and ideas are arranged and re-arranged to construct an identity and contest the status quo (Hebdige 1979). I will further examine the relevance of Hebdige's work shortly, after discussing Stuart Hall.

A number of scholars have been associated with the CCCS, but the contemporary intellectual "ringleader" has undoubtedly been Stuart Hall. His work spans more than four decades and is the topic of the edited volume Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues and Cultural Studies (Morley and Chen 1996). One of Hall's many contributions that I draw from in my analysis is his discussion of decoding and encoding (Hall 1993; 1980). Developed for the purpose of understanding how people read televsual texts, Hall proposes that television programs do not have a single meaning, but are instead open to multiple readings (Hall 1993; 1980). However, this does not mean that texts are open to any reading whatsoever, because each stage of communication limits the possibilities in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
the next stage (Hall 1993). Further, Hall contends that there may be a relationship between people's social location (e.g. social class) and their readings.

He develops three types of readings that people tend to use to interpret a text. The first is a dominant or preferred reading where a person or group accepts and agrees with the dominant ideology communicated by the text. The second is the negotiated reading where a person produces a locally situated reading that fits into the dominant ideology. And the third strategy is the oppositional reading where a text's dominant ideology is re-articulated within an alternative framework (Hall 1993). Some have claimed that there are no pure dominant readings, and in fact most readings are some variations of a negotiated reading (Fiske 1996). I use Hall's conception of televisual decodings to better analyze an entire range of practices, which articulate different aspects of ideology. For example, the way(s) in which people discuss the government can be analyzed using Hall's different readings. A frequent oppositional reading that I've heard often involves gun control policies. When reading the mention of "public safety", AOI members typically re-articulate this as meaning "government safety" which allows the system to maintain social control, preventing citizens from defending their rights and liberty. This oppositional reading of gun control policies goes as far as people constructing theories implicating the government's orchestration of "plots" where urban gang members are currently being trained as part of an eventual "operation" culminating in raids on citizens' firearms at which time dissenters will be killed. In another twist to the oppositional reading of gun control policies, an AOI associate told me that he thought the recent "spate" of "school shootings" were engineered by government "mind control" tactics in
the hopes of facilitating "sweeping" gun control legislation that will prohibit all gun ownership.

In another sense Hall's conception of the way(s) in which ideology works to constitute subjects also informs my project. Following Althusser, Hall (1986) suggests that ideology names and positions people as subjects, which results in a person being able to recognize that he/she is being addressed, and in the process subjecting him/herself to this positioning. For example, racial categories, such as, white people/black people immediately constructs identifiable boundaries where people through "spontaneous identification" recognize themselves within those categories (Donald and Hall 1986). According to Althusser's (1971) the subject is a social category, symbolically constructed, which is the key mechanism to the functioning of ideology (Althusser 1971). A white supremacist ideology names a white subject as someone who not only embodies a particular cultural heritage that is entirely superior to other "races", but a white subject who also possesses a particular genetic make-up, a bloodline that is clearly distinct from Jews and other "non-whites". As Hall argues (1993) "racism operates by constructing impassable symbolic boundaries between racially constituted categories...and attempts to fix and naturalize the difference between belongingness and otherness" (Hall 1993: 445). The resulting gulf created through a white supremacist ideology between "whiteness" and "otherness" is normalized or "naturalized" within this discourse.

Another Birmingham scholar whose work I draw from heavily is Dick Hebdige. His book Subculture: the Meaning of Style (1979) traces the development of various post-WWII youth cultures in Britain, focusing primarily on the punk subculture (Hebdige 1979). Hebdige contends that "all aspects of culture possess a semiotic value, and the
most taken-for-granted phenomena can function as signs...there is an ideological
dimension to every signification" (Hebdige 1979: 13). This emphasis on the semiological
reflects the view that ideology is something that is lived and enacted through daily
practices.

Expanding upon his notion of semiotic value, Hebdige suggests the concept of
bricolage to explain how subcultural styles are constructed. As developed by Levi-
Strauss (1966) in the Savage Mind bricolage refers to a "science of the concrete"
(Hebdige 1979: 103), as opposed to a science of the abstract. Hebdige uses the notion of
bricolage arguing that subcultures tinker with objects, practices, and ideas to subvert
traditional meanings (Hebdige 1979). Further, bricolage serves to establish homologies or
the confluence of beliefs and practices (Willis 1978; Levi-Strauss 1969) and analogies
between an ordering of nature and society to make explicitly clear an explanation of the
world (Hebdige 1979). The result is a flexible system, which allows for an infinite
number of extensions and improvisations that generate new meanings (Hebdige 1979).
Thus, combining images of U.S. "founding fathers" with images of Adolph Hitler and
German Nazism illustrates an attempt to re-establish a true "Aryan Patriotism".
Specifically, this example illustrates how bricolage and appropriation of signs are used to
create resistance.

Further, the AOI characterizes the natural world and contemporary society in starkly
different manners. Members of the AOI often express views that distinguish between a
"pure" natural world and a "decadent" social world. On the one hand, they construct
relations to the natural world through a kind of conservationist way of living (e.g. some
people are in the process of building homes made from straw bales because these are
considered to be more "environmentally friendly"). At the same time, nature tends to be seen as something humans can possess and ultimately harness for their needs. According to the AOI, nature will provide the necessary protection and defense from increasing social chaos, collapse, and ever-powerful Federal and international entities. On the other hand, society is classified as over-crowded and unfriendly—a "cesspool", which has "de-evolved" into a disharmonious wasteland. This characterization of society includes an ordering where large urban areas are the epitome of the "cesspool" (e.g. cities like San "Fagcisco"). Discussions surrounding the growth and ensuing decline of civilization in Salt Lake City also reveals this ordering of society. As Salt Lake City experienced significant growth over the last decade, it has simultaneously become an unfit place to live. The same is true for small towns like St. George and Hurricane, Utah. As they continue to grow these areas are also less inhabitable. Clearly, this ordering of a "decadent" society contrasts with the notion of a "pure" nature. Furthermore, these orderings of the natural and social world make it possible for members to establish a coherent worldview that resolves inevitable contradictions.

Informed by Althusser's notion of ISAs, Hebdige (1979) analyzes subcultures, which he interprets as forms of resistance where their "experienced contradictions and objections to this ruling ideology are obliquely represented in style" (Hebdige 1979: 133). I also examine the AOI in part as an exemplar of subcultural resistance. Hebdige uses the term "noise" to refer to the resistant forms that styles embody (Hebdige 1979: 133), which for the AOI includes among other things: shaved heads and the use of swastikas, signifying an attempt to simultaneously recapture conventional American values and a subvert "polite" society's mistaken historical interpretation of Nazi Germany and Adolph
Hitler. Further, the AOI illustrates that ISAs are sometimes the sites of ideological struggle and are used to resist and negotiate the "teeth-gritting harmony" that ISAs typically produce. For instance, while members of the AOI may accept and re-produce traditional notions about the family, the family is also seen as a sort of refuge from the decadence of other ISAs (e.g. education, mass media). Through the family, members enact practices to negotiate and resist an external world controlled by Jewish interests and polluted by non-whites. Instead of a daughter becoming a "poster girl" for a beauty pageant, she becomes a "poster girl" for the "movement". And instead of giving children "cub scout" supplies, members of the AOI give their children survivalist kits to prepare for the day when "ammunition will be worth more than gold and guns will line the streets" (Birth of a Militia 1997).

The Birmingham School's approach to ideology is dynamic and rooted in the notion that ideology is more than just a set of beliefs, but is enacted and accomplished through concrete everyday practices. Researchers have studied various subcultures to show how ideology "works" and as a result a number of insightful texts have been produced. In chapters 5, I continue to discuss how AOI members articulate ideology through daily practices, illustrating in greater detail the relevance of the Birmingham approach to my study of ideology.

A final caveat regarding my use of the Birmingham School to examine the AOI is necessary. Research produced there typically focused on either working-class subcultures struggling against dominant ideology or other groups marginalized from mainstream society (e.g. West Indian immigrants in the U.K., women etc.). First, unlike the tedds, mods, punks, or early skinheads in the U.K., the AOI's members primarily...
derive from middle-class "parent cultures". Further, the AOI is submerged in a subculture developed around the notion of defending (not interrogating) white privilege. While my "subjects" do not "fit" the political project of the Birmingham School, Hall (1996) recognizes the importance of studying the potential for reactionary politics among various subcultures (Hall 1996). Beyond this seeming lack of fit, I have also been plagued with a lingering doubt about my decision to study white supremacists. I often wonder if the time I've committed to the AOI would have been better spent with people engaged in a progressive agenda. I wonder if I should have devoted a study to anti-nuclear activists, opponents of the death penalty, the New Black Panthers, or people with disabilities advocating for equal rights?

Classical Research

One can not discuss research regarding right wing movements without at least mentioning the work pioneered by scholars at the Frankfurt School. However, a thorough treatment of the "authoritarian personality" is beyond the scope of this paper.\(^{15}\) Instead, I will briefly discuss some of the main assumptions that grounded the original research on the authoritarian personality, which I follow with an examination of the Pluralist model, another theory that has been especially influential in explanations of right-wing movements in the U.S.

Developed by Frankfurt School scholars in 1950 (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson and Sanford 1950), the authoritarian personality research was intended to

\(^{15}\) Some places to start for a review of research on the authoritarian personality since 1950 are: Altemeyer 1988, 1981; Lowenthal 1987.
measure and identify individuals with an authoritarian character (Bessant 1995). Spurred by the rise of National Socialism in Germany, original authoritarian research dealt mainly with the "Fascist" or "F" scale (Altemeyer 1981), as Frankfurt scholars were seeking to examine the social and psychological factors that provided fertile soil for the growth of fascism (Blee 1996; Bessant 1995). Adorno and others contended that individuals with low tolerance for ambiguity and a high need for rigid, stereotyped views are attracted to the uncomplicated, authoritative, and conspiratorial ideologies that characterize extreme right-wing movements and groups (Blee 1996).

Like most research that captures peoples' attention, there has been a large amount of debate regarding the "authoritarian personality" (Adorno 1994; Bauman 1989; Altemeyer 1988; 1981). Many researchers have used the original research on the authoritarian personality as a starting point to build theories of their own with different emphases. For example, Altemeyer (1981; 1988) uses Albert Bandura's (1977) social learning theory (instead of psychoanalytic theory) as a theoretical basis for what he refers to as Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA). Needless to say, the contribution from the Frankfurt scholars is immeasurable and will likely generate discussion for decades to come.

Pluralist Theory

In 1963 Daniel Bell edited an expanded and updated version of *The Radical Right* which included contributions from Bell, Richard Hofstadter, Seymour Martin Lipset, Talcott Parsons, David Reisman, and Nathan Glazer (Bell 1963). Gaining appeal in the U.S. during the 1950s and 1960s, the pluralist model has been widely influential for
explaining extreme right-wing politics (Berlet 1997). Influenced by Emile Durkheim's (1984) writing pluralist scholars contended that contentious action and rebellion are a diversion from the evolutionary course of society. Further, pluralist theorists viewed dissident behavior as a temporary "disorder" resulting from the very changes that eventually allow the "natural" progression of society to continue (Kaplan 1998; Durkheim 1984). The pluralist scholars were in part responding to the extreme intolerance and scapegoating prevalent during McCarthyism (Bessant 1995). In fact, centrist/extremist theory developed in a series of studies of McCarthyism and other right-wing movements during the 1950s (Blee 1996).

*The Radical Right* was the catalyst in developing what has been referred to as the "pluralist model", "status theory", and "centrist/extremist theory" resulting in a number of works that further elaborated their position. Attempting to address the limitations of personality-based theories, the pluralist model argued that radical right-wing movements are best understood as collective reactive efforts to safeguard threatened social statuses or group values (Blee 1996). As outlined primarily by Bell, Lipset, Raab, and Hofstadter, status theory argues that dissident movements on the right and left are composed of marginalized individuals with little or no connection to the mainstream political system and without any elite affiliations to government or corporate sectors (Kaplan 1998; Berlet 1997; Blee 1996; Aho 1990). The authors of *The Radical Right* (1963) agreed that radical right-wing movements arise from the "status anxieties" that people who are on the verge economic decline experience (Kaplan 1998; Bell 1963). What is crucial here is that the perception of social decline outweighs any actual or material losses that adherents may suffer (Kaplan 1998; Bell 1963). Again, drawing from Durkheim,
centralist/extremist theory substituted status anxiety for anomie, where disordered masses were replaced by sectors of the population that had been socially "uprooted" by waves of prosperity (Kaplan 1998). Daniel Bell (1963) used the term "dispossession" to refer to the various changes of a rapidly developing, post-war economy, where an increasing "uprootedness" was seen as the price of continuing progress (Bell 1963: 1-38). This uprootedness resulted in "anxieties" or "strain" which primarily infected those dubbed as "reactionaries" (Lipset and Raab 1970; Hofstadter 1965). Hofstadter (1965) argues that reactionaries represented a "fundamentalist revolt against the conditions of modernity" (Hofstadter 1965: 118).

The pluralist school produced a number of other works following The Radical Right (1963) of which I will examine arguably the two most influential: Richard Hofstader's (1965) The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Seymour Lipset and Earl Raab's (1970) The Politics of Unreason.

Historian Richard Hofstader published a short, but widely read essay entitled The Paranoid Style in American Politics in 1965, in which he claims that the central organizing component for radical right adherents is the propensity to concoct and espouse conspiracy theories (Hofstadter 1965). Hofstadter (1965) refers to these adherents as the "paranoid spokesman in politics" whom he describes as "overheated, oversuspicious, overaggressive, grandiose, and apocalyptic" (Hofstadter 1965: 70-73). Their thinking is characterized as the "fundamentalist style of mind...a Manichean and apocalyptic style of thought prevalent in the fundamentalist tradition which can easily be carried over into secular affairs and transmuted into a curiously crude and almost superstitious form of anti-communism" (Hofstadter 1965: 73).
The pathological tendencies that the "paranoid style" encourages manifest themselves as unfocused anxieties. These anxieties do not translate well into the mainstream world of interest-based politics, resulting in an engagement in "status politics":

Status politics seeks not to advance perceived material interests but to express grievances and resentments about such matters, to press claims upon society to give deference to non-economic values. As a rule, status politics does more to express emotions than to formulate policies. It is in fact hard to translate the claims of status politics into programs or concrete objectives...and for the most part the proponents of such politics, being less concerned with the uses of power than with its alleged misuse, do not offer positive programs to solve social problems. The operative content of their demands is more likely to be negative: they call on us mainly to prohibit, to prevent, to censor and censure, to discredit, and to punish (Hofstadter 1965: 87-88).

While Hofstadter's Paranoid Style was more speculative, Seymour Lipset and Earl Raab in *The Politics of Unreason* (1970) provide a dense and thorough study of the radical right in its various forms throughout American history. Lipset and Raab expand upon the work in the largely speculative *The Radical Right* with their own book seeking to provide an empirical basis for pluralist theory (Kaplan 1998; Lipset and Raab 1970). Using historical survey data to analyze the class bases of radical right movements, the authors conclude that, while upper-class individuals sometimes engage in these movements, most participants are drawn from the "lower economic strata" (Lipset and Raab 1970: 429). This finding supports Lipset's (1960) earlier reasoning in *Political Man*, where he argues that the lower classes face conditions which foster ignorance, intolerance, and "authoritarian predispositions" making them susceptible to extremist ideology on the right or left offering easy solutions to complex problems (Lipset 1960).

Although the Pluralist model continues to influence public discussions of dissident movements, it has been the object of serious criticism in the last couple of decades (Blee
1996; Diamond 1995; Aho 1990). Many of its major premises have been challenged and, according to some, "thoroughly discredited" (Berlet 1997). Among these various criticisms, the following are especially important: 1) the model assumes societal consensus, while ignoring systematic oppression; 2) it has ignored the ties to mainstream politics and elites that many right wing movements hold; and 3) it assumes the "lower economic strata" has been disproportionately involved in extreme right wing movements.

The pluralist assumption that society is characterized by a common set of values articulates the Durkheimian structural-functionalism that gained ascendancy in the early phase of post-WWII America (Bennett 1995). This view increasingly came under attack in the 1960s and 1970s as students and other activists lined streets, rode buses, burnt down, occupied, and closed campuses demanding an end to racist policies at home, while forcing the public and government to reconsider the legitimacy and morality of the war in Vietnam. The idea that a common set of values tie Americans together could no longer be assumed as critics of the pluralist model revealed the inherent conservatism of such thinking. Matthew Lyons (1994) aptly expresses the view that the pluralist model supports the status quo and ignores systematic oppression:

While right wing populist movements in the US have attracted great attention in recent years, they have been widely misunderstood. Many liberal and centrist critics portray these movements as an irrational fringe phenomenon at odds with the democratic mainstream of U.S. politics, and look to the government to crack down on them. This viewpoint hides the oppression and inequality at the core of U.S. society, the links between many right-wing movements and economic/political elites, the complex mix of legitimate and illegitimate grievances underlying right-wing 'paranoia,' and the danger of increasing state repression." (Lyons 1994 quoted in Berlet 1996: 66-67).

This statement also points to the second criticism mentioned above, which Sara Diamond (1995) and others describe as a "misread" of key historical events, especially...
McCarthyism, and many of the right wing movements that followed it (Diamond 1995; Rogin 1967; Latham 1966; Polsby 1960). According to these critics, the Pluralist School mistakenly conceptualized the intra-elite power struggle that marked the McCarthy era as populist and subsequently labeled the electoral right-wing movements that emerged after the McCarthy era as "extremist" (e.g. the John Birch Society) ignoring these movements' connections to mainstream electoral and interest based politics (Diamond 1995; Rogin 1967; Latham 1966; Polsby 1960).

Another important criticism against the pluralist model concerns the assumption that the "lower economic strata" make up the majority of radical right wing movements (Lipset and Raab 1970). Several studies examining the demographics of various extreme right wing groups have challenged this finding (Blee 1996; Aho 1990; Anderson 1987; Schoenberger 1969). For instance, profiles of John Birch Society members and Barry Goldwater supporters reveal these people to be neither economically nor educationally marginalized, but rather disproportionately made up of doctors, lawyers and other upper-middle class professionals (Kraft 1992; Schoenberger 1969). Further, James Aho's (1990) study of more than 500 "Idaho Christian Patriots" indicates higher levels of education and social integration among these patriots than the Idaho general population that Aho used as a control group (Aho 1990). More recently, Kathleen Blee (1996) found in her study racist activists that the "majority of informants held middle-class jobs (e.g. occupational therapists, nurses, teachers, librarians) were attending college, or were married to a stably employed spouse" (Blee 1996: 686).
Contemporary Research

Although German fascism and McCarthyism produced some interesting research on "extreme" right politics, little attempt was made to investigate such phenomena using ethnographic methods (Kaplan 1998). While the patriot right has been studied extensively through newspaper and magazine articles, television news stories and documentaries, academics have made little effort to thoroughly examine their lived experiences (Himmelstein 1998). This neglect, while less pervasive today, nonetheless, continues. As mentioned above, I will divide the literature on the contemporary Patriot right into four sections: 1.) macro; 2.) content analysis; 3.) ethnographic; 4.) journalistic accounts. Some of the work that I consider macro examinations utilize ethnographic methods, but their foci is at the macro level, which is why I classify them as such.

Macro Examinations

Aho's Christian Patriots

James Aho's (1990) *Politics of Righteousness* is arguably the pioneering work studying the contemporary extreme right wing in the U.S. Aho interviewed some 520 "Christian patriots," which he defines as a person combining an evangelical belief in personal salvation through Jesus Christ, a fundamental reading of the Bible and U.S. Constitution as well as the belief that "a satanic conspiracy has infiltrated America's major institutions to subvert God's will" (Aho 1990: 16-17). Further, Aho divides Christian patriots into two types: Christian Constitutionalists and Christian Identity. The major distinction between the two is the belief in a vague international conspiracy
(Christian Constitutionalists) or a specifically Jewish conspiracy (Christian Identity) (Aho 1990).

*The Politics of Righteousness* makes an important contribution toward empirically testing several theories that have traditionally been used to explain right wing movements, such as, "status anxiety" theories (Lipset and Raab 1970) and "mass theory" (Kornhauser 1959). Aho’s study also applies more recent social movement theories (political process theories) testing their applicability (Aho 1990). Aho finds little support for either status anxiety or mass theory, but he does find significant levels of support for political process theories that emphasize involvement as a product of a network of pre-existing social ties (Aho 1990: 135-211).

While *The Politics of Righteousness* is a well researched and a "must read" for any student of right wing movements, it suffers from a number of weaknesses. For example, although Aho interviews 520 patriots, the book fails to communicate much in the way of intimate details about the everyday rudiments of life as a Christian patriot (Barrett 1991). While it may be unfair to criticize a book for failing to do something it didn’t intend to do, Aho does make some claims about “presenting an insiders’ perspective". Furthermore, he makes little attempt to place his study in the broader societal or historical context or the larger literature on the New Right (Himmelstein 1991).

**Dobratz and Shanks-Meile’s White Separatists**

In 1997 Betty Dobratz and Stephanie Shanks-Meile published what is to date the most extensive account of the white supremacy movement. Based on more than 5 years of fieldwork, attending dozens of various Ku Klux Klan rallies, Aryan Nations'
Congresses, interviewing 125 participants including leaders and rank and file members, Dobratz and Shanks-Meile examine the history, ideology and strategies of what they refer to as the "white separatist movement". The authors' analysis utilizes resource mobilization theory, political process models, and New Social Movement theory as well as discussing labeling theory and its application for studying the white separatist movement.

According to the authors ideology has numerous meanings, however, they use ideology to "refer to a set of ideas that describe, explain, and justify the ends and means of political action" (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997: 89). Dobratz and Shanks-Meile explore seven different aspects of what they see as critical components of ideology within the white supremacist movement including: 1) anti-Semitism; 2) religion; 3) class and inequality; 4) white separatism; 5) race and racialism; 6) U.S. Government; 7) New World Order (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997: 89-162).

Maybe the authors' most interesting finding concerns the use of the term white separatist instead of white supremacist. This issue is raised at length, as the authors contend that a fundamental change in the white supremacist movement concerning separation instead of domination makes the label separatist more accurate than supremacist (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997: 97-125).

Dobratz and Shanks-Meile have produced a valuable resource to better understanding white supremacists. This book doubtlessly provides the most extensive treatment of the contemporary white supremacy movement; however, because the authors aim to provide a thorough survey of the entire movement they understandably neglect the interpretive aspects of white supremacist ideology.
Hamm's Skinheads

Mark Hamm's (1993) book *American Skinheads* is one of the few in-depth scholarly examinations of U.S. skinheads (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997; Blazack 1995). Hamm interviewed 36 skinheads, using face to face, phone and mail interviews as a basis for his conclusions. To better understand the skinheads, Hamm distinguished between "terrorist" skinheads (n=22) and "non-terrorist" skinheads (n=14). The author defined skinheads as terrorist if at least half of their violent activities targeted people of other races and if the person indicated that the reason they became a skinhead was because "they were fighting for the survival of their race" (Hamm 1993: 106-107). Some of Hamm's most significant findings revealed that skinheads were devoted to conventional family values, hard-core drug abstainers, and alienated from politics and economics, but not the future (Hamm 1993). Another important conclusion that Hamm drew was that Tom Metzger (founder of White Aryan Resistance) was not, contrary to the author's hypothesis, solely responsible for the spectacular increase in the number of skinheads in the U.S. during the late 1980s (Hamm 1993: 182).

Hamm argues that skinheads differ from traditional juvenile gangs, because of their overt racism, political violence, and international connections, and proposes that skinheads be defined as a terrorist youth subculture (Hamm 1993). Hamm's most interesting argument involves his assertion that youths are not attracted to the skinhead subculture because of economic disadvantage, but because of the subculture's emotional appeal of white power music and the rebellious seduction of the skinhead style (Hamm 1993):

Instead, the data presented thus far suggest that certain white youths have entered the skinhead subculture through what appears to be a rational choice based not on
socioeconomic disadvantage, but rather, on being drawn to the subculture because of the emotional appeal of white power rock and the skinhead style. During the late 1980s, the unique combination of these two mighty forces appears to have spoken straight to the hearts of certain white children and youth throughout the United States (Hamm 1993: 120).

Further research needs to take this assertion to heart in hopes of better illustrating the attraction and emotional appeal of white supremacy.

**Blazack on Alienation**

Randy Blazack's (1995) dissertation *The Suburbanization of Hate: An Ethnography of the Skinheads* argues that economic downturns since the 1970s has resulted in economic anxiety and frustration leading to eventual involvement in "extremist" groups like the skinheads (Blazack 1995). Specifically, Blazack utilizes Albert Cohen's (1955) theory of "strain" to explain the skinhead's subcultural involvement. Blazack interviewed some 70 skinheads between 1989 and 1994, which were conducted in Chicago, Memphis, Orlando, and Atlanta as well as several smaller towns (Blazack 1995). His findings suggest that strain results from four threats to the "ascribed status of straight white males in America":

1) declining economic opportunity for upward mobility, due to deindustrialization, mergers, and the rise of the service sector; 2) the perception of upward mobility of minorities for example the black middle class; 3) the perception of increased empowerment for women; and 4) of homosexuals (Blazack 1995: 3).

While Blazack's strain thesis is questionable given other scholarship that fails to find any consistent economic strain leading to involvement (Blee 1996; Aho 1990) his dissertation is nonetheless an important contribution to the relatively understudied subculture of skinheads. However, absent from Blazack's dissertation was the "richness"
that has traditionally marked ethnographies, leaving the reader wondering who were the skinheads that Blazack talked to?

Bennett's Party of Fear

David Bennett's (1995) narrative history examines the ebbs and flows of various U.S. right-wing movements since 1790. Bennett's central argument is that while grievances, sources, and targets of protest change, the one constant denominator among these groups is a deep and penetrating fear, "...they have been organized out of the fear that their America was threatened by powerful, sinister, and conspiratorial adversaries" (Bennett 1995).

Bennett's central argument is that, beginning in the 1930s, "traditional nativism" which combined a fear of alien ideas with an intolerance of minorities, began an irreversible decline. In part, "traditional nativism" gave way to "inverted nativism", where people of immigrant origins via Father Coughlin and Joseph McCarthy turned the label "un-American" against old-line eastern elites (Bennett 1995). Bennett cites many reasons for the decline against alien influences: the end of mass immigration in the 1920s; the difficulty of blaming the Great depression on a scapegoat; the strength of the New Deal coalition; the discrediting of racism; the rising authority of a meritocratic system of status and achievement (Bennett 1995). However, as explanations for a decline in anti-foreign ideologies, rather than an interlude, these factors can be readily challenged (Higham 1995).

One problem with Bennett's lengthy treatment is his overall lack of an interpretive framework for examining the changes in these right-wing movements (Higham 1995).
Although Bennett's title alludes to the importance of fear, the author never really explores the issue of fear in much depth, except to note its presence, and documents the different targets of various right-wing movements. However, aside from these criticisms, *The Party of Fear* is an insightful and richly researched book that is crucial for those seeking a more thorough understanding of the historical significance of right-wing movements in the U.S.

### Content Analysis

#### Whiteness Under Attack

The study of white supremacist publications such as newsletters, interviews, books, websites and other secondary documents provides a great potential for research. In fact, a number of scholars have used such data sources to examine how white supremacist discourse constructs whiteness, others, and vigilantism. Rather than examine this literature in its entirety, for the purposes of space, I am going to focus solely on Abby Ferber's recent book *White Man Falling* (1998) as an exemplar of this type of work.

Ferber uses a post-structuralist approach to better understand the meaning(s) of race, arguing that "poststructuralist theory has revealed the centrality of borders to the construction of coherent identities...the obsession with interracial sexuality is part of the process of boundary maintenance essential to the construction of race and gender identity" (Ferber 1998: 6). Further, she claims that it is more than a description of the gendered images in white supremacist discourse, but an attempt to explore the
intertwined construction of race and gender and how these "work" in the white supremacist discourse. Central to her analysis is the contention that white supremacist discourse is about redefining masculinity (Ferber 1998).

Using excerpts from the voices, writings and illustrations of white supremacist publications such as, *The National Vanguard, White Power*, and *The Thunderbolt* Ferber reveals that paramount to this discourse is the idea white masculinity is in crisis, desperately needing "proud, strong white men" to "stand up" and reassert their dominance is paramount to the white supremacist discourse (Ferber 1998). However, rather than isolating white supremacist discourse as a purely "bizarre" phenomenon with little or no connections to the mainstream, Ferber argues instead that white supremacist discourse shares basic assumptions about race and gender with more mainstream discourses (Ferber 1998).

Contextualizing the production of race within recent historical developments since the-mid 18th century, Ferber argues that, like much of the social science literature examining race relations as well as general public attitudes, white supremacist discourse reifies the conception that race is rooted in nature (Ferber 1998). By interrogating white supremacist discourse, Ferber locates a number of critical dimensions to the textual performance where race and gender are actively constituted through the construction of boundaries and differences. Some of these include: constructing racial essence, disease and the threat of boundary crossing, the natural order, and threats to sexuality (Ferber 1998: 69-99).

---

While *White Man Falling* is an excellent analysis of discourse and discursive strategies, in a world of increasingly easy access to secondary textual productions, it is important that researchers not lose sight of the people who are producing these texts. Ferber argues that participant observation may be a good technique to study "hard-core" members, but "it tells us nothing of the over half a million readers of white supremacist literature who do not participate in white supremacist activity" (Ferber 1998: 63). This viewpoint seems to reproduce the notion of a fixed category of white supremacists, neglecting the fluidity of membership, which seems to characterize people's involvement. Furthermore, it would seem that participant observation is still a rich way of studying those who are not "hard core" white supremacists, revealing many facets a secondary analysis alone is not able to. Nonetheless, *White Man Falling* is a great alternative to the shallow and superficial examinations that often besets the study of white supremacy.

**Ethnographic Approaches**

**Blee's Life Histories**

One of the leading scholars on the white supremacist movement is Kathleen Blee. Her work is too lengthy to detail here and as a result I will focus on one of her articles that is in many ways emblematic of her approach\(^1\). In "Becoming a Racist" Kathleen Blee (1996) seeks to subvert traditional treatments of gender in relation to racist movements, while simultaneously examining what leads people to be become racist activists (Blee 1996). Between September 1994 and October 1995, Blee conducted in-depth interviews with 34 female racial activists. She utilized a "life history" approach to

\(^{17}\) For further work see Blee (1998; 1998; 1997; 1993; 1991).
overcome many of the methodological problems that arise during a study of white supremacists. Further, Blee uses life histories to better understand how female racial activists "make sense" of their world, their place in that world, what they perceive as major events and significant turning points, and how they understand their own racial activism and beliefs (Blee 1996).

Blee found that when analyzing racial activists' life histories a number of different means emerged by which these women established a rational basis for their involvement (Blee 1996). Through the strategies of conversion, selective adoption, and resignation, "women activists create coherent personal narratives by actively reconfiguring the 'fit' between themselves and the goals of the racist movement" (Blee 1996: 688).

Resignation refers to the reservation that Blee noted among the women about their activism. Contrary to the swagger that tends to make male activists' narratives, the women Blee interviewed portrayed their involvement as emerging out of a sense of duty or an obligation for the betterment of their people (Blee 1996).

Selective adoption refers to interviewees' strategies to manage contradictions between personal beliefs and group beliefs. For instance, several of the women noted their support for legalized abortion and their disagreement with their group's stance on homosexuality (Blee 1996). Another woman confided that one of her closest friends was black, but he was "really white" (Blee 1996: 694). This illustrate the importance of selective adoption where people negotiate a system of race, religion, ethnicity, sexuality etc. that distinguishes characteristics based upon actions. Thus the black person who was "really white" was perceived as "righteous" or "loyal", providing the needed justification to maintain the women's racist beliefs. Although bizarre, this type of thinking is by no
means extraordinary. Consider that many "white" people who do not define themselves as "racist" distinguish between "good blacks" like the Cosbys or Michael Jordan and the "niggers" that rob and murder.

The third strategy Blee notes is conversion. She found that the women she interviewed tended to account for their political transformation as the result of a single sensational event or series of events (Blee 1996). These racial conversion stories seem to parallel other accounts such as religion, sobriety or other types of political activism (Bearman 1998; Bearman and Stovel 1993; Cain 1991). According to these stories racial awareness is the result of a transformation from "racial naivete' to racist enlightenment" where "the more mundane details of actual recruitment to racist groups fall to the wayside" (Blee 1996: 689). Blee contends that these stories can not be taken as literal accounts of ideological transformation, but rather as a means to situate and structure their involvement and beliefs "in what otherwise seem a disorderly and chaotic series of life events and decisions (Blee 1996: 689). In fact, when pressed to construct chronological life histories, respondents reveal a pattern of recruitment to white supremacist groups quite at odds with the pattern of "conversion-by-striking event" described in their more abstract accounts. What emerges, when pressed for chronological re-constructions, is a slower more incremental process where racial awareness is usually the consequence of associations, with friends, relatives, spouses, and significant others (Blee 1996). The tendency for personal associations to pre-date conversion supports Aho's (1990) findings as well as my own.

One of Blee's most interesting findings is that while antipathy toward African-Americans is often what motivates people to join racist groups, anti-Semitism is
primarily learned within the movement. Once they become associated with racist groups recruits are taught about the role Jews play in controlling almost every facet of American life (Blee 1996).

My only criticism of Blee's work involves her use of in-depth interviews and other secondary analysis, without participant observation. The adoption of participant observation would have provided her with some insightful observations and experiences that would significantly enrich the interviews she conducted. However, I am sure there are good reasons for her choice not to conduct participant observation, such as ethics and/or personal safety, and this shortcoming certainly shouldn't be seen as a reason to dismiss the importance of her work.

Bessant's Narrative and Semiotic Analysis of Skinheads

Using a narrative and semiotic analysis, Judith Bessant (1995) examines the appeal of the skinhead subculture and the formation of youth identity. Published in 1995, the article "Political Crime and the Case Young Neo-Nazis: A Question of Methodology" was part of a project that Bessant had yet to complete. I am not aware of any other articles that she may have published since 1995, which means my review will necessarily be limited to this article. Further, because her research was in progress at the time this was published, her analysis and findings are understandably limited. However, my interest is her contention that traditional approaches locating the cause of "far" right groups in structural determinants, such as social dislocation and high levels of unemployment, ignore other important dimensions. Neo-Nazism offers attractions and
emotional appeals that are common to most of us, such as, pride, honor, duty, and courage (Bessant 1995).

According to Bessant, a narrative approach allows the researcher to glimpse at the interpretive aspects people use to make sense of their world (Bessant 1995). Following Richardson (1990), Bessant contends "through narratives we constitute ourselves and our identity" (Bessant 1995: 107). Further, the use of narratives illustrates the complexity and often contradictory nature of identity formation. Similar to Blee (1996), Bessant finds that many of her informants talked about becoming a skinhead as a "transformation":

...full into reading Hitler's things. If you see a Vietnamese you have to go for him, or tell him off or spit at him or something like that. You have to spit on Jewish people and just run around and bug people or bash them and just go off at them...As soon as you transform—it's a transformation of a life style, you just hate and they [other members of the group] know and they help you with that. So they guide you along (Bessant 1995: 109).

These kind of stories give life experiences meaning, allowing the person to make connections between events in order to constitute meaning (Bessant 1995).

Along with narratives, Bessant also uses semiotics to better understand the neo-Nazi identity. Using style as one example, Bessant discusses the importance of items such as white t-shirts, Doc Marten boots, army pants, and braces. The plain white t-shirt that many people wear without a second thought, signifies white power to the skinhead, while the shaved head and other items help create distinctions between "us" and "them" (Bessant 1995).

My only criticism of Bessant's article is that it was underdeveloped, likely reflecting the early stage of her project. As a result, it is hard to evaluate the presentation of her data, as her section on semiotics was only one page long.
Raphael Ezekiel's *The Racist Mind* (1995) is a fascinating book that reads almost like an autobiographical recounting of the author's ethnographic experiences (Ezekiel 1995). Beginning with a Klan rally in Stone Mountain, Georgia, the birthplace of the Klan's second era in 1915, Ezekiel vividly portrays his surroundings, the people he encounters and their interactions:

We drove through town toward the mountain, to a huge meadow at its foot. I saw little knots of men by small fires...men were setting up their sleeping bags around the fires. People had driven in from a distance. It felt like a camping trip, a kids gang...I soon found myself alongside a cluster engaged in picture taking, another favored pastime...The guard nearest me, a young man with short hair and blue eyes asked me to be in the picture with him...He leaned close to me and said, 'Hey are you kosherish?' I was surprised. 'What?' I asked. 'Excuse me?' 'You wouldn't happen to be Jewish, would you?' he asked. 'Well yes,' I said, 'I do happen to be Jewish.' 'Out!' he cried. 'Out the gate! Lets go!'...Lennie said, 'It's all right.'...Arthur stared at me...'I don't give a damn for kikes.' 'Keep the dream alive, kill a Jew. Keep Hitler's dream alive' (Ezekiel 1995: 9-11).

The Racist Mind also illustrates the fundamental disjuncture between what people say and what they do. For example, when Ezekiel visits a Klan rally, an Aryan Nations Congress and a small skinhead "cell" in Detroit, he is open about being Jewish. Although as the above segment illustrates this results in threats at times, more striking is the ease with which Ezekiel is able to move among the supremacists who are usually willing to talk with him and often share intimate details of their lives. Remember this is a person who theoretically, as a Jew, is a child of Satan.

Ezekiel argues that research examining white supremacists need to distinguish between leaders, like Richard Butler (the founder of Aryan Nations) and rank and file members, like the skinhead "cell" Ezekiel conducted fieldwork with in Detroit. This
distinction seems to be one of Ezekiel's principal aims, as he goes to great lengths to portray the leaders as cynical, power-hungry Machiavellian types who are ultimately ambivalent about their followers and the rank-and-file members who appear as lonely, empty and fear-ridden.

_The Racist Mind_ is an admirable effort to provide an insider's account of the white supremacist movement. Ezekiel also refers to the cultural and historical tradition of white supremacy in the U.S., but, because _The Racist Mind_ is written as much for popular consumption as for an academic audience, he makes little effort to integrate his study with other related works.

Mitchell's Performance Supremacists

Relying primarily on participant observation, Richard Mitchell has been studying white supremacists, survivalists and others on the "far" right for the last twelve years. In 1991 Mitchell contributed a chapter to the book _Experiencing Fieldwork_ where he uses his fieldwork with white supremacists (and mountain climbers) to discuss the methodological issue of "secrecy and disclosure" in regards to "learning the ropes" (Mitchell 1991). Illustrating the methodological difficulty of doing fieldwork with people whose beliefs are repugnant to your own, he comes down squarely on the necessity for fieldworkers to undergo this ordeal if they are to provide an empirically sound representation (Mitchell 1991). As he argues, "some find their subjects' outlooks contrary to their own, even repugnant, and the rituals an excretion. Yet just as clearly, participation remains the venue to broadened understanding and acceptance" (Mitchell 1991: 106).
Mitchell (forthcoming; 1991) emphasizes that research involving white supremacists must take into consideration the performative aspects to behavior. Failure to do so results in work that "misses the theatrical", where "apocryphal tales and intentionally extreme statements of ideology and program" are taken "as the principal basis of analysis" (Mitchell 1991).

Much of my own work is informed by Mitchell's focus on the performance of white supremacy. Analyzing behavior as part of a performance (Goffman 1959) has conceptual similarities to the Birmingham approach to ideology. This similarity makes sense given the influence of symbolic interactionists on the Birmingham School (Hall and Jefferson 1976).

Anderson: From Punk to Skin

Eric Anderson's Masters thesis "Skinheads: From Britain to San Francisco Via Punk Rock" (1987) traces the stylistic development of the skinhead subculture from Britain to San Francisco (Anderson 1987). Anderson turns to the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies to better understand the skinheads' emergence during the 1960s and the second wave that followed in the 1970s. Because the second wave of skinheads in Britain and their San Francisco counterparts both emerged from the punk scene, Anderson also examines the stylistic development of the punk subculture.

Anderson's thesis is based on three months of fieldwork in San Francisco where he lived at first in his car and then with a group of punks in a house. During the summer of 1985, Anderson made contact with the "San Francisco skinheads" whose core membership consisted of some 25 males and 8 females (Anderson 1987). Finding that all
of the S.F. skinheads had initially been punk rockers, Anderson set out to understand why they had changed their subcultural affiliation (Anderson 1987). Much of Anderson's thesis examines the development of the skinhead subculture in Britain and then moves to the U.S. describing the punk scene, including "Peace Punks", "thug rockers", "skate punks", "straight-edge", and "death rockers". The last chapter is devoted to the S.F. skins, where he describes their stylistic elements, search for "working-classness" and their association with fascism.

The S.F. skins emerged largely in response to the increasing political awareness of the Peace punks (Anderson 1987). Some of the more aggressive, masculine and conservative punk rockers (e.g. thug rockers) became increasingly disturbed that the punk scene was filled with "pussies" and "wimps". This realization led "thug rockers" to adopt elements of the skinhead style. Thus shaved heads, Doc Martin boots, and a tenacious aggressiveness became apparent among more and more thug rockers in the early 1980s. However, these punks who dressed like skinheads began to see themselves as "real" skinheads in the summer of 1984 at the height of peace punk activism (Anderson 1987). The S.F. skins initially numbered around 200 members before the demands of subcultural affiliation became clear (fascism and rigorous unity) causing a significant decline in membership (Anderson 1987). By 1985 the S.F. skins were living in the Haight-Ashbury district, ranging in age from 14-29. Looking to their British counterparts, the S.F. skins emphasized unity through their graffiti, "The S.F. skins share one mind" and statements like the following also illustrate this hyper-sense of unity and closeness: "Because if a bunch of people jump on me we're comin' back twice as strong. It's called unity man and
punk rockers ain't got no unity. They're a bunch of wimps and that's why we beat them up" (Anderson 1987: 87).

The S.F. skins were mostly high school dropouts from middle-class, conservative, suburban backgrounds (Anderson 1987). However, these youths defined themselves as members of the working class, which resulted in their cultivating perceived working-class values such as, a strong work ethic (Anderson 1987). Yet, most of the male skins were unable to obtain full-time employment, producing less than surprising explanations blaming "foreigners" and "lazy niggers" for stealing jobs and "sucking off the system" (Anderson 1987). The skin's position discouraging drug use (except for smoking marijuana) reflects another element of the working-class identity the skinheads sought to embrace. As one skinhead put it: "We don't do no drugs, we smoke pot, but we don't do no drugs. We drink Bud (Budweiser) and we hang the flag. We're American and don't every good American do the same thing?" (Anderson 1987: 99).

Unlike European skinheads whose fascistic ideology was largely defined by larger political parties (in Britain the British National Front, in France, Jean-Marie le Pen's National Front, and in West Germany the outlawed Nationalist Party), the S.F. skinheads were without such direct political influence (Anderson 1987). However, in the summer of 1985, the S.F. skins introduced what became known as the "American Front", a racist, ultra-nationalist Republicanism (Anderson 1987). Without the direct influence of an organized fascist party, the S.F. skins turned to Ronald Reagan, shouting such slogans as "Heil Reagan, Heil Reagan", "We're proud Republicans, proud to be Americans" and when asked why they admired Reagan so much one of the S.F. skins responded:

He likes war...Hey man, he ain't no chicken shit punk rocker, like fuckin' Carter. That fucker lets fuckin' hostages sit over there a hundred days man. Reagan gets out there
and goes 'Yeah, fuck that man, you let 'em go or you're dead too, ya know'. Send a bunch of mercenaries over there man, kick 'em all in the balls and then ask the questions"  

Anderson's thesis makes an important contribution to the study of right-wing movements in the U.S. His work documents the cultural and historical development of a local San Francisco subculture and offers insight into questions such as, "where did these skinheads come from?" By utilizing the CCCS approach to place the S.F. skins emergence and style in socio-historical and theoretical context, Anderson helps illustrate the Birmingham School's relevance for examining the American landscape. His work is a good example of how style and ideology are ultimately interwoven and the ability both have to transcend geographic borders especially in the age of late or post modernity.

Journalistic Accounts

Journalistic accounts constitute the last genre of studies investigating the Patriot Right, and is the largest type of coverage, especially considering the lengthy list of newspaper and magazine articles as well as television documentaries (Himmelstein 1998). Along with journalistic coverage, I include "watchdog" accounts, which following Dobratz and Shanks-Meile I define as: "organizations that engage in claims making...draw our attention to certain conditions...giving attention to certain causes, they are setting particular agendas" (Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997: 2-3). Some of the larger and more prominent of these organizations include: Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), and Center for Democratic Renewal (CDR). For the purposes of space and the sake of brevity, my review of journalistic and watchdog
accounts is limited to an overview, highlighting some of the more important and interesting findings. Typically, these studies tend to offer large amounts of information, such as, dates, times, places, and people as well as descriptions of groups, estimated memberships, activities, and beliefs. For instance, Richard Abanes' (1996) *American Militias* and Kenneth Stern's (1996) *A Force Upon the Plains* are both informative surveys of the American militia movement and the existing ties between militias and white supremacists (Abanes 1996; Stern 1996). Journalists have also revealed the significance of events such as Ruby Ridge and the Waco Siege, as well as the impact structural-historical transformations (farmers' crisis in the 1980s) have had in terms of mobilization and recruitment (Noble 1997; Abanes 1996; Stern 1996; Corcoran 1990; Coates 1987).

In their book *Gathering Storm* Morris Dees and James Corcoran (1996) contend that as the events of Ruby Ridge and Waco unfolded, the citizen militia movement emerged largely as a result of the efforts of white supremacist leaders who sought to create a more palatable face to hatred and supremacy:

[Louis] Beam and his militia followers are repackaging their message. They downplay racism and focus on people's fear and anger...Tens of thousands of people are hearing the message and thousands are joining their movement, many unaware that Beam and his fellow travelers are helping to set the agenda. They are just the type of people racists and neo-Nazi leaders have long been after. They are mainly white and middle class...."(Dees and Corcoran 1996: 4).

Dees and Corcoran (1996) also point to the links between more mainstream conservatives and white supremacist groups (Dees and Corcoran 1996). For instance, they document Larry Pratt's, presence at the Estes Park meeting hosted in 1992 by well-known Christian Identity preacher Pete Peters. Pratt, a former Virginia legislator and current supporter of
congressman Richard Armey, and is now executive director of both Gun Owners of America and the Committee to Protect the Family Foundation, spoke at the Estes Park meeting in favor of armed militias to an audience filled with many known white supremacists (Dees and Corcoran 1996).

Another journalistic account that deserves mention is Patsy Sims' (1996) riveting and detailed study of the Ku Klux Klan. Based on years of interviews, observations and interactions with Klan members, driving more than 1,200 miles throughout the south, visiting people's homes and attending Klan rallies, Patsy Sims' (1996) *The Klan* reflects one of the more in-depth and sensitive accounts of white supremacists (Sims 1996). Unlike many other journalistic accounts, Sims relies on first-hand experiences with Klan members, listening to how people make sense of their lives, constructing rationales for their beliefs and activities. Sims weaves together personal experiences and news events to create an intimately personal account of Klan members, seeking to get at nothing less than "the hearts and minds of its members" (Sims 1996: ix).

Partly because of the utter lack of ethnographic data surrounding the lives of U.S. skinheads, Jeff Coplon's (1989) Rolling Stone article "Skinhead Nation" is another important contribution (Coplon 1989). Coplon's limited study of skinheads found that they were as likely to come from middle-class homes as lower-class, but one common denominator was that they generally came from broken homes and were often victims of child abuse (Coplon 1989: 84).

Although much insight can be gained from the above and other journalistic accounts, several limitations deserve mentioning. First of all, as Himmelstein (1998) argues, there is little or no attempt to understand "everyday individual and collective life through in-
depth interviews, participant observation, and letters, diaries, and other personal documents" (Himmelstein 1998: 1). In addition, journalistic accounts often "miss the theatrical" reporting extreme stories and statements as everyday behavior, ignoring what Goffman (1959) referred to as "front and backstage" behavior (Mitchell 1991; Goffman 1959).

Although research on the white supremacy movement is growing it is still comparatively small. Further, the literature that does exist suffers from a lack of overarching analytical frameworks. Unfortunately there is a paucity of effort to connect studies of the white supremacy movement to already-existing literatures. Slowly this is beginning to change: Ferber uses post-structuralism, Blee—narrative analysis and social movement theories, Bessant—semiotics and narratives, Aho—social movement theories, and Hamm and Blazack—criminological theories. It will be interesting to see how much this continues to change in the next decade.

---

18 Sims (1996) is clearly an exception to this.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The paradigmatic assumptions that inform my project combine elements of the interpretive and critical perspective (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). A paradigm is more than just the method a researcher uses, but includes a researcher's worldview (Guba and Lincoln 1994). Ferguson, Ferguson and Taylor (1992) outline four basic assumptions that constitute the interpretive paradigm. These include: 1) reality is not fixed, but is social and created; 2) the split between subject and object is fallacious and misleading; 3) the split between fact and value is misguided; 4) the goal of research should be interpretive understanding (summarized from Ferguson, Ferguson and Taylor 1992: 5-6; see also Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Guba and Lincoln 1994; Lincoln and Guba 1985; Bogdan and Taylor 1975). These assumptions contrast with the traditional “objectivist” perspective that tends to dominate sociological research (During 1993). Unlike the “objectivist” perspective where research is “scientific” and “neutral” the interpretivist perspective values the “stories” that researchers produce (Ferguson, Ferguson, and Taylor 1992). Critics of the objectivist perspective argue that interpretation is the “very condition of human inquiry itself” (Schwandt 1994). In fact, as Paul Rabinow and William Sullivan (1987) contend: “the interpretive turn is not simply a new methodology, but rather a challenge to the very idea that inquiry into the social world and the value of the understanding that results is to be determined by methodology” (Schwandt 1994).
According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) while major differences exist among interpretivist approaches, one unifying theme is their "commitment to the study of the world from the point of view of the interacting individual" (Denzin and Lincoln 1994: 100). Throughout my fieldwork, the words and actions of the people studied remain at the center of the multiple and emerging interpretations that I have developed over the past 2 years.

Along with an interpretive approach, my project also contains elements of the critical perspective (Fiske 1994). While the critical perspective encompasses various diverse intellectual traditions, there are several unifying themes including: 1) research should empower individuals through an explicitly political approach; 2) self-conscious criticism making clear a researcher's perspective, which better informs researchers about some of their own ideological and epistemological assumptions; and 3) ideology is more than just beliefs, but is "inscribed in the materiality of social and institutional practices" (Kincheloe and McLaren 1994: 140). This list is not meant as exhaustive, but rather as an abbreviated list of themes characterizing the critical perspective, which have been especially relevant to my project. Throughout my research I have thought about the way(s) in which the research I am engaging in can benefit other people. While I do not hold the paternalistic and egotistical view that my research will emancipate members of the Army of Israel from an oppressive and hateful way of life, I do believe that my research can in some small way begin to help us better understand individuals who embrace openly white supremacist beliefs. Further, I also hope that a reader of this text will reflect on his or her own participation in the larger system of white supremacy (hooks 1997; Feagin and Vera 1995).
One of the critical perspective's most important intellectual developments has been cultural studies. Informed by cultural studies, my project emphasizes the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies' (CCCS) approach to ideology (Hall and Jefferson 1976). However, cultural studies is not a monolithic framework, as there are multiple projects subsumed under the cultural studies banner (Hall 1996; Denzin and Lincoln 1994; During 1993). The foci for the different frameworks include a concern with cultural texts, lived experience, and the articulated relationship between texts and everyday life (Hall 1996; Kincheloe and McLaren 1994). Denzin (1992) argues that cultural studies "aims to always subvert the meaning of a text..." and "expose[s] the ideological and political meanings that circulate within the text..." (Denzin 1992: 151). Further, cultural studies directs the "interpretive interactionist" toward a critical appraisal of how "interacting individuals connect their lived experiences to the cultural representations of those experiences" (Denzin 1992: 74). As he also contends cultural studies encourages an analysis connecting social interaction and meaning to the "communication process" and "communication industry" that "produce and shape the meanings that circulate in everyday life" (Denzin 1992: 96).

The recognition that people's lives exist within a larger social/political/economic context also reflects the critical paradigm (Hall and Jefferson 1976). Understanding any social phenomena requires a micro and macro approach. As Mills (1959) said: "the sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society (Mills 1959: 6). The Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) approach to ideology examines the intersections of people's daily lived
experiences with more macro trends (Hall 1996). Further, "attempting to connect critical
theory with the particularity of everyday experience, the CCCS researchers have argued
that all experience is vulnerable to ideological inscription" (Kinchesoe and McLaren
1994: 145). The CCCS also contends that when theorizing occurs outside the realm of
everyday experience the result is "formal and deterministic theory" (Kinchesoe and
McLaren 1994). I situate the Army of Israel within the larger white supremacist
movement and the patriot right, examining the economic, social and political context in
which these phenomena currently exist. Further through an intertextual web, I also
situate individual members' ideological articulations of "others" within the larger culture
and construct dialogues that evoke the intersections between ideology and the everyday
world. In the next chapter I intend to discuss cultural studies and ideology at greater
length.

Getting Started

Lofland and Lofland (1995) discuss the various terms used to describe the fieldwork
process, such as naturalism, ethnography, fieldwork, field study, qualitative social
research etc. (Lofland and Lofland 1995). I use the terms ethnography and fieldwork
interchangeably to refer to the highly interpersonal approach that I employed throughout
this project.

In December 1996 I obtained approval from the Office of Sponsored Programs to
conduct research with members of the white supremacist movement. Beginning in
January 1997 and continuing to the present, I have conducted more than 500 hours of
fieldwork in southern Utah and northern Arizona with members and associates of the
Army of Israel. The field visits ranged from a six-hour initial meeting to three-day visits where I stayed in the homes of AOI members. Although I entered the field with many questions and a number of pre-conceived notions, I did not have a structured research design as I intended the project to be exploratory (Liebow 1967). When I first began my fieldwork, my intention was to get as close as possible to the Army of Israel in hopes of understanding the world in which they lived. Certainly, I had reservations and there were lines that I didn’t intend to cross. For example, I decided that “becoming the phenomenon” (Mehan and Wood 1975), as some researchers prescribe, was beyond my ethical boundaries. But, at the same time I didn’t want these ethical boundaries to preclude the closeness that I desired with my subjects. I wanted to see, hear, feel and smell the Army of Israel in as “natural” a setting as possible. I was more than willing for Dave to “show me the movement” as he suggested in his first letter.

To get "close" to the Army of Israel I knew that my approach would primarily rely on participant observation and unstructured interviews (Van Maanen 1991). However, following a long tradition among symbolic interactionists, I also relied on other techniques to gather data (Bogdan 1970; Thomas and Znaniecki 1958; Anderson 1923). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) refer to researchers who use this type of eclectic approach to methodology as "bricoleur" who use whatever tools are at hand (Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Becker 1989). During this project I analyzed secondary sources, including newspaper articles, newsletters and video-taped televisual documents, for example, I collected each of the Army of Israel’s newsletters, “The True Israelite”, and conducted a qualitative content analysis to determine some of the themes that were present in the texts (Harper 1993; Altheide 1987). I also analyzed a CBS documentary, “Birth of a Militia”
that was filmed in January and February of 1997. The documentary allowed me to juxtapose my impressions in the field with a visual text. I also conducted numerous searches using an on-line computerized newspaper archive (Lexis-Nexis) as well as a manual search through indexed newspaper archives for articles that mentioned the Army of Israel. These and other "secondary sources" reflect existent multiple representations and reveal "the intertextual nature of any contemporary ethnography" (Marcus 1994: 571).

I am convinced that ethnography is the preferred methodological strategy to understand a group's everyday world. The ethnographic process, in part, includes observation, participation, and interviewing. To provide a more thorough disclosure of my methods, the following section discusses some of the "tools" that I used during fieldwork with the Army of Israel.

The Tools

Participant Observation

Becker and Greer (1957) define participant observation as:

That method in which the observer participates in the daily life of the people under study, either openly in the role of researcher or covertly in some disguised role, observing things that happen, listening to what is said, and questioning people, over some length of time (Becker and Greer 1957: 28).

Gold (1958) further delineates participant observation using a four-fold typology where a research can assume: 1) the complete participant role; 2) participant-as-observer role; 3) the observer-as-participant role; and 4) the complete observer role (Gold 1958). The role that the researcher assumes results from the stage of the research process, the relationship of the researcher to the subjects, and the various settings (Adler and Adler 1994; 1987).
assumed each of these roles in varying degrees, sliding between participant as observer and observer as participant most of the time.

Various fieldwork roles emerge as the stages of fieldwork a researcher engages in change (Shaffir and Stebbins 1991). Shaffir and Stebbins (1991) outline what they refer to as the "four stages" of fieldwork: 1.) entering the field; 2.) learning how to play one's role while there; 3.) maintaining and surviving the several kinds of relations that emerge; 4.) leaving the field (Shaffir and Stebbins 1991: 7).

*Getting in* is the process of negotiating entry into the research setting. Access to a research setting varies significantly and corresponds with "investigator's relationship to the setting, the ascriptive categories of the researcher and researched and the specific nature of the setting" (Shaffir and Stebbins 1991: 25). Many researchers correctly argue that gaining access is a process that is best understood as occurring throughout a study (Burgess 1991; Fontana 1977; Geer 1970). In my case, one of the most important initial factors that assisted in my "successful" entry revolved around "race". Had I not been "white", initial entry would have been difficult. Other issues that I encountered initially included: which terms (e.g. white supremacist, white separatist etc.) were acceptable (during my first meeting I was told that the term white supremacist was a "media buzzword"), and how to frame my research so that it wouldn't sound like I was attempting to "smear" the Army of Israel or write an "expose". For example, in my initial letter to the AOl I wrote:

---

19 During a CBS filmed documentary members of the Army of Israel requested that no "nonwhite" camera journalists be sent for the assignment. The relationship between entry with white supremacists and the gender of the researcher is another important issue that deserves further exploration.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Dear Dave,

My name is Pete Simi and I'm a graduate student at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. I'm interested in studying the white separatist movement, primarily comparing media demonizations with real people. I was given your name by Ron Berry who thought that you would be a good person for me to contact. Maybe we could meet for lunch and talk more about my project. Let me know what you think, if nothing else, the worst that can happen is a free lunch.

Thanks,

Pete Simi
P.O. Bx. 72018
Las Vegas, NV 89154

I purposely mentioned "media demonizations" hoping this would communicate that I might be sympathetic.

Learning roles in the field includes observing and beginning to appreciate the distinctive meanings and rules of behavior among your subjects (Matza 1969). Gaining trust and establishing rapport are crucial to building an understanding from "within" (Shaffir and Stebbins 1991). During the course of my fieldwork, I have familiarized myself with "white power" music (something that I had previously never listened to) as it is an important genre of music to AOI members and associates for many reasons. Another important aspect of "learning the ropes" is assuming various research roles (Adler and Adler 1994; 1987). Here I struggled trying to decide when to participate and when to step back and observe. While there are a variety of different perspectives that occupy the entire spectrum, ranging from the prescription that fieldworkers remain detached and distant (Richardson 1991; Gordon 1987) to "becoming the phenomenon" (Mehan and Wood 1975), I tended to utilize a pragmatic and situational "fly by the seat of my pants" approach. In some cases I remain distant and quiet (sometimes listening
attentively and observing closely, other times feeling withdrawn and wishing I were somewhere else), other times I actively participate, feeling enjoyment and comradeship with those around me. As others point out, this uneasy balance is not only determined by the researcher, but also by the demands and expectations of the researched (Shaffir and Stebbins 1991; Emerson 1983). All of these issues continue to play important roles in “maintaining relations” during fieldwork.

Leaving the field is often seen as the “final act”, but has not received nearly as much attention in the ethnographic literature as gaining entry (Shaffir and Stebbins 1991). Because I do not permanently live with any member of the Army of Israel, my fieldwork is marked by continual entry and leaving. This makes rapport much more difficult to attain and maintain, as it isn’t possible for me to visit on a daily or even weekly basis. At the same time, this has made leaving the field easier, as it has always been a continual and expected part of the process. However, there have been instances when the dilemma of leaving the field has arisen. One day in Cane Beds, Arizona, Dave’s neighbor, Sam, asked me the following question: “wouldn’t it be funny you came up here to write about us and you ended up living here—it would be great, you could teach at the community college down the road and write all you want”. It felt good to hear him say that, I felt welcomed, but I could hear another researcher’s voice:

...research with white separatists— it’s a battle for your soul, it really is. Sometimes I sat outside in the sun at Aryan Nations talking with everyone, getting ready to go to church and there was this overwhelming feeling of family and I could feel how easy it would be to just give in.

Cane Beds certainly isn’t Aryan Nations, but it also isn’t tops on my list of most desirable places to live, so I did what any person would do who didn’t want to hurt another

---

20 Conversation with a researcher that requested to remain anonymous (1997).
person's feelings, I lied: "Yeah, that would be something, it'd be nice to live out here, this would be a great place to write". Because I am still conducting fieldwork in southern Utah and northern Arizona, I'm not sure what will happen when I do finally leave.

While participant observation may sound easy--"just hanging out"--it is in fact, a complicated process that is often emotionally, physically and psychologically overwhelming (Lofland and Lofland 1995; Sharriff and Stebbins 1991; Van Maanen 1988; Johnson 1975). A fieldworker must, in a relatively short amount of time, become acquainted with the field. This includes learning members' speech (or argot), dress codes, and other formal and informal "rules of living" as well as the "tacit knowledge" of the people studied (Altheide and Johnson 1994). Tense, despondent, awkward, anxious, scared, shocked, amazed, angry, and sad were all feelings that I experience at one time or another during the fieldwork process. And I often feel like a "creep", "stranger", "outsider", "spy", "mark" and "convert" as well as feeling unwanted, ignored, and barely tolerated (Lofland and Lofland 1995; Sharriff and Stebbins 1991; Van Maanen 1988; Fontana 1977; Wax 1971).

Not only is participant observation akin to an emotional "roller-coaster", but it is also intellectually taxing. Participant observation requires the researcher to listen closely to what people say, observe what they do, and keep careful notes during and following field visits. I recorded direct quotes when possible, compiled summaries of conversations when direct quotes escaped my memory and recorded detailed "thick" descriptions of my surroundings (Lofland and Lofland 1995; Van Maanen 1988; Johnson 1975).

Beyond emotional, psychological and physical stress, participant observation also poses a number of situational challenges. One that I faced during my fieldwork was
consuming large amounts of alcohol and illicit drugs. Certainly, memory after drinking bouts becomes problematic, but many times alcohol is a great comfort in otherwise uncomfortable surroundings, leading to larger quantities consumed. Sharing "vices" is also important as a strategy to gain trust and improve rapport. For instance, smoking marijuana when they offered it (which was frequent) encourage discussions surrounding the legalization of the "herb" as well as the conspiracy that keeps the drug illegal.

Initially, when marijuana was offered I politely refused, however, I noticed that after a couple refusals the first time I accepted Dave happily exclaimed, "Yeah, all right". Sometimes when we discussed how marijuana became illegal, people would mention that because marijuana was associated with Mexicans the Federal government played on racist fears to criminalize the plant. I was familiar with the argument, but I had always associated it with radical leftists. Discussing issues like this provided opportunities for me to genuinely find "common ground" with members (Fine 1993; Wax 1971).

Similarly, drinking beer was also an effective means to gain entry and establish rapport. Consider the following exchange during my first meeting with Dave and Robert:

Date--January 4, 1997

Waitress hands us our menus: "I'll be back in a few minutes to take your order". The three of us eyeball our menus as I ask, "do you guys want some beer?".

Dave: "Yeah, but not here, all we got around here is 3.2 beer," he says shaking his head in disgust.

I nod, not sure what he means.

Dave: "In Utah the ALC [Alcohol level content] is only 3.2, it's all piss beer, we'll go down the street to a tavern, at least it's cheap there". Then kind of wistfully Dave says,
"You got the good beer down in Nevada—when my friends from Vegas come up I usually have 'em bring up some beer".

A couple hours later after 3 or 4 pitchers of Coors piss beer Dave mentions again, "see I told you this shit is like water," he hesitates momentarily, "you know, I really love beer down in Nevada".

On my drive back that night, I was certain of one thing, when I return in a couple of weeks, my first gift will be some "good beer" from Nevada.

Three weeks later when I returned to southern Utah, staying with Dave and his family in La Verkin, I came fully prepared with a case of Henry Weinhard's beer. When Dave saw this he said, "that's cool, you brought up some good beer". Throughout the weekend, Dave mentioned this several times to his friends that I'd "brought some good beer from Nevada".

Beyond the methodological lesson that gift giving is an essential ritual to the fieldwork process, I was also learning a lot about Dave. The persona that Dave creates through the "True Israelite" newsletters was, at times, very different from the person I was beginning to know. While the newsletter was filled with obsessive complaints of Jewish control and a burgeoning New World Order, it seemed Dave would have been a lot happier if he could only have more "good beer".

Interaction and Fieldwork

Arguably the most significant aspect while "doing fieldwork" is the social/psychological dynamics that unfold between the ethnographer and his/her subjects (Gottschalk 1991). Although there is a tacit assumption that fieldworkers are "friendly,
honest, and kind" (Fine 1993), at times fieldworkers are none of these things. Sometimes fieldworkers despise the researched (see Malinowski 1967), yet even when fieldworkers feel favorably toward the researched, there are always people the ethnographer simply doesn't "click" with. These people may resist the researcher's questions with subtle gestures and uncomfortable periods of silence, avoidance or openly reveal their hostility toward the ethnographer using verbal or physical confrontations. Interactional difficulties can hamper data collection as well as challenge a fieldworker's self-esteem. Further, negative interactions may cause the fieldworker to question whether the project is even worth doing (Lofland and Lofland 1995).

Throughout the fieldwork process my intention was to remain as unobtrusive as possible. By this I do not mean that I was a "fly on the wall", but that I purposively didn't ask a lot of questions and instead tried to let subjects initiate conversations (Yablonsky 1965). I thought of myself as a guest (which I was or, as some have said, I literally "slept with the enemy") (see Himmelstein 1998) staying with distant relatives that I barely knew. Conversations that resulted from interactions with informants while eating, drinking, working, or just sitting around were later recorded in fieldnotes. One important benefit from my use of unobtrusive methods is that much of the data I collected was unsolicited and spontaneous (Lofland and Lofland 1995). I want to emphasize that from my perspective, there is no such thing as a transparent fieldworker and my presence must have encouraged some people to articulate more “extreme” views and others to articulate less “extreme” ones, nonetheless, many of the subjects often initiated discussions without direct prompting. I also paid close attention to more discrete behaviors and discourse including what some might consider uninteresting or irrelevant
to the topic at hand. For example, consider the verbal exchange between Dave and I regarding country music: As Dave inserts a tape that he says he likes, I casually remark "this sounds like Garth Brooks". "Humh, but Brian Hunter's not a fag like Garth Brooks," Dave quickly replies. Dave doesn't listen to Garth Brooks because he considers Brooks a "fag" who promotes "multicultural bullshit", thereby revealing that ideational sentiments are articulated through concrete material practices, in this case, deciding which singer or musician to listen to. Because I am interested in how ideology is articulated through everyday practices, the routine and mundane are of vital importance.

Interviews

I use interviews as a supplement to participant observation, which is a common practice among fieldworkers (Lofland and Lofland 1995). The interviews I conduct are usually unstructured and typically occur in people's homes or outside in a fielded area on private property or in public spaces like bars or restaurants. Unstructured interviewing is open-ended and spontaneous allowing subjects to respond without having to choose between fixed categories (Fontana and Frey 1994). I primarily use what some refer to as "oral histories", "life histories", "creative interviewing" and "ethnographic interviewing" (Fontana and Frey 1994; Blee 1993; Douglas 1985; Spradley 1979). Spradley (1979) summarizes "the ethnographic interview" as a "series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants" (Spradley 1979: 31). Spradley (1979) elaborates further by discussing various elements of the ethnographic interview: 1) give informant explanation of research (multiple times); 2) express cultural ignorance; 3) ask initial question and re-state as
needed; 4) express interest during informant responses whenever possible; 5) re-state informant responses using their words; 6) break up informant responses to 'grand' questions by asking more specific questions regarding aspects of informant's response; 7) ask descriptive, structural and contrast questions; 8) create hypothetical situations; 9) when ending the interview, express interest, state that you have much more to learn, identify topics not covered, and establish the next interview (summarized from Spradley 1979: 31-33).

I want to be clear that my interviews were spontaneous, extremely informal and typically not tape-recorded. Although not using a tape recorder presents certain problems, I feel that whatever was lost was more than made up with an increase in spontaneity.

For the sake of consistency I use the term "life history", a technique which allows researchers to collect information that is not necessarily recorded in written documents and has often been used to reach ignored, oppressed, and forgotten groups (Fontana and Frey 1994). Because racists and other "far" right groups typically espouse beliefs that are anathema to historians and other social scientists there has been little attention paid to their life stories (Blee 1993). As, Blee (1993) contends "oral histories can tap into the complexity of political experiences and beliefs more directly than can documentary sources" (Blee 1993: 599). I use life histories to better listen to people's narratives, in order to understand them beyond the gross caricatures that are typically constructed to represent white supremacists and other "extremists". However, I do not intend to use these narratives uncritically. I want the dialogues that I write to help reveal not only how "ordinary" people practice ideology, but how white supremacy is embedded and
articulated in our institutions and the larger culture. The following is a segment from an
"intertextual interview". In the next section (postmodernism) I will explain the rationale
for such a disjointed and fragmented presentation style.

September 1974---Boston, Massachusetts
A south Boston antibusing protester wearing a peace symbol necklace and long hair holds
an effigy of a black person that says: "Stop Busing: Niggers Go Home" (Formasino

How did you get turned onto this?
Johnny Bangerter:

When I was a young kid going through school in Las Vegas, Nevada I went to a sixth
grade center. We got bused across town you know to be forced to mix and the very
first day of school we got the windows bashed out of our bus. They had to surround
the school with police cars.

In Las Vegas?

Yah, they had to surround the school with police cars just to let the buses in. We were
the f____ing honkeys is what they so-called us. This was being screamed at us by
old black people, young black people, we were getting rocks thrown at us, dead cats
were thrown at us.

All in Las Vegas?

This was northwest Las Vegas where we got bussed across to a elementary school.
This was my first experience as a young kid with racism from black people— I was a
honky in sixth grade.

I Say Segregation Now... Segregation Tomorrow... Segregation Forever
George Wallace 1963

South Boston mother:

I would say we were all opposed. You know, I feel so middle-of-the-roadish... we
were opposed to it [busing], but at the same time we didn't want to hurt, and we didn't
want any trouble. We didn't want any kids to get hurt, and were willing to go in and
have students, both black and white, receive their education, without any violence
(Formisano 1991).
Cities and schools remain segregated despite decades of efforts—"white flight" ensues as soon as black residents in a neighborhood exceed 8% (blacks constitute 12-13% of the national population), while 63.2% of all black youngsters still attend segregated schools in the U.S. (Hacker 1995).

**Postmodernism**

While this paper is not an examination of postmodernism, I feel that it is imperative to discuss postmodernism, especially as it relates to ethnography. Although postmodernism is characterized in a variety of different ways (Dickens and Fontana 1996), the first uncovered use of the term postmodernism dates to around 1870 when an English artist used the term to describe certain paintings (Best and Kellner 1991). However, between the 1917 and the 1960s postmodernism began to be used as a term to describe a "new era of western civilization" (Dickens and Fontana 1996), including a wide range of structural changes characterizing post-World War II Western society (Gottschalk 1997; Dickens 1995; Pakulski Crook, and Waters 1992; Giddens 1990; Harvey 1989) and other social phenomena including cultural and psychological practices expressing and enacting such changes (Gottschalk 1997; McCannell 1992; Jameson 1983). Postmodern theorists argue that these critical social changes signal a break or shift from the modern period (Featherstone 1988; Lyotard 1984; Baudrillard 1983).

Paralleling these transformations has been equally disruptive intellectual developments questioning the traditional social scientific approaches that attempt to study the world around us (Dickens and Fontana 1996; Rosenau 1992). For example, Marcus and Fischer (1986) contend that a "crisis of representation" marks the postmodern era,
where traditional modes of inquiry and writing are significantly being challenged (Marcus and Fischer 1986). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) argue that the "crisis of representation and legitimation" respectively challenges the representation of the Other and the authority we can claim for our texts (Denzin and Lincoln 1994).

As ethnography attained academic solidification in the early 20th century, the role of the ethnographer in field reports was largely absent (Van Maanen 1995; Fontana 1994; Rosaldo 1989). This absence articulates the notion that it is possible for an ethnographer to be a "fly on the wall" and simply report the "facts" (Van Maanen 1988). In the process, ethnographic authority was established through texts that evoked an invisible "all-knowing voice from afar and above, stripped of all human subjectivity or fallibility" (Richardson 1988: 203). Rosaldo (1989) poignantly describes the traditional way of doing ethnography:

Once upon a time, the Lone Ethnographer rode off into the sunset in search of his 'native.' After undergoing a series of trials, he encountered the object of his quest in a distant land. There he underwent his rite of passage by enduring the ultimate ordeal of 'fieldwork.' After collecting 'the data,' the Lone Ethnographer returned home and wrote a 'true' account of 'the culture' (Rosaldo 1989: 30).

Increasingly, the traditional foundations for producing ethnographies are collapsing as authors insert themselves into texts, writing "narratives of the self", using post-structural psychoanalysis to subvert dominant discourses, and experiment with representations of Others that are, among other things, polyvocal, intertextual, and performative (Ellis and Bochner 1996; Richardson 1994; Clough 1992). No longer is ethnography seen as an objective enterprise, where a neutral observer gathers "facts" and carefully organizes these to build a theory, which is then followed with a "reporting" of what, when, why and how the phenomenon happened. Instead ethnography and
ethnographic re-presentations are increasingly seen as ambiguous and uncertain, value-driven, and open to multiple interpretations (Gottschalk 1998; Ellis and Bochner 1996; Fontana 1996; Richardson 1994; Ellis and Flaherty 1992). While Becker (1965) asks us "whose side are we on?", Van Maanen (1991) reminds us that, "neutrality in fieldwork is an illusion" (Becker 1965; Van Maanen 1991: 39). The result then is a departure from the traditional criteria for evaluating ethnography and a move toward the development of different ones. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) summarize some of what motivates the writing of experimental texts:

We care less about our 'objectivity' as scientists than we do about providing our readers with some powerful propositional, tacit, intuitive, emotional, historic, poetic, and empathetic experience of the Other via the texts we write (Denzin and Lincoln 1994: 582).

Before continuing with a discussion of how my project is informed by postmodernism, I want to emphasize that like many attempts at innovation and creativity, the antecedents and intellectual precursors to postmodernism are often ignored (Dickens and Fontana 1996; Rosenau 1992). This is unfortunate as it leaves postmodern approaches and critiques open to easy and flippant dismissals as being "old wine in new bottles". In many ways postmodernism is largely an extension and refinement of counter-Enlightenment philosophical critiques of science that have existed since the 18th century (Borchard 1998; Dickens 1998; Seidman 1983). Counter-Enlightenment philosophers such as Vico and Herder questioned the degree to which science alone could produce an understanding and explanation of the social world (Borchard 1998; Dickens 1998; Seidman 1983). Further, according to Dickens and Fontana (1996) many postmodern perspectives
exhibit striking parallels with the project of Marx, Weber, Simmel, Durkheim, Mead, and others in the classical sociological tradition as they, too, struggled to find new ways to understand the dramatic changes in social structure and everyday life during their own time (Dickens and Fontana 1996: 10-11).

This is not to say there is "nothing new under the sun", but, nonetheless, for postmodernism to continue influencing approaches seeking to understand the social world, it is important that postmodernism's intellectual lineage(s) not be ignored.

To better clarify my approach, I will now discuss some of the conventional criteria for evaluating ethnographies and how my text is informed and departs from these criteria. The “objectivist” perspective typically applies four criteria to scientific inquiry: 1) internal validity, the degree to which results correctly “fit” the phenomenon; 2) external validity, the degree to which results can be generalized to other settings; 3) reliability, the extent to which findings can be replicated or reproduced by another researcher; and 4) objectivity, the extent to which results are free from bias (summarized from Guba and Lincoln 1994).

Throughout much of this project I utilized a “loosely inductive” post-positivistic approach to gather, manage, and analyze data (Altheide and Johnson 1994; Miles and Huberman 1994). Shortly after beginning my fieldwork I began developing files to manage my data. My fieldnotes were filled with chronologically ordered descriptions of the people and surroundings, their interactions with each other and myself, and as accurately as possible I recorded conversations (using quotes to distinguish verbatim accounts from those paraphrased) (Lofland and Lofland 1995). While writing fieldnotes I also made notes of my impressions (margin notes) such as possible themes or patterns in what I was observing (Huberman and Miles 1994).
Later after spending more time in the field “mucking around” I started to develop more abstract categories for analysis (e.g. fear, constructions of race, nostalgia, socialization patterns, previous subcultural involvement, drug use, child rearing patterns visions of the future) (Lofland and Lofland 1995; Huberman and Miles 1994). This included comparing and contrasting categories, noting relations between variables, and moving back and forth between first-level data and more general categories (Huberman and Miles 1994; Strauss and Corbin 1994).

However, at times I felt gnawing barbs of uncertainty with my system of data management and analysis. I was missing something--no that’s not right--I was ignoring the “moments” or “flashes” of insight that occur while in and out of the field, when understanding actually seems possible, when things begin to “crystallize” (Richardson 1994). I started to feel that presenting my “data” in the conventional ethnographic format was not an option. I am not implying that grounded theory or more conventionally analytic approaches are worthless (because they’re not), however I also want to be honest about how and why I decided to alter my methodological strategy and present my data in a more experimental fashion.

Although some experimental ethnographers relinquish any criteria to evaluate their work, informed by a number of more experienced experimental ethnographers (Gottschalk 1998; Denzin 1997; 1994; 1989; Mellinger 1997; Ellis and Bochner 1996; Agar 1995; Loeske and Cahill 1995; Richardson 1994; Clough 1992; Pfohl 1992; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Tyler 1986; Crapanzano 1980), I want to tentatively frame my ethnography using the following: 1) self-reflexivity; 2) intertextuality; and 3) multivocal dialogues.
Self-Reflexivity

As noted the issue of author-ity in ethnographic texts has provoked many scholars to openly address their presence as participants and ultimately as creators of ethnographies. One tactic authors use to subvert the traditional ethnographic author-ity consists in including self-reflections, emotions, and memories that are triggered while in the field (Gottschalk 1998; Denzin 1994; Van Maanen 1988). Self-reflexivity decenters objectivist notions of validity and reliability that are premised on the assumption that a unified, tangible, knowable, and ultimately predictable reality exists that allows ethnographers to accurately capture this reality given the appropriate methods are used (Guba and Lincoln 1994; Kincheloe and McLaren 1994).

As a means to acknowledge my presence as researcher/author, I communicate the subjective positions that I presently occupy, including relevant biographical information allowing the audience to better situate the text's authoring. Another strategy I use to subvert the "objective" scientific discourse is to insert, at various points in the text, ethnographic journal entries conveying emotional responses to "subjects" and sites encountered in the "field".

Although my presence is everywhere in this text, I did not want to create a narcissistic text (Gottschalk 1998; Tierney 1995; Marcus 1994). Regardless of creative innovation, in the final analysis, ethnography should communicate about other people. It should evoke rather than represent, motivate an emotional experience, encourage reflection, consideration, or forethought, and illustrate the intersection between personal biography and history. At the same time, if the focus is the Other, it is an inscribed Other.
that is always informed by how researchers see themselves (Denzin 1994). As Krieger (1991) says, "when we discuss others, we are always talking about ourselves. Our image of 'them' are images of 'us' " (Krieger 1991: 5).

**Intertextuality**

Postmodernists tend to substitute intertextuality for causal explanations (Rosenau 1992: 112). They argue that because the social world is intimately interwoven, theories trying to establish a temporal basis of variation existing as part of an independent reality are dubious (Rosenau 1992). However, among postmodernists there is (characteristically) more than one way of conceiving intertextuality (Rosenau 1992). While the more absolute proponents of an intertextual approach, argue that every text is related to every other text, resulting in a chaotic state, others continue to struggle with understanding a text's content showing more concern for a text's substance than absolutists (Rosenau 1992). The softer version sees intertextuality as relational rather than entirely chaotic (Rosenau 1992), and I opt for a softer version of intertextuality, aiming to communicate connections between texts that would likely go unexplored with a more "orthodox" approach. As well as engaging the fields of interconnections, I continue to investigate textual content. Unlike those who claim that textual content is irrelevant because interconnections are random, I contend that texts whether communicating constructions of race or other concerns are far from random.

My motivations to embrace an intertextual ethnographic presentation is not a stylistic tangent, but is instead derived from the notion that everyday life is increasingly mediated through simulations of "real" and fictional accounts, events, situations, crises, and
celebrations that inform individuals, groups, and institutions (Gottschalk 1998; Denzin 1994; 1987; Clough 1992; Baudrillard 1988). I juxtapose local understandings encountered in the field with media, musical, televisual and cinematic texts to evoke the way(s) in which ideology is enacted, articulated, resisted and reproduced. I also immerse my representation of the AOI in other pre-existing representations such as documentaries, newspaper articles, television interviews, and "popular" narratives involving the AOI (e.g. "Is Zion Park safe? I mean are the skinheads still taking it over?") (Marcus 1994).

In addition, the work of postmodern geographers illustrates the increasing primacy of an intertextual world where the traditional boundaries of community and place have been transformed (Morley 1996; Gillespie 1995; Meyrowitz 1985). As communication technologies, such as satellites, faxes, video recorders, internet-related items, and video conferencing facilities continue to develop at ever rapid paces, people's lives are more and more linked through webs of "disassociation" (Morley 1996; Gillespie 1995).

Similarly, as some have argued, it is no longer adequate to view places and groups as internally homogeneous (Morley 1996; Gillespie 1995; Massey 1991). They contend that places and groups are "spaces of interaction" where "local identities are constructed out of resources...which may not be at all local in their origin..." (Morley 1996: 330; Gillespie 1995; Massey 1991). These ideas illustrate the existing connections and the impact that an increasingly large number and different types of texts have in our lives. Don't be confused, this is not a populist argument of free-flowing access to communication and the production of texts. Quite the opposite: grave inequalities continue to exist in the production of texts (e.g. consider the difference in the amount of media the U.S. exports versus the amount we import) (Morley 1996). Further, I am not
implying that people around the globe experience these changes and texts in the same way, but rather that "reality" is more and more mediated through these texts regardless of where one lives.

Following the insight produced by postmodern geographers, rather than simply isolating my study to a specific space or time, I use pieces of "common sense", folklore, and other related articulations of people besides members of the AOI (e.g. the mass media and my own family, friends, acquaintances) and places other than southern Utah and northern Arizona for the purposes of illustrating that the circulation of white supremacy exists beyond the local "fringe" culture that I encountered. In chapter 4, I elaborate more on how research examining the transformations of community, group and identity relate to the Army of Israel.

To better express the varied dimensions of textual relationships, I use a collage-like presentation style, which is informed by various experimental ethnographies (Mellinger 1997; Gottschalk 1995; Loeske and Cahill 1995; Ellis and Bochner 1992; Pfohl 1992). A collage-like presentation differently engages an audience/reader, decentering traditional assumptions of unity and universalizing ways of understanding the world. Clifford (1988) contends that a collage style should assemble voices other than the ethnographer's and "avoid portrayal of cultures as organic wholes, or as unified realistic worlds subject to a continuous explanatory discourse..." (Clifford 1988: 146-47). Further, as Pfohl (1992) adds: "The promise of the collage is to mess up or tear gaps in an otherwise neat, enchanting and seemingly seamless social ordering of perception" (Pfohl 1992: 98). The collage has an ability to interrogate the taken for granted, evoking qualities that an audience is almost forced to confront. Following Mellinger (1997) I use a collage style
reproducing a televisual ethnographic logic that is emblematic of one of America's favorite forms of travel "channel surfing". One of my goals is to weave together different voices, invoking different kinds of knowledge to re-create a nightmare-like world where white supremacy parasitically gorges itself on representations of the Other in a never-ending expedition searching for racial purity.

If as Gramsci (1971) says ideology works by generating "common sense" or as Althusser (1971) claims ideology functions to "naturalize" social norms, then it would seem perfectly reasonable to create a collage juxtaposing everyday ideological practices with mass mediated texts to illustrate their connections with each other. As more recent researchers have argued, mass media texts are increasingly tied to our everyday practices (Gottschalk 1998) rendering attempts to concretely separate everyday ideology and mass media ideology problematic at best. A collage offers the opportunity to interrogate this fusion between the everyday and the mass media.

Multivocal Dialogues

Multivocal or polyvocal texts provide enough room for more than one voice, thereby destabilizing the authority of the ethnographer's representation (Fontana 1996). Ethnographies where dialogues supersede a single authorial voice or monologue, rely on two-dimensional exchanges between the researcher and researched (Fontana 1996; Crapanzano 1980). Chapters 4 and 5 are informed by this logic, as they are polyvocal dialogues that implicate my position in the field and in the text. However, I am not claiming to have created an “authorless” text, as I freely admit that I have selected, edited, pruned, spruced, collapsed, and written what is before you (Richardson 1994).
Further, I intend to resist an overly analytical posture that restricts difference by using ready-made concepts (Marcus 1994). By creating multivocal dialogues with people who are often caricatured in easy one-dimensional fashions that gloss over any of the complexity in their character, I hope to produce a deeper, more complex, though thoroughly partial understanding. The time I spent with members and associates of the Army of Israel resulted in challenges, surprises, bewilderment, anger, sadness, joy and a change of consciousness. Arguing for polyphonic and "emancipatory" dialogues with ethnographic subjects who the researcher feels a strong affinity towards is admirable, but what about subjects whose dialogues are often full of hateful and harmful words? The answer, I argue, is that ethnographers must continue to engage readers with the voices they encounter. By doing this not only can we begin to appreciate people's multidimensionality (hateful and loving, generous and mean, intelligent and ignorant), we can also locate seemingly "bizarre" dialogues within more familiar ones whether institutional or familial. Eventually this kind of insight will (hopefully) help position ourselves more effectively to resist racist practices and all the other forms of domination that we confront on a daily basis.

Ethics and the Fieldwork Process

Any research project must consider a number of ethical issues and these were exacerbated by the beliefs and practices of those studied in this project. If the use of deception is one of the "thorny" ethical issues that fieldworkers must confront, I am afraid I am guilty of a considerable amount of it. Although I haven't pursued "deep cover" (Fine 1980) where subjects are completely unaware of a researcher's "true"
identity, I have often "passed" myself off as more sympathetic than I really was. Worse yet, I have also been acutely aware of tacitly encouraging destructive beliefs and practices.

As with the debates surrounding the appropriate distance fieldworkers should establish with their subjects, the use of deception is also strongly contested. For some, the use of deception in research is unacceptable in every case and should be strictly avoided (Bulmer 1982; Erickson 1967). On the other hand, Jack Douglas (1976) developed what is sometimes referred to as "investigative fieldwork", an approach that emphasizes the necessity and importance of deception to accomplish worthwhile fieldwork (Douglas 1976). Mitchell (1993) emphasizes the role deception plays in the everyday world and its inevitable use, especially as a research practice (Mitchell 1993). And as Roth (1970) correctly points out, that during fieldwork it is often impractical and presumptuous to announce one's status as a researcher (Roth 1970).

Others advocate a more situational approach to the use of deception (and ethics more generally). Denzin (1989) maintains that "no single set of ethical standards can be developed, because each situation encountered requires a different ethical stance (Denzin 1989: 261).

I hope that the reader does not expect any ethical resolution because I have not found one (nor do I think one necessarily exists). I concur with Denzin (1989) that ethics are far too complicated to establish "hard and fast" policies and regulations. While I would never try to hurt another person (physically, psychologically, or emotionally) the possibility always remains. I think of these issues often and I am in frequent dialogue with others and myself about how a researcher might handle the various difficulties I've
encountered. Sometimes, I maintain ethical guidelines and in other situations I know I cross them. Although I do not verbally espouse beliefs that are contrary to my values, I have laughed, smiled, and nodded in affirmation, to words that are repugnant to me. For example, in situations where I’m listening to a person discuss how “white men don’t have any civil rights” I find that I nod (as I usually do while listening to another person speak) and say things like “uh-uh” “yep”.

While George Marcus’ (1994) reference to “messy texts” importantly characterizes a “new” genre of writing that is purposefully reluctant, uncertain, ambiguous, sensitive and “open” to multiple readings and interpretations, “messy texts” say as much about ethics as they do about writing. In fact, it seems appropriate that an ethnographer who sets out to write a “messy text” adopt this as her/his approach to an ethics of fieldwork. Uncertain, ambiguous, reluctant, sensitive, and “open”, can an ethnographer ever really adhere to a more definitive ethical approach?

The following ethnographic narrative "shows" rather than "tells" the reader about an ethical dilemma that I encountered (Ferguson, Ferguson, Taylor 1992).

When Did I Become a Nazi?

The following ethnographic fragment tells the story of a short visit with a neo-Nazi couple whom I've spent many weekends with at their home in southern Utah. I'd known Dave and Andie for about six months; they were my initial foray into the field. This time I was meeting Dave and Andie in Las Vegas. Short and slender, Dave was in his late twenties. His face had a rugged, yet babyish look and he usually wore blue jeans, T-shirts, and hiking boots. A trimmed mustache and beard covered his face below short
brown hair, and when he shaved his head only brown stubble remained. He was usually
friendly and often very generous. Andie was in her early twenties and had dark brown
hair that hung below her shoulders. She was small and quiet. I found that when I made
the effort Andie was usually friendly and willing to talk about herself. The couple is
celebrating their wedding anniversary, staying at a small hotel on the Las Vegas "strip". I
drive to their hotel to meet them the afternoon before they leave town. We decide to head
over to the Soldier of Fortune Annual Convention, which is being held at the Sands
Convention Center. Meeting Dave in the hotel lobby, I followed him back to their room
where they were finishing packing. Dave asked how the Aryan Nations’ Congress was
this year and said how much he wished he could have gone. We talked about the piece of
land he had purchased in northern Arizona and his dreams of building a house and
playground for his children. He said that he loved guns shows, but was disappointed that
he didn't have enough money to purchase one today.

It was a fairly typical visit--what was planned didn't occur. Dave needed to find a
money wire and we never made it to the Soldier of Fortune Convention. It turned out
Dave had run out of money and they didn't have enough to make it back home to northern
Arizona. We finally found a money wire at the Sahara Hotel and Casino. We walked
around the hotel, which was being remodeled, and managed to find a cashier where Dave
picked up the money they needed. As we started to leave, we quickly realized we were
lost. Which way had we come in? Dave asked a security guard for directions. A left and
right, but we were still lost. Looking for the exit, we stumbled upon a couple of banquet
style tables with jewelry spread across the top. "Look at that honey," Dave said
admiringly. As we were looking, the double doors directly behind the tables swung open
revealing an Israeli flag hanging from the ceiling in the middle of the convention room.

"Oh no, gimme a break—let's get out here," Dave said flatly, but visibly disgusted. He laughed as we walked away, "Did you see that flag?—that Israel flag". Dave didn't wait for a response, "Man I saw that Jew flag and thought *us little Nazis* better get the hell outa here". I wasn't sure if he was talking to Andie or me or both of us.

We said our good byes. "Dave, good to see you again--I'll talk to you soon". "Yeah, come up as soon as you can". What was happening? I hated feeling like I had no control. I was following fieldwork guidelines, I had built connections, developed accounts, presented myself as someone who wanted to learn, and tried to be as courteous as possible (Lofland and Lofland 1995)—I had wanted this fieldwork to be successful. I wanted to "get in and get along," but "*us Nazis*"? Did hanging out and drinking beer together lead Dave to include me as one of them? Normally in fieldwork, this reference to a collective "*us*" would be flattering, but "*us Nazis*"?

I hesitate to comment on this story for fear of defeating the purpose(s). (My) purpose is to situate ethics using this story in a way that parallels what Denzin (1994) refers to as the "art of interpretation". If interpretation is always a "tricky" business, uncertain and never fully resolved then is it possible for ethics to be anything less/more? The efforts to legislate and institutionalize norms governing research are based upon the premise that a researcher "controls" and "commands" her/his "field". While this assumption may apply to the laboratory, it is grossly inaccurate in the "real world". My little story problematizes this notion by evoking the general "messiness" of the research process. I do not say this as avocation for an "anything goes, no holds bar ethics", quite the contrary, I think ethics should remain central to the "research act" at all times (Denzin
1978). What we need is a continual dialogue addressing concerns, not "absolutist"
policies (often engineered by bureaucrats seeking to avoid possible litigation) that silence
the difficult ethical dilemmas that researchers face on a day-to-day basis.

In this chapter I have outlined my methodological approach which primarily relies
upon participant observation supplemented by unstructured interviews. I address
postmodernism as it relates to ethnography and discuss how it informs my text. Having
introduced the topic, reviewed relevant literature and methods, it is now time to fasten
your seat belts and accompany me on our journey through the Army of Israel.
CHAPTER 4

AN INTERTEXTUAL HISTORY

Cast of Characters

Johnny Bangerter—founder of the Army Israel; "one of Utah's most well-known white supremacists"

Casey Bangerter—Johnny's spouse; instrumental in organizing "Operation White Nurse" with Johnny's mother

Dave—"core" member of AOI; produces the AOI newsletter "the True Israelite"

Sam—long-time friend of Dave's, purchased property together with Dave in northern Arizona

Andie—Dave's spouse and mother of two; in February 1998 at the age of 22, Andie died in a car accident

Mindy—also long-time friend of Dave's; married to Sam and mother of two

Todd—relative newcomer to AOI; participated in the CBS documentary "Birth of a Militia"

Mary Bangerter—Johnny's mother and founder of "Operation White Nurse"

Barbara—Johnny's older sister; her ex-husband gained custody of their children largely as a result of her Christian Identity beliefs

John—Barbara's husband and Randy Weaver's cousin

Mary-Lynne—younger sister of Johnny's; involved in the vigil during the standoff at Ruby Ridge

Grant Bangerter—Johnny's younger brother; helped organize "Hammerskin" skinhead organization in Arizona
Pat—original member of Christian Identity Skins and long-time friend of Johnny's in Las Vegas; the two parted ways over a disagreement during the Ruby Ridge standoff

Bobby—Mary-Lynne's husband; organized American Front in the mid 1980's in West Covina, CA

The "objectives" of this chapter are to discuss: 1) the historical emergence of the Army of Israel, highlighting key events in its development as well as Johnny Bangerter's (the founder/leader of the AOI) "rise" as a racist activist; 2) insert the beginning of an ethnographic trail that illustrates some of my experiences with the AOI; 3) present some of the AOI's core ideological tenets; and 4) integrate academic insight related to identity and group formation as well as space, community, and geography. I want to reiterate to the reader that what follows is disjointed and may at times read like a schizophrenic journal entry. However, my goal is not to demonstrate with crystal clarity a hypothesis that I have faithfully tested and eventually confirmed. Instead, I want to invite the reader to join me in my attempt to create an array of associations between different historical moments, observations and narratives gleaned from fieldwork, mass-mediated texts, and "drifts" using ethnographic journal entries. I consider this collage style of presentation as a parallel to the same fast-paced, multivocal, media saturated "reality" that we including members of the AOI find ourselves living in today (at least in the "west").

I should make it clear that when I set out to study the Army of Israel, I expected (hoped?) to find a tight-knit group who would allow me to enter their inner-circle and "capture" their entire way of life. I thought the AOI would be a clearly structured organization with an easily decipherable hierarchy, a group of people who met regularly, discussing strategies, and mapping out future plans and activities. Instead the group that I found was a whole lot messier, and much more difficult to characterize.
Johnny Bangerter began his "devotion to the international movement" as a skinhead in 1984 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Bangerter and fellow skinheads referred to themselves as "CIS" or Christian Identity Skinheads. Then sometime between 1990 and 1991, while still living in Las Vegas Johnny began referring to his "comrades", family and himself as the Army of Israel. When I asked Johnny "how did you guys come up with name Army of Israel?" he explained that:

I just came up with it, you know back in Las Vegas in those days we were pretty much more hardcore Christian Identity and we were constantly in the battle with the Jews more than anything. I mean if there was a Jewish event we were there, if it was an abortion rally we'd attack it and I thought what better of a name to go attack a Jewish rally 'the Army of Israel attacks the Jews'. The true Israelites attack the counterfeit race. So I figured that would, just the name alone right there would make it easy to understand Identity. With the Army of Israel they asked the right question the very first time—'Why do you guys call yourself Israel?'. Because we are Israel. Army of Israel, it gets right to the point, it identifies who you are, it is identity. Right there we identify with Israel so those were our chants when we'd march. 'Who are we? Israel! Who are we? Israel!'

In 1992, following the outbreaks of violence in Las Vegas subsequent to the Rodney King verdict, Bangerter, his family, as well as several friends, migrated to southern Utah. When I began studying the Army of Israel in 1997, it appeared that the AOI wasn't very organized and that they were more a loose-knit association or network of somewhat "like-minded" people. Membership was sketchy from the start, when I first asked Dave how many members the AOI had, he said that he couldn't talk about it—"biblical" reasons prohibited him. At one time, Dave told another researcher there were less than a dozen members.

---

21 For a discussion of different conceptualizations of social movements see Staggenborg 1998.

22 Other organizations also use this reason for not discussing membership totals, for instance, Richard Butler responded that "biblical" reasons prevented him from divulging the number of AN members when I interviewed him in 1997.
"core" members, but, this conflicts with other statements about membership that Dave and Johnny have made:

"...skinhead spokesman David Dalby, says the Army of Israel's St. George Unit has nearly 200 members. Our numbers are growing daily." (Salt Lake Tribune, 10/24/94).

"In La Verkin, Army of Israel's ranks have been growing since news of the Oklahoma bombing. Bangerter claims. He estimates there are more than 700 members in Utah, Nevada, and Colorado... Utah Division of Investigations Sgt. Scott Mann says the number is more like 50-100." (Salt Lake Tribune, 5/28/95)

However, a recent discussion with Johnny about membership and the historical development of AOI sheds some light on these issues. The following are excerpts from conversations with Johnny, which are juxtaposed to academic commentaries regarding space, organization and identity.

Me: "In 1994 in the Salt Lake Tribune Dave was quoted as saying there were 200 members, was that accurate?"

Johnny: "No, more like 50 you know may be nationwide we probably had 200 people who had either written or donated money or knew o f us or something"

Each social world, then, is a culture area, the boundaries of which are set neither by territory nor by formal group membership, but by the limits of effective communication (Shibutani 1987: 130).

Me: "Is there a formal membership in the Army of Israel?"

Johnny: I've always been against that, it just gets people in trouble. There's a not a formal Army of Israel group thing--just the people that attend, the people that got guns and ammunition, the people that are Christian Identity, then I would say yah they're in the Army of Israel, you see that's where it's another blanket type organization thing. It was able to let lots of people in--it wasn't just a skinhead thing

Informed by Phfot (1992) I contend that the AOI is part of an international network that is electronically, ideologically, and sometimes even physically connected/circuited to other like minds who are fascinated with blood and soil and live in multiworlds where white heterosexist males are superior yet increasingly dominated and emasculated in a world where nothing is as it seems. Accordingly, on more than one occasion members have asked: Where are the white man's civil rights anymore?"
Johnny: I remember going to the Dixie Center [in St. George, Utah] and probably about a 1000 people and I got a standing ovation when I gave a speech up there right after Ruby Ridge. About a 1000 people were there with all the patriots different militia groups, Bo Gritz spoke and I spoke, there was standing room only. I won't say those are all Army of Israel but we got that much support out here

In 1992 after the standoff at Ruby Ridge, the AOI's "council of twelve" disbanded over disagreements that surfaced during their protests in Idaho.

Johnny: There was a lot going on during Ruby Ridge that Pat and I were arguing about. First he didn't want me to bring up all the guns and ammo that I had and then during the standoff, the feds wanted to separate the crowd, the protesters into two camps the Identity people like us and the regular patriots that were there. Pat supported it and I didn't like the idea you know I said why, why are we going to split up the crowd we need all the support we can get. After that when we got back we kind of just went our separate ways.

Me: So what happened with the "council of twelve"?

Johnny: Well Ben who was the head of the council of twelve lived up in northern Utah and he handled all of the finances, he was an LDS guy and had been a member of Rockwell's American Nazi Party, but after Pat and I started fighting he lost interest and got tired of it all. The others have moved to different parts of the country Denver, some have moved up to Idaho and uh that's pretty much what happened.

In January of 1992, the AOI took part in their last march:

Johnny: I think the last march was Denver, January 92 in Denver yah it caused a big riot. They looted downtown Denver, there was 129 of us and 25,000 protesters. We were marching against Martin Luther King's birthday, it was either right before they started celebrating it there or right after... (Johnny Bangerter, 1999).

Then in the mid 1990's some "associates" of the AOI began to turn to more "contentious action":

Johnny: Bill and Eric they were both working with me for a while, I got 'em jobs and they ran out of patience and decided they were going to join the bandwagon of bank robberies so they went on a bank robbery spree and got caught

Me: "When was that?"

Johnny: That was in 94 and got caught and uh then Jay and his little group, see I don't like to say they're Army of Israel because that can criminally implicate us but uh Jay and his little group of guys they uh got charged and convicted of blowing up two
newspapers in uh I think it was Washington. Two newspapers and robbing several banks

Me: "Was that Spokane?"

Johnny: Yeah it was Spokane, they got busted that was in 94-95 and Spider got subpoenaed because Jay wrote this declaration of war at Ruby Ridge which we all signed it and the F.B.I. confiscated that and all of our names were on that. But Spider didn't say anything to implicate anyone. Yeah a lot of other guys, I wouldn't feel comfortable mentioning their names they all I did everything I could to discourage 'em all from doing things like bank robberies cause I saw from what happened to the group [the Order] that was before us, we never knew any of 'em though but I saw what happened and I learned from 'em and the ones that were still alive you know they would say don't do what we did you can't spend the money and that's exactly what happened just about to everyone

PIPE BOMB EXPLODES AT CITY HALL IN SPOKANE
EXTREMIST GROUP SUSPECTED IN SPOKANE BOMBINGS

Two men wearing ski masks used a pipe bomb in a bank robbery in Spokane WA on Apr 1, 1996 after setting off another bomb moments earlier at a newspaper office...The incidents were reminiscent of bombings in 1984 and 1986 carried out in the region by members of the Order, an offshoot of the white supremacist Church of Jesus Christ Christian [Aryan Nations my words]...Verne Jay Merrell, 51, a former nuclear plant engineer; Charles Barbee, 45, a former AT&T supervisor; and Robert S. Berry, 42, a truck mechanic...were sentenced to mandatory life prison terms in Spokane, Wash., for a series of bombings and bank robberies (Washington Post, D12/28/97; New York Times, 4/30/97; New York Times, 4/3/97).

Johnny: I guess people just got tired of the way we were doing things you know marches or training, training for what they'd say you know, 'what are we training for, we already know how to shoot, how to repel, what are we waiting for?', 'well we're waiting for the holy war,' 'well, when is the holy war?' and a lot of those guys got frustrated and there's still a lot of 'em out there that are still doing it, still out there, I'm just waiting to hear about 'em getting caught, like I said they got most 'em and all...

By 1997 when I began my fieldwork, "formal meetings" were no longer being organized and the Sunday bible studies that I had been told about never occurred during my two years of fieldwork: "people are just to busy", Dave mentioned to me once sounding rather frustrated. Neither did the paint war training that I'd been promised would start "as soon as we get our uniforms, that way you can feel what it's like to be in the movement". While the AOI is definitely connected to the larger white supremacist
movement, this contact seems to be increasingly sporadic. Johnny claims that, "The Army of Israel is well established within the movement and also has ties to militias in Montana, Texas, and Utah". Staggenborg (1998) uses the term "social movement community" to discuss the fluid, informal, and amorphous aspects of social movements:

Social movements rarely have clear beginnings or endings, and they overlap with other movements with similar values in the same 'social movement family'. Movements have supporters rather than members, and their boundaries are diffuse rather than fixed (Staggenborg 1998: 181).

The AOI is migratory, associates/members move in and out, from southern California to Las Vegas to southern Utah to Idaho to Arizona to Montana to Portland, Oregon to Salt Lake City to Denver etc. Further, the AOI is representative of a hybrid type of group formation. Yet, it would be a mistake to ignore the way(s) in which the AOI embrace particular spaces. As we will see places like Zion National Park are held in the highest esteem, offering a gathering site for the "true children of Israel".

Fascist yet anti-statist, connected to an international movement yet perpetually fearful of the trends of globalization, pot smoking and ecologically aware with shaved heads, big guns and an ultra magnified sense of masculinity. Maybe the Army of Israel is part of an emerging organizational form, where solidarity and identity no longer depend on traditional notions of space and face to face contact?:

In the pulverized space of postmodernity, space has not become irrelevant: it has become reterritorialized in a way that does not conform to the experience of space that characterized the era of high modernity. It is this that forces us to reconceptualize fundamentally the politics of community, solidarity, identity and cultural difference (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 9-10).

Dave publishes a periodic newsletter that is sent to various people throughout the United States who have either donated money or stamps. Producing "the True Israelite" (the AOI
newsletter) is relatively quick and thanks to computer technology can be accomplished with the labor of only one person. And when funds are available, the accessibility of computers and copying at places like Kinkos makes mass distribution a fairly simple process. The newsletter can be disseminated to an unknown number of like-minded people, providing a mechanism for sharing information and ideas. Maybe more importantly, newsletters like the "True Israelite" and websites, phone recordings, faxes, short-wave radio etc. establish and sustain bonds between individuals and groups who have little or even no face to face interaction.

Still although I was waiting for a more formal organization to emerge, one that would better fit my expectations of what a white supremacist group should look like, what I was finding was a world that was at once seemingly familiar and ordinary, yet, also checkered with "bizarre" everyday practices.

But it looks like a normal suburban living room, gorgeous kids running around and then you start to notice that there are little things that might be different than the average living room [pictures of swastikas and Adolph Hitler] (Pike 1997, "Birth of a Militia").

I was hearing and seeing things that were completely alien to anything I'd ever heard or seen before. Daily routines were fairly mundane; people worked at jobs and came home to families, watched television, did housework, and went to bed at night. Some people were still in high school, and others had "dropped out". Some people worked steadily, while others only worked periodically. There was beer to drink, music to listen to, trails to hike, cars to fix, groceries to buy, diapers to change and anniversaries to celebrate. And there was a lot of talk about black helicopters and black people, the New World Order and Jews. There was white power music, pictures of Adolph Hitler,
Confederate flags and swastikas. Clearly, these weren't the families depicted in *Leave it To Beaver* or *Family Ties*, but they weren't one-dimensional—100% pure haters either.

*But even men I knew I would hate turned out to have some redeeming qualities. In short, Klansmen do not fit neatly into a single mold. And so this book is to introduce the reader not just to the Klan but also to its people, beginning with the first man I met..."* (Sims 1996: 7).

Ethnographic Beginnings—January 1997

I wanted it. I slowly walk toward the little silver metal post-office box eager for a response, yet fearful of rejection. My answer awaits me in the form of a small white envelope post-marked from St. George, Utah. That must be it. I feel like a kid on Christmas morning, waiting to tear open my first present. The news is good. Dave agrees to a meeting after the holidays. The letter is hand-written on a standard piece of white college ruled notebook paper:

"...Perhaps if our lunch goes well I can show you about the movement rather than tell you..."

"Yes, that's perfect," I say to myself. His letter concludes confidently and rather optimistically:

...at the end of December I will be living with my family and another family on our property. In large canvis [sic] tents at first, but soon in our own homes-paid for! Living debt free is possible...Hope to hear from you soon.

He sounds like he's having fun, like someone going camping, only permanently. There's a phone number on the letter; I think of calling, but not today—I don't want to seem to eager. Enclosed with the handwritten letter, is a four-page newsletter entitled "The True Israelite". The newsletter is black and white. Above the title, in smaller letters, is the
I am eager to meet Dave, in fact I can't wait to. At the same time, why am I so excited at the prospect of having lunch with a self-proclaimed neo-Nazi? Should I really be enjoying this? Are my actions going to perpetuate hateful ideology and behavior? I have no answers, only questions. I want to meet Dave and put a face to this person who is moving his family to live in "large canvas tents at first..." and whose newsletter states that "the F.B.I. is watching close and it is only a matter of time... We will defend ourselves and our families and our nation at all cost."

Born to Hate?

Who is the Army of Israel? Were members spawned immaculately from the belly of Satan? Did they have histories, hopes, and dreams? What led them to the white supremacy movement? Was their involvement with the AOI the result of an epiphanic "racial awakening" or a slow gradual process? These are all complex questions that have multiple answers/interpretations/understandings. What follows are necessarily partial and incomplete ethnographic fragments, which include, AOI narratives and pieces of information gleaned from other sources (newspapers, documentaries, reports etc.), as well as observations and participation.

A Crisis in America

On September 4, 1957 Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus ordered the National Guard to prevent nine Negro students from enrolling in previously all-white Central High School... An ever larger mob of angry white adults gathered outside Central High each morning to make sure the troops turned the Negro students away... By midmorning,
angry white mobs had beaten at least two Negro reporters, broken many of the school's windows and doors, and come so close to capturing the Negro students that the Little Rock police evacuated them in desperation. Central High was segregated again before lunch, and students joined the mob in cheers of victory (Branch 1988: 223-234).

September 1974—Boston, Massachusetts
A south Boston antibusing protester wearing a peace symbol necklace and long hair holds an effigy of a black person that says: "Stop Busing: Niggers Go Home" (Formasino 1991).

1980, Las Vegas, Nevada—Johnny (AOI member):
When I was a young kid going through school in Las Vegas, Nevada I went to a sixth grade center. We got bused across town you know to be forced to mix and the very first day of school we got the windows bashed out of our bus. They had to surround the school with police cars. Yah, they had to surround the school with police cars just to let the buses in. We were the f---ing honkeys is what they so-called us. This was being screamed at us by old black people, young black people, we were getting rocks thrown at us, dead cats were thrown at us. This was northwest Las Vegas where we got bussed across to a elementary school. This was my first experience as a young kid with racism from black people— I was a honky in sixth grade.

1993, Salt Lake City, Utah—Mindy (AOI member):
There were these girls at my high school, these black bitches, and some were Somoan, they'd heard I was hang'n out with skinheads. One day they came into my class and they pulled me out, my fuck'n teacher just stood there and let 'em so I told 'em I wasn't leaving with 'em but they just kept saying that I had to go with 'em. So when we went outside in the hall I just stood my ground and said if they were going to kick my ass it was going to take all of 'em. Finally my friends showed up and these monkey bitches backed off. They're just fuck'in nigger bitches that wanted to cause trouble, so after that I just said fuck it I'll hang out with whoever I want.

South Boston mother—1974:
I would say we were all opposed. You know, I feel so middle-of-the-roadish...we were opposed to it [busing], but at the same time we didn't want to hurt, and we didn't want any trouble. We didn't want any kids to get hurt, and were willing to go in and have students, both black and white, receive their education, without any violence (Formisano 1991).

1985, Salt Lake City—Dave (AOI member):
You know I was 15 and a little punk rocker and I became a skinhead. I guess I was tired of all the bullshit in school. They wanted us to integrate, it was a joke. We were having to mix with all these blacks and nobody really wanted it. I got tired of all these
niggers walking around doing whatever they wanted and the skinheads weren't having any of that shit, we stood up to people and kicked ass.

Clearly, AOI members envision integration as chaotic and corruptive, which in part explains their awareness of the need for a "racial solution". As one contributor to the white supremacist internet listserv "Stormfront" indicates: "Whites become racists by experiencing the daily aggression of the muds and by waking up to the genocidal policies of our Jew controlled government like immigration, affirmative action, integration..." (Stormfront 1998). Johnny, Mindy and Dave's narratives seek to produce knowledge that discredits sympathetic interpretations of integration. These narratives subvert notions of a black subject who is oppressed by substituting a white one who is the "real" victim (Ferber 1998). Traumatic "racial" events become causal explanations for involvement, leaving white people no other choice but self-defense. Thus, the white supremacist movement becomes the only logical/possible solution. As Kathleen Blee (1996) points out in her study of white racist activists' narratives:

...narratives provide respondents with an ordered and agentic undergirding to what otherwise might seem a disorderly, even chaotic, series of life events and decisions...And they accord intent, calculation, and meaning to radically changing self-identities...In line with racist ideologies that radically separate "us" from "them," activists' conversion stories usually assume a dichotomous narrative form. They relate the abandonment of a previous weak, distorted, ignorant, directionless, and naïve self and the construction of an all-knowing, committed, impassioned self. The narratives pivot around a precise event of decisive awakening, in which the essential difference between good and evil, between clarity and confusion, and between likeness and otherness is revealed and explained" (Blee 1996: 689).

I Say Segregation Now...Segregation Tomorrow...and Segregation Forever
(George Wallace 1963)

Cities and schools remain segregated despite decades of efforts—"white flight" ensues as soon as black residents in a neighborhood exceed 8% (blacks constitute 12-13% of the
national population), while 63.2% of all black youngsters still attend segregated schools in the U.S. (Hacker 1995).

In an article discussing "suburban racial resentment" the authors contend that this phenomenon is:

a new sensibility and mood in the political and social life in the U.S.: a mood articulated in suburban fear of encirclement; a mood increasingly being formulated in the language and politics of resentment. The dangerous inner city and the world 'outside are brought into suburban homes through television and film, instilling simultaneously desire and fear (McCarthy, Rodriguez, Buendia, et al.) 1997: 276-77).

Although, AOI narratives emphasize direct physical contact with the "other" as the catalyst for their own "racial resentment", we can not ignore the impact of prior and present mass mediated images on the formation of perceptions of race and the development of a "white identity". From the time children are old enough to watch television they are taught that blacks are more violent and prone to criminal activity while whites especially women are more likely to be victimized (Davis 1981). Further, the AOI are active producers and consumers of texts that circulate racial resentment: "it's obvious other races don't have the same regard for life that whites do, look at the family that was shot down in east L.A. by those Mexicans" (fieldnotes 1997). For McCarthy et al. (1997):

In this phase of racial antagonism, resentment operates through processes of simulation or the constant fabrication of racial distinctions, fields of affiliation, fields of exclusion. Discourse of resentment create the pure space of the folk, the pure space of origins, the pure space of the other who is so different from 'us' (McCarthy et al. 1997: 279).

Clearly, racial resentment is central to an understanding of AOI members' involvement in the "movement", but members' narratives also point to other factors in the development
of the AOI. Consider Johnny's discussion of his subcultural "break" or "disengagement" from punk to Nazism:

1980's, Las Vegas—Johnny:
Our punk band was involved in anti-nuclear protests you know up at the test site. I knew from personal experience because we grew up down wind in Utah so we were really pissed about the testing, and all of us punks, the peace punks, and us more hardcore types protested together. See originally, I was involved with Greepeace and Earthfirst!, but all the leaders cared about was raising money, they didn't want to actually do anything, there wasn't any unselfish devotion like you find at AN [Aryan Nations]. And things really started getting hostile, when we started fighting with 'em about nonviolence. We got sick of all the nonviolent crap, the passive resistance stuff. We didn't want to lay down in front of cars or dig ourselves into some holes. To us it didn't make sense and if the police were or you know anybody was going to beat on us, we were going to fight back defend ourselves and so we started looking in other places for other models and that's when we start turning towards fascism and Nazism.

Listening and reading Johnny's words make me wonder that with a few different turns in life maybe he would have become an "up and coming" environmental activist instead of "one of Utah's most famous white supremacists". But what needed to be different? In his research examining neo-Nazi skinheads Ezekiel (1995) argues that:

They didn't need to be members of a Nazi cell. They needed to be confrontational, they needed to feel some glamour, they needed to feel they were doing something that had some importance. But all this could have been met otherwise. They could have readily been recruited into Earth First. They had an anti-corporate sense of the world, they were quite romantic about wilderness, and Earth First would have given them a chance to be active, to be confrontational and to have glamour. They could have been active there just as happily as in the Nazi cell (Ezekiel 1998: 3).

With punk long outgrown and another move from skinhead to militia increasingly underway, I met Dave and Johnny as both were rapidly approaching their 30s, a lifetime of experiences behind them. My story with the Army of Israel begins in 1997, on a lonely and hurried drive along Interstate 15 from Las Vegas to St. George, Utah.
January 1997—The First Meeting

Thoughts flash through my mind as I'm driving to my first meeting. I'm in emotional overdrive; nervous tension coupled with an eerie excitement is rushing through my body. Finally the project is no longer some idea in my head but is actually materializing. I'm not sure what will come of my “luncheon” with Dave, one of the leaders of the Army of Israel, a white supremacist, Christian Identity group, but I know it will be a learning experience.

The weather is gloomy; slight drizzle accompanies low-lying dark clouds, as I speed along the freeway. I finally make it to St. George, Utah and find the “spaghetti factory” parking lot where Dave has suggested that we meet. I'm running late and afraid that he's gone. After finding a parking space, I step out of my car and survey the area, looking around, uncertain of what or who I'm looking for. I turn and see two men leaning up against the front bumper of a mid 1980s two-door burgundy sedan. They're in their twenties, heads shaved; wearing black "flight" jackets and jeans—“that must be them,” I say to myself. I begin walking slowly toward them, feeling uncertain. “Hey,” I softly call out as I approach, “sorry I’m late.” “No problem,” the shorter man responds, “we thought you might get lost.” I extend my hand as they extend theirs. “This is Robert” the shorter man says, “And I’m Dave”. “Nice to meet you,” I respond. Dave is short and slender; his face is babyish, yet rugged. A neatly trimmed beard covers his jaw and chin. Robert is taller, close to 6-feet, but also very slender. His Italian heritage that he indicated later is apparent, as is the swastika tattooed on his right hand between his thumb and index finger.
We talk over a pizza that Dave and I share, while Robert eats his own plate of spaghetti. "So is this for a book report?" Dave inquires. "Well, it's for my thesis, it's more like a book" I respond wanting to sound important, wanting them to take me seriously. Dave and I talk while Robert watches. Dave is eager to discuss the movement; he enjoys it. There's no hesitation with Dave, "I'm not trying to convert anybody, I just like talking with anyone who's interested", but Robert is skeptical, even cold. Finally he barks out, "Well do you think our government is leading us towards one world communism?" Ah hah, so this is my first test question, I can feel Robert gauge me as I prepare my answer. "Well, I don't know about communism, but I know I don't like the way our country is heading" I state flatly, hoping my response is enough. The answer is honest, yet ambiguous and ripe for complete misinterpretation. Robert greets my response with a slight nod, appearing satisfied. Later after some beer and a few games of pool he seems to finally relax.

Lunchtime Chatter

Me: "So where are you [Dave] from?"

Dave: "Salt Lake, but I've pretty much lived all over--what about you?"

Me: "Portland."

Dave: "Oh really, yeah, I lived in Portland, actually it was during the Seraw murder--Portland wasn't a good place to be a skinhead at that time.\textsuperscript{23} You know the skins who killed Seraw were stupid--they made it really hard."

Me: "did you know the skins who killed Seraw?"

\textsuperscript{23} Three skinheads in Portland, Oregon murdered Mulageta Seraw, an Ethiopian immigrant, November 13, 1988 (Langor 1990).
Dave: "no not really, I knew some of the guys they hung with, but I wasn't there that long"

Me: "So one thing I've been wondering about because I know some people are offended uh by the term white supremacist, what do you think about the term?"

Dave: "Well it's a media buzzword—I don't go around calling myself a white supremacist."

Robert [interrupts]: "But the white race is superior."

Dave: Well yah, races aren't the same, there are differences, look at black's physical abilities, they do some things better, the thing is blacks and whites can't live together, you know blacks should just follow Farrakhan, but the problem is blacks have an inferiority complex, so we just keep building and then give it all away until one day they're going to have everything. It's really simple, we just want to follow the natural order, and you know it's obvious other races don't have the same regard for life that whites do, just look at the family that was shot down in east L.A. by those Mexicans.

Stephanie Kuhen, 4, was mortally wounded when her mother's boyfriend made a wrong turn into a dead-end street in Los Angeles used as a hangout by Hispanic hoodlums...A mob of 20 youths barricaded the car, then opened fire...After years of bloody violence that has terrorized minority neighborhoods, a wrong turn by the white Kuhen family into the heart of Los Angeles' gang-infested darkness...prompted city officials into a frenzied crackdown on street gangs (Chicago Tribune, September 22, 1995; USA Today, September 19, 1995).

Americans watched their televisions in awe last month as they heard the story of the White family who made a wrong turn into 'gang territory' in Los Angeles. A three-year-old girl was brutally murdered by savage Mexican gang members. The same fate surely awaited the entire family had it not been for the courageous father who used his hand to push the cars' accelerator and get his family to safety. What crime had been committed to deserve such a nightmare? They were guilty of being White. What price are you willing to pay for your white skin? (True Israelite, October 14, 1995).
Journal Entry—January 1997

What's wrong with these guys, don't they know anything, whites kill blacks and Hispanics all the time, haven't they ever heard of lynching, they seem so sincere, but can they really believe this bullshit?

(Robert is visibly concerned; an angered frown covers his face)

Robert: "if a white kills a black it's a hate crime, but nonwhites can shoot us and sell drugs to our children."

Dave: "yah, it's hypocritical."

(The conversation somehow turns to the movie *Braveheart*)

Dave: "*Braveheart* that's what it's all about, if you want to understand the movement you need to see that movie"

Robert: "I can't believe Hollywood let that one by"

(I'm fascinated by their avid support for the film *Braveheart*, they seem truly smitten with the movie as it represents an excellent depiction of their own plight)

Dave: "Well, Mel Gibson, he's Australian--kind of a black sheep in Hollywood, you know he even came out and supported Pat Buchanan"

Lunch ends and we decide to head down the street to one of their "stomping grounds" for some pool and beer. Dave pulls out a five dollar bill and leaves it for the waitress, "I always like to leave good tips, I use to be a waiter" he explains as we're putting our jackets on.

The Blarney Stone Tavern

The tavern is located next to a Speedy Mart gas station, it is older, a typical watering hole. An L shaped bar with stools for about 15 is off to the left as you enter through the
front door with a couple of pool tables off to the right. Once inside we grab a pool table and Dave orders a pitcher of beer, he knows the bartender and she asks, "where you been hiding?" At about the same time a stranger approaches us, a man in his early thirties, clean-shaven, well groomed and nicely dressed—he introduces himself as Tim and asks if he can join us in some pool. We agree and begin shooting.

(Tim notices Dave's Aryan Nations t-shirt)

Tim: "I've heard about this Aryan Nations, so what's it all about?"

Dave: "I'll show you"

(Dave runs out to his car and returns in a couple of minutes with a stack of newsletters)

(While Dave is outside, Tim turns to me and asks, "are you a member?". Not sure how to respond I tell him, "no, just friends". He then tells me, "I've always been interested about it and it's hard to tell from the media". Tim then mentions that he's a member of the Church of Scientology and that he visits Las Vegas often for study groups)

(Dave returns)

Dave: "Here, read this"

(Tim starts looking at the papers and after a couple of minutes, he says, "hmm, some of this makes pretty good sense")

(Dave and Tim begin discussing the importance of maintaining our liberties such as the 2nd Amendment; I sit by and observe in amazement as each of them begins to softly recruit the other)

(While Tim and Dave discuss religion, I strike up a conversation with Robert)

Me: So what was it like being a skinhead in Fullerton?
Robert: I got tired of it, most of the skins down there are Odinists and being a Christian you know well that's why I came up here, I just want to find a good girl who goes to church and get married

Me: what about down there, what were the girls like?

Robert: oh the skin girls are hos [whores], they'll sleep with any skinhead who comes along

(As I'm talking with Robert, I hear the bartender tell a joke about Mexicans...)

(A little later after a couple more pitchers of beer, Dave who had earlier claimed that the Mulageta Seraw murder “wasn't good” is now joking about the incident)

Dave: See ya later Mulagater

(Wincing, I can feel my jaw and neck muscles tighten, my stomach twinges, and my knees ever so slightly weaken wondering how anyone could joke about such a tragedy...)

An Ethiopian man who was beaten to death with a baseball bat Sunday was attacked by a group of white supremacist skinheads...the attackers were three young men and two women who drove up in a car as two friends dropped Seraw off at his house (Las Vegas Review Journal, 11/14/88).

"Move your car! roared the drunken Ken 'Death' Mieske. 'Move your fuckin' car!' he roared again and after another moment Mieske again shouted 'Move your fuckin' car!'. Just as Seraw backed away, Mieske, Strasser, and Brewster approached Tesfaye's car. Mieske carried a baseball bat. He smashed the front window of the Dodge, spraying Tesfaye and Antneh with shattered glass. Then he turned on Seraw. No, please! Cried Seraw. Please! Using all the power of his strong young body, Mieske then beat Seraw in the head with the ball bat as Strasser and Brewster kicked the 110-pound immigrant with their boots" (Hamm 1993: 4; Langer 1990).

Reportedly the girls in the car screamed for more, cheering the skinheads on (Las Vegas Review Journal, 11/14/88).

**RE-ENACTMENT**

hey you fucking monkeys you can't park there, why don't you go back to Africa SMASH—a baseball bat to the side of Seraw cracking his ribs
CRACK—a steel toed Doc Marten boot to the shin causing Seraw to double-over and fall to his knees
Ken hit the nigger harder!
Come on you guys, kill the fucking niggers!
SMASH
CRACK

"When they were finished, Mieske had fractured Seraw's skull in two places, killing him" (Hamm 1993: 4; Langer 1990).

Dave's joke about the heinous murder, "see ya later Mulagater" reminds me of Tom Metzger's hateline phone message recorded after the Seraw murder:

Dateline: Portland, Oregon
And now the oppressed await the decision in the skinhead/Ethopian case. We may believe that many of these Negroes had long arrest records. Many of the beautiful Negroes were also high on crack. SOUNDS LIKE THE SKINHEADS DID A CIVIC DUTY (Hamm 1993: 159).

(I try to ignore my feelings of disgust and anger by nodding as Dave continues, "it's about time we got one, they had it coming"—"see ya later Mulagater" continues to ring in my head, but in spite of this I manage to ask a question)

Me: that was Eastside White Pride right?

(Dave and Robert glance at each other, seemingly impressed with my familiarity of the skinheads who were involved in Seraw's murder and nod, yeah that's right)

Journal Entry—January 1997:

My god I smiled when they joked about the Seraw murder, I actually managed to smile. I don't know if I can keep doing this, I don't know if I want to or if I even should. What's worse is when I asked about Eastside White Pride [the skinhead group who killed Seraw] and they looked impressed I felt a beam of pride, they seem to like me it feels good...

(A couple of games later, a man from the other side of the bar walks across the room toward Dave)
"Hey Dave, you got any newsletters on ya?"

(Dave hands him a newsletter in exchange for a couple of dollars, as the man mentions that he's recently seen Randy Weaver interviewed on television)

(A little later Dave boasts)

Dave: "You see, the Army of Israel, we're a household name around these parts"

We've got a lot of ties in Utah, a lot of support from different groups...I remember going to the Dixie Center and probably about 1000 people and I got a standing ovation (Johnny Bangerter 1999)

The evening is winding down and we've drunk an uncounted quantity of beer, when Dave turns to me from the pool table and says, "You've got some pretty big balls coming up here and meeting some skinheads you don't even know". The compliment is followed by an offer of a return visit, "you can stay at my house and pretty soon we'll be doing paint war, as soon as we get our uniforms that way you can feel what it's like in the movement, I figured you'd want to do that". I agree flattered about his reference to the size of my balls and happy that my (our) first meeting has been successful. Dave also tells me that he's anxious for me to see his newly purchased property. "It's pretty far out there," Dave says, a sly grin spreading across his face, "this way I can see'em coming". On the way to our cars Robert shakes my hand and extends an invitation for me to stay at his place, "Next time you come up, we'll have a real nice turkey dinner". "Thanks, that sounds great" I respond. I drive back to Vegas in the dark, crisp winter air. I don't know what to make of Dave and Robert, my head is full of thoughts as I try to make some sense out of it. In some ways my visit is uncannily familiar like so many other days with friends: drinking beers, playing pool, and bullshitting. And today certainly isn't the first time I've been around people who refer to blacks as "niggers". Yet, I've never met
anyone who reveres Adolph Hitler, tattoos swastikas on their body, and are arming
themselves for the impending "race war". I have a lot to think about.

Shortly after my first visit with Dave and Robert, Robert moved to Idaho not far from
the Aryan Nations "headquarters" in Hayden Lake. I happened to run into him at a
skinhead party in Idaho and he explained his move from Utah. "They screwed me over
down there, it was getting pretty sick, I had to leave". "What was going on?" I asked. "A
lot of a shit, but mainly drugs, that's all they do down there is drugs". "You mean pot?"
"Well, yeah, but not just pot, they're doing heroin and other shit too, they're turning into a
bunch of tweekers". We spoke a little longer; he asked how my research was going and
invited me stay at his house if I ever needed a place to "crash".

Two years later while watching Ed Norton portray a skinhead on the "silver screen" in
the movie American History X, I thought of Robert. Their faces resemble each other,
Norton's smile reminds me of Robert's wickedly sarcastic sense of humor, and both are
"strapped" with 38 caliber pistols--I wonder if Robert ever used his the way Norton did--
brutally murdering two young black men trying to break into his car?

What is the Army of Israel capable of? What kinds of "activities" help build members'
collective identity? What are some of the pivotal events in the development of their
"careers" as white supremacists?

November 11, 1988, Las Vegas, Nevada--Imperial Palace Hotel and Casino

Skinheads brawl with protesters

A quiet protest in front of the Imperial Palace turned into a brawl that spilled onto the
Las Vegas strip when those opposed to hotel owner Ralph Engelstad clashed with
several dozen radical Skinheads...The Skinheads blamed those protesting Engelstad
for starting the riot...The melee erupted at 5:20 p.m., about 80 minutes after
demonstrators began protesting in front of the hotel against owner Ralph Engelstad's
past fascination with Adolf Hitler...But about an hour later, members of Las Vegas
Skinheads, who are also National Socialists, arrived carrying white supremacy and Nazi flags and placards, stating, "Smash Communism," and "White Man, Awake!"...the two groups began shouting at each other. The scene erupted in violence. Bodies, sticks, placards and fists were flying everywhere...Emmanuel Anthony...was hit in the head by one of the skinhead's skateboards...suffered a separation between his cheekbone and his skull...(Las Vegas Sun, 11/11/88; Las Vegas Review Journal, 11/11/88; Las Vegas Review Journal, 11/12/88).

A decade later Johnny reflects on the "brawl" in front of Imperial Palace:

Yeah I remember that...they came and threw fliers in front of our house, it was Andy Rosenberg and those guys. Yeah they were taunting us to come down, they said 'skinheads be there', so we were. Yeah that was something else, you know Mike the one kid in the picture, Spuds brother, he uh was just cruising down the strip on his skateboard. He had nothing to do with this and next thing you know there's all his friends and his brother in a big pile in the strip. He just jumps off his skateboard, you can just see right on live T.V. he jumps off his skateboard like it's all planned in mid-air grabs his skateboard and waps this guy in the head with it and that's it that was the big thing happened right on live television...Let's see oh yeah these are the people we we were suppose to of beat first in the paper it says we uh were uh picking on the elderly we were messing with the wheelchair and all them but it wasn't like that at all, it was a bunch of guys from Golds Gym. Ya know the paper says the skinheads we were attacking the elderly Jews, they had hired a bunch of people from Golds gym to come down and beat us and so that's what happened. We beat 'em all, we whipped 'em all down they outnumbered us 20, 30 of them and about 9 of us and that was pretty exciting I remember that (Johnny Bangerter, 1999).

the Imperial Palace brawl occurred a day before the televised brawl on the Geraldo Show, where Gerlado's nose was broken during a fight that erupted between long-time civil rights activist Roy Innis and John Metzger of White Aryan Resistance and

The Geraldo brawl was broadcast on the afternoon of November 11, 1988. The following evening, Mulugeta Seraw would die at the hands of skinheads in Portland (Hamm 1993: 55)

After the Imperial Palace incident, Johnny and his "crew" of white racist activists remained in the public eye. In 1989 at the prompting of an over-anxious Las Vegas reporter CIS agreed that they had developed a "hit-list" with hundreds of Jewish people...
from Las Vegas on it. Although no such list ever existed, CIS was happy to go along with the idea. Looking back now Johnny laughs about the fictional "hit-list":

This news reporter at the courthouse during David Sass and Buffy and the other Jews that tried to shoot us during their trial she asked why we were filming, 'Are you developing a list?' A light bulb goes on 'yah we're developing a list'. 'Well is it a hit list?' 'Yes it is a hit list'. [laughter] And she asks, 'can I see the list?' And so I talk to Spider and see we didn't have a list, there was no list. Oh yah, first she goes, 'how many names are on the list?' And I ask Spider how many should we tell her and he says, 'I don't know 500'. And I said, 'there's 500 hundred names on the list'. And she said, 'well can I see the list?'. And we didn't have a list ya know so I tell Spider ya know cause we always converse, 'she wants to see the list'. And he's, 'well I don't know, I guess' [laughter]. And he's all 'we'll make one'. So I go back and tell her, 'yes you can see the list'. And so we stayed up all night long we had the Jewish newspaper, the Jewish Israelite and we were cutting out pictures of all these Jews and we used the same picture over and over again just in the photo album and when she came over it was sitting on the table and behind me was the rebel flag, uh the swastika flag and American flag and a picture of Zion right behind me plus a topographical map with you know the little red thumb tacks where we were taking over you know how we were thinking back then you know completely you know kind of a little out of it I guess [laughter]. 'This is where we're going to take over'. Magical thinking you know we had the red where we already conquered and then the white was where we were going to take over and there of course is the hit list and we're telling 'em there's the 500 names and the reporter is all, 'you say you're Christians, but in the 10 Commandments it says, 'thou shall not kill'. And I was all serious and I said, 'that is a mistranslation, it says it is against God's law to murder, but to kill his enemies is his duty' [laughter] and that was it, the headlines said, 'to kill is a duty' [laughter] and then they showed us with guns and the whole bit [laughter] (Johnny Bangerter, 1999).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s Johnny and the rest of CIS continued to actively mobilize in Las Vegas. It seems their favorite targets were "pro-choice" rallies and any Jewish gatherings:

we were constantly in the battle with the Jews more than anything. I mean if there was a Jewish event we were there, if it was an abortion rally we'd attack it and I thought what better of a name to go attack a Jewish rally 'the Army of Israel attacks the Jews' (Johnny Bangerter 1999).

Coinciding with the CIS's continued mobilization, Johnny's mother Mary and his spouse Casey developed what they called "Operation White Nurse". Mary, who is a licensed
emergency medical technician, and Casey explained the purpose of Operation White Nurse as:

something for white girls to feel good about...we weren't an organization or anything, you know with a membership, but if people were interested and wanted literature we'd send it to them. We had these shoulder patches that said Operation White Nurse and we had 500 made up and sold them all. You know we worked with girls to get them educated and a lot went to school and became EMTs and nurses because of Operation White Nurse (fieldnotes, 1999).

Prior to and during the Gulf War, Operation White Nurse spearheaded a mass mailing of letters to U.S. military personnel criticizing the U.S.'s "pro-Zionist" foreign policy and urging them to reconsider the use of force in the Middle East. However, according to Johnny as they became more active and vocal, the skinheads drew increasing public attention leading to threats and attempts on his life like the one below:

"...a group of Jewish-led vigilantes were arrested for trying to confront a group of skinheads...the eight defendants were apprehended in a 1983 Chevy van filled with baseball bats and other fighting paraphernalia..." (Las Vegas Sun, 2/22/89).

While Johnny and his family were increasingly concerned about the threat of "Jewish locals" and others who despised their views, it was the urban unrest following the Rodney King verdict that sent Johnny and his family packing to Utah. The Bangerters were living near "old town" on St. Louis Ave and Spencer near Charleston not far from "the city's predominantly black westside where the rioting occurred" (Nevada Appeal, 5/1/92). They vividly remember the violence and ensuing mayhem.

TROOPS TO VEGAS
400 GUARDSMEN SENT TO LV WESTSIDE TO RESTORE PEACE
UNREST WORRIES VEGAS

LAS VEGAS - Gov. Bob Miller ordered the National Guard deployed today on the city's westside after a night of rioting that left at least one person dead. The incident
began before dusk when a group of young people began marching down Bonanza Road a major street just three blocks from downtown’s Glitter Gulch casino district. Police stopped the youths by forming a barricade, and the violence began to spread through the Westside, where three white men were beaten earlier in the afternoon. Mayor Jan Laverty Jones imposed a curfew Thursday night from 10:30 p.m. until dawn in the city’s predominantly black westside, where the rioting occurred (Nevada Appeal, 5/1/92)

Mary La Fountaine (Johnny’s mother):

After that we had to get outa Vegas, it was just too much. We saw it all—burning cars, blacks tearing everything apart. We knew we couldn't wait any longer, so we headed back for Utah (fieldnotes 1998).

Violent Recall—“a biographical drift”:

Initially, my best friend's bedroom T.V. inFORMed us about the "riots,"—this was then followed by inFORMATION from numerous people who understood "ghetto violence"-- -buildings on fire, sirens whaling, Korean store owners armed and ready to defend themselves, but most of all angry black bodies in the streets, the lone white trucker, the brick to his head again and again, boots stomping his defenseless body repeatedly, vandals looting their own community, just looking for an excuse to fill their pockets--stereos, televisions—these people are animals, any chance they get to run around like this, they're destroying buildings that were just rebuilt and before you know it they'll do it again.

1992--An Aryan Migration to the Land of Zion

Since 1992--when he moved from Las Vegas to southern Utah to create a whites-only homeland in Zion National Park--Bangerter has preached his white separatist ideology to a small band of followers dubbed the Army of Israel...His band of skinheads, many tattooed with swastikas, is bent on establishing an ancestral homeland for Anglos in Zion National Park...the Army of Israel members are said to meet regularly in Zion National Park to plan the Judgement Day battle. The group feels there is religious symbolism in the towering cliffs in Zion. They have talked of hanging their 3-story-tall swastika banner from the park's Great White Throne (Salt Lake Tribune, 10/24/94, 5/28/95, 9/4/97).

They feel very close to the land, the land is part of the movement and if they have to take cover or they have to flee, Zion is their holyland (Birth of a Militia 1997).

More than anything that’s why I appreciate it [Zion] this place the most because it's going to be so helpful in what's to come (fieldnotes 1997).
The irony of these times, however, is that as actual places and localities become ever more blurred and indeterminate, ideas of culturally and ethnically distinct places become perhaps even more salient...imagined communities come to be attached to imagined places, as displaced peoples cluster around remembered or imagined homelands, places, or communities in a world that seems increasingly to deny such firm territorialized anchors in their actuality (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 10-11).

Adding Fuel to the Fire---Ruby Ridge, Idaho August, 1992

Not long after Johnny and others moved from Las Vegas to southern Utah, a quiet heavily wooded mountain became the scene of tragic gunfire followed by a thunderous response from the federal government as agents descended on a place called Ruby Ridge, Idaho. In the midst of this turbulence, Johnny Bangerter and several comrades as well as a number of others from the surrounding area and the rest of the nation began a vigil alongside the federal government's encampment. The vigil symbolized their protest of the federal government's handling of a situation that they saw as persecution of Randy Weaver's beliefs, and his unwillingness to collaborate with the "feds".

The shootout at Weaver's mountain home left a lasting impression on Bangerter...He is related by marriage to Randy Weaver, the white separatist whose wife and son were killed in a 1992 confrontation with federal agents at Ruby Ridge, Idaho (Salt Lake Tribune 5/28/95; Rocky Mountain News, 11/2/97).

"Still No End in Sight to Idaho Standoff"

As Randy Weaver sits in his mountain top cabin holding off heavily armed federal agents more white supremacists are arriving in the area leaving law enforcement officials with one particular worry: sympathizers sneaking in to try to help Weaver and his family (Fox News, April 1992).

"John Bangerter self-proclaimed member of the right-wing Army of Israel says that the showdown in the northern Idaho's panhandle is a declaration of war...Hostility by protesters has escalated perilously close to violence..." (ABC News, April 1992).

"Protesters with Signs reading 'Baby Killers' and 'We're Fed Up with the Feds' are held as part of their daily vigil in support of Weaver and his family" (KUTV News, April 1992).
Johnny 1992:
These people are now the enemy, every federal institution, every federal agent is the enemy...they're upholding Satan's laws, they're upholding the laws of darkness they are not upholding Gods' laws (Fox News, April 1992).

1997:
These guys are murderers...I want to get these sons of bitches...Every night I go to bed and every morning I wake up, I think about it and I get depressed about it...I don't sleep anymore (Rocky Mountain News, 11/2/97).

1992 was a pivotal moment in the life course of the AOI. The "council of twelve" disbanded over disagreements regarding Ruby Ridge and the AOI's last march had already taken place earlier in the year. The AOI continued to maintain contact with other groups like the Aryan Nations and within the next year or two, Dave would start publishing the AOI newsletter the "True Israelite". Informal meetings were held periodically and in 1994 the AOI protested at a public forum for gay/lesbian rights.

Skinheads Crash Meeting of Gays, Lesbians

About 20 skinheads from the 'Army of Israel' made a 55 mile trek Saturday night to hassle a meeting of southern Utah homosexuals...Officers checked the group for weapons and then allowed them to be seated, even though the meeting was half over...One skinhead called out, 'I'll tell you, you better stay away from our kids, faggot.' A second said, 'We're going to get these homosexuals out of town.'...The skinheads left the chamber, but they did not return to their enclave in Hurricane until they had passed out literature that read, in part: 'Queers molest your children.'...This is the first time since the Army of Israel members moved to southern Utah from Nevada in 1992 that they have had a hard target in the area...Much of the area in the southwest corner of the state is predominantly white" (Salt Lake Tribune, 10/24/94).

However, according to Johnny the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing was what really changed things for the movement and the AOI.

I think the high point of the movement was around 93-94 and then the bombing happened and the movement just went cold after that...It dampered the movement it really dampered it bad at that point anybody who was a serious patriot in this country
was like hey you know the government is going to clamp down really hard. I guess you could look at it both ways, people who were more out in the open with things went completely underground disbanded their organizations that’s all that happened, that was the end of the marches and things… (fieldnotes, 1999).

Had things fizzled for the Army of Israel? Melucci (1984) argues that movements are "a network of small groups submerged in the everyday life" that only occasionally emerge to partake in overtly political mobilization (Melucci 1984: 829).

So who knows what could happen next, there’s a lot of hardcore serious dedicated patriots out there that still have the same feelings about things that are just stocking up on ammunition and waiting… (Johnny Bangerter 1999).

I sensed that for Dave, Johnny and others there was a feeling of fatigue and continuing involvement in the movement was a struggle. Shortly after being released from jail, Johnny told me that "the newness of the movement has worn off, it's not like it was years ago, these days I’d rather look for antiques for my collection or go for hikes than get involved in some kind of movement activity (fieldnotes, 1999). Last summer, while Dave was struggling to recover from an intense depression following his wife's death in an auto accident he mentioned to me several times that "I don't feel like I can keep going with the movement but I have to for Andie, I know she would want me to" (fieldnotes, 1998).

An Aryan Weekend--January 1997

After our first meeting, Dave and I plan for me to come up and stay for a couple of days. I pack my gym bag for the weekend and throw it in the backseat of my car wondering if I'm really prepared. The first meeting went well, but this is different. An entire weekend as a guest in a neo-Nazi skinhead's house? We plan on meeting in
downtown St. George at a hotel where a "punk" concert is scheduled. I drive to our rendezvous point, but there is no sign of Dave. Some kids standing around tell me the concert has been canceled.

"Shit, had I made the trip for nothing?". I drive some more, looking, feeling lost in an unknown town. The Blarney Stone Tavern is close; maybe they've wandered over there? I walk in and order a bottle of Budweiser beer, but I don't see any familiar faces. Everyone seems to know each other at the bar so I anxiously gulp down my beer, looking around feeling uncomfortable. I decide to head back over to the hotel parking lot as a last ditch effort in hopes of finding Dave. Positioning my car for an easy get away should I need one, I get out and begin to slowly walk across the cold-hard asphalt. Across the dark lot I see a group of people and as I move closer I notice a man pointing a camera at the group. A couple of kids with skateboards are hanging around and I ask, "what's with the cameraman", to which they respond, "they're filming the skinheads". Well, I've finally found them. Then in the distance I hear, "Is that Pete?". The voice is Dave's and when I get close enough we shake hands. The camera's eye is aimed directly at our handshake, which leads me to spontaneously turn towards the camera, smile and wave. I'm not sure who I am waving to (hi, Mom?) or is my response simply a reflex to the knowledge that maybe somewhere an unknown audience will eventually view this and possibly misconstrue my presence. After a few minutes of small talk, Dave thinks we should get going. Andie remains quiet; is she shy or unhappy about me staying with them for the weekend? She's short and slender with long dark brown hair that runs past her shoulders and her complexion is creamy light, almost pale. During our first meeting Dave said several times that, "women should be extra-feminine—they shouldn't shave
their heads— it's not natural, the natural order— God's law". Andie looks young, in her early 20s and is wearing a dark flight jacket with a t-shirt reading "Hitler's European Tour". Later with her jacket removed the back of her shirt reveals names of places and dates like other concert t-shirts. However, this has the various dates of Nazi Germany's invasions; Poland—September 1, 1939, Denmark—April 9, 1940 with the exception of Russia and Great Britain, which read, "cancelled" next to those countries.

After some scrambled eggs the next morning I discuss how she met Dave and what her family thinks about their beliefs. "Oh they like Dave". "What about his beliefs?". "Well at first they weren't very crazy about us dating or him being a skinhead, they don't agree with all of our beliefs, but they're also not stupid, they know what's going on in our country". "Where did you grow up?" "In Mesquite, then in Salt Lake". "So were you into the punk rock scene up in Salt Lake". "Oh no, I just met Dave through some friends who were, I was just a good little Mormon girl". "So what do you envision your children's future like— do you want them to be involved in the movement?". "I haven't really thought much about it, I mean I want them to have free faculties, I want them to decide for themselves".

At Dave's suggestion I follow behind them in my car. On the way to their house we stop to pick-up their children from a babysitter. I wait in my car while they run up to the sitter's older mobile home, which has a large Confederate flag draped across the front window. Next, we stop to meet Dave's good friend Johnny Bangerter. Dave wants me to meet Johnny and tells him that I'm a student studying the "movement". But, Johnny is in the middle of rolling a marijuana joint and not particularly interested in my presence. Our visit is short and we return to our cars to finish the drive to their home. I follow
them for another five miles until they pull into the driveway of a newer duplex. Their
house is simple, a clean average looking family room with a dining area and kitchen.
Dave motions for me to set my bags down in the living room, "I hope you don't mind
sleeping on the couch, but we don't have an extra room". "No that's great," I quickly
reply.

Andie and Dave have two daughters (the oldest of which is Dave's from a previous
relationship) Jessie and Sarah. Their youngest child, Hunter is less than a year-old, and is
named after William McDonald's (aka William Pierce, the founder of the neo-Nazi
organization the National Alliance) main character in the novel Hunter, a drive-by killer
who begins murdering interracial couples and eventually works his way up to
assassinating Jews in order to cleanse America of its sickness and save the future of white
civilization (ADL 1995). "Have a seat," Dave says. We both sit down on his couch.

CLICK.

"Two bombs explode at an abortion clinic in Atlanta, injuring six; President calls blasts
vile act of terrorism"

CLICK.

"Honey, we'll be back in a while," Dave says to Andie. "Lets go out to my property, I
have some stuff to drop off and I want to show you this place". As we get into Dave's car
he says "it's about time, and the second bomb the feds deserved it." "You think so?" I
ask. "Yeah, what comes around goes around." he says matter of factly. It's around 11:30
p.m as we pull out of the driveway in Dave's burgundy colored Buick sedan. "It's really
unusual for snow to still be on the ground" he tells me as I listen trying to sound
interested. It feels awkward; I want to start asking questions, "when did you first get
involved?, how?, why?". Dave fiddles around the car floor for a tape, "Have you ever heard of Rockabilly?" Dave asks. "You mean like the Stray Cats?". "Yah kind of". I could hear his silent snicker; the question/response sounded ridiculous as soon as the words left my mouth. The Stray Cats, like that "fag" Garth Brooks were "sellouts", "race traitors" representative today of so many white people and white things that would rather cow-tow like little "whiggers" to the liberal Zionist-controlled system.

The heater in his car isn't working and I am thankful for my wool jacket. But it still isn't enough and I begin to shiver. Dave puts another tape in his car stereo and lyrics instantly pound from the speakers: "Big Brother is watching You, Big Brother is a Fucking Jew". We continue to drive and I slowly realize that we are literally in the middle of nowhere. Patches of snow cover the barren land, as paranoid thoughts start to flash through my mind; I don't really know this guy, maybe he's taking me out to the middle of the desert and planning to kill me. It would be a great place to dump a body, I think. My god what am I doing? I don't like this guy; he's a damn Nazi. Thankfully, we start talking about the legalization of hemp. We both agree about how ridiculous the law is against hemp. "There are so many uses for hemp, shoes, plywood, hammocks," Dave comments and I fervently agree. The topic is comforting for me to discuss and strategically important. It provides "authentic" common ground between the two of us. Dave shuffles for another tape, "have you ever listened to Skrewdriver?" "No, but I've been wanting to hear their music" I respond. Dave starts to explain the importance of Skrewdriver to the movement. 24 "Yeah, Ian Stuart was becoming dangerous, that's why

---

24 Ian Stuart, lead singer for the white-power band, Skrewdriver, died in an automobile accident September 14, 1993.
they had to kill him. It was just too convenient for the government." But apparently

Stuart and Skrewdriver live on through the influence of their music:

"White Power for England
White Power today
White Power for Britain
Before it gets too late"
(Skrewdriver, White Power)

The song "White Power" is followed by another Skrewdriver "hit" song—"Nigger, Nigger":

We won't take it anymore, gonna take our nation back.
Nigger, nigger get on that boat
Nigger, nigger row
Nigger, nigger get out of here
Nigger, nigger go go go
(Skrewdriver, Nigger, Nigger)

I tell myself "it's just lyrics", but I know they're much more than that.

We finally arrive at Dave's property. The sign on the side of the highway says "Cane Beds", and we turn onto a dirt road and then another, leading us into a seeming maze before we arrive at his 5 acre lot. We step out of his car and "darkness" surrounds us. There is no "light", save a few stars in the sky above. Cane Beds feels ominously quiet, yet at the same time there is a tranquil quality about the place. It seems peaceful, but I wonder about the other people who live out here. Do they share similar sentiments to Dave? My imitation hiking boots are beginning to sink in the snow-covered mud, as I help him unload his car, including several rifles and a half dozen boxes of bullets. "You have to be prepared," he says. This reminds me of something he had said during our first meeting: "I'm moving out there so I can see 'em coming". This is similar to what Dave tells one of the journalists during the filming of a CBS documentary:

You can still get those gas masks everywhere, it's just those filters that's going to be hard to get---same with guns and ammo, guns are going to line the streets before it's
all said and done and ammunition will be worth more than gold (Birth of a Militia, 1997).

There are a couple of canvas tents already set up and Dave points out a partially built structure, "Sam is building a storage area using wooden crates" he explains. Sam, his wife Mindy, and their two children have bought an adjoining lot with Dave and Andie. "So Dave have you met any of your neighbors?" I ask. "Yeah, I've met a couple, they're all patriots out here". "The man who sold us the property gave us a great deal with low payments and no interest, yah and he's a patriot too." We finish unpacking his car and Dave pulls out a bullet from a box. "Look at that," he shows the bullet to me as if holding a priceless possession, "these bullets can't be traced, the government keeps tack of all this stuff, so when they call out the order to confiscate all of our weapons and ammunition, they won't know about bullets like these". Dave decides we should start a little campfire and warm up, but his "scout skills" are less than impressive and it takes us about twenty minutes just to get a single flame going. I feel sorry for those who might rely on him for a fire after the "collapse". The night is getting colder and luckily Dave suggests that we head home. We drive in silence along the dirt roads that lead back to the highway, until finally I ask: "Dave how did you first become involved in the movement?" Instantly he responds, and I assume he'd probably been asked this question many times before, "when I was 15 I was a little punk rocker and from there I became a skinhead". Dave's response is less than I had hoped for, but I choose not to probe further. The next question is his. "So, Pete, what are you planning on being when you grow up?" The question seems innocent enough. "I'm planning on getting my Masters and Ph.D. and then hopefully finding a teaching job". Dave seems unimpressed and responds, "well
that's if we don't recruit you for the race war first". I don't know what to say and gently begin to laugh. I feel like I need to say something, but what? His look is serious; he doesn't seem to be joking. Our first meeting includes many comments that I don't approve of or feel comfortable with, but this comment directly includes me in a hypothetical (perceived as real) fate for "Aryans" in this country. I'm not sure how he interprets my laugh or my lack of response, but he doesn't press for any further response and for that I am thankful. My lack of response or hesitation to Dave's invitation is relatively unimportant, I don't think it really matters, when the "system breaks down," groups like the AOI will lead the struggle and "nonbelievers" will either "fall in line" or face expulsion.

Dave: The next song [street fight] is one of my personal favorites, it's about the confrontations between the communists and the skinheads at the punk rock shows and gatherings. The SHARPS [Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice] and commies and all the people who have attacked us over the years. You can't stop us (fieldnotes, 1997)

\textit{We live on the streets now, we fight for our lives,}
\textit{We fight for the flag, we're all willing to die}
\textit{We don't run from anyone, we never back down,}
\textit{If we see a Red flag, we tear it to the ground}

Chorus:

\textit{We're flying the flag, we fight the Red peril}
\textit{We're flying the flag, we hold our heads high}

\textit{We're flying the flag, we'll never give up now}
\textit{We're flying the flag, we'll fight 'till we die} (Skrewdriver, Street fight)

October 13, 1991. At 9:15 yesterday morning our bomb went off in the FBI's national headquarters building. Our worries about the relatively small size of the bomb were unfounded; the damage is immense...
We were still two blocks away when the pavement shuddered violently under our feet. An instant later the blast wave hit us—a deafening 'ka-whoomp,' followed by an enormous roaring, crashing sound, accentuated by the higher-pitched noise of shattering glass all around us.


When we arrive at Dave's home, he gathers some blankets for me and we each say goodnight. Before falling asleep, I survey the living room; it is normal enough, a bookshelf, a television and VCR, Disney videotapes, some family portraits and a wedding picture. Then I notice the semi-automatic rifle leaning against the wall in the corner next to the couch where I'm sleeping. I wonder if it's loaded?

The weekend speeds by. Saturday we hike in Zion National Park and Sunday is spent with Dave at his property, where I meet Dave's friends Sam and Mindy. Sam is 27 and Mindy is 20 and like most of the people I've met during the weekend, they appear pretty ordinary. I find out later that Sam is especially concerned about the environment and has ordered a research report from the University of Arizona regarding the use of straw bales for home building. Sam is enthusiastic about his plans to build their home with "alternative resources". That day the four of us sat and talked in one of their canvas tents for a couple of hours before I headed back to Las Vegas. Mindy didn't say much. Dave and Sam did most of the talking, but later, after getting to know Mindy better I would find that she is articulate and vocal about her beliefs. The following two segments are a short synopsis of the two central AOI figures.

**Dave's Secession from Society**

Cane Beds is the perfect place for someone who has had enough. It is quiet and fairly remote, yet still close enough to more developed areas to find work. Locals estimate that
about one or two hundred people live in the area known as Cane Beds, but nobody knows for sure because it isn't incorporated and there are no actual boundaries. Most residents in Cane Beds live to the north of Highway 89, which runs west from Hurricane, Utah to the Grand Canyon and Lake Powel. The highway is well traveled by tourists looking for the scenic beauty of northern Arizona and southern Utah. To the north not far beyond people's homes, jagged red cliffs surround Cane Beds. You could drive by Cane Beds a hundred times and never notice it. But the more I visit Cane Beds the more intrigued I become. Homes range from newly built lodge-style houses and older two-story dwellings to trailers and other ramshackle dwellings, some without indoor plumbing. Some lots are immaculately landscaped, while others are filled with old cars and an array of other "junk".

Cane Beds has a "quirky" reputation among people in the surrounding area. When I mention that I am doing research in Cane Beds my comment is often greeted with a smile or something vague like, "Oh, Cane Beds that's an interesting place" or "Yeah, Cane Beds is eclectic, it's a different place out there". However, other references to Cane Beds are more specific such as the Salt Lake Tribune newspaper which referred to Cane Beds as a "constitutionalist enclave" (Salt Lake Tribune, September 14, 1997). The sense I gain from Cane Beds is that while there is certainly a strong anti-government sentiment that runs deep, the community is organized more around the idea that Cane Beds is a refuge. Cane Beds is a place where people can build their homes without the bothersome and inconvenient eye of government regulations. Law enforcement is rarely seen and rarely needed, traffic doesn't exist, the air is fresh and the water clean. There isn't a central community center; people do as they please without the interference of large-scale
bureaucracies. Some people are attracted by the exceptionally inexpensive property while others are radical environmentalists who just want to live off the land. And there are, as Dave told me, a number of "patriots" who espouse everything from open anti-Semitism and white supremacy to those who espouse the "tamer" John Birch Society-type rhetoric. Certainly, Cane Beds isn't the only community in the area known for being unusual, only five miles to the northwest of Cane Beds are two polygamous towns: Hilldale and Colorado City.

The CBS documentary filmed about the AOI said Dave moved to Cane Beds "to move out of the system and away from society...Dave wants to move outside of normal everyday society where his only interaction with people is through his choice" (Birth of a Militia, 1997). But Cane Beds is much more than a hideout for Dave, it is a chance to build something. A chance to build a community where people who look at the world and see what he sees can live together. As he points out, "we're building quite a community out there, move out while you still can" (fieldnotes, 1998). On February 25, 1998, Dave's dreams came to a crashing halt.

I had it made, I was on top of the world. I had moved my family onto our property where we were developing (without bank loans) using alternative building (straw bale/pallet construction). Although we had to use an outhouse and haul our water, we were living free, preparing for the future, and very happy....Then came February 25th and nothing will ever be the same again. One of the most beautiful, sweet, pure souls to ever grace this Earth was taken from it. I did not know one could feel such pain and live. Andie was so much more than my wife and the loving mother of my kids (ages 1 & 3 yrs.), she was my best friend (The True Israelite, nd, 1998).

Dave's wife Andie was killed in an automobile accident on February 25, 1998 at the age of 23. In September of 1998 Dave decided to temporarily move to Salt Lake City, Utah where his parents both live. In the process of moving Dave was also involved in an
automobile accident where he lost his spleen and severed an aorta. Although his condition has steadily improved he is still hospitalized in a rehabilitation center.

Johnny's On the Lamb

When I began my fieldwork in January, 1997 Johnny had recently been stopped for a minor traffic violation, however because he was driving on a suspended license and was carrying a loaded firearm the minor traffic violation quickly escalated into a felony situation.

The chain of events that today has Bangerter evading the law began with the Jan. 10 traffic stop...Refusing to be handcuffed in front of his children, Johnny Bangerter jumped in his car and drove a short distance to his brother-in-law's trailer park home where he remained until [Sheriff] Humphries arrived and 'told him to take his wife and kids and go home'...The night's events resulted in Humphries returning to the Bangerter's house a few days later with a criminal summons... (Salt Lake Tribune, September 14, 1997)

After this incident Johnny became increasingly convinced that law enforcement officials were hoping for another Ruby Ridge or Waco. "So I don't think anything has changed, I think the federal government is pushing for another standoff, they're pushing for a shootout. Nothing's changed, it's just got worse, that's the only thing that has changed" (Johnny Bangerter, 1997). This realization led Johnny to literally barricade his family and himself into their home and create a ramshackle fortress. A watchtower was built, foxholes in the yard were dug and his house secured: the front door was reinforced with a wooden plank supported by two metal brackets screwed into the doorframe. The window frames were bolted on the outside with chain-link fencing to prevent tear gas canisters from being thrown through the glass, and old furniture and bookcases were used to stack against the windows for further protection. The final touch on the bunker Johnny was
creating was an old tattered Confederate flag flying from the roof. The preparation for an impending confrontation with law enforcement continued for 9 months and led to fearful speculation. Sprinkler heads in the pasture next door were thought to have surveillance cameras: "I know it sounds crazy but that's how we live every day here...The feds just want to kill Johnny and they'll keep trying to get him until he's dead" (Casey Bangerter, 1997).

On May 20, 1998 the county sheriffs and local police finally arrested Johnny and shortly after his arrest he was sentenced to the Utah State Prison for psychiatric evaluation for 60 days (Associated Press, 7/3/98; Salt Lake Tribune, 5/21/98). Ultimately Johnny received a sentence of six months for felony evasion and was released in December of 1998 from Purgatory County Jail in Washington County, Utah. Currently Johnny is on 3 years probation and is living with his family in St. George, Utah (fieldnotes 1999).

The future status of the Army of Israel is undecided and it will be interesting to see if members attempt any revival or whether the AOI will continue to dissipate. The following chapter begins to examine how individual members articulate ideology through everyday practices. Chapter 5 discusses constructions of racial others analyzing how the other is articulated through concrete material practices including written and spoken words.
CHAPTER 5

ARTICULATING WHITE SUPREMACY

"I was walking through the jungle and what did I see? 101 niggers staring at me"
"Fight, fight, nigger and a white"
"Iny meany miny mo, catch a nigger by the toe"
(Children's "Nursery" Rhymes)

Following a cultural studies perspective outlined in chapters 2 and 3, this chapter illustrates that white supremacy is enacted and dramatized at a daily level. Paramount to the vision of white supremacy is the articulation of specific "enemies" or "others" (Aho 1994). I show that for members of the AOI enemies or the other are articulated through concrete material practices including spoken and written words. I also emphasize that in the process of constructing the other, white supremacists simultaneously construct a particular white identity positioning whiteness as the true essence of humanity (Dyer 1997).

While the AOI classifies many groups as enemies, including homosexuals, blacks, Hispanics, Jews, and Asians, my focus in this chapter is the construction of blackness and Jewishness. I select blacks and Jews because they are the enemies most frequently discussed by members of the AOI.

However, rather than "ghettoizing" the AOI's belief in white supremacy as an artifact of a purely reactionary "lunatic fringe", I want to situate the AOI's virulent form of white supremacy within a pattern of thinking and behavior that exists on a continuum
embedded within the larger culture, including our political and economic institutions, everyday practices, and unconscious (Ansley 1997; Ferber 1998; Feagin and Vera 1995; Ezekiel 1995; Feagin and Sykes 1994). Or as Frantz Fanon succinctly put it, "the habit of considering racism as a mental quirk, as a psychological flaw, must be abandoned" (Fanon, 1967: 77).

To accomplish this I've created a collage using fragments from mass media texts and my personal biography along with inscriptions of the ethnographic data gathered during the course of my fieldwork that evoke the system of white supremacy. The following is not a traditional presentation of data, instead, I choose a disjointed and fragmented approach that some might call schizophrenic. My approach is not meant as creative play in "textland" (Smith 1993), nor is it the first ethnography of its kind. Postmodern ethnographers (Mellinger 1997; Ellis and Bochner 1996; Gottschalk 1995; Loseke and Cahill 1995; Denzin 1994, 1993; Richardson 1992, 1991; Shelton 1992) are continually pushing the envelope exploring alternative strategies of writing and presenting "data". The point is not stylistic creativity as an end to itself, but stylistic creativity as a means to other ways of knowing (Richardson 1994)—ways of knowing that do not hinge solely upon reliability checks and casual explanations, but instead emphasize writing strategies that create avenues where the author is present as an active participant and where the reader can insert themselves within the text reflecting on their own standpoint using these experiences to produce richer interpretations.

Further, I do not use this style to confuse the reader, but to evoke the contemporary world of mass mediated messages and images that saturate our everyday world (Gottschalk 1998). Following Mellinger (1997) I use a televisual ethnographic logic that
is emblematic of one of America’s favorite forms of travel "channel surfing". One of my goals is to weave together different voices, invoking different kinds of knowledge to re-create a nightmare-like world where white supremacy parasitically gorges itself on representations of the Other in a never-ending expedition searching for racial purity. In this world, articulations of white supremacy are submerged in a web of associations that are often taken for granted, unspoken, ignored and most importantly not responded to.

When Madonna, one of America’s favorite icons, expressed the following in a *Spin* magazine article "we" hardly blinked an eye:

> Madonna: you know I believe that I have never been treated more disrespectfully as a women than by the black men that I’ve dated. Black men are the most sexist on the planet (quoted in hooks 1997).

In her video *Cultural Criticism and Transformation* bell hooks (1997) responds to these comments by saying:

> But what was sad was not her as an individual repositioning herself but people not responding to the kinds of anti-black statements with outrage and disgust, here’s a women whose white husband was beating her up and yet she doesn’t tell us that any of these black men have engaged in domestic violence and yet black men come to stand for the most sexist people on the planet (hooks 1997).

Following hooks (1997) I use this dialogic style to subvert the silences that often accompany articulations of white supremacy. Thus by producing a multi-dialogic collage of white supremacy, this text seeks to understand groups like the AOI relationally instead of as self-contained worlds.

I want to emphasize I am not arguing that the system of white supremacy is the “only” ideology practiced in the U.S. Rather than viewing white supremacy as “the” dominant

---

25 At times I use mass mediated messages, such as musical lyrics, which reproduce white supremacy (e.g. Guns Roses, Rolling Stones), while in other cases I use mass mediated messages, which are commentaries about the system of white supremacy in the U.S. (e.g. Pearl Jam lyrics, a segment of the movie *Do the Right Thing*).
ideology, I contend white supremacy is "a" dominant ideology. In fact, rather than reproducing the system of white supremacy, some of the mass media texts presented resist the system of white supremacy (e.g. Pearl Jam lyrics, a segment of the movie *Do the Right Thing*).

The statements I've selected from the mass media and my personal biography do not reflect a random sample, but instead are the product of years of attentiveness to racism. Between my fifth and sixth birthday I began to develop a close relationship with another neighborhood boy who was black. He was nine years my senior and I thought of him like a big brother and in some ways a father. After a few years I realized regardless of how much I idolized Ken, some people only saw the color of his skin (one of the kids in our neighborhood wasn't allowed to participate in any the games we frequently played because of Ken's skin color—another memorable display of racism directed towards Ken occurred one day following a basketball game, immediately after Ken left to go home, a friend's cousin, who was visiting from the U.K., began imitating Ken by dancing around wildly, pounding his chest, scratching his head and grunting gorilla-like noises, I looked on in disgust, but remained quiet). However, the racism I witnessed directed towards Ken unleashed a desire in me to analyze my own racism as well as others. For years I have closely monitored the occasions when I associate negative feelings with black people or become fearful in a particular neighborhood that just "coincidentally" is predominantly black.

The purpose of using these statements is not to show how awful other white people are, but to show how white supremacy permeates our everyday world. Because I am using "data" from my personal biography it is important that I say a little more about my
personal background, not as a narcissistic move, but to allow the reader to better contextualize what follows. My early schools years (K through 4) were spent in Citrus Heights, a suburb, of Sacramento, California at Woodside Elementary, a school that was predominantly white and in a neighborhood that was only slightly better integrated. Toward the end of grade four we moved to Vancouver, Washington, which is essentially a suburb of Portland, Oregon (comparable to Henderson and Las Vegas). Because of awkwardly drawn district boundaries I attended Wy' East Junior High (Native American name for Mt. Hood) and Mountain View High, the newest and wealthiest secondary schools in Vancouver. They were predominantly white (but better integrated than the elementary schools I attended) with approximately 10 percent of the student body who were black and another 10 percent who were Asian. Most of the people whose statements appear in this text are from middle and upper-middle-class backgrounds, challenging the notion that racism is primarily a result of economic deprivation or lower levels of education. Many of these individuals are from "healthy", intact families and their parents are "white"-collar professionals including engineers, lawyers, and doctors.

As I write this I find it absolutely necessary for me to honestly admit that regardless of how much self-analysis of my own and others’ racism I engage in, I am not relinquishing (nor do I necessarily wish to) the privileges of whiteness in a society dominated by the ideology of white supremacy. Even as a product of a single-parent family raised in relative poverty (welfare and then my mother’s eventual “pink” collar position in a library earning the minimum wage), the color of my skin has worked in my favor and in ways that I will never be fully aware of. Excluding the countless subtle occasions where my skin color has “paid off,” I know of several specific instances where my whiteness
has resulted in me receiving the "benefit of the doubt" from police officers, educators, and employers. It would be disingenuous for me to say that I wasn't in some ways thankful for these privileges. At the same time I think people like myself who have received these privileges have a responsibility to find a voice that problematizes this system. In a small way this is what my text seeks to do.

Informed by Hall (1997, 1996) it is important to remember that the form(s) racism takes change over time and racism varies greatly depending upon who the targets are (Hall 1997, 1996). As he remarks,

it is often little more than a gestural stance which persuades us to the misleading view that, because racism is everywhere a deeply anti-human and anti-social practice, that therefore it is everywhere the same--either in its forms, its relations to other structures and processes, or its effects (Hall 1996: 435).

As a result, I choose to focus on white supremacist ideology in the U.S. not because the U.S. is the only society where such ideology exists, but because it is likely that white supremacy in the U.S. and racism in Japan are going to be radically different. For the purposes of time and space I have limited my discussion to racism that is directed towards Jews and blacks in the U.S. One key variation marking public discourse in the contemporary U.S. is that anti-Semitism is less open than anti-black prejudice (Sacks 1997). Because of this difference, the collage I created is somewhat unbalanced. In light of the fact that U.S. anti-Semitism flourished in the first half of the century (Sacks 1997), one technique I utilized to counteract this unbalance was to collect several examples from different historical periods in the U.S. that articulate particular constructions of "Jewishness". Using excerpts from popular historical artifacts like Henry Ford's rabidly anti-Semitic writings illustrate the fluidity of racist constructions over time (Hall 1996).
It also reminds us that many of the grotesque caricatures depicting Jews are still with us in muted and tamer forms. While the characterization of "the Jew as the devil" may be fairly isolated today among groups like the AOI, we should not dismiss the "softer" stereotypes that dominate Jewish representations as purely benign. Too many times we are led to believe that there is something about "Jewishness" that makes one prone to neurosis, frugality, and intellectualism. And if survey data, which reveals support for conspiracy theories of Jewish financial control are accurate then these "softer" stereotypes are likely bound together with much more dangerous and explosive stereotypes (Ferber 1998). Further, we should also not ignore the openly anti-Semitic statements made in the past couple of decades by some of America's most powerful citizens:

- Patrick Buchanan defends Nazi war criminals and describes Adolph Hitler as "an individual of great courage, a soldier's soldier" and referred to Holocaust survivors' memories as "group fantasies of martyrdom"
- Ronald Reagan's national security staffers frequently meet with followers of the neo-Nazi Lyndon LaRouche organization
- Former secretary of state James Baker says 'fuck the Jews'
- Supreme Court Justice, Sandra Day O'Connor writes a letter of encouragement to a right-wing group agreeing that the United States is a Christian nation
- President Ronald Reagan honors Nazi S.S. officers by visiting the Bitburg cemetery and comments that the SS soldiers buried there were "victims, just as surely as the victims in the concentration camps" (Reed 1993: 34-35).

As the many faces of racism undergo changes, it is crucial to recognize the many innocuous manifestations of what some refer to as "everyday racism" (Feagin and Sikes 1994), however, my focus is the more explicit manifestations of racism and the

---

26 Ferber cites results of a 1986 Harris Poll, where 27% of Iowa and Nebraska residents agreed that "international Jewish bankers" exploit farmers and almost half of these residents agreed that "Jews should stop complaining about what happened to them in Nazi Germany". Even more startling was the finding that 29% of all Americans agreed with the characterization of Jews as "money grubbing" (Ferber 1998: 149).
recognition that even in such vicious forms these too can become part of our "common sense". Previous researchers have argued that racism among groups like the AOI is explicit and unapologetic, while racism among the public at large tends to be much subtler (Ross 1995). Generally speaking I would agree with this, but I think it would be a mistake to overemphasize this dichotomy. The examples I use from the mass media and my personal biography are often as virulently racist as anything I have ever heard during the course of my fieldwork. Together these articulations question the assumption that open racist sentiments are quickly disappearing in the U.S.

Race is one of the dominant classificatory systems humans use to construct their world. It is also a system that is largely taken for granted, naturalized in a way that it is accepted without question (Hall 1997). To better understand how members of the AOI articulate white supremacy it is important to consider how race is part of their "common sense". Members of the AOI, like the larger culture, take for granted the existence of racial categories. The idea of race as a social construction is beyond the group's "common sense" or "taken for granted terrain" (Gramsci 1971). According to Gramsci common sense represents itself "as the traditional wisdom or truth of the ages" but instead common sense is "historical, not natural or universal..." (Hall 1996: 43). Racial categories then are a form of common sense that serves as a glue binding AOI practices, beliefs and meanings together. When Sam tells a small group of people that someone tried to "Jew him down", there is no need for Sam to explain what he means by "Jew down". Within their "shared universe" the association between Jews and "money grubbing" or cheapness is already well established. In this case the term "Jew down" represents a kind of wisdom, a folk knowledge that is partly unspoken. More recently
critical race theorists like Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1986) have discussed the
way(s) in which the notion of race is normalized and thus taken for granted within the
larger culture:

In US society... a kind of 'racial etiquette' exists, a set of interpretive codes and racial
meanings which operate in the interactions of daily life... Everybody learns some
combination, some version, of the rules of racial classification, and of their own racial
identity, often without conscious teaching or conscious inculcation. Race becomes
'common sense'—a way of comprehending, explaining, and acting in the world (Omi

At one level the AOI appears to adopt two broad classifications of race: white and
nonwhite. When members of the AOI articulate the nonwhite or other, it is always done
in relation to what it means to be white. According to some researchers the
representation of blackness is central, indeed seemingly inescapable to the construction of
a white identity (Dyer 1997; Morrison 1992). Because of this when I discuss how
members of the AOI articulate the other I will simultaneously be discussing how
members articulate whiteness/themselves.

Although there is a strong belief in the existence of racial categories among members
of the AOI, the boundaries of what constitutes whiteness and nonwhiteness is sometimes
uncertain. In her (1998) study of white supremacist publications Ferber also notes that
"even though racial identity is posited as a biological or God-given fact of nature, the
definition of whiteness is in constant flux" (72). And Dyer argues that within the
construction of whiteness, some "nationalities" are privileged beyond others:

Whiteness as a coalition also incites the notion that some whites are whiter than
others, with the Anglo-Saxons, Germans and Scandinavians usually providing the
apex of whiteness under British imperialism, US development and Nazism (Dyer
1997: 19).
One of the first AOI members I met was a second generation Italian-American who, although he was accepted as white, was secretly referred to by some members as a "whopp". During a conversation with Robert I asked him if he ever felt that his Italian heritage prevented his acceptance as a "true" Aryan. He responded by saying:

"well Mussolini made sure we were in [laughter] anyway I'm from northern Italy not southern Italy as far as I'm concerned the people from southern Italy with their dark kinky hair and their black skin, they're not Aryans, they look just like niggers, they got nigger blood in 'em".

Another example illustrating how whiteness is a contested site open to negotiation is the following conversation between two AOI members:

Slater: "I might be willing to marry a Mexican or Indian, but not a black, that's just wrong".

Mindy: "But they're spics, that's disgusting".

Slater: "Wait a second, Mexicans are part Indian and Spanish and Spanish are Europeans, I don't know, I just said I might marry a Mexican"

Slater attempts to establish a "white" lineage for Mexicans by emphasizing their Spanish (European) heritage. Thus it would be a mistake to see whiteness as a permanently fixed category. Instead whiteness is at times fluid and has varied greatly throughout its short existence, as in the case of the Irish in the U.S. (Cleaver 1997; Allen 1994; Roediger 1991). Contrary to 19th century theories of the Irish as a "non-Aryan subspecies" who were often depicted as ape-like, today the Irish are widely accepted as "white" and among many explicitly white supremacist groups Celtic culture is highly esteemed (Cleaver 1997). However, it would also be a mistake to characterize racial identity within the system of white supremacy as "borderless" and entirely fluid. White
supremacy enlivens boundaries and desires to create unambiguous identities of the self and the other which simultaneously constrict this fluidity.

ENACTING the OTHER

This is a story of the sacrificial effects of the dominant ritual practices of those who find a seemingly centered pleasure within the violent and consumptive swells of an advancing whitemale, heterosexist, transnational mode of CAPITAList reproduction. COMMAND CONTROL COMMUNICATIONS. This is also a story of those sentenced to circulate at the peripheries of what's imaginable within the imperial confines of a new and teleelectronic U.S. will to power without end... This is the story of a violent modality of power and knowledge: a fantastic, nihilistic and cybernetically engineered will to will, a third order of CAPITAList epistemology that is as terroristic as it is seductive and as inFORMational as it is forgetful of the sacrifices which constitute its materiality. This is not a pleasing story to tell [my italics] (Pfohl 1992: 5-6).

The following is a collage filled with racist sentiments and statements. The words, while despicable, are nonetheless very "real". What is the purpose of creating such a poisonous text? Doesn't this unwittingly reproduce and maybe even legitimize the oppressive and obnoxious way of thinking that produced these statements in the first place? While I am sympathetic to these concerns, I contend that if we ever intend to dismantle white supremacy we need to interrogate it to derive a better understanding of the complexity, allure and the degree to which white supremacy is entrenched in our culture. The denial of racism is pervasive among those of us who constitute white America and this must be confronted if we are going to develop way(s) of disrupting the system of white supremacy. Hopefully this collage will not only evoke disgust, but the introspective reader will likely hear familiar voices, voices coming from not so distant relatives, friends and co-workers who are "just a little bit racist", politicians we voted for anyway, police officers whose behavior doesn't harm "us"; voices that are better left

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
unheard. In fact, among the statements that follow, some of the most "extreme" do not emanate from members of the overtly white supremacist AOI, but by "decent" law-abiding Americans who are not in any way formally affiliated with the white supremacist movement and who probably find the Klan and skinheads repulsive. Let us begin.

My friend F___ tells it this way: she was a teenager in Little Rock, in 1924. This is the end of the life of a black man F___ never knew. The lynchers tied him to the back of their Ford car and dragged him throughout the city streets, through white and black neighborhoods alike. All of his skin scraped off. F___ noticed the black man had turned white and she wondered whether that's what they had in mind when they preached in church about how we're all the same underneath. Then the lynchers, some of whom she recognized as prominent members of the Little Rock elite and civil-service cadre, built a bonfire at the intersection where the black part of town abutted the white, out where the pavement ends. They threw the man in the fire. As the acrid smoke of human sacrifice filled the neighborhood, some of the lynchers, especially men in training showing off for their girls, pulled pieces of burning flesh and smoldering bone from his body, and walked the streets with their trophies. A high-tech lynching, thanks to that Ford car. State-sanctioned terror. Human sacrifice (Gilmore 1993: 31-32).

I never knew my grandfather, but I'll never forget the story he told my mother when she was just a girl. One day in the small town of Hewitt, Texas where he grew up, the townspeople decided that a little "nigger" boy had stolen some candy from the general store. People gathered together, certain in their judgement, and hungry for justice so they threw that little nigger boy in an open pit of searing flames. Apparently the sweet smell of his charred flesh wasn't enough because the town decided he wasn't the thief after all. So they found themselves another little nigger boy and tossed him in too. But, amazingly this didn't satisfy their animalistic desire or self-righteous anger and so they found themselves a third black boy to burn alive. I've never tried to verify this story, I wonder if it was recorded? My grandfather told my mother this story to emphasize how common this sort of thing was. But that was a long time ago, my mom said it happened around 1916. Things aren't like that anymore.
KING BEATING EXPOSES RACIST PRACTICES AMONG LAPD

March 3, 1991—A speeding car occupied by three black men drives through red lights on California Highway 210. **Fifty-six** crushing blows, several stun-gun blasts, and random savage kicks and pushes later, these bold white officers had succeeded in 'handling' matters (Baker 1993: 42).

*****

JASPER, Texas - Three men with suspected ties to the Ku Klux Klan **chained** a black hitchhiker to the back of a pickup truck and dragged him to his death (Associated Press 6/10/98).

*****

**Officers in Bronx Fire 41 Shots, and an Unarmed Man Is Killed**

An unarmed West African immigrant with no criminal record was killed early yesterday by four New York City police officers who fired 41 shots at him in the doorway of his Bronx apartment building, the police said (New York Times, February 5, 1999).

*****

Or maybe not? Is that just the way things are?

Well they passed a law in '64 to those who ain't got a little more. But it only goes so far. Because a law don't change another's mind...That's just the way it is. Some things will never change. That's just the way it is. But don't you believe them (Bruce Hornsby, 1986).

*****

Changes

Come on come on
That's just the way it is
Things'll never be the same
That's just the way it is
aww yeah

I see no changes all I see is racist faces
misplaced hate makes disgrace to races (2 Pac Shakur, 1999)
Information is no simple thing. Information is a social form of value; a moral and economic value brought into being by the sacrificial rites of western historical enlightenment (Pfohl 1992: 53).

"Hey I just put on some Skrewdriver, are there any Jews out there?" Rich, rhetorically asks, while about 15 of us stand around drinking beer in front of a blazing bonfire, he simultaneously salutes Nazi style toward the car stereo that is pounding guitar and drum sounds in some painfully awkward correspondence with the skinhead singers' guttural voice (fieldnotes 1998).

The AOI participates in an "othering" of people who do not and have not historically fit western society's white/heterosexual/male vision. The AOI copiously uses information to argue and justify an exclusionary desire to resurrect and perpetuate an Aryan myth of supremacy. Rich uses the musical group Skrewdriver to challenge racial others (are there any Jews out there?). Simultaneously, Rich uses white power music as point of articulation [connection] to a historical and racial gesture: the Nazi salute. Thus Nazi Germany and everything this "great Aryan empire" represents is invoked through nonverbal communication and a particular genre of music.

The AOI classifies all people who are "nonwhite" as other, yet there are various distinctions made between each of these groups. For example, blacks are marked for their acts of individual destructive behavior (i.e. crime, drugs, teen pregnancies etc.) while Jews are targeted for their treacherous use of political and economic power.

Despite these distinctions there are also some basic commonalities too. These commonalities are the basis for the five themes that I have inscribed in the following pages. These themes are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive, in fact articulations of the other are intimately intertwined and I could spend an entire text just examining the
representation of the other's body. I choose these themes as preliminary and tentative
categorizations. The themes include: 1) unquestioned boundaries; 2) distinctions; 3) the
body as a site of white supremacist inscriptions; 4) associations between the other and
crime; 5) disrupting utopian possibilities.

Unquestioned Boundaries

Following Hughes (1945), Howard Becker's argues in his classic book *Outsiders*
(1963) that some statuses in our society

"...override most other statuses and have certain priority. Race is one of these.
Membership in the Negro race, as socially defined, will override most other status
considerations in most other situations; the fact that one is a physician or middle-class
will not protect one from being treated as a Negro first and any of these other things
second" (Becker 1963: 33)

These statuses are what Becker refers to as "master statuses". Clearly master statuses
inform much of the AOI's as well as the larger culture's articulation of race. For example,
Mindy's comment about Jerry Seinfeld illustrates this point: "Jerry Seinfeld, he's the
funniest Jew on T.V.". Her comment indicates that above all else Jerry is Jewish. In fact,
regardless of how funny or appealing Seinfeld is, he doesn't exist beyond his Jewishness.
Further, Mindy is implying that Seinfeld is the funniest of the many Jews who are on
Television, which articulates the belief that Jews through over-representation control
Hollywood. I found the following on one of the many white supremacist websites that an
Internet explorer can currently discover while surfing the "information super highway".

The White Pride Network

[www.whitepride-net](http://www.whitepride-net)
white pride worldwide
Although this site may not be very significant in the grand scheme of the online universe, I am interested in how the white pride network works to articulate the ideology of white supremacy. I contend that the "white pride network" operates by inverting the logic of Becker's (1963) master status. In this case the overriding status is membership in the white race, which rather than obscuring or overriding subordinate statuses like doctor is instead a signifier for "respected" statuses such as middle-class, educated, professional as well as particular qualities such as hard work, intelligence, trustworthiness. Thus as Hall (1996) says race is a "floating signifier" an artifact of discursive constructions that "works like language" (Hall 1996). Within the system of white supremacy race is a code that "stands for" or symbolizes characteristics that help us explain human difference (Hall 1996). The white pride network uses every opportunity and makes every effort to articulate the significance of race. Even "www." (a form of computer language) is appropriated and transformed, and a seemingly innocuous form of computer language is used to signify race. Interestingly, with the subversion of "www." race becomes the signified and "www" becomes the "floating signifier" with the hope of reproducing an international yet fixed white identity--"white pride worldwide" (also notice that by using "www" as a signifier for white racial identity there is an unspoken association to the signifier 'KKK', which stands for the Ku Klux Klan).

******

Jew Watch

- Keeping a Close Watch on Jewish Communities & Organizations
- Worldwide Jew Watch is a Not-For-Profit Library for private study, scholarship, or research.
- Watch JEWISH NEWS - Jews JDL ADL JWC Bronfman Wiesenthal Holocaust Auschwitz Anti-Nazi Zionism Israel Mossad
In contrast to the white pride network, "Jew Watch" is devoted to reifying the category of Jewishness. Jews exists and because they exist they need to be monitored. This site reeks of a magically wild paranoia that resembles the McCarthyite rhetoric of the 1950s promoting fears of Communists hiding under American beds. Jew Watch implies that the "Jew" is everywhere, in this case the "Jew" is definitely the signifier. Yet, what is interesting is the lack of specificity as to what Jews signify. Jew Watch tells us that they are "keeping a close watch on Jewish..." and encourages us to "Watch JEWISH NEWS" but what are we looking for? Jew Watch signifies that Jews are an(other) and there is an assumption that we all know what this means. The first page of the website Jew Watch doesn't tell us how Jews are different, however, beyond this first page is a list containing dozens of files that concretely "educate" us as to who the Jews are and what the Jews do. A viewer has the opportunity to read everything from Henry Ford's entire harangue comprised in the multiple volumes of *The International Jews* to some of the most recent "scientific" evidence proving that the Holocaust was indeed a "hoax".

The following examples work at the level of the Jew Watch's first page, they too lack specificity except by indicating the other is out there. In these instances race, if nothing else, is used to signify impenetrable and impassable boundaries.

*****

"My friends hate going to Vegas with me 'cause I love driving down in North Las Vegas with my stereo cranked, playing Skrewdriver or some other white power band and just piss off the niggers" (AOI member).

*****

White House aides in the Reagan administration are accused of referring to Martin Luther King Jr. as 'Martin Lucifer Coon' says former cabinet member Terrell Bell (Reed 1993: 23).
"I don't get these militias that allow niggers in, that guy J.J. Johnson who heads a militia, what the fuck. That's not right, those aren't real militias" (AOI member)

Danny: "Did you know Marilyn Manson was Paul from the Wonder Years?". Mindy: "You mean the Jew, Paul you mean the guy with the big nose and glasses, you mean the Jew?" (AOI member).

Me: "How did you do last night [in the wrestling meet]?" Darren: "I lost [pause] I lost to a nigger. I let a nigger beat me" (high school classmate, 1987)

"Jerry Seinfeld is one of the funniest Jews on T.V." (AOI member)

In these examples the other's status as the other clearly overrides everything else. "Nonwhite" advocates of the militia movement, like J.J. Johnson, who share many the AOI's concerns about the government, are still "niggers" who don't belong. The focus is not necessarily the other's behavior or even specific characteristics, but reproducing a particular logic where the other is clearly distinguishable (although we don't how) and apparently not "fit" to coexist with white people. Most of these comments are marked by a profound lack of reflection. They seem to be a product of an ideological system that as Hall (1996) says "think us" (Hall 1996: 30). Paul from the Wonder Years is "the Jew", Dr. King is a "coon" and "niggers in North Las Vegas hate Skrewdriver". These examples reflect how Becker's master status "works" within an ideological system to position subjects. Critical to this "positioning" is the creation and maintenance of boundaries separating "us" from those who are not "us" (others). The master status
structures the parameters of how a subject is "seen". Further, the master status functions as an easily accessible and seemingly tangible "piece" of "inFORMATION" (Pfohl 1992) for individuals to grasp in our attempt to understand human difference within a given ideological system (Hall 1997).

Through the lens of white supremacy, the seemingly mundane act of watching the _Wonder Years_ positions Mindy as an Aryan spectator and Paul, a young man who possesses certain stereotypical Jewish characteristics (big nose, thick dark glasses and intellectualism) as "the Jew". The ideological system of white supremacy has already arranged or "spoken" Paul's position, yet Mindy's articulation of Paul as "the Jew" allows her to "utter ideological truths as if [she] were [the] authentic author[s]" (Larrain 1996: 49). Within the system of white supremacy the boundaries which separate the other are part of a "distinctive set or chain of meanings" (Larrain 1996: 49). The beliefs (e.g. Jews are weak, blacks are lazy) about the other are preceded by positions within an ideological system that fix the categories of "us" and "them" (master statuses are markings of these positions), making demonization possible.

But these examples also "work" at another level. Like a sexy television commercial, these statements are suggestive. Darren says, "I let a nigger beat me". The "nigger" has no name, no school, he exists only as an(other). Darren's unhappiness is less about losing than losing to a "nigger". Darren's statement reveals that by losing to a "nigger" not only did he let himself down, he let his race down. Suddenly, a high school wrestling match is transformed into an inter-racial struggle. The match becomes symbolic of the national struggle between "us" and "them"—where white women are being attacked in the streets by black male savages and where white men are increasingly loosing jobs to unqualified
minorities thanks to government programs like "affirmative blacktion" that have been instigated by troublemakers like Dr. King (Coon).

Distinctions

You need to be careful about generalizing, some white people are bad and some black people are good, don't get me wrong there's niggers but there are some good black people. We just don't mix well together that's why I started turning away from the Mormon Church when they started letting blacks become elders (AOI member).

Mookie [Spike Lee]: Peno, who's your favorite basketball player?

Peno [John Turturro]: Magic Johnson.

Mookie: who's your favorite movie star?

Peno: Eddie Murphy

Mookie: who's your favorite rock star?

Peno: [pause]

Mookie: Prince, you're a Prince freak

Pino: Boss, Bruce

Mookie: Prince

Pino: Bruuuce

Mookie: Pino all you ever talk about is nigger this and nigger that and all your favorite people are so-called niggers.

Pino: it's different, Magic, Eddie, Prince are not niggers, I mean they're not black, I mean, let me explain myself they're not really black, I mean they're black, but they're not really, they're more than black, it's different

Mookie: it's different?

Pino: yah, it's different, that's the way I feel

(Do the Right Thing, 1989).
Johnny: the nigger, nigger stuff that is such a waste, it's not even the right direction that's my opinion, but as far as the fight against the Jews and that goes yah, that's the truth, and not even every single one either, I mean, yah, I agree with Aryan Nations about seedline [the theory that Jews are the literal descendents of Satan] and all that

Me: so do you think Jews are the literal descendents of Satan?

Johnny: [sigh-hesitation] well, yah, just by how things have gone I really do think that, just by what they've done, their actions, even if there was no bible at all or anything like that, just look at their very actions, what they got going for them

Me: Now you told me one time that in Las Vegas that you were good friends with a guy who was a member of the Israeli Airforce, so if a certain people are the literal descendents of Satan, are certain individuals, can they be considered good people, I mean how does that work?

Johnny: Well, it's gotta be [laughter], it's gotta be that way, that's what I mean not every single, you can't blanket every person, but I know my friend he was kind of a wicked person [laughter], real greedy, real selfish, real self-centered, real murderous, talked about mowing down sand niggers, I couldn't be that way

Me: Yah, o.k. not a good example [laughter]

Johnny: [stops laughing] I couldn't mow down Jews, I couldn't just kill people like that, then you hear people in the movement, 'ah just put 'em all in a meat grinder' where do people come off like that, how do people think like that (AOI member).

"Yah, he's pretty cool for a nigger" remarks Lance, a high school football teammate, as we watch a "highlight" film with an interview of the former All-Pro defensive back Ronnie Lott (1989).

Me: "Now what would you do if a black guy with a pick up and a gun rack, a Confederate flag, you know a guy that wanted to just get away from the federal government, what would you do if he was going to buy some property over here?".

Sam: "Well, if such a guy existed then I guess it would be o.k." (AOI member).
"My dad has always said there's niggers and then there's black people" (friend 1985).

Me: O.K. best case scenario we're all living separately. What about if Jews are willing to live separately too?

Dave: Oh, you're talking about the extermination plan—I don't know—if they could live like that. We could try and give them some land somewhere put on the corner of the globe somewhere, but the Jews have always needed to sponge on other people, they've never prospered on their own, they can't work the land (AOI member)

Me: "when you say people should be judged by their works, what about a Jewish person who does good things for people and you know is anti-Israel?".

Dave: good question—there is that guy who rejects the Jewish religion, [notice that Dave immediately interprets my comment regarding anti-Israeli sentiments to mean anti-Judaism] I forget his name and there's another Jewish guy who's been on the talk shows explaining the lies regarding the Holocaust but uh you know some people with good seeds do bad and some people with bad seeds do good, but I don't know Jews just have to control everything, there's just something about them. It's like with a parasite; it can't live without sponging off some other life form.

These articulations respond to a question that white supremacy constantly entertains: is there anything redeemable about the other?. The logic of white supremacy posits that the other is inherently inferior. Although there are disagreements as to whether the cause of this inferiority is biological or biblically ordained (often a combination of the two), nonetheless inferiority is assumed in each scenario.

You can hear in these comments a kind of distorted reflection or a reflection of distortion that white supremacy produces. Compared to the strands of white supremacist discourse where the other is unquestionably and without exception evil, destructive, harmful, and universally in need of extermination, these statements construct a dualistic
categorization of the other. According to this logic there are blacks and there are "niggers". Although Johnny says Jews are the spawn of Satan, he qualifies this: "not every single one either...you can't blanket every person". Sam contends that "there are good blacks", Pino thinks his favorite blacks are "more than black" and Lance thinks Ronnie Lott is "pretty cool for a nigger". Lott's athletic ability coupled with an unassuming demeanor that isn't too flashy like all those other "cocky niggers" makes him acceptable, but like the examples in the previous theme doesn't override his master status as "nigger".

While creating binary oppositional categories of the other using behavior to distinguish between the good and bad is already indicative of a white supremacist ideology, ultimately this dualistic system of categorization is unable to fulfill the promises of evaluation that it implies. Theoretically if a black or Jewish person "behave" in way(s) deemed permissible then that particular black or Jewish person should be accepted. However, as soon as many of these statements are uttered it is clear that this is not possible. For example, initially Sam says, "there are good blacks", but within a few minutes he is also claiming that whites and blacks should not mix together. Further, on another occasion I asked Sam the following hypothetical question:

Me: "Now what would you do if a black guy with a pick up and a gun rack, a Confederate flag, you know a guy that wanted to just get away from the federal government, what would you do if he was going to buy some property over here?"

Sam: "Well, if such a guy existed then I guess it would be o.k."

Sam's response to my hypothetical question reveals that he is unable to suspend his belief about the fundamental differences between "the races" and the inferiority of those categorized as the other. And, while Johnny states that it is possible for individual Jews
to be considered "good people", his reasoning for thinking Jews are the literal descendents of Satan is because "just how things have gone...just look at their very actions, what they got going for them". Although this isn't the "bible says it's so, so it must be true" argument some people make, it is still a "closed" system of thinking where Jews are unable to exist except as the children of Satan. Johnny tells us to look at "how things have gone..." a completely ambiguous reference, which is used to concretely refer to the "evil of Jewry". Further, because of Jewish actions they must be the children of Satan, and the proof is "what they have going for them".

While there is a sense of uncertainty about categorizing the other, this is overridden by a strong disbelief or skepticism about the other ever behaving in ways contrary to the claims of white supremacy. Jews are inherently unable to work, which partly explains their uncontrollable desire to "sponge" off hard-working people, while blacks because of an underdeveloped intellectual, spiritual, and moral capacity are unfit to live among "us". Interestingly in each case blacks and Jews take advantage of "white guilt" (slavery and the Holocaust) to drain the resources of white civilization. As Dave once said, "we just keep building and then give it all away until one day they're going to have everything...".

Ultimately, those who feel uncomfortable about just "writing off" entire groups of people allow themselves to ponder the possibility of accepting certain members of those groups, but of course there aren't any others who "qualify". Some people who are marked as other (e.g. Ronnie Lott) while "pretty cool" are nonetheless still (an)other ("...cool for a nigger") because regardless of what they do, they will always contain the potential to behave like a "nigger". This "logic" inverts the idea of there being "niggers and black people". Lance seems to be saying there are "niggers and then there are
niggers". Peno's remarks exemplify the idea of others "transcending" their race. They are held in esteem because they "aren't really black".

This section points to "spaces" where ideology and reality don't quite "fit". Ideological systems like white supremacy represent way(s) of understanding the world, but are never completely totalistic. Johnny knows Jews are the children of Satan, but he also knows he' met Jews he likes. Clearly this presents a problem for the unity of an ideological system. Contradictions such as this demand some form of "ideological work" (Berger 1981) to develop a resolution, however seemingly unsatisfying. The resolutions in many of the examples (Johnny's, Pino's, Lance's, and Sam's) take the form of what Hall (1996) refers to as "negotiated readings" where a person produces a locally situated reading that fits into the dominant ideology. The dominant understanding within Christian Identity is Jews are the literal descendents of Satan which Johnny accepts, but given his local experiences with some Jews he produces a situated reading: "yes, but not every single one, it must be possible for some Jews to be good people".

An(Other's) Body

In the next section the other's body becomes a lens to understand and contextualize his/her "deviance" and potential threat while simultaneously valorizing the white body for its heroism and normalcy27.

The 'paper tiger' hero, James Bond, offering the whites a triumphant image of themselves, is saying what many whites want desperately to hear affirmed: I am still the White Man, lord of the land, licensed to kill, and the world is still an

27 There is a vast literature examining the other's body, especially representations of the black body (Ferber 1998; Mellinger and Beaulieu 1997; Gooding-Williams 1993; Mellinger 1992; Morrison 1992; Cleaver 1970; Kovel 1970; Fanon 1967; Kubie 1937). Throughout U.S. history (and for that matter "western" history) the black body has been pivotal as a site for expressing fears, disgust, and fantasies (Mellinger and Beaulieu 1997; Mellinger 1992).
empire at my feet. James Bond feeds on that secret little anxiety, the psychological backlash, felt in some degree by most whites alive (Cleaver 1970: 82).

*****

"How did I become the enemy here?" (Falling Down, 1993).

*****

"They may take our life, but they can't take our freedom" (Braveheart, 1995).

*****

If the movie Falling Down (starring Michael Douglas) spoke to a growing pessimism, articulating the fear that white masculinity is under attack and an uncertainty in the future of white domination (Dyer 1997), then Braveheart (starring Mel Gibson) was parasitic on a yearning for a return to unquestioned white reign, encouraging whites to immerse themselves in a glorious past filled with an uncompromising willingness to struggle for the truth (hooks 199?).

*****

Blood sin and desecration of the race are the original sin in this world and the end of humanity which surrenders to it... Thus I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew I am fighting for the work of the Lord (Adolph Hitler, Mein Kampf, 1923).

*****

"I am one of the chosen ones, this is the chosen race, look at this earth and what's been created upon it, this is the chosen race, it is me, my blood, my people" (AOI member).

*****

He won the lottery when he was born
Took his mothers white breast to his tongue
Trained like dogs, color and smell
Walks by me to get to him
Police man

He won the lottery by being born
Big hand slapped a white male 'merican
Do no wrong, so clean cut...
Dirty his hands, it comes right off
Police man
Police stopped my brother again
Police man

Jesus greets me... looks just like me...
Do no wrong, so clean cut
Dirty his hands, it comes right off
Police man
Police stopped my brother again
Police man
Police stopped my brother again
Police man

All my pieces set me free... human devices set me free...
All my pieces set me free...
Human devices set me free...(Pearl Jam, Y.M.A.).

*****

We used to team up with the long hairs [skinheads without shaved heads] and take on the punkers, it was like Road Warrior [the movie], we'd show up in brown shirts, just Blitzkrieg the place, half the crowd is like shouting 'White Power! White Power!' we're taking over like miniature Hitlers, we were all yelling, 'and this is the way' (Johnny, AOI member).

*****

Suddenly through a magical resurrection of Aryan power and pride, brown shirts and memories of the purest of all Aryans are used as a means for a new generation of warriors to reassert Aryans to their rightful position. Johnny's use of the term Blitzkrieg and his reference to the movie the Road Warrior is telling. Motion is everywhere, the skinheads have successfully battled for control, while a sea of white bodies are awakened at the sheer sight of their strong-arm tactics, spontaneously erupting in calls for white power and saluting the promise of solidarity and an end to the seeming decline of white privilege. In Johnny's narrative usurping the punks as leaders of an angry youth is a
metaphor for the nation at large. The ultimate Blitzkrieg is an "Aryan National Front" that eliminates the Jewish-led communists from their powerful positions as national leaders.

In each of the above examples the focus is a threatened, but ever vigil, white body. A white body that exemplifies control and order, defending humanity from the racial others who like untamed savages (blacks) or cunning parasites (Jews) seek to destroy and dethrone the engineers of world civilization. In the following, the focus shifts to the other's body, a pollutant, which bears absolutely no resemblance to the pure white body (Ferber 1998; Mellinger and Beaulieu 1997). These examples illustrate that the body is more than flesh and skin, but is closely associated with metaphysical notions of "essence" or soul as well as cultural characteristics and traits.

Joel Kovel argues that a core experience among racists is "a sense of disgust about the body of the black person based upon a primitive fantasy: that it contains an essence--dirt--that smells and may rub off onto the body of the racist" (Kovel 1970: 84).

blacks just don't have the same essence as whites, I know they don't, that's why we can't mix with them, whites lose their specialness when we mix with that black blood (AOI member).

In a dairy kept by President Nixon's chief of staff, H.R. Haldeman, he details Nixon's negative view of blacks.

President emphasized that you have to face that the whole [welfare] problem is really the blacks. The key is to devise a system that recognizes this, while not appearing to. Problem with overall welfare plan is that it forces poor whites into the same position as blacks. Pointed out that there has never in history been an adequate black nation, and they are the only race of which this is true. Says Africa is hopeless (Nightline, May 16, 1994 quoted in Feagin and Vera 1995: 113-114).
The body is a complex structure... The functions of its different parts and their relation afford a source of symbols. We cannot possibly interpret rituals... unless we are prepared to see the powers and dangers credited to social structure reproduced in small on the human body (Douglas 1980 [1966]: 115).

Blacks are dirty. And just some of their habits and things... They're so different than whites. It's kind of a tough question. I don't know. It's just something that you see and something that you're taught you don't do... You [as a young white girl] don't bring home black boys" (interviewee quoted in Feagin and Vera 1995: 149).

While watching television, a highlight of a basketball game flashes across the screen provoking Robert to comment, "look at those big gorillas, all sweaty, always stinking like shit [laughter]" (AOI member).

Man you ain't gotta
Worry 'bout a thing
'Bout your daughter
Nah she ain't my type
(But supposin' she said she loved me)
Are you afraid of the mix of Black and White
We're livin' in a land where
The law say the mixing of race
Makes the blood impure
She's a woman I'm a man
But by the look on your face
See ya can't stand it
(Public Enemy, Fear of a Black Planet, 1990)

well blacks in America, laziness is just part of their culture here... Not necessarily in other parts of the world, but in America that's just part of their culture (relative, 1997).

In [Israeli] banks and government offices, it is not uncommon for employees to eat and smoke cigarettes while serving their customers. Waiters at restaurants are often brusque and short-tempered. At one Jerusalem restaurant, the waiters are so surly that
it has become fashionable to eat there just so customers can do battle with the staff (*the True Israelite*, n.d.).

******

The other morning I was looking out the front window and I saw James walking out to pick up his Sunday paper and he was wearing boxer shorts and he was all dancing around like some goddamn jungle-bunny,[laughter] (friend, 1980).

******

Hollman, Jewish star of the Celtics, is a marvelous player. He has always reminded me of Benny Leonard. Both are of the same alertness and general make-up. Jewish players seem to take naturally to the game. Perhaps this is because the Jew is a natural gambler and will take chances" (Ed Sullivan, 1933 quoted in Chideya 1995: 72).

******

The slave owner would breed his big black with his big woman so that he could have a big black kid... The black is a better athlete to begin with because he's been bred to be that way because of his thigh size and his big size. Blacks can jump higher and run faster... If blacks take over coaching like everybody wants them to, there's not going to be anything left for white people (Jimmy 'the Greek' Snyder, CBS Sports analyst in a 1988 interview, quoted in Chideya 1995: 154).

******

"You run pretty fast, you must have some nigger in ya" (college football coach at a University in Montana, 1991)

******

"Blacks are better at some things, look at long jumping and other sports, they just don't have the mental capacity that whites do” (AOI member).

******

"I've only had sex with one real black man". Jessica explained that for her to consider a man "really" black his penis needed to be of a certain size (friend, 1992).

******

Two of the Negro's most prominent characteristics are the utter lack of chastity and complete ignorance of veracity. The Negro's sexual laxity, considered so immoral or even criminal in the white man's civilization, may have been all but a virtue in the habitat of his origin. There, nature developed in him intense sexual passions to offset

******

"Black girls just wanna get fucked all night
I just don't have that much jam" (Rolling Stones, Some Girls).

******

"Jews are weak that's their problem and that's why they always want to control everything" (AOI member).

Hall (1997) contends that "the body is a text and we all read it" (Hall 1997). The body is used as a marker, the ultimate signifier of race as well as qualities, characteristics etc. (Hall 1997). Jessica's statement illustrates this point: "I've only had sex with one real black man", (she then explains that for a man to be really black his penis needs to be of a certain size). The black body is envisioned as being fully equipped with a large penis among other things and when this fantasy is not met the previously black body is quickly transformed into something not really black. Another example where the body is clearly "read" as a signifier for race is an AOI member who says, "Jews are weak that's why they have to control everything". Tim is articulating the white supremacist vision of a small, effeminate, "four-eyed", "twerpy" intellectual, Jewish male body whose hands are free of calluses and is busy figuring how to "screw people in the rear" both literally and figuratively (Ferber 1998). Hall (1997) says that it is much easier to use the black body than the Jewish body as a signifier for race (for the obvious reason of skin tone), but for those obsessed with Jewish control, the "Jew body" becomes pivotal to articulating the tendencies of the "Jew-devil".

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
At the same time qualities, characteristics etc. are used to signify particular racial bodies. For instance, the football coach who said, "You run pretty fast, you must have some nigger in ya" is using a physical attribute (speed) to signify a particular racial category (black or as he put it "nigger"). If the body is the medium that, at least in this context, gives speed meaning then that meaning is understood through racialized cultural images of long sleek black bodies with bulging buttocks and strong thighs glistening with sweat and smoothly yet powerfully moving towards a finish line, basketball hoop, or end-zone (Hoberman 1997).

Although many of these examples do not specifically name the other's body, the body is nevertheless articulated through a "chain of meanings" (Larrain 1996: 49). The body is evoked through these associations, which are used to interweave moral, physical, characterological, and aesthetic evaluations. Johnny claims that "blacks just don't have the same essence as whites..." because of their "...black blood". The black body is a carrier of blood (symbolic of much more than fluid pumping through our veins) that renders blacks as less than human and whites as somehow more than human—"white specialness". But Johnny's use of blood as an explanatory agent of racial difference is emblematic of a heritage of racial ideology where the black body is associated with disease, defecation, dirtiness, smelliness among other uncomplimentary characteristics (Ferber 1998; Mellinger and Beaulieu 1997; Kovel 1970). Further Johnny's claim leaves the black body as incapable of existing as sophisticated spiritual and moral beings, in contrast to the white body, which is the epitome of moral and spiritual development.
Crime: the Other's best friend

In this section the other becomes a medium for the discussion of crime.

In Fanon's recitation of the racist interpellation, the black body is circumscribed as dangerous, prior to any gesture, any raising of the hand, and the infantilized white reader is positioned in the scene as one who is helpless in relation to that black body... The fear is that some physical distance will be crossed, and the virgin sanctity of whiteness will be endangered by that proximity. The police are thus structurally placed to protect whiteness, their own violence cannot be read as violence; because the black male body... is the site and source of danger, a threat, the police effort to subdue his body, even if in advance, is justified regardless of the circumstance (Butler 1993: 18).

*****

THE JUICE IS LOOSE

OJ Simpson is free and looking for a date, but be careful not to upset him... temper, temper! Any White women considering dating a nigger ought to think about the fate of Nicole Simpson. Just like back in Africa, a great big jungle bunny dropping out of a tree to massacre its victim in a fit of rage (True Israelite, October 14, 1995)

*****

If you look, for example, at male monkeys, especially in the wild, roughly half of them survive to adulthood. The other half die by violence. That is the natural way of it for males, to knock each other off, and, in fact, there are some interesting evolutionary implications of that because the same hyper-aggressive monkeys who kill each other are also hyper-sexual, so they copulate more... Maybe it isn't just the careless use of the word when people call certain areas of certain cities 'jungles'... (Dr. Fredrick K. Goodwin, Director, Alcohol Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA), referring to a proposed program that would have identified up to 100,000 inner-city children as potentially violent and administered powerful psychoactive drugs to combat their projected problems, quoted in Chideya 1995: 192).

*****

In Susan Brownmiller's [classic?] book Against Our Will she writes: "The mythified specter of the black man as rapist, to which the black man in the name of his manhood now contributes poses a threat to all women, black or white" (Brownmiller 1975: 194).
******

It offers a real and complete instance of a government within a government in the midst of America's largest and politically most powerful city, and it also constitutes the machine through which pro-Jewish and anti-Gentile propaganda is operated and Jewish pressure brought to bear against certain American ideas. That is to say, the Jewish government of New York constitutes the essential part of the Jewish Government of the United States (Henry Ford, The International Jew, 1921).

******

Did you guys hear about the man that got shot at Upfront?. Some nig—[Shelly interrupts herself] some black guy just walked up from behind and shot him in the head. God, black people are always fucking things up for everyone (friend, 1993).

******

Me: Some people claim that the problems that we have financially in terms of a small number of people controlling most of the wealth, some people claim that those people are basically Jews. Do you think this is accurate?"

Rodney: Sure. Sure. In 1913 they took over our money system and they've been robbing us blind ever since...and they're killing Africa. They developed AIDS.

Me: when you said 'they', they are killing?

Rodney: Yeah. The New World Order is killing.

Me: Do you think the New World Order is exclusively or primarily controlled by Jews?

Rodney: By those who Jesus says 'you call yourselves Jews and you are not Jews'...They are the production of the devil. They have no soul. They're sadistic. They enjoy torturing animals and people. And they've done it all through time (AOI member).

******

Once you have nonwhites living in the neighborhood there's crime, any neighborhoods without nonwhites there's no problems. Around here we wave at each other, once nonwhites come in they start throwing gang signs (AOI member)
And then there's a Khazar [Jews] group that want to keep encroaching in our lives and take our money away from us, you know. They're the bankers and everyone else...(AOI member).

"The vast majority of the people blacks kill are not other blacks"(William Buckley 1993: 11).

Race Relations - USA
There goes the neighborhood
Neighborhood by neighborhood, as the non-whites move in, the whites take flight. This familiar scenario changes safe communities into jungles...Most whites are far too defensive to discuss race. The fear of being called a 'racist' and the guilt that has been instilled into their minds, keeps many whites from addressing issues and problems that must be solved. In general, whites are not against blacks, they are against being assaulted, mugged, raped, and so forth. These things just happen to occur when a neighborhood turns black. Not to say that all blacks are criminals or that no white people ever commit these crimes, but overall, race is a factor (the True Israelite, 1997).

Waiting at the courthouse to schedule a trial date for a drug charge, Dave notices a black man being transported by the police in handcuffs: "How do you like them chains nigger?. You better get used to 'em" (AOI member) [Dave fails to see the irony in his comment, both he and the black man have been arrested and are awaiting trial].

I was at this party last weekend and you know that black guy Roy?. He tried stealing some shit and so I told him to get the fuck out and he backed off. You know it's that kind of shit that makes people hate blacks, just acting like a nigger (AOI member)

"When Stan went to pay me, he only wanted to give me 160.00, that fucker tried to Jew me down" (AOI member).
The following are segments of computer printouts between LAPD dispatchers and patrol officers:

Monkeys in the trees, monkeys in the trees, hi-ho the dario, monkeys in the trees...where you be? In the projects. Roger...good hunting...I would just beat and release that fat slob in the suit named Homey Claus...hohoho, mofo (Christopher Commission, Appendix, quoted in Novick 1995: 120-126).

"these guys are too white to be gang bangers" (police officers in Vancouver, Washington, 1991).

The other is unimaginable without recognizing his/her criminal propensities. Blacks are overwhelmingly associated with violent street crime, while Jews are envisioned as agents of insidious acts of covert financial and political crime. Through a web of spoken and unspoken connections criminal behavior is as natural for the other as goodness is for white people. Certainly the body continues to figure prominently in these articulations, as "big black bucks" like Rodney King pose a threat to the collective security of white America. But, these examples represent very specific associations of who the other is and what the other is capable of doing. Implicitly these statements become explanations of why it is necessary to exclude the other. Dave snickers while rhetorically asking, "how do you like them chains nigger?" and then responds, "you better get used to 'em". His comment conjures images of blacks and chains from another period in U.S. history (he specifically uses the term chains instead of handcuffs). The plantation system is transformed into the contemporary prison system, in fact, several states have recently begun using the "old chain-gang"--another "tool" available to the "prison-industrial
complex" or what Pfohl (1992) might refer to as another tentacle in the far-reaching
system of U.S. state-sponsored terrorism (Pfohl 1992).28

Ironically prisons themselves are becoming a source of cheap labor that attracts
corporate capitalism... This 'New American worker' will be drawn from the ranks of a
racialized population whose historical super exploitation—from the era of slavery to
the present—has been legitimized by racism (Davis 1998: 68).

Dave's response, "you better get used to 'em" illustrates a not so uncommon view among
many white Americans regarding the appropriate way to control the future of black
males. Destined for a life of crime, better to lock 'em up and threw away the key, get 'em
while the animals are young before they really hurt one of us. The issue is control, an out
of control other in need of a disciplined white male body or else chaos. Similarly, Susan
Fraiman argues that:

the Central Park jogger case stands for one paradigm of American racism, available
during slavery but crystallized in the period following Reconstruction and still
influential today, in which white men's control of Black men is mediated by the
always-about-to-be-violated bodies of white women (Fraiman 1994: 71).

COMMAND. CONTROL. COMMUNICATION.
Technologically freed from imaginary and material repressions that have long haunted
the white CAPITAList and straight-minded memories of powerful modern men,
ultramodern male power may today be advancing into unpredictable regions of
psychic and bodily control over the destinies of others. Judge for yourself the relation
between such power relations and the contemporary ascendance of white (k)nighted
and techno-fascist modalities of terroristic social control (Pfohl 1992: 17).

Excluding the Other: A Utopian Dream?

Big wheels keep on turning,
carry me home to see my kin
singing songs about the southland
(Sweet Home Alabama, Lynyrd Skynyrd).

28 See also Amnesty International's recent report documenting the dispensing of the death penalty and the
general conditions in prisons in the U.S. In both cases the reports found numerous human rights violations
that among other things also involve racial disparities (Amnesty International 1998).
"Rockabilly has just enough twang to keep the niggers away, there's just something about twang, it's a nigger repellant" (AOI member).

1987, Canton, Ohio: Jewish police officer Steve Silver finds a poster of Adolph Hitler stuck on the wall of the locker room in the police department (Novick 1995: 81).

The AOI talks of hanging a Nazi banner from the Great White Throne in Zion National Park: "We want to reclaim it [Zion] for the true people of Israel" (AOI member).

"I can't even go to the park in Hurricane without hearing nigger music, I wish they'd turn that crap down, I find that rather offensive" (AOI member)

Guess I needed sometime to get away
I needed some piece of mind
Some piece of mind that'll stay
So I thumbed it down to sixth and L.A.
Maybe a Greyhound could be my way
Police and niggers, that's right
Get out of my way
Don't need to buy none of your gold chains today
(Guns and Roses, One in a Million).

"The arts you know—they're Jews, they're left-wing—in other words, stay away" (Richard Nixon commenting to his daughters quoted in Feagin and Vera 1995: 113).

One black student who was present at the fight reported hearing comments such as, 'We're sick of these niggers. We're going to get them.' When he entered the dorm during the fight, he said white female students grabbed him, saying, 'Nigger, you better not touch my boyfriend.' The same student also commented: 'Many students you thought were your friends, roommates, teammates [were] calling you all types of names—coon, spearchucker, nigger... Were the first three years a façade, a fake, and
finally everybody showed how they really felt?" (black student commenting on their experience during a racial conflict at the predominantly white Olivet College in Michigan quoted in Feagin and Vera 1995: 34-35).

"Have a white Christmas and a Jew-free New Year" (Christmas card from a Ku Klux Klan member sent to a member of the AOI).
"If only" (AOI member's response to the Christmas card after reading it).

"I'd like to go into south central [Los Angeles] and just start wiping all the niggers out" (acquaintance, 1992)

"We don't need no niggers around here" (AOI member singing the lyrics of the "pro-Confederate" Johnny Rebel band)

"Yah, I use to live in Charlotte and I knew a lot of blacks out there, I went to school with mostly blacks. Living here in Cane Beds, it's like heaven and hell" (AOI member)

During his 1990 U.S. Senate campaign Jessie Helms used the following television advertisement implying that his Democratic opponent Harvey Gantt, who was black, favored racial quotas. The ad showed white hands holding a job rejection letter while a commentator said:

"You needed that job and you were the best qualified. But they had to give it to a minority because of a racial quota. Is that really fair?" (Feagin and Vera 1995: 113).

I mean when you take a test for the post office in this country right now and you're white, you're very likely to have your test score dropped fifteen or twenty points and if you are a minority you are liable to have it raised fifteen or twenty points (David Duke quoted in Chideya 1995:234).
******

ME: "Have you ever been to the water slide park on the 'strip'?".
Dave: "No," "I just can't imagine swimming in the same water with that many
niggers" (AOI member).

******

I wonder how many of us who are constituted and who constitute themselves as white
at some level wish they could wake up one morning and "nonwhites" were suddenly
gone, that is vanished—with any death camps, without a struggle, without any crying
babies—I wonder if for most white people if this is a dream deferred?

The other is an impediment to happiness. No speaka English, Christ-killing, welfare
taking, 40 ounce drinking, jive talking, money grubbing, disrespecting. The white-man
works hard, 40 hours a week, tax paying, law-abiding, shower taking. The other is like a
pollutant, can YOU imagine swimming in the same water with that many niggers?.

Dave's response is to the collective question of whether the white population is willing to
resist the entrenched system of white supremacy. The response across the country is
rather gloomy: educational institutions remain largely segregated and residential
integration is virtually nonexistent (Hacker 1995). Gated communities are flourishing as
the affluent erect walls to maintain order and prevent the hordes of dangerous and violent
others from entering. While some may claim that this example is really a "class issue", I
contend that given what we know about "white flight" (Hacker 1995), the rapid increase
of gated communities and other attempts at insulation are driven by racialized images of a
destructive other.

Happiness is within reach, in fact, Once Upon a Time, America used to be clean,
wholesome, a place where you could raise your children without the threat of drugs,
drive-by shootings, teen pregnancy, and AIDS. White supremacy positions the other as an obstacle to purity. If not for the other whites could achieve their full potential. Purity would no longer be an abstract quality, but a lived reality. In some cases we hear what needs to be done to the other to achieve this purity: "I'd like to go into south central [Los Angeles] and just start wiping all the niggers out" (acquaintance, 1992). In other cases we hear the ways in which the other is obstructing white potential: "You needed that job and you were the best qualified. But they had to give it to a minority because of a racial quota. Is that really fair?" (Jessie Helms congressional television campaign commercial quoted in Feagin and Vera 1995: 113).

Sometimes concrete practices such as hanging a picture of Hitler on the locker of a Jewish police officer are used to articulate the desire to eradicate the other from the immediate environment. In this case the anti-Semitic police officers use an icon (a photograph of Hitler) to signify the "final solution"—i.e. "keep the dream alive, kill a Jew" (Ezekiel 1995). Similarly, Dave says "Rockabilly has just enough twang to keep the niggers away, there's just something about twang, it's a nigger repellant", revealing the potential music has as vehicle to promote racial exclusion. Dave's fondness for Rockabilly is based in part upon a desired effect--"nigger repellant", which contributes to a utopian vision; a world without the other.

When the AOI talks of hanging a Nazi banner in Zion National Park this provides a connection between ideology and space using a concrete material item (a banner) that is emblazoned with a symbol (swastika). Zion is marked as an Aryan space where the other is in no uncertain terms not welcome. The "natural" purity of Zion is a seductive metaphor for the racial purity of Aryans making the park a perfect settlement. But, the
AOI is not going to hang the banner in just any old part of the park, they intend to hang it from the *Great White Throne*. The banner is used to articulate the Nazi vision of racial pride and purity, which is then articulated to a site whose name for obvious reasons resonates with the AOI's mission.

Rather than summarize chapter 5 in a more or less conventional fashion, I ask the reader to accompany me to an (un)finished conclusion where I maintain the at times fragmented style to among other things subvert the traditional project of wrapping up a text with a final and singular conclusion. However, I do offer a partial and tentative assessment of my text, including areas unexplored, “objectives”, and the implications (or so what?).
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

For texts seeking to produce different way(s) of knowing (Richardson 1994), a conclusion is an awkward enterprise. Traditionally conclusions have functioned to tightly "close" a text with an authoritative summary of the researcher's findings. Instead I want to emphasize that my ethnography is partial, incomplete, tentative, and contextual using a style of presentation that situates the AOI relationally within the system of white supremacy. I admit that at times, especially chapter 5, I "slip" into an "authorial voice from afar" (Richardson 1994). While the collage is multi-voiced and I acknowledge "up front" that the analysis is my reading of white supremacy, I do nevertheless position those readings with a certain amount of authority. In other words, I am not claiming to have created an “authorless” text, as I freely admit that I have selected, edited, pruned, spruced, collapsed, and written what is before you (Richardson 1994). Because sitting here creating readings of "others" reeks of self-confidence (some would say conceit) I want to remind the reader that the same author who supposedly "understands" the AOI is the same fieldworker who wrote the following in a journal entry one lonely afternoon:

June 1997:

I wanted to help [with the building of a barn], I wanted to pitch in, but I was scared to death. I felt like such an outsider, so useless, yeah I helped lift a few things, but I shuddered that they were going to ask me to measure something or do something that would reveal my complete mechanical incompetence. I didn't want them to think I was a "retard".
I include this entry, not as a self-destructive "cop out" to shatter any credibility I may have established, but to subvert the romantically "macho" notion of ethnographers rolling up their sleeves, leaving uncertainty behind, and becoming "one of them". In light of the fact that ethnographers love to write about other peoples' "secrets" or "dirty laundry", but often fail to disclose any of their own, I contend that the ethnographer who is willing to do so (without being narcissistic) may deserve even more credibility.

As with any text I have overlooked, neglected, and ignored important aspects and components that would have resulted in different "ways of seeing" (Berger 1973). I want to briefly discuss some of these weaknesses.

One of the most glaring absences from this text is a sustained discussion of the anti-government sentiments that fuel much of the AOI's vision of the world. The federal government and other international entities (United Nations) are thought to be complicit in the "New World Order" seeking to destroy "America's sovereignty". The AOI even has a term for this collection of organizations, groups and individuals--the "New World Order Crowd". There are various ways to "read" this aspect of the AOI's ideology; I'll mention two. First, within the AOI's ideology the federal government is articulated as an "other". Some might say this reflects an evolving pattern among the larger white supremacist movement where the government is now seen as enemy instead of an ally (Parker and Simi 1997; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1997; Bennett 1995). Interestingly in the process of demonizing the federal government, groups like the AOI use racialized imagery to describe the "feds". "The government is weak and only interested in collecting taxes to support their greed" (Jewishness) or "the Ruby Ridge standoff and the..."
Waco siege illustrate the government's unsustainable passion for brutal and barbaric force, federal officers leap at the chance to attack our white mothers" (blackness).

My second observation regarding anti-government sentiments is that unlike Jews or blacks, which are "otherized" using an essentialist view of race, the "feds" and the U.N. are in part targeted for their geographic location. The "feds" and U.N. represent entities that are beyond the "local" which the AOI valorizes as a space of ultimate truth, prosperity, and happiness. Dave and his family purchased property in a small rural community, where "patriotic" sentiments run-deep, offering them the opportunity to "live off the land and grow some crops" no longer needing to use "Babylonian money" thus avoiding the "mark of the beast" (Birth of a Militia 1997).

The next issue I neglected is fear. Some researchers contend that the postmodern moment is marked by "low-level" fear (Massumi 1993), while others diagnose the postmodern self as paranoid (Frank 1992), panic ridden and envious (Langman 1992), and fluctuating between terror and chronic boredom (Petro 1993). Given the importance of fear within the AOI's ideology, a project comparing the manifestation of fear among the AOI to the research above would likely prove interesting and insightful.

Fear is a vital emotion that functions at a number of levels within white supremacy. Fear works at an intellectual level using explanations peppered with scientific quotes and statistics regarding "black" crime, "nonwhite" overpopulation of the world (which justifies their contention of "the genocide of the white race"), and Jewish over-representation in financial and political institutions. But fear is probably most powerful at the emotional level, where an assortment of fantasies/nightmares use spectacular

\[29\] For a thorough discussion of these issues see Gottschalk 1997.
imagery to evoke the others who are depicted as Satanically-possessed, savage subspecies, and disease-infested to name a few. These images play on fears of interracial sexuality/mixing, emasculation, loss of rigid gender boundaries, and the spread of homosexuality.

Lastly, while the focus of this text is racial others, there are important intersections between race, gender, and class that unfortunately due to space and time constraints I was unable to explore. This is in no way meant to reflect on their importance and I am pleased that researchers studying the white supremacist movement are beginning to investigate issues surrounding gender (Shanks-Meile forthcoming; Ferber 1998; Blee 1996). Clearly, further analysis of the AOI and white supremacy would do well to explore these issues in much greater depth. Next I want to shift gears a little and move toward an assessment of this text.

Elvis was a hero to most
But he never meant shit to me you see
Straight up racist that sucker was
Simple and plain
Mother fuck him and John Wayne
Cause I'm Black and I'm proud
I'm ready and hyped plus I'm amped
Most of my heroes don't appear on no stamps
Sample a look back you look and find
Nothing but rednecks for 400 years if you check
Don't worry be happy
Was a number one jam
Damn if I say it you can slap me right here
(Get it) lets get this party started right
Right on, c'mon
What we got to say
Power to the people no delay
To make everybody see
In order to fight the powers that be
(Fight the Power, Public Enemy, 1989)
Inspired by the lyrical wizards Public Enemy and a legion of rap artists including Ice-T, N.W.A., the X Clan, Paris, and Boogie Down Productions, among others, one of my text's fundamental contentions is that white supremacy is an ideological system that is part of an enduring (although not static) cultural heritage rooted in this society's institutions, everyday practices, and unconscious. White supremacy is NOT limited to a collection of "fringe" groups on the right, but instead permeates across and throughout the left-right political continuum. Remember, one of President Clinton's campaign strategies in 1992 was to denigrate or "Hortonize" Sister Souljah as an "extremist" at a Rainbow Coalition meeting led by the Reverend Jessie Jackson for her various comments about the existing system of white supremacy in the U.S. (Feagin and Vera 1995: 124-134).

My thesis sets out to achieve two objectives: 1) create a collage using fragments from the mass media and my personal biography to evoke the system of white supremacy that continues to exist in the U.S.; 2) examine how the AOI concretely accomplishes the ideology of white supremacy through everyday practices. Specifically I discuss members' articulations of the "other". In the next section I retrace these objectives.

Chapter 3 presents my methodological approach, explaining participant observation and interviewing as well as the way(s) in which my text is informed by an experimental presentation style. Using a methodological approach referred to as "bricolage" where a researcher use whatever tools are at hand (Denzin and Lincoln 1994) has allowed me the flexibility needed to interrogate the way(s) in which white supremacy is present in mass media texts and everyday practices.
Following the "experimental turn" in ethnography where authors attempt to implicate themselves as participants in systems of oppression (hooks 1997), one way to frame my use of racist personal biographic fragments is as an attempt to "out" myself as a participant in the system of white supremacy. I can hear some readers asking, what's wrong with him? Why does he hang around with people like this, there must be something wrong with his friends, family and himself, most white people don't think/speak/act like this.

Although I would like nothing better than for what I've written to be merely the "abnormal" experiences of one person, I find it hard to believe the racial attitudes I've included from my personal biography are radically "different" from the "norm". And what about the examples from the mass media? Ronald Reagan used the "welfare queen" buying groceries with food stamps and driving off in a brand new Cadillac, George Bush created "Willie" Horton, and Bill Clinton marked Sister Souljah as an irresponsible reverse racist—one could argue that our last three presidents have largely been elected based upon their willingness to "play the race card".

Racial Practices

In chapter 4 I commented that, "what I was finding was a world that was at once seemingly familiar and ordinary, yet, also checkered with "bizarre" everyday practices" (chapter 4).

But it looks like a normal suburban living room, gorgeous kids running around and then you start to notice that there are little things that might be different than the average living room [pictures of swastikas and Adolph Hitler] (Pike 1997, "Birth of a Militia").

This statement is a good example of how daily practices such as the items used to decorate a living room enact ideology and help accomplish abstract conceptual categories.
like race. The picture of Hitler is a signifier of "racial pride" and the supremacy of the Aryan race. Another practice articulating how the family becomes inscribed with a racial component includes Dave and Andie's decision to name their child after a fictional character in one William Pierces' novels, *Hunter*, a drive-by killer who begins murdering interracial couples and eventually works his way up to assassinating Jews in order to cleanse America of its sickness and save the future of white civilization (ADL 1995).

Through the taken for granted practice of selecting a child's name, members of the AOI activates or enliven the ideological system of white supremacy. Similarly, one of Johnny's children, Zach, brings a stack of G.I. Joe dolls out to the couch where I'm sitting and begins showing me each one:

Zach: This is Arctic GI Joe and this Jungle GI Joe and this one I call him Hitler".

ME: "Do you know who Hitler was?"

Zach: "Yeah, he was a great German leader".

And upon seeing a framed picture of Hitler hanging in Dave's living room, I ask what Hitler means to him, "he was brilliant, I idolize him, just watching him speak, he knew what needed to be done, he knew the white man needed to awake". By focusing on the active component of spoken and written words I illustrate that constructions of the other and constructions of a white identity (racial categories) exist beyond abstract conceptions, but instead are accomplished through practices including spoken and written words.

By creating images of a racialized "other", whites engage in a parasitic process of identity formation, where whiteness is equated with normality and purity (Dyer 1997; Morrison 1992; Sartre 1948). Maintaining boundaries between the “other” and “us” reinforces a system of white supremacy where a white subject is empowered not only
because of what it is, but also because of what it is NOT. When individuals enact a
vision of the other they are simultaneously enacting a vision of themselves. Members of
the AOI illustrate this only too well. For instance, when Dave says, "blacks have never
built a true civilization, look at history, look at what's happening in Africa, they're still
running around eating each other" not only is he attributing certain characteristics to
blacks, but his statement is premised upon assumptions regarding whiteness. Without
even uttering the words his statement reveals the widely held belief that whites have
historically been the agents of progress and enlightenment.

Using a cultural studies approach to ideology that I discussed in chapter 2 and then
apply in chapter 5, the following reiterates this perspective. Through a socially
constructed subject that identifies distinct racial attributes, we become individuals who
embody the cultural heritage that our "forefathers" have created. White supremacy
names subjects who not only embody a cultural heritage, but are also the beneficiaries of
a genetic and spiritual legacy that is the driving force of history. White supremacy
promises subjects that they are the carriers of an "Aryan" bloodline that is the product of
evolutionary perfection, or for the more religiously oriented, Aryan blood is the gift that
only the children of God possess, which is clearly distinct from Jews and "nonwhites". In
this sense one could look at the "promises" of white supremacy as an example of what
Althusser (1971) referred to as "interpellation", which is the act of recruitment in
ideology that names and positions you as the subject. Through the process of
interpellation you immediately recognize that you are being addressed and in the process
you subject yourself to the consequences of this positioning (Donald and Hall 1986;
Althusser 1971). Thus the very structure of language which is predicated upon
differentiation works in accordance with "common sense" resulting in a system where a subject's agency is premised upon her/his racial classification. Historically the system of white supremacy has at least in part led many white subjects to theorize their privileged racial position and attempt develop formal explanations. Dyer (1997) notes the genealogical research that searched for white racial purity:

In this perspective white people represent the only sub-race that has remained pure to the human race's Aryan forbears (and has perhaps even purified that inheritance via the Caucasus). Non-whites then become seen as degenerative, falling away from the true nature of the (human) race. This notion goes back at least to Johan Boemus, who in 1521 proposed that all humans were descended from Ham, Shem, and Japeth, the sons of Noah, but those who descended from Ham degenerated into blackness, whereas the civilised, who remained white, were descended from Shem and Japeth; more 'scientific' and Aryan variants were proposed in the eighteenth century. In the quest for purity, whites win either way: either they are a distinct, pure race, superior to all others, or else they are the purest expression of the human race itself. What is interesting in either version is the emphasis on purity (Dyer 1997: 22).

Within this framework whiteness is seductive for its virtues; the "other" is seductive for its threat. Sometimes the threat is envisioned as direct individual physical action (e.g. blacks' criminal behavior) in other cases the threat is conspiratorial (e.g. Jews' monopolization of finances). Blacks are sexual creatures closer to nature with violent animalistic instincts that are often uncontrollable while Jews are shadowy, lurking behind the scenes, making decisions like a puppet master. A binary oppositional system of white and nonwhite (good and evil) is the subtext beneath the AOI's notion that the virtues of whiteness as well as the physical state of whiteness are under attack (Ferber 1998). This attack is in part the result of black cultural characteristics, such as drug use, lack of sexual control, laziness, and ignorance (which translates into the need for welfare and affirmative action), degraded cultural styles (clothing, music, slang), and the overt physical threat of crime, race-mixing, and immigration. At the same time whites suffer

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
from a Zionist-driven, communist-inspired New World Order that controls the policies and institutions which allow for the "muds" to proliferate and the genocide of the white race to continue at an ever faster pace.

White supremacy binds those constituted as white together through an unconscious ideological alliance. This alliance is filled with emotions and ideas about white superiority and nonwhite inferiority. "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?". "White is Right" "The Great White Hope" "That's Mighty White of You" "This is a nice (white) neighborhood". "I'm not your slave, what color do I look like?". Did you ever look up black in a dictionary? Black destitute of light, devoid of color, enveloped in darkness, soiled with dirt, foul, sullen, hostile, forbidding as a black day, wicked as black cruelty, indicating disgrace and dishonor, or culpability and there's others--blackmail, blackballed, blackguard... Let's look up white... white of the color of pure snow, reflecting all the rays of the spectrum, the opposite of black, free from spot or blemish innocent, pure, without evil intent, harmless, honest, square dealing and honorable... Wait a minute this is written by white folks (Malcolm X, the movie, 1992).

When the white man over here says he's white, he means he's boss, you hear it in his voice---'free, white, and twenty-one', the white man made that up, he's saying I'm boss (Malcolm X, 1965).

In the introduction I contextualize the white supremacist movement within recent social/political/economic transformations. Social movements whether struggling for environmental justice, religious freedom or unfettered "white rule" emerge during particular historical moments seeking to alter or maintain the status quo. Massive immigration provided a rallying cry in the early part of the 20th century, while in the 1950s a white supremacist resistance developed in response to the efforts to secure black voting rights and end segregation. But more than anything else the white supremacy movement feeds on the notion of essential categories of race. However, it is important
that we recognize the creation of whiteness, as a racial category is a relatively recent social invention. Whiteness has traditionally been experienced as "raceless" and personal identity typically constructed in a race-neutral manner (Flagg 1997). Further, according to Dyer (1997) whiteness is not typically seen or named allowing whites to function as a human norm (Dyer 1997).

But, the "normalcy" of whiteness is increasingly being challenged, and offensive/defensive current is beginning to develop among the white population (Gallagher 1997). Gallagher (1997) asserts that "whiteness is in a state of change...The construction of whiteness is based at least among the respondents in my study, on a perception of current and future material deprivation and the need to delineate white culture in a nondemonized fashion (Galgher 1997: 6-7).

Or as Samuel Francis, an editorial writer for the Washington Times and advisor to Patrick Buchanan's presidential campaign declared: "whites must reassert our identity and our solidarity...in explicitly racial terms through the articulation of racial consciousness as whites" (New York Times, 2/23/95). The Reagan Revolution, the growth of a paramilitary "warrior culture" in the 1980s (Gibson 1994), the anti-immigration, anti-affirmative action, anti-gay/lesbian campaigns and the Christian Right are all in various ways inscribed with a particular racial component. For example, as mentioned above, Ronald Reagan's rugged western individualism successfully utilized the racialized image of welfare queens using food stamps to buy groceries and driving home in a brand new Cadillac.

Code words are all around us these days. When a politician declares that we have to stop catering to special interests and pay attention to the middle class, you know who the special interests are and you know that the color of the middle class—symbolically,
if not empirically—is white. And when another politician attacks welfare mothers who breed children in order to claim larger, you know that the real message is composed of two racial stereotypes: (1) the sexually promiscuous black..., and (2) the lazy and shiftless negro made familiar to so many Americans by the comedian Stepin Fetchit (Fish 1994: 90).

The white supremacy movement, since the original Ku Klux Klan was organized in 1867 has ebbed and flowed, but has yet to die. The latest "installment" or "episode" of the movement relies heavily on the "backlash" of the 1980s and 1990s.

Implications
Defection—Leaving Hate?

Gramsci eloquently posits a position that I strive for in my analysis of culture: "a pessimism of the mind—with an optimism of the will" (Hall 1996). If I have learned one thing during the course of my fieldwork, it is that a "naive" and paternalistic view of "emancipating" individuals or groups from embracing hateful ideology is problematic at best. Unfortunately, I do not think many of those involved in the AOI are necessarily going to change their views anytime soon. Rather than solely focusing on "raising the consciousness" of AOI members, I seek to implicate my own complicity in a societal system of white supremacy. By juxtaposing the AOI's articulations of white supremacy with the larger culture, my goal is to "familiarize" the AOI's ideology of white supremacy not to "normalize" it, but to "pry" open the unspoken and ignored system of white supremacy existing in the U.S.

At the same time, I have slowly begun building a relationship with Johnny (the founder of the AOI) that has given me, in a small way, a renewed sense of hope or an "optimism of will". For the first time during the course of my fieldwork I feel I am
getting close enough to a member where we may eventually come to a deeper understanding of each other. I hope this will provide each of us an opportunity to mutually recognize the other's perspective, and then maybe the critical perspective that I embrace will have some effect of "conscious raising" for Johnny and others. But this optimism is continually checked by Hall's pessimism of the mind. I wrote the following in my journal shortly after an interview with Johnny about a month ago:

March 1999—My heart sank when Johnny agreed that Jews were the literal descendents of Satan. I already knew he believed this, but I just spent the day hiking with him and felt I was getting to know another side. A side that vehemently opposed the death penalty, a side that criticized the government bombing of the black communal group in Philadelphia [MOVE], the side that sincerely enjoys exploring the scenic beauty of southern Utah, the side that...I guess I'm letting hope get the best of me, Johnny is a white supremacist, he's suppose to believe Jews are Satanic.

As quickly as Johnny had become an agent of hope on the road out of hate, he was now beyond redemption. It feels good to think of the white supremacist as an enemy in need of destruction, but it's too easy (Aho 1994). James Aho (1994) comments that while a number of researchers have studied the process of "becoming" a member of a hate group; few studies have examined the process of leaving these groups. Aho contends in his admittedly small study of seven defections that "it would be a mistake to view involvement in Neo-Nazism as necessarily enduring" (Aho 1994: 136). Although Aho is undoubtedly correct, we can also not under emphasize that even when members of hate groups become "inactive" in terms of formal mobilization (e.g. marches, rallies, etc.) their ideological affiliations may remain firmly intact and manifested in more "mundane" fashions (e.g. music choices).

Aho raises an interesting question: to what extent is involvement in the white supremacist movement enduring? I find that while presently there may be little
traditional political activity among AOI members, white supremacy is nonetheless entrenched within their daily lives, influencing everything from selecting a child's name, decisions to home school, places to live etc. However, although the ideological "lens" of white supremacy deeply affects members' daily lives, we should not assume it is an all-encompassing effect, dominating every single aspect, every single second of adherents' lives. For example, Dave's daughters own and frequently watch the movie Aladdin (featuring "mudpeople"), which Dave purchased for them as a birthday gift—a movie made by none other than Disney, a "Jewish, homo-loving company". When I asked Dave about it one day, he responded with a casual shrug, "it's for the kids". Another example illustrating a disjunction between "sentiments and acts" is Johnny's sister, Barbara who drives a Suzuki, which she refers to as a "Sugucki," but nonetheless she drives this "foreign-made" automobile, departing from "strict" white supremacist doctrine demanding members to "buy white" (which in this case might mean either Ford or Volkswagen among others). The point is these contradictions do exist (as they do within any ideological system) and assuming Aho is correct that Nazism is not necessarily enduring, they may provide avenues for encouraging people "out of hate".

One of the difficulties examining white supremacy is the tendency to either collapse or completely separate the "movement" and the larger ideological system that permeates our culture. At times I fall prey to both mistakes and neither is productive. The movement and system exist on separate, yet overlapping planes, which are sometimes moving in the same direction and other times moving in diametrically opposite ones. And although this gets a little tricky to concretely conceptualize, both the movement and the system are simultaneously moving in multiple directions. This requires researchers, activists, and all
concerned citizens to carefully begin sorting intersections and oppositions between the movement that openly preaches superiority and hate and the system, which preaches "raceless equality" while practicing something very different.

Much of this conclusion was written while listening to a compilation of Malcolm X speeches. In his speech "By Any Means Necessary" Malcolm X discusses his call for self-defense against the lynchings and beatings at the hands white people in the U.S. He specifically mentions the workings of the Ku Klux Klan and their use of fear to achieve subordination. In my attempt to understand and represent the lives of openly white supremacists like the AOI, I am concerned about this being misconstrued as somehow promoting a "soft" view on these supremacists. Acts of racist violence and intimidation whether committed by the Klan, skinheads or "ordinary" citizens (Howard Beach, Bensonhurst, Marquette Park or the LAPD, NYPD etc.) need to be confronted in no uncertain terms. Attempts to understand the hate motivating such acts must not be misunderstood for sympathy, yet in our vigilance to confront these heinous acts of destruction we must remember that "guilt by association" makes us all guilty. As I said in chapter 5, hopefully this text will not only evoke disgust, but will encourage the introspective reader to hear familiar voices, voices coming from not so distant relatives, friends and co-workers who are "just a little bit racist", politicians we voted for anyway, police officers whose behavior doesn't harm "us"; voices that are better left unheard. The evil that racial violence speaks lurks within, [screaming to the surface periodically], a nation that loves to wallow in a façade of liberal democracy where justice is blind and opportunity is free to all of those who are willing to work hard enough. Sweet Dreams.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


_____. 1995b. "The Suburbanization of Hate: The Evolution of Racist Youth Subcultures." Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.


215


Clough, Patricia T. The End(s) of Ethnography: From Realism to Social Criticism. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.


Ellis, Carolyn and Arthur P. Bochner, eds. 1996. *Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing.* Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press.


The True Israelite. 1998a. No Title. N.D.


VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Pete Simi

Local Address:
7875 N. Rainbow
Las Vegas, Nevada 89131

Home Address:
7875 N. Rainbow
Las Vegas, Nevada 89131

Degrees:
Bachelor of Arts, Social Science, 1995
Washington State University

Thesis Title: Amerikan Dreams: Dialogues With White Supremacists

Thesis Examination Committee:
Chairperson, Dr. Simon Gottschalk, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Kate Hausbeck, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Dr. Robert Parker, Ph.D.
Graduate Faculty Representative, Dr. William Jankowiak, Ph.D.