Understanding Hate Speech

Michael S. Waltman, Department of Communication, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Ashely A. Mattheis, Department of Communication, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.422
Published online: 26 September 2017

Summary

Most of the research dealing with hate and hate speech has examined the practices and discourses of hate groups and hate crimes. This work has tended to focus on hate and hate speech directed at African Americans, Jews, and other nonwhites by white supremacist groups. An emerging and growing literature examines hate and hate speech that is used by men to target and harass women. Research in this area has focused on the ways that hate speech produced by organized hate groups and men’s rights activist groups is used to recruit new members, to socialize new members, to radicalize people, and to encourage ethnoviolence. The Internet has had a revolutionizing influence on these groups’ use of hate speech. Additionally, hate novels and “hate music” have played important roles in the recruitment of people into the hate movement and promoted violence against those perceived as enemies of Aryans.

Keywords: hate, hate speech, hate stratagem, myth, heuristics, manosphere, cyber harassment, white power music, intergroup communication

Introduction: Defining Hate Speech

In the context of work on hate speech, hatred has been defined as the extreme dislike of a person or group of people because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or gender orientation (Foxman & Wolf, 2013; Perry, 2001; Waltman & Haas, 2011). Aristotle (1984) wrote that hatred is distinguishable from mere anger by three characteristics. First, anger is a temporary state. One might be angry with a neighbor who allows his dog to run free through the neighborhood. This anger, for most people, will dissipate with the passage of time. Hatred, however, is a more durable emotion that will not dissipate over time. Second, anger produces spontaneous action. One might blurt out angry words at the friend who betrayed our friendship. Hatred, however, may often drive actions, even violent actions, that are planned. Third, anger does not tend to produce a loss of empathy for those with whom we are angry. Even when hurt, those who feel anger do not typically wish harm on those with whom they are angry. Hatred, on the other hand, does tend to produce a loss of empathy. This lack of empathy may make violence against the other more likely.
Hate speech is discourse designed to call attention to, and to manipulate, social differences (Foxman & Wolf, 2013; Waltman & Haas, 2011; Waltman, 2015). Hate speech discursively constructs the in-group in extremely positive terms while also constructing the out-group in dehumanized terms, including characterizing the out-group as posing a threat to the in-group and cherished in-group values and traditions. Hate speech may serve a variety of different social and political purposes. First, hate speech may serve the simple purpose of intimidating those who belong to an out-group because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation (Waltman & Haas, 2011). Typically, the targets of hate speech belong to a social group that has a history being oppressed, making them especially vulnerable to intimidation through hate speech.

Second, hate speech is often deployed in order to promote violence against the out-group (Perry, 2001; Waltman & Haas, 2011). Hate speech often explicitly denigrates the out-group, constructing the out-group in dehumanized terms while representing the out-group as the source of difficulties for the in-group. Such scapegoating (Campbell, 2011) often serves to construct the out-group as worthy of violence that might be visited upon them by the in-group (Waltman, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c). Keen (1986) has argued that the out-group must be rhetorically killed before they may actually be killed.

Third, hate speech is used to construct a collective form of memory for the in-group (Perry, 2001; Waltman, 2015; Waltman & Davis, 2005; Waltman & Haas, 2011). This collective memory is made up of the beliefs that group members share with one another through their hateful discourse. Christian identity groups and neo-Nazis teach their members that Jews control the federal government, Hollywood, and various media outlets and use these institutions to control society and wage a genocidal war on white people. All manner of hate groups teach their members to expect that a racial holy war (RAHOWA) will ultimately be necessary to resolve racial conflicts in the United States (Perry, 2001; Waltman & Davis, 2004).

Fourth, hate speech is used to recruit and socialize new members to groups that make hatred a primary purpose for their being, that is to say, hate groups (Perry, 2001; Waltman & Davis, 2005; Waltman & Haas, 2011). By sharing stories, jokes, and books among themselves, hate groups use hate speech to teach their members the appropriate beliefs for being a proper group member.

**Purpose of the Literature Review**

Most of the research dealing with hate and hate speech has examined the practices, discourses, and violence of hate groups (Crothers, 2003; Daniels, 1997; Perry, 2001; Waltman, 2014; Waltman & Haas, 2011). The work has tended to focus on hate and hate speech directed at African Americans, Jews, and other nonwhites by white supremacist groups. An emerging and growing literature examines hate and hate speech that is used by men to target women (Kimmel, 2013; Kimmel & Kaufman, 1994; Messner, 1998). This literature review examines the use of hate speech by organized hate groups and misogynist groups to accomplish many of the goals described in the introduction, including the promotion of gendered violence and ethnoviolence. The Internet has had a revolutionizing influence on groups’ use of hate speech. Consequently, most of the research reviewed focuses on the use of hate speech on the Internet. First, the literature is reviewed according to the constructs that researchers have
employed to study hate speech. This will help readers appreciate the broad ways that hate speech has been conceptualized and studied. Next, texts and places where hate speech is conveyed are examined. Specifically, research on hate online (including a space of misogyny termed the “manosphere”), hate novels, and white power music are reviewed.

Hate Speech Constructs

The Discursive Construction of In-groups and Out-groups

There are several constructs that are useful for conceptualizing the discursive construction of in-groups and out-groups. First are the hate stratagem and scapegoating. The hate stratagem is a rhetorical trick, a deception. It attempts to influence through trickery, rather than through reasoning and argumentation (Waltman, 2003; Waltman & Haas, 2011; Whillock, 1995). The use of the hate stratagem represents an attempt to influence others by manipulating their hatred and a host of cultural stereotypes to accomplish political or social goals. The hate stratagem has four characteristics: (a) it inflames the emotions of individuals by encouraging them to view themselves as members of a significant and important group, (b) it denigrates a specified out-group and individuals who belong to that out-group, (c) it inflicts permanent harm on the out-group, often by suggesting that they pose a threat to the in-group, and (d) it rhetorically conquers the out-group. It is important to note that those susceptible to recruitment into a hate groups are not a homogeneous group. However, many who find their messages appealing are individuals who have a grievance with life, and experience a sense of social isolation. These grievances make a hate group appear to be a good fix for the individual’s problems (Blee, 2002; Guttentag & DiPersio, 2003).

First, the hate stratagem inflames the emotions of individuals by encouraging them to view themselves as members of a significant and important group. Race hate and ethnonationalist groups posit white people as the descendants of kings, that the white race is the only true builder of culture, medicine, democracy, and Western civilization, that whites are responsible for giving more to the world than any other race. White people in the United States are told that they are responsible for building the nation, that white people are the nation. In another example, misogynist groups pose gendered relations as a zero-sum game, where men have had their masculinity stolen because any gains for women and girls must mean a loss to men and boys. Women are therefore the destroyers of men, society, and ultimately civilization.

Second, the hate stratagem denigrates a specified out-group (Waltman & Haas, 2011; Whillock, 1995). Typically, discourse at this stage focuses on cultural stereotypes that dehumanize and belittle the other. This characteristic of the hate stratagem involves constructing, for example, African Americans as less than human and savage-like. Children of undocumented immigrants are termed “anchor babies.” President Obama, a favorite target of the racist right and those in the organized hate movement, has been constructed in images and cartoons as a savage medicine man with a bone piercing his nose. Similarly, Jews and women are treated as conniving, greedy, disgusting, and destroyers of culture (often contrasted with white people or men, who are builders of culture).
Third, the hate stratagem inflicts permanent harm on the out-group by suggesting that they possess highly undesirable characteristics and attributes that isolate them from other social groups, particularly the in-group (Waltman, 2003; Whillock, 1995). Often the out-group is depicted as an inherent threat to the in-group, with an inborn desire to harm the in-group, and as a threat to cherished values held by the in-group. African Americans and undocumented Mexican immigrants (whom some have termed “illegals”) are portrayed as a genocidal threat to white people (as “predators” and “rapists”). Women are characterized as a threat to all civilization because they endanger men. Additionally, women are positioned as the “real” perpetrators of gendered violence against men through their manipulation of sex and the legal system.

Four, the hate stratagem rhetorically conquers the out-group (Waltman, 2003; Waltman & Haas, 2011; Whillock, 1995). This conquering ultimately serves to negate the out-group’s existence. This conquering most typically takes place by: (a) the in-group’s segregating themselves from the out-group and (b) the in-group’s taking pleasure in the suffering or killing of the out-group. Across many texts examined, white people are asked repeatedly to imagine a world that is made up only of white people. In the authors’ imaginations, this world is described as perfection, because white people would never have to meet or interact with those who are not white. The all-white world is described as a more beautiful and harmonious place. Similarly, this feature of the hate stratagem is evident in calls for the destruction or the imagined killing of the out-group. In the online environment, cartoons, artwork, and news stories describe the killing of the out-group as a pleasurable, joyful, and righteous act (Billig, 2001; Daniels, 1997; Waltman & Davis, 2004). Because women cannot be eradicated if humans are to survive, misogynist groups take pleasure in imagining a nostalgic return to a past where men were “real men” and women “knew” their place—a place where women lived to fulfill men’s needs and reflect their glory.

Whillock (1995) developed the hate stratagem to criticize a political flier that was deployed to vilify a number of political candidates in a gubernatorial race in Alabama. Waltman (2003) examined the Ku Klux Klan’s use of the hate stratagem to recruit children to the Klan in their “Just for Kids” web page. Waltman and Haas (2007) argued that a rhetorical trick, like the stratagem, was particularly useful with children, who lack the knowledge and critical thinking skills that many adults might be able to draw on when evaluating the Klan’s persuasive appeal. The hate stratagem was used as a way to “educate” children about the Klan while also teaching them to view African Americans as their enemy.

Similarly, Waltman and Haas (2011) examined the operation of the hate stratagem in the racist novel Hunter. Written by William Pierce, the former director of the National Alliance, a neo-Nazi hate group, Hunter describes the education and socialization of a lone wolf terrorist named Yeager, who is offended by the existence of interracial relationships that seem to be omnipresent. This “race mixing” so offends Yeager that he begins a killing spree, literally “hunting” interracial couples. Yeager’s terrorism becomes a path of enlightenment as he learns that interracial couples are merely a symptom of a more systemic evil. Over the course of the novel, Yeager learns that Jews control the federal government, the media, and Hollywood. All of these institutions conspire to wage genocide against white people. As his knowledge grows, he expands his “prey,” eventually killing highly placed politicians and other elites. Essentially, the hate stratagem becomes a frame for rationalizing violence against threats to a valued in-group.
Waltman and Haas (2011) also examined the operation of the hate stratagem on a web page called “The Insurgent,” maintained by well-known white supremacist Tom Metzger. “The Insurgent” is a “complete resource” page for all manner of hate groups and white supremacists. “The Insurgent” contains: (a) archives of literature produced by writers in the hate movement (e.g., David Lane, William Klassen, Tom Metzger), (b) artwork that connects readers with a glorious Aryan past, and (c) games and cartoons that allow the reader to take pleasure in their hatred of the non-Aryans. Waltman and Haas (2011) described how readers experience the hate stratagem through “The Insurgent”’s discourse, and how they learn a rationale for taking violent action against various vilified out-groups that pose a threat to a valued in-group.

While the hate stratagem is more than simple scapegoating, scapegoating is an important part of the hate stratagem. Campbell (2011) described the long history of scapegoating the hated. It is a history that ranges from the scapegoating of Eve to explain the eviction of humans from the Garden of Eden, to the monarchical use of the scapegoat to push blame down the hierarchy, to the scapegoating of Jews throughout the centuries in Europe and the Middle East, and to the scapegoating of witches to explain all manner of calamities in vulnerable communities. Thus, the process of scapegoating has played an essential role in the communication of hate.

**Content Analysis and Close Readings of Texts**

Some researchers have studied hate speech through content analysis and close readings of texts that focus on themes, myths, and heuristics that contribute to the strategic use of hate speech.

One quality of the hate stratagem is that it encourages superficial information processing by relying on cultural stereotypes and hatred rather than critical thinking and reasoning (Whillock, 1995). Research into the nature of hate speech has demonstrated that when some employ the hate stratagem they also encourage a form of heuristic information processing of their persuasive messages (Waltman, 2003; Waltman & Haas, 2007). Heuristics are decision-making short cuts that people may employ in persuasive situations when they find the persuasive message difficult to process, boring, or complicated (Petty & Caccioppo, 1986); that is, heuristics reduce the cognitive load of difficult decisions and make decision-making easier and less burdensome (Cialdini, 2001). When processing persuasive messages, we may employ a variety of heuristics. Petty and Caccioppo (1986) focused on three primary heuristics. One persuasive heuristic is the credibility heuristic. That is, we may reduce the burden of decision-making by focusing our attention on the authority or expertise of the persuader. A second persuasive heuristic is the liking heuristic. That is, when deciding whether to comply with a persuasive request, we may be influenced by how likeable the persuader is, rather than the quality of their argument. A third persuasive heuristic studied by Petty and Caccioppo is the consensus heuristic. People employ a consensus heuristic when they are persuaded by how other people are responding to a persuasive message.

The Ku Klux Klan’s “Just for Kids” web page employed these heuristics in tandem with the hate stratagem (Waltman, 2003). First, the Klan presents itself as credible and authoritative. The credibility heuristic operates under the assumption that we should be positively
influenced by authority figures or experts about the issue at hand. The Klan appealed to children’s inclination to employ a credibility heuristic when, in a “Bet You Didn’t Know” section of their web page, they presented information about a number of quotes attributed to significant Americans, such as Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln, that suggests that they were indifferent to the suffering of slaves and endorsed the institution of slavery. By associating their positions with the authority of a Founder and a president who fought slavery, the Klan makes its message more appealing to young readers.

Second, the Klan members attempt to construct themselves as likeable. The liking heuristic operates under the principle that we should comply with requests of those we like. Waltman (2003) found that the Klan used this heuristic to encourage children to have a more positive view of the Klan. To appeal to children, they described the Klan as a peaceful organization and as a “club”:

One night when the club was meeting they accidentally came across an outlaw band of negroes. But this time ... the negroes ran away screaming. They thought the men in their costumes were the ghosts of dead soldiers ... These deeply religious men felt that God had given them a great gift in disguise—a peaceful way to defend themselves.

So, not only is the Klan portrayed as a peaceful organization, but also children are taught that the Klan’s purpose was to protect white people from dangerous newly freed slaves.

Third, the Klan encourages children to rely on a consensus heuristic. The consensus heuristic operates under the principle that we are more likely to comply with a persuasive request if we believe other people are accepting the persuasive message. The web page informs its young readers, “We want you to make known that we are the largest, oldest, and most powerful Klan organization.” In other words, children should respond positively to the message because so many other people have examined the Klan and found them to be an organization worth joining.

Other studies have examined myths, described as master narratives, that are found in different cultural texts (Barthes, 1972; Hart, 1997; Waltman & Davis, 2004; 2005; Waltman & Haas, 2011). Mapping the myths that may be found in a text, or multiple texts, may provide insight into the important belief constellations that constitute a cultural grouping. The myths may be useful for understanding the thinking that guides the actions, and sometimes violence, of the group.

Space limitation requires that the myths that have emerged in the study of a variety of texts from the organized hate movement in the United States be described here in somewhat truncated terms. It is not surprising that the myths describing Aryan identities possess a number of positive qualities, while the myths used to describe the enemies of the Aryan race are negative, stereotypical, and dehumanizing. But there are a variety of other myths that provide more interesting insight into the collective memory that authors and users of racist texts are trying to cultivate (Waltman & Davis, 2004, 2005; Waltman & Haas, 2011). For example, the “pleasure of murder” myth communicates to Aryans that they will enjoy the experience of murdering the enemies of the Aryan race. The “racial holy war” (RAHOWA) myth communicates to Aryans that the inevitable outcome of the social conflict inherent
between Aryans and their enemies (Jews and other “mud races”) is a racial war that Aryans will inevitably win. The “dispassionate Aryan” myth communicates to Aryans that when confronting the enemies of the Aryan race (or committing acts of ethnoviolence) they should always maintain control of their emotions at the critical moments of racial conflict. This is a way of demonstrating their moral superiority and the meaning and purpose of racial violence. A broader sampling of the myths derived from Waltman and Haas’s critique of *The Turner Diaries* (MacDonald, 1996) and *Hunter* (MacDonald, 1989) may be found in Table 1.
Table 1. Hate Myths Constructed in *The Turner Diaries* and *Hunter*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Myth</th>
<th>Myth Synopsis</th>
<th>Turner Diaries</th>
<th>Hunter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moral Aryan</td>
<td>The moral Aryan myth is a narrative that enunciates the values and personal behavior that constitute moral conduct for the racially conscious white person. One of the most notable elements of Aryan morality is the compassion one should show other Aryans, particularly Aryan women.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigilant Aryan</td>
<td>A vigilant Aryan acts in ways that are consistent with his or her racial beliefs. This involves strict adherence to an ideology of hate that guides and shapes one’s behaviors and interpretations of daily events.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispassionate Aryan</td>
<td>This myth teaches that the proper racist is calm in all circumstances. This dispassionate state is most valuable when the racist Aryan is engaged in violence or preparing for violence.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martyr hero</td>
<td>The martyr hero exemplifies morality, vigilance, and dispassion by making the ultimate sacrifice for one’s race, martyrdom. This involves the complete subordination of individual identity to racial identity, which is rewarded with a kind of eternal life when one is remembered by other Aryans after an honorable death.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black predator</td>
<td>This myth constructs black people, particularly black men, as an ongoing threat to white people. Blacks are understood to be robbers, murderers, and rapists. Blacks are constructed as taking pleasure in the harming of white people.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black savage</td>
<td>The black savage myth is used to construct the African American identity as inferior and subhuman. This is accomplished through frequent use of animalistic metaphors (e.g., swarming hordes, cannibals).</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish vampire</td>
<td>The Jewish vampire myth is grounded in the belief that the Jewish race has never produced its own culture. Jews are depicted as both living off other</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Myth</td>
<td>Myth Synopsis</td>
<td>Turner Diaries</td>
<td>Hunter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cultures and “sucking” them dry of their resources. This process of cultural conquest is said to be so gradual and subtle that only a “racially aware” white person can recognize it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repulsive Jew</td>
<td>The repulsive Jew myth impersonalizes and distances the Jew from the reader. Jewish women are described as fat and grotesque. This is also evident in constructions of Jews as animal-like and living solely for the sake of gratifying their senses. <em>Jewish</em> is assumed to be equivalent to <em>ugly.</em></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish pornographer</td>
<td>The Jewish pornographer myth seeks to link the corruption of wholesome whites (through race mixing and other liberal agendas) to the Jew. The notion of Jewish pornography has a less literal reference to the government (through laws, such as the legalization of same-sex civil unions) and the media (e.g., through movies and television shows that encourage racial mixing).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zionist-occupied government</td>
<td>The Zionist-occupied government (ZOG) myth can be viewed as an extension of the Jewish vampire myth. Racists view ZOG as both the manifestation of Jewish conspiracy within the personnel of the government and the government’s promotion of Israel-dominated policy.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping white man</td>
<td>This myth explains white people’s complicity in their oppression by ZOG. Their lack of racial consciousness prevents them from identifying with Aryan culture and participating in an Aryan collective memory. Sleeping white men are appropriately viewed as an other. In part, the white man is sleeping because he has been weakened and made comfortable by the creature comforts of capitalism. White men are sleeping due to brainwashing and materialism. The sleeping white man myth is ultimately used to justify the racial holy war.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial holy war</td>
<td>The racial holy war (RAHOWA) myth is seen as the sole remedy to the “diseases” described above (predator Jews and savage black people).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Myth</td>
<td>Myth Synopsis</td>
<td>Turner Diaries</td>
<td>Hunter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorist’s Burden</td>
<td>Ethnoterrorism and an eventual racial holy war are necessary solutions because ZOG and the Jewish-controlled media have made Aryans second-class citizens, reversing the natural superiority won by Aryans.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Aryan Ideal</td>
<td>The Terrorist’s Burden Myth depicts the dilemma that racially aware Aryans face concerning ethnoviolence: the unavoidable sacrifice of some innocents (racially conscious Aryans) to ultimately save the Aryan race.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure of Murder</td>
<td>In general, the Female Aryan Ideal Myth perpetuates a gendered narrative of Aryan woman as pure and innocent. Readers learn the Female Aryan Ideal Myth as the main character glorifies the physical attributes of Aryan women. Women are revered for their ability to produce white children. Thus, Aryan women are key to the survival of the Aryan race. Women are also revered when they support men and avoid Feminist beliefs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Aryan</td>
<td>The Pleasure of Murder Myth advanced in <em>Hunter</em> teaches readers the pride Aryans should take in the commission of ethnoviolence. <em>Hunter</em> teaches readers the pride Aryans should take in a job well-done. Thus, Aryan pleasure is realized by committing ethnoviolence against the enemies of the Aryan race.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goehring and Dionisopoulou (2013) argue that *The Turner Diaries* can be understood as a persuasive text that appeals to readers as a form of constitutive rhetoric. Constitutive rhetoric is a form of rhetoric in which a text calls its audience into being (Charland, 1987, p. 134). The rhetoric reveals a collective identity for the audience and works to establish the boundaries of that identity and to distinguish it from other competing or potentially relevant identities by offering the audience a way to see themselves in the vision advanced by the text (Stewart, Smith, & Denton, 2012, p. 200). The authors argue that fiction can be particularly effective in promoting a cause as worthy or a community as valuable (Burke, 1973). Goehring and Dionosopoulos (2013) argue that *The Turner Diaries* constitute the white supremacist community through “identification by antithesis” (Burke, 1973). Identification by antithesis invites identification and the formation of community based on social differences. That is, the community defines itself and is made whole by what distinguishes it from other identities and communities.

Goehring and Dionosopoulos (2013) argued that their reading of *The Turner Diaries* revealed that the identification by antithesis is accomplished by encouraging Aryans to see themselves as a part of a white supremacist community by distinguishing themselves from Jews, African Americans, the federal government, and the media, as well as white people who are unaware of, or complicit in, the threat posed by dangerous others. The federal government is portrayed as controlled by Jewish interests and as seeking to engage in a genocidal war against white people by encouraging multiculturalism, an alien value to white people in the United States. The media, broadly, are portrayed as biased and controlled by Jews. Their purpose is to help the federal government to push an agenda that encourages Jewish interests and challenges white interests. In *The Turner Diaries*, this threat is dealt with through the killing of journalists until it can be said that America truly has an American press again (p. 375).

Waltman and Davis (2005) also studied the discursive features of *The Turner Diaries* in terms of the set of myths that construct a collective identity for white people. Many of the qualities regarding the “other” identified by Goehring and Dionosopoulos were also identified by Waltman and Davis in the form of myths. However, Waltman and Davis argued that *The Turner Diaries* offers instead a specific collective Aryan identity for how one may be a proper racist that goes beyond identification by antithesis. They argued that there are common ways of being in the world that Aryans should aspire to and eventually embody and that are learned through Aryan mythology. The “moral Aryan” myth emphasizes the compassion Aryans would show to other Aryans. This includes the example of an Aryan terrorist who paused in the midst of the aftermath of an explosion to tend to the wounds of an Aryan woman injured by a bombing. Another example is a description of snipers who targeted black police officers but not white police officers.

A second myth, the “vigilant Aryan” myth, emphasizes that the ideal Aryan should be prepared to act on his own racist beliefs. This means being prepared to attack Jewish controlled institutions whenever possible. Moreover, vigilant Aryans take care to plan for their own action and violence against the corrupt system that oppresses Aryans.

A third myth, the dispassionate Aryan myth, describes someone who is able to remain calm in all circumstances. There are numerous examples of the protagonist killing Jews, African Americans, and white race traitors. In all of these examples, the ideal of the dispassionate Aryan is displayed in the descriptions of the killings. Even on “The Day of the Rope,” the day
following the Aryan victory over Jews and nonwhites, there are examples of terrorists being instructed to ignore pleas for mercy and to keep control of their emotions as they hang their enemies in order to distinguish themselves from their enemies, who lack self-control.

The “martyr hero” myth is a narrative that emphasizes that the ultimate Aryan hero is one who has given his life for his race. Indeed, the book is called *The Turner Diaries* because the protagonist is someone who gave his life in order to support the ultimate victory of Aryans in the race war. Waltman and Davis argued that martyrdom serves to extend the Aryan community, linking the individual to the Aryan community in inextricable ways.

In an interesting approach to the study of hate speech, Olson (2002) compared the discourse produced by people who have committed acts of hate-motivated violence with the discourse produced by stranger rapists, and by sport hunters when they talk about hunting their prey. Olson found that the three types of discourse shared a common interpretive homology. The discourse produced by the speakers had four points of homological correspondence: (a) The rhetor symbolically constructs and initiates a nonconsensual adversarial relationship with the target, (b) targets are selected opportunistically and are constructed as interchangeable with all other potential targets, (c) rhetors impersonalize their prey without objectifying them or diminishing the power of the prey following their conquest, and (d) rhetors express a desire to dominate and to take pleasure in the dominance of the prey. These themes are conceptually distinct from the hate stratagem, but the themes share with the hate stratagem a process by which one is moved from disgust with a group with whom one has an adversarial relationship to a desire and willingness to take pleasure in the suffering of one’s enemies.

**The Delivery of Hate Speech**

**The Centrality of the Internet to Modern Hate Speech**

The study of hate speech in the present and recent past requires an understanding of the Internet and the expanding role of the Internet in daily life. The first web page devoted to the communication of hate, “Stormfront,” was developed by Don Black in 1995 (Foxman & Wolf, 2013; Kessler, 1999; Waltman & Haas, 2007, 2011). The forum now has 300,000 members (Beirich, Hankes, Piggott, & Schlatter, 2016). The development of hate on the Internet had a profound impact on the hate movement in the United States. Formerly, a gathering of neo-Nazis might require a participant to travel great distances to an isolated location in order to be around others with whom he could be himself. Now, for the price of an inexpensive computer and a server (or a modem) to connect to the Internet, hateful minds are only moments away from communicating with one another (Guttentag & DiPirseo, 2003). As the Internet grew, it is not surprising that the various hate groups grew more interconnected (Waltman & Haas, 2011). The privacy and anonymity of the Internet made it easier for the hatemonger to express him/herself in ways that decency would discourage in a world of face-to-face interactions. The anonymity may actually fuel people’s hatred, as they are more likely to viciously attack others and express their hatred toward others under conditions of anonymity (Citron, 2014; Foxman & Wolf, 2013). Cognitively cocooned with like-minded individuals, individuals on the Internet may receive the mistaken impression that their hateful views are widely shared (Citron, 2014; Foxman & Wolf, 2013). Moreover, hate speech on the Internet serves to mislead millions of innocent people, “recruiting the next generation of
bigots, racists, sexists, homophobes, and anti-Semites” (Foxman & Wolf, 2013, p. 31). However, the Internet does more than facilitate recruitment, it becomes a place where people can be radicalized to the point of violence (Blee, 2002; Waltman, 2014).

Much research on hate speech online has examined a variety of web pages to understand how discourse is used to accomplish different goals. Waltman and Haas (2011) did a deep dive into the comprehensive web page “The Insurgent” to describe how readers could experience the hate stratagem by reading through archives of readings, games, cartoons, posters, and artwork. Waltman (2003) examined the Ku Klux Klan’s “Just for Kids” web page and found that children were recruited to the Klan’s perspective through the use of a blend of the hate stratagem and the use of persuasive heuristics.

These examples deal primarily with web pages developed by specific groups with specific ideological goals. Waltman and Haas (2011) examined other web pages for the extent to which they possessed the myths that form the collective memory of groups in the organized hate movement: (a) “Vanguard News Network,” a racist online newsletter that is designed to appeal to a wide variety of hate groups, (b) “Lone Wolf Survivalist,” a web page designed to sell equipment to lone wolf terrorists and survivalists, and (c) “Women for Aryan Unity,” a group of racist pre-Christian pagan women devoted to living a feminist lifestyle while cooperating with men in the hate movement to further the interests of their race. Employing the constant comparative analysis procedures of grounded theory, Waltman and Haas found that all of these Internet sites drew upon the myths of the in-group and the out-group to justify their hatred and actions that they might take against the enemies of the Aryan race.

The Vanguard News Network (VNN) draws upon the Jewish-controlled media myth when they introduce themselves to readers in their banner with the heading “No Jews Just Right.” They explain to readers that they are former journalists and academics driven from their jobs by a “Semitrical (sic) correctness” that has denatured our culture (the “Jewish vampire” myth). Their goal is to reclaim the American mind (Waltman & Haas, 2011). The myths were also pursued through a department VNN called “Between the lines.” This section teaches readers to apply an Aryan understanding to news stories. The writers insert their own cheeky comments into the text of the message to point out the bias of the writer. One example is the October 8, 2002, remarks by President Bush about the threat of Saddam Hussein (with VNN’s comments in italics):

Tonight I want to take a few minutes to discuss a grave threat to peace, and America’s determination to confront the world by leading that threat—oops, shouldn’t’ve said that; lead the world in confronting that threat ... The threat comes from Iraq. It arises directly from the Iraqi regime’s own actions—its history of aggression, its insistence upon existing, and its drive toward an arsenal of terror to counter the one we’ve armed Israel with ... We resolved then, and we are resolved today, to confront any and every opponent to mass immigration threat, from any source, that could bring sudden terror and suffering to America.

Here VNN hints at Israel’s control of the federal government and the United Staes’ role in attacking the enemies of Israel while stating, not so implicitly, that the U.S. government is a threat to the world.
VNN also teaches these myths through their Multi-Media Center. VNN’s Multi-Media Center section offers a range of slick promotional materials and cartoons that advance VNN’s racist agenda. Through the manipulation of digital and nondigital images, Jewish, African American, and Latino identities are vilified and dehumanized. Because this is done through “humor,” the Multi-Media Center becomes a place where white supremacists may go to find pleasure in their hatred.

The “Lone Wolf Survivalist” web page is devoted to perpetuating the lone wolf myth evident in Hunter. A lone wolf is an undercover Aryan who is sympathetic with the hate movement but belongs to no particular hate group, a practice that protects hate groups and their leaders from legal culpability and prosecution. The goal of the lone wolf is to wait for the time to strike at the enemies of the Aryan race when their conscience tells them to act. The subtitle of the Lone Wolf Survivalist page is “the Hour of Redemption is near.” The page offers various tools that the lone wolf may explore and study: sniper training, silencers, artillery, tools, and underground economy. Clearly, the page is devoted to teaching followers the skills they might need to hunt their enemies. Readers learn to value the identity of the lone wolf.

“Women for Aryan Unity” is a web page devoted to creating a new feminism among racist neo-pagans. The goal is to teach women the values appropriate for their role in this race religion and to work cooperatively with men to advance the Aryan race. The page has information pertaining to the various elements of Odinism, religious blots (prayers), the names of gods and goddesses, and various Aryan traditions. The goal is to perpetuate the “ideal female Aryan” myth (see Appendix A). That is, women learn the importance of bearing and raising white children. They learn to oppose abortion (white genocide) and to make a healthy home for the entire family. This is the contribution of the ideal Aryan woman. This nurturing quality is emphasized in their “Adopt a Bruder” program, which encourages women to adopt a man who is serving time in prison for fighting for his race. Women are encouraged to contribute money each month to a prisoner or to write letters to help maintain his morale.

Several academic writers (e.g., Foxman & Wolf, 2013; Perry, 2001; Waltman, 2014; Waltman & Davis, 2004, 2005; Waltman & Haas, 2011) have described how hate groups and specific hatemongers use the Internet to radicalize those who visit their sites. There is no way to know the true proportion of the readers of these sites who eventually turn to violence. What is known, however, is that in the last few decades one common attribute that these individuals share is an immersion in hateful ideologies through the Internet. Benjamin Nathaniel Smith followed the web page maintained by the World Church of the Creator and Matt Hale and eventually worked with Matt Hale. In 1999, following Hale’s rejection from the Illinois Bar Association, Smith went on a killing spree that began in Chicago and ended in Indiana, where he committed suicide. In 1999, a British neo-Nazi named David Copeland learned how to make pipe bombs in a cybercafé. He planted bombs in a Bangladeshi neighborhood and a gay bar in London, killing three people and injuring 140 people. In 2009, James Von Brunn, a producer and consumer of hate on the Internet, killed a guard at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. In 2011, Anders Breivik went on a killing spree in Norway, targeting the children of liberal politicians he viewed as responsible for Muslim immigration to Norway. His manifesto revealed that he had been reading many sites maintained by hatemongers in the United States (Kay, 2011). In 2015, Dylan Roof shot nine African American worshippers in the Mother Emanuel African Methodist Church in Charleston, S.C. He told them he was killing them because they were responsible for raping white women. His “manifesto” revealed that he had
been following many white supremacist Internet sites. These are only a few examples of what would be a long, exhaustive list of white supremacist, religious, and misogynist terrorists discussed in the academic research cited here.

**Hate Online in the Manosphere and the Alt-Right**

Since 2007, coping with the misogyny of the manosphere—defined as “a loose collection of interlinked sites ... steeped in misogyny (and in some cases racism)”—has become a ubiquitous part of working and participating online and across social media for feminist authors, scholars, and activists (Futrelle, 2011). The manosphere is comprised of three online groupings—men’s rights activists (MRAs), pick-up artists (PUAs), and men going their own way (MGTOWs)—that have largely been studied as individual groups, distinct in practice and philosophy from each other. While differences do exist among these three distinct expressions of the manosphere, they share an ideological foundation in their belief in a global culture of “misandry,” that men are under attack by an overly feminized and feminist society, and that masculinity itself is endangered in contemporary society (Elam, 2012; Frey, 2010; Vorek, 2011; Wright, 2013).

Ferber (2000) compared the discourse of the men’s rights movement with the discourses of hate groups. Both movements invest discourses that construct men as under attack from powerful forces intended to emasculate men and advance other identities. Both groups see feminism as a dangerous ideology that attacks the essential character of both men and women. It denatures women by placing them in the workforce, often in positions of power over men. It denatures men by emasculating them. Ferber argued that both discourses construct men as in a state of shame for their emasculation. The discourses construct a solution to this problem: for men (white men) to return to their true, masculine nature and to claim dominion over women (and other racial groups). However, scholarly literature about the manosphere is limited.

Most scholarly works focus on the progenitors of the manosphere men’s culture known broadly as the men’s movement, and much of the work is focused specifically on the mythopoetic men’s movement and the Promise Keepers. Social philosopher Kenneth Clatterbaugh included a chapter in his book (2007) on men’s rights perspectives but it focused on understanding the social realities of gender roles and masculinity and so did not touch on the culture of the manosphere. Similarly, Messner (1998) wrote about the men’s movement with a focus on sex roles. While, Kimmel and Kaufman (1994) articulated how the destabilization of common understandings of masculinity promotes regressive men’s movement ideologies.

The majority of writing about the manosphere is currently in nonscholarly publications, such as newspapers and blogs. The limited field of scholarly work to date has focused on distinct subgroups rather than taking a holistic approach to the manosphere. Kimmel (2013) included a chapter on men’s rights activism (MRA) where he noted the rise of MRA online forums as a function of middle- to upper-class white men’s articulation of aggrieved entitlement in the face of social change. Dragiewicz (2011) wrote about the link between discourses by
convicted batterers and men’s rights lawsuits to repeal domestic violence laws and eliminate funding stemming from the Violence Against Women Act. The remaining literature is made up primarily of journal articles focused on particular subgroups of the manosphere.

Of this literature, the majority of articles are focused on studies of pick-up artist (PUA) culture and tactics. This work includes studies that track the effectiveness of PUA “seduction” strategies. According to Oesch and Mikloušić (2012), PUA strategies work to build intimacy between strangers, allowing men to successfully engage women. Schuurmans and Monaghan (2015) provided a qualitative study of how PUA mythology produces anxiety for men in the PUA community. Denes (2011) provided a study framed through feminist analysis, where she argued that PUA seduction scripts are more correctly categorized as rape scripts because they suggest that men can and should manipulate women’s biological responses without women’s verbal consent to sex. The scholarly work done to date has yet to position these groups firmly within hate group culture and does not question the implications of the Internet and social media in packaging manosphere ideologies for broadened consumption into the normative social, public, and political spheres. The lacuna in the literature is a promising and fruitful area of work for scholars interested in hate speech.

Current manosphere groups have evolved from early online platforms started in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States and are governed by a sense of “aggrieved entitlement” (Kimmel, 2013) in a world where women and minorities are seemingly becoming more equal. This rise of minority power produces anxieties based on a belief that white men are “entitled to feel powerful,” especially when they construe that power as being challenged by less worthy individuals (Kimmel, 2013). With the technological affordances of Web 2.0 and the wide proliferation of wi-fi and smartphone technologies, this precarious masculinity, and the manosphere culture, has begun to globalize, moving particularly into countries and geographies characterized by adherence to very traditional patriarchal values. Thus, online and social media platforms enable the collapsing of geographical distance between members, so hate groups can reach wider audiences. The technologies also enable anonymity and partial participation, thus mitigating the social, legal, and political ramifications of participating in hate. Participation is further enabled and encouraged through social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, for example) that allow sharing of memes, images, stories, and often decontextualized or overly simplified renderings of social analysis and opinion.

On these platforms, hate ideologies can be shared as politically incorrect humor, specifically through memes. Rhetorical scholar Johnson argued that the meme format is especially powerful and “[m]emes persuade ... because they ‘program’ people to respond in particular ways” (2007, p. 42). This aligns with Waltman and Haas’s work on heuristics, or “rules of thumb” used to promote hate online (Waltman & Haas, 2011, p. 24). Memes themselves are the online rhetorical structure or vehicles for heuristic content made up of images linked to stereotypical claims.

Even more importantly, the rhetorical power or persuasive ability of memes has consequences beyond mere consumption as “[t]he meme extends the notion of politics, and power, outside of the state and even dominant institutions” (Johnson, 2007, p. 43). This is precisely the mechanism by which manosphere memes utilize negatively valenced cultural tropes and stereotypes about gender, articulated as “humor” to persuade men (and women) both inside
and outside the movement. Memes whose content is able to tap into the consumers’ heuristic thinking about gender as they spread online are a crucial tool through which manosphere rhetoric becomes “normalized” and mainstreamed into everyday social and public life. Thus, the mobilization of hate memes online and through social media means that extreme ideologies and hate can be normalized into both “political” and “nonpolitical” spaces of everyday life, further enhancing the incursion of hate ideology into mainstream life.

The movement of hate from fringe groups into the mainstream political and social culture can be seen in the rise of “Alt-Right” culture on the Internet. The term Alt-Right has been described as “racism for the tech savvy generation” that proliferates through meme and social media culture (Fraser, 2017). In addition, sexism or misogyny has been noted as a primary lure used to radicalize men into the Alt-Right race hate ideologies (Romano, 2016). This is achieved by leveraging the manosphere antifeminist ideology of the zero sum game of gender, where gains for women are posed as inherent losses for men. Following Ferber’s work, the distrust of feminism and women in both the hate and MRA worlds allows antifeminist ideas to be used to radicalize men online. Alt-Right groups, like manosphere groups, leverage gendered hate against supposedly “feminized” masculinity and “weak” men. In the manosphere, terms such as white knight and mangina are used to denigrate men who support women and in the Alt-Right, the term cuck, a highly racialized term derived from cuckold porn, is similarly used to describe weak (white) men “duped” by manipulative (white) women and African American men for similar purposes (Schwartz, 2016). The application of racialized terms to an existing gendered otherness makes way for the radicalization of white men into race hate and ethno-nationalism from gender hate platforms.

In the still-forming online “white identity” movement, strands of traditional race hate, ethno-nationalism, and manosphere ideologies converge. Broad-ranging groups from “gamers,” online video game adherents linked to PUA and manosphere cultures, coexist with white identity and ethno-nationalist adherents who express rage and hatred “against social justice warriors—SJWs—who want to spoil their fun. They hate the liberal apparatus of the state, including the mainstream press and Ivy League academia, which they collectively dub The Cathedral. And they hate normies—normal people—and their repressive political philosophy, democracy” (Fraser, 2017). Alt-Right groups’ power online and in the political milieu is forming differently because of the media in which it proliferates and because its overt focus is “culture wars,” where race hate can appear to be different from traditional forms of race hate, such as that of the Ku Klux Klan. The shift to culture, or rather culture as a covering for neo-racist ideologies, has been posed as a response to antiracist work done since the civil rights movement (Balibar, 1991, pp. 22–23). This convergence of hate ideologies and its successful proliferation through online hate speech will be an important focus in emerging hate speech research.

**Hate Novels**

Hate novels have played an important role in the radicalization of individuals through hate speech. One such novel is *The Turner Diaries*, which was written by the late William Pierce (under the pseudonym of McDonald), former director of the National Alliance, a once influential neo-Nazi organization. The novel describes the life of Earl Turner in a racial holy war between Aryans and non-Aryans (Jews, African Americans, and other nonwhites). Turner
is a martyr in a war that is eventually won by the Aryans. As a diary, the novel informs readers about the war from the perspective of Turner. Readers learn, in detail, how to carry out bombings and other violent actions. The novel has been an important text for the hate movement in the United States. It has played a role in the radicalization and recruitment of terrorists in the hate movement. The book was found in the possession of Timothy McVeigh when he was arrested (and later convicted) in the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City (Perry, 2001; Waltman & Haas, 2011).

The section of this chapter called “Content Analysis and Close Readings of Texts” reviews several studies that had proffered different conceptualizations of hate speech as delivered through *The Turner Diaries* (Goehring & Dionisopoulos, 2013; Waltman & Davis, 2005). Other researchers have studied *The Turner Diaries* as an influential text within the hate movement. Ferber and Kimmel (2000), like Waltman and Davis (2005), examined the novel’s use of myth to appeal to readers’ imaginations, specifically the Western myth. The racial holy war depicted in the novel is cast against the backdrop of the Old West, where action is equated with violence and is valued over talk as a means of problem solving. Others have examined the novel through the lenses of an apocalyptic worldview (Brodie, 1998), conspiracy theories (Pipes, 1997; Walker Fields, 2002), and religion (Gallagher, 1997).

Another novel, also written by Pierce, is *Hunter*. *Hunter* was written to take readers through the learning process of becoming a more radicalized white supremacist. The novel tells the story of Oscar Yeager, a man who is experiencing an undifferentiated hatred of mixed-race couples (where one member of the couple is white). He spends his evenings hunting and killing mixed-race couples because they disgust him. Over the course of the novel, he meets several white supremacists who cultivate his hatred and teach him an ideology of hate that justifies his disgust of mixed-race couples. He eventually learns that miscegenation is part of the Jewish plot to eradicate whites through their control of institutions, including the media, government, Hollywood, and the international banking system.

Waltman and Haas (2011) examined *Hunter* through the lens of the hate stratagem. That is, they found that as readers progressed through the novel, (a) they learned a number of myths that caused an extreme identification with their own social group (white people); (b) they learned that the out-group that posed a threat to the valued in-group was to be understood in dehumanized and stereotypical terms and was culturally inferior; (c) they learned that the out-group poses an immediate threat to the valued in-group (the out-group wishes to destroy the in-group); and (d) they learned that they will enjoy the suffering of the demeaned and threatening out-group. Waltman and Haas argued that the hate stratagem becomes a way of rhetorically conquering the out-group and is a process of radicalizing the in-group.

Waltman (2015) examined a new racist novel, *White Apocalypse*. *White Apocalypse* asserts a history of white American indigeneity, claiming that Vikings were the first people to occupy North America, before the “American Indians” (the Solutrean hypothesis). The American Indians are described as immigrating from the “Orient,” across the Bering Strait, approximately 12,000 years ago. These “Amerindians” constitute a loose mixture of North American Indians and Mexicans. The novel tells the story of a conservative anthropologist, Dr. Jack Schoenherr, whose working life is dedicated to proving the Solutrean hypothesis. If true, the Solutrean hypothesis would prove that Aryans are the true Native Americans. This would mean, among other things, that Aryans are the only group of people deserving citizenship. A
group of violent Amerindians break into Schoenherr’s home to kill him before he can prove his hypothesis. They kill his family, but Schoenherr kills many of the Amerindians in a gun battle. Schoenherr later meets Samuel Buchanan, who has been working to prove the Solutrean hypothesis through a conservative historical think tank. The two join forces to fight the Amerindians and to discover the lost bones of ancient American Aryans that will prove the Solutrean hypothesis.

Waltman examined the book through the lens of grounded theory to identify a set of myths that give logic to this new version of hate in American life. Not surprisingly, the text identifies a number of myths that vilify non-Aryans who pose a threat to Aryan Americans. Aryans are understood to be warriorlike, creative, and the producers of Western civilization. What is unique about *White Apocalypse* is that it shares a new lesson with readers. Readers learn that liberalism was brought to America by Jews fleeing Russia. To be liberal is to be Jewish and insufficiently American. Liberals hold beliefs that are detrimental to America and Western civilization. Liberals value egalitarianism, globalism, materialism, and multiculturalism. These are all Jewish threats to Western civilization and Aryan identity.

**White Power Hate Music**

Music has played an important role in the development of many cultures within the hate movement. For example, early skinhead culture was influenced by early heavy metal and the Jamaican reggae that was popular among tough Jamaican street gangs (Hamm, 1993). Early skinheads blended Jamaican reggae toughness with an image of the English working class at a time of economic austerity in England. They wore their hair extremely short, adopted the steel-toed dockworker’s boots known as Doc Martens, leather bomber jackets, Fred Perry sports shirts, and braces (Hamm, 1993). Punk rock, with its antisystem, anarchist message, ultimately became a defining feature of skinhead taste, along with idiot dancing, which involved raucous, chaotic movement in which dancers would collide with one another and became a precursor of, if not a fuel for, violence. White power music would eventually displace punk rock, as racist skinheads and youth within the hate movement of all stripes were drawn to a music that feels insurgent and allows them to take pleasure in their hatred as they sing about Aryan superiority and violent actions taken against their enemies.

One of the first white power bands, Skrewdriver, was led by a skinhead named Ian Stuart Donaldson (Brown, 2004; Hamm, 1993). The band became very popular in England. Skrewdriver made their way to America, along with skinhead beliefs and practices. Eventually, America had its own skinhead insurgence in the 1980s (Brown, 2004; Hamm, 1993). Resistance Records became a prominent label that distributed white power music, followed by Micetrap and Tightrope Records (Pitcavage, 2012), and the white power music industry grew, with young people thirsty for a brand of music that reflected their values, emboldened them, and made them feel powerful. In the current decade, the music is more diverse and belongs to the broader hate movement (Futrell, Simi, & Gottshalk, 2006). Indeed, there does not seem to be a consensus on what precise label to give the music. It has been referred to as skinhead music, white power music, hate music, and neo-Nazi music. Some even note this music sometimes reflects the country music genre. Recent estimates are that there are approximately 100 to 150 white power bands operating in any given year (Pitcavage, 2012). This broad genre of music has proven to be a powerful form of recruitment and radicalization.
of young people into the hate movement. According to Love (2016), Erich Gliebe of Resistance
Records claims, “Eleven and 12 years old, ... that’s the perfect age to start grooming kids ... We
give them a CD, ... they go to our Web site and see other music and download some of our
music ... To me, that’s the best propaganda tool for our youth.”

Hamm (1993) conducted a thorough ethnographic study of skinheads in a host of large cities
in the United States, with the aim of determining the factors that were able to distinguish
terrorist skinheads (skinheads for whom violence was a part of their daily lives) from
nonterrorist skinheads (skinheads for whom violence was a minor part of their association
with skinhead subculture). Hamm argued that white power music is a cultural artifact that is
important to the construction of the identity of the terrorist skinhead. At the time of his study,
Hamm found that approximately 91% of terrorist skinheads identified Skrewdriver as their
favorite band and limited their music consumption to white power bands, while nonterrorist
skinheads reported listening to a variety of forms of music. Hamm claimed, “Skrewdriver’s
music appears to have offered skinheads the perverted moral energy necessary to commit
acts of paki bashing, queer bashing, and terrorism” (Hamm, 1993, p. 120). Eventually, the
German government described skinhead music as the number one gateway to violence (Love,
2016).

Scholars have written about the way in which music and art can serve as a catalyst for
ritualized forms of violence, much like the “berserking” of groups of violent skinheads (Brown,
2004; Chastagner, 2012; Cotter, 1999; Etter, 2009; Futrell, Simi, & Gottshalk, 2006). Futrell,
Simi, and Gottshalk (2006) emphasized participants’ reports that white power music serves to
foster strong feelings of dignity, pride, pleasure, love, kinship, and fellowship. It is probably
this sense of identification that contributes to a collective identity that motivates financial
support for white power music and that makes it the strongest revenue stream in the
movement (Condon & Richmond, 2012). An ethnographic study conducted by Futrell, Simi,
and Gottshalk (2006) described the music “scene” in order to understand the meanings of the
white power music for participants. They identified three levels of scene: The local scene, the
translocal scene, and the virtual scene. The local scene was typified by performances that
took place at a local bar that drew primarily individuals from the immediate community. The
translocal scene was typified by a multiday music festival that drew people from a wider span
of communities and that took place on private property. The virtual scene included
information from around the web, including social media platforms, web pages, and message
boards relevant to the music and that serve as occasions and means for sense-making among
participants. Data collection took place at the music scenes, from secondary sources, such as
the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League, which have made a study
of these groups, and interviews with individuals who regularly take part in the music scenes.

Futrell, Simi, and Gottshalk (2006) reported that the white power music scene plays an
important role in identity construction and the participants feeling of agency. The music
scenes were places where participants experienced a cathartic expression of their emotions.
Participants reported that music scenes were places where they could be themselves,
experience dignity, and be around people who are like them, and therefore experience a sense
of community. Participants even reported that listening to music while alone offered a sense of
dignity and community. The feeling of community is clearly available from the local,
translocal, and virtual scenes. Many of the scenes allowed participants to tell stories of their participation that emphasized their exceptionalism, superiority, recruitment to the movement, and commitment to the movement.

Brown (2004) described how skinheads in England and Germany were aligned with the right wing in those countries by Skrewdriver and Bohse Onkelz, respectively. Both groups, through lyrics and style, blended skinhead pride and fearlessness with a pride of nationalism. Set in a firmly nationalistic foundation, increasingly radical themes of ethnic identity were established. The tensions were exacerbated by programs in both countries that increased anxiety about guest-worker precariousness. In Germany, the right wing extremist identity was imbued with meaning from Germany’s Nazi past. Brown believed that connections between skinhead culture and the right wing are tenuous and not permanent. However, he described efforts made by Blood and Honor and Hammerskin Nations, two prominent skinhead groups that have played an important role in the white power music scene, to promote music scenes that explicitly connect right wing ideology with skinhead lifestyles (Brown, 2004, p. 171). Like other authors, Brown has emphasized the important role of the music in the recruitment and radicalization of young people into this violent milieu. Moreover, recruitment and radicalization may be made easier by the fact that some gangs (e.g., Vinlander Social Club, Volksfront, Hammerskins) have close connections to bands and the music scene (Chastanger, 2012).

Etter (2009) described the music as adopting a death metal or hate rock theme that emphasized violence, angst, dissatisfaction with the current order, and an “end justifies the means” worldview. He argued that these themes fuel the street wars that occur in American cities (Etter, 2009). According to Axelrod (2012), historian Michael Kohlstruck of Berlin’s Center for Research on Anti-Semitism argued that the music scenes, like the Internet, become places where young white supremacists may be cocooned from outside influences as they are radicalized through listening to screams of revolution, white genocide, racial holy wars, and the evils of Jews and African Americans.

Discussion and Future Directions

Research has examined hateful discourse as it is expressed through a variety of texts (hate online, hate novels, and hate music) produced by hatemongers (race hate groups and groups in the manosphere). The central role of the Internet in connecting the texts is clear (racist novels and white power music may be accessed and discussed through various web platforms). Indeed, the growth and integration of the hate movement coincides with the evolving technological affordances of the Internet. Moreover, research has made clear that hate-motivated violence and crime are associated with the tendency of the hatemongers to cocoon themselves in various sites, readings, and bulletin boards (Love, 2016; Waltman & Haas, 2011). The anonymity of the Internet emboldens the hateful mind to greater extremes and the community found there leads people to believe that their hateful ideas are more widely shared than is actually the case (Citron, 2014).

However, the nature of hate speech also serves to radicalize individuals and to push the hateful mind toward more extreme hateful thinking and even violence (Love, 2016). The hate stratagem (Waltman & Haas, 2011; Whillock, 1995) encourages readers of various hate
messages to identify with a valued and precious in-group, to see out-groups as devalued and dehumanized, to see the dehumanized out-group as posing an existential threat to the in-group, and to imagine themselves taking pleasure in the suffering and murder of the out-group. Similar processes are reported in the ways that stranger rapists and hate-motivated predators (Olson, 2002) discuss their “prey.” Historically, hate speech has served to prepare communities for hate-motivated violence, as one must construct the out-group as worthy of killing before they may actually be killed (Keene, 1986; Tsesis, 2002). The threat of violence from right wing and misogynist extremists poses an even greater risk to the American public than threats from groups like ISIS (Eichenwald, 2016; Kurzman & Schanzer, 2015). As Kurzman and Schanzer pointed out, empirical studies of the threats faced by law enforcement paint a different picture than the fears stoked by politicians and headlines.

It is important to note that hate groups are connected by shared ideological perspectives. Groups within the hate movement share the sexism/heterosexism (and in some cases, even misogyny) of groups in the manosphere and those prone to cyber harassment (Perry, 2001; Waltman & Haas, 2011). Such shared beliefs and discourse can create a homology that unites different groups and leads them to view the world in similar ways (Waltman, 2015). As noted, the manosphere may serve as a portal for many men into the larger Alt-Right movement with its broader white supremacist/nationalist worldview. So, the manosphere may help connect misogynists to people who desire a white ethnostate (Cox, 2016).

The study of hate speech is important for its own sake. There are connections between the study of hate speech and other theoretical perspectives that are important for the advancement of both perspectives. Social identity theory is a significant theory that describes the competitive interactions between different social groups. Briefly, the theory posits that groups may denigrate out-groups in order to compare favorably to those groups. Precious little has been written about how this might be accomplished communicatively. Hate speech offers a way of understanding the mechanisms/tools groups have to accomplish this goal. A broader discussion of the value of studying hate speech is a larger topic for another forum, but this brief example should offer readers insights into how the study of the communication of hate can enhance understanding of theoretical perspectives beyond hate speech, proper.

Another area for future research is what is becoming known as cyber harassment (Citron, 2014). Cyber harassment is the “intentional infliction of substantial emotional distress accomplished by online speech that is persistent enough to amount to a course of conduct rather than an isolated incident.” Like other forms of hate speech, cyber harassment involves threats of violence, privacy invasions, reputation-harming lies, calls for strangers to physically harm victims, and “doxing” or technological attacks (e.g., filling up email inboxes with threats, or opening fake online advertisements that list victims’ contact information.). While cyber harassment may involve criminal behavior, it is also certainly hate speech. Like other forms of hate speech, cyber harassment often targets people because of their gender, sexual orientation, or sexual identity. Numerous studies have demonstrated that women are, by far, frequent targets of cyber harassment by men (Citron, 2014). When men are targeted, they are typically targeted because of their gender identity (Citron, 2014). Harassers and stalkers, online and offline, are more likely to be men than women. Cyber harassment will prove to be a fruitful area of hate speech research in the future.
The Internet is a big and heterogeneous space. Hate groups operate on social media and places like YouTube. These spaces offer texts where researchers may learn more about the Internet and the specific role that visual imagery may play in the radicalization and recruitment of people in the world of hate. It is clear that the more one examines the use of hate speech as a persuasive resource, the more it becomes evident that hatred is a significant part of everyday life (Waltman, 2015). This work is important for understanding the hatemonger, but it also is important for fully appreciating the social and cultural worlds we all inhabit.

Further Reading


References


Related Articles

Race and Ethnicity in U.S. Media Content and Effects
Prejudiced Communication
Speech and Debate
Ingroup Love and Outgroup Hate
Critical Whiteness Studies
Anti-Semitism and Communication