Silence, Speech, and Support: *Community Response to Trauma* and the Taxonomy of an Embodied Rhetorical Genre

by

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Dedication

This is dedicated to Sarah A. Wheeler, who always believed I could do anything, and this is evidence of that. This is also dedicated to Mustafa N.I. Tunkara, who makes me strive to create a better world where he feels safe and loved.

Acknowledgements

The process of writing from concept to completion for an English teacher of 28 years is challenging at best and paralyzing at worst because of my inner critic. Combine that with the isolation of graduate school and COVID, and something could go terribly wrong. *But it didn't.* I looked to, leaned on, or reached out to others to bolster and buoy myself up against the waves of self-doubt, loneliness, and even fear. My friends, my family, and my former students were there and showed up for me in a myriad of ways: phone calls and FaceTime; texts, cards and care packages; walks in the park; virtual Happy Hours; and writing groups. Thank you, thank you, thank you. You do not know how those small things all added up to be big things, and those big things kept me going.

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There were specific reasons I chose my committee members, and **Dr. Anne Ruggles Gere** was chosen for her calming steady influence. Nothing seems to disturb her, and her ability to find joy, grace, and love in all that she does and sees reminded me continually why this dissertation was/is so important to me. Anne is one who asks the hard questions, but she does so out of love and respect. For that I admire and adore her.

I chose **Dr. Anna Watkins Fisher** for my committee for another reason. She knows the system; she knows there is play in that system, and she seeks to disrupt it in subversive ways. In this way social justice is at the heart of all Anna does. Her tenacity to see the cracks in things in order to fight for what is just is what I appreciate about her, and I hope I was able to channel that feistiness in this dissertation as I look to disrupt a system of response that has gone unquestioned.

Dr. Sara Blair brought to my dissertation a value for the visual– and by default the non-discursive–that moves in ways inarticulate. Her work with the visual is what made me choose The University of Michigan, and articulating the inarticulate is what Sara does best. I can only hope this dissertation does do something to articulate how hate symbols circulate and function.

Finally, while not on my committee, I would be remiss, if I did not acknowledge the profound effect **Dr. Hannah Rule** has had on my scholarship and this dissertation. Her classes at The University of South Carolina on composition and on embodiment helped me figure out who I wanted in my "neighborhood" of scholarship. Hopefully she has room in her "neighborhood" for one more because I am moving in!

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Abstract

This project defines and describes an embodied rhetorical genre such that scholars, community stakeholders, and teachers can understand and reflect upon their practices. Reflecting on practices when faced with hate acts as a form of trauma enables individuals and groups to better enact social justice within their communities through their embodied actions. "Silence, Speech, and Support: *Community Response to Trauma* and the Taxonomy of a Rhetorical Genre" uses data from *The Swastika Counter Project (TSCP)*, which documents 1339 swastika hate acts from January 1, 2016 to January 20, 2021 in various communities across the United States, to make two distinct but related claims. First, community responses reveal patterns in both linguistic products and the embodied and material actions of actors who respond to the swastika as trauma, and I argue that these responses have their own specific patterns that constitute a taxonomy I am calling *community response to trauma*. Second, I propose the embodied metagenres of *silence*, *speech*, and *support* as a means to understand and to account for the social and embodied nature of rhetorical situations and thereby account for their influence on all instances of trauma within communities. My findings make visible the practices of power, inequity, and embodied harm present in hate acts and allow scholars and community stakeholders to see how the various rhetorical genres within the metagenres of *silence*, *speech*, and *support* actually function as responses to swastika hate acts.

Chapter 1 Finding an Object and Counting/Countering Hate Acts

Some might argue that the face of the Republican party has been changed by Donald Trump, and that his campaign and presidency supported white supremacy, or at the very least a form of nationalism that bordered on fascist white supremacy. Like previous presidents, he was often compared to Hitler, and this connection was circulated in the media as a condemnation, but news sources, collectives, and independent research began gathering data to show a correlation between an uptick in hate acts and his presidency (Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), ThinkProgress, CITYLAB, and ProPublica). Whether it was documenting the number and location of hate groups within the United States, discussing 261 incidents of hate over a period of a few months since Trump took office, or mapping hate acts in relation to data such as education, poverty, religiousness, conservatism, and diversity, the aim of these groups was to bring to light and quantify hate crimes and other incidents of prejudice. By locating and investigating hate crimes, these groups hoped to lend validity to claims of fear that marginalized groups experience as a result of being overly surveilled and othered. In documenting past events related to hate and "convert[ing] qualitative value into quantitative" these groups deploy a tactical media move that Raley calls "tactical cartography" (22). These mapping activities highlight and bring attention to moments in time around hate and allow individuals to see the patterns and problems that they may not be aware of. Doing so provides individuals with the space and moment to be introspective, to dialogue, and to alter future social behaviors, responses, and systems that may permit and directly or indirectly exacerbate hate and trauma within their community or disrupt their effects.

My dissertation stems from a public-facing project I am currently working on called *The Swastika Counter Project (TSCP)*. *TSCP* seeks to perform its own form of "tactical cartography" as it focuses specifically on how swastikas, as an iconic representation of an ideology and as a symbol of hate, have circulated and functioned from January 2016-January 2021 within the United States. This time period is significant because it encompasses Trump's bid for the Republican nomination for president and his presidential term. *TSCP* has collected 1339 incidents, and the sheer number of swastika incidents prove that swastikas are a problem in America. The data, while not attributing causation to Donald Trump, suggests there may be some kind of relationship between his presidency and swastika appearances across the nation. There are upticks heading into and around his election and after the Charlottesville Protest where Trump commented about there being "good people on both sides."[1] Within the data, there are also documented references made by elected officials that refer to Trump and the political climate as being a factor in the swastika hate act occurrence within their community.

The phenomena of swastika appearances indicate that leadership does impact a county, and this relationship is a significant finding. However, this dissertation is not concerned with establishing the correlation between Trump and swastikas. Rather it seeks to observe patterns in linguistic products and the embodied and material responses of actors who experience the swastika as a form of trauma in their community regardless of its affiliation or lack of affiliation with Trump as a person. From the community responses we have gathered in *TSCP*, I have defined a taxonomy I am calling *community response to trauma*, which consists of the embodied metagenres of *silence*, *speech*, and *support*. Through these metagenres and the genres that compose them, I attempt to understand and to account for the social and embodied nature of

[1] See PolitiFact | In Context: Donald Trump's 'very fine people on both sides' remarks (transcript) for full transcript.

rhetorical situations around hate acts. My findings make visible the practices of power, inequity, and embodied harm present in hate acts as a form of trauma and allow scholars and communities to observe how the rhetorical genres within *silence*, *speech*, and *support* actually function in response to swastika hate acts.

1.1 Patterns and Questions

In examining community response to swastika hate acts across the 1300+ instances, there was some variance, but there were also certain responses that occurred over and over again in community after community. How could rhetorical situations, such as a swastika introduced into a space, have such differing responses, and conversely why were some of the same responses being enacted over and over again in the same community and across communities? What were these responses accomplishing? Specifically, this dissertation tries to answer these questions:

> How do communities respond when the swastika appears in communal spaces where diverse publics engage?
>
> How might studying those responses give scholars and community stakeholders (both big and small) a better understanding about how hate rhetoric functions in practice in order to both mitigate its harm and possibly prevent future harm?

These questions are the foundation of this dissertation, and the data within *TSCP* gives scholars concrete examples of how images can function in powerful, embodied, material, and rhetorical ways. By bringing to light the often "invisible issues of policy, definition, and ideology" that were present in communities, I hope to put these visible issues in conversation with the already visible structures within communities while also being mindful of the politics of visibility that could impact those communities placed under the spotlight (DeVoss, Cushman, and Grabill, 16).

New London Group's discussion about "designs of meaning" provides me with a lens to look at community response as multimodal and gives me a way to observe how various multimodal ways actors engage with and make meaning from the trauma of a swastika hate act (19). From the *available designs* demonstrated by communities across the United States, I was able to establish genres–big and small–that reflected materiality and embodiment and are factors in rhetorical responses. Centering materiality and embodiment expands rhetoric and accounts for actors beyond the human. Looking at communities' responses to swastika hate acts as specific examples of a "social action" creates opportunities for scholars to be aware of the rhetorical nature of an embodied rhetorical genre (Miller).

1.2 Going from the Large Data Set to Homing in on Practice

To help me understand how genre can be a social action, I used iconographic tracking to trace community responses across the 1300+ incidents in *TSCP*. I then analyzed those patterns using rhetorical genre studies to create a taxonomy composed of the metagenres *silence*, *speech*, and *support*. Using letters and statements issued by community leaders, I rhetorically analyzed specific discursive practices. Finally, I conducted semi-structured interviews with community leaders in Boise, ID about a specific atypical and embodied response they had to a swastika hate act in their community. This process of discovery has allowed me to go from a large data set, which provided me with a variety of *available designs* to examining the genre of letters and statements within the metagenre of *speech*, and then to honing in on a particular redesign within one community's response that demonstrated ways various community stakeholders engaged in supportive responses to their community's trauma with a swastika. Starting broad and then zooming in sets this dissertation up to be used as a resource for various stakeholders within towns and cities as well as academia when it comes to studying hate acts as embodied rhetorical

moments. In looking at my taxonomy and the patterns it lays bare, stakeholders might be able to see possibilities for mitigating harm to vulnerable populations within their borders and perhaps set in place systems that could prevent future community trauma.

When I first approached *TSCP*, I was tasked with recording community responses to hate acts that went "above and beyond" in their actions, but I soon questioned what was "above and beyond?" Who determines that? Are targets or target communities consulted when it comes to a response by the larger community? I had to figure out for myself what were typical responses before I could identify and understand those that were atypical. Studying the difference between "doing what is expected" and "going above and beyond" has given me the opportunity to observe how hate speech, or in this case the icon of the swastikas, hate symbols circulate and impact spaces and the material and embodied actors within them. It has allowed me to learn how power might play a part in these rhetorical interactions and why some communities barely reacted beyond reporting the where, when, and how of the swastika incident, and some communities even held forums, assemblies, or clean-up parties. Other communities took it a step further and created task forces, designed curriculum to educate, utilized knowledgeable community members as resources for support, and provided counseling to help mitigate the harm of the swastika's appearance. Whether it was covering up the swastika with paint and filing a police report or gathering as a community to educate, discuss, and/or reclaim the space, swastikas traumatized communities and forced them to reckon with their identity as a community and who did and did not belong within it. By making visible the actions, processes, and patterns that communities follow after swastika incidents, this dissertation allows both scholars and communities to study these past incidents as *available designs* in order to understand how to

better support communities as they redesign and respond to trauma in both theoretical terms and embodied practices.

1.3 How this Dissertation is Organized

This dissertation is organized into five sections. Section One: *Introductory Materials* consists of this first Chapter: “Finding an Object and Counting/Countering Hate Acts," Chapter Two: “Defining an Embodied Rhetorical Genre,” and Chapter Three: “Creating a Taxonomy.” Section Two: *Silence* contains only one chapter, Chapter Four called: “Silence as Discursive and Non-Discursive Action,” which discusses silence as the linguistic, embodied, and material practices that shut down and shut out victims by glossing over harm as communities focus on property and center perpetrators. Section Three: *Speech* contains two findings chapters: Chapter Five: “Written and Spoken Responses to Swastika Hate Acts on School Campuses” and Chapter Six: “Elected Civic Leaders’ Written and Spoken Responses to Swastika Hate Acts.” Both examine the move of speech via the statements and letters of actors in local and educational spaces that are issued after swastika hate acts and how moves like “thoughts and prayers” function performatively as empathy and are used by civic leaders to maintain their position of power in the community. Section Four: *Support* also contains two findings chapters: Chapter Seven: “Attending to Target Communities and Addressing and Mitigating Their Harm” and Chapter Eight: “Redesign: A Case Study for Community Support.” Both chapters approach support, which is a move that is more often found in educational spaces than in localities, and discuss what actions actually constitute support and mitigate current harm as well as put into place structures and education that help mitigate possible future harm. Chapter Eight then takes those moves a step further as it uses a swastika hate act in Boise, ID as a case study to demonstrate how a community can fully engage with the harm done by a swastika and respond

civically, socially, emotionally, materially, and visually to both mitigate the harm done and prevent future harm to target populations. Finally, Section Five: *Implications* contains a singular chapter: Chapter Nine: "'Stable-for-Now': Redesigns in an Embodied Rhetorical Genre and Implications for Future Iterations." This chapter reminds readers of the fluidity of genre and the imperative that it must redesign and evolve if it is to meet future community expectations and support an ever-diverse world.

It may be time to shift our responses and behaviors surrounding swastikas because their position and use has undergone a shift or at the very least has become something that may not be circulating and impacting diverse groups of individuals the same way it previously had. Miller, Devitt and Gallagher write that studying genre allows scholars

> a way to characterize the rhetorical climate, culture, and conventions of a historical site; it offers theorists a mid-level construct that is both symbolic and materialized, a construct that mediates specific practices and performances with abstract considerations of agency and typification; it offers critics a way to explore the achievements of particular speakers and writers by placing them in the context of conventions, ideologies, and histories embedded therein; and it offer empirical researchers a unit of analysis that reveals power relationships, social agreements, and background presumptions. (272)

This project and the larger project of *The Swastika Counter Project* (*TSCP*) may allow scholars to do just that and in doing so create teaching moments. In "Systems of Genres" Bazerman writes, "Only by uncovering the pathways that guide our lives in certain directions can we begin to identify the possibilities for new turns and the consequences of taking those turns" (100). It is through understanding and examining an embodied rhetorical genre, we can see how it has been marshaled in the past as its various *available designs*, and in doing so, we can move forward

with redesigns in future iterations that achieve supportive and inclusive just ends for vulnerable populations.

This dissertation is designed to be public-facing and therefore accessible to both scholars and community members. To aid in this, I have included captions with alt text image descriptions and figures within. If for some reason, you do not find this accessible in the format it is currently in, please contact Kelly Wheeler at kellynnw@umich.edu, and I will be happy to help you access this dissertation in another format.

Chapter 2 Defining an Embodied Rhetorical Genre

Carolyn Miller is credited with establishing rhetorical genre studies as a field with her landmark essay "Genre as Social Action." In this essay she argues that genre should not be centered "on the substance or the form of the discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish" (151). By engaging the social and focusing on action as part and parcel of genre, Miller is inherently arguing that bodyminds and how they act in rhetorical situations cannot be extricated from rhetorical genres. As I created the taxonomy of the embodied rhetorical genre I am calling *community response to trauma*, I therefore had to weave rhetorical studies in genre, embodiment, and materiality together. The interplay of these three fields in relation to community response to a visual—the swastika—has allowed me to better observe and illustrate the embodied nature of rhetorical genres.

Rhetorical interactions rely upon bodily practices, and as a result, they are actually "embodied genres" (Weedon and Fountain 591). Like Weedon and Fountain, I argue that genre cannot be extricated from bodies because "not only do genres shape bodies and bodies shape genres, but also the genre itself is accomplished by and through the body. The body intertwined with the objects and texts of its environment is the material and multimodal means through which the genred action is performed" (Weedon and Fountain 591). Therefore, genres are "materially instantiated not just through texts and discourses but through bodily *practices*" (Weedon and Fountain 590, *emphasis* mine). Here the use of the word *practices* emerges as key in understanding genre as being embodied. *Practices* inherently require bodies in/action as well as the impacts that material actors may have upon bodies within spaces and places. For me,

practices include *concrete* actions that may be discursive *and/or* non-discursive elements in nature. Therefore, when I refer to genre, it will always include embodied and material actors that engage and participate in concrete practices of action. I will discuss those practices in more detail as subsets of the metagenres within my findings chapters.

My dissertation provides an opportunity to understand specific rhetorical *practices* involved in responses to hate acts collected as trace in news stories. This trace can capture ideologies, values, and beliefs around certain practices of harm (Ore). By including the embodied and material actors, I thus further "a complementary focus on the unity or cohesiveness of embodied rhetorical practice and the physical as well as larger social-cultural effects--and affects--of genres," and my approach gives rhetorical studies a richer understanding and definition of how rhetoric functions in communities especially in instances of collective trauma (Miller, Devitt and Gallagher 271).

2.1 Genre Studies and the New London Group's Theory of *Design*

Genres are created when there are patterns in structure, use, or form and "dynamically embody a community's way of knowing, being, and acting" (Bawarshi and Reiff 78). The only way genres can become patterns is if they are taken up by discourse communities in certain ways that become typified (Bawarshi and Reiff). This process becomes a cycle where the repetition of the genre creates expectations within the discourse community for the genre to be repeated, so as a result, it is often repeated. Associations between actors and moves within rhetorical moments, therefore, become "actively created and recreated" (Grabill 196). As we create and recreate responses, we understand what a typified action is and respond in kind ("Systems of Genres" Bazerman 89). In other words, there is a certain comfort in seeing what one expects and

expecting what one sees, and yet there are anomalies—flies in the proverbial ointment that do not follow the pattern.

The expectations for genre operate in hindsight, and because of that perspective, genre appears fixed or rigid when it is not—quite. One is always looking at what happened in the past, and that backward gaze is part of what defines a genre as a genre. However, if one is to disrupt the reproduction of a genre, one must look at the anomalies and typical response in relation to the typifications to see which ones are ineffective or do not do what they should. To understand what is typical and atypical, one must define and understand the systems, structures, and performances as they function within the genre. Defining systems, structure, and performances can help individuals be critical of the ineffective nature of some genres and may even create opportunities for change within a genre to better suit the rhetorical moments that may arise in the future. Miller, Devitt and Gallagher discuss the iterative nature of genre evolution when they say, "the inhibiting or centrifugal force of genre makes the acts of generic variation and violation ones that can be seen and remarked on, providing a path toward invention and creativity" (273) The ability to veer from those past practices into new territory "because as their conditions of use change--for example because of changes in material conditions, changes in community membership, changes in technology, changes in disciplinary purpose, values" makes genres "*dynamic*" (Bawarshi and Reiff 79). Therefore, genres must accommodate both stability and change. Catherine Schryer describes this dynamic quality as "stabilized-for-now or stabilized-enough sites of social and ideological action" (108). In this way, genre is never just present but is always coming to be/passing away as it moves through time, and as it moves through time, it may have to satisfy other discourse communities or serve a different purpose than it once did (Heidegger).

With my taxonomy, I make visible connections between actors and moves focusing on connections of assemblages and to actions surrounding swastika hate acts enables readers of these flows of activity to "better see and ask questions about often-invisible tools and practices" that are occurring when these workflows are articulated in visual ways (Lockridge and Van Ittersum). Communities and individuals involved may be too close to the moment to see the impact of their responses or how their responses may not do what they want them to. If the true goal of the community is to create a safe, diverse, inclusive community, communities need to be able to distance themselves from their actions to analyze whether they are meeting those expectations or not. Viewing *The Swastika Counter Project* (*TSCP*) through the lens of rhetorical genre studies provides the kind of distance to see what kinds of typifications are taken up, and the genre as performed can be defined, explored, and questioned.

The process of looking at what has transpired in the past and using it to inform future action is similar to New London Group's (NLG) description of the process of *design*. NLG proposed that when an individual encountered a new situation, they drew upon "resources for meaning," which NLG called *available designs* (77). Using the *available designs* the individual would work "on/with *available designs*" in a semiotic process called *designing* that then "reproduced and transformed" those *available designs* into the *redesigned* (77). The *redesigned* was then folded back into the *available designs* for future use in an iterative cycle. As NLG understands it, design is always looking back and reliant upon the kairotic moment to determine what best suits the current needs of the discourse community.

The tension between staying the same yet changing reflects a dynamism that has forced genre studies to make peace with the fact that genres are not as fixed as one might expect. Instead, genre, like design theory, incorporates "a mixture of different semiotic systems" and in

doing so "captures the way in which different discourses relate to (speak) to each other" (New London Group 20, 21). This mixture contributes to the various permutations that a genre could undergo to meet the kairotic expectations of a particular moment when the genre is employed. Where this dissertation approaches the embodied rhetorical genre of *community response to trauma* is at this intersection of stabilized for now and future change. With my taxonomy, I attempt to pin down the stabilized parts of a genre while also showing the messy and dynamic possibilities that it might undergo in future iterations as the communities across the United States experience change in membership and/or ideology.

2.1.1 The Definition and/or Redefinition of Community

In defining the embodied genre *community response to trauma*, I need to define what I mean by community because as a term can be quite vague and encompass a variety of actors.[2] Communities are assemblages of actors in certain spaces and engaged in typified or atypical rhetorical practices. They may share geography, beliefs, events, and/or identities, so therefore their definition becomes an issue of scope and demarcation. Even though communities are often understood as having some kind of commonality among their constituents, that does not mean there is not a diversity or plurality of views within them. This tension between commonality and plurality makes my analysis of community responses when swastika incidents occur within communities all the more thought provoking because I am exploring how individuals who place swastikas in communities can redefine and reshape a community's identity.

[2] Swastika incidents create what I call a "target community" and a "wider community" in that they are intended to exclude individuals (the target community) from a perceived larger unified community that the perpetrator feels is threatened. In rhetoric this may be equated to the primary and secondary audiences, but as I look at how swastika incidents affect the spaces and places in which they appear, the terms primary and secondary audiences do not quite explain the relationship or the rhetorical interaction that occurs when a swastika is introduced into a space or marks a place.

I use the word assemblages to function in two ways. My first use invokes the more common use to describe a group of individual actors in certain spaces, but my second use draws from Latour, who describes rhetorical moments that call for a "certain type of assembly," or *thing* (Latour). He argues that when individuals "share matters of concern about which they do not agree," they interact or respond (Grabill 199). This response around a "matter of concern" I refer to as an assemblage, or in other words a community response. Only when diverse publics engage or overlap do these matters of concern create material and embodied actions, or responses (Rice). Swastikas, as a matter of concern, force a community to assemble or reassemble/reform/reshape/reconstitute themselves, and they participate in a moment of community definition. The community must define what it is and what it is not, and how community members respond to a swastika hate act informs individuals harmed by the symbol as to whether they count as community members or not.

Community leaders would have you believe that the community is a unified collective: a monolith. The concept of community and the notion of a collective intersect because both unite members within the boundaries of a particular space or place and support people (including themselves), structures, and services that work to ensure and uphold the common good for those within their boundaries. The notion of unity is put to the text when swastika incidents occur within communities. Leaders and representatives would have you believe that the community holds the same values, beliefs, and behavior expectations that they do as elected leaders because they were elected to represent and speak for their constituents in political, social, and even economic affairs. However, placement of the swastika within the community and its being "newsworthy" enough in the first place to be reported on indicates that there is dissent about what constitutes or should constitute community membership. Someone *within* the community

has challenged the community identity, and it is therefore not monolithic. The perpetrator[3] perceives the community as, or desires the community to be, representative of the beliefs and values held by those who have historically used swastikas in the United States and who have used those hate symbols to mark spaces as heteronormative, Christian, and white. Our data in TSCP bears this out as there were few instances when a person/persons from outside the community actually came in and placed a swastika. Only a handful of incidents, of our 1339, had an "outsider" come in to place a swastika within a community. One example was where an unknown perpetrator hacked into computer printers at several colleges and universities and printed out swastikas (*TSCP*). Another incident involved three men from a town who went to a neighboring town on more than one occasion to put swastikas up (*TSCP*). This indicates that the community's identity or how it "should be" identified is up for debate by some members in the community, and therefore is a matter of concern.[4]

The embodied genre of *community response to trauma* requires looking at how communities are assembled and respond. Looking at assemblages of material and embodied actors within a process of rhetorical interactions can help scholars better understand the "power relationships, social agreements, and background presumptions" within communities as communities encounter trauma (Miller; Devitt and Gallagher 272). Making these invisible practices visible enables stakeholders to disrupt those practices should they no longer serve the purposes they once did. There is a caveat: as a scholar engaged in work that ties to trauma and

[3] Only seven perpetrators were identified specifically as female within *TSCP*. There were instances when the perpetrators were only identified as students, but the default body in reporting appears to be male of the 194 perpetrators that were identified.

[4] While the identities of all the perpetrators are not known, the identities of perpetrators who were caught resided or frequented the communities where the incidents occurred because they worked, shopped, or went to school there. This is to say there is not a gang of individuals who go from town to town under cover of darkness putting swastikas up and then moving on.

making invisible practices visible, my research should engage and be attentive to those harmed by the visualization of my work such that I do not further harm populations that are already vulnerable within the cities and towns they live in.

2.2 Patterns, Typifications, and Trace: The Taxonomy of an Embodied Genre

How does one capture and make visible the invisible? Like Grabill, I argue that the social is "a type of connection that is visible because of movement (activity);" it has an embodied trace that can be seen in actions and interactions between actors within a rhetorical moment (196). The news stories from *TSCP* capture those actions and interactions to some degree and allow me and other interested parties to see how communities re-collect, re-form, and/or re-define themselves around swastika hate acts. These traces of activity display community as a dynamic, complex, and diverse assemblage of individuals that can be re-formed with each major rhetorical interaction or trauma. Studying the actions of perpetrators gives scholars an understanding of how community is constituted and how trauma such as hate acts reconstitute and redefine what community is.

Some like Spinuzzi and Lockridge and Van Ittersum have looked at ecologies and workflows that produce the texts, to try and capture the dynamic nature of genres and how various bodies and materiality contribute to and impact production around and of texts, but they were dealing with smaller subsets of data than is present within *TSCP*. Their sample size of one specific location or a sampling of student writers allowed them to use their respective metaphors to map out activities around genre creation. Russell's activity system and Englestrom's activity theory also could have also helped me show the dynamic nature of the embodied rhetorical genre I propose, but while ecologies, workflows, and activity systems account for some of the

messiness and dynamic nature of genres, I needed to organize and fix the practices captured in the trace of the news stories first. Attending to the actors and their practices within the news stories of *TSCP* creates steppingstones of reference and a common language that paves the way for further research by myself or others. With a common language tied to practices around the embodied rhetorical genre of *community response to trauma*, future research could focus on mapping the various networks or ecologies between actors as they participate in a response. I began to attend to this kind of mapping in Chapter Eight where I interviewed various community leaders around their activity and processes in their response to a hate act, and I plan on continuing exploring similar approaches in future research.

I concede that using the rigid structure of a taxonomy may seem counter to the dynamic activity I am attempting to capture in this dissertation, but as mentioned, the preponderance of data from *TSCP* required that I establish more concrete structures in order to understand the genre itself. Without definition of a certain cut and dry nature, genres could be considered so fluid that they would escape repetition, which is at the heart of their definition since rhetorical situations are never identically replicated in the social sphere. Through *TSCP* I was able to look at social interactions as a result of swastikas appearing in communities in a way that organizes those social interactions and indexes "cultural patterns" (Miller, 165). These cultural patterns are informative for the field of rhetoric in terms of trauma or hate studies because they let scholars see how theory plays out in praxis.

By examining the data from *TSCP*, I have become the one "who understands associations, and in understanding them becomes a creator of associations" (Grabill 196). In other words, I have gathered examples of the associations, and in my curation of them, I have created my taxonomy of response to make sense of the data. This curation and organization also

help various communities make meaning of their singular experiences with swastika hate acts in relation to the swastika hate acts across the US. With the definition of an embodied rhetorical genre and its structure, I also open it up to be critiqued. Even though creating a taxonomy in some ways truncates the messiness of the embodied actions and assemblages around trauma in rhetorical moments, it is necessary in order to define the embodied genre as it is.

Creating a taxonomy "stabilize[s] experience and give[s] it coherence and meaning" for scholars, communities, and other individuals who are interested in doing social justice work. (Miller 159; Berkenkotter and Huckin 479). Our understanding of these rhetorical moments, albeit without absolute understanding of the complexity of situations, does allow us to understand the past, and while we may not be able to predict the future, we can make "plausible connections among various moments or acts" ("Systems of Genres" Bazerman 88). The connections can then become new iterations of community response that may better meet the needs of the target community and the larger community as a result.

2.2.1 Embodied Rhetorical Genres and Discursivity

As mentioned previously, as an embodied rhetorical genre, *community response to trauma* includes both discursive and non-discursive modes of rhetorical engagement and both of those are required in order to meet the needs of both the target and larger communities. Therefore, it is important to describe: how discursivity and non-discursivity function, how they are connected in rhetoric, and how they create cultural patterns of behavior (Bazerman "Systems of Genres"; Miller). Murray writes about the "many multiple and layered textual modes and media" that are at play in rhetoric but especially what he calls non-discursive rhetoric, which includes images (2). I consider swastikas, although drawn, written, or etched, to be non-

discursive because in the Western world and the United States, where the data for *TSCP* comes from, swastikas embody both a pride for some kinds of people as well as a kind of hate that is nebulous and directed to specific groups of individuals. Swastikas, therefore, create non-discursive rhetorical situations for individuals who encounter them within spaces and places.

A swastika does not utilize formalized or codified linguistic features, and it comes to its meaning through social, cultural, and emotional contexts (Murray 13). Like other symbols, swastikas, function as images that carry meaning and help us make sense of the world and the places and spaces within it even though their "particular meaning or emotion is unutterable or confined to the non-discursive form[ ]" (Murray79). For Murray discursive texts are "bound by semantic form" and follow a logic of "one idea after another" while, non-discursive texts can "accommodate meaning unsuited to sequencing--unutterable, affective, ephemeral--and that there are connections through images that may lead to future articulation." (4, 5). This means that non-discursivity is embodied, experienced, and not read like text. In the case of a swastika, although we see the symbol, because of its non-discursivity, what it conveys beyond words causes a variety of emotions and feelings depending upon who is viewing it. The non-discursive is taken in through the individual's body without words, is organized in relation to past encounters, is then used by the individual to make sense in relation to previous encounters, and is then the foundation from which the individual acts in any future encounter. Murray's theory, much like the New London Group's theory of *available design* is thus foundational in thinking about how swastikas are circulating within the United States because both theories of visuality and multimodality engage with the physical and embodied actors that help constitute the rhetorical situation and create meaning for individuals within those situations.

While swastikas originally circulated as religious images and represented anything from the celestial to prosperity and long life, that is no longer the case in certain parts of the world currently. The word, *vastika*, means “good fortune” or “well-being" and historically marked coins, doors, account books, and pottery on various continents all over the world dating back thousands of years (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; Augustyn). Swastikas still circulate and connote positivity in the Indian religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism where they still represent opportunity and prosperity, but their current meaning in other parts of the world has come to represent something more ominous.

2.2.2 Circulation of Swastikas and Embodiment

This change in meaning for the swastika occurred when the Nazi party took up the symbol. Nazis believed it tied the German culture back to its Aryan roots, and the swastika came to embody nationalistic pride and exclusivity; it morphed into an icon that stood for fascism and genocide. Helmers and Hill argue that national symbols are “employed as a visual shorthand to represent shared ideals and to launch an immediate appeal to the audience’s sense of a national community,” and Nazi Germany utilized the swastika in this way (4). Pride, patriotism, and nationalism become wrapped up in the swastika, but nationalism and patriotism generally only have certain bodies included within what it means to love one’s country.

Swastikas have come to have power because they move and circulate in particular ways visually (Mitchell, Murray, New London Group). Part of the power of a non-discursive text’s ability to move a group of people is dependent upon preponderance of the text and how the text is functioning in relation to other texts within particular contexts. When swastikas appeared on billboards, leaflets, at the start of newsreels in the movie theaters, on flags hung from official buildings, on armbands and uniforms, as pins on lapels, they and the ideals they represented

became more salient, unified, and powerful in the minds of their audience as they influenced the audience members' attitudes and beliefs (Helmers and Hill 28). The prevalence and repetition of swastikas during WWII created moments that created and utilized *intertextuality* (Bazerman). Intertextuality involves "the recognition and referencing of images from one scene to another" (Helmers and Hill 5). Individuals see the pervasiveness of a particular symbol and therefore transfer that knowledge or emotional response of that symbol from one person to another or from one place to another. This means that swastikas carry into any new rhetorical interaction both the emotional and intellectual meaning from any previous rhetorical interaction had with them. In order for intertextuality to occur, readers of these texts/audience members must become active participants in connecting the texts to one another as they make sense of the symbols and their repetition (Helmers and Hill 5). Even when individuals do not support the beliefs behind the symbol, individuals still reinscribe the beliefs and ideals when they recognize and identify the symbol as the symbol. In other words, the symbol has the valence and power intended by the rhetor wielding the symbol only if individuals recognize the symbols as having power to begin with. When there are connections made between symbols in various locations, this can create a kind of synecdoche where from a nationalistic perspective, defending the flag (and the swastika) means defending one's country, people, and possessions (Helmers and Hill 7). In the case of the swastika, its pervasiveness in daily life created an overwhelming sense of a country unified behind a cause and a country who could and would be as powerful as it once had been because of that unity.

The ubiquitous nature of the swastika with its incorporation into Nazi life and war propaganda created an uptick in the swastika's circulation and in some ways permanently changed how much of the world views the swastika today. Because of the history associated with

swastikas, “available designs of words and pictures--come with attached discourses” meaning that ways of engaging with these symbols are historical and social and impact the rhetorical discourse and rhetorical activity around them (Wysocki 26). In this way swastikas as “discrete and unitary” objects invoke identities and “define what and who we might be and do in our lives with others” (Wysocki 28). Because of the discourse surrounding swastika at any point in history, swastikas determine who and what engages with them. Thus, swastikas delineate who is a part of the intended discourse community and who is not as well as which identities are valued as part of the discourse community, and which are not.

In some ways, I would argue that the swastika came into its own as a mark of exclusivity and surveillance because it marked spaces and places where certain individuals were welcomed, and others were not. In doing so, individuals within those spaces and places became *more* visible to onlookers and others who occupied the same locations because there was an understood collective or community, and individuals were compared to that ideal collective in order to determine their belonging. The swastika’s repetition tied to white supremacy has morphed the swastika and in its meaning to the Western World, and this valence of meaning is how white supremacist groups use it.

2.3 Swastikas and Embodied Response

Using swastikas to mark and exert power is only one available design of the swastika, but the Nazi’s use of the swastika as a mark of power and embodiment of racism continues to be the more prevalent use of the symbol today within the United States. As with the Nazis, today’s swastikas are still often used to imply a threat of harm to those who are not white, cisgender, heterosexual individuals. The connection between body and mind is an important consideration when one thinks about how icons like swastikas function. As mentioned earlier, from a rhetorical

standpoint, peoples' bodies filter information about the world around them, and as a result those bodies are how individuals make meaning. In this way one cannot separate the body from the mind. Margaret Price uses the term "bodymind" to describe this intertwining (4).[5] A bodymind is "a sociopolitically constituted and material entity that emerges through both structural (power- and violence-laden) contexts and also individual (specific) experience" (Price 4). In understanding how the visual operates in conjunction with hate and how it impacts the body, the responses by communities to emotionally-charged symbols such as swastikas give scholars insight into how much power the swastika has, the violence it is imbued with, and therefore how seriously it should be taken in its harming of individuals.

Murray and Fleckenstein both make strong cases for how bodily reception of the senses does function rhetorically. Murray argues that our bodies are part and parcel of how we make sense of the world around us; through them we experience our world and create our logic (Murray 84). In addition, Fleckenstein takes the tact that bodily experience anchors floating signifiers and signification, and *through* that anchoring, people make sense of the world and create their logic (284 Writing). In essence, we carry our bodies in our minds (Writing 290).

Fleckenstein describes "is" logic as being the bodily experience and "as if" logic as being the discursive capturing of the experience. We use signifiers ("as if" logic) to represent the actual things ("is" logic), so we constantly work in imagewords, which place images of things in our head to be manipulated and to make sense or meaning of the world. Here, when Fleckenstein uses the term imageword, she is referring to how words, when read, call to mind images and thus images and words are inseparable. I argue that symbols and images, while not words, also

[5] Price's theorizing of the body provides rhetoricians with a metaphor for the relationship within each individual of the physiological and the social in terms of bodies and their interactions because of the many ways the social and physiological sustain and shape one another.

function as imagewords. They call to mind other images or even words much like the iconic "swoosh" calls to mind Nike, or the image of the Iwo Jima flag raising evokes words of pride and patriotism.[6] Fleckenstein calls the relationship between body and mind the *somatic mind*, and this relationship depends upon the nesting of our senses. Murray agrees, adding that the anchoring of images in this way "shapes the brain, constructs pathways and nodes within the various elements of the brain which make up such potentialities as personality, health, and acumen" (Murray 111). In other words, we are what we feel, and what we feel in turn controls what and how we think. Because of our reliance on image "it is clear that our use of non-discursive text—a language form rich in images—must hold a more intimate connection to our mental process than found in our use of discursive text" (Murray 124). Thus, non-discursive texts have the ability to *move* bodies in one direction or another both physically and psychologically. Swastikas are but one example of how non-discursivity is used to move a group of individuals in a particular way as swastikas create locations that are exclusive to certain bodies and inclusive of others, which, in turn, impacts an individual's felt sense of safety and security.

2.4 Swastikas as Hate Acts

The data that has been collected in *TSCP* indicates that the swastika is operating in this way: as a threat to safety and as a form of hate. With only a few exceptions within our data, where it was used as a religious symbol, the majority of incidents show the swastika as being celebrated as a mark of whiteness or used as a threat to those who are different from what the perpetrator feels a community should be composed of. The differing opinion about who and what

[6] I do not believe that imageword is exclusive to just linguistic texts. I understand it more as a term to describe the relationship between the symbol and the image in one's head. Fleckenstein uses word in imageword because she is discussing composition and words, but I think symbols or images could also function as a form of imageword.

should constitute a community is a "matter of concern" and creates a moment where diverse publics orient themselves based upon their intellectual and embodied understanding of the symbol's meaning. In response to swastika hate acts, various publics within communities have assembled to condemn, to clean, to champion freedom of speech, and/or to support individuals who are harmed by the swastika (Rice).

I hold that the use of a swastika is a hate act because of how it functions within the space it is placed, but pinning swastikas down as a form of hate speech or as a hate act can be a challenge for towns, cities, states, and even the nation. Unlike hate speech, hate acts have a material permanence that remains in the space long after a swastika has been cleaned up. Swastikas cannot be spoken like words, and yet they are written on walls, cars, park benches, and sidewalks as a message. Where words can disappear with their utterance unless recorded, the swastika lives in the spaces it is placed until it is "removed," and even in its removal, I argue that its trace, both physical and emotional/psychological, still remains to cause harm. In this way, its semi-permanence creates an impact and harm as long as individuals remember that it was there. Materially, it remains as a fragment in the embedded paint stuck in the microscopic cracks and fissures of the walls upon which it is marked. Emotionally and psychologically, like a word, the swastika does convey hate, but the symbol also gestures to historical and social moments, which create visceral responses for the communities that have been targeted by that symbol in the last 80 years. The valence of harm of a swastika is different from a crude drawing of male genitalia or someone's tag of their name or crew upon a wall. For these reasons, swastikas that appear in public spaces are not hate speech but hate acts.

How swastikas operate as hate speech, or even a hate act or crime, however, is contested by lawmakers and legal counsels. While there are some laws such as the NY State Penal Law

240.31 that says that “a person who etches, paints, draws upon or otherwise places a swastika, an emblem of Nazi Germany, on any public or private building or other real property, without the express permission of the owner is guilty of aggravated harassment in the first degree,” most laws are not specific to swastikas because they are often seen and protected as a form of free speech. Regulation of hate speech is "unconstitutional" under the First Amendment (Gould 3, Watkins and Meyer) unless it is deemed and proven obscene, designed to defame, or used to inflame or incite violence (*Roth v. United States,* 354 U.S. 476, 77 S.Ct. 1304, 1 L.Ed.2d 1498 (1957) (obscenity); *Beauharnais v. Illinois,* 343 U.S. 250, 72 S.Ct. 725, 96 L.Ed. 919 (1952) (defamation); *Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire, supra,* (1942) ("fighting words")). These laws have only been on the books since 1942, which speaks to the lack of attention and seriousness given to how words harm, and icons like the swastika have been lumped under speech laws.

While hate speech could be involved in one of those established categories above, a lack of universal federal definition of hate speech creates a gap in the law and allows racist words or symbols–spoken and written–to occur without legal ramifications unless property is involved. An attempt to circumnavigate this gap was the Civil Rights Act of 1968 that argued when a crime is “committed on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability,” it was punishable by law (Department of Justice). Inserting that crime could be based upon one’s generalized identity seemed to address the gap, but enforcing the Civil Rights Act of 1968 has become even more of a challenge for those who support it. This is because of what qualifies as a hate crime under this Act, and its enforcement is specific to the values of governing bodies and constituents within various states, counties, cities and towns. For instance, Waterville, ME Police Chief Joseph Massey explained after some swastikas were found on a large rock at Quarry Road Recreation Center, “that if someone goes out into the middle of

the road and screams that she or he hates black people, that does not constitute a hate crime. However, if he or she walks up to a black person and points a finger at the person and says he or she hates black people, then that is considered a hate crime" (*TSCP*). The fact that it has to be a specific person targeted in order to constitute a hate crime seems preposterous. Placing a symbol anywhere could then be excused and use that loophole because it did not target one person in a public place or space. However, for individuals who have been historically targeted by that symbol, that symbol does mark a place as hostile, inhospitable, and unsafe, and those individuals do take the swastika personally as a form of hate that is directed toward them.

Most states and territories of the United States do have some kind of hate crime law with only seven having no kind of law (American Samoa, Arkansas, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, South Carolina, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Wyoming (Department of Justice)). The other states and territories do have some kind of law, but it varies as to whether "data is collected by state law enforcement agencies or a records agency" which "includes information about the motivations, victims, and perpetrators of hate crimes" (Department of Justice). Without proper tracking and accounting for these events, there is insufficient data for some groups to prove that hate speech and hate acts are prevalent and therefore a serious concern. *TSCP* seeks to remedy this gap in the data, and this dissertation codifies that data in such a way to help make sense of how communities respond to these hate crimes. By organizing the data and creating a taxonomy, I create points of discussion and reflection around community practices when it comes to trauma, more specifically hate acts.

Inconsistencies in enforcement of punishment for hate crime within a state also occur as enforcement varies from city to city or county to county. Some sheriffs or police departments may feel that a certain threshold of evidence must be met in order for it to be considered a hate

crime, and when that threshold is not met, they may not report a crime as a hate crime whereas the same crime in another town or county may be deemed a hate crime because law enforcement view it differently. An example of this would be when Boise Police Chief Ryan Lee chose to assign the violent crimes unit to the investigation of a swastika hate incident at the Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial rather than the property crimes unit (Lee). In another city, it may have just been assigned to the property crimes unit. The lack of consistency in definition and enforcement creates an issue in data collection for the government and other groups interested in how hate circulates and the law is enforced. The lack of data also represents challenges for self-reflection when communities believe what they experienced was an isolated incident, which it may well be, but when against a larger backdrop of an entire nation of incidents, it could be a sign of something much more troubling.

All of this variance among law enforcement agencies not only creates underreporting for hate crimes but further underreports hate speech as a category. This underreporting can create a climate that is ironically permissive of hate crimes and hate speech because those may not be considered problems unless they are connected to other definable crimes that can be and are punishable by the law. By not addressing the issue of hate and only focusing on crime as being only one of property, law enforcement gets an incomplete picture of how the community is functioning and what the community may perceive the crime to actually be. This incomplete picture impacts how police departments relate to the community, especially those vulnerable populations more impacted by police support or lack thereof. Police departments and agencies are prevented from being self-reflective and examining behaviors within their areas of enforcement, and in subordinating hate acts and hate speech to property crimes, police perpetrate

microaggressions toward marginalized groups and in essence devalue lived experiences of emotional or psychological harm.

2.5 Swastikas as "Matters of Concern"

Why someone feels the need to put a swastika in a community may be complex, but I am not concerned with the motivation of placement. For me the rhetorical response, or assemblage, that the swastika created gives scholars insight into trauma, conflict, and issues of diversity and inclusion as well as creates opportunity for understanding how communities might better navigate those moments. Placing swastikas in a community becomes an "issue--the matter of concern," around which assemblages occur in response to the *thing* (Grabill 199). Part of why a swastika is documented in the media is because there is disagreement between the various publics that inhabit that space. If the community was in agreement about the appropriateness and placement of the swastika, there would be no need for an assemblage or response.

TSCP visualizes assemblages around swastika hate acts as well as supplies researchers with a *thing* **and** the assemblage or response around the *thing*. Community responses are constituted by a complex web of texts, material items, and embodied movement of actors (Bazerman, "Systems"). These webs are mapped out in my taxonomy via various "meta-genres" that describe forms of engagement and response to swastika hate acts (Giltrow 195). Janet Giltrow calls a "meta-genre," or "atmospheres surrounding genres," and some would interpret it to mean the thinking around the genre (195). Instead, I deploy atmosphere to mean the material and embodied practices that surround the genre. Much like Michael Carter does in his analysis of curricular expectations of departments at a college, I hold that metagenres are "general ways of doing" (392). Carter's definition of metagenre asks us to think about larger genres. For him a

metagenre “a genre of genres” to indicate “a structure of similar ways of doing that point to similar ways of writing and knowing,” and I have discovered that community actions around responses to swastika hate acts do fit into larger ways of being and knowing (393). I have named these metagenres *silence*, *speech*, and *support*, and I will discuss them in the findings chapters of this dissertation.

2.5.1 Safety and Security

One cannot talk about a swastika and place without talking about safety and who deserves safety and security in locations like large cities and in schools where individuals from diverse backgrounds come together. Because of how vulnerable populations are impacted by swastika. I must stop to acknowledge how the term diversity is functioning within my dissertation. For some individuals who reside in the United States, diversity is dangerous because it disrupts what those individuals feel is a proper hierarchy of power within the US. This hierarchy is nothing but white supremacy dressed up as nationalism, patriotism, and pride. First, this narrative disregards problematic and harmful effects of colonization and slavery in the establishment of the US. Second, this narrative also neglects those bodies who were here and who were enslaved and brought here as having a claim to the spaces and places they were born, lived, and died. Finally, this narrative presents a monolithic national identity as eugenicist in nature and as something pure to be kept clean despite the improbability, and frankly genetic danger, of it being so. In nature, diversity ensures survival. While I understand that someone might feel a certain way about groups of individuals, as Robert Jones Jr put it, “We can disagree

and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist."[7]

From *TSCP* data, we can see that larger cities in each state—often in diverse neighborhoods—are the locations where swastikas appear most. Schools also appear at the top of the list of places where swastikas are found, followed by parks. In looking at the buildings where swastika incidents occurred most often, religious institutions (mainly synagogues or churches who work with immigrants) are high on the list. The markings on synagogues and Jewish community centers are an obvious allusion to the Shoah[8] and not innocently placed upon the walls, doors, and grounds of these places. The placement of swastikas on these institutions is a threat. Similarly, one could make the same argument about public places. Because the symbol alludes to or is invoked as the icon of the Nazi regime, swastikas mark spaces as white. They assert the power of white individuals in their placement on buildings and in public places, and like the countries of old who placed their flags on lands they conquered, swastikas lay claim to the real estate they mark as being white owned or a space that should be white owned. This claim then makes the space unwelcome for others who do not share the identity of being white.

2.6 Implications for Genre Studies, Embodiment, Materiality, and Visual Rhetoric

Exploration and mapping of *community response to trauma* creates opportunities for scholars to conceive of genre as including non-discursive forms of engagement such as it homes in on practice *and* process. As Lockridge and Van Ittersum argue, practices accrete over time,

[7] This quote has been attributed to James Baldwin as of late, but Robert Jones, Jr. "Son of Baldwin" organizer originally posted it in 2015 on Twitter (Robert Jones, Jr. on Twitter: "We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist." / Twitter)

[8] Shoah is the Hebrew word for catastrophe and is used by some Holocaust scholars to denote with specificity the genocide of Jews during the Holocaust.

and patterns become clearer. *The Swastika Counter Project's* collection of four years of data allows me, both temporally and materially, to define an embodied form of genre and expands rhetorical genre studies to include assemblages of people, places and materiality.

Chapter 3 Creating a Taxonomy

3.1 *The Swastika Counter Project* as an Object of Study

Trauma impacts communities in a variety of ways. Whether it be a natural disaster, police brutality, a school shooting, or a hate act, a community's response tells us much about a community's identity, values, beliefs and/or practices. Understanding the rhetorical moment of a community's response to trauma and critically examining the actors and actions of that response creates opportunities for scholars and concerned community stakeholders to see how genre studies and rhetorical studies speak to and with the trauma of hate acts. To help understand the response to trauma more broadly conceived, this dissertation looks at a specific kind of community trauma–the appearance of a swastika within a community and makes plain the invisible practices of community interactions as response. In making these practices visible, two things can occur: moments of typification can be probed for their rhetorical effectiveness, and atypifications then manifest themselves as moments of possibility, which may provide responses that instantiate new ways of doing. My focus on community responses to swastika hate acts as a phenomenon within trauma response has allowed me to generalize and articulate a genre taxonomy called *community response to trauma*. Creating this taxonomy helps scholars, local communities, and schools understand that they are not alone when responding to trauma, not as a means to excuse their response or comfort them into complacency but rather to push them toward *redesigns* that may be more responsive to community trauma in the future.[9]

[9] As mentioned in my second chapter, I borrow "redesigns" from the New London Group, who believed that rhetorical responses draw from "available designs." From those "available designs" rhetors have the choice to stick

3.1.1 Exigence: A Gap in Terms of Hate Crimes

Collecting data on hate acts and hate crimes in the United States is not novel. Data about hate crimes has been collected by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, but as mentioned in Chapter Two, there is variance in what is considered a hate crime. While the UCR houses a variety of hate crimes, it does not give scholars insight into how the iconic swastika circulates specifically. On the other hand, in terms of swastikas, the AMCHA Initiative website does collect data on incidents involving swastikas and other anti-Semitic genocidal expressions found on U.S. college and university campuses from 2015 to present day. What is missing from AMCHA, however, is documentation of how swastikas circulate and are used against groups other than Jews and when the swastika is used in locations outside of college campuses. *The Swastika Counter Project* (originally *The Swastika Monitor*)[10] attempts to fill this gap in data by looking at swastikas beyond the confines of college campuses longitudinally from January 1, 2016-January 20, 2021. *The Swastika Counter Project (TSCP)* gathered 1339 online newspapers, magazines, and local news affiliate news stories that mentioned swastikas physically appearing in locales of the United States to document swastika circulation. Specifically, we were interested in the possible uptick of swastikas on the ground that attracted media attention and triggered community response.

Clearly swastikas occur digitally, however, for the scope of our project, we focused on how swastikas circulate in the material world. We purposefully avoided swastikas in digital spaces for a couple of reasons. First tracking swastikas online would have produced more data

with one of those designs or modify it for a particular rhetorical situation. The resulting design is a "redesign," which then becomes a part of the ever-changing bank of "available designs."

[10] The change in name came from a discussion around what it means to monitor. If our project was to do something beyond recording swastika incidents, then it was more than just monitoring them; it was counting them, and in counting them and bringing them to light we were countering. The play on the word counter allows us to document them as well as use the *Project* to counter the iconic hate symbol.

than we could have analyzed and required specific software tools and use that we did not have access to. Secondly, and more importantly, understanding how swastikas circulate in the material world gives scholars and other stakeholders insight into how non-discursivity rhetorically functions when individuals are exposed to or targets of swastika hate acts near or on their homes, their places of work, where they worship, or where they gather. We can forget the materialities that happen when swastikas appear in physical locations, and we wanted to draw attention to those material and embodied consequences.

3.2 Creating a Taxonomy: A Mixed-Method Approach

Because of the sheer number of swastika incidents gathered by *The Swastika Counter,* I required a method to assist in sifting through and understanding data I was particularly interested in: community responses to swastika hate acts as an example of community response to trauma. I sought to answer these questions: how do communities respond when swastikas appear in communal spaces where diverse publics engage, and how might studying those responses give scholars and communities a better understanding about how hate rhetoric functions in practice in order to mitigate its harm and possibly prevent future harm? To answer these questions, I have used a mixed-method approach that draws upon iconographic tracking, genre tracing, and genre analysis. While there is overlap in all of these methods, their combination draws attention to the material, embodied, visual, and rhetorical ways communities respond to swastika hate acts as a form of trauma. As overlapping methods, iconographic tracking, genre tracing, and genre analysis allow me to focus on patterns within community responses to swastika hate acts and map material and embodied actors and actions. Through my mapping of these actors and actions, I have created the taxonomy: *community response to trauma*.

While the following sections follow a chronological description of how I carried out my research and are labeled according to method, the methodological underpinning of rhetorical genre studies makes teasing my methods completely apart quite difficult. This difficulty speaks to the interdependent relationship between genre and rhetoric. Only when rhetorical moments bear enough similarity to one another to create recognizable typifications can we create genres, and in creating genres, we create discourse community expectations for future rhetorical moments that may have similar actors. The dependence of rhetoric on genre and genre on rhetoric creates an opportunity for scholars to look at how embodied genres contribute to the rhetorical and how rhetorical moments demand certain embodied responses (Spinuzzi). With swastika hate acts, those embodied responses can be seen as examples of "distributed cognition" that give scholars an opportunity to understand a community's identity, social structure, and response to problem solving in a moment of disruption or conflict within a community (Spinuzzi 48). Using genre as a way to understand identity and publics within local communities and how those might impact responses helps me understand how communities see themselves in relation to the trauma, especially trauma that impacts a portion of their population.

3.2.1 Iconographic Tracking

Iconographic tracking was used both to build the database of *TSCP* as well as to help me parse the data I gathered for my own portion of the project that centers on community response to trauma. *Iconographic tracking* is "a digital research method that is designed to account for the ways that images circulate, transform, and become consequential as they participate in various collective activities in physical and digital spaces" ("Tracking Swastikas," Gries). The circulation of images does something, so tracking them like you would do other actors in rhetorical genres is important. Like Gries, I argue that "images are vital actants, productive of

space and consequence--that they move into new locations and enter into diverse relations with other signs, structures, peoples, organizations, etc., they (re)configure space and (re)assemble collective life in both expected and unexpected ways" such that "images play a significant role in spreading contagious affects and desires that, in turn, fuel particular motivations, thoughts, behaviors, and actions" ("Tracking Swastikas," Gries). In this way images become one of the actants within assemblages of material and embodied actors where there is a challenge to the unity in the perception of a matter of concern (Latour, Grabill). Because swastikas function as a visual form of hate speech, where they appear impacts those who encounter those spaces and create responses that are not often documented on a large scale or in relation to other responses. *TSCP* and my dissertation remedy this issue as both use *iconographic tracking* to create opportunities for examining community responses in relation to one another at the macro level.

The first steps of *iconographic tracking* involve data hoarding, data mining, and assembling a collection but we were very specific about the parameters of our process (Gries "Mapping Obama Hope"). Gries used Google to search for any mention of swastika each day from January 1, 2016 through January 21, 2021 to amass over 1300 instances in news stories where a swastika appeared in the physical world. While the circulation of the swastika online is harmful, how a swastika impacts the material and embodied spaces, places, and actors in those moments of placement is important for the conversation around new materialism and rhetoric. We therefore did not include swastika mentions culled from the internet search such as memes or other uses of swastikas that were created and circulated solely online. For example, one instance involved a high school play that featured a flag as a backdrop for a portion of the performance. A student thought it would be funny to change the flag to a swastika, so they altered an image and circulated it on social media with commentary. While the student was disciplined for this action,

the incident never happened in the material world, so we did not include it. There were also some instances, which we did include, that did circulate on social media, but those swastika hate acts were grounded in incidents that occurred in homes, at parties, or on school grounds. For instance, a young Jewish girl had friends over for her birthday, and they decorated cupcakes (*TSCP*). One of her friends thought it would be funny to decorate her cupcake with a swastika. The mother of the birthday girl took a picture of the cupcake and circulated it on social media pointing out that it was not funny. We therefore included this incident because it actually happened in a home, and there were also news stories about the incident.

As the Lead PI for data collection Laurie Gries made every effort to mitigate the location of the computer and its impact on the search engine. Gries Collected 99% of the incidents via incognito browsing and changing her search engines. As a secondary PI in data collection, I added incidents as I came across them. Often these incidents were embedded in the original news story as mere mentions and required that I do some extra work to create a complete line of entry for them. When I needed to find an incident that was mentioned within another incident, I used Chrome as my search engine. I typed the town's name and "swastika" and then scrolled to find a date that matched the mention or timeframe noted in the original article. I would then open the article, verify it was the same incident mentioned in the parent news story, and then create a line entry for that event. This happened approximately 15 times.

As we collected the incidents, we organized the data. Each incident involving a swastika was recorded as a separate line of data within a spreadsheet. Once we recorded the URL for a swastika incident, we then read each news story and mined it for the following information: the geographical location (city, state); date of the incident (day, month, year); category of news source (school newspapers, news aggregates, local, national, or international news); activity

reported in the news source (vandalism, graffiti, symbol of hate, racist message, etc.); accompanying text ("Trump," "Heil Hitler," etc.); accompanying pictorial elements (iron cross, Star of David, etc.); media used to create the swastika (spray paint, marker, pinecones, etc.); place (public space, local business, college, etc.); structure (bathroom stall, park bench, urban wall, automobile, etc.); intended target (race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, etc.); culprit; and community response (public meeting, statement or letter, demonstration, clean-up, etc.). I then broke community response further down into coded actors (victim, neighbors, elected officials, religious leaders, etc.) and moves made by those actors (public meeting, statement or letter, demonstration, clean-up, etc.). As we worked through the data, subcategories within the categories emerged as a result of the data mining we did. We noticed patterns and trends in the types of news sources, places and targets that we saw, so we created drop-down menu shortcuts for these subcategories. Our definitions of what constituted the collected categories as well as the delineations within sub-categories are in our codebook in **Appendix A**. Codes for the various actors and their rhetorical moves are explained in **Appendix B**. To ensure validity of the data, all incidents were double coded. Within the community response category 100 random incidents were selected and double coded to check for consistency with no variants discovered, so those community response codes that I determined and created are reasonably sound in their validity.

3.2.2 Genre Tracing

After hoarding, mining, and assembling a collection, the next step in *iconographic tracking* is to analyze the data. In order to analyze the data, I needed to see the relationships between the various actors involved in the responses to swastika hate acts. In this way, *iconographic tracking* set me up to use *genre tracing* as another method. *Genre tracing* involves identifying patterns of activity that are replicated in such a way as to constitute a genre. Both

iconographic tracking and *genre tracing* have ties to actor-network theory (ANT) whose premise is to map relationships between individuals, and this allowed me to see the rhetorical function of the phenomenon as well as create the metagenres of response within my taxonomy (Latour). *Genre tracing* allowed me to understand how the various actors and practices were connected and formed assemblages (Latour). Here I use practices instead of texts, which is often the focus within genre studies because embodiment and how that translates into action does function as a genre and is traceable as such. As mentioned in the introduction, assemblages are useful as they describe incidents as being "matters of concern" that result in an embodied and material response (Grabill 199). Swastika hate acts created moments where diverse publics were forced to interact and engage in matters of concern that impacted not only the target community but the larger community as a result.

While *genre tracing* as a method does resemble activity theory with its interest in actors and their relationships, *genre tracing* is particularly interested in actors and texts (in a broad sense) and how they operate together within "complex institutions, disciplines, and communities" (Spinuzzi 23). Again, I push back on the use of the word texts and argue for practices as "texts" of embodiment. I used *genre tracing*, therefore, to help me in establishing actors and actions for my coding as I looked at who was most often involved in a response and what their responses often were. By making those "unofficial, frequently unarticulated" practices visible, *genre tracing* allowed me to better conceive of how individuals, institutions, disciplines, and communities "solve problems and disseminate solutions; and how their conversations and problem solving are instantiated in artifacts" (Spinuzzi 23). Mapping who is involved in a response and how they respond allows me to approach answers to my research questions: how do communities respond when swastikas appear in communal spaces where diverse publics engage,

and how might studying those responses give scholars and communities a better understanding about how hate rhetoric functions in practice?

3.2.3 Genre Analysis

Genre tracing enabled me to see the relationship between actors and actions and brought certain artifacts and embodied genres to the forefront of my analysis. As certain actors and actions became more salient in terms of typification, I then turned to *genre analysis* to help me understand not only key rhetorical moves but also the genres within those moves. Those key rhetorical moves, I have named metagenres within my taxonomy. Borrowing from Michael Carter, metagenres "signify a higher category, a genre of genres," which "indicates a structure of similar ways of *doing* that point to similar ways of writing and knowing" (393, *emphasis* mine). Like Carter, I include ways of doing within the definition metagenres, and for the purposes of my dissertation, the ways of doing as a way of being and knowing help me make sense of community responses to swastika hate acts and as well as give me the rhetorical umbrellas to describe and analyze smaller embodied genres and genre artifacts.

The metagenres I identified were *silence*, *speech*, and *support*, and they represent the most common *ways of doing* tied to *community response to trauma*. They are in **Figure 3-1** below. At the center is *community response to trauma*. Circling it are three metagenres. How I came to understand these as metagenres will be discussed later in this chapter, and what these metagenres entail will be explored in my findings chapters that follow this chapter. The use of the term metagenre as describing "ways of doing" is generative for me because it allows for embodied practices, which are often attached to trauma response, in addition to linguistic texts, which are often understood as the basis or product by which genre is defined within rhetorical genre studies.

Figure 3-1 Metagenres

The metagenres I identified function differently rhetorically, but all contribute to how the assemblages with communities respond to trauma. In other words, they are the ways communities engage or perform rhetorically in their response. The metagenre *silence* rhetorically functions to decenter victims and minimize victim harm while often centering perpetrators. *Silence* tends to make police the sole enforcers and arbiters of justice and shifts the focus of the crime to be one of property and not embodied victim harm. When communities decenter victims and prioritize property over human mental health and well-being, *silence* enacts microaggressions against populations who are already vulnerable to these kinds of harm more frequently. *Silence* can also fixate on punishment and perpetrators as scapegoats to prevent critical conversations around diversity and inclusion within communities.[11] This particular kind

[11] I understand that there have been other discussions around silence and how it functions rhetorically in powerful easy as a means of protest, emphasis, or omission, but for this dissertation, I am choosing to examine its power of decentering and shutting down conversation that could create moments of critical engagement that support victims and mitigate harm/future harm.

of silencing will be discussed in depth in Chapter Four. When it comes to *speech* as a metagenre, civic leaders often use letters and statements performatively with the move I call "thoughts and prayers." While speaking out against swastikas can let targets of swastikas know they are supported, one must look at who is centered in these speech acts; is it the speaker or the target communities? Often the metagenre of *speech* is used by those who use it to perform empathy without acting on it beyond the speech act itself. Instead, *speech* often becomes a way for elected officials to maintain their position of power. Within *TSCP* I documented 153 letters and statements issued by individuals and community groups, and they will be talked about later in this chapter as I explain how I also used *genre analysis* to unpack the rhetorical moves housed in the language used within them. I will also discuss them further in Chapters Five and Six of this dissertation. Finally, the metagenre *support* encompasses embodied actions that assist victims and attempt to mitigate future harm, and this category is the most under-represented of the three metagenres. I discuss *support* in Chapter Seven, and in Chapter Eight I use a case study to demonstrate how support can manifest itself through full community participation and engagement.

3.2.4 Mitigating the Challenges of News Stories

Doing a *genre analysis* of the news stories has challenges for a researcher. Because coding actors and moves by nature restricts and possibly simplifies what may be a very complex and singular rhetorical moment, I had to be cognizant to not collapse actions. I was also careful not to add a positive or negative valence to my coding because my task in coding was to organize and note patterns, not comment or judge them on their success or failure. There was also an issue with news stories being incomplete in recording actors and moves because of things like author focus, time constraints, or possible space or word count constraints. To mitigate this, I sometimes

visited other stories on the incident, and those were collected in the notes section of our database. There were also instances in the original amassing of data where an incident was recorded twice. When that happened, I collapsed the incident into one line and made note of the other news story in the notes section of the database. Finally, to mitigate a possible oversimplification, I took my investigation of a swastika hate act further by completing a case study of a community's atypical response and conducting interviews of six local leaders from that town. This case study will be explored further in Chapter Eight. Through conducting interviews with local community members, I was able to get a fuller picture of what a particular response entailed and triangulate whether my codes held up to scrutiny. My subsequent findings outlined in Chapter Eight did give credibility to my metagenres as a part of the taxonomy *community response to trauma*.

3.3 Tracing a Genre in News Stories

As mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, I hold that documents function as trace and serve as a record of events, so individuals not physically or temporally present may witness a rhetorical moment (Ore). How I came to examine and understand these traces and the assemblages these news stories created around swastika hate acts will be outlined below. Using *iconographic tracking, genre tracing,* and *genre analysis* I will discuss the collection of the data, how it was organized, and how the patterns I found created the codes and eventually the metagenres and taxonomy of *community response to trauma*.

I came to *TSCP* in May 2019. By that point Laurie Gries had amassed over 600 swastika hate acts that spanned from January 1, 2016 to May 25, 2018, and my first job was to cross-check the data. For every website listed in the data collection, I read the online news story of the incident. I added any missing information to our Google spreadsheet and made sure all parts of our data that we collected were accurate. (See **Appendix A** for the categories of data gathered

for *TSCP*.) I also added data to the newly established category of community response. Up until this point, we had not methodically gathered community response data, but it was an avenue that we were interested in exploring further as a research team. We felt we could better understand how communities viewed swastikas through examining how communities responded to them, and those responses might indicate whether communities felt swastikas were a serious threat or not.

Originally, I was tasked with documenting responses that were "exceptional," were "unusual," or "went above and beyond," but after making it through about 300 incidents, I began to question what constituted an "exceptional" or "unusual" incident that "went above and beyond." My definition of "exceptional" was nebulous because without an understanding of the typifications in response that constituted the genre, I could not articulate what responses were atypical or performed a redesign of other typical responses as their response

3.3.1 Noting Typifications and Establishing Codes

To understand response as a genre, I had to determine what typifications were taken up by communities. I needed to reexamine all the swastika hate acts to note what happened in each instance: who were key players in the community response, and which moves did those players make? My reexamination of the data presented me the opportunity to note patterns across specific instances and allowed me to connect "the private with the public, the singular with the recurrent" thus establishing a working definition of what a swastika hate act community response might entail as an embodied rhetorical genre ("Genre as Social Action" Miller 163).

My initial reading of the first 300 incidents in *TSCP* had no agenda except to note "exceptional" responses, so before I began re-reading the incidents a second time, I used a grounded theory approach to come up with my initial codes. Because I already had a sense of the

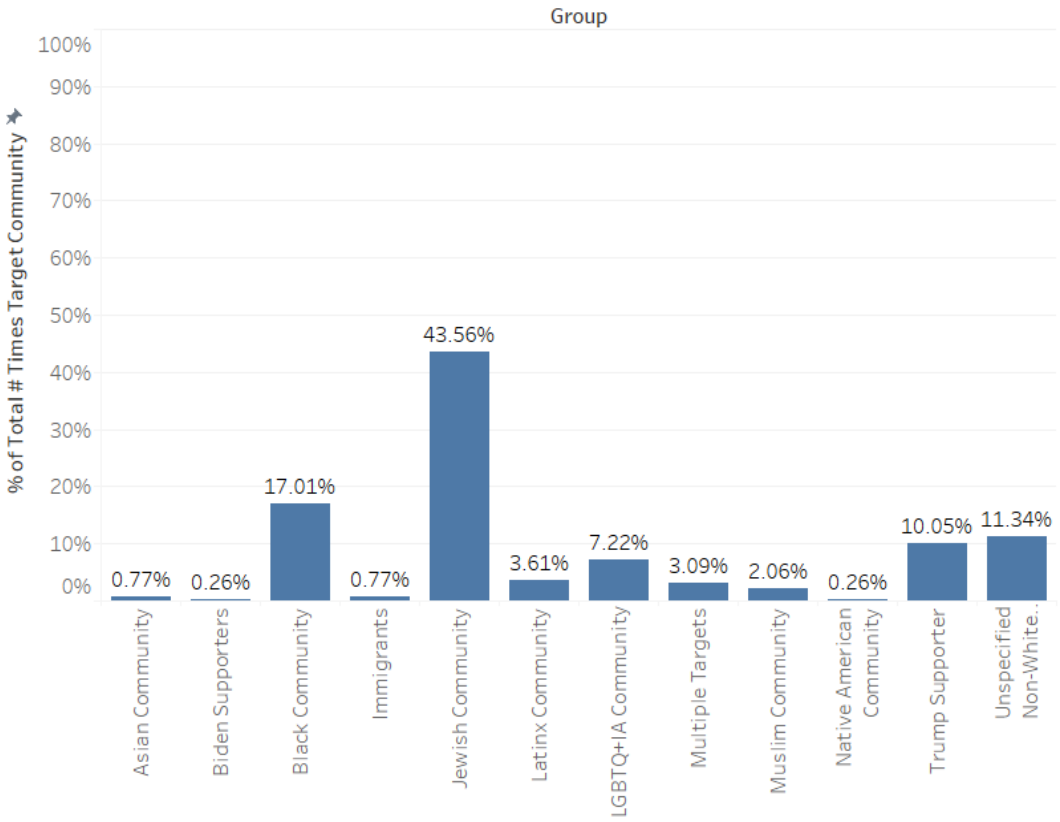
actors and the kinds of moves made from my first pass-through, my codes included naming the actors involved and their likely moves in response to swastika hate acts. Repetition in actors and their actions resulted in 13 "actor" codes (school administration, mayor/council member, police/sheriff, representative/senator, department of transportation, parks department, neighbors, community members, religious leaders, ADL, student group, homeowner/car owner, and business owner) and seven "move" codes (clean up/cover up, letters/statements, policy/committee/system creation, victim support, gathering/protest/vigil/demonstration, suspension/denial of access to space, and gathering/protest/vigil/demonstration).These are delineated with examples in **Appendix B**.

My inductive approach of seeing patterns in a small portion of incidents to determine my initial codes helped create credibility in my codes because I did not come into the coding with assumptions and expectations about what I should see or would want to see as a response. Methodologically this is significant because had I approached my research with assumptions of who I believed should be involved and what they should do in terms of their position, power, and ability, I might have missed out on the fine subtleties of the kinds of individuals involved and how they were involved in a variety of ways. Upon rereading and completing the reading of the remaining 1300+ incidents, I made sure to flesh out details to my codes such as the kinds of elected officials or the various ways victim support occurred. My codes will be explained in more detail in the next two subsections and will be detailed further in my findings chapters.

TSCP attempts to think about who is harmed and aims to provide ethos for those claims about the harm done by swastikas in its quantification of swastika hate acts. We made every effort to identify intended targets/target communities of the swastika hate acts when possible, given the limitations of the news stories and the evidence therein. **Figure 3-2** below has the

breakdown of the targeted communities that could actually be pinpointed. In 69.9 % of the incidents, the specific target of the swastika was unclear. If the target of the swastika belonged to a marginalized community, that community was coded as the target community.

Figure 3-2 Target Communities that were Identified



Sometimes the identity of the target community was obvious because the individual or the news source identified the ethnicity or social group of the target, and the swastika was placed on their private residence, property, or business for instance. If it was placed on a religious institution, the religious group was identified as the target community.

We also took our cues about who the target of the swastika might be from the text that accompanied the swastika because swastikas occurred most often in public locations such as bathrooms, parks, streets, or overpasses where it was not so obvious who the target was unless there were words or images along with the swastika that indicated a particular group. If the

accompanying text identified a particular group or used a racial or ethnic slur, that group was coded as the target. If there were slurs about sexuality or groups that were told to "go back to ___," those were named as the intended targets (*TSCP*). Some swastikas appeared with language identifying multiple targets. In those instances, those groups were listed and counted separately, and if the text contained phrasing like, "White Power," we coded the hate act as having "Unspecified Non-White" targets (*TSCP*). The identity of the target was not always obvious, so we assume that the numbers tied to communities most often targeted within *TSCP* are but a fraction of the number of times those groups are actually targeted by hate acts.

The largest target group was the Jewish Community followed by the Black Community, unspecified Non-White Community, Trump Supporters, and the LGBTQ+IA Community. Here one can see that the swastika is predominantly used against historically marginalized communities or is used to comment upon a particular political community and how that community is viewed by the person who placed the swastika in that location. Based upon those targets/target communities who could be identified, it is a fair assumption that swastikas, in general, function as hate symbols designed to intimidate, strike fear, and *other* particular members within a community. Here *othering* is defined as a setting apart and treating differently; in more common parlance, it is the basis upon which discrimination, bigotry, racism, and genocide is founded. When someone--be it an enemy in war, an opposing political party, or someone considered "foreign" --is othered, it becomes easier to treat them differently, treat them as less than, and/or possibly murder them without guilt. *Othering* underpins how perpetrators can justify their treatment of their targets and why they place swastikas in locations where their intended targets may encounter them

3.3.1.1 The Trump Supporter Anomaly

When it came to the target label "Trump supporter," the individual was someone who openly supported Trump. The swastikas appeared on campaign signs in people's yards or on cars that had a Trump bumper sticker or the phrase, "Make America Great Again" (*TSCP*). Here, swastikas were used to mark individuals with specific political beliefs. Rather than using the symbol to mark public spaces as exclusive for some groups or functioning to harm historically marginalized victims of the Holocaust, the symbol was used to mark those individuals, who perpetrators felt held the same ideals as the Nazis.[12] Within the United States, being called a Nazi by anyone, is not a compliment for most. By marking the individuals as being affiliated with Nazis, the perpetrator, in this instance, was defining the larger community as being inclusive of diversity and anti-Nazi, so therefore the "Nazi sympathizer" was the one who was the outsider and who did not belong. This delineation of community make up, again, is based upon the perpetrator's sense of what constitutes their community or what they believe should constitute their community.

Determining how the swastika functioned in relation to Trump did pose some challenges as the word Trump was found 75 times in connection with a swastika. Just because a swastika appeared next to the word "Trump" or on a "Trump" sign, it was not always clear whether the swastika was saying that Trump was a fascist Nazi and therefore a horrible person, or that Trump was a fascist Nazi, who was good and going to "Make America Great Again" by keeping it

[12] Of note is that since January 2021, there has been an increase in the swastika used to protest what is thought to be socialist or fascist policies concerning COVID and mask-wearing. In these instances since January 2021, and with a particular incident in Lansing, MI that occurred within our data, the political Right used the swastika to mark people and places that they felt were infringing on freedoms and rights of American citizens. Often individuals on the Right likened the COVID mandates to WWII Nazi identity cards and the Stars of David that Jews were forced to wear. This analogy equates the US government with the Nazi party. Holocaust scholars have continued to point out the fallacy of this correlation, and yet there are those on the Right who still maintain the connection.

Christian, white, and immigrant free. The swastika and the accompanying visuals and text are all we had to look at, and intent is not clear when faced with the hate symbol and Trump's name. Therefore, we know there are some instances in *TSCP t*hat could have been anti-Trump that were not coded as such. This means that the association between swastikas and how they circulate in relation to Trump in terms of what they mean is incomplete and would require more research beyond the capabilities of this dissertation. Regardless, the association between the swastika and Trump created connections between the fascist racism associated with Nazis and him.

No matter whether the symbol marks Trump positively as a fascist Nazi or not, groups that have been historically harmed by the swastika and could see the association as nothing but negative and harmful, and if the association occurred enough times, Trump becomes permanently linked with the symbol and thus its ideology. This association could cause undue anxiety and fear for some about what he might do with this power as President. There is also the logic that if he is associated enough with the symbol by a mass and variety of individuals, then perhaps there is some truth to the association, and therefore the fear some feel would be warranted.

While Trump supporters represent one category of individuals who were targets of the swastika, this dissertation chooses to focus more on targets belonging to marginalized communities. This choice is a conscious one because the swastikas are being used differently in relation to Trump supporters than they are historically marginalized individuals, and that use has different mental and emotional consequences for the target/target community. More often than not, the Trump supporters who were targets of swastikas were white and enjoyed the privileges and power in the United States associated with whiteness. Being called a Nazi by having a swastika associated with your name does not have the same valence of harm that the symbol

evokes when used against a marginalized group. Granted there may be some fallout on social media for being called a Nazi, but the individuals who are marked as Nazis can deny the association.[13] If the individual has no other trappings of a Nazi, the incident and the swastika connection evanesces, but with marginalized communities, the swastika becomes yet another micro or macro aggression perpetrated against them. The toll of just one more instance of hate targeted toward a person's identity can be mentally and emotionally exhausting on a much grander scale than being called a Nazi. That mental and emotional exhaustion does not go away over time; it is compounded with every news story, with every personal account, and with every discriminatory act read about, seen, or personally experienced by that individual.

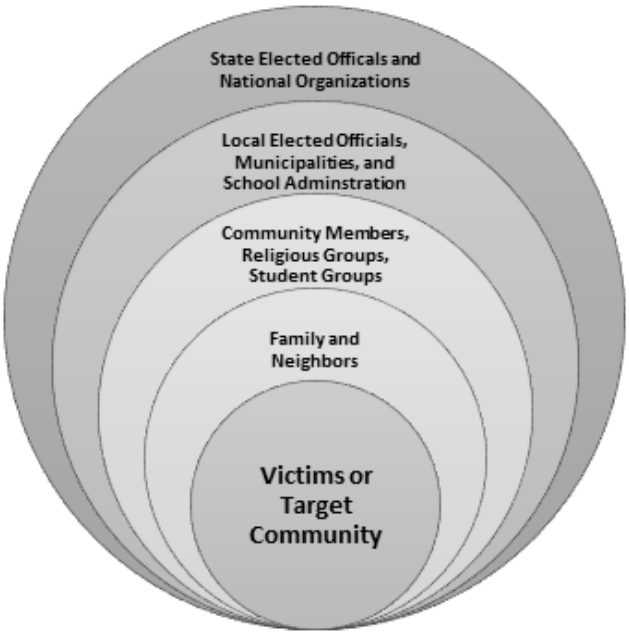
3.3.2 The Usual Suspects: Typification of Community Actors

Aside from targets/target communities, there were other actors who responded to the swastika hate acts. These actors are situated both socially and physically in terms of proximity to targets of swastika hate acts. How these actors responded–whether it was as a singular agent, as part of a community group, or as part of an institution within the community–dictated the kinds of actions those actors performed. **Figure 3-3** below presents a visual of my actor categories, which were fleshed out in more specific detail as I progressed through my data. The visual locates the target or target community at the center because that is who the hate act targets and who is the closest socially, emotionally, and physically to the harm done. As the circles increase in size, the figure is intended to represent the actors' association with the target/target

[13] There have been some instances where anti-maskers used the symbol to label and call out state officials as being authoritarian for requesting individuals isolate and that states go into lockdown to stop the spread of COVID. The analogy is a false equivalency and sets up Nazis and authoritarian governments as being one and the same, when the Nazi party was but one form of authoritarian government, and forcing someone to wear a mask in no way resembles the persecution of Jewish individuals.

community as that association gradually moves from personal connection and close physical proximity to one of more distance. to the target/target community.

Figure 3-3 Circle of Actors



Here I mean that the more distanced the actor was physically, socially, or emotionally from the targets or targeted community, the less these responses were about the target/target community per say but rather more about the actors' own personal beliefs concerning swastikas as an act of hate, about the targeted community as a whole, or about social issues such as the lack of support or inclusivity in the community or the nation. Another way to look at it would be, the further away an actor was from the target/target community, the more likely victim harm became decentered as other motivations such as political agendas and the maintenance of power or social order/structure become the motivation for the actions of the respondents.

As the circles increase in size, there is also a tendency for responses from leaders and elected officials to be connected to social expectations placed on them by their constituency, who they were elected to represent. There were, however, instances where personal connection may have been a motivator for some elected civic officials. For instance, one individual shared the

same identity as the target community and expressed an affinity or direct connection to that community (*TSCP*). For others, how they were perceived by constituents in the community became more salient as a motivator for response than the harm to victims. An example of this was when an elected official was concerned about how her community would be viewed by neighboring communities if they had swastikas present in their town (*TSCP*). Focus on community identity, and an elected official's "coming down hard" in advocating punishment could make elected officials more palatable, relatable, and therefore more supported come reelection. Because elected officials can exert their social, political, and/or financial power over the community, they are looked to by the community to be leaders who protect the community from individuals who challenge the notion of the collective. In my examination of letters and statements made by elected officials, I noticed several instances that bore this protective power dynamic out, and those will be discussed in Chapter. Six where I discuss the metagenre *speech* and elected officials' responses.

As I progressed through the 1300+ incidents, the categories for the code of "actor" became more detailed and were expanded to include more nuanced positions within the community. Targets/targeted communities included homeowners, car owners, business owners/businesses, and churches as a subset of businesses. In addition to targets/target communities responding to the swastika hate act, we saw responses from family members as well as neighbors. Sometimes the targets knew their neighbors, and sometimes they did not, but the neighbor group was often in close proximity geographically or had some familial ties with the targets. Beyond the immediate neighborhood of the target and their family, community members that belonged to the town or city also responded when it came to clean up efforts, vigils, parades, demonstrations, or even frequenting a business to support them monetarily.

Religious leaders from all denominations including denominations connected to the target also responded, and on college and university campuses, student groups were often respondents. As actors were further removed physically and geographically from the target/target community, they often fell into the category of local elected officials, school administration, and municipalities. Local elected officials included mayors, council members, and assembly persons. School administration included principals, superintendents, university presidents, university deans, directors, and district liaisons. Municipalities ranged from police departments (including campus police departments and school SROs), fire departments, parks and recreation departments, departments of transportation, public works departments, city employees, or maintenance crews for the city. The group of individuals, who were most removed from the targets, were the state elected officials such as governors, representatives, and senators and national organizations that had local or regional offices such as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) or the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). The recursive nature of adding to and redefining the codes for the category of "actor" meant that my data drove the coding, and as a result mediated some possible biases I might have as to who should respond and how.

3.3.3 Embodied Actions: Typifications in Practice/s and the Emergence of Metagenres

Like my coding procedure for the actors in community response to trauma, I followed the same process in developing initial codes for the embodied and possibly non-discursive "moves" that actors made. Using the first 300 incidents, I devised my initial codes based upon the typifications I noticed. As I moved through the remaining 1000+ incidents, I added details to my initial codes that elaborated on the kinds of embodied and non-discursive actions that were performed. My final codes with examples of what those codes look like in everyday practice are

Table 3-1 Codes for Actions with Examples

Code	Examples
Letters/statements *	Letters sent to parents by school administration, statements made by public elected officials
Clean up/cover up $	Painting over, placing of materials over, scrubbing off
Policy, committee, or system creation ^	School assemblies, courses created, educational materials developed, procedures for reporting incidents, committees created to deal with incidents, policies for punishment or dealing with perpetrators, sensitivity training, committee meetings, meetings to discuss next steps
Gathering, protest, vigil, or demonstration ^	Rallies, parades, gatherings to celebrate diversity, gatherings to protest a perpetrator's acts
Suspension or denial of access $	Any punishment meted out for perpetrators. In schools, this included suspension, community service, or submitting an apology verbally or in written form. In the community this included fines, denial of service or access to the building or location, and/or prison.
Victim support ^	Extra security measures taken like walking students across campus at night, mental health services offered along with staffing and telephone numbers, offering up and providing spaces for victims to talk about and process the incident
Other	This was a catch all category for anything that did not fit the other coded moves. This included contacting the ADL or SPLC. Also, when paired with police, it became the code for investigation, that the police were handling it, or that the police had been contacted.

Key: *: *Speech*; $: *Silence*; ^: *Support*

in the **Table 3-1** above in **bold**. **Appendix B** also contains specific examples of these codes from the letters and statements within *TSCP*.

Since I was able to label the moves of actors, I was able to see the expected moves within the embodied rhetorical genre of *community response to trauma* as typifications. Those typifications in "moves" became the metagenres: *silence*, *speech*, and *support*. **Figure 3-4** shows how often discursive or non-discursive moves by actors in the community occurred within these metagenres where responses were recorded. Some online news reports recorded no response because the news story functioned merely as a crime or community bulletin announcement of the incident. On the other hand, other news stories contained multiple actors with various responses. As mentioned earlier, I use the concept of metagenres to describe the ways of doing within the taxonomy of *community response to trauma*.

Figure 3-4 Trauma Responses in Communities: Metagenre Percentages

Silence, performed 51.28% of the time, functions as a rhetorical move that shuts down conversation, minimizes victim harm, and/or reduces the harm to be a crime of property that once cleaned up, it is as if it never happened. Common moves of *silence* are: cleanup/coverup, police involvement/investigation, suspension/denial of the perpetrator to access of the space, and/or language about perpetrators that is ableist and/or infantilizing and/or decenters victims.

Speech, performed 31.26% of the time, is constituted by letters and statements issued by everyone from school administration to elected officials to religious leaders and/or police, and these linguistic moves, while minimally supportive, often function as "thoughts and prayers:" a performative move designed to look supportive but ends up often being empty of embodied support beyond the utterance or written word. *Support*, performed only 17.45% of the time, focuses on materiality and embodiment using a lens of futurity and which centers victims. Examples of the kinds of embodied moves within this metagenre are: policy/committee/system creation, gatherings/protests/vigils/demonstrations, and/or victim support in the way of mental health counseling, escorts around campus, and/or surveillance cameras. My findings chapters explore *silence*, *speech* and *support* as meta-genres of *community response to trauma* in detail.

3.3.4 Coding "Other"

Of note when it comes to coding actions within metagenres, the category of *other* was originally designed to be a catch-all for the moves not described by the other six categories, but it soon became populated with "investigation" and "involvement" connected to police responses (*TSCP*). My original assumption was that police would investigate as part of their role as police, but police were involved in other ways beyond investigation. I had not accounted for those ways in my codes, so I therefore coded those other moves within the various move categories and coded police involvement and investigation as *other*. The combination of police and the coded move *other* happened 622 times (or 46 % of the responses to incidents) and demonstrates it was in fact their default move.

3.4 Unpacking the Metagenre of Speech: A Genre Analysis of Letters and Statements

When looking at specific rhetorical moves in response to swastika hate acts, letters and statements from community members appeared most often–so often that speech became one of the metagenres of *community response to trauma*. To better understand this rhetorical move, I needed to look more closely at the words issued in the letters and statements of community leaders via the method of *genre analysis*. This meant that collecting the text of these speech acts was important. I amassed 153 letters and statements from the 1300+ new stories and added their full text to the community response category within the database reserved for taking note of the kinds of actions communities performed in response to swastika hate acts.

The actual letters and statements function as yet another form of trace within the trace of a news story because they give scholars access to words delivered as a response to swastika hate acts. As speech acts, these letters and statements also have the capability to record actors and moves that are not necessarily present in the text of the news story directly and act in many ways as a "hyperlink" to other practices and behaviors within the embodied rhetorical genre of *community response to trauma* that occurred beyond the news story. In this way, they allow for a more complete picture of the practices that create the taxonomy I argue for in this dissertation. While the writer of the news story did not explicitly list out these moves as part of their personal generated content, these letters and statements within the news stories either quoted a response at length or linked the respondent's statement or letter to the news story via hyperlinks. Because they recorded action beyond the news story but were included in the new story, I coded the actions within the letters as responses in the community response portion of *TSCP* along with the actors associated with them. For instance, a letter may have offered up mental health support by school administration, so I coded it as school administration victim support.

Genre analysis provided me with a method to categorize what I saw as I analyzed the discursive moves within the letters and statements. My findings are outlined in detail in Chapters Five and Six where I discuss letters and statements issued by elected civic leaders and by school administration respectively. Also, part and parcel of these letters and statements is a verbal or written record of the community leader's position and their commentary on the swastika hate act, and this is why examining letters and statements as the metagenre of *speech* is productive. The speech acts and moves performed by those issuing the letters and statements gave me insight into power dynamics, definitions of community, and moments where politics may have outweighed true embodied support of victims.

For my *genre analysis* of statements and letters, I collected all of the letters and statements that were of significant length issued in official spoken or written statements. These ranged from three sentences to entire letters that were paragraphs long. I first began by looking at the letters from school administration because they had the most complete text, and in almost all instances the trace documents contained the entire text from salutation to closing. Focusing on these letters in particular gave me an idea of how a person tasked with the responsibility to address and resolve the harm done by a hate act responded. Using a grounded theory approach, I read through all of the school administration letters before I created my initial codes, which were kept as I read through the other groups' letters and statements such as religious leaders, student groups, and elected officials. My reading was not unbiased, however, as I had suspected that the moves such as clean up, policy creation, gatherings, suspension, and victim support that I noted and coded in the online news stories would also appear as trace within the letters and statements. **Appendix C** shows two examples of how I coded letters and statements.

The 13 moves that were coded as well as what those moves might look like for the various groups that issued letters and statements appear in **Table 3-2** below. One can see some moves outlined as general moves as well as police who play a significant role in investigation are captured in the trace of the news story, but those were not the only moves that the rhetors made in these letters and statements. Had I coded for only those actors and moves seen in the news stories proper, I would have missed out on some specific and subtle rhetorical moves that were aimed at specific audiences for those letters and statements. Those audiences may have required different forms of engagement and information than, perhaps, the readership of an online news story, whose readers could reach beyond the local community where the swastika hate act occurred.

Table 3-2 Coded Moves and what they looked like performed by various actors

Move	**School Administration**	**Police**	**Religious Leaders**	**Elected Officials**	**Student Groups**	**ADL**
Invocation of Community #	Definition of what community is and is not	What the community is or is not	Move to make a better community	What the community is or is not	Students as a group must tolerate difference	Civil rights focus
Invoking Home Help @	Asking for parent involvement in disseminating information or in supporting the school		The need to educate the community in order to de-escalate this type of hate		Everyone must work together	
Description of the Swastika Hate Act *	Location and timeline of discovery	Naming the crime, vocabulary to describe the crime, location and timeline		Naming the crime, vocabulary to describe the crime, location and timeline	Naming the crime, vocabulary to describe the crime, location and timeline	Naming the crime, vocabulary to describe the crime, location and timeline
Procedure *	What was done in response and why	Response and timeline		What was done in response and why (usually police)	What was done in response (usually this was	What was done in response and why (usually police)

					condemned as not enough)	
Clean-up *	When and who cleaned up			When and who cleaned up (usually public workers/municipalities)		Appreciation for quick clean-up
Timeliness *	When the swastika was cleaned up	Timeline of their involvement		Timeline of the swastika clean-up		Appreciation for quick response
Contact Info *	Who to contact for more information or to report	Who to contact to give information in helping police				
Condemnation of the Swastika Hate Act #	Vocabulary to name perpetrators, language to describe the act, saying this is not who we are	Focus on the crime	Not what a religious or godly community does	Vocabulary to name perpetrators, language to describe the act, saying this is not who we are	Vocabulary to name perpetrators, language to describe the act, saying this is not who we are	Vocabulary to name perpetrators, language to describe the act, saying this is not who we are, language tied to larger national issues
Code of Conduct #	Reminders that students agreed to this and/or will be punished according to this					
Police Involvement *	SROs or outside police involvement timeline	Perpetrator commentary	Appreciation for police involvement	Use of police to enforce and support punishment of perpetrator		Appreciation for police involvement
Invocation of Safety ^	The belief that schools should be safe, and all students should feel safe	Mentions of harm done to the victim/community	Fear of acceleration of similarly types of incidents, fear of the climate in the US changing, fear that individuals have become emboldened	Communities should be safe for all	The belief that schools should be safe, and all students should feel safe	Communities should be safe for all as a civil right
Support of Victims ^	Counseling services, school events/assemblies		Resolutions to fight/combat	Empathy described or a situation	Student support groups offered	Resolutions to fight/combat

			hate/hate acts/discrimination/racism/anti-Semitism, offer up of religious support services or locations for individuals to feel safe and/or talk	described to show they understood the harm done		hate/hate acts/discrimination/racism/anti-Semitism,
Support Materials ^	Information parents could use to help talk with their students about swastikas/history of swastikas and why they are not appropriate at school					

Key: @: Help; *: Documentation; #: Community; ^: Support

When I did examine these letters and statements, I noticed two things: they documented actions taken by others, but they also functioned rhetorically to invoke or create community, condemn actions, or enlist help. What this looked like within the letters varied from actor to actor, but there were some patterns that appeared across all the letters. Despite some holes, there are three moves that are made by all of the groups: invocation of community, condemnation of the swastika, and invocation of safety. Support of victim, mention of police involvement, outlining of procedures, and a description of the swastika appearance are also highly represented. This indicates that identity and safety of the community and those in it are important, but we also need to look at how often the letters and statements were issued and the individuals who issued them. Those topics will be discussed in Chapter Five and Chapter Six, which deal with *speech.*

3.4.1 Help: Making it Happen

Contact information, such as names and phone numbers, for officials or the authorities was also listed in some of the letters and statements. Implicit in giving the contact information for the police, the school administration, or some form of authority was a request for community members to respond by engaging in the discursive move of giving information that could lead to the capture of the perpetrator/s. Calling for help invokes a sense of the community taking care of its own and provides a way for community members to participate directly. As an audience with discourse expectations, individuals reading or listening to the letter or statement also expect contact information to be given, especially if they feel some kind of connection to the target/target community, the place, or the community at large.

3.4.2 Documenting the Incident and Assembling the Facts

Aside from the police being listed as the resource that individuals should contact to enact justice, police also appeared in the moves to document the who, what, where, and when of the swastika hate act. Individuals in their letters and statements were quick to note that police were involved and investigating. Also, part of the documentation was a description of the swastika's appearance, location and procedure that was used to remove it in a timely fashion. The silencing moves of cleanup and timeliness function to prevent future harm, but as will be discussed in Chapter Four, quickly cleaning up can also shut down conversation around target/target community harm.

3.4.3 Creating In-Groups and Out-Groups: Defining Community

Letters and statements from civic leaders also explicitly defined what a community was and was not and condemned the act and/or the perpetrator. Often the idea of a unified community

was juxtaposed to the perpetrator in a move that set the community up as good and the perpetrator as an outsider of the community. This indignation was used to create an in-group and out-group dynamic. Based on the data in *TSCP*, the irony is the perpetrator belonged to the community, so saying the perpetrator was an outsider was incorrect on a physical/geographical level. The idea of a unified community within a school environment often manifested itself physically in what schools called a "code of conduct;" a written document that binds individuals in the community to particular kinds of behavior (*TSCP*).

Performing indignation or condemnation, while a rhetorical move, actually decenters victims and focuses attention on the perpetrator and the issuer of the letter or statement. While this may make the speaker feel good and like they did something, without concrete actions to follow those words, condemnation and indignation exemplify a move I call "thoughts and prayers," where merely words are the response and deemed enough. "Thoughts and prayers" will be discussed in depth in Chapter 6 that discusses speech tied to elected officials specifically. When the speaker makes the "thoughts and prayers" move, they might feel they are absolved from further action and then can walk away from the issue without the accountability of creating systemic support.

3.4.4 Embodied Support: Safety and Victims

In terms of support, there was both a request for safety, the supplying of materials to help young students navigate the incident and the history and harm of the symbol as well as an identification with the target/target community of the hate act. Most often support occurred in more embodied ways like: mental health services being offered, policy or course/lesson creation, assemblies or town halls, vigils/protests/demonstrations, and even offers of walking students

from place to place at night or an increased use of surveillance cameras. Safety of targets/targeted communities is centered in these visible and concrete actionable moves.

3.4.5 Accounting for Sample Size

Even with my collection of letters and statements, I know I did not capture all of the community responses, but because of the audience for those letters and statements and the need to establish credibility and maintain support, there would have been an emphasis on the issuer of the statement or letter to outline everything in order to appear supportive, which would be part of the genre expectations of being a leader. Some may question the variety in patterns that I found when looking at the letters and statements because of the sample size. Having only 102 statements by elected officials or 27 letters by administration may seem like small numbers in relation to the total number of events, but when looking at the statements and letters within those samples, the similarities in moves that I found among actors indicates that it would not matter how many statements or letters I collected because what I did find within all of the data was strikingly similar. Had there been more variance in the statements and letters in their respective samples, then there would be a possible issue with validity, but because they were so similar, I believe those concerns with validity resolve themselves. These letters and statements are key in helping provide a more complete picture of a community's response.

3.5 Up Close and Personal: Genre Analysis of a Community Response to Trauma

My last area of data collection and analysis involved a case study where I conducted interviews with local leaders in a town that experienced more than one swastika hate act. The case study, which is discussed in Chapter Eight, provides me a way of understanding a particular community in order to see how their response might map onto the larger patterns and trends I

found while developing the embodied rhetorical genre of *community response to trauma*. The case study also allows me to look beyond the trace of a news story and talk to individuals involved about their thought process, motivations, and the adequacy or inadequacy of their and the larger community's response within the context of the rhetorical moment. I chose this particular community because it was an example of an atypical response and allowed me to flesh out more clearly a possible successful redesign in that it responded in ways that supported target communities and created opportunities for community members to demonstrate that support in material and embodied ways. Looking at a particular community and their atypical response also allowed me to see how the genre might shift in the future as communities and rhetorical expectations shift. In this way it provides a "stable for now" moment in the life of this genre (Schryer 108). Genres must adapt in order to exist, and in looking at this particular community and articulating its actors' thoughts and moves, I may be able to offer up a *redesign* or paths within the *redesign* that could make the embodied rhetorical genre of *community response to trauma* more responsive to hate acts and mitigate harm done by those acts.

Since my interviews occurred after I had determined what was *normal* and what was *exceptional* in terms of a response, I transcribed the interviews and used the codes I had already developed for the statements and letters discussed above. I chose to use those codes because of the discursive nature of an interview and the fact that individuals were not only sharing their experiences but also describing the response that the community and its various members made. Here, my interviews serve as another form of trace that goes beyond the news stories about the hate acts and beyond the public statements I gathered and analyzed. They allow me to dig in and see just how a community coordinated their response in order to demonstrate to perpetrators that

the spaces and places of that town belong to *everyone*, and that those communities should be diverse and inclusive.

3.5.1 Member-checking

In conducting my IRB approved interviews with the community leaders within my case study, my interviewees had to trust me. To ensure and help facilitate that trust, I emailed my participants a letter, which outlined the goals of my dissertation and asked if they would be willing to let me record an interview with them using questions I included in the letter along with my assurance of confidentiality and ethical use of their information. (See **Appendix E** for my invitation letter.) Also in my invitational letter, I outlined that they could remove themselves from my project at any time, if they felt that working with me had become too burdensome, too personal, or that they did not feel comfortable with the goals or the scope of my dissertation any longer. The letter also outlined their ability to member-check the portrayal of their information in my dissertation findings chapter.

Member-checking occurred well in advance of my defense, so those I interviewed could correct any language or possible misconceptions, if they felt they were being misrepresented or that their ideas were not as articulate as they wished. We negotiated those changes through comments on the shared document and via email. In this way, I allowed participants control over their own data and their own voice/narrative. Engaging participants as collaborators in my research lends credibility to my research, and it shows that I honor them and their community as creators of research (Ridolfo).

3.6 Understanding My Position and Ensuring Data Validity

My position as a researcher in this project is not one that allows me full knowledge of what it is like to feel the implied bodily threat of seeing a swastika because my appearance fits within the parameters of "safe from persecution." As a woman I do, however, know what it is like to be harassed and to feel uncomfortable or unsafe in places I have walked or spaces I have entered. If my bodily fear is even a fraction of what other bodies that are more vulnerable feel in relation to possible violence at the hands of others, I believe I have some inkling of the harm of the swastika even if it is only empathetically. No one deserves to feel unsafe in the places and spaces they enter, and the swastika can create that uncertainty and fear. It changes a space because as an iconic symbol it embodies the histories and ideologies, which have marked spaces as welcoming or unwelcoming to certain groups of people and even signaled the threat of death.

3.6.1 Shining a Light: Dangers and Opportunities

Because my dissertation is focused on communities and individuals, how I handle and represent them matters. In bringing attention to community responses, I amplify the possible audience of those who are privy to the incidents within the communities, and for that reason, I must consider the ethical implications of my sharing and the politics of visibility. Shining a spotlight on a community may not show the community in a favorable light when it comes to diversity and inclusion, if swastikas are found within its boundaries. It may misidentify a town as being an unsafe place, so those who belong to vulnerable populations who have been historically targeted by swastikas do not move there or move away. [14] Shedding a light might also create

[14] An example of a possible misidentification was an incident involving the Southern Poverty Law Center's (SPLC) Hate Map when they listed Gurnee, IL as a location of a hate group. In November 2016 someone posted on a KKK website that he was an "exalted cyclops" and that he lived in Gurnee, IL 60031 with a personal Gmail. The SPLC emailed and got a response verifying it was a real account, so they put it on the map (Rehagen). The Gurnee's police investigated everything they possibly could and found nothing, but the SPLC kept the town on their Hate Map

moments of over-identification where the city or town becomes a beacon for white supremacists, who think it is a place where they would find like-minded individuals and could result in more white supremacists moving into the area. Swastikas in this sense "become visual spectacles that attract community attention and elicit a wide range of affects, emotions, intellectual responses, and actions," which may be pride for being white while at the same time cause fear for those who have been historically harmed by the ideology represented by that symbol (Gries, "The Swastika Counter").

Sometimes, though, we need to shine a light on behaviors in order to see what is actually happening. In his piece "Surveillance Studies," Gary Marx writes, "Mushrooms do well in the dark, but so does injustice. Sunlight may bring needed accountability through visibility, but it can also blind and burn," and this applies to the seemingly invisible processes and assumptions behind responses to swastika hate acts (740). Shining a light on intolerance can hurt. If scholars and communities are to do the work of social justice, they must think about undoing the structures of power that maintain systems of injustice, and that may be painful for certain individuals, groups, or even our nation. By documenting systems and how they currently work, we can make those processes more visible, and in doing so, we can work to modify them (Lockridge and Van Ittersum). The consequences of shining a light may be harmful to some, but we need to ask who is being harmed and who is being kept safe, if those injustices are allowed to continue unexamined.

(Rehagen). It was not until the following January rolled around that the KKK label was removed from their town, but during the time it was on the map, the town took it upon itself to actively prove it was a miss-label and that it was an inclusive town by holding events, creating committees, and focusing community action on inclusivity (Rehagen).

3.6.2 Biases in the Trace

The bulk of my dissertation focuses on news stories that filter through the writer who developed the story, and for that reason, viewing these swastika hate acts through this medium can result in an incomplete picture of the community response. One issue that could have impacted the data was how reporters wrote about the swastika hate act. Where some reporters may have felt it less serious, others may have felt the opposite, and this may have impacted what the reporters felt was important to mention, quote, or talk about in detail. Despite the filter of reporters' biases and purposes in writing news stories, the news stories in *TSCP* do capture the responses in communities, and those responses are the focus of this dissertation–not the commentary on those responses by the news reporters. For that reason, I focus on what is done and who does it as opposed to the editorialization and language choice of the news reporter in describing the individuals involved and their actions. My focus on actors and actions somewhat mitigates what may be a bias of the reporter when it might come to commentary or evaluation.

I also know we were not able to capture all instances of swastika hate acts across the United States in *TSCP*. As is the case with every crime and hate crimes in particular, the nature of the crime and the inconsistency across the nation and between states creates situations where swastika hate acts are under-reported, which makes absolutely accurate data impossible. We also found that some hate acts were only mentioned as a passing reference within a news story as being part of a string of swastika hate acts. This collapse of data on the part of the reporter who reported them all in one news report rather than in separate news reports indicates that swastikas may not be seen as being newsworthy enough to warrant a news article until the stakes or the repetition of its appearance warranted a concern. In those instances where there was a collapse in

reporting by the reporter, we made every effort to find out details about these mentioned swastika hate acts, but in some instances no other information or data could be found.[15]

3.6.3 The Digital Disappearance

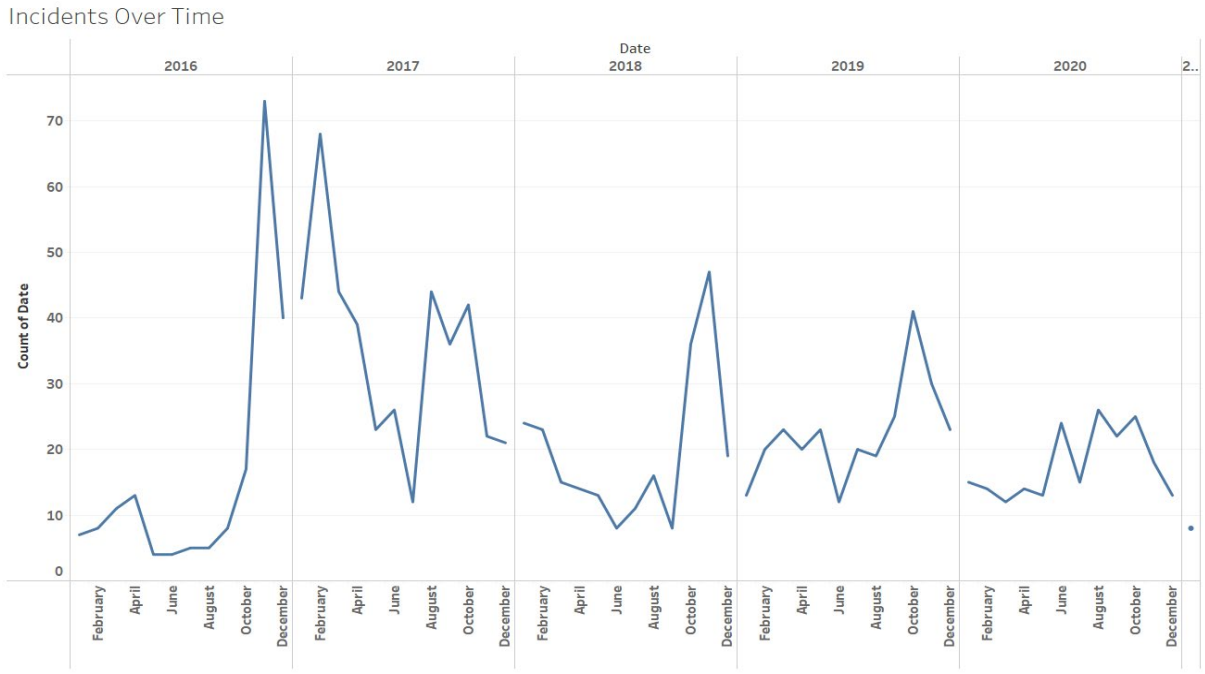
As with the case of any digital project the links for some websites disappear over time, so when I went back to reread and/or double code, websites no longer linked to an article. When websites appeared to disappear, we made every effort to find another news story that did talk about the same swastika hate act, but in a handful of instances, we were unable to do even that. We have now collected pdfs of all the websites we could find to ensure we do not lose any more data. Collapse and omissions are problematic, but despite the under-reporting, the sheer number of our samples size of 1339 incidents over the span of five years adds validity to my claim that patterns do exist within *TSCP* and that those patterns enable me to propose the taxonomy of *community response to trauma.*

Conversely, another challenge with collecting data via news stories is that there is also an undercurrent of titillation that is involved in talking about swastikas because of their infamous history and connection to Nazis. It is possible that news outlets may try to create a narrative that feeds off of and into fears of Trump and white supremacy, and by stirring the pot, so to speak, they keep the fear alive, sell more stories, up their viewership, and make more money. This possibility could play a factor in the quantification of incidents and possibly inflate numbers of incidents, especially around certain events that have occurred since January 2016 when the data was first collected. As such, there are some interesting patterns in circulation that cannot be

[15] There were 11 that fell into this category.

ignored, and our data makes that visible. **Figure 3-5** below demonstrates the pattern of swastika incidents across the four years of our data collection. For instance, we saw an uptick after the election of Donald Trump (November 8, 2016) as well as his inauguration (January 20, 2017) and in the months following the Charlottesville Rally (August 11, 2017). There are also swells of swastika activity during the fall (September and October) which coincide with when the Jewish

Figure 3-5 Swastika Incidents over Time



High Holidays and Halloween occur. The pattern demonstrated by the figure above indicates that although there may be a correlation between creating titillating news around events tied to politics, certain times of year, there is an uptick regardless of political events or discussion.

3.7 Putting it All Together

Regardless of the circulation of swastikas in terms of where and how often they appear, there were discernible patterns in community responses to swastika hate acts. In my collection and analysis of the data, three rhetorical meta-genres emerged: *silence*, *speech*, and *support*, and

these metagenres impact how scholars might view rhetoric, embodiment, materiality, trauma, and hate studies. Understanding these theories through genre provides an answer to the question posed by Miller, Devitt and Gallagher in "Genre: Permanence and Change" where they ask, "How might genre help scholars in different fields consider ways to examine the ethics--the power relations, privileges, enactments, responsibilities--of current practices and technologies and their consequences?" (275). I answer that taking account of material and embodied actors within rhetorical moments creates assemblages, and rhetorical genre studies gives communities and scholars the theory and methods to define, discuss, and explore these assemblages as a means to not only understand community response to trauma but create spaces that are responsive to harm and which support diversity and inclusion.

In the findings chapters that follow, I use rhetorical genre studies to help me concretize the meta-genres of *silence*, *speech*, and *support* within the embodied rhetorical genre of *community response to trauma*. I am also able to offer up the possibility of a *redesign* to help communities mitigate harm to targets/target communities of hate acts and the larger community as a whole. Chapter Four *Silence* illustrates the linguistic, embodied, and material practices that silence victims by glossing over the harm done to them as these moves focus on property and center perpetrators. Chapters Five and Six examine the move of *speech* in local and educational spaces via the 153 statements and letters that are issued by community leaders and groups after swastika hate acts. As mentioned, although speech is an act, these letters and statements often fall short in recording or providing concrete embodied actions that support victims and mitigate community harm. Chapter Seven considers *support* as necessary and embodied, which is a move that is more often found in responses at schools and universities than it is with responses by local municipalities, governments, or representatives. Finally, Chapter Eight is a case study based

upon interviews conducted with six community leaders in response to a swastika hate act in a university town. I use these interviews and the general community response to demonstrate how a community can fully engage with the harm done by a swastika hate act and respond civically, socially, emotionally, materially, and visually.

Chapter 4 Silence as Discursive and Non-Discursive Action

> "Indifference elicits no response. Indifference is not a response. Indifference is not a beginning; it is an end. And, therefore, indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor -- never his victim, whose pain is magnified when he or she feels forgotten. The political prisoner in his cell, the hungry children, the homeless refugees -- not to respond to their plight, not to relieve their solitude by offering them a spark of hope is to exile them from human memory. And in denying their humanity, we betray our own."- Elie Wiesel, "The Perils of Indifference." (April 12, 1999)

> "Ledyard is an open, accepting community. All signs of hate in our community must be challenged and, if considered by our police force to be a hate-crime, justice must prevail. Silence is, in effect, acceptance or approval of abhorrent behavior. When left unchallenged, hate persists and grows….Hate speech and crimes not only cause many community members to feel angry, frightened, or unsafe, especially marginalized citizens, they damage the whole community." -Marcelle Wood, chair of the Ledyard Democratic Town Committee (February 8, 2020)

4.1 A Definition of Silence

Scholars have discussed the rhetorical function of silence and its use for emphasis; its role in defiance; and its ability to comfort when words are too much or not enough. While these are all productive uses of silence, this chapter discusses the metagenre of *silence* as an unproductive shutting down, an erasing, and a decentering of both voices and the discussion around issues of conflict within communities tied to trauma or issues of diversity and inclusion. In these moments of *silence*, communities fail. They disregard the voices and needs of those targeted by the swastika. They quickly clean up or cover up the act and move on. They center property as paramount to rectifying harm and treat punishment of perpetrators as penultimate to success. And/or they ignore their role, culpability, and complicity in trauma.

For me and this discussion of swastika hate acts and trauma, *silence* impacts and harms some individuals and groups more than others. It perpetuates systems that privileges certain

bodies over others and benefits those who have always had a voice in politics, economics, and systems of oppression. *Silence* allows those structures and systems to continue without reassessing or revising them to benefit more individuals. Only when a system is broken or disrupted can it be redesigned and changed to benefit more, if not all. However, those who benefit from systems as they are are hard pressed to give those benefits up or feel that if everyone benefits, then they benefit less. Instead, those individuals wish the system to continue even with emotional, economic, social and embodied costs to others. Who is silenced and how they are silenced becomes a way to explore power such that in making those silencing practices visible, society may/can change to be more equitable, inclusive, and accessible.

This dissertation defines *silence* as both the prevention of speech as well as the prevention of conversation around the value of embodied experiences of historically marginalized individuals. How this phenomenon appears and functions within the metagenre of *silence* will be the subject of this chapter. Discussing and valuing embodied experiences is a form of knowledge-making that could help communities foster support for diversity within their neighborhood, city, or town, but silencing shuts that down. When looking at traumatic events that occur in communities, silence works to decenter traumatized individuals. It prevents conversations around the event and the embodied harm that trauma causes, and in decentering those conversations, communities fail to challenge existing social structures within their communities. Failure to center targets/target communities and their trauma further marginalizes the individuals within these vulnerable groups while doing little to prevent or mitigate future trauma (Dotson, Ahrens). *The Swastika Counter Project* (*TSCP*)with its collection of responses has allowed me to examine just how *silence* works and has given me insight into *available*

designs that are dangerous to community well-being when not paired with other responses belonging to the two other metagenres I discuss in this dissertation: *speech* and *support.*

Silence can be the result of both discursive and non-discursive practices. Discursively, silence occurs when an abundance of language or a counter narrative is used to prevent speech; think of this as the one who outshouts someone or always has the last word such that they truncate conversation and silence an opponent. Here silence is the goal much like in a competitive argument. Whoever shouts the loudest or has the last word, wins, but this is not helpful when thinking about trauma to vulnerable populations. Who is speaking, when and how becomes important because that indicates the invisible power structures within a community as well as the values of the community when it comes to the importance and value of marginalized groups of people.

4.1.1 The Impact of Silence: Compounding of Trauma

The quotes at the start of this chapter describe a kind of rhetorical silence that is both discursive and non-discursive. Discursively, it is the absence of speech that harms, but through a non-discursive lens, the failure to speak (an action) is read by victims, perpetrators, and the larger community as being permissive of the harmful actions.[16] The inaction of bystanders, according to these two quotes, does nothing to aid the victim of harm because these bystanders are believed to not care about the victim or are believed to not challenge the harm done to another human simply because the harm does not impact them. Victims of trauma read the inaction and lack of speech by bystanders as being a violation of community expectations where

[16] I use *read* here specifically because I pull from the New London Group and their discussion of multiliteracies as being grounded in discursive and non-discursive actions such as gesture. To be literate in these forms of communication means they can be read, and I contend that gestures are readable to an audience regardless of the intent of the one gesturing.

safety as a function of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is an unspoken warrant valued and guaranteed to those who "belong" to the community. When no one stands up for the victim, the victim is figuratively placed outside the community's protection and is *othered*.

Of course, judging bystanders does not take into account the power dynamics of the situation and how the bystander may feel powerless to help. Regardless of the reason for inaction, psychological, emotional, and possible physical repercussions occur to victims of trauma when bystanders stand by. The various forms of harm can become a secondary focus of the community as energy, time, and understanding is spent looking at the mindset of the perpetrator or in justifying inaction by the bystanders themselves. Decentering victims and placing the focus elsewhere, in effect silences victims by removing their embodied experience from the knowledge-making around this kind of trauma (Dotson).

As suggested by the quotes, being a bystander is a position of privilege, and literally and figuratively, the bystander assumes a kind of belonging to the community in which the perpetrator is allowed to exist unfettered. Figuratively, the bystander assumes the identity of the perpetrator and creates an alliance with him by allowing him to harm. For the bystander, the community includes the perpetrator, or otherwise, the bystander would defend the community from the perpetrator. Literally, bystanders also assume they are not a part of the target community and therefore are safe, which is read as indifference by victims.

As the quotes point out, the bystander's narrow conception of community fails to account for their own participation in a larger community that is both harmful and is harmed by indifference and/or silence. As a form of situational irony, failure to act is an act. In avoiding harm to themselves by standing by and permitting the perpetrator to harm others, bystanders harm themselves; they are actually harmed because the ecology of the community is altered and

damaged. This harm then creates a precedent for the community that possible harm can come to anyone who does not belong to the community and as a result creates a false sense of security for those who feel they do belong to the community and therefore cannot be harmed. Martin Niemöller's quote "First they came…" demonstrates that a community is made up of relationships and interactions between individuals.[17] Those relationships, or webs of interaction and activity, rely upon individuals but contribute to structures and organizations beyond the individual. When one relationship is damaged, others are impacted as touching one part of the spider web vibrates the rest of the web.

Trauma to a community challenges the notion of the collective, which is defined physically, ideologically, or socially by the community. Silence and the practice of silencing divides a community into who belongs to the collective and who does not: who is worthy of defense because they belong to the community and who is precarious in their position within the community because they do not belong. Precarity of marginalized groups already exists because of systemic issues or racism, classism, etc., but when trauma targets those already marginalized groups, their precarity increases with the implied threats of harm found in the swastika as a hate symbol. Looking at how silence plays a part in these moments of social justice or injustice not only allows scholars to see just how targets/target communities are treated but also how seriously the swastika is treated as hate speech.

TSCP shows that both discursive and non-discursive acts function as forms of silencing in communities where trauma in the form of a swastika occurs. Examples of both discursive and

[17] "First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist./Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out— because I was not a trade unionist./Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew./Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me."--Pastor Martin Niemöller (Martin Niemöller: "First they came for the Socialists..." | Holocaust Encyclopedia (ushmm.org))

non-discursive silencing acts found within *TSC* include: using euphemistic language to describe swastikas and swastika hate acts, making the police largely if not solely responsible for rectifying the incidents via their role in punishment, using ableist and infantilizing language to describe perpetrators, centering the incident around perpetrators rather than targets/target communities, and municipalities quickly cleaning up/covering up the swastika. First this chapter will look at discursive acts like statements made by leaders and police and language that function as a form of erasure, which silences. Then this chapter looks at how police involvement and their relationships with marginalized communities impact those communities when targeted by swastikas. Finally, this chapter looks at the non-discursive acts such as cleaning or covering up. What these various acts do and how they silence relates to how communities do or do not mitigate trauma to targets/target communities within their community.

4.1.2 Recognizing Targets/Target Communities and Acknowledging Embodied Harm

Both quotes that opened this chapter discuss victims and how not addressing the harm of the individual victim actually harms the community as a whole in the end as it compromises the concept of community and how an individual functions within a community. The structure and cohesion of the community is dependent upon the health and safety of individuals within it, and if an individual does not feel safe, the community's assumption of safety is challenged. This insecurity risks undermining the trust the individuals have in the community and as a result creates fault lines in the community structure that result in division and mistrust. Understanding the treatment of victims after a swastika hate act can help scholars and communities see what happens when victim harm is not dealt with in meaningful ways or the community as a collective is challenged by an individual within it who violates community norms. Looking at the treatment

of victims and the repercussions of that neglect connected to the larger community enables communities to do better and be better when it comes to response practices.

According to most of the news stories in *TSCP* there were statements made by victims about the harm done when the swastikas appeared. Some victims were angry, surprised, or resigned that they had been targeted, and others expressed appreciation for the support they received from neighbors and the larger community after the incident occurred. Some focused on the physical aspects of property damage while others focused on the emotional and psychological damage done in terms of re-examining their perception of safety in their community. An example of someone articulating the mental harm of a swastika is Aaron Moreno. He responded to a swastika spree that took place in December of 2016 in Los Angeles (*TSCP*). The spree involved swastikas and the word Hitler tagged on a variety of businesses near his own business. He admitted to also being a victim of swastikas tagged on his business multiple times in the past. When interviewed for the news story he said, "The effects of the symbols are longer lasting. The (vandal's) intent is to use that symbol in order to inflict some amount of psychological and emotional harm on other people" (*TSCP*). His comment emphasizes the embodied effects of swastikas and how that harm is not tied solely to the materiality of property; swastika hate acts impact beyond the one incident and change how individuals feel especially in spaces where swastikas appear. Another incident, also in Los Angeles, in January of 2017 involved a swastika carved into a business' bathroom wall (*TSCP*). It had the word "Trump" underneath the carved swastika. The owner responded by saying,

> "Although the defacing of restaurant property isn't anything new, the current political climate makes us all hypersensitive to the meaning behind the messages that people leave on walls. It's ridiculous that people feel the need to deface someone else's property at all,

but to try to promote fear and violence by carving a swastika takes it to a much more malicious level than the common tagger." (*TSCP*)

Here the owner Ting Su, who happens to be Asian but does not think his ethnicity had anything to do with the crime, articulates that the swastika as a "tag" has a violent valence to it that is not present in other kinds of tagging. A swastika is "much more malicious" than someone's initials, a crude drawing, or a phrase. This violent underpinning has to do with the historical use of the symbol and how it circulates even today as a threatening symbol of hate, and these underpinnings threaten certain bodies no matter the intent behind the placement.

Whether the harm is explicit or implicit in terms of the perpetrator's intent, the individuals who enter that space or place, especially the targets and the target community/ies, cannot tell the difference. They see the symbol and know recent history and how racist groups in the United States have currently used the symbol. They do not know the perpetrator, the perpetrator's origin story, his motivation, or how he came to write this symbol in this location.[18] Individuals who enter this place where the symbol is can only rely upon the physical remains of the symbol before their eyes, and their responses are based upon their knowledge of the symbol and their connection to those who have historically been harmed by that symbol. The quotes of the two victims above reiterate the lingering effect of the harm done even once the physicality of the symbol is cleaned up or "erased."

For the perpetrator who holds with the racist meaning of the symbol, he uses the symbol to mark places and spaces as belonging to a certain kind of community that he has envisioned. Like a dog marking its territory, these swastikas represent implied threats used to indicate that

[18] Only seven perpetrators were identified specifically as female within *TSCP*. There were instances when the perpetrators were only identified as students, but the default body in reporting appears to be male of the 194 perpetrators that were identified.

this space/place is for cis, hetero, white, Christian individuals only, and if you do not identify as belonging to all of those communities simultaneously, then the message is "You are not welcome because you are not us." A swastika in a space/place makes it unwelcoming for some bodies and thus prevents individuals or target communities from feeling safe when they enter or use that space.

4.2 Police Involvement and Their Role in Silencing

Understanding the harm done to marginalized communities is only part of how swastikas hurt both the target and larger community. As mentioned, the reaction of a community to a trauma can further harm the target community or victim (Ahrens). In this section, discursive and non-discursive practices that enact silence will be explored especially when it comes to police involvement. *TSCP* shows that the language of the police and police involvement can result in the silencing of victims and/or silencing of conversations around swastika harm. Performing *silence* is not just a move of police; others can perpetrate *silence*. This chapter just uses police to illustrate how *silence* as a metagenre functions in discursive and non-discursive ways in the material and embodied world.

When police are called, a report may be filed, and there may be some kind of investigation. Police did not issue statements very often, and if they did, it was often a procedural statement. They also reiterated in their statements that they were investigating the crime; they arrested someone; or they commented on the nature of the perpetrator/possible perpetrator. Community responses to swastikas in *TSCP* show that the majority of swastika hate acts contain police involvement in some form (747 moves by police in the 1339 incidents). This number may be under-reported because the assumption of the news reporter may have been that police would, by default, be called for issues of property damage. Some of the reports online documented by

TSCP just listed the incident with no detail beyond the location and the date of when it occurred. This hole in the data was discussed in the Chapter Three of this dissertation.

4.2.1 Silencing Discursive Practices of the Police

How police talk about perpetrators and the larger community demonstrates their relationship with those they serve, and a positive relationship is pivotal for communities historically harmed by police. How police interact with various groups within their jurisdiction can be played out in the language used by the police when talking two and with these groups. That language can then color the extent to which the police engage in rectifying the damage done by the swastika because of beliefs and language around certain groups of individuals that police are supposed to serve and protect. If the responsibility for rectifying the harm done to the target community rests on the shoulders of the police, how the police view the community harmed and who is doing the harming directly impacts the investigation. A police spokesperson may write off an incident as someone having a bad day or just kids up to pranks or goofing around when these incidents have both material and embodied consequences regardless of the motivation of the perpetrator. Language that centers perpetrators or excuses behavior has been used in all moments of community violence both big and small within the United States when it comes to individuals (especially white men) harming others; in other words, language matters.

4.2.1.1 Euphemistic Language as Care or Harm?

One way police silence the conversation around harm is by using euphemistic language. Euphemistic language is language used in instances of trauma where the speaker's word choice is designed to provide distance or perspective that lessens or diminishes harm for the audience to whom the words are directed. For instance, rather than say that individuals were murdered, some may say that someone died or "passed away." Using euphemistic language can be seen as a way

of protecting individuals from harm because words that carry implied threats can be triggering for some. The threat of a swastika is no different, but using euphemistic language to name swastikas and swastika hate acts also causes further harm because in not naming swastikas as the thing causing the harm, the conversation about the harm done to a community can never be fully addressed. By that I mean that unless there is common knowledge or stasis around what "vandalism" or "graffiti" means when it comes to swastika hate acts, the conversation is never fully clear in terms of what is being talked about and addressed (*TSCP*). The use of these words bears some examination as "vandalism" and "graffiti" are crimes of property whose punishment is often satisfied when there is restitution for the damages to the property and nothing else. One police department referred to it as "felony malicious mischief, the fancy term for property damage" (*TSCP*). So, are we talking about swastikas, everyday vandalism, and/or hate acts? Those have different meanings and valences of harm associated with them, and critical conversations around vandalism versus a swastika hate act would and should be quite different.

Swastikas are also referred to as a "Nazi symbol," "anti-Semitic vandalism," "anti-Semitic graffiti," a "hate symbol," and "hateful graffiti" just to name a few of the vague descriptions from news stories (*TSCP*). Euphemistic language around swastika hate acts only serves to blur what the swastika is and the harm it does. By calling it what it is, a swastika, those reading the news story know exactly what is being talked about, which forces discussion of the symbol specifically. In calling the harmful object by its proper name, the focus becomes the object and how it is harmful rather than the property crime, which can be superficially rectified with repairs. Failure to discuss swastikas and what they mean perpetuates ignorance and allows others to inflict the same harm at a later time under the guise of ignorance, innocence, and carelessness. In talking about swastikas as harmful symbols, communities where they happened

have some to have some hard conversations around who they are as a community, how the community conducts itself, and what concrete actions the community will take to ensure support for those harmed as well as prevent future incidents from occurring. As seen in later chapters, talk often becomes just words without any concrete action, but engaging in challenging conversations around race, gender, sexuality, or what it means to be an American requires energy and action. Without those conversations because euphemistic language is used, communities will be more likely to have repeat instances, which would result in further harm to various target communities in the future.

A Reporter's Influence in Languaging around Swastikas

Now to be fair, news reporters may play a part in how swastikas are named and identified in the stories they write. To avoid this possible pitfall, which would cloud the conversation here, this dissertation focuses on the words captured in quotes as the language used to talk about the swastika by the various stakeholders surrounding the incident, not the language of the news reporter.[19] While it could be argued that the news reporters are also stakeholders in the incident as they share the information with a larger audience and increase awareness about the incident, for the purpose of this dissertation, their language and commentary exists secondarily to what was actually said and done by the key actors involved in the response to the incident.

Since news reports reach a wider audience, new reporters could aid conversation around such incidents by naming swastikas and not using euphemistic language, but that aspect of a news reporter's influence is not part of this dissertation. In creating an association between swastika and crime, especially the crime of hate speech, naming swastikas creates a rhetorical

[19] Of note, however, is that *TSCP* does have how the news stories refer to the swastikas other than by its name. This includes quotes AND commentary of the news reporter.

space where perpetrators cannot help but know what a swastika is.[20] With that knowledge, there is also an implied understanding that that there will be consequences for using that symbol.[21] If swastikas are talked about and used as a point of education within the community and their consequences of harm discussed every time a swastika hate act occurred, there would be no grey area; the framing of conversations around swastikas could only be seen of as serious, and there would be no question as to it being some kind of mistake or potential joke.

Police Language about Perpetrators and its Troubling Consequences

The language used in statements issued by the police department found in *TSCP* also illuminates the ways in which police dismiss perpetrators. When looking at police comments, two things emerge as trends: there is an assumption about the mental faculties of the perpetrator and there is an assumption about maturity of the individuals. Both of these approaches are problematic and elide and simplify the issue in many ways. For example, when looking at traumatic events like mass shootings, the newscasters and reporters are quick to find out everything they can about the perpetrator. Part of this is a function of police releasing names, but also a part of focusing on the perpetrator is that it allows communities to be "shocked" and therefore distances themselves from the harm done by the perpetrator as well as their role in that harm. If individuals within a community are "shocked," they can set the community up as the victim and use the perpetrator as a scapegoat for community issues without engaging in the particular victims who were targeted and how their community contributed to that. An example

[20] I would hazard a pretty accurate guess that perpetrators do know what a swastika is, but in looking at language used by law enforcement (and others) around perpetrators their move, which will be discussed later in this chapter, is to dismiss the person as being ignorant, a prankster, or mentally ill.

[21] Before someone falls down the slippery slope of, "If we teach one symbol, then wouldn't we have to teach them all, and there are just too many to teach." First of all there are resources for finding information about hate symbols and white supremacy, but the swastika has been pretty universal in its use as a hate symbol in the United States and in Europe since WWII. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has a resource that lists all the hate symbols (Hate Symbols Database | ADL).

to illustrate this point is the Atlanta shooting that occurred March 16, 2021 where a man killed eight people and wounded one. Of the nine shooting victims, six were of Asian descent. In the hours after the shooting rampage, the reports focused on the perpetrator. Captain Jay Baker made what was an innocuous statement with large significance for victims; he said the shooter was "having a bad day"[22] to describe the motive and set the perpetrator up as being mentally incapable of determining right from wrong and controlling his actions. Focusing on the perpetrator and excusing his behavior takes away from focusing on who the victims were and why he chose them. To engage in a discussion around the victims would require hard conversations around the sexualization and fetishization of Asian women. It would ask individuals to put that in conversation with economics and the kinds of jobs available to Asian citizens in the United States and why these jobs have traditionally been taken by Asians and Asian Americans.

One also cannot help but acknowledge how the political climate has contributed to Asian American violence. The President of the United States, Donald Trump called COVID-19 the "Chinese virus"[23] or "Kung Flu,"[24] which resulted in a spike in Anti-Asian hate that was recorded by Melissa Borja et al's Virulent Hate Project. The shooting in Atlanta could/would force hard conversations to be held about Asians and Asian Americans and their embodied lived experiences and politics in the United States. Still with one press conference, the focus became the perpetrator and his "addiction" and him being "troubled" and having a "bad day." The victims, on the other hand, had their names misspelled and mispronounced.[25]

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[22] Baker issued an apology for the harm his statement caused and is described here: Sheriff's officials 'regret any heartache' for 'bad day' comment after Georgia spa killings (nbcnews.com)

[23] Trump sparks anger by calling coronavirus the 'Chinese virus' | Coronavirus | The Guardian

[24] Trump Once Again Calls Covid-19 Coronavirus The 'Kung Flu' (forbes.com)

[25] The Asian American Journalist Association actually created and issued a pronunciation guide for news reporters AAJA Pronunciation Guide for Asian Victims of Atlanta Shootings | Asian American Journalists as part of their

While the instance of the Atlanta shooting may not be the same, or swastika hate acts as heinous as murder, the same moves to silence conversation appear when swastika hate acts occur in communities. Focusing on the perpetrator rather than acknowledging the victim positions the community as being "shocked" and therefore not culpable for any part of the crime is similar and displays the same kind of indifference mentioned in the opening quotes. Police have described swastika hate acts as being "crime[s] of ignorance," ones that come "out of the blue," or are "done for shock value rather than hate" (*TSCP*). Performing shock as a rhetorical response silences and becomes a shield to not engage substantially with the issue of harm, which results in a harmful microaggression that compounds an already harmful situation for victims. Shock will be discussed further in Chapter 6, which focuses on the metagenre of *speech* in relation to civic leaders.

Using Ableist Language as a Form of Dismissiveness

As a form of minimization and dismissal of swastika hate acts, language to describe perpetrators also plays a part. The data in *TSCP* shows that police describe perpetrators as not normal or lacking the mental discernment that presumably the rest of society has. Police use language to describe perpetrators as being "misguided," "challenged," a "knucklehead that was maybe even inebriated at the time," and a person was a "little troubled and probably racist" (*TSCP*). These quotes describe individuals as being not in their right mind, or they would not have committed the offense. In describing them this way, the police are describing the kinds of people who belong in the community and those who do not. Because of the positioning and negative connotation of these phrases to describe perpetrators, this language indicates that the

guide to talk about Anti-Asian hate Association AAJA Guidance on Atlanta Shootings & Anti-Asian Hate Incidents | Asian American Journalists Association.

perpetrators are NOT a part of the community. The perpetrator becomes the scapegoat, and if he is the "knucklehead" who did it, it follows that the community does not need to address the issue any further or their part in it, if he is caught.

Also of concern when it comes to police is the language they have used to describe perpetrators. It is often dismissive, ableist, and stigmatizing for those who do have mental health issues. Beyond giving those with mental health issues a bad rap, these comments speak to what normative bodies should do and how they should behave within communities, and those who do not behave or conduct themselves in ways acceptable for a particular community are viewed as outsiders, who are socially or mentally deviant. Mental health issues and neurodiverse thought are not deviance indicators, and yet people have historically conflated the relationship between them. You do not have to look further than other crimes, such as mass shootings, where the notion that a person can mentally snap and kill people is used as the narrative around a perpetrator. Such narratives are used to elicit some kind of sympathy for the perpetrator. While there may be some mental health issues at play within a perpetrator, the writing off an individual's crimes as being a lapse in sanity or a moment when they got carried away with their emotions trivializes and diminishes those who deal with serious mental health issues and contributes to further stigmatization of those with mental health issues or who have neurodiversity as being dangerous and unstable. Dismissing an individual as being "not normal" also allows communities and populations to ignore the underlying systemic issues that influenced the individual's behavior, so rather than dealing with toxic masculinity or gun control, white males are given a pass in their behaviors, which trivializes the millions of people who deal with mental health issues daily and do not harm others. The narrative is that the perpetrator was some "crazy" individual who acted alone and is not "us" is seen as exceptional and therefore not

worthy of examination because it has happened only once in a community or was done by someone who lost control of his emotions and is "crazy." The scare quotes here indicate this is a word often used to describe unacceptable behavior not mental health issues.

Being able to see how language is being used and how communities respond occurs in *TSCP*, and these observations of patterns enable scholars to see the singular tree as well as the forest. Just because an incident (swastika or shooting) happens once in a community does not mean it is a singular incident. Rather it is connected to larger systemic social issues within the larger community more broadly defined geographically, socially, economically, or ideologically. Therefore, swastika hate acts (no matter how they are viewed locally) are serious issues that deserve serious attention. Creating a social scapegoat with mental health issues is not only ableist, but it also allows a community to dismiss the issues of justice, equity, and inclusivity within its own parameters as not being part of the conversation around swastika hate acts.

Infantilization and the Minimization of Harm

Another dismissive move by police is to infantilize the perpetrators or to treat juveniles as being automatically ignorant about swastikas and their meaning. Some police describe the perpetrators and their behavior as "childish" and "immature," but police were not the only ones to infantilize perpetrators (*TSCP*). Principals, mayors, and city representatives also used language that invoked a childish naiveté when describing perpetrators. They said things like, "someone did something stupid;" people "say bad things, and draw stupid pictures;" it was "probably a great kid...just made a bad choice;" or it was "some young, stupid kid who doesn't realize what that symbol stands for" (*TSCP*). The idea of childish pranks, being funny, or kids being kids with their need to shock adults also presents swastika hate acts as not being serious. Swastika hate acts are written off by some police as a "non-thought out prank," a "teenage

prank," or just "being funny" (*TSCP*). The assumption is that kids do not know any better, and one could argue that at the elementary levels this may be true. As we move up in age of a perpetrator, that argument becomes harder to make, and this brings up an interesting notion about how we treat children who perpetrate swastika hate acts versus those who are adults. Of the incidents that occurred in school spaces, especially in the K-12 category, there was the move to educate individuals about the Holocaust and the harm that the swastika causes. Assemblies, curricular changes to classes, and special topic discussions within social studies classes have been used as a blanket approach to target an undetermined perpetrator or to target future perpetrators. The reasoning here was that if schools can educate children, who cannot or may not think about things before they do them or who developmentally do not often think about the harm they cause others because of their egocentric perceptions, then the problem will be solved. Education could do much to prevent future perpetrators, and as embodied genre within the metagenre of *support*, education will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

Saying perpetrators are behaving like children assumes children do not know right from wrong or how to treat others. Infantilizing a perpetrator actually creates a situation where swastikas are not viewed as seriously because a child-like person created them. The news stories captured in *TSCP* generally identified individuals under 18 as children or teenagers, and those names and genders were sometimes not released because of their age. However, 18 proved to be a bit more nebulous in terms of whether the perpetrator was a teenager or an adult male.[26] Regardless of age, swastikas are still serious when we look at the embodied and material

[26] Also a thing to note: sometimes 18/19 year olds are called teenagers and other times adults: a 2/21/19 incident refers to four 18 and 19 year olds as teenagers (showed up in KKK hood w/swastika at home of someone); on 5/27/19 the story referred to an 18 year old as man (marker construction site); and on 9/14/19 two 17 year olds were referred to as boys ("teens") and an 18 year old man (spree: Jewish school, catholic church, buildings, vehicles, statue of Virgin Mary). Oftentimes these individuals were just referred to as their gender as was the case on 10/2/19 perpetrators were referred to as 18 year old male and an 19 year old male (Holocaust denier)

consequences for those who see that swastika as a symbol of implied harm to them or those around them. The assumption by police, community leaders, and even targets/target communities that it could be just a child pranking people or trying to be funny feels wrong. What about a swastika is funny or a prank? If being a child is an excuse for poor behavior, what does that say to those who are harmed by the swastika...that their harm is a joke, funny, a prank, and allowable because it was a child who perpetrated the hate act? Those excuses diminish the seriousness that swastikas have and have the potential to do even more harm to specific marginalized groups.

4.2.2 Consequences of Silencing Discursive Practices: Decentering Victims

Euphemistic language and language that decenters victim harm by focusing on property and perpetrators allows communities to avoid critical conversations about who they are as a community and prevents dealing with harm perpetrated by members of that community. In not naming the crime as a hate crime that involves a swastika specifically, the crime becomes general and focused on property rather on the harm of the victims. By insinuating that it is just kids being kids or someone mentally deficient, community members contribute to negative stereotypes of those with mental health issues as well as excuse harmful behavior just because a young person does it. Perpetrators then proverbially function as scapegoats or sacrificial lambs, and their demonization prevents the larger community from coming to grips with the part they played in the swastika hate act.

Whether it be a small swastika in a high school bathroom or to borrow from recent events in the United States, a man gunning down eight people, six of whom were of Asian descent, the language to describe the perpetrators and the trauma they inflict upon the community counts. Dismissing the behavior of the perpetrator as them having a bad day, being a prank, or the result of a troubled person does not deal with the issue that an individual within the community

perpetuated the violence, and that violence will be felt long after he has paid his fine or spent his time in jail. Diminishing harm and decentering victims pushes already marginalized groups even further away from the center of discussion about their lived experiences within the larger community and perpetrates yet another microaggression against them as a group. This form of microaggression drives a wedge into communities and furthers the divide and mistrust amongst individuals within them where efforts should be working toward being anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-ableist, anti- practices, if communities are to be the "welcoming," "inclusive," and "supportive" communities they profess to be.

4.2.3 Silencing Non-discursive Practices of the Police

Police are responsible for a lot of different aspects of community safety and general regulation, which can be a heavy burden that is hard to carry and is perhaps one of the reasons the Black Lives Matter Movement and others have called for a reallocation of funds from the police to other social services to help with that burden. Because police are responsible for so much, one can see why the statistics are dismal when it comes to swastika perpetrator capture. According to the data in *TSCP*, out of the 1339 incidents, 146 (10.9%) resulted in some kind of jail time, fine, or suspension from a particular place. The statistics show that the perpetrator is not often caught, and if so, he is most often only relegated to paying restitution for the property damage through paying a fee or spending time in jail.

Reasons for the lack of capture and punishment are complex. They can range from lack of funding and officers to complete the investigation to the lack of evidence because the crime was "hard to track," done under the cover of night, or done in a location that is not surveilled by cameras. Police also may not view a swastika as a hate symbol. In addition, victim relationships to the larger community or with the police because of one's circumstance and/or ethnicity can

create a lackluster approach by police in investigating and prosecuting swastika hate acts. With the police tasked with so many activities and such low prosecution rates, one could see how swastikas might fall low on the "to do" list. The time spent on investigation does not pay off because the likelihood of capture is so low. This is not to point out that police are bad, but the structure, organization, funding, and mindset of police officers and the police department within these communities do impact the care, attention, and successful pursuit of perpetrators with the goal being identification and/or prosecution.

4.2.3.1 How Punishment Silences

Prosecution and punishment are often seen as the desired goal for such a crime. Instead, I argue that punishment has another function; it creates silence around possible conversations concerning the swastika and the mental and emotional harm it does to both the target community and the larger community. If a community does not engage in self-reflection of its own culpability in the swastika appearance, the community is doomed to see it reappear. In the case of community leaders, advocating punishment then becomes reactionary rather than preventative and does not engage in the conditions in the community that may have contributed to the swastika incident in the first place. Rabbi Fink in Chapter Nine discusses these underlying conditions as starting points for structural attention to preventing hate acts. The move to demand swift punishment of the individual also conveys that these incidents are isolated and the acts of individuals. Therefore, the logic follows that these crimes are not worthy of real conversations about the embodied harm done in the community. Both of these responses harm targets/target communities further as their pain is not fore fronted but dismissed once the culprit has been caught. For instance, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo responded to 13 incidents and issued nine statements or letters within *TSCP*. Cuomo's language and moves are consistent. He is

always “appalled” or “disgusted” by the incident and condemns the incident in the strongest of terms calling it “vulgar,” “racist,” “vile,” “bigoted,” “reprehensible” and “despicable” (*TSCP*). Along with his condemnation comes a demand that perpetrators be punished “to the fullest extent of the law,” and yet New York State has little success in identification and prosecution of perpetrators (*TSCP*).

Cuomo was not alone as a governor who responded to swastika incidents. Governor Gretchen Whitmer addressed swastikas on signs at a Michigan state capital protest of Covid restrictions via her press secretary Ned Lamont (*TSCP*). New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy (D) also issued a statement concerning a swastika hate act that condemned a Jewish-owned home being vandalized with a swastika and the words “White Power.” In his statement he said, he’s “appalled by this act of antiSemitism.” and pronounced that they “will hold those behind this responsible” (*TSCP*). Similarly, Republican Governor Pete Ricketts of Nebraska issued a statement as a response to a Jewish Temple being vandalized by a swastika and the words “FU Black Shirt” (*TSCP*). In his statement, he “condemn[ed] antiSemitism in the strongest possible terms,” described the Jewish community (and target of the swastikas) “a vital part of our state for generations,” and called for help from citizens so that “the perpetrator can be prosecuted to the full extent of the law” (*TSCP*).

Punishment of the perpetrator does do something; jail time and paying for damages does rectify the physical damage, and the identification of the perpetrator does give some comfort to the target community because they know who did it. Punishment may give future perpetrators second thoughts if they wish to avoid their own discomfort if/when they are caught. The statistics we report in *TSCP* of getting caught are not much different in New York where Governor Andrew Cuomo established the Hate-Crimes Task Force in New York in 2018 with a $2 million

budget.[27] If punishment does remedy the situation, the lack of convictions by the Task Force whose only purpose is to address the "increase in bias-motivated threats, harassment and violence throughout New York State " with just an 11% "success rate" has done little to make target communities feel better in New York. For perpetrators, the likelihood of individuals being caught may be worth the gamble.[28]

4.2.3.2 Police and Community Relationships

The only specific community police commented on most regularly in their issued statements was the Jewish community. This lack of diversity in response to various targeted communities presents an interesting wrinkle in police response and police relationships with various communities. If indeed our data is correct, the police's relationship with groups other than the Jewish community may not be as supportive in terms of denouncing perpetrators. What does this say about the police? It might tie back to the fraught relationship between Black communities and police. It might also be a concrete indication of why movements like BLM are important in forcing police departments to examine their relationships with and treatment of Black communities. When Black or other marginalized communities encounter swastikas, they need to be treated as seriously as Jewish communities. These findings also indicate that the troubling relationship we see between the police and Black communities can also be found

[27] Cuomo introduced legislation in New York (November 2016) in response to the uptick in hate seen in New York. "The Task Force, led by the New York State Police with assistance from the Division of Human Rights and the Division of Criminal Justice Services, seeks to both strengthen enforcement, the state's hate crime laws, as well as increase awareness among New Yorkers." Success of this Task Force can be debated as "To date, the State Police and its Hate Crimes Unit have investigated and offered [sic] assistance to other law enforcement agencies and District Attorneys on a total of 353 hate crime cases. Of the 353 cases, 293 were closed by law enforcement investigation, with 41 arrests being made." This actually works out to be only an 11% "success rate". A full report is here: Hate_Crime_Task_Force_Report.pdf (ny.gov)

[28] While news stories are frozen moments and time, and the culprit may have been caught after the news story was published, we also know that our data shows that swastika incidents are under reported, which is evidenced by some news stories mentioning one or two events that occurred previously to the current event that went unreported in any online space.

between the police and LGBTQ+, Latinx, Muslim and immigrant communities and therefore these relationships warrant further examination by police entities in order to be more just, equitable, and inclusive in police interventions and interactions with these communities.

The data in *TSCP* and that is presented in this chapter asks police to reexamine their role within the community: What are the expectations for them? Do they actually think they can do anything, and if they do not, how does that impact how they respond and talk about swastika hate acts? How do their actions impact their relationships with the community at large and the target community who may feel police do not care about the hate act when a lack of energetic response could be about resources and evidence? What do repeated offenses do to a police community when they have nothing for evidence, or there is no evidence time and time again? How does this impact how police react or investigate other crimes in the future? If experience tells officers that they will not capture the criminal, how much energy do police put into a new crime of the same nature? How much attention do police give this new crime, and how do communities see this effort? These questions compound the already challenging relationship police have with marginalized communities and having police involved from the get-go of any incident certainly impacts how the swastika is perceived, investigated, and circulates. These questions all center around non-discursive practices and how perceptions of the audience (the larger community and the victims) both impact and are impacted by police actions or lack of action

4.3.3.3 Focusing on Property and the Erasure of Embodied Harm

Places and spaces play an important part in swastika hate acts in terms of visibility. The United States legal system operates under the notion that one is innocent until proven guilty and that the prosecution bears the burden of proof in order to convict an individual or group of harm "beyond a shadow of a doubt." In other words, the crimes must be proven, made clear, or "made

visible" to a jury. Some of the places where swastikas occur are in places where perpetrators cannot be seen placing them because they are *private public* spaces. By that I mean they occurred in places one could not place surveillance devices and are therefore private, but they were in public locations. Examples of this *private public* kind of space are bathroom, bathroom stalls, dorm doors and hallways, elevators, and even more expansively underpasses and overpasses where video surveillance is not often employed. It is hard to make a crime visible enough to be prosecuted when it occurs in a space or place where there is no one to see it.

Because visibility underpins the legal system in the United States, crimes often default to property or physical harm of the victim because property crimes are more visible for a jury and therefore easier to prove once the connection between the perpetrator and the crime is established; we can see the damage. Proof and actual conviction when harm or damage is internal and located within the mental and psychological realms of a victim is more challenging. Because of this challenge, it seems the law actually emphasizes physical harm and crimes of property, and emphasis is a form of value. It seems that mental harm is not valued by the legal system as much as the harm done to the physical and material world because those crimes are more visible.

Important to the perpetrator is that the swastika be seen by neighbors or citizens walking by or utilizing those spaces. Swastikas were intended to be viewed and visible for others beyond the perpetrator and the target/target community. In this way the perpetrator wishes people beyond the intended target to see the swastika such that his audience is more than the target community. Visible community places and spaces include private property (234), public spaces (i.e., sidewalks, over/underpasses) (186), local businesses (101), parks (87), religious institutions (67), and public facilities (i.e. post office, library, transit stations) (37) (*TSCP*). While the places

and spaces could be private in terms of private property, in most cases the swastikas were visible from the outside as the perpetrators would have needed to gain access into the building or place to damage the interior. Of those swastika hate acts that occurred inside buildings, those buildings were generally public in nature (i.e. libraries, religious institutions, transit stations) and allowed access to a variety of individuals. Because of their accessibility to a variety of individuals, swastikas in these public spaces harm more than just the property owners' premises and often function as an indicator of who belongs in the community and who does not. In this way, the victim may be more than just the property or business owner, and the perpetrator, by placing it in a visible location, knows that his message will be seen by others who may share the identity of the property or business owner or who would also view the swastika as being a threat to their physical safety.

When a swastika appears in a neighborhood, public place, or a school, the first urge is to remove it; to cover it up; to make it as if it was never there. Quick cleanup functions as a defensive move, and as a result can appear like it is a cover-up of the activity such that the community can pretend nothing happened. This becomes a delicate rhetorical negotiation because one does not want the swastika to stay up any longer than possible because of the harm it causes. If cleanup is the only rhetorical move, how far does that response go in mitigating future harm? What happens before and after the cleanup in terms of conversation and redress of harm impacts how that cleaning is viewed/understood by the target community as well as the community as a whole. Does the cleanup function as means of engagement and support or erasure? This next section discusses cleanup as a form of erasure and as a non-discursive form of silencing.

Of the 1339 instances reported in *TSCP*, 400 reported some kind of clean up activity. Part of the urge to remove the swastika comes from a concern for property and the tidiness, care, and pride an owner or community has in how things look. This is why graffiti (326 times) and vandalism (229 times) are the most prevalent words used other than swastika to describe swastika hate acts. Words like graffiti and vandalism locate and label the crime as outside of the body and located in the realm of physical property. When the crime is focused on property, as soon as the swastika is cleaned up, the focus becomes catching the individual to punish them for the property damage. This damage can be compensated monetarily by being assigned an amount of money to cover repairs or time to spend in jail. Earlier in this chapter, the focus on the perpetrator and how it decenters targets/target communities was discussed and focusing on the physical repairs of the swastika only further decenters the harm to the victims. Once the repairs are done, the traces that are deemed to hold the harm are erased, and this allows the community to move on as if nothing ever happened. The issue, for all intents and purposes, in the physical world is closed, but in the psychological and emotional world, the damage and harm remain. One victim from Billerica, MA in discussing the swastika painted on a storage container in a public parking lot said, "Covering over the graffiti will be an easy task, erasing the pain and hurt caused by the use of that symbol is much harder" (*TSCP*). This begs the question: how do communities engage beyond cleanup to combat this hurt? Chapter Eight discusses a community response in Boise, ID gives a more complete example of what engagement beyond cleanup might look like.

Another part of the urge to remove the swastika comes from a concern for the targets/target communities and the knowledge that the swastika is a harmful image. The longer it is left to remain in a public space, the more individuals there would be that would see it and possibly be harmed. This is especially difficult to navigate when a victim's private property is

defaced. The harm is very personal, and the victim is revictimized each time she/he/they enter the space. The sooner they can remove the swastika, the less that symbol invades their space and challenges their safety and belonging in the larger community. An added difficulty to private property owners, who are targets of swastika hate acts, is that they are responsible for cleaning up the hateful damage done to their property, so not only are they harmed in the marking of the swastika upon their property, they are now responsible for the mental and physical labor of removing it themselves or finding someone to remove it for them. They now must contact the insurance, buy the paint and paint supplies, rent or borrow a power-washer, and or buy the cleaning materials. This labor becomes a second victimization and further silences the emotional and psychological harm because the attention is yet again on the physical and material effects of the swastika upon the person's personal property.

Within the public realm, the responsibility of the clean-up often falls to school administration, the parks department, the department of transportation, or the utility works within a city or county. Here the wider community system to which the target community belongs cleans up the residue of the swastika. In some ways this could be seen as the community taking responsibility for the swastika because they are cleaning up the mess, but by moving the cleaning to some city entity, the individuals within the community do not have to come face to face with the responsibility of cleaning up and the tough conversations around the harm swastikas do. Instead, it becomes some abstract entity's responsibility and nothing to concern oneself with. No real community engagement on the individual level is necessary.

The final part of that urge to remove the swastika comes from an awareness of how that place is perceived by others in the community as well as others beyond the community. Having a swastika in a particular public place or space marks it as being or belonging to a certain group of

people. Those who live within that community may wish to combat that perception that could be had by others in the community or by neighboring communities. This is a notable concern because one does not want to attract others who support the symbol, so erasing it or covering it up seems prudent in terms of harm, perception, and message sent to the perpetrator or others who hold those same beliefs.

4.3.3.4 What Makes a Swastika Hate Act "Serious?": Materiality, Permanency, and Repetition

The materiality of the swastika and its permanency are recorded in *TSCP* itself, but they also play a role in community swastika hate act response by community members. These responses are both discursive and non-discursive. One police department determined the seriousness of the property damage as being dependent on the materials used and argued that "because it is permanent ink, permanent ink is then removed" (*TSCP*). Because of the ease of cleaning it off, it was therefore less serious. The logic again is that once the property has been "repaired" or brought back to its original condition, the crime has been resolved. Another officer described an incident where someone drew a swastika in the snow as not "attempting to intimidate or scare anyone" because "if that was the case, the symbols would have likely been drawn in a more permanent medium" as if the medium takes away from the harm done (*TSCP*). Sure, when a swastika is removed, further harm does not occur, but the harm that did occur before the swastika was removed is still there, and to say that because it was not more permanent misses the point of what a swastika means and the harm it causes.

Sometimes seriousness is a function of repetition. A Parks and Recreation worker said, "Unless it's something they think is really gang related or something like that, it's usually noted in the records and we just take care of it. And if it becomes an ongoing thing, then it becomes more of a concern" (*TSCP*). This begs the question of who is keeping track of these hate acts?

How many times are swastikas covered over again and again as they reappear? One occurrence is often written off. A second occurrence may be cause for concern, but a third occurrence often means there is a problem. This "tipping point" has caused an increase in action around the swastika appearances as communities realize the appearances are not "one offs." Within *TSCP*, there were news stories that mentioned two or three events when they talked about the most recent event, but in searching the internet for a corresponding story that detailed the incident, there was no evidence, news story, or mention of the previous events anywhere to be found. This means that not only is there an under-reporting in terms of the data in *TSCP* but that some people and some news sources do not feel swastikas to be especially dangerous or serious until they appear more than once within a specific context or place/space.

How often something needs to be addressed and cleaned up does a couple of things. First it sends a message to the target community that there may be more than one person who feels this way or that there is one person who feels so strongly about the ideology embodied in the swastika that nothing will deter them from repeating the act. The repetition of swastika appearances escalates fear within the target community. Secondly, the number of times something has to be cleaned up brings attention to the swastika and the harm it causes. This can embolden repeat offenses. Repetition can also mean that cleanup happens more quickly or that it can linger even longer as municipalities or home/business owners are used to cleaning it up and have the supplies, or conversely, may not have the time or materials to continually clean and cover up the swastikas. Also, because it was a crime of property, the police may want to keep the swastikas as evidence, which can result in an incident like in Clarkstown, NY where swastikas were on trees on a man's property for seven months while the police investigation drug on with no resolution (*TSCP*). The owner finally took it into his own hands and cleaned it up himself.

4.2.4 Consequences of Silencing Non-Discursive Practices: Erasure

The urge to clean up or remove the swastika is a good one, but there are some repercussions that come with that clean up or removal that can harm the community where the swastika appeared. The harm that results is a false sense that the incident has been dealt with and is no longer an issue. It shuts down, and in many ways prevents, conversation about the swastika, its history, and its harm on target communities. The adage, "Out of sight, out of mind" is apropos. If it is no longer seen, it can no longer harm, and if it is no longer seen, we no longer need to have a conversation about how it came to be there and the people it targeted and harmed when it was there. While the swastika can be covered, the covering of it is not enough when we think of the damage done to the intended targets/target communities within the wider community. In terms of restitution, a quick clean up without further discussion becomes another way of erasing the incident and indirectly silencing the target community because it shuts down conversation about the targets/target communities and the harm they may feel as the space/place changed when the swastika was introduced.

Rhetorically, understanding how place and space function is key to understanding embodied harm and allows one to see that once a swastika appears in a place or space, it permanently alters that location. Removing it or covering it up does not ensure that it is erased. The harm to those individuals still occurred. In some towns and cities, there are added penalties for crimes involving swastikas and that address this harm. They can be labeled a hate crime, but proving a swastika is a hate crime can be difficult. As mentioned at the start of this dissertation, enforcement of the penalties tied to hate crimes vary from city to city and state to state, and there is no uniform approach to crimes of this nature that involve hate symbols or hate speech.

Materially, swastikas, as symbols, require inscription, and that inscription creates a semi-permanence for a time even if it is a short time. They physically alter the spaces in permanent ways but also alter the space beyond the material bounds. From a structural and atomic standpoint, paint or ink is layered over an existing structure changing the chemical makeup of the structure even on the basest of levels as the ink or paint bleeds into the pores of the surface. The structure is physically altered forever, and even in the covering up of it, it still exists below the surface.

The removal of swastikas may also damage the space permanently as it has ruined a piece of art or may leave a trace that is visible beyond the incident itself such as a hint of color difference where the weather has not created a patina of that original color yet. In this way the item will always contain a physical memory of the swastika even after it is "removed." One could use this as a metaphor for communities who experience trauma. This removal and yet incomplete removal serves as a metaphor of how the space changes for the targets of swastika appearances. The space is still there, but the swastika, like osmosis where elements move from highly concentrated areas to lower concentrated areas, has bled into the fabric of the community. It has changed the cells of the community, and removing it always leaves some of the swastika behind in the minds of the targets/target communities who have witnessed or heard about the swastika appearance (Levine). One person summed it up nicely after swastikas were found with racial slurs on the exterior walls of a home where there was construction being done by a Latino crew in Pawleys Island, SC; "You know, you can paint over these words, but they can't paint over that sentiment. You can't erase that message that's been sent to our community" (*TSCP*). The physical combined with the lore about the swastika in that space alter the safety of the target community and as a result the larger community as both are changed forever.

In terms of punishment and who is responsible for the crime, the finger pointing points to the perpetrator, but when the crime is erased and no one is ever caught, who is the perpetrator and where do they live? Perpetrators live in those communities. Knowing that a perpetrator lives within a community and is not caught creates a hypervigilance for targeted vulnerable populations. Their safety and security in their homes, in their cars, in businesses, in houses of worship, and in public places all feel "less safe" for them because the criminal has not been caught. There is some comfort in having a criminal caught, but even in the catching and knowing she or he will not do it again, the adage is, "if it happens once, it can happen again," and incidents within communities have shown just that.

Chapter 5 Written and Spoken Responses to Swastika Hate Acts on School Campuses

5.1 Introduction

I begin my exploration of the metagenre *Speech* by examining the smaller community of school campuses within the larger community of a town or city through letters and statements. The data for letters and statements was more complete and therefore allowed me to account for all possible rhetorical moves within these discursive practices. By complete I mean that the letters and statements issued in relation to swastika hate acts on school campuses were often in their entirety from salutation to conclusion despite being a smaller sample size than the letters and statements given by elected officials. The more clipped and brief letters and statements of elected officials will be discussed in the next chapter. Because the artifacts from schools were complete, I begin with these to determine and eventually finalize my codes, which will be discussed in this chapter.

Schools have the most swastikas placed on their campuses, and of the 1339 swastika incidents, K-12 accounted for 280 incidents, and colleges accounted for 284 incidents. As an educator, I find that significant. Also, as an educator, I know that schools are positioned to respond differently to hate acts, and this is evident in the kinds of responses captured in *The Swastika Counter Project (TSCP)*. Most notably there are some significant differences between school responses and the kinds of responses that will be discussed in Chapter Six, which looks at the letters and statements of elected civic leaders. Schools, like the larger communities, do enact the metagenre of *silence* as outlined in Chapter Four with actions such as clean up and suspension, but the majority of the responses by schools focused on *speech* and *support*. *Support*

as a metagenre will be discussed in Chapter Seven. The breakdown of the kinds of responses within the metagenres when there were swastika hate acts at schools is in **Table 5-1** below.

Table 5-1 School Responses to Swastika Hate Acts

Clean Up/Cover Up (*Silence*)	**Gathering/ Protest/Vigil/ Demonstration (*Support*)**	**Letters/ Statements (*Speech*)**	**Other**	**Policy/ Committee / System Creation (*Support*)**	**Suspension/ Denial of Access to Space (*Silence*)**	**Victim Support (*Support*)**
121 instances	30 instances	355 issued	37 instances	110 instances	40 instances	46 instances

One can see that the metagenre most enacted when a swastika appears in educational spaces is *speech*, followed by *support* and *silence.* Because of the frequency of *speech* being enacted as a response, looking at those speech acts within the metagenre can give scholars insight into the school community as a discourse community as well as the genre expectations for letters and statements that respond to trauma within that community as a result. For these reasons, the discursive and non-discursive practices trapped and recorded within the trace of the letters and statements themselves are important as they can concretize responses that are not in the news story itself. Examining these discursive traces gives scholars, school communities, and larger communities an idea of actions available to them as responses. In this sense these actions that have been captured by *TSCP* become *available designs*[29] that various communities can draw upon to inform their own responses should a swastika, another other hate act, or trauma occur on their campuses. A secondary benefit of looking at letters and statements associated with swastika hate acts on campuses is that scholars can get a sense of how school communities define and

[29] Like the New London Group, I believe that choices available within a rhetorical situation are called "available designs." They are termed designs because they are not singularly linguistic and could represent various modes of engagement that could include material and embodied actions.

understand themselves differently than the larger community in which they are located, and this is important for educators as they work to create safe havens that are inclusive and supportive of diversity. Finally, letters and statements give scholars a better understanding of how swastikas are perceived and discussed in the school setting, and this understanding gives scholars insight into the rhetorical genre expectations of hate act responses and trauma responses in general.

Within the letter and statements–no matter who issues them–there are certain rhetorical themes or moves made by the rhetors[30], which are generally outlined in **Table 5-2** below. These moves are concretized both **Appendices C** and **D** where I give samples of coded letters and examples of how these codes manifested in the letters and statements.

Table 5-2 Moves within Letters and Statement Issued about Hate Acts on School Campuses

Move	**School Administration**	**Student Groups**
Invocation of Community	Definition of what community is and is not	Students as a group must tolerate difference
Invoking Home Help	Asking for parent involvement in disseminating information or in supporting the school	Everyone must work together
Description of the Swastika Hate Act	Location and timeline of discovery	Naming the crime, vocabulary to describe the crime, location and timeline
Procedure	What was done in response and why	What was done in response (usually this was condemned as not enough)
Clean-up	When and who cleaned up	
Timeliness	When the swastika was cleaned up	
Contact Info	Who to contact for more information or to report	

[30] I use the term rhetors to refer to the authors of the text who have a specific audience and purpose in mind. In the case of a letter, it is the author who wrote it, and in the case of a statement, it is the speaker who spoke it.

Condemnation of the Swastika Hate Act	Vocabulary to name perpetrators, language to describe the act, saying this is not who we are	Vocabulary to name perpetrators, language to describe the act, saying this is not who we are
Code of Conduct	Reminders that students agreed to this and/or will be punished according to this	
Police Involvement	SROs or outside police involvement timeline	
Invocation of Safety	The belief that schools should be safe, and all students should feel safe	The belief that schools should be safe, and all students should feel safe
Support of Victims	Counseling services, school events/assemblies	Student support groups offered
Support Materials	Information parents could use to help talk with their students about swastikas/history of swastikas and why they are not appropriate at school	

Notable within letters and statements from those involved in school communities was a focus on the future, which is different from the letters and statements that will be discussed in the next chapter. School letters and statements were very concerned with the immediate mitigation of current harm as well as the prevention of future harm. Letters and statements that focused on the mitigation of harm often discussed education, policy creation, and victim support specifically in terms of specific actions in the schools like having assemblies, instituting curriculum changes, conducting class discussions, inviting Holocaust survivor speakers, adding more security, creating access to mental health, and opening up community forums.

5.1.1 Relationships among Actors and their Significance in Rhetorical Response

As will be discussed in the next chapter, audience plays an important role in the language used in letters and statements. Even within letters and statements tied to educational spaces, audience varies slightly because the rhetor/audiences' relationship is slightly different and has a different power dynamic.[31] For instance, a K-12 principal has a different relationship with students and parents than a university president has with students and parents. Part of it could be due to the age of the students, but factors such as paying to attend the institution and more student autonomy in terms of grades and privacy at the postsecondary level give postsecondary students more power than say an elementary school student. For this reason, I have separated out when significant differences occur between K-12 and postsecondary for each rhetorical move.

As a community within a community, the structure of power and relationship of stakeholders to the target/target community is different because of proximity. A school community does have ties to the broader community, but its stakeholders are more invested in how the school functions and the school's identity because they are closer (geographically, physically, socially, or ideologically) to the targets/targeted communities.

This chapter uses genre analysis as a means to tease out and better understand the genre of letters and statements within the metagenre of *speech* as a kind of response to swastika hate acts. In looking at the language used in these particular letters and statements, there were notable

[31] When it comes to formal statements or letters, K-12 students only had a couple of instances in our four years of data where individual students wrote editorials in their school newspaper about the event and their feelings about the incident. Those feelings ranged from saying a school overreacted to a school under-reacted. Beyond individual student commentary in the news stories gathered by *TSCP*, students at the postsecondary level also exerted their voices via editorials, but there also appeared more group statements and letters. The occurrence of student statements and letters at this level may be because student groups are responding to incidents in communities that they feel they have some ownership or vested interest in, and for that reason, it appears they felt they needed to create a more formalized means of address toward a particular audience to fulfill genre expectations tied to a hate act response.

trends. Mentions of students, school, campus, children, and various iterations of faculty and staff pepper the language that is used in these letters and statements because of the nature of location. These nouns are most frequently used with the exception of pronouns, which will be discussed later in this chapter in the section that discusses community and inclusivity. Along with references to the location and the people who may be directly involved in or responding to these incidents, there are other rhetorical moves that are prominent in the language used within statements and letters in relation to school swastika incidents. Those moves will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

5.2 Procedures and Descriptions

In examining the letters and statements of those affiliated with schools, the move most began with was a description of the swastika hate act that occurred and an outline of the procedure undertaken in response to the swastika being found. This genre expectation serves as exposition at both the K-12 and postsecondary levels and occurs because individuals who issue statements or write letters seek to establish a form of ethos by delineating what has been done as well as the next steps that will occur in relation to the incident. Cleaning or covering up the swastika, police involvement, and possible punishment are often a part of this process, which says a lot about what is expected in a response as well as how *silence* can play a large part in responses, if those actions are the only ones taken by those affiliated with schools. Sometimes part of the process is a description of future moves such as creating committees or policies to facilitate reporting of future incidents or there may be increased targeted education within a school for students. These responses contribute to the metagenre *support* and explain how that metagenre figured so strongly in letters from these individuals.

5.2.1 Audience Influence in K-12 Letters and Statements

When looking at the moves made in the letters and statements, audience does impact the language used, especially when it comes to emphasis on certain rhetorical moves. The various layers of audience to which the rhetor is responsible in K-12 letters often create the necessity for an emphasis on the procedural descriptions as description and procedure satisfy the most audiences. Details of the incident are introduced within the first few sentences of the letter quickly followed by the emphasis on the timeliness of the clean-up in order to mitigate or lessen the exposure of students to the swastika. Delineating what occurred and what was done in response also heads off any kind of rumor or twisted story a student may bring home to their family because they do not quite understand what a swastika is, what exactly happened, or why it might be important at school.

5.2.2 Audience Influence in Postsecondary Letters and Statements

However, in examining the 10 letters and statements at the postsecondary level, the move of describing the incident and explaining the procedure that followed took up considerably more space, and that may be attributed to the audience. Students are the primary audience, or stakeholders, for these letters with a secondary audience being parents and/or the larger community in which the college or university is housed. For this reason, students move from the more passive role in the K-12 letters to the more active role in postsecondary letters because they pay to go to the school. In this way, they are viewed as customers who, like the tax-paying or tuition paying parents[32] in the K-12 letters, require the details of the goings on and possible

[32] While many parents do pay students' tuition at the postsecondary level, because of the nature of the relationship between the student as the main point of contact for grades, etc., the relationship between student and school has shifted. Parents do participate in a student's education, but unless a student allows parents access, parents are not a part of the communication that the school has with its constituents. Parents receive different kinds of contact about finances and alumni information along with safety issues, but the day to day communication between the university

trouble that may be occurring on campus that may impact their education, safety, and welfare. When traumatic events happen on campus, students also would want to know how serious the college or university believe these incidents to be because how the university responds to one incident gets extrapolated to others. Therefore, the university must address the procedure of the incident to convey their seriousness concerning the incident and therefore the safety of all students who attend the institution. In this way, institutions treat the students as powerful constituents of the university worthy of the university's attention. School administrations' responses must cater to students as a way of acknowledging the power dynamic between student and university in order to extend and demonstrate respect to students.

5.3 Timeliness and Clean Up

Along with description of the incident and the attention to the procedure to deal with the swastika, there is a notation about the timeliness of the response as a reflection of how serious the incident is deemed to be. The faster the response, the more seriously the administration is believed to take the swastika. Many letters and statements from both K-12 and postsecondary were sent or said within 24 hours of their occurrence. The theme of timeliness was much more prevalent in the K-12 letters than in the postsecondary letters. This indicates both the perceived danger of the swastika and how malleable students may be in terms of being influenced or harmed by seeing a swastika. Parents, in general, want things within schools dealt with quickly, efficiently, and properly, which ties into the notion of safety for their children, and the school administration's emphasis on this move within the letters and statements demonstrates who they see as their primary audience in the K-12 realm.

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and its constituents focuses mainly on the student as the point of contact for the school with the family/community as represented by the student.

Sometimes universities sent letters and statements, more than 24 hours later because they had to check with the various offices like the university president, student affairs, and perhaps legal services. Still, these letters and statements emphasized timeliness by using words like "today," "yesterday," "quickly," "immediately," and "underway" (*TSCP*). These words convey a sense of urgency and seriousness. Marking the response as being timely acts as reinforcement and responds to the audience's expectations as well as creates a directive or guidance for the audience that they too should feel it serious.

Regardless of the grade level, most often the phrase tied to the move of cleaning up was that the swastika was "cleaned up" (*TSCP*). Other times the swastika was "removed" (*TSCP*). Occasionally, the specific form of cleanup was mentioned like "painted over," "erased," or "covered up" since swastikas appeared written on whiteboards, carved into things like school furniture, sprayed on walls, scrawled on posters, or etched into the metal walls of an elevator just to name a few examples (*TSCP*). Language around cleanup is important. Cleaning, erasing, and covering up have the ability to contribute to the metagenre of *silence* in that they remove the image from view and therefore hinder possible engagement in critical conversations if cleanup is treated as the finale or penultimate response.

5.4 Police Involvement

Another response that often falls under the metagenre *silence* is police involvement. In both K-12 and postsecondary, the police are relied upon to be the "heavy" in terms of punishment and carrying out justice for the crime of property damage. The words used most often are tied to crime, the law, or punishment with mentions of "police," "investigation," "reported," "responsible," "defaced," "discipline," "vandalism," "graffiti," and "removed"

(*TSCP*). Whether it be the local police force, a Student Resource Officer (SRO),[33] or campus police, "reports" are taken, and "investigations" are conducted in many of the swastika hate acts on school campuses across the nation (*TSCP*). The fact that there are so many mentions of police indicates that police are the culpable ones when it comes to rectifying the harm done at least to the property. Because the police are emphasized as an actor with power in this situation, property is the primary crime, and the swastika as a hate act is secondary if a consideration at all. A focus on property rather than emotional trauma has the ability to hinder support of those targeted by the swastika, and therefore responses that use police as the arbiter of justices, as mentioned in the previous chapter, fail the larger community by neglecting those who have been emotionally harmed within it.

5.5 Condemnation

As administrators address the harm done to the campus and the students within it, most frequently the speech act of condemnation is seen as a way to support targets/targeted communities. As a result, condemnation appears in all the letters and statements issued by those responding to swastika hate acts. The move to condemn often comes in the form of descriptive words, negative nouns, or appears in verb form often as "condemn" or "do not condone" (*TSCP*). Descriptive words for swastika incidents generally carry negative connotations such as "offensive," "disturbing," "insensitive," "troubling," "reprehensible," "hateful," and "hurtful" (*TSCP*). All of these identify the position of the rhetor as passing judgment on the act and indicate they understand the hurtful nature of the symbol otherwise these words would not carry with them embodied notions of harm in their very definition. Similarly, nouns followed suit and

[33] An SRO is a uniformed officer who is assigned to patrol one or more schools and assist with safety and discipline on a school campus. They may enforce local, state, or federal laws depending upon the student offense.

were used in the same way to pass judgment and convey that harm was carried out on another. "Hate/tred," "harassment," "discrimination," "violence," "threat/s," "bigotry," "bias," and "insults" all indicate that the rhetor feels strongly about the incident and sees it has harmful to a particular subgroup within the community (*TSCP*). Sometimes administrators expressed condemnation for perpetrators from the perspective of the targets/targeted communities as a rhetorical move to demonstrate empathy. One administrator wrote, "...it only takes a few people to make us all feel distressed and unsafe. We cannot and will not live this way. So please partner with us in keeping this campus the safe and welcoming place it should always be--without exception" (*TSCP*). Here the administrator's empathy and identification with the target/target community functions as a form of tempered condemnation because it becomes a personal affront to him as a "victim."

5.5.1 A Gentler Reserved Kind of Condemnation: K-12

How condemnation functions within letters and statements appears in the language used to describe the swastika hate acts themselves. Condemnation is more tempered in K-12 letters and involves words such as "concerned," "unacceptable," symbol-of-hate," "act-of-hate," "expressions of hate," "offensive," insensitive and divisive symbol," "hurtful," "seriously," "incident of intolerance," "attempts to instill fear," or "discrimination" (*TSCP*). This language, as you will see in contrast to the postsecondary discussion that follows, is less forceful, and that is because of the various audiences the letter is intended to reach. Schools cannot come off too harshly by calling perpetrators of the swastikas out for a few reasons: they are children; they may not know better; and/or children are a reflection of their homes, and if a student is called out too harshly, parents may take it personally and be offended. Compulsory education requires that schools educate all students who enter their doors, and if one of the goals of school is to educate

children in being good citizens, belittling students does not reflect a growth mindset, which is one of undergirding premises by which K-12 education operates or should operate.

5.5.2 A Challenging Kind of Condemnation: Postsecondary

As with the K-12, the move in postsecondary letters is often first to denounce the act and/or perpetrator and then set the community in relief against the denouncement with a move similar to "this is not us." What was interesting about these letters versus the K-12 letters is that the writers took more time and space to condemn and name the condemnation as well as to celebrate the community and name what that community was. In one letter from the Vice President for Student Affairs at William & Mary, almost a third of the letter talked about community: a community that was created when students were accepted to the college because "'Who comes here belongs here'" and a community that should continue to be upheld because of the "trusting relationships you have established at William & Mary with faculty members, with administration, with mentors, and with your friends" (*TSCP*). The letter closes with "And may we each commit to listening more, with compassion and with respect," which was how many letters ended: a call for community but also support for one another and a gesture to victim support (*TSCP*).

In addition to condemnation appearing in school administration letters and statements, condemnation was also present within student groups' letters and statements. When student groups issued letters and statements, they said they were "deeply concerned" and "repulsed by the actions of these individuals" that they found "deeply disturbing" (*TSCP*). They described swastikas negatively as a type of "ignorance," "antisemitic actions," "bias-related incidents," a form of "white supremacy," and "vandalism" (*TSCP*). Like the statements and letters from the administration, condemnation was juxtaposed with community as the word *community* appeared

in five of the nine letters and statements issued by student groups. *We* was used 11 times as was *our* five times (*TSCP*). Student groups used *we* to create a sense of unity in opposition to perpetrators, but student groups also used *we* to self-identify that they had work to do and needed to check themselves and their behavior. In including themselves as being individuals who needed to improve, they made a similar move that Ibram Kendi articulates in *How to be an Antiracist*, where he argues that the dichotomy of racist/"not racist" is unhelpful. The opposite of being racist is not "not racist;" it is antiracist because we operate in a racist system, and we either participate in the system or we work to disrupt the system (Kendi). Bettina Love argues that schools are no different when it comes to upholding racist systems. When student groups admitted they were part of the problem instead of creating an *other*, these groups accepted their part in the problem with an eye toward changing their behaviors for the future and in doing so, were able to better support fellow students with the result being a more inclusive school community.

5.6 Community, Code of Conduct, and Invocation of Safety

Community and condemnation often are often in neighboring sentences within letters and statements in both school and larger community responses. This juxtaposition serves to position community identity as being central in the constitution of community. It also sets the perpetrator off as harming that identity. Aside from the condemnation, the move made most often in the letters and statement was one of championing inclusivity and supporting community. The words that demonstrate this and appear in all the statements and letters are the pronouns "we" and "us" as well as the possessive pronoun "our." Using these words creates a relationship not only between the author and the primary audience, but it also produces a unified notion of the audience and what they should feel/think about the incident and the perpetrator. The person

making the statement or writing a letter to be disseminated to a particular community is including themselves and feels that they have the ability to speak for the community involved in the incident. Part of this articulation also includes the invocation of the word community itself as it appeared quite often in statements and letters (49 times in 23 letters and statements) (*TSCP*). Community was described in terms of what it stood for in contrast to what it was not, which is why almost all condemnation statements were either preceded or followed by statements about community and community or core values.

"Core values" or some form of communal agreement to behavior and decorum within a place like a code of conduct was mentioned 13 times in the 23 letters and statements (*TSCP*). Most schools have core values and codes of conduct, and administrators referred to those as well as to the specific values within those codes such as "tolerance," "diversity," "respect," "equity," "understanding," "compassion," "kindness," "inclusivity," "acceptance," and "safety" (*TSCP*). The juxtaposition of condemnation and community often created an *us versus them* relationship with the person writing or issuing the statement being part of the *us* versus perpetrators of the incidents, who are perceived as the *them*. This kind of language also assumes that there is just a singleton acting out against the group and that the group is a monolith, but a monolith is impossible when diverse identities and publics converge such as on college campuses. Glossing over the fact that the perpetrator came from within the community does little to contribute to the conversations about diversity and inclusion. It stymies what would be challenging conversations about conditions that would/could produce individuals within the community and why those individuals feel comfortable or the need to put swastikas on campuses.

5.6.1 Protecting Children and Fostering Community: K-12

In an examination of the letters from K-12 administration, community was the category most emphasized, and statements of the values of the community could be found scattered throughout the letters themselves as the administrators reminded the audience again and again who the community was and what they stood for. Drawing on community can be tricky for administrators in K-12 settings because schools are often public spaces. In many ways schools are microcosms of larger neighborhood communities where there are diverse populations and identities in close proximity to one another and where friction may be present. For the authors of these letters, the primary audience is often the parents, but there is also an understanding that the letters are public and therefore can reach a secondary audience which includes the larger community within which the school resides. Students are another secondary audience as they can be the ones taking letters home to parents or who may then have discussions with parents as a result of the letter.

Because of the diversity of the primary audience and the two secondary audiences, rhetors must be careful in their language choices to not offend, to be supportive of their audience in their role as a public institution, and to create or reinforce a particular definition of community in spite of the incident and the diverse community they serve. As mentioned above, administrators often lean into community and their definition of that community throughout individual letters as they remind parents of "core values" and "mission statements" that include "tolerance," "respect," "equity," and a valuing of "diversity" as a means of creating a "safe" environment for growth and learning (*TSCP*). Reminding parents of these tenets held by the school reminds parents that their children are an extension of the larger community in which the school is situated and that by valuing others, students are, by the same logic, being valued. What

parent would not want their children to be valued and thus looked after and kept safe? Students who are privy to this letter would also wish to know they are safe and valued. This message of inclusivity and safety is important for the larger community as well because social structures tend to value schools as a nexus for citizenship and fostering democracy where individuals are educated, valued, and supported no matter their upbringing.

5.6.2 Accountability and Responsibility: Postsecondary

At the postsecondary level the role of the student is more powerful and autonomous in its relationship to the administration, and because of this relationship, students can be held more accountable for their actions. Students willingly attend postsecondary institutions; their attendance is not compulsory. Because they are adults according to the law, the institutions can be more direct and vehement in their description and condemnation of the act. Students have choices: they can comply with the community expectations; they can choose to leave the university voluntarily; or they can be expelled. The bottom line is that the university wants all of its students to stay (financially and for the good of a democratic and enlightened society), but the institution is willing to let some students leave, if it means the rest of the students feel like they want to stay. In this way, the actual minority, established by the university, is those who are racist, sexist, ableist, and homophobic.[34]

One of the reasons colleges and universities may lean into community and code of conduct is because of the diversity of the stakeholders (students) at the college and university levels. Since there have been moves by postsecondary institutions to be more diverse, equitable,

[34] I recognize that this is very reductionist and that institutions may profess to be enlightened when their structures and governance actually do the same kinds of harm to these "individuals" marked out as not belonging to the university. I do not wish to discuss the harm that college and universities perform here specifically, but I will address later in this chapter how these letters and statements do do harm to marginalized groups in a different and less obvious way under the guise of being "woke" or "listening."

inclusive, and just in their admittance and retention of students from marginalized communities, it is natural that colleges and universities display a convergence of ideas and identities, but that diversity necessitates that a more accepting and supportive environment for marginalized groups be created and upheld. The language used around the swastika incidents conveys both an understanding of the harm done to students, who belong to historically marginalized populations, and support of diversity. This can be seen in how swastikas are referred to as "symbols of hate," "weapons of hate," "antisemitc," "weapons of intimidation and hatred," "threats of violence," and "incidents of harassment" that are "grounded in bigotry or ignorance" and "repulsive and outside the bonds of civil discourse" (*TSCP*). This language is much more forceful than K-12, and that is because of the relationship mentioned above.

Holding students responsible for their actions means that students can be called out more assertively for behaviors not befitting the institution. This relationship between institution and student reflects a different view of education than K-12; the relationship becomes less about a student being unaware and using the swastika incident to create a learning experience or enrich the growth of a student as it was in K-12 but rather an attempt at reversing an established worldview that the student already has. While the goal of both levels is changing the student's mind to make it more accepting of diversity, the move at K-12 operates out of student naiveté and the idea that they just do not know what the symbol means or the harm it causes, whereas at the postsecondary level, the move operates out of the belief that a student knows what the symbol means and must be guided (gently or forcefully) to understand its inappropriateness and that it will not be tolerated at school. Because students at the postsecondary level are believed to be more established in their ways of thinking, the accountability of students is different, and the

language of the letters and statements asks students to be active participants in supporting diversity in the university.

Student group letters and statements at the postsecondary level also addressed fellow students, but another audience was administration. These audience choices make sense because student groups address the communities they feel have the most influence or power in the situation. Whether it be to enact some kind of change in a current system, support for the individual/s or group/s harmed by the incident, or punish individuals for the incident, their fellow students and school administration are the ones who can do the most. In two of the eight incidents recorded by *TSCP*, student groups addressed the school institution specifically as they called out inaction or mishandling of the swastika hate act by the university. In terms of student audiences, focusing on students as a primary audience indicates that the student groups understand the power of students as participants within the institution. Student groups recognize that the responsibility for the community and the culture of the university starts and ends with student behavior and beliefs, and by addressing students specifically and calling out behaviors that are not desirable, these student groups set community guidelines from within–not imposed by outsiders of the group like the university itself. As a teacher, I know that student expectations of their fellow students are more powerful than teacher expectations of students in some areas of behavior, and these student groups utilize that dynamic as they call for student action and support of targets/targeted communities.

5.7 Invocation of Help, Call to Action, and Victim Support

When it came to victim support, it was consistent in all of the postsecondary letters, and this again may be the result of the audience. Since administrators are talking directly to students, they must show those students, and especially the students who have been targeted by swastikas,

that they belong on campus. Support for targets/targeted communities took the form of acknowledging harm, showing concern for student safety, offering mental health or religious support, or organizing opportunities for students to express themselves and their concerns in campus gatherings. Education also was used as a form of victim support as school administration or other offices on campus created panels and brought in educational speakers.

5.7.1 Efficiency and Education at the K-12 Level

The overture for victim support was not grand at the K-12 level in the letters and statements issued although the data does show that middle and high schools did work on victim support more. This discrepancy will be discussed further in Chapter Seven. K-12 administrators did offer educational opportunities and resources for both students and parents and invoked parent help to engage with their children and talk about the swastika, its history, and what it means today. Administration also organized community meetings and invited speakers including the ADL and religious leaders to address students or consult on educational units. Schools at this level also ran assemblies and made curricular changes that exposed students to the historical significance of swastikas in their social classes.

5.7.2 Social Justice Warriors and Student groups at the Postsecondary Level

At the postsecondary level, student groups were advocates of education. Two of the letters and statements issued directly challenged the institution's response to the swastika.[35]

[35] Eight incidents on campuses had a total of 10 responses by student groups. While the sample is small, it is likely that more letters and statements were issued for swastika incidents; they just were not reported by the news source. Of the 284 college swastika incidents, only 110 were reported in student-run news sources. The breakdown and focus on student voices and statements makes sense when looking at where the news stories are located. These eight incidents were reported in student-run news sources (6), an online magazine (1), and in the local news (1). Looking at these eight incidents, one can see that the moves made by these letters and statements would be the moves made by most student groups in response to swastika incidents because those moves fit the genre expectations one would imagine such groups to make in such a situation, especially when we compare those letters with the administrative

Student groups argued things like, “we said on the post that we feared that without the Fordham community and the administration holding those that perpetuate these crimes accountable that it would continue to happen. Unfortunately, it turned out to be true” (*TSCP*). They also pointed out that the institution “prefer[s], instead to deny the racism active in their midst. They have not accepted their institutional negligence. They have not mandated cultural competency” (*TSCP*). Both of these statements recognize the power of the institution to influence community expectations on campus and in some ways ask the institution to fix the culture while also communicating their expectations for the community and what it should comprise of in terms of attitudes and beliefs. Both letters also discussed that fixing this issue would lead to “liberation” and disrupt “expressions of white supremacy, which is an actual threat to the safety of POC and Jewish students” (*TSCP*). While acknowledging the effects on specific groups within the communities, the letters and statements of student groups also indicate that the community as a whole would benefit from the university taking a stronger stance in handling swastika incidents. They argue that by focusing on support for the targeted communities, the larger community would be supported indirectly since the target community is but a piece of the larger community in terms of definition and function. Because school is a location where students live and attend classes, having swastikas in their “home” causes insecurity in their “home,” a sanctuary or safe haven from the troubles of the outside world. Student groups recognized the common affiliation, and this may be why they were so vocal in criticizing the university and so adamant about action to reclaim the safety of their communal home: the campus.

letters. A low number of letters and statements by student groups may be a result of how the media covered the incident, who the media privileged in its covering, and how involved students were in responding to the incident in a unified way.

Tied to student group responses in their statements and letters is a call to action. Their use of the word *must* signals an imperative and requires an active stance. *Must* appeared seven times in the data for the eight incidents versus single time it appeared in school administration letters (*TSCP*). With the use of the word *must*, student groups became agents of change by demanding action from themselves, others, and specifically the university. Some of the phrases including *must* were "[an institution] *must* confess to consciously and unconsciously fostering racism," "we *must* be united," and "we *must* hold true to the values of equity and inclusion for all" (*TSCP*, *emphasis* mine). The warrant underlying these charges is that the community is powerful, and through self-examination, the community would be stronger and develop into one that was supportive of diversity. The logic follows that having a community supportive of diversity ensures that another incident would not likely occur again in the future.

Interestingly two separate instances caused the student Democrat and Republican groups to issue statements. This is telling when looking at the political climate and division around topics of race, gender, sexuality, and immigration and what it means to be a community at a postsecondary institution. The letters took two different approaches when discussing the swastika. In one incident, the George Washington (GW) College Democrats and College Republicans issued a joint statement that asked the university "to take greater strides in ensuring the safety of the Jewish students at GW" (*TSCP*). Here the move, like the ones above by other student groups, is to place the power in the hands of the institution to protect students, but preceding this statement, there was an invocation of community that included both groups as a locus of power and as having a responsibility to prevent hate acts. They wrote, "We must acknowledge as an entire GW community, the repetitive nature of these antisemitic actions on our campus" (*TSCP*). Using *must* and the pronoun *we* indicates that these groups are including

themselves within the community that needs to be self-reflexive and take responsibility for actions that transpire on their campus. The writers view themselves as part of the community, part of the problem, and part of the solution, which demonstrates the student groups' belief that they are a powerful entity within the community they live. They can call on others to make changes as well as exert their own power to make changes within the community and themselves.

5.8 Consequences of Statements and Letters

As noted earlier, the letters and statements of college community members concretize actions not found in the online news stories and function as trace for examination of the assemblages of activity around community response to hate acts. While the letters of elected civic leaders appeared performative words with no follow through action, the letters and statements issued in response to swastika hate acts on school campuses contain more definable responses and actually outline, set up, and actionably carry out victim support. In other words, they move beyond words toward material and embodied support of targets/targeted communities, but these letters and statements are not without their own shortcomings.

5.8.1 Consequences of Letters from School Administration

In looking at the language and letters used in statements from school officials, the move most often is to create an us/them, insider/outsider dynamic, and in doing so, this move actually harms the community as it creates a dynamic of exceptionalism and othering. Establishing an us/them or insider/outsider dynamic allows the community to write off the individual's behavior as being the exception to the rule of the community. Now it may well be that the individual acted alone, but if the goal is to prevent such an incident from occurring again, this us/them and

insider/outsider construct actually sets up more opportunities for others to try and upset a community by violating community expectations even if they may not be doing so for white supremacist, racist, or sexist reasons.[36] In other words, if the goal is to get a rise out of the community, then any kind of action would do, but because the community has come out so strongly as being anti-swastika, an individuals who places a swastika in the community knows that it will disrupt the community's sense of unity and get a rise. Creating an us/them construct in those letters and statements then perpetuates the use of the swastika as a weapon of community disruption in addition to harming marginalized communities. Those two actions cannot be separated because the swastika serves both purposes, and with such a dual purpose, the possibility that a swastika would be placed in the community again is very probable.

Another repercussion of an us/them insider/outsider dynamic is that the community shuts down conversation around harm done to the marginalized groups harmed by swastika hate acts. The perpetrator is still culpable, but shutting down conversations around diversity and inclusion is a missed opportunity for a community to understand how it may or may not have contributed to the perpetrator's actions. The community also misses an opportunity to formulate how they might prevent future incidents of harm. Not addressing the role communities play in the swastika incidents and blaming it on the sole actions of an individual denies their role in such acts. A community's examination of their systems, their role in community culture, and their support or lack of support of inclusivity could be an opportunity for community development and growth and preventing that conversation by setting up an either/or dichotomy sets the community up for further incidents.

[36] As noted in previous chapters, intent does not matter when it comes to harm. The harm is the symbol being present. An individual coming upon a swastika does not know the intent of the person who placed it there; they just see the visual and material symbol of hate in a place or space.

In some of the letters and statements issued by individuals in school communities, there were concrete actions outlined such as school assemblies, discussions in class, work with the ADL, having guest speakers, and talking specifically about the Holocaust in depth. Often the response in K-12 is to have an assembly or have teachers talk to students about the swastika, but perhaps there is another missed opportunity here. Instead of "talking to" students, there could be more engagement of students in the learning process. Talking *with* them rather than *at* them would help them understand the harm of swastikas rather than just being told swastikas are harmful. The educational system has been tasked with a lot of expectations when it comes to student education and care, but having those communal spaces look at what makes them human and how they contribute to an overall culture is important in preventing swastikas from occurring in the future.[37] Bullying takes many forms, and tying that in with the historical use with K-12 students might also help students understand more about the harm swastikas cause.

5.8.2 Consequences of Letters and Statements from Student Groups

In terms of the consequences of letters and statements from student groups, their letters and statements do some interesting things in relation to the administrative letters, and as a result, the consequences of them are different. Although making the same moves of condemnation and invoking a sense of community, what stands out most in the letters and statements from student groups is the focus of the letters being direct challenges to the school institution and victim support via inclusive and self-reflective language. As challenges, the letters position themselves advocating for the university to do their part as a provider and powerful entity to prevent these kinds of incidents from repeating. The university *must* do their part in the community to ensure

[37] I understand that we will never be able to eradicate swastikas being marshaled and used in places, but my question is: are we doing all we can and in ways that are effective to educate students about history but also create empathy.

the "safety" of all who encounter the campus. The notion of safety is perhaps one of the reasons why these letters do focus on victim support. Since students see themselves reflected in the target of the incident (a fellow student) they are more likely to advocate for the general safety of all because the logic is that individual safety is but a microcosm of group safety, and the undermining of one undermines the other. Safety connects to social justice work in that what stunts civic participation is when individuals do not feel safe to occupy spaces of conversation or express themselves because of real or perceived hostility. If safety is ensured for all participants, then more democratic and diverse forms of discourse can occur; the conversation is inclusive because individuals can advocate for themselves in ways that create and promote equity.

Words and turns of phrase can only do so much, however, unless there are actionable items that follow. The letters of challenge by student groups seem to call for actionable items, and their condemnation, community invocation, and victim support tie together to create opportunity for actions to move beyond words. Key here is the acknowledgment and addressing of harm of targets/targeted communities in these incidents, which is not as prevalent as in administrative letters and statements because those individuals have different audiences and different identities. Student groups are "closer" to the targets/targeted communities in identity and position within the community, so this affiliation creates a dynamic that calls for university actions of safety. All students want to feel safe, and if other students are not safe, it does not take much of a logical jump for one to think that they might also not be as safe as they think. This is why the imperative nature of the word *must* is so important. Students are calling for action–concrete action–that creates safety by taking down systems that support and enable racism to go unchecked and/or unpunished at a postsecondary institution.

5.9 Conclusions

The data from *TSCP* supports that *speech* is the most common metagenre of response, and because of its ability to both prevent and support action, communities must be careful in its use. In some ways, *speech* can be seen as a penultimate response that results in disengagement and/or prevents further critical engagement with swastika hate acts as it shuts down critical conversations about a community and its members' responsibility for ensuring the safety of its constituents. *Speech* also has the potential to move communities and community members beyond words to actionable response by sharing information and creating opportunities for support. Chapter Eight will discuss how the metagenre of *speech* coupled with the metagenre of *support* can operate within a community response to create a more diverse, inclusive space that is safe for everyone, but because the metagenre of *speech* is a dynamic response to swastika hate acts and to trauma more generally, communities should not rely solely upon it or overuse it, or it will lose its effectiveness and become cliché much like the "thoughts and prayers" move that I will discuss in the next chapter.

What is most helpful in the trace that letters and statements create is their documentation of *available designs* from which other schools and communities could draw. The more and varied responses there are and that communities have access to, the more communities can tailor their response to trauma because they can better see possibility. By possibility I mean a way to both meet the community expectations, which we would hope would include support of diversity and inclusion, while at the same time enact more inclusive and supportive practices that mitigate the harm of targets or targeted communities. There is no one right answer because communities differ. Rather, there are a variety of possible answers, and doing what one has always done when a community is continually changing and expecting a different outcome is short-sighted, foolish,

and results in non-inclusive spaces and places. The linguistic based genres of letters and statements have to change and evolve in order to meet the new needs of more and more diverse populations within given communities, and speech acts alone as a metagenre need to evolve as well.

Chapter 6 Elected Civic Leaders' Written and Spoken Responses to Swastika Hate Acts

6.1 Introduction

Chapter Five discussed the various rhetorical moves found within the letters and statements of school community stakeholders and how those fit within the metagenre of *speech*. This chapter looks at how the metagenre *speech* functions within the community beyond school campuses and examines the language within the letters and statements issued by elected civic leaders. Where silence was the absence of discourse or shutting down of conversations around victim harm through both discursive and non-discursive actions, speech is completely discursive in practice and function. Speech is often seen as a response to silence as the Elie Wiesel quote from Chapter Five points out, and elected officials can often be the individuals communities look to for leadership, safety, and support when trauma occurs within their communities. The letters and statements that appear throughout this chapter represent but a portion of the letters and statements that contributed to this findings chapter and demonstrate some similar rhetorical moves to the ones discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter looks at the discursive moves made by elected officials in order to better understand the rhetorical assemblages that involve civic leaders to give civic leaders possibilities for choice as they think of their own response to trauma in their communities.

6.1.1 Letters and Statements as Actions and/or Discursive Products

Letters and statements are unique in that they are a discursive practice that can concretize other discursive and non-discursive moves made by community members. In other words, the

genre of a statement or letter in response to a swastika hate act is a genre within the larger metagenre of community response to trauma (Giltrow). The assemblage around the matter of concern (the swastika hate act) creates a space where individuals and groups produce other discursive and non-discursive genres that help them negotiate the rhetorical moment within the larger system that constitutes the metagenre. Letters and statements function as trace of the community response and articulate not only the values and beliefs of the speaker who may or may not feel empowered to speak for the community, but those letters and statements also provide discursive records of embodied and material responses of stakeholders within the community.

As a genre within a genre, statements are words issued to the general community and can be spoken. They are labeled statements by the news reporting source and are different from commentary given by witnesses, victims, or bystanders because there is an officiousness or authority given or assumed when issuing a statement and "going on the record." This differentiation is important because a statement is a matter of "going on the record" rather than giving an opinion, and for that reason, looking at the language surrounding those who are making official statements becomes important when thinking about the embodied rhetorical genre of community response to trauma. Letters, on the other hand, are generally written and issued via some kind of delivery device like email or regular mail. They contain many of the genre trappings of the general genre of letters such as salutations and closings and are often longer in length because of their detail and inclusion of contact material because the rhetor is not present to answer "follow-up" questions that could be addressed when a rhetor is giving a statement.

The nesting of a discursive rhetorical genre within a metagenre that includes both discursive and non-discursive moves and actants helps scholars to see the complexity of the rhetorical situation as not being just about product; it is about the embodied and material actors and process/es. The examples in this chapter demonstrate letters and statements are seen as a final product by the individuals who issue them and are therefore thought to be a complete act in the sense that they have done the "thing" expected of them. They have responded appropriately, but individuals who issue letters and statements fail to understand that the demonstrative act of speaking is only the first step in actionable rhetorical responses that account for and fully addresses the embodied harm of victims. This is not to say that statements and letters do nothing, but when they are seen as "the act" of support rather than the start to the process of support, they do not contribute as much to mitigating the harm done to victims nor do they mitigate future harm.

As discursive practices, letters and statements can come to be viewed as an empty performative gesture with low stakes rather than the first act in a process of acts focusing on proactivity that involves significant material and embodied involvement. Sandy Schumann and Olivier Klein argue in "Substitute or steppingstone? Assessing the impact of low-threshold online collective actions on offline participation" that people participate in the sharing of info and liking because it is of low cost/low risk to them (Schumann and Klein 308). The move of officials to issue a statement or letter fits the parameters of a low cost/risk action that appears as participation and activism. Much like those who share or like posts online, their issuing of a letter or statement often contains no expectation beyond the initial response of any kind of further action (Schumann and Klein 309). The act of issuing a statement or letter also works in another way as the officials actions are not just about appearing good but also about feeling good

about themselves and elevating their self-esteem (Schumann and Klein 309). Schumann and Klein argue hedonistic motives of feeling good about yourself and the advancement of personal interests are cyclical in nature and actually act as feedback loops that can lead to passivity because individuals feel good about their small gestures of protest. It is like Caesar said to Brutus, "Let me have men about me who are fat,/sleek-headed men as such as sleep an-nights" because when people are happy and have all their needs met, there is no need for them to act (Shakespeare). Schumann and Klein also argue that this feedback loop actually demobilizes us and prevents us from really doing anything active (Schumann 309). This leads to what some would call "slacktivism," which has come to describe individuals doing the minimum to appear as if they are part of a current cause. Slacktivism becomes important when we talk about letters and statements later in this chapter when the move "thoughts and prayers" is unpacked.

As mentioned in the methods chapter, speakers in letters and statements emphasized 13 moves including: **invoking community**, **condemning the act**, demonstrating a concern for safety, reminding people of a code of conduct, eliciting help, **describing the event, outlining the procedure for dealing with the hate act, involving police, timely cleaning up, providing contact information**, supporting victims, and supplying of support materials. Although an example of each of these moves can be found amongst the statements and letters collected by *The Swastika Counter Project* (*TSCP*), the moves listed in bold above were the moves most often made by elected civic leaders and will be discussed in detail within this chapter.

6.1.2 Elected Civic Leaders and their Speech Acts

I define elected civic officials as being anyone from local government officials (mayors, council members, board members, or assemblymen) to state level officials (representatives, senators, and governors) to all those running for or holding a federal political office such as a

presidential candidate or a sitting Vice President. Because these are political positions, it is expected that leaders weigh in and take stands in the political arena when it comes to incidents that impact the community. Swastikas fall under the category of community trauma that requires a response. As individuals held responsible for supporting their constituents and maintaining safety within the community at large, leaders utilize *speech* and the discursive genres of letters and statements as opportunities to articulate their positions and appeal to the various stakeholders within their communities.

Exigence for letters and statements from elected officials is not the same as their intention (Miller 157). Rather exigence is the occasion "and thus a form, for making public our private versions of things," and elected officials bring their own perceptions and expectations to their actions while also negotiating the public nature of being a representative of the community (Miller 158). Because exigence is an occasion, it has a "social motive" and therefore becomes tied into expectations for behavior within certain rhetorical situations (Miller 158). Therefore, one must consider the social, and by default power dynamics, as being constitutive of genre expectations for elected officials' responses to trauma. These responses must result in "particular social patterns and expectations that provide a socially objectified motive for addressing danger, ignorance, separateness," or they elected officials fail to meet the discourse community's needs (Miller 159). Thus, elected officials are expected to issue letters and statements, and those letters and statements must contain certain moves within them to further meet community expectations for these elected officials as leaders

6.1.2.1 Local Elected Officials

The relationship that the leader has with their community impacts the letters and statements they issue, and it seems that the expectation is that if a community leader is to have a

good relationship with their community, they must be transparent and talk about what they do to and for the community. Letters and statements provide this transparency, and we can see that elected officials understand the expectation, so they participate in that response often. Elected officials issued letters and statements over half of the time when they participated in some kind of response (64 of 114) (*TSCP*). In terms of collecting the letters and statements, most news stories just mentioned that there was a statement given or a letter issued, and some quoted phrases from the statements or letters. Despite the lack of full access to all of the speech acts, I was able to collect 64 substantially quoted statements and letters that this chapter will be analyzing. Within the letter and statements, mayors and local representatives articulated their more embodied responses in an effort to communicate and be transparent. Those other responses included creating policy or working in committees (10), helping with cleanup (7), and participating in gatherings (4) (*TSCP*). The heavy reliance on letters and statements as a genre within the metagenre of *speech* says something about the leaders' perceptions of their position and power and how they feel they should interact with their local community through their language use. As scholars, we also gain some understanding as to how serious elected officials feel swastika incidents are and what these leaders feel their responsibility is concerning these incidents.

Mayors

When I broke local officials down into the subcategories of mayors and other civic leaders, interesting trends emerged. Mayors were responsible for 30 statements concerning swastikas in their communities (*TSCP*). The breakdown of political affiliation was 20 democrats, 7 republicans, and 3 unknown (A search did not find three individuals linked to a particular political party.) (*TSCP*). While this dissertation does not look at the political makeup of the

communities where these leaders reside, it is interesting that there is a preponderance of democratic leaders speaking to swastika incidents in their communities. How mayors speak about the swastikas and their impact gives scholars an understanding of the kinds of moves expected from the discourse communities with which they are communicating whether Democratic or Republican and the publics they are engaging around hate speech in the form of a swastika. Political party made no difference in the kinds of rhetorical moves made within the letters and statements, which means that even with political positions, leaders were aware that their constituency had expectations that transcended political parties.

Council Members, Board Members, and Assemblymen

Besides mayors, there were 37 letters and statements from local elected or appointed representatives from various towns and cities (*TSCP*). These included council members, assembly members, selectmen, town supervisors, borough presidents, and township managers. I separated these individuals from mayors because they are members of a governing body of individuals responsible for the governance or organization of a town or city as opposed to being a single leader in a position of authority. They must work with others, and although the statements they issue may be individual, they do not have the same kind of authoritative power that a mayor might have.

6.1.2.2 State Elected Officials

At the state level, governors, senators, and representatives are both similar and different from local elected officials in terms of their letters and statements. This is because while a mayor could be likened to a governor and senators and representatives function within a collective governing body like council members do, the relationship between those at the state level and those at the local level and their constituents is different, and this difference can be seen in both

the focus and the language used in the letters and statements in these two levels of elected officials. Because of state officials' distance from the swastika hate act in terms of their day-to-day interactions with their communities and even possibly their physical location, when state officials weigh in, there is more power and authority given to their letters and statements. Namely the incident is "bad enough," or serious enough, that it has been brought to their attention and therefore worthy of being addressed by them. When swastika hate acts do occur and are addressed at this level, state elected officials use their letters and statements as a way to discuss national issues or leaders, partly because they can see larger trends within their sphere of knowledge but also because they too are held accountable for the actions of constituents within their states and see how national figures are held up as examples for how the citizens of a nation should behave. Therefore, the logic is that if you have "bad actors" within a community, it is because the leader is directly or indirectly permissible of such behavior and has not fulfilled their role of ensuring the safety of all within their purview. This dynamic of responsibility ties to community expectations for behavior beyond the issuing of letters and statements but also does impact the construction of the letters and statements and the language within them.

Senators and Representatives

The data gathered from *The Swastika Counter Project* found that there were 22 statements made by senators and representatives concerning swastika incidents. 15 of the statements came from representatives (14 Democrat and 1 Republican) and nine statements came from senators (6 Democrat and 3 Republican) (*TSCP*). The data shows that there are fewer responses at the state level to swastika incidents than there are at the local level, but the position of state representative creates an interesting tension between local and state power, influence, and connection in terms of elected officials and their involvement in local incidents. The data

points to the more hands-on approach of representatives versus the senators, and this may be because the representatives represent specific districts that are grounded in particular towns and cities. Swastika incidents that happen within those towns and cities fall under state officials' jurisdictions because they are more directly connected to those communities as opposed to senators who represent the state as a whole. Senators are more far removed from the local politics since their position is more to represent the states' interests in Congress. That is not to say that senators are not concerned with local politics or that representatives are not concerned with state politics, but the proximity and affinity for localities whether it be a town or city is different and may not come to the attention of a senator whereas the structure of the US government makes it so elected state representatives are more closely plugged into their districts they represent. In many ways, it is a matter of attention and what a state official is meant to be attentive to as part of their job description. One might imagine that an incident would have to be pretty big for it to come across a senator's desk unless it was tied to the senator's own home community or area of interest because of friends and/or family members. The numbers from *TSCP* bear this out with 18 responses being from representatives and less than ten being from senators.

Governors

Governors also issued statements and letters concerning swastika incidents that occurred in schools as well as those that occurred in the larger community. Sometimes those words were delivered via a press secretary and sometimes themselves directly. There were only nine statements and letters found in *The Swastika Counter*, but a governor being involved or the mention that she/he made a statement occurred 13 times (*TSCP*). The low number of letters and statements may be a result of reporters not getting statements from governors for their news

stories, governors not being informed about local incidents, governors not thinking it a state issue and worthy of comment, or governors having what they feel are more pressing concerns in their job than local incidents that would be handled locally. Again, this speaks to proximity to the incident. The more removed an individual is from the locality in which the swastika occurred, the more likely it is that the individual does not know about it or does not care about it. This is not to dismiss the participation of governors in local politics, but they may not think that these local incidents fall under their purview because the local leaders have taken or are taking care of it. It becomes a non-issue unless there is a spree that causes attention to a particular city or town or if there are repeat offenses within a town or city.

6.2 Dissecting Letters and Statements for Rhetorical Moves

When examining over 102 letters and statements of elected officials from 79 different incidents in *TSCP*, the responses documented within these discursive practices contain notable themes in terms of emphasis and absence. Punishment was often emphasized as part of a leader's role to protect the community, but there was a noticeable lack of victim support beyond anything more than a condemnation of the perpetrator. Many times the very first move in a letter or statement issued by an elected civic leader involved condemning the action (37), invoking community (15), or describing the act (10) (*TSCP*). Since condemnation appeared most often as the first move, one must ask, why is this the first rhetorical move in the letter or statement? Answering this question requires looking at the texts of these statements in order to better understand how civic leaders conceive of themselves within the power structures of the community and how they negotiate, through discursive practices, community expectations for them as leaders.

6.2.1 Articulating the Incident

> Over the past couple of days, a photo has circulated on social media of swastika graffiti painted on two tree trunks in Pine Ridge Park in Edmonds. In addition, a dressed-up doll was found wedged in the branches of one of the trees. For passers-by, this was a shocking sight and has raised questions and concerns.
> As we all know, the swastika has been used for decades as a symbol of white supremacy and/or hatred towards other races and ethnicities. While we do not know if this incident was motivated by prejudice or hatred, or meant to intimidate, the presence of the swastika graffiti in our public park is very concerning and has no place in our community.
> At the core of the City's values is for Edmonds to be an open, affirming and inclusive community – an example to other communities in our region. And I believe we fulfill that value promise most every day in our activities, actions, and interactions. Yet, there is always more we can accomplish. There is always more work to do to achieve our goal of a fully equitable and inclusive city.
> Whether purposeful or out of mischief, invoking such a powerful symbol as the swastika, infused with a history of hatred and violence, cannot be condoned. Hateful symbols should not be the subject of anyone's public expression. We must take a stand against such abuse whenever and wherever we see it.
> Upon discovering this incident, the Edmonds Police Department investigated, took pictures, and interviewed observers, as well as forwarded the incident to federal law enforcement. I have instructed the Parks Department to do their best to remove or obscure the graffiti in this incident to ensure that the trails in Pine Ridge Park remain an inviting, natural respite within our urban environment. Members of the public are encouraged to report incidents of offensive graffiti/hate speech/vandalism to the Edmonds Police Department.
> Please join me in sending the message throughout our community that hurtful symbols and imagery need to be stamped out in Edmonds. –Edmonds Mayor Mike Nelson following an incident where swastikas were painted on trees at Pine Ridge Park

6.2.1.1 Description and Process

Like the statement made above by Edmonds' Mayor Mike Nelson, local representatives also spent a considerable amount of time on describing the incident and articulating the process that was taken to address or respond to the incident. The focus on description and process creates a sense of transparency for elected officials and appeals to their constituents by showing that they are involved and knowledgeable about the incident. As leaders of their communities, their actions must be visible and show support for safety within the community, if they are to be elected again or to be understood as operating in good faith for the good of the community.

Giving the details of the location as well as the process of handling the swastika could indicate that they care about their constituents and are active in that care, meaning that their care is shown through action and involvement. Of the 102 letters and statements, 25 referenced the locations of the incident and their descriptions of processes, which in of itself is not a large percentage, but given that the rhetorical moves most made which were condemnation and defining community, this move figures prominently in this discussion about what the letters and statements do rhetorically (*TSCP*).

6.2.1.2 Police Involvement

Naturally in connection to the description of the incident and the process of response, police involvement was also mentioned. Elected local civic leaders focused on police participation (30 mentions) and along with that was an emphasis on labeling it a crime (6 mentions) tied to property (6 mentions specifically) (*TSCP*). Words like graffiti (9 mentions) and vandalism (5) were labels given to the hate act, which also centers the crime as one of property (*TSCP*). It is natural with the emphasis on the crime of property damage, that elected representatives would lean into the police as the ones responsible for ensuring that perpetrators "be found and face the proper repercussions through our justice system" and that perpetrators will be prosecuted "to the full extent of the law" (*TSCP*). Really this move is about delegating to the police, and in doing so as was discussed in the *silence* chapter, elected officials hand over responsibility to police. Delegating to the police fits within the expectations for leaders, but it also has the capability to release leaders from having to take any kind of action themselves.

6.2.2 Establishing and Asserting Power

> I joined Hempstead Town Supervisor Don Clavin, members of the Town Board at the Seamans Neck Park playground to condemn multiple instances of antisemitic vandalism discovered there this week, including Swastika on playground equipment that was brought to our attention by concerned residents. As a former police officer, longtime civic leader and a father, I am truly disgusted by the existence of this antisemitic vandalism in one of our beloved parks. The unfortunate reality is that this antiSemitism still exists across our nation and we must always be vigilant and never let our guard down. As co-chair of the town's Graffiti Task Force, I will work with my fellow Town Board colleagues and members of the community to address these hate crimes. The Town Board has already doubled fines for graffiti. In response to the discovery of the antisemitic vandalism at the town park, Supervisor Clavin, myself along with the Town Board immediately directed the Parks and Public Safety Departments to enhance patrols and perform additional check-ups and inspections of equipment at parks facilities. We will work with parks personnel and other departments to discuss enhanced security measures such as the installation of security cameras. The Nassau County Police Department has been notified and is conducting an investigation. To report any other incidents on Town Property located in my district please call my office during business hours @516-812-3285 or via email @ ccarini@tohmail.org. We will make sure that the graffiti is removed and Police are notified.–Councilman Christopher Carini (*TSCP*)

6.2.2.1 Condemnation

Action on the part of the leader is important for constituents when a community faces trauma, and asserting and establishing a leader's power to control the response and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of a community is expected. This is an embodied rhetorical genre expectation. The language in the letters and statements demonstrated a leaders' awareness of this expectation and they responded most vehemently with condemnation (*TSCP*). Condemnation was often the first move for community leaders in letters and statements because community leaders have a responsibility to their constituency to protect and serve them civilly. The individuals in their community elected the leader to their position, so they must negotiate a proper response to appease a variety of community stakeholders at the same time, and this negotiation of audience was shown in their statements and letters. An example of this is in the statement above. Carini denounces the antisemitism and labels it as a hate crime, but then he

shifts his language to his involvement as a member of the Graffiti Task Force that will ensure any "other incidents" are taken care of (*TSCP*). His office or the taskforce, since the antecedent of "we" is not clear, "will make sure that the graffiti is removed" (*TSCP*). The end of his statement has moved to graffiti more broadly which seems to nod toward an even larger audience than the targeted community because others in the community might have different kinds of graffiti that they wish addressed or taken care of on the town property.

While creating a sense of unity is important for an elected leader, the rhetorical move of condemnation works ironically to silence conversation about the hate act when the condemnation's intent is victim support. Targets of swastika hate acts may take comfort in condemnation initially because a speech act is an action, but when condemnation also creates a scapegoat in the form of a perpetrator, it is easy for individuals or a community to write an incident off as being the exception to the community norm. It may very well be the exception, but singling out a perpetrator as acting in a vacuum denies the fact that the perpetrator exists and is a member of the community. In this, condemnation only works as a deterrent for perpetrators if they are motivated by social belonging, but if perpetrators place swastikas in the community in the first place, they have a certain view of who and what the community is, which is different than, say, the elected officials or others who condemn these individuals' actions. Perpetrators may be in the minority, but they obviously feel emboldened to place swastikas in the community because of the cues, affordances, or opportunities presented in the communities they live in.

Only two statements do not condemn the swastika hate acts outright. Congresswoman Karen Bass (D-CA) invokes community alone when she responds to swastikas placed on a mural to celebrate the Black Panthers, saying "An attack on one of us is an attack on all of us;" and

Sen. David Carlucci (D-NY)[38] in response to swastikas drawn on a bathroom toilet paper dispenser at a high school uses the incident to illustrate why he is advocating for legislation to "bring age-appropriate instruction about hate-symbols like swastikas and nooses into classroom education" (*TSCP*). In both we can see values being put forth that reflect a value of diversity and education toward that end, which indirectly condemn the swastika and what it commonly represents: a symbol of hate and intolerance.

6.2.2.2 Decentering and Silencing

Like the moves discussed within the metagenre *silence*, the letters and statements of elected officials also commented on the perpetrators who committed the act. Elected officials describe swastika hate acts as "vile and cowardly acts," "hate speech," "hate-symbols," "hate-crimes," "hateful acts," "horrendous act act-of-hate," "appalling display of hate and intolerance," "horrific display of hate," "a symbol of hatred and genocide," "vile and hateful vandalism," "offensive graffiti/hate speech/vandalism," "very offensive graffiti," "trash," and "antisemitic trash" (*TSCP*). The valance of these words signifies that swastikas are understood to be associated with hate, intolerance, bigotry, and even genocide. Swastikas are thus seen as a threat to the harmony and safety of the community. The use of concrete words like graffiti and vandalism is significant because as mentioned before, they focus the crime as being one of property, but the use of abstract terms such as intolerance and bigotry indicate that the issuers of the words understand that the incident reaches beyond the physical incident of property damage and undermines the held values of a community and the safety of those who inhabit it.

[38] In a statement, Sen. David Carlucci said he will push legislation to prevent similar racial incidents in the future. "As we see acts of antiSemitism continue weekly and sometimes daily, we have to be looking to address root causes. It is sad this happened among children as young as middle schoolers. This is why I am very strongly pushing to pass legislation to bring age-appropriate instruction about hate-symbols like swastikas and nooses into classroom education. Hate is a learned behavior, and we can teach against it."

The language used in letters and statements by elected officials also directly or indirectly comments on the perpetrator as a person and in doing so invokes the speaker's positionality and power as well as creates an insider/outsider dynamic. By describing the acts as "acts of intolerance and bigotry," "despicable," "vile," "pitiful," "cowardly," and "childish, nasty, and small," speakers perform a form of commentary and set up the perpetrator as the embodiment of all of these concepts the moment the perpetrator places swastikas in the community (*TSCP*). Here the goal of the speaker is to chastise the perpetrator for their naughty behavior and set the elected official up as the authority figure, who can pass judgment in their position as figurehead for the community and the community's values.

Chastisement is not the only moral outrage performed by individuals who issue letters and statements. Another common discursive rhetorical move is shock. Phrases like "disturbing," "deeply disturbing," "shocking and disturbing," "disturbing and outrageous," "troubling," and "particularly troubling" are moves of surprise (*TSCP*). When it comes to the rhetorical move of shock, the speaker is centered. The focus is on the affective effect of the individual, who is shocked rather than the source of the trauma that caused this affective moment in the speaker. As the focus moves to the one who is shocked, an audience's response becomes tied up in attending to the speaker and the relationship the audience feels they have with the speaker. As leaders, the belief by some is that their shock is supposed to mean something more and carry more weight when dealing with perpetrators not only in eliciting help but also in meting out punishment.

When moral outrage and shock are performed by those who issue letters and statements, communities need to look at what statements of shock and outrage really do rhetorically. These moves actually shut down conversation about tough subjects like racism, anti-Semitism, immigration, gender, and sexuality, which have as many perspectives as there are members

within a community because, as mentioned in the *silence* metagenre, conversation and action as a result are the means toward providing more support for individuals targeted by swastikas and ensuring that a community is diverse and inclusive. Taking the moral high ground and setting the perpetrator up as the only "bad apple" does not allow communities to be self-reflective in how they contributed to the swastika hate act in the first place. In addition, setting up the official as the embodiment of the values and ideals of a community, assumes the community to be a monolith and that all within it believe the same thing, when the incident itself demonstrates that to be not true.

6.2.2.3 Battle Rhetoric

As a leader in the community, who is a figurehead but who is also tasked with ensuring the safety of the community after it experiences a swastika hate act, leaders used strikingly antagonistic rhetoric that invoked a perceived siege on the community and its safety. Antagonistic language results in warlike words and phrases such as *fight*. Whether it was fighting to keep a community "inclusive" or fighting "to end this spate of intimidation and bigotry," there was a battle to be won against this "vile" and "despicable" symbol that represents "intolerance" and "antisemitism" (*TSCP*). Swastika hate acts represented an "attack" that must be met with an epic and violent response.

In such responses, the goal is to eliminate or destroy the opponent, and this was shown in some of the language deployed by mayors especially. Mayor de Blasio (D) of New York, who has been very vocal about swastika incidents in his city was quoted as saying, "We will fight back every time they rear their ugly head, and we will win because we are right and we know diversity is and always will be our greatest strength" (*TSCP*). He alluded to the battle metaphor again in another separate incident, when he said, "If we confront it, we can stop it. But we need

to not only stop it, we need to stamp it out once and for all" (*TSCP*). This move to destroy and take no prisoners creates an unwinnable situation because the community, as mentioned above, is not a monolith and has differing views. The swastika would have never appeared in the community otherwise.

6.2.3 Defining a Community

> I'm outraged and upset by a cowardly act of what appears to be a racially motivated attack on a home and vehicle of an African American family in Warren. This attack occurred yesterday evening. This is completely unacceptable and will NOT be tolerated in our city. The Warren Police Department and Commissioner Bill Dwyer are on the job and will conduct a complete investigation. Those found responsible for this crime will be brought to justice. Our city is a true melting pot of many different races and religions. All help to make Warren a good community. They are all welcome but those who would peddle hate and cause destruction are NOT welcome in Warren and should be aware that our city leadership and myself in particular will never stop in pursuit of justice. Anyone, who might have additional information about the perpetrator or perpetrators of this crime feel free contact Warren Police (586) 574-4877, my office at (586) 574-4520 or me personally. Thank You! Note: This is NOT reflective of the true character of Warren residents and I'm sure they all share in my outrage.–Mayor Jim Fouts (*TSCP*)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, condemnation was often juxtaposed with community, and the letters and statements from elected officials are no different. Most often community and condemnation appear in close proximity to one another either as the next sentence or within one sentence of each other. Officials described communities in terms of what they were ("a welcoming, tolerant and vibrant city. Hate has no home or safe harbor in our community.") as well as what they strove to be ("a welcoming and inclusive community for all, and [hate speech] threatens the diversity that enriches our community") (*TSCP*). The above quote also makes these moves: "Our city is a true melting pot of many different races and religions. All help to make Warren a good community. They are all welcome but those who would peddle hate and cause destruction are NOT welcome in Warren" (*TSCP*). In the examples above, there is a warrant that the community is unified in its beliefs and values of tolerance, diversity, and

inclusivity, but these statements do not recognize that all of the individuals within the community may not have those values and leave no room for discussion as to how the community contributes to that dichotomy.

Both kinds of statements push on the definition of collective or community because perpetrators live or operate within the physical space of the community and therefore have ownership or a stake in the community.[39] Conflating location with values and beliefs creates a "perceived" homogenous collective, and communities are rarely homogenous.[40] This conflation also shuts down conversation around swastika incidents because only members of the community, according to mayors and community leaders, value diversity and inclusivity, and to not have these values means you are not a member of the community. When you are not a part of a community, and when your behavior runs counter to values of the community, it is easy to dismiss and devalue you. By creating an outsider, elected officials elide that there are those who live within the community who feel differently. Setting up a community as being homogeneous postpones hard conversations that could be had around social justice and would in fact create instances where communities could be fruitful in combating hate by being reflexive on the diverse attitudes and behaviors within the community.

In defining the community they lived in, elected officials included themselves as being "inclusive," "safe," and "supportive" of diversity. **Table 6-1** below contains a breakdown of the number of times "we" and "I" were used in the various elected officials' letters and statements (*TSCP*). While the personal statements issued are personal, one would expect the first-person

[39] *The Swastika Counter Project* found that there were only a handful of know perpetrators that were not from the city or town where they placed the swastika, and when video surveillance footage caught the acts, individuals often just walked into view and walked back out indicating that they did not have to travel too far to get to cover and be undiscovered.

[40] Data from *TSCP* bears this out in that swastika hate acts occur more frequently in larger cities where populations tend to be more diverse.

singular pronoun, but actually the first-person **plural** pronoun appeared more often indicating that the elected official was establishing that they were a part of and speaking for the community. As a member or spokesperson, they then felt they had the authority to define who did or did not belong in the community.

Table 6-1 Use of First-Person Pronouns in Letters and Statements of Elected Officials

Group	**Number of Statements**	**Total number of "I"s used**	**Total number of "we"s used**
Mayor	30	18	66
Local Representatives	38	20	45
Senators/Representatives	22	11	34
Governor	9	10	10

The use of the word "I" in these letters and statements works to personalize a statement but also displays the rhetor's belief that their ethos and power carry some sway in the community. In the letters and statements, "I" often initiates a declarative statement (*TSCP*). Often paired with an action or feeling, "I" appeared with "condemn," "feel," "abhor," "fear," "am disgusted," "call upon," "want," "urge," "encourage," "have instructed," "am directing," "will work" "hope," and "thank" (*TSCP*). Here one can see that a personal reaction is part of the genre expectations in these statements. Communities expect leaders to appear human and have human emotions around such incidents. Humanity and connection to community is part and parcel of an elected official's job as representatives of the community and therefore imperative that they display the proper outrage and emotion at the appropriate times. The use of "I" also allows leaders to flex their power as they can direct individuals to clean up, work together, enact

policies, or create educational opportunities. The structure of the sentences indicates that they only lead, direct, or advise the individuals who will be responsible for and do the heavy lifting of healing a community after a swastika incident. Their declarative statements function like a director whose action may or may not move beyond the act of an utterance or written word.

Going on record is intended to meet the discourse community's expectations of what a leader should say after an incident, but beyond words, the data indicates that unless there is a repeat of an incident in the future, the matter is deemed settled and closed after the proper indignation is expressed by community leaders. For instance, Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert (R) had two swastika incidents noted in our data: one 7/21/18 and another 6/30/20 (*TSCP*). In the first, a swastika was burned into the grass at Memorial Park and the second involved racist writings and symbols painted on the grass (*TSCP*). Her statement for the first focused on thanking the "parks maintenance for quick action" concerning "offensive graffiti (*TSCP*). She then outlined the process for covering and clean-up. Concerning the second incident, Stothert put more emphasis on community and punishment:

> The racist writings and symbols painted on the grass at Zorinsky Park are not indicative of what Omaha is or what Omaha citizens believe. We do not tolerate acts of hate. Our Parks maintenance team removed the graffiti on June 30 as soon as we learned about it. The Omaha Police Department will investigate this as a hate crime and those responsible will be held accountable. The city's new hate intimidation ordinance could also apply, increasing the possible sentence for persons arrested, charged and convicted in this case. (*TSCP*).

Her response to the second incident indicates that the swastika has taken on a more serious valence in terms of crime and community. Where the first statement was concerned with

cleanup, the second adds to the cleanup and calls this a possible hate crime, which is more serious under the hate intimidation ordinance established.

"I"s were used to condemn but also to describe and explain the elected official's part in the procedure as a way to mark leader involvement in dealing with the swastika appearance. Mayors and governors used their "I" statements mainly in their condemnation of the incident and their invocation of community but rarely anywhere else (*TSCP*). Five of the nine "I" statements were made by Governor Gretchen Whitmer's press secretary, Ned Lamont. Lamant read her statement, written in first person, about swastikas placed on signs at a demonstration protesting the safety restrictions the governor issued to slow the spread of COVID (*TSCP*). Protestors had tried to draw a parallel between the Nazi regime and having to wear masks and go into lockdown by putting a swastika on signs with words like, "What's next concentration camps?" Her statement skewed the governor data and is the reason for the high usage of "I" in letters and statements for governors. As with all of the uses of "I," they demonstrate elected officials' involvement in the community but also presumes that the community would care what local representatives do, believe, and feel.

6.2.4 Curating a Reputation

> "It's disturbing and outrageous that there are those in our society that feel they have a right to deface property either public or private. Hateful acts don't just damage the victim: they can damage our entire community, along with our reputation. This act is not at all representative of who we are here in Cadillac."–Mayor Carla Filkins said in an emailed statement. (*TSCP*)

The samples I gathered from *TSCP* show that elected officials appear to have multiple audiences in mind when they issue letters and statements. An example of this is the statement above made by Cadillac, MI Mayor Carla Filkins. Here we see that Filkins recognized the harm of the victim, but the emphasis in the first sentence was on the damage to the community and to

the community's reputation (*TSCP*). This reputation in turn reflects poorly on Filkins as a leader when the reputation of the community is a bad one. The mayor has some part and responsibility in community reputation, so it is in the best interest of community leaders at the local level to consider an outsider's perspective on the community they represent. Failure to do so results in negative press as well as a reputation that could do one or both of the following things: draw in more individuals who support the ideology behind the hate act because they think that the community is supportive of such beliefs or because the town has been made less hospitable with the swastika hate act, individuals historically harmed by the symbol may not move into the community, which lessens the diversity of a city or town. It should be noted that this is not a consideration that is relegated to mayors and local leaders alone and can be seen at the county, district, and state levels, but because mayors are closest to the communities in terms of their leadership and responsibility, they are more apt to be thinking of the community's reputation amongst outsiders with every statement or public document they issue.

6.2.4.1 Outward Facing Beyond Perpetrator to National Rhetorical Climate/Context

The concern with reputation can also be a motivating factor when taking a political stand against swastikas. No elected official is going to openly celebrate a swastika hate act or the ideals embodied in the swastika in a public letter or statement because it could be political suicide for some. Donald Trump conducted a press conference on August 16, 2017 after the Charlottesville Rally where he said there were "good people on both sides" (Transcript of Trump's contentious Aug. 15 press conference - ABC News (go.com)). This statement and others he said over the term of his presidency could be construed as supporting hate acts, and his consistently unclear (depending on who you talk to) stance on white supremacy made some elected officials wary of having their communities lumped in with him.

Within the 25 letters and statements of state representatives, there are eight references to the political climate of the time and to an increase in hate possibly in conjunction with the administration in the White House (*TSCP*). No finger pointing occurs, possibly from fear of retribution, but the implied target is Donald Trump. One such statement is from a Representative candidate Ammar Campa-Najjar (D), who pointed to a change in political climate in his statement referencing a swastika hate act in his district: "But it sadly proves that hate in 2020 is not only alive and well among a cowardly few, but that it has become even more brazen and blatant….If we expect to stop bigotry, we need (to) stop electing people who refuse to call racism, antiSemitism and bigotry by its real name" (*TSCP*). Here the "elected people" are not named specifically, but the context clues in the wording "refuse to call racism, antiSemitism and bigotry by its real name" points to Trump.

Elected state officials must have their eye on the nation as part of their purview as leaders and representatives of their respective states. Because they are a part of an elite group tasked with legislating behaviors via laws in the United States, their eyes are always on the nation, its political trends, and their position as leaders. This signaling national issues and gesturing to a state's position in relation to those issues enables the elected official to position themselves and their state as morally superior. This positioning performs a form of synecdoche where the Congress member becomes shorthand for the state they represent despite the reality that the constituents within their state are not unified. A Congress member must balance the moral high ground with the knowledge that the people they do represent are diverse, which may be why there is no direct naming of Donald Trump in quotes like Campa-Najjar's that were issued after hate acts but merely referencing the "leader in the highest office in the land" as being one, who perpetuates hate and fear (*TSCP*). Congress members understand the complexity of community

in terms of community never being monolithic, yet they use community and the collective to unify their state or present their state as unified in relation to other states and the nation as a whole. Again, this kind of posturing and rhetorical move prevents opportunities for communities to really reckon with their culpability and honestly discuss what it means to be diverse and inclusive.

6.2.4.2 "Thoughts and Prayers": An Expectation for Action or an Empty Rhetorical Move

Bawarshi and Reiff write that "genre systems and genre sets are the means by which cognition is distributed among participants across time and space" (91) These systems shape "our sense of timing and opportunity" and help determine the kairotic moment of when, where, why, how, and by whom discourse communities or publics expect actions tied to a particular event occur. This explains why elected civic officials within the community or within an organization feel the need to employ the "thoughts and prayers" move when trauma occurs in their community because they see this move as one of the community expectations for an embodied genre. "Thoughts and prayers" as an embodied genre is designed to position civic leaders as having authority and power to undo the harm caused by the trauma.

"Thoughts and prayers" as a general rhetorical move plays to two audiences: the outraged who support the victim and those who may be impacted if laws or systems are changed and perceived power is "lost" in the move to a more equitable society. For instance when there is trauma in a community such as a school shooting, community leaders condemn the horrific act and are seen as being righteous because of their outrage over the deaths of children, but these same individuals only offer their "thoughts and prayers" because they know that part of their constituency such as gun owners and gun lobbyists would be negatively impacted, if they

advocated gun control laws.[41] Rather than act in concrete ways, speakers hedge their speech in a move to support the victims while also soft pedaling the condemnation in such a way so they do not alienate the other constituents that they represent.

"Thoughts and prayers" also describes the move community leaders make in response to swastika hate acts, but it does take further explanation as to how I draw this parallel. First, the move is used in relation to a violent event. Now some may say that drawing a swastika is not the same as murdering a bunch of people, and that is true. However, the threat invoked when placing a swastika in a location does draw upon the history of the symbol and the 11 million deaths that were perpetrated under that banner of that symbol. So, while it does not end life, the symbol invokes a threat of death, and for marginalized groups who have historically been the target of micro and macro aggressions, that symbol is more harmful than a drawing of human genitalia or someone's name tagged on a wall. A swastika is a threat designed to intimidate and cause harm, and victims in our data reference this harm and threat (*TSCP*).

For this discussion, "thoughts and prayers" describes the often-vehement condemnation of a swastika incident: an incident that few other than the perpetrator would publicly support. This is a safe move to make; the rhetor will come out on the side of the victim and be the good person in this situation. What makes it a "thoughts and prayers" move is that the purpose and audience are complicated. The audience is the victims, but the audience is also a larger community or group of constituents, who have the power to keep or remove the individual making the statement from office. In this way, "thoughts and prayers" becomes a political move to "look good" in the eyes of the constituency and maintain one's position and power without doing anything to undermine one's position or place in the community leadership. Having to

[41] I recognize that gun control laws are not a panacea to school or mass shootings, but the lack of legislative guidance and support when legislators throw up their hands as a response does nothing to prevent more shootings.

dance amongst conflicting ideologies, the letters and statements become more about serving the purpose of placating various publics and keeping local leaders in office rather than doing anything substantial for their communities beyond lip service.

Now speaking up and condemning an action is in itself an act. Words can do things. They can stir a group to action. They can put concepts and policies in motion. However, sometimes speaking up has not been followed by any particular embodied action of support on the part of the rhetor. As Miller, Devitt and Gallagher write "genre can manifest as a medium of delivery, as pure means (such as the blog, the photograph, the paperback), and yet such media can be (and often are) materialized, commodified, packaged, marketed, and distributed as products, as ends," and I see the thoughts and prayers statements/letters serving that function as a product or end rather than an act that does something concrete in alleviating the fear and unease of individuals who are targets of the swastika or for whom it has embodied consequences (274).

The belief is that speaking up is enough, and it can be for some, but for many victims of such incidents, when they see their victimization as but one in a long chain of similar victimizations, "thoughts and prayers" does nothing in the material and embodied world in which they live and does nothing to promote or ensure their safety or the safety of others in the future. For this reason, the gesture fails and does not do what it is intended to do: reduce and alleviate the harm done by the swastika appearance. This is not to say that the local leaders think swastikas are insignificant; in fact the language to describe swastika incidents does demonstrate how members in the community view swastikas and the material and embodied harm they cause in the larger community (*TSCP*). However, naming the harm and doing something about the harm in the present or to prevent it in the future are two different things.

6.2.5 Supporting Victims

> The Anne Frank Memorial was vandalized by racist criminals. Nine stickers with swastika symbols were placed throughout the memorial. This is shocking and disturbing, and we know it does not reflect the values of our community. The vandalism will be investigated, and the people responsible will be held accountable.
> We have reached out to Wassmuth Center for Human Rights and the local synagogues and are working with Boise PD and community stakeholders to address the Nazi graffiti. We are working with stakeholders to ensure every community member feels safe in the months and years to come. Racism and antisemitism are not welcome in Boise and must be addressed. We will work together as a community to make sure it is.
> This is not normal—the rhetoric we've seen over the past days and months has no place in our community. Bad actors who use racist and violent rhetoric are not welcome in this community. We are committed to an open and welcoming city for everyone, and leaders from the business, cultural, and religious community stand with us. We will collaborate closely with all stakeholders in our community to protect these values.
> These actions are upsetting. This has been incredibly difficult, and we understand people are hurting. Our hearts are with everyone affected and everyone facing anxiety, loss, uncertainty and injustice. We will continue to work with all of you to make Boise a better place for everyone to live.
> Events like these attract attention, but we know through Boise residents' everyday actions that this is a place of kindness and openness. It is part of Boise's identity, and if we work together, the rest of the state and country will see the real Boise.–Boise Mayor Lauren McLean

Even though many elected officials focused much of their letters and statements on description, procedure, police involvement, community, and condemnation that did not mean that some elected officials were immune to the victims and their harm beyond the crime of property or that they merely only had talking points designed to get re-elected. Local representatives had more moves to support victims than any other elected leader group with 10 instances of support, and McLean's statement above demonstrates a care for individuals within the community (*TSCP*). Ten may not seem to be a significant number considering there were 103 statements from elected officials, but the absence of this move on a regular basis in the data gathered by *TSCP* is telling. Even when targets/target communities were not obvious, some local representatives often identified who or what they knew or assumed the target community to be by name. Mayor Jim Fouts released a statement in response to vandalism on the private

automobile of a Black family in Warren MI: “We offer our heartfelt sympathies to the Hall family and pledge our full support to the Warren Police Department in their efforts to bring those responsible to justice” (*TSCP*). The vandalism in Warren included slashing the tires of the family’s three vehicles and a swastika with the words “Get the F*** out,” “Not Welcome,” “Terrorist,” and “Black Lives Matter” written in marker on Mr. Hall’s truck (*TSCP*). In a different incident in Seaford, NY, Councilman Dennis Dunne, Sr joined with fellow members of the Town Board to condemn the “antisemitic vandalism” on playground equipment and support Jewish members of the town: “No person should ever feel threatened because of their religion, and we're here to stand together to assure members of our township's Jewish community and of all faiths that we are unified against hate of all forms” (*TSCP*). Both of these examples and McLean’s quote show different kinds of support: sympathy, empathy, and a concern for safety. All speak directly to the victims and offer comfort in some way that indicates that the harm done in the act of placing a swastika in the community is not just one of property; it is one of emotional and psychological harm. Sadly, as mentioned, *support* was a metagenre that infrequently appeared within the data of *TSCP*. Support will be explored in depth in Chapter Seven.

6.3 Consequences of Letters and Statements of Civic Leaders

Sometimes what we have always done and what we have come to expect in a particular rhetorical moment is not enough. As Bawarshi and Reiff tie this to how uptake functions and influences genre. They write “uptake helps us understand how systematic, normalized relations between genres coordinate complex forms of social action--how and why genres get taken up in certain ways and not others, and what gets done and not done as a result,” and we can see that even with the failure in most swastika incidents where the culprit is not caught, there is a move

to fill that void in some instances with “thoughts and prayers” a a response even though it has come to not mean much (Bawarshi and Reiff 86). This move has seen some serious uptake in terms of its deployment as it has become part of a “learned recognition[] of significance” that has become habitual and done unthinkingly or as a perfunctory of what is expected within a particular situation (Bawarshi and Reiff 86). While the move to denounce and offer one’s “thoughts and prayers” is better than silence, it begs the question of what the move of “thoughts and prayers” does for the community. In other words, “you keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.” Leaders within communities keep making that move, but I am not sure that it is doing what they think it is doing in terms of supporting victims and their concerns of safety–at least to the extent that they think that move is supporting victims. Part of using a genre is knowing “when and why to use a genre; how to select an appropriate genre in relation to another or others; where along the range of its uptake profile to take up a genre and at what cost” (Bawarshi and Reiff 86). With swastika hate acts, the “thoughts and prayers” move fails as it has become too costly for some groups who again and again experience harm as a result of inaction, so even though the discourse community expects it to be performed, it is ineffectual. One has to ask who the “thoughts and prayers” move is serving and why? While some elected officials may be heartfelt and earnest in their sympathy, sympathy does not take away the harm done to targets/target communities nor does it prevent future harm from happening. The “thoughts and prayers” move then actually just stands in as a substitute for real constitutive action and functions to allow community leaders to proceed as usual without having to engage in tough conversations around diversity and inclusion and their roles in the systems that uphold structures that continue to support inequity and discrimination.

Chapter 7 Attending to Target Communities and Addressing and Mitigating Their Harm

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapters looked at how the metagenres *silence* and *speech* function within community responses to trauma. This chapter looks at responses that fall within the metagenre of *support.* As a metagenre, it appeared the least often in only 326 incidents (17.45% of total responses) as opposed to *silence* (51.28% of total responses) and *speech* (31.26% of total responses). This low percentage indicates that there is more that communities could do to respond to trauma. Despite the small percentage of responses in comparison to the other metagenres, I am able to present some trends in both actors and activity and how those responses illustrate the metagenre of *support.* The subgenres within *support* are: protests/vigils/demonstrations (101 total responses), policy changes/committee/system creation (140 total responses), and victim support (84 total responses). Within those subgenres there were 345 responses. The difference between the number of incidents listed above and the number of responses is a result of certain incidents causing more than one response of support.

Below, I discuss the various moves within *support*, but as an overall metagenre, I qualify *support* with an unspoken *embodied*. *Embodied* is key here because it requires individuals to physically move their bodies or alter how their bodies move and participate in ways that move beyond speech acts.[42] Because letters and statements within the genre of *speech* do serve as trace

[42] As discussed in previous chapters, I recognize that speech is an embodied act and could be viewed as being one of support. However, as also argued in this dissertation, when all it is used to do is denounce and condemn, that action

for practices and responses around trauma, I do draw from them to capture the embodied ways *support* occurs in community and how harm is addressed or alleviated for targeted communities. With my focus on embodiment, Price's description of the bodymind helps explain the integral nature of attending to both body and mind and why *support* must integrate body and mind as it prioritizes and values the embodied experiences (270). Our bodyminds are one and therefore are impacted together when we experience trauma or harm or any kind.

Community actions where there is support often involve large numbers of community members (supporters) acting together toward a common goal. There is a difference in how a victim feels when they see people out cleaning up, protesting, helping neighbors, creating signs of support, and attending to mental health and safety by setting up support options and manning those offerings versus someone just saying they condemn an action or support them as a person. Unspoken warrant in this enthymeme is that supporters who actually do something care more because in a capitalistic society time and labor hold value. Individuals who disrupt the natural flow and focus of their own activities to attend to others demonstrate to victims that supporters are vested in victims as humans and as community members so much so that they are willing to work at making the space safe and inclusive. Being invested in victims as humans means showing up, moving from behind one's computer screen,[43] and physically doing the work of support, which may come in the form of cleanup or speaking out but also appears in a variety of ways discussed in this chapter.

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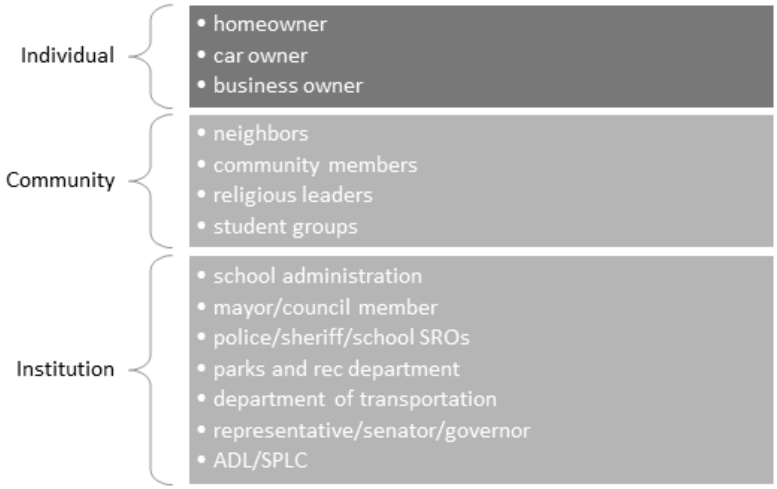
only goes so far in supporting those targeted by swastika hate acts. This is why "thoughts and prayers" has become so cliché and overused. Individuals think they are doing something in the speaking that "fixes" or "rectifies" the harm done in the situation, but in reality, it comes off as navel-gazing and a performative move that demonstrates the "goodness" of the person making the statement.

[43] The term "slacktivism" has been used to describe individuals who just click like or share as a way to bring awareness around an issue but rarely engage with the issue beyond the like or share (Bower; Glenn).

7.2 Community Connections and One's Responsibility to Others

In order to discuss *support*, relationships within the community need to be articulated as they relate to accountability and responsibility for one another as human beings within a community. The individuals who respond to swastika hate acts can be configured according to their accountability to targets/target communities of hate acts, and with relationship, one can map the degree of support these individuals/groups might be expected to give to targets/target communities. **Figure 7-1** below illustrates the categories of responsibility and how they relate to groups, systems, or institutions within the community. I break it down as follows: individual, community, and institution.

Figure 7-1 Categories of Those Responsible to Target/Target Communities



Here accountability is tied to the relationship between the target/target community and the personal or social expectations for individual/community/institution to respond in supportive ways. If the expectations in the community are there to support targets, then the individual/community/institution may feel more of an obligation and thus be held more accountable by others to display support. The closer the individual is to the victim and their identity socially or by proximity, the more accountability there is for that individual/group to

respond because they are likely to encounter the victim and feel a personal connection or some kind of responsibility. When distance between the individual/group and the target/target community becomes more distant and removed, accountability lessens.

Accountability can also become more diffused as individuals or systems of organizations are added because as the social and proximal boundaries expand, the relationship is not as personal or the identities may not be as closely aligned. When groups are broken down by their affiliation, we see there is a correlation between the distance between the victim's identity and the identity of the person responding. By this I mean that the closer the respondent was to the victim physically, geographically and/or ideologically, the more likely they were to respond to the swastika hate act. The further away from the target/target community the respondent was, the more general and often self-serving the response became. This is to say, individuals in the more diffused levels of responsibility (institutional) tended to be more political in their responses as these individuals were responsible to not only the victim but also to the systems that uphold their own position of influence within the larger community. For many at the institutional level, the responsibility was not only to victims but their broader constituents and with that, their response was sometimes used to position themselves on local and national policies, events, and leadership as presented in the previous chapter that discussed letters and statements of elected officials.

As more individuals are added at each layer, the layers increase in complexity. With the increase of complexity, however, community accountability to the victim is diffused because there is an assumption that someone else or something more powerful will take care of the situation. While there were instances of neighbors, family members, and individuals coming together to rectify the damage done and mitigate harm to the victims, the most common community response was to let institutions take care of the situation whether it be the police, the

parks department, or school administration. As responsibility moves from the individual toward the institution, individuals within the community may begin to feel they can be more disengaged as their responsibility to act is passed on to someone else who is thought to have more power to fix the problem at a legal or institutional level. Ironically, however, support as a metagenre manifests itself strongest and with the most power at the community level where targets and target communities feel connections and the presence of embodied actions by the people they encounter on the day to day.

7.3 Cleanup as Springboard for *Support*

The most common local response of support for those targeted by hate acts is cleanup. At first glance, this move seems a contradiction to my point I make in Chapter Four where I label cleanup as a part of the *silence* metagenre, but remember that I qualified cleanup as being a response within *silence* when it was the only response or was a response that had no further engagement with the hate act beyond the cleaning. Who cleans up, how they clean up, and what they do as a result of the cleanup actually transforms what could be a silencing move to one of *support*. Targets/target communities are often responsible for the cleanup of the swastika hate act when it occurs on their property, so neighbors cleaning up a space versus some city entity cleaning up the space has a different valence of support. Neighbors coming and shouldering the burden of cleanup for the victim demonstrates care, protection, and identification with the individual targeted or harmed. Within the data, cleanup was not the end for those who supported targets/targeted communities; it was instead a jumping off point for other responses. For instance, one Thompson's Restaurant in New Milford, CT was defaced by swastika and a racial slur in August of 2017 (*TSCP*). The business owner began cleaning her business, and when community members witnessed her doing so, they joined in as well as donated cleaning supplies

(*TSCP*). Then when the restaurant opened later that day, other community members hung balloons and put up a sign that said "New Milford stands with Thompson's and Hate has no home here" (*TSCP*). Still other community members showed up to eat at the restaurant to show their solidarity for the business owner and support them financially (*TSCP*).

7.4 Speaking of *Support*

As mentioned in the two previous findings chapters, *speech* can be a move of support because it is "speaking against" the hate act, but when there is no action beyond the speech act itself, the move provides little support to victims who must deal with the embodied consequences of the hate act. Groups that were not mentioned in any depth in previous chapters were religious leaders. The letters and statements of religious leaders technically serve as examples of *speech*, but within these letters and statements were nuanced ways eliciting an embodied response or continued physical response beyond the letter.

Especially interesting, when looking at religious leaders' and groups' letters and statements, was when and how they talked about swastikas and especially how they reacted when swastikas impacted others who were not a part of their affinity group. Looking at their response to a religious "other" is fruitful because it enables scholars, religious leaders, and religious communities to think about their relationship with other religious entities within the larger community and then to create possible inroads forward for tolerance and support between those various groups. To help me understand how religious leaders extended support via their letters and statements I examined 19 statements (K-12, 7; post-secondary, 12) made concerning school campus swastika hate acts and 43 statements discussing swastikas that impacted communities beyond school campuses (*TSCP*). These do not represent all of the statements given by religious leaders but rather the ones I was able to obtain either the full or partial text of.

With the exception of one joint statement issued by three rabbis and a bishop, all letters and statements were issued by a singular Jewish, Christian, or Muslim leader/group. Most of the letters and statements were issued by Jewish leaders, which makes sense since the largest target group was the Jewish community. There were 167 verified incidents within *The Swastika Counter Project* (*TSCP*) that ranged from swastikas being placed on private property like homes and automobiles to more communal Jewish property like Jewish community centers, synagogues and temples. Although Jewish properties were targeted frequently, surprisingly, Christian churches were targeted more often (37) than Jewish synagogues (25) and Muslim mosques (1) (*TSCP*). This may be because of those churches' stances on immigration and LGBTQIA+ issues, and data within the *TSCP* supports that claim.

7.4.1 A Missed Opportunity

Despite being targeted and understanding what it may feel like to have a hate act directed toward them, Christian leaders generally only responded if the swastika hate act occurred on their properties or if it impacted a school campus. Within *TSCP* there is only one instance where a Christian leader issued a statement that discussed a swastika that was not on their own church grounds, and the incident that evoked the response was when a Black family's home in Springfield, MO was vandalized with a swastika on their front door, calling it "hate-based vandalism" (*TSCP*). Of all the incidents involving targets of various faiths, ethnicities, and genders or sexualities, having only one time where a church leader spoke to the harm done by a swastika to another identity group beyond the school walls is telling. This lack of response stands out as a missed opportunity for religious groups to form alliances and support one another as a way to support their own religious beliefs.

7.4.2 A Call for Social Justice

While Muslim religious leaders were not present in our data as responding to incidents within educational spaces, Muslim religious leaders did issue statements and letters for incidents in the greater community. Within those statements, Muslim religious leaders called for social justice and action. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR),[44] as the name suggests, is concerned with Islamic relations within the boundaries of American, but when looking at the language used in its letters and statements, it conceives of the United States as a larger community where it actually advocates for social justice for all marginalized groups, itself included. Of the three statements documented in *TSCP*, two were in support of target communities who were not Muslim (*TSCP*). One statement supported a church that was vandalized, and the other supported a Jewish community center that was vandalized (*TSCP*). In both statements issued, the rhetors referred to the government's responsibility for leading by example and supporting religious freedom and safety for those who practice any religion (*TSCP*). When a Marriottsville, MD church was vandalized with a swastika, the CAIR wrote, "These hateful acts are often a direct consequence of the toxic rhetoric emboldened by top level officials in our own government. Houses of worship are sanctuaries that deserve to be protected. We call on elected leaders to aggressively repudiate racism by demonstrating inclusivity and tolerance through their words and actions" (*TSCP*). Similarly, when a Jewish Community Center in Fairfax, VA, the CAIR issued a statement saying, "Acts of antisemitic hate are part of a disturbing rise in bigotry targeting minority communities nationwide that must be confronted and rejected by Americans of all faiths and backgrounds. Our nation's leaders must speak out in

[44] The website CAIR-Council on American-Islamic Relations says, "Since its establishment in 1994, CAIR has worked to promote a positive image of Islam and Muslims in America. Through media relations, lobbying, education and advocacy, CAIR works to make sure a Muslim voice is represented. Through our work, CAIR seeks to empower American Muslims and encourage their participation in political and social activism."

favor of mutual respect and reject the divisive rhetoric that can prompt such vile, bias-motivated incidents" (*TSCP*). In both instances, CAIR supported other faiths under the larger umbrella of community living within America where one is guaranteed the right to worship as one chooses. Here they point to the government as the institution as being the one responsible for ensuring freedom (and safety) to practice one's faith and that that right should be supported by the government. By advocating for religious freedoms and safety for other religious communities, CAIR works to insure the safety of their own religious community. CAIR's approach demonstrates that both unity and difference can coexist within the borders of the United States.

Another statement attempted to build solidarity across diverse communities. Matthew Finkelstein of the Progressive Zionists of California attempted to also build solidarity when he called for Black and Jewish communities of Vallejo to unite (*TSCP*). His statement was in response to anti-Black graffiti on a public park building. He said, "I know how intimately our histories and stories are connected. This vandalism is the work of a coward, a weak attempt to intimidate us, because white supremacists are terrified of the power of Black-Jewish solidarity. We look forward to working with Black communal leaders to find the perpetrator, hold them accountable, and build an even stronger Vallejo" (*TSCP*). Here, Finkelstein refers to the historical connections between Black and Jewish groups during the Civil Rights Movement and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but since that time the relationship between those groups has been fraught at times. The notion to connect across identity groups seems to be a way for religious leaders, groups, and organizations to build upon the notion of community as being an notion that supports and maintains both connectedness as humans and diversity in beliefs and lived experiences. Building connections could be an in-road into creating a more cohesive larger community that supports one another.

7.4.3 Acting in the Best Interests of the Larger Community

When it came to discussing how a community should function, Jewish religious leaders also seemed to point to a connectedness that transcended religious differences. Jewish religious leaders described a community that should display "openness" as well as "respectful atmosphere" (*TSCP*). One leader also argued that "in the year 2019, no person, young or old, in our community, or anywhere, should be subjected to the language or symbols that the Nazi regime used in the service of violence, terror, and mass murder. We simply will not stand for it" (*TSCP*). Jewish leaders believed that the solution was working together with other groups. They used language like "stand together," "stand shoulder-to-shoulder at this time," "shared effort," and "[t]ogether, we will enter the forthcoming new year in a spirit of shared vigilance, resolve, and fortitude" (*TSCP*). All of this language is embodied and active. The notion is that the labor involved is not just for one religious group. Instead all members of the community, regardless of their religious affiliation, are responsible for working with one another toward a shared space of respect and dignity for all.

One instance mentioned briefly earlier in this chapter did elicit a response from three rabbis and a bishop that called for the community to be conceived of more broadly to include all faiths. A young girl at a Catholic high school had a hand drawn swastika on her shirt and a German flag painted on her forehead that she circulated on Snapchat. The four leaders wrote a joint statement that said, "There is no such thing as an innocent bystander when this image is displayed. This incident makes it clear that we must be vigilant and hold ourselves and each other accountable for the use of words or symbols that demean human dignity. May this incident be an opportunity for all of us to recommit ourselves to pray and overcome prejudice" (*TSCP*). Here we see that the invocation of community involves dignity for all and the belief that faith in

a higher power and real understanding of religious tenets will help individuals see the dangers and harm of prejudice regardless of religious affiliation. Because it was at a Catholic school, the audience would have been fellow Catholic students and those in the larger community beyond the school such as parents, alumni, and other community stakeholders in the school. With a religious audience, it would be natural to imagine the community to have faith and believe in prayer, but what is interesting is the notion that both the bishop and the rabbis would urge the community to the same result: dignity and the prevention of prejudice regardless of religious beliefs. This is a telling piece of evidence for this community in terms of who they are and what they believe the swastika to represent. For them the swastika was a sign of disrespect and affronted the dignity of individuals by challenging an individual's right to exist in the same spaces as others. Here, the communal statement argued that your faith would treat others, regardless of their faith, with respect and dignity. Also present in this statement is the notion of bystander and responsibility. Here, the target community was the victim, and all others were perpetrators, which is a strong stance for some communities who have individuals who each have different perceptions of what their community is and/or should be. The warrant here is that if you do nothing, you are part of the problem; that means that community is everyone, and everyone is responsible for the harm that is done within the walls of that educational campus. Action and prevention go hand in hand, and students were called to do something when faced with the harm of others. One could see it as guilting students into action, but guilt only happens when a person recognizes and feels responsible for and to someone other than themselves.

Religious communities supporting one another occurred in another instance within the data. St. Marks in the Valley Episcopal Church made a statement about a swastika found at a local high school (*TSCP*). Acknowledging that "vandalism damages the fabric of our

community, expressions of hate threaten to tear it apart," the church described the community as "vibrant, diverse, and welcoming:" a community that was "safe and inclusive" where "all people are welcome and images and actions like this are not acceptable. We come together to say our community is better than this and to wish all of you a holiday season filled with love and joy" (*TSCP*). A church responding to a high school event that involved an anti-Semitic symbol is significant, especially when one hears of division amongst religious institutions. Here we have one religious community supporting another, and this provides an opportunity for systemic support.

7.4.4 Consequences of Statements and Letters of Leaders and Groups Affiliated with Religious Faiths

The Council on American-Islamic Relations and their approach to swastikas offers religious leaders, groups, and communities a way to engage in meaningful and supportive ways when swastika incidents occur in their neighborhoods, towns, and cities. Their responses in the letters and statements they issued advocate for support of victims regardless of their religious affiliation and forge and strengthen connections between community members. The ability to connect across religious institutions and beliefs can create a mutually supportive community that is more tolerant of diversity when different religious groups can see where and how they are connected rather than focusing on the differences. By taking a humanistic approach, religious leaders have the power to unify and create religious coalitions across religious divides that could support all faiths. Here again, the move is to stand together and support one another. A unified and strong front ensures the safety of all involved when the focus is not on the differences of beliefs but on what it means to be human and to be safe within the community you live. Connections between individuals and across faith communities could do much to combat

swastika recurrences, and religious leaders can play a large part in ensuring that those connections occur.

Something the Jewish religious leaders and groups also offer in their letters and statements is naming the incident as being specifically swastika related. Naming the swastika as the harm and not using euphemistic terms allows focus to be on the symbol, how it is functioning within communities, and the harm that it does to those it targets/target communities. It seems like a small move to name something, but it is a move that would support victims and help facilitate tough conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusion because it forces communities to acknowledge what a swastika is and the harm it does.

7.5 Creating and Redefining Community

Creating community does not just come from the words designed to invoke particular embodied actions. Community definition is also created in the material ways space and place function and include or exclude individuals. Who is included, when they are included, and how they are included can tie to things like security, gatherings of all types, and curricular modifications just to name a few. This next section discusses how non-discursive actions function to create and define communities. While I realize that some of these non-discursive responses are tied to and rely upon discursive elements, my point is not to separate discursive and non-discursive genres of engagement. Rather I point out the non-discursive elements that are at play in these supportive responses because as Weedon and Fountain argue, “not only do genres shape bodies and bodies shape genres, but also the genre itself is accomplished by and through the body. The body intertwined with the objects and texts of its environment is the material and multimodal means through which the genred action is performed” (591).

Within public places, people who live near those locations as well as beyond them come together in order to protest or educate or to reclaim/remake/remark the space. Other schools like the University of Massachusetts installed "additional surveillance cameras," increased "security patrols in buildings that have been targeted" as well as increased the "Counseling Center outreach in cultural centers and residence halls" (*TSCP*). UMass "also held floor and building meetings in residence halls to provide support and awareness" and sent leadership to engage "in one-on-one and group meetings with impacted students and communities" (*TSCP*). The physical presence and access to individuals who can help does much for victims when they are dealing with the embodied harm of a hate act.

Another example of *support* is Boise, ID. After a swastika hate act occurred there, Boise leaders and businesses created signs, had two community gatherings (in person and virtual), and placed banners throughout the city (*TSCP*). Boise's response will be detailed in the next chapter and gives scholars and community members a possible *redesign* of what might be considered a *typical* response.

7.5.1 Assembling as Support: Protests, Vigils, Demonstrations, and Gatherings

Protests, vigils, demonstrations, and gatherings all serve as a way to gather people together for a cause. Also within this category were forums, town halls, and residence hall meetings. When it came to protests, vigils, and demonstrations, these gatherings served two purposes: to express sorrow at the harm that occurred and reclaim the space, and the other was to take a stand against someone who was claiming they had the right under the First Amendment.. Most often protests, vigils, and demonstrations were designed to lament an incident that had passed while at the same time reclaim those spaces and places back from the hate symbol by displaying love and solidarity. For instance, Dominican University's Priory Campus in River

Forest, IL had an incident where a swastika was drawn on a dorm hall floor in cleaning liquid that discolored the surface (*TSCP*). College community members left notes of support on index cards within the lines of a heart drawn in masking tape on the floor of the floor directly below where the swastika was drawn (*TSCP*). Another example of a demonstration of support occurred in Montvale, NJ where students invited "Temple Beth-Orr and the Jewish Federation Northern New Jersey to a rally against hate that featured a video of Holocaust survivors, a walkout to the football stadium and a choir singing John Lennon's 'Imagine'" in response to a swastika with racial slurs aimed at the Black community (*TSCP*).

The second purpose for protest, vigils, and demonstrations was to take a stand against someone who was exerting their freedom of speech most often on their property. Here neighbors protested residents in their town who hung Nazi flags like one member of the National Socialist Movement in Springfield TN or a "history buff" who is "not a Neo-Nazi" he "just like[s] the design of the flag, the colors, the pattern" (*TSCP*). While some like the "history buff" took their flags down because they "didn't want any more headaches," others doubled down and said that it was "a matter of proving a point" that "Symbols aren't racist. People are" (*TSCP*). In both of these instances neighbors and local community members held signs and gathered in protest.

In terms of gatherings, these also included forums and residence hall meetings. These kinds of assemblies were designed to give individuals the opportunity to meet to discuss the swastika hate act in a structured way, so individuals could air their feelings and express solidarity, if they wanted to. These gatherings were always pro target community in nature and were about what the community could do to be more inclusive and supportive of those who were targeted by the swastika hate act. An example of this was when Reverend Nancy Soukup organized three meals where students were allowed to sign a pledge to show their support at

Roger Williams University in Bristol, RI (*TSCP*). This event made visible the connections within the community by enabling everyone to see the pledges. The number of names visible sent a message to the perpetrator as well as the victims and made the *stand* mentioned above observable and concrete as the sheer number of names demonstrated to those targeted by the hate acts that now they had possible allies. Actions like this create connections between students on campus that can do much to ensure a more diverse and inclusive community for all.

7.5.2 Changing How Communities Operate: Policy, Committee and/or System Creation

After a swastika hate act, some communities decided to implement policies and systems of support. Some systems were reporting systems for when a hate or bias act occurred and/or was witnessed. For instance the University of Wisconsin-Madison has a system so "students may report instances in which they feel targeted because of their identity and information on a forum where students can ask questions and voice their frustrations" (*TSCP*). Communities also created committees to study how to better support individuals within their communities. For instance after a spate of swastika incidents, Andrew Selesnick, Superintendent of Schools in Lewisboro, NY met with principals and "local religious leaders to discuss how we can best work together to support the students and the community we collectively serve" (*TSCP*). When swastikas challenge the system, it forces the system to reexamine itself and perhaps be more critical of how it operates.

7.5.3 Education is the Key.

Schools provided the most support of any group, and for that there is much to learn from them in terms of how to approach a diverse audience and how to think about preventing future harm. Many K-12 offered assemblies, Holocaust speakers, or curriculum modification. Pelham

Middle School Principal Lynn M. Sabia was lauded by her superintendent because she "gathered the school community to discuss the meaning of this deeply disturbing symbol, and focused on including Holocaust education into their curriculum" (*TSCP*). Principal Shelley Somers said in a letter to parents in Darian, CT that the school has addressed intolerance through "advisory classes, social emotional learning lessons, and our revised Social Studies curriculum, and will continue with a Nov. 7 grade level 'Step Up' assembly coordinated by the Anti-Defamation League" (*TSCP*). Somers then said "these steps [had] not been enough, and [she] is now planning a parent meeting, including clergy and community members, to 'discuss strategies to eliminate this unacceptable behavior'" (*TSCP*). The move to educate students demonstrates that educators believe that they can prevent future harm by exposing students to curriculum that is inclusive and supportive of diversity.

7.5.4 Calling on Others to Help

Sometimes locations that experience trauma, need help, and swastika hate acts are no different. Schools turned to the larger community most often for help from places like the Holocaust survivors, religious leaders, and Anti-Defamation League (ADL). Perhaps the most poignant of helpers are those who have experienced the most hate from that symbol: survivors of the Holocaust. Their eyewitness account of harm that came from the ideology behind that symbol when it was used by the Nazis does much to educate students and community members. Even in my own teaching of the Holocaust, my students always remark that hearing the stories from survivors' mouths is the most moving thing they encountered in our study. There is something about the embodied experience of listening and seeing someone as they tell of their pain and suffering at the hands of an ideology that wanted to deny their existence and how that ideology has become embedded as a constant reminder in that symbol. Within *TSCP* there were

nine instances when survivors were invited to come to schools to share their experience, but those numbers will sadly continue to dwindle as survivors pass away (*TSCP*). Schools and larger communities will need to rely upon databases such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Survivor Reflections and Testimonies, The University of Southern California's Shoah Foundation, or Yad Vashem's collection of Survivor Testimonies.

Like the K-12 educators who were discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Five, religious leaders also called for help. Words of embodiment asked for individuals in the community to *stand*. Whether it be, "stand unified in our condemnation of this hateful graffiti, and in our work to fight hatred and bigotry," "stand by to offer support to any students who wish to connect in the wake of this incident," "stand as a light against the darkness of ignorance, hatred and discrimination, and we will not be cowed," or "stand with us in support of the Jewish community," the act of standing both figuratively and literally has more force to it (*TSCP*). The notion of standing is a sign of force or strength, and its use here is significant when thinking about the perceived danger the swastika represents for target communities. Standing is an act of defiance, an act of support, and an act of recognition. In standing, individuals are calling attention to themselves, which opens them up to possible repercussions from the perpetrators as the perpetrators see more targets. The way in which *stand* is used in letters and statements within *TSCP* indicates that individuals are not afraid of being targets; in fact in the statement from the bishop and rabbis, they argue that it is the moral imperative to stand up as a possible target in order to fight injustice and support the dignity of others.

7.5.4.1 ADL

One of the groups asked to help communities in taking their stand was the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). The ADL is a Jewish organization that was founded in 1913 "to stop

the defamation of the Jewish people, and to secure justice and fair treatment to all."[45] While the ADL's start and main focus is fighting anti-Semitism, the other offshoots of their work such as confronting discrimination and securing justice as well as promoting respectful schools and communities reach beyond a focus on issues that impact only Jews. Within the school context, the ADL was often called in to help schools educate their students about the swastika and the harm it causes, and because the ADL also believes education is one of the ways to support victims and prevent future incidents of harm, the pairing with schools, especially, is important.

The ADL was called upon for assistance in 53 incidents and provided educational guidance and resources (*TSCP*). They were also called upon to comment upon antiSemitism in general across the United States, but sometimes different branches of the ADL or spokespersons from ADL commented on specific swastika incidents. *TSCP* contains 14 such statements or letters, and upon examination of these letters and statements, there are some rhetorical moves that bear looking at more closely. Condemnation of the incident comes from words such as "disturbing," "cowardly," "offensive," and "racist" (*TSCP*). These incidents are called examples of "hate," "extremism," and "bigotry" that have been used to "intimidate" (*TSCP*). In one incident, ADL New Jersey/New York Director Scott Richman explained possible meanings of the swastika and said the swastika intended to "shock" people, but he then pivoted to counter those who would dismiss the incident of a swastika spray painted on a tree in a public park as being just about shock(*TSCP*). He explained the valence of meaning inherent in the symbol itself when he said, "Since 1945, the swastika has served as the most significant and notorious of hate symbols, antisemitism and white supremacy for most of the world outside of Asia. In the United

[45] The ways in which the ADL works toward this goal is by fighting antisemitism, combating extremism and hate, confronting discrimination and securing justice, supporting Israel as a democratic state, and promoting respectful schools and communities; the details of which are listed on their website What We Do (adl.org).

States, the swastika is overwhelmingly viewed as a hate symbol" (*TSCP*). In his opinion, there was no mistaking the swastika as anything other than a hate symbol, and based upon the data collected in *TSCP*, Richman is correct.

Like other letters and statements, condemnation is juxtaposed against community, but how community is named and talked about focuses on the positive acts that have taken or are taking place at the time of the statement. These actions have a victim focus. Praise is often the move used by the ADL to encourage behaviors that help victims. For instance, the police in a town where the hate act took place are praised for being attentive and supportive of victims. Four statements illustrate this point.

- "Confronting hate always starts with community leadership. We're grateful to Salem Mayor Driscoll, Salem Police Department and local residents, who immediately condemned this act, ensuring that Salem will not be defined by cowardly acts of bigotry."-New England Regional Director Robert Treston (*TSCP*).

- "All people deserve to worship in peace and safety, free from any attempt to intimidate them or prevent them from practicing their faith. We commend the Denver Police Department for investigating the incidents as potential hate-crimes."-ADL Mountain States Regional Director Scott Levin (*TSCP*).

- "Educating our children and residents on how to respond and fight hate is an important proactive measure we can take to create safe and inclusive communities. We have seen the response from the Washington Heights community speaking out against recent acts of bias and we stand with them and will continue working together to make every neighborhood no place for hate."-ADL in New York and New Jersey Regional Director Evan Bernstein (*TSCP*).

- "The outpouring of support from our community and the willingness of community members to remove offensive literature as soon as it is spotted is cause for hope and encouragement, not fear. Those among us attempting to sow seeds of division are being met with an overwhelming response of goodwill and action."-Plains States/CRC Regional Director Mary-Beth Muskin (*TSCP*).

These statements all contain praise, but the praise is specific and supports victims even when it is focused on timeliness of cleaning, which is a silencing move often used to eliminate conversation around an incident as mentioned in Chapter Four. Here the police are praised for being leaders in condemning the act and investigating incidents as potential hate-crimes (something the ADL has as a goal). Safety for the community is invoked but not with a punishment undertone found in the elected leaders. Instead the tone supports diversity, and as outsiders looking in, these statements situate the police as allies in the fight against bigotry. This subtle shift in tone and police positioning by the ADL places police in the community as active participants rather than outside enforcers, who have no stakes in the community other than to act as armed guards punishing perpetrators. Other praise comes for the local community itself and the actions individuals have taken to be inclusive, supportive, and proactive in creating safe spaces for community members. The focus on the actions of community members by the ADL in a sense concretizes support and names it. It lets the community know what support looks like and how that support benefits everyone including the targets/targeted communities. What the ADL is doing is praising the behavior it wants to see repeated, which is behavior supportive of victims. Educators use this move when trying to elicit certain behaviors in students; it is called positive reinforcement. In the classroom, naming and pointing out good behavior gives students concrete ways of also behaving, if they want praise or to also be seen as good. The ADL statements function the same way by praising the model behavior.

7.5.4.2 Consequences of Statements and Letters of the Anti-Defamation League

Part of what we can learn from the ADL comes from their history. Because the ADL has been around for over 100 years, it has some ethos not afforded to other groups, and when it speaks, it is viewed as an expert in the field. Also as a national organization, they are better

positioned to see trends and can comment with more authority on how the swastika is circulating and what it means currently in the United States. Their H.E.A.T Map and their Hate Crime Map as well as their Hate on Display (™) Hate Symbols Database prove their expertise in the field of hate and its history in the United States. Their ability to see both the historical and current use of swastikas gives them authority not afforded any other group save the Southern Poverty Law Center who has their own hate tracking device in their Hate Map.

What makes the ADL's statements effective is that they put names to behaviors. Much like the statements and letters of Jewish leaders that concretized the swastika as the offending act, naming supportive behaviors can help community members understand what kinds of behaviors are actually supportive. The ADL does lean upon denouncement and police involvement as being powerful, but action and safety must follow that denouncement otherwise it becomes just another incident of "thoughts and prayers." Calling swastika incidents hate-crimes and praising police for investigating them as such creates a link between the word swastika and hate-crime. That simple association becomes one that cannot be ignored, and with repetition, it changes how swastikas are viewed. There can be no mistaking what a swastika is, and in creating the association, towns, cities, and schools will have to deal with it as an issue to be treated seriously and not just written off as another form of vandalism. This small move is a powerful one, if society is to take swastikas seriously as a visual form of hate perpetrated on spaces and places where people gather, live, and do business. Naming it as a hate-crime, therefore, focuses action and attention on actually creating spaces and places for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

7.6 Safety and Security: Mental and Physical Well-Being for All

Since religious leaders are often one of the pillars of support for the communities they serve, it makes sense that they are also the ones to offer that support to their own or others who are hurting. The religious leaders in the data demonstrate they understand the harm that swastikas produce, and this recognition further demonstrates that swastikas are not just another form of vandalism. There is a valence of harm inherent in them that must be addressed, and who better to address that harm than those people of faith where people turn when they need emotional or physical support. The bishop and rabbis from the example above acknowledge the embodied harm felt by "anyone who may have seen this image" and "the pain it has caused" (*TSCP*). Jewish leaders have even opened up their places of worship and their staff "to meet with any students or families who would like to discuss the episode and how best to respond to your own questions and concerns, or your children's questions and concerns" (*TSCP*). This acknowledgment by religious community leaders of the embodied harm of the target/target community does much to heal a community and attempts to rectify in some small way the feelings of insecurity and precariousness that victims may feel after swastika hate acts. Moves such as these go a long way in healing a community, and Jewish religious leaders were quick to note and appreciate the "timely" manner in which the swastika incidents were condemned as well as express appreciation for "all the beautiful messages of love and support at the scene of the incident" (*TSCP*). Part of healing a community after an incident is understanding the various ways by which the swastika has harmed the community, and the responses of the religious leaders lead us to believe that the harm is more than just the physical act of vandalism on the wall of a building but more importantly the embodied harm of feeling unsafe, unwelcome, and unsupported.

For schools, student groups expressed the most care in addressing victim harm and offering them support. School communities often offered counseling when they made the move of support; they set up extra counselors or created ways for students who were harmed by the hate act to easily access mental health professionals. An example of this is Columbia University in New York; they had two incidents that happened in early March of 2020 (*TSCP*). As part of the university's response, they offered traditional counseling services in person but also offered online/virtual options for convenience and safety (*TSCP*).

Along with mental health support, there was also a concerted effort to ensure physical safety, which also contributes to mental health support. At Wheaton College in Norton, MA, "Residence Life staff met with residents in Pine Hall last evening, and they will continue to offer support and counsel to all students in the building and on campus. We also plan to step up security in Pine Hall. Public Safety officers will be conducting extra patrols in the building and beyond" (*TSCP*). Both University of Nevada in Reno, NV and Duke University in Durham, NC installed security cameras after their swastika hate acts (*TSCP*). The time and resources spent on providing services to targets/target communities shows a valuing of those individuals and a desire to create inclusive spaces. A side benefit to the services being offered is that they are now available to the entire community.[46]

7.7 Consequences of Support

As shown in this chapter, *support* as a metagenre considers materiality and embodiment as it attends to victims in visible practices. All of these discursive and non-discursive embodied subgenres demonstrate a desire by communities to mitigate harm of targeted

[46] Some would say that this is a disability framework in that a modification targeted to include one group actually becomes more inclusive for more than just that group and benefits the entire community. Examples of this would include curb cuts and closed captioning.

individuals/communities. Some communities also put into practice systems of support to prevent future harm. Unfortunately even with all the *available designs* presented within *TSCP*, the actual numbers of responses leave more to be desired, and perhaps this lack of attention to support vulnerable populations has contributed to repeat instances of swastika hate acts in various communities across the United States.

Chapter 8 Redesign: A Case Study for Community Support

8.1 Introduction

"genres dynamically embody a community's way of knowing, being, and acting" (Bawarshi and Reiff 78)

Trigger warning note: This chapter contains an image of a swastika.

The chapters that discuss the metagenres of *silence*, *speech*, and *support* engage with ways of doing and being at the larger level, but I also wanted to experience the granular for myself; I wanted to engage with a specific community response. Meeting leaders from a community and seeing a place where a swastika hate act occurred would enable me to better understand what drove community leader responses and why the hate act and its response were so important to a community. My analysis of the 1300+ incidents that occurred over the span of *The Swastika Counter Project* (*TSCP*) did not allow this kind of engagement. I was limited to news stories, which presented information in a somewhat removed manner as the reporter looked on and recorded the event and its response. As such, I was only allowed to view the phenomenon through the language and eyes of the reporter or reporting source, which, as was mentioned in previous chapters, is limiting. Language on its own may also fail to fully capture embodied phenomena because it requires the reduction of a three-dimensional experience to two dimensions that contain mere echoes of the lived moment. By looking in depth at a community response, my position as a researcher might create a different space from which to make meaning of a particular swastika hate act, and my position might enable me to observe and question things

differently than a reporter/reporting source, who may have its own bias/biases and writing constraints such as a new cycle.

Although present within news stories about the hate act, responses by community stakeholders around hate acts cannot be fully understood and explicated with all their complexity without taking the time to interview and dig deeper into the rhetorical moment of that particular time and those particular actors. Attention grabbing headlines and short "snack news" that are designed to be read in less than seven minutes limit the details of news stories (Vanden Abeele, Cock and Roe 148). The news cycle has a certain shelf life and is not concerned with the fuller arc of a response in relation to a moment of trauma. As a result, in only using *TSCP*, I was missing the details that the words of the news story could not capture: a community's response to a swastika on a personal level. To help me better understand community response on this more intimate level, I needed to explore one response more in depth. Spending time exploring one community response would also provide me with the opportunity to cross check my coding for the metagenres and give me a perspective that news stories did not: access to victims and community stakeholders who were involved in a response. Through talking with individuals involved in the response, I hoped to better comprehend what an atypical design might look like and how it unfolded through the eyes of those who were involved in the response.

Fortunately for me, I had a friend, who I have known for many years from my work with Museum Without Walls, and she lives in Boise, ID. One of her volunteer jobs was working as a docent at the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights. When the swastika hate act occurred in Boise in December 2020, she sent me news articles about the response just because she knew about my dissertation and that I was working on *TSCP*. At that point in my cross checking of the data, I had not gotten up to December 2020 yet, so I just checked to see that the incident was in the

database. It was, so I knew I would be encountering it as I continued to move through the data. As I worked through the data noting the kinds of responses and developing the embodied rhetorical genre of *community response to trauma* based upon the typifications I noticed, I knew what an atypical response would possibly look like. When I got to the Boise response in my cross-checking, Boise's response was indeed an atypical one. It did have some of the typical moves within its response, but there was also a redesign of specific elements that created a unique and multifaceted approach to mitigating and preventing future harm to targeted communities.

With my realization, I reached out to my friend, who put me in touch with the Director of the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights, Dr. Dan Prinzing, and I explained my project and how I believed Boise's response might provide other communities with a unique take on a response that relied upon some of the typified metagenres and subgenres discussed in this dissertation but did so in ways that created new ways of viewing, understanding, and doing in response to swastika hate acts. When she made the virtual introduction of Prinzing to me, she suggested he might also put me in touch with other community leaders, who could also give me insight into the larger community's response. I shared that I would be interested in interviewing those community members also to get a sense of the who, the what, the how, and the why of the response. He agreed to be interviewed and then virtually introduced me to other community leaders, who I then reached out to and arranged interviews with. I traveled to Boise in October of 2021 (10 months after the incident) to conduct these 40+ minute semi-structured face-to-face interviews in order to understand the space and people involved in the response. Appendix D contains the questions I used to frame the interviews, which allowed individuals to discuss the response process as well as reflect upon and articulate what they did in a timeline fashion, their

motivations for their involvement, and their perceptions of the success or failure of the response. The information from these interviews and my documentation via personal pictures of the space where the incident occurred is what constitutes this chapter.

As mentioned above, news reporter bias and the ability of the reporter to gather information before the news is scheduled to be published can truncate a story. Community response can take time, and because the news cycle moves quickly from one subject to the next, a follow-up story that might contain the whole response may never materialize. This creates an incomplete picture. Sometimes we were able to obtain more than one story that addressed the response, and those were recorded in *TSCP* in the "notes" section. Most times the news story reflected an initial response because it was reported within the first 24/48 hours. Space within a publication may have also been a factor for news stories as online news sources tend to demonstrate a "snack news" approach which also truncates the story into digestible and easily read bites lasting no longer than five minutes to seven minutes (Vanden Abeele, Cock and Roe 148). Finally, limited information within a news story poses a challenge when it comes to community response because actions outlined in the news story may have happened before individuals were aware of the incident and/or possible ways they could have participated in actions of support, which also leads to a limited community response.

8.2 The Community Stakeholders

Because this chapter relies upon the narratives of seven individuals, it seems appropriate to take the time here to introduce these people (in alphabetical order) and share their role in the community. As mentioned, the network of people I present here was not selected by random but rather constitutes a network of leaders within the community, who were actively connected to the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights and who played a part in the Boise response. They are: a

business leader, a religious leader, the executive director of the local business association, the chief of police, the mayor, and the executive director of a local museum. The majority of the individuals were white and/or male, but the diversity of the group is mostly representative of the demographics found in Boise.[47]

- **Paul Fleming**. Fleming is the Senior Account Manager of the Boise Metro Chamber and a board member of the North Boise Little League and the Sage International School of Boise.
- **Rabbi Dan Fink** Fink is Idaho's first permanent rabbi at Congregation Ahavath Beth Israel (CABI) in Boise and has served there since 1994. He is known for his blog At Home and On the Road, and his teachings advocate social justice, communal awareness, and support for one another, and his actions around the community reflect those teachings.[48]
- **Jennifer Hensley** Hensley was hired as the executive director of the Downtown Boise Association in the fall of 2019 and oversees management of the Downtown Boise Improvement District (BID) where she helps to make downtown Boise a safe and clean place for all individuals.
- **Chief Ryan Lee** Lee was installed as the Police Chief in Boise in July of 2020. Chief Lee brings police cadets to the Anne Frank Memorial as part of their training. In his speech, Lee reminds cadets of their role in the community as citizens whose job is to uphold and support the Declaration of Human Rights and to protect and ensure that all individuals that the police encounter are treated with dignity and respect.

[47] U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Boise City city, Idaho estimates that the population in Boise is 89.3% white, 1.9% Black or African, 2.9% Asian, and 50% female.

[48] While Rabbi Fink is a leader in the community both socially and spiritually, he does belong to a historically marginalized community that was targeted by the Boise swastika hate act.

- **Mayor Lauren McLean** McLean is the first elected female mayor in Boise's 150 year history. She has served since January of 2020, and her goal is to help create a community for everyone that is environmentally responsible and offers its members equitable access to housing, living wage jobs, transportation, as well as a voice in the future of Boise.
- **Dr. Dan Prinzing** Prinzing is the Executive Director of the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights and has held this position since 2007. A career educator, Prinzing's work has taken him from the classroom to state government to countries around the globe as a teacher, coordinator, and trainer in human rights education.
- **Phillip Thompson** Thompson is the Executive Director and Board President of the Idaho Black History Museum in downtown Boise. He also serves on the Chief's Community Advisory Panel for the Boise Police Department. Thompson is also an active leader and member of the Muslim community in Boise.[49]

My interviews with these individuals were recorded, transcribed, and coded for their responses. I used the codes I had developed from both the larger data set that focused on actors and moves as well as my codes from the letters and statements in Chapter Five and Chapter 6, which focused on the rhetorical moves of the person issuing the letter or statement. In this way my analysis of the interview transcripts created access for me to individuals and responses not reported in the news stories and gave me a fuller picture of the responses themselves in that I could ask follow-up questions that were more detailed. My interviews also provided me with key actions as this community negotiated the constitution and reconstitution of their identity as a result of a swastika hate act.

[49] Phillip Thompson happens to be a black man, but that is not the reason he was interviewed. His leadership and active role in the community as well as his connections, socially and personally, to Chief Ryan Lee, Rabbi Dan Fink, and Dan Prinzing made him a necessary voice to include.

Even in the fuller picture I attempted to capture with these interviews, I know there are limitations to my interviews themselves. Relying upon recollection of an event that happened 10 months prior can cause interviewees to wax philosophical or perhaps embellish their parts to make them seem more involved. It can also result in a lack of detail as recollection becomes fuzzy with time. There may have also been a desire of the interviewees to be perceived in a "good light." As for my own limitations, in meeting these individuals and sharing in their call for action, I may expose my own biases in terms of their response. This is why I tried to rely upon their language to describe the events and the reasoning for their response as much as I could. I also attempted to present some criticisms of the response, which were brought to light as shortcomings and assumptions made by community leaders about the monolithic representation of Boise as a unified community in the response. I present those shortcomings in this chapter as well to give readers a sense of where even this redesign has some things it could do differently in its next iteration.

8.3 The Rhetorical Moment in Context

On the morning of December 8, 2020, a passerby found nine stickers with swastikas and the phrase "WE ARE EVERYWHERE" plastered on various locations of the Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial in Idaho's state capital, Boise (*TSCP*).[50] Stickers were placed on the "Spiral of Injustice," on the video kiosk within the Marilyn Shuler Classroom for Human Rights, on the current "The Faces of Idaho" display that was on rotation in the Marilyn Shuler Classroom, on an image of Bill Wassmuth for whom the center affiliated with the Memorial is named, and on the bronze statue of Anne Frank, specifically on the diary she holds in her hands.

[50] Manuel Gomez created a virtual tour of The Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial with funding from the Idaho Film Collection. This link allows you to tour the Memorial virtually Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial - Boise | Virtual Memorial Tour (annefrankmemorial.org)

Figure 8-1 One of the nine stickers placed on various surfaces of the Memorial. Source: The Wassmuth Center for Human Rights

Figure 8-1 above shows the sticker on Anne Frank's statue. As Whitney Phillips points out in "The Oxygen of Amplification: Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators," there is a danger in circulating the images of white supremacists because the circulation could amplify white supremacist ideology and even possibly bring more like-minded individuals to those spaces and places. Like her, I recognize this danger, but also like her, I recognize that sharing these images of these hate acts, if done in such a way to create conversation and dialogue around the harm they do, might actually de-amplify those ideologies as the criticism of them creates an inhospitable space for these kinds of actions and behaviors in the future.

Contextually, this date and these stickers are important. Days before there had been a protest at the Central District Health offices where members of the city leadership were going to vote on mask measures, and the meeting had to be adjourned because of public safety concerns.

Mask mandates had been hotly contested by some Idahoans, and there had been demonstrations at the state capital at various times since the introduction of COVID-19 restrictions had begun. Some groups that had visited the capital protesting were members of white supremacist groups in Idaho, who were not shy about their feelings concerning civil liberties as well as their Aryan agenda. December 8th was also two days before Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights, and members of the Jewish community within Boise were preparing for this festival, which commemorates the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem in 165 BC. This particular moment in time is important to note, but it is also part of a longer timeline concerning Idaho's identity as a state and its struggles with white supremacy.

8.3.1 A Historical Context that includes the Aryan Nation

More largely contextualized, the December 2020 incident is one of several in Idaho's struggle with a small faction of white supremacists, who have impacted the narrative around what it means to be an Idahoan and live in Idaho. As Thompson said in his interview, Idaho has "fought that fight for a while" against white supremacists with a notable moment being in the 1970s when the Aryan Nation housed a compound near Hayden Lake (Thompson). The incident at the Anne Frank Memorial on December 8, 2020 created yet another moment where the community was tasked to "actively engage with getting ahead of the narrative" that Idaho houses white supremacists and is as a state intolerant of diversity (Thompson).

Part of countering that white supremacist narrative began back in the 1970s when white supremacy came to the forefront of attention in Idaho. Richard Butler had created a white supremacist group housed in the Hayden Lake area. Based upon the Christian Identity[51] Butler

[51] The SPLC writes, "Christian Identity is a unique antisemitic and racist theology that rose to a position of commanding influence on the racist right in the 1980s. 'Christian' in name only, it asserts that white people, not Jews, are the true Israelites favored by God in the Bible. The movement's relationship with evangelicals and

called his group the Aryan Nations and was in the process of trying to recruit new members and develop an expanded network of compounds in Idaho. Local communities in surrounding areas near the compound sought the help of the Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations to prevent this expansion. Bill Wassmuth, for whom the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights was named, was chair of this Task Force, and he and others worked with local Idaho communities to build coalitions that battled the Aryan Nations' expansion. Because he was a leader for the Task Force, Wassmuth became a target for the Aryan Nation, and members of the Aryan Nation bombed his home in September of 1986. The bombing led Wassmuth to create the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment, where he worked with others, including Marilyn Shuler, to address bigotry through education and by "monitoring the activities of groups that harass individuals because of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry" (Clinton Archives). Through the work of Wassmuth and the Task Force along with a lawsuit for a "wrongful assault" of a woman and her son by Aryan Nation members, Butler and the Aryan Nations were bankrupted. The compound was dissolved, and the land was given to the woman and her son as part of the settlement. This victory was one step in combating white supremacists in Idaho, and Wassmuth played an integral part in that victory. Wassmuth's work as a social activist ended in 2002 when he passed away, but his legacy in the center named for him continues to work for human rights and justice in Idaho, in the nation, and in the world.

fundamentalists has generally been hostile due to the latter's belief that the return of Jews to Israel is essential to the fulfillment of end-time prophecy." https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/christian-identity

8.3.2 A Historical Context which includes the Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial

The Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial, built by the Wassmuth Center, has its own origin story. This story also adds context to the December 2020 hate act and serves as another moment in Boise's history of working to change the narrative around Idaho and supporting diversity and inclusion. In 1995 a traveling exhibit about Anne Frank visited Boise and drew almost 50,000 people from around Idaho (Prinzing). Four leading women in the community thought a more permanent exhibit would be beneficial as a way to educate individuals and combat hate.[52] These women started the "Changing Hearts and Minds" campaign that raised the money for the Anne Frank sculpture. Idaho native and philanthropist Greg Carr also stepped in and donated a large sum toward the construction of the memorial. Carr is also well-known for purchasing the former land of the Aryan Nation compound once was and turning it into a park under the control of a local college. The origin story of the Memorial demonstrates another moment in time where a community banded together to place importance on human rights and diversity, but it was not the last time. **Figure 8-2** shows a current photo of the memorial.

Figure 8-2 The Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial, Boise, ID Source: Personal Photo 10/2022

[52] One of these women was Marilyn Shuler, who was also a member of the Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations, and because of all of her work with the Task Force, The Wassmuth Center, and the Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial, a classroom on the Memorial's grounds bears her name.

8.3.3 A History Context that includes a Hate Act May of 2017

From the time of its construction in 2002 until 2017 the Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial had no incident of anti-Semitism or racism (Prinzing). May of 2017 broke that peace when the memorial was a target of anti-Semitic and racist individuals. This incident involved racist and anti-Semitic words along with a swastika in permanent marker on the tablet engravings of "The Declaration of Human Rights," which are housed within the memorial space.[53] Mayor Lauren McLean describes the Memorial as a community hub:

> a convening place where we come together as a community to heal after less-than-stellar events might take place as a kind of physical reminder, as the community gathering space, a physical reminder of what's been done, who we are, and what we could to do to address whatever's going on in the community and be able to move forward." (McLean)

In my interview, Chief Ryan Lee referred to the Memorial as a "venerated object" and a place sacred to the community. Its attack was seen as a personal attack on the community of Boise; a place that many describe as "blue bubble in a red state" where diversity and difference are more valued and supported than some of the conservative and less tolerant areas surrounding the city (Lee, Prinzing, Thompson).

In Chapter Six civic leaders drew connections between Trump's presidency and the hate acts in their communities. As mentioned previously, ThinkProgress, CITYLAB, ProPublica, and Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) all charged or documented that there was an uptick in hate acts and hate groups in 2017 and 2018. The SPLC noted that in 2016 there were 917 hate groups, and the number jumped to 954 in 2017 and 1020 in 2018 respectively (See **Table 8-1**, Hate Map

[53] The Memorial is one of the only places in the world that has the full text of "The Declaration of Human Rights" on public display, and its presence is one of the reasons why the Memorial is named a "Site of Conscience" within the United States (Prinzing).

| Southern Poverty Law Center (splcenter.org)). In 2019 it tapered to 940 groups, which was more than there were before Trump took office, and in 2020 the number dropped to 838. [54]

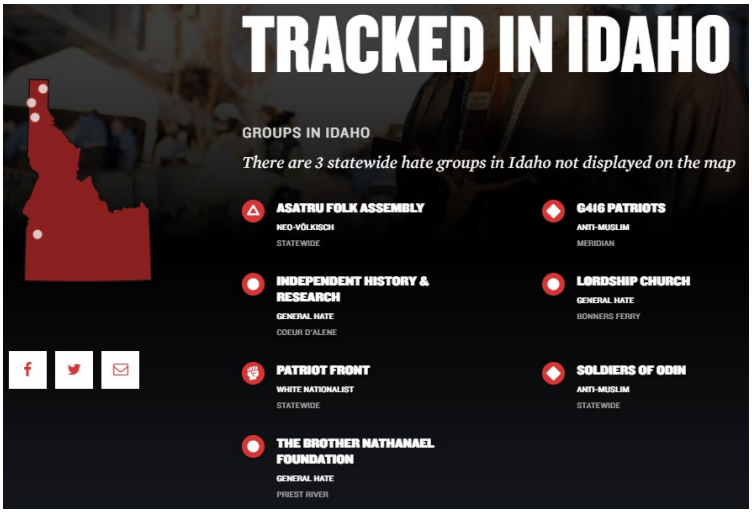
Table 8-1 Hate Groups (HG) in Idaho and in the United States Information from Hate Map | Southern Poverty Law Center (splcenter.org) accessed 11/13/21*

Year	**2020**	**2019**	**2018**	**2017**	**2016**	**2015**	**2014**	**2013**	**2012**	**2011**	**2010**	**2009**	**2008**	**2007**	**2006**	**2005**	**2004**	**2003**	**2002**
Idaho HG	7	7	10	12	12	8	10	9	17	18	13	9	7	8	7	7	7	7	9
US HG	838	940	1020	954	917	892	784	939	1007	1018	1002	932	926	884	841	801	761	749	705

Idaho followed a similar trajectory with a similar peak in 2016/2017. According to the SPLC Hate Map, Idaho had 12 active hate groups in 2016, 12 in 2017, and 10 in 2018. These numbers are updated every January by the SPLC, so they actually represent the number of hate groups found active the year before. The earlier peak of 2016/2017 shows that Idaho was a state that had white supremacist groups looking for a leader who would demonstrate, value, and uphold white supremacist beliefs. While not as high as during Obama's two-term presidency, the difference between presidency, the difference between the lull at the end of Obama's second term in office and the start of Trump's presidency appears stark and significant. Since 2019, the number has tapered and held consistent at seven groups. **Figure 8-3** shows a map of the hate group locations in Idaho for 2020.

[54] Within this table one can see another and perhaps even more disturbing peak and trend that occurred between the years of 2010 and 2012. Those years coincide with the Obama presidency and his reelection, and I would argue the struggles the United States had with having a Black president.

Figure 8-3 Hate Groups and their Locations in Idaho as of 2020 Source: Southern Poverty Law Center accessed 11/5/21



When looking at the incident in May of 2017 and the one in December in 2020, which is the focus of this chapter, one cannot help but notice that the timing seems tied to the political climate of the time and the Trump presidency. Dan Prinzing describes the incidents and their relationship as "bookends" because of their occurrences at the start and end of Trump's presidency (Prinzing). Something about the political moment at the start, during, and at the end of the Trump presidency seems to have emboldened both groups and individuals across the nation to act out in hateful ways toward spaces and places of diversity as well as to attack verbally, visually, and physically individuals and groups of marginalized individuals in an effort to display dominance. As mentioned in Chapter Two, for some individuals who reside in the United States, diversity is dangerous because it disrupts what those individuals feel is proper hierarchy of power within the US. This hierarchy is nothing but white supremacy dressed up as nationalism, patriotism, and pride. It would seem that Boise is but one example that demonstrates how individuals felt encouraged by Trump to promote hatred in a space that was designed to be inclusive and support diversity. Of the December 2020 incident, Mayor Lauren McLean recalls,

> We were in the throes, as was the rest of this country, of a conflict over the pandemic. There was a rise in extremist language and threats in our politics, that when the community saw this action placed in the context of time, I think, begged the response that Boiseians provided: not that they had to but they felt called to do it in the context of time with everything swirling around us. (McLean)

Acknowledging the context of a swastika hate act is an appropriate start to a response for a community. By acknowledging context, the conversation around the swastika hate act demonstrates understanding–not as an excuse for behavior but as a way to better see the underpinning of the swastika hate act in order to better combat, within the response, undercurrents of emotion or aspects of reasoning that brought about the action in the first place. This is an example of opening up a conversation rather than silencing it.

When thinking about the "bookends," Prinzing attributes to Trump's election and presidency, Prinzing recalls responding to a reporter's question after the May 2017 defacement. Reporters asked Prinzing the question, "Is this who and what Boise is?" He replied, "Don't judge us by the act of an individual or individuals. Wait and listen to how the community responds," but he said when asked the same question about the incident in December of 2020, he wondered "Maybe this is who we are becoming. You know, if you begin to establish a pattern, you have to wonder, are we subject to such or is this who we are becoming?" (Prinzing). He voiced this wonder in an interview shortly after the December incident, and his comment drew some backlash from the Boiseans, indignant that he might suggest that Boise and Idaho were becoming locations where white supremacy was making a comeback and growing. Even though his comment drew a visceral response by Boiseans, Prinzing believed his comment served as a moment where the community had to decide "What are we and why does an act like this

happen?" (Prinzing) Boise's response to his question was to *redesign* their *community response to trauma*, which included a campaign intended to support the mitigation of harm to victims, to heal a community, and to prevent such hate acts from occurring again. What the community decided to do as a response to his statement is outlined in the remainder of this chapter.

8.4 Supportive Responses Grounded in Kindness

"We've seen in history, there are moments. Then there are movements, right? And when do you, how do you, turn a moment into a movement?" (Dr. Dan Prinzing)

The arc of the narrative leading up to the December 2020 hate act has many moving parts, and even the collection above is truncated in its representation of several articles and websites. The narrative I outlined also could not have been delivered in an online news article that is limited by its genre conventions to be a short read requiring less than seven minutes to read. Despite being truncated, the narrative above does provide readers with some historical context for the December 2020 hate act and shows how that particular hate act and the community's response to it are part of Boise's long fight against white supremacy and intolerance. Boise Mayor Lauren McLean describes it as "yet another one of those points that we need to see in a suite of events occurring in our community" where Boise could establish and re-exert who they were as a community. Mayor Lauren McLean described the community response as "wrapping their arms" around the victims and in doing so, "making clear our values and creating action around the amplification of our values." By coming together and defining the community as inclusive and supportive of diversity, she believes it "helps us heal and helps bring us back together, so we can do the next thing" (McLean). But how to do this and move beyond the spoken words of support that often create an us versus them dichotomy that allows people to

feel good in the moment of the denouncing utterance but provides no long-lasting victim support or future mitigation of harm?

Boise's response does move beyond the utterance, but like all communities, speech within letters and statements did occur. How statements were handled and how the community was provided opportunities to engage as a result of statements issues demonstrates that Boise's redesign makes the best use of Boise leadership and the various stakeholders and assemblages–embodied and material–within the community. Because of the location, the history, the rhetorical context, and the larger community's values, the individuals who discovered the hate act wasted no time circulating and condemning it on social media and notifying police the morning of December 8th, 2020. The Boise Police Department dispatched officers to the Memorial, and Chief Ryan Lee recognized the "incredible harm" done by the stickers (Lee). The nature of the symbol coupled with the phrase's use as a popular white supremacy slogan, meant he assigned the investigation to the violent crimes unit rather than the property crimes unit, which is often the default procedure for some police departments in these moments of community trauma. After recording and collecting evidence, Boise police and various community members, who saw the posts online, removed the stickers and their residual adhesive. Police involvement, documentation, and some form of cleanup–be it by victims, individuals in the community, or municipal entities–would have been enough for some communities and would have resulted in silencing the critical conversation and community engagement around the swastika hate act, but not for Boise.

As discussed in the chapter focused on the metagenre of *silence*, only removing a swastika and involving the police prevents sophisticated and critical engagement with the harm done to victims and the larger community. The community in Boise, feeling the eyes of the

nation upon them and recognizing that their long-held struggle with white supremacy was not over, chose to engage with the hate act and the harm it caused. The Boise community responded in four defined ways, which marked and reclaimed the space as inclusive for all. *First*, police labeled and treated it as a hate crime rather than solely a property crime. *Second*, government on all levels condemned the hate act but also participated in dissemination of information to create a unified front. *Third* community members were able to engage and show outward support in a variety of material and embodied ways. *Finally*, community corporations, business leaders, and the downtown business association created a recuperative campaign that consisted of yard signs for homes and businesses as well as street banners for the downtown area. This campaign co-opted the phrasing of the hateful sticker and rebranded it as an inclusive phrase. The actions of these four groups of stakeholders, which will be discussed in detail below, provide concrete examples of how a community creates security, decenters perpetrators, celebrates kindness, and promotes diversity. These actions also directly or indirectly support the emotional, social, and physical well-being of the targets/targeted communities as integral members of the larger community and do much to mitigate the harm of the current hate act and work toward a future where such hate acts would be less likely to happen again.

8.4.1 The Beginning of a Redesign: Organizing and Unifying a Community

The findings chapters have all illustrated the *available designs* within the embodied metagenres of *silence, speech,* and *support*, and when we look at the data within individual news stories, we can see how these function, are centered, or are re-combined in redesigns. Boise gives us a unique redesign where police, municipal leadership, community members, community corporations, business leaders, and the downtown business association all functioned alongside one another in a unified approach with a shared vision and connection despite not being centrally

organized in that there was not one person calling the shots. Instead, various subgroups and individuals within the community participated in tandem with one another and rallied around a slogan, first issued by the perpetrator but then was taken up by supporters of victims and of Boise as being inclusive. It was a moment of grassroots response by an individual/individuals, who placed notes of support on the memorial that turned into a citywide activity and rally cry.

Small towns can organize and coordinate activities more easily, but Boise is the capital of Idaho; it is no one main street town where everyone knows everyone else by name. Boise's police department has 300 officers, and the Downtown Boise Association maintains a membership of 700 businesses, some of which have their national headquarters in Boise such as Micron, St. Luke's Health System, Albertsons, Winco, Healthwise and the J R Simplot Company. Boise School District has 33 elementary schools, 8 junior high schools, and 5 senior high schools with more than 26,000 students, and Boise State University, located near downtown Boise, has an enrollment of over 25,000. Unifying a community this large requires some doing, but Boise has some small-town tendencies that demonstrate their connectedness and disposition to look out and care for one another (Prinzing, Fleming). For instance, the local high schools use the YMCA facilities for physical education. This kind of community networking can be found in other communities in the United States where resources are shared, but perhaps is seen more often in smaller communities, which form this kind of interdependence because of limited resources.

Even with the networks that Boise has created, when a moment of trauma such as a swastika hate act impacts a community, there is still a great deal of work that has to occur to create a unified purpose or response, and this work was not as obvious in other community responses to swastika hate acts within *TSCP*. The prominent public location and its rhetorical

context in terms of the history and politics created a vision and connection within the community in Boise, but our data shows many other communities across the nation also experienced swastikas on under/overpasses, in parks, on monuments, or on libraries but did not have the concerted effort that Boise did.

The Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial is central to the community, physically, and emotionally as the embodiment and representation of the values and ideals of community members, and for that reason, there is an added interest by the community to preserve the space and make it safe. The hundreds of pavers with donors' names that floor the memorial, wall plaques of sponsors, and small dedicated spaces from individuals such as Anne Frank's friend Miep Gies testify to the community connection and buy in, literally and figuratively, individuals and the community has in this place, and this most certainly may have played a part in unifying the community. Paul Fleming, Senior Account Manager of the Boise Metro Chamber, describes the memorial site as being "in the heart of our community, and it's right on the river. You pass it; you walk through it; you bike through it on your way to campus or students on their way to downtown. It is one of those veins. It's in the perfect spot" (Fleming). Other communities, however, have also experienced swastikas on churches, synagogues, and schools, which are central valued spaces within communities. There is something unique in Boise's redesign of a response, however. Because of its history, Boise's response may be one of a kind, a *redesign*, but Boise's response also then becomes one of the *available designs* that could be replicated by other communities in the future. As a redesign it could be taken up, and in its typification, it could permanently alter the embodied rhetorical genre of *community response to trauma* for the long term.

8.4.2 The Epicenter: The Wassmuth Center for Human Rights

While Boise's response is unique, it would not have occurred without the connections between the various stakeholders within the city, nor would it have occurred quite the way it did without the epicenter of activity put forth by Wassmuth Center for Human Rights and its director, Dr. Dan Prinzing. As noted in the intro of this chapter, Prinzing knew of or worked with all of the more known and powerful community stakeholders involved in the response. They turned to him for direction as to how to respond to the swastika hate act that harmed the space he oversaw as a leader himself in the community.

As mentioned in the start of this chapter Prinzing began working at the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights in 2007, and his work with the Center has helped set it up as an integral part of the community whether it be community education and outreach, travel and support abroad for human rights, or being a depository of resources for other organizations to utilize. While one could not equate the Center with Prinzing, his work has made him the face for the Center the last fourteen years and the person to whom the community turns when it comes to anything Center-related. The swastika hate act on the Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial therefore fell under his purview, and as a result he and the center became a hub, so to speak, for the community response to the hate act. The Memorial was the symbolic target for the hate act as it stood for, and still stands for, diversity and inclusion; the inclusion of the Declaration of Human Rights on the tablets within the space as well as a statue of Anne Frank, who perished due to hatred and violations of her human rights testify to the focus of that space.

8.4.2.1 Police Involvement and Clean Up: Silencing or Supporting?

As was the case in many instances noted in *TSCP*, police were immediately called the morning of December 8th. The move of calling the police as shown in the data initiates the

recording of the hate act and starts the process to rectify the damage done to private or public property legally. The data demonstrates that this move, along with cleanup, is sometimes the only response to a swastika hate act.[55] As mentioned in Chapter Four, for many communities, once it is in the hands of the police, the belief can be that it has been dealt with, and justice for the target of the crime will work through police investigation. This often functions to silence critical conversations around victim harm as it focuses on property and casts the legal system and police in the role of rectifiers of the crime committed when the community also needs to deal with the embodied harm done to its members. Also mentioned previously in the *silence* chapter, how the police perceive the harm and who has been harmed by the swastika impacts the investigation, so their response and treatment of the hate act also communicates to the target community as well as the larger community a lot about the values of the police department. The Boise Police Department's choice to label and treat the incident at the Memorial as a hate crime and its deployment of the violent crimes unit rather than the property crime unit is telling. Labeling a swastika incident as a hate crime lets all members in the community know that the police see this crime as being more than about property and sets the police up as allies in the embodied struggle of how communities deal with hate and acts of hate.[56]

Chief Ryan Lee's approach to this crime is indicative of his approach to policing. How a police department perceives its constituents determines their treatment of those constituents, and those in their community watch to see how individuals are treated. That treatment creates a sense

[55] There were actually 253 instances where police investigation was the only actor/move combination, and 31 additional instances where there were two moves and police were the actors in both. There were also 96 instances where cleanup was the only move made by various actors.

[56] As talked about in the introduction, the definition of a hate crime nationally found here United States Department of Justice-Hate Crimes-Learn More says "At the federal level, a crime motivated by bias against race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability." Proving motivation can be challenging and how a community determines what is or is not a hate crime locally varies.

of security, but it can also sow mistrust. Chief Lee has done much within the Boise Police Department to create better community connections. With the creation of the Training, Education and Development Division (TEDD), Lee has focused on officer education with the task force to address implicit bias that officers may use when they encounter members of the community. Lee also brings the police cadets to the Memorial upon their graduation to remind them of their role in ensuring the human rights of all who inhabit the town. His actions and this activity was significant in the eyes of those I interviewed, including Lee, as being unique and special about the BPD (Fleming, Lee, Prinzing, Thompson). When those who are charged with keeping the peace are treating community members with respect, that does much to increase a community's support and trust that the police are acting in their best interest and value all who live within their precincts. Lee sees his department as acting alongside community members in creating a "community not based on identities but ideals" (Lee). In talking with cadets at the Memorial, Chief Lee reminds them of these ideas when he says that "the heart of community policing is to see that we are the community and must protect every part of it and ensure justice for everyone" ("Anne Frank Memorial Academy Class").[57] The BPD's visible presence at the Memorial beyond moments of crisis and community harm demonstrates in embodied ways the value the BPD has for the Memorial and what it stands for. As a member of a larger group, who is often associated with the metagenre of *silence*, according to our data, Lee's approach challenges the ways police are seen and function within the community and provides other police departments with ways to engage when swastika hate acts happen within their boundaries.

As with other community responses, along with police involvement is the move to clean or cover up the swastika. By removing it from view, the further harm of those who encounter it is

[57] The full video of his talk can be seen here: https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=457695172133965&ref=sharing

removed, but so is discussion around the swastika being placed there in the first place. Prinzing, along with others such as Fleming, cleaned the stickers off after the police were finished gathering evidence, but Prinzing was faced with a dilemma. Cleaning it up without discussion would allow the community to choose not to deal with the circumstances, emotions, and underlying hate that some community members had and felt emboldened to share in that space. Prinzing debated sharing the images after they had already been removed. After sitting on it for a couple of hours, he said he decided to share the images because to do otherwise would "just sweep it under a rug and pretend as if it does not exist" (Prinzing). He says that he was glad he shared the photos because "that's when the community began to rally in their support. Their proclamation, 'This is unacceptable' was coming loud and clear" (Prinzing). The choice to share the images is a challenging one and one that *TSCP* has also grappled with as the database contains the images of the swastikas when they were found in the news stories. The crux of the issue is that by capturing the images of the swastikas and allowing them to be viewed, one opens those swastikas up to further circulation and possible harm to historically targeted groups, but like Prinzing, *TSCP* felt it important to capture the swastika to not only to document and prove its materiality within spaces but to also force conversations about what it means and how it harms. As discussed in the metagenre *silence* chapter, cleanup with no discussion does nothing to mitigate future harm. Prinzing's decision to share the images was a way to force the community to discuss who and what they were and what they stood for, and the community responded to that call.

8.4.2.2 **Speech** *as a Metagenre and the Issuing of Statements in Boise*

As discussed in the two chapters on *speech*, statements and letters from various members of the larger community often condemned the perpetrator while also invoking a sense of

community either by defining what the community was or what it was not. Boise community leaders were no different in issuing statements. Where the Boise leaders were a bit different in this genre of response was that they acknowledged the problem that brought about the hate act to begin with and then pointed to or asked for concrete actions of solidarity in rectifying the harm done to the community as a result of the hate act. Mayor McLean's statement in a public virtual meeting held on December 10th, just two days after the hate act demonstrates this. Mayor McLean convened a meeting with Wassmuth Director Dan Prinzing, Senior Vice President, Legal Affairs, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary at Micron Technology, Inc. Joel Poppen, and Rabbi Dan Fink. McLean started the meeting acknowledging Idaho's history,

> We in Boise, we in Idaho, know because of the history that we've had that it is so important to address [hate] to move forward from it, and it's time that we do it again; that we renew our commitment to doing that again. I want to say from a city perspective, you know I deeply believe that we are a stronger community because we are really willing to address what has been here, what is here, and we're willing to talk about who we are and who we want to be. That is so important particularly in these tough tough days, and that makes us in many ways unique: the connections that we have to each other, our willingness to be honest about elements that are here, and our deep desire to protect the people of this place and to make this place a better community for it.(Community Meeting)

Here McLean articulates the need for community discussion around identity–not just who they are but who they want to be. She acknowledges the long history of Idaho, but instead of dismissing it as being in the past, she addresses it head on and admits that those "elements" are present in the community and that if the goal is a safe community, those "elements" need to be

addressed in ways that protect the community and strengthen it. When interviewed, McLean said that this meeting with Prinzing, Rabbi Fink, and Poppen of was not just a public meeting about condemnation, "We took the quick step of having a community conversation, condemning [the incident] of course in our statements, but then telling the community we'd be calling on them to join us in action to amplify and push back on what had happened and amplify who we really were." This call to action manifested in many ways that moved beyond the "thoughts and prayers" move of just condemning and invocation of community without actionable items of support because it asked the community of Boise to define what it was and protect the people within it. The actions of McLean's office that followed this statement demonstrated that there was support for victims beyond words. Her office disseminated information about the events and activities that the community could engage in. She says, "We shared on the social media perspective as the signs were being distributed, different things like that, like tried to elevate the voices of the organization that was running the campaign" (McLean). One might ask if sharing is an act, but when talking about coordinating a whole community response, dissemination of information in terms of how community members can engage does work as a conduit for action because it invites participation of all individuals within the larger community. Her inclusion and public conversation with key stakeholders in the community and the community identity demonstrates that for her, conversation means involving all individuals who are impacted by the incident, and the act of conversation can and did lead to further action within the community. Through conversation and the bringing of key stakeholders to the table, community needs (both the larger community and smaller target communities) are articulated and can be better

understood and thus met.[58] A key challenge with the "thoughts and prayers" response is that the focus of those statements and letters is condemnation and invocation of community. McLean, however, offered a different framing that provided opportunity for engagement and asks—or demands—that the community reconstitute and redefine who they are when faced with a swastika placed in their town. From the data, rarely do "thoughts and prayers" responses involve an identification with the target community or an invitation to the larger community to engage with and talk about the harm done by the swastika and how to mitigate that harm. In this way McLean's conversation with leaders in the community—especially the Jewish community with Rabbi Fink—was a move to listen to individuals who have been harmed about best ways to forward as a larger community.

8.4.2.3 Corporate Activism: Just an Assemblage of Concern around Identity or Support?

The mayor's meeting with key players in the community brought business leaders, community corporations, business leaders, and the downtown business association into the conversation. Being part of the conversation created an impetus for larger participation and support whether it was Micron's financial support for human rights education programing, Chobani's financial support for construction of the new Wassmuth Education Center, Healthwise's partnership to create yard signs for home and business, or the Boise Business Association's creation of street banners for the downtown area. Centered within these responses is the Wassmuth Center and Dr. Dan Prinzing; he provided a touchstone and point of contact for the various strands that amalgamated into corporate activism.

[58] The city of Boise's website describes McLean's vision of creating a city that is "truly for everyone" where there is "a seat at the table for residents when decisions about the future of Boise are being made," and her actions seem to enact those beliefs (About the Mayor | City of Boise).

Businesses and business leaders recognize that Boise needs to draw in innovative employees in order to make the business flourish and grow, and an event like the hate act on the Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial is not good for business because it sends a message that some individuals are not welcome in Boise. This concern about perception by those outside the city or town was discussed in the earlier chapter on community leaders and speech. Fleming shares this sentiment when he said in an his interview:

> [a] goal of our community is to attract, grow, and retain talent. And the other goal of our community is to grow correctly. Right, try to get in front of the influx of people with correct infrastructure. And I think that's kind of the goal of every community: to have the hierarchy of needs met, as well as elevate the opportunities for our citizens to enjoy this beautiful place that we call home. (Fleming)

Hate acts like the one in Boise prevent cities from attracting diversity and talent and can be quite problematic when it comes to recruitment and growth as a business, so a response needs to consider outsiders' perceptions (Fleming, Thompson). This is not to say that Boise was motivated by looking outward in order to "appear" like the city cared, but as mentioned earlier, the historic context of Idaho being the home to white supremacists is a narrative that is always at the back of the mind of Boiseans. Therefore, how they appear to the world beyond their geographical location must be a consideration when it comes to bringing in talent to innovate and create with the end goal of growing Boise into a place that is inclusive of diversity.

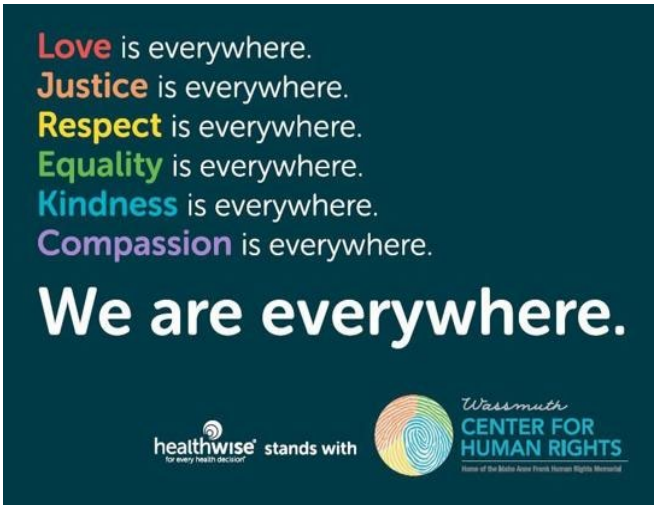
Businesses engaging in conversations about the future of the community was not the only way businesses and corporations participated in activism. Somewhere upwards of 40 businesses signed a letter condemning the act, and that letter was forwarded to city and state officials (Prinzing). Micron Technology, Inc., an American producer of computer memory and computer

data storage, has its corporate offices in Boise and donated money toward educational programs at the Wassmuth Center, and Chobani, another Idaho-based company, donated toward the construction of the new Wassmuth Center. Both companies used their funds to support community education as an entry point to mitigate future hate acts because they believe in the various programs developed by the Wassmuth Center that are designed to help create upstanders, disrupt the spiral of injustice, and provide resources for teachers about the Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial. In this way these large businesses have their eye toward the future and ensuring and supporting programming of the Wassmuth Center that does much to counter othering and hate.

8.4.2.4 Co-opting Hate Speech: "We are Everywhere"

Healthwise perhaps had the most visible participation in responding to the swastika hate act because they worked with Prinzing and the Wassmuth Center to create yard signs like the one below in **Figure 8-4**.[59] The process by which Healthwise and the Wassmuth Center created these

Figure 8-4 Design for yard sign by Healthwise in conjunction with the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights Source: Wassmuth Center for Human Rights



[59] Healthwise is a non-profit company founded in 1975 that develops health content and patient education for the health insurance companies, care management companies, hospitals, and consumer health websites (Healthwise - Wikipedia).

signs and the choice to use the wording they did demonstrates a reassertion of Boise's identity as being inclusive and supportive. Their move also co-opts the threatening language of the perpetrator, "WE ARE EVERYWHERE."

Using the language of the perpetrator could have gone horribly bad for the community campaign. However, the re-branding of the phrase along with its partner phrases changed the meaning. While the phrase in connection with the swastika was intended to mark the place of Boise and space of the Anne Frank Memorial as exclusive and for certain kinds of bodies, the signs created by Healthwise and The Wassmuth Center, using the very same phrase, mark the place of Boise and spaces within Boise as actually being the opposite: inclusive for everyone. Prinzing admits, "if Neo-Nazis had copyrighted the tagline we stole it; we broke copyright. Because then we made it ours" (Prinzing). In using the language on the stickers and flipping its meaning, the yard signs, and eventually the town banners, changed the definition of "we" and transformed it to the opposite of its intended meaning with the stickers.

Figure 8-5 Flower and handmade notes and pictures placed in front of the Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial in Boise, ID Source: Kristen McPeek, IdahoNews

How the campaign landed on the phrase came from several notes left at the Anne Frank Memorial that said things like “We choose love;” “Love is everywhere;” “We lead with LOVE and we are EVERYWHERE” (See **Figure 8-**5 above, McPeek). Some of those signs are pictured below in Prinzing and Healthwise felt that there was something to co-opting the phrase and redefining the notion of “we.” While white supremacists use “we” as a threat designed to convey surveillance of non-white, non-cis, non-heterosexual, and non-Christian gaze, the yard sign expands the definition of “we” to be broader. If anything, the use of “we” turns the gaze back on the original “we” of the white supremacists and sets them outside the definition of the “we” Boise proposes, if individuals do not agree with the values in these statements. This new use of “we” in the signs invokes a large number of invisible (or visible because of the signs themselves) participants much like the “we” in the swastika stickers, but the new use is not a threatening “we.” Instead the use of “we” extends kindness, respect, and other values one would want from individuals with whom they associate and from the larger community in which they live.

Once the signs were produced, the rebranding of the phrase was literally everywhere: shop windows, people’s yards, on cars, and in social media. Below is a photo taken ten months after the hate act (**See Figure 8-6** below). Fleming remarked that the Boise Chamber used a digital reader board on their building right by the freeway where individuals travel in and out of Boise to share the phrases shown on the Healthwise and Wassmuth Center’s yard signs (Fleming). Mayor McLean also said that the city’s reader board also displayed the message phrases (McLean).

Figure 8-6 Yard sign in a Boise neighborhood yard October 17, 2021 (10 months after the incident) Source: Personal photograph 10/2021

The "We are everywhere" campaign did not just stop with yard signs. Jennifer Hensley, the executive director of the Downtown Boise Association (DBA), who oversees management of the Downtown Boise Improvement District (BID), organized the creation of banners for the lamp posts downtown (See **Figure 9-7** below). Hensley believed that taking action was, "better than doing nothing as long as you did it in good faith," so after hearing about the hate act and the yard signs being printed, Hensley saw an opportunity to "lean into" the campaign and take it to the "next level." She did not, however, want to draw attention to the fact that the association was in the process of creating these banners because she felt that announcing what they were doing would not "feel genuine. That just feels like you're trying to do a thing for attention" (Hensley). She did not want the banners to be read as some kind of stunt to make the association look good

(Hensley). Instead, by quietly creating and putting them up with no announcement, she made visible and material the support the DBA had for the targeted community and the Wassmuth Center without making it all about DBA and notoriety. To create the banners, she sought out Prinzing and partnered with him and the Wassmuth Center to make sure all the proper permissions were obtained from The Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, Netherlands in order to use Anne Frank's iconic image (Hensley).

Figure 8-7 Designs for the three banners created by the Downtown Boise Association Source: Downtown Boise Association

In creating the three banners above, she described the process as a group decision that came from the community response. She said: "'We are everywhere' was something that was out there. And then the word 'love' kept floating around, so we wanted three different versions. ...We wanted the 'We are everywhere' and we wanted 'love' and so we kind of wanted something that tied it together that didn't feel like these were just stand-alones" (Hensley).[60] Hensley also

[60] The use of Anne Frank's image did concern some members of the community only because to use her image in connection with a phrase like "Love is everywhere" seems tone deaf for some within the Jewish Community (Fink). Afterall she was sent to a concentration camp where she died, so where was the love there? Here, perhaps, her image with the phrase is meant to allude to her famous quote, "In spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart. I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery, and death. I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness, I hear the ever approaching thunder, which will destroy us too, I can

remarked that they purposefully used the pastel colors of pink, lavender, and light blue for the banners to stand out against the holiday decor of deep reds and greens that were prevalent during that time of year. Their goal was that the banners would catch people's eyes and would therefore create engagement with the messages the banners conveyed (Hensley).

Figure 8-8 A year later the Anne Frank Banners with "WE ARE EVERYWHERE" still remain near the Memorial. Source: Personal photograph 10/2021

Like the yard signs, these banners marked spaces. Hensley recognized this, so "We wanted to put them in one of the most prominent spots in downtown. We put them down Capitol Boulevard, as you're driving up towards the capitol building. That was important to us" (Hensley). This way anyone visiting the Boise capital would know what Boiseans stood for. The banners became a claim about identity and defined Boise as being inclusive by using the language originally set forth by the perpetrators of the hate act as being exclusive. A year later

feel the sufferings of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end, and that peace and tranquility will return again." (*The Diary of Anne Frank)*

the only remaining banners are the ones that encircle the Anne Frank Memorial. They are pictured above in **Figure 8-8** and show only the one design, “We are everywhere” as a clap back to the stickers that marred that space 10 months before.

What was amazing about these banners was that the entire process from creating the wording and designs to getting permissions to printing the banners to putting the 75 banners up took only two weeks: an almost impossible feat when you think of all the individuals involved and the fact that many of the groups involved had other things to do (Hensley). The speed with which this was done indicates that it was a priority. Hensley recollects that everyone stopped the projects they were doing and moved the banners to the front of the line; “It was great, like everybody was in line to it as quick as possible but as powerful as possible” (Hensley). Again, response time was important for Hensley and the DBA because it ties into the association's belief that their job is to make downtown Boise a clean and safe place for all, and by marketing the positive aspects of the community, she hoped that the banners would help individuals feel safe downtown. Being positive was important for her because,

> We weren't going down the same road of “whoever did this is terrible.” You don't have to say that. All we need to say is that's not who we want to be. We did talk a lot about, “this isn't who we are,” and that was something that we thought of at one point. ...And I think there's really good meaning behind that, but it apparently is somebody in this community. And so I think pushing it out and saying the “We are love” statement to me means the majority of the people around you are not like this. And so I think the idea of putting it out there as a positive, and saying that we understand you're here, but you're not us; you’re not the biggest, loudest voice. (Hensley)

Hensley's sentiment echoes the sentiments of others in terms of celebrating kindness and not focusing on perpetrators. In many ways the power of perpetrators lives in how people talk about them, and when you do not give perpetrators airtime or focus, they are decentered and lose power. This decentering of perpetrators and centering of victims via speech demonstrates a redesign on how speech plays out in other swastika hate acts. Perpetrators are the ones shifted to the margins, and Boise, which has defined itself as inclusive for all marginalized communities, is centered.

8.4.2.5 Opportunities for Individuals to Engage

Part of an embodied community response to a swastika hate act is the ability of individuals within the town to physically engage in a variety of ways. Boise community members were able to engage and show outward support in diverse material and embodied ways because of the opportunities civic leaders created for engagement. The engagement and participation of Boiseans gives them a "positive platform" beyond the "everything is terrible one" that could exist and allows some way to express support and to engage in meaningful ways (Hensley). Community members did engage by putting up yard signs, taking photos with the banners and posting on social media, donating money, leaving notes and flowers at the Memorial, and attending two gatherings organized by members of the community. The first informal gathering occurred days after the hate act and was a small one at the Memorial because of COVID-19 mandates. There was also another formal virtual gathering that was organized by the Wassmuth Center that involved leaders, musicians and local students, which was accessible via closed captioning and ASL to individuals in Boise and across the state and nation. The reason that participation varied was because the city leaders created pathways to disseminate information to the community while also keeping costs for participation low.

Jennifer Hensley sums up why engagement and the financial costs of engagement are important when they decided upon a response. She says:

> One thing that was very important to us last year is recognizing how hit everything was financially. Here, there was a housing crisis. And so we were working really hard to come up with ways for people to engage with downtown, free, but still be a part of the community…I felt like putting something out that was free to you for you to enjoy and walk around reading or to take a photo of and engage with or whatever you would like to do gives anyone, who can't donate money, [who] doesn't have a yard to put a yard sign, or [who] doesn't have the ability to go to an event because they've got kiddos: those sorts of things. It gives them an opportunity to engage in that. (Hensley)

Not asking for money in a town where individuals are struggling for resources during a pandemic seems prudent, especially since some of the rhetoric around hate acts stems from a fear that certain groups are taking resources away from other groups. The yard signs were "donation only" and never sold because of the generosity of Healthwise, who paid for the first 1500 to be printed (Prinzing). Prinzing describes that many times individuals would come in to pick up a sign and donate upwards of $50 to allow for continued production and to allow others to pick up signs without having to worry about donating anything (Prinzing). These donations resulted in the ability to print another 5000 more signs (Prinzing). Here one sees the generosity of individuals in the community who did have money helping those who did not, which allowed for more participation and as a result, more areas of town were marked with the signs. Access was key in dissemination of information and the spread of the campaign. The Wassmuth Center was and continues to be the primary distribution center, but the Center also set up distribution locations in Caldwell, Nampa, Meridian, Idaho Falls, Pocatello, McCall, Coeur d'Alene and

Sandpoint and shipped yard signs statewide (Prinzing). As mentioned, signs and banners still remain over a year after they were first put up, and this is a testimony to Boise's commitment to redefining and reconstituting themselves as a community that is kind, inclusive, and supports its residents.

While Boise's response does show how some silencing and speech acts could be used in ways that were more supportive, there were some who were concerned that the Boise community's response could be just a performative act designed to create a form of complacency for individuals within the community. Both Philip Thompson, the Executive Director of the Idaho Black History Museum, and Rabbi Dan Fink of Congregation Ahavath Beth Israel (CABI) cautioned against the yard signs being the only kind of support offered by the community because they argued that signs are not enough (Thompson, Fink). The signs could be read as "empty gestures," like ribbons on your car or yard signs supporting veterans or Black Lives Matter (Thompson). They could become a kind of "cop out;" that "affords you that feel-good moment to feel like you did something, but you literally did the bare minimum to make yourself feel better, and to somehow relieve yourself of the responsibility of having to do more" (Thompson). This may certainly be true in part because of the nature of Boise's response. It is easy to put up a sign, and like many who repost things on social media, it could be a form of slacktivism that only serves the ego of the person doing it. Here again, motivation does not change the material and embodied consequences of signs being placed in locations. The material and visual marking of those signs in those locations does do something because those signs tell target communities that the qualities on those signs are desired in those locations.

The signs also verbalize in visual and material ways the personal investment (because of its location private property in some instances) of the owners that they would mark themselves as

possible targets of the perpetrators for disagreeing with the perpetrator about who "we" is. While I understand that the individual placing that sign on their private property may not be a member of the community targeted by swastikas, unless the perpetrator or someone who agrees with the perpetrator knows the individual who own the property they are only left with the material sign that someone who is not allied with their beliefs occupies that space.

Another argument could be that just because a sign has those words and a person puts those signs up in their space as a marker that does not mean those qualities exist in that home or business because an individual's self-perception may be different than others' perceptions of that individual. Placing a sign in a business might also function as a marketing ploy like when Pride Month or Black History Month occurs, and that is a valid point. Here the kairos of that moment makes it fashionable, chic, or trendy to support a group or cause when practices within the business do not support that affiliation This dissertation does not weigh in on this argument but rather acknowledges a possible social limitation where someone might believe they are "woke" in theory or perform "wokeness" as a ploy to gain business when in practice, they may not actually embody the values on the sign.

The coloring and structure of the signs created by Healthwise and The Wassmuth Center feel familiar as they echo the "In this house we believe…" signs first created by Kristin Garvey in 2016 the day after Trump was elected president (Mak). In this way, the 2020 Boise signs function mimetically as they echo the sentiment of the original rainbow-colored signs of 2016 and allude to the "bookends" that Prinzing referred to when the Anne Frank Memorial was defaced in 2017. Boise's signs, however, take abstract ideals like love, justice, respect, equity, kindness, and compassion and connect them vial parallel structure to the "we" within the "we are everywhere" and in essences redefine the "we:" a much different "we" than the perpetrator

intended. It is of interest that these signs are rainbow-colored and may demonstrate being more inclusive beyond the statements issued as rainbow flags and pins are used to mark support for LGBTQIA+ communities. The LGBTQIA+ community is not explicitly supported in the wording, but one has to wonder in a state where civil rights and marriage equality for the LGBTQIA+ community is still fraught and illegal, if this was a nod to those communities without explicitly stating it.

Because Boise's sign refers to abstract and absolute notions of what constitutes the Boise community, one could argue that using the word everywhere is not or could not be true, especially when juxtaposed with the hate act of 2020. There is hate, injustice, disrespect, inequity, unkindness, and a lack of compassion in the world and in Boise. Saying that there are these things in Boise does not make it true. However, Prinzing argues the signs are not designed to be present absolutes but rather reminders that there is good in the world should we choose to focus on that good. Similar to the sentiments behind the "In this house we believe…" yard signs, Prinzing argues, "the real message is that sometimes when we are confronted with evil, the voices of good have to stand up a little louder, taller and louder, proclaiming who and what we are" and "not only does the voice of good have to get louder. It has to be also amplified in its presence" (Prinzing). If a community choses to celebrate the good and not discuss what got it here, there is the potential for silencing to occur, but Prinzing and Hensley say here were trying to focus on the good that is Boise as a way of defining and amplifying what Boise is and should be. This amplification, or uptake, Prinzing refers to comes about as a result of participation and circulation. The more participation you have, the more uptick there is in circulation, and the more circulation there is, the more a message is amplified.

The celebration of good within a community is a way to move the focus away from perpetrators and does more to center the target community because it demonstrates in large numbers that there are more who do care and support diversity than there are that do not. It may not center victims entirely, and it could be more about the community members' feelings about themselves than actually supporting victims. However, when it comes to comfort of the targeted communities, one has to believe that seeing a large number of individuals proclaiming their support and identity as an inclusive "we" versus the exclusive "we" of the white supremacists must bring some comfort even though one acknowledges that the absolute statements used are not universally applicable within the community.

8.5 Community as Action

Boise's response to the swastika hate act of December 2020 demonstrates some definable responses that address community harm on both small and large scales and provides other communities with a redesign in terms of community response. The police acted quickly and treated the incident as a hate act; the city leadership took on the role of dissemination of information and tasking Boise to act; businesses contributed financially and created opportunities for community member participation; and community members gathered in person and virtually for a vigil, left notes and flowers of support, and circulated the campaign's message by placing signs in their yards. Boise "understood the assignment" when it recognized the seriousness of the swastika hate act and how their response to the hate act would influence how they would be perceived by those within and those outside of the community, and they worked to decenter perpetrators and center victims. In essence, the hate act asked Boiseans to articulate what the community is as well as what it wants to be. The language used by Boise leaders and in Boise's campaign was always "we," "us," and "our" when talking about the harm as well as what needed

to be done in order to mitigate that harm, and this inclusive language works to identify the speaker as being part of the response. As mentioned in the *speech* findings chapters, just using the pronouns "we," "us," and "our" is not enough unless the language surrounding those words works to concretize substantive action and support. Leaders understood that while there were different valences of harm for some groups more than others, the harm to one community was actually harmful to the community as a whole. Rabbi Fink articulated it best in the virtual meeting on December 10th with Mayor McLean, Joel Poppen, and Dan Prinzing. Quoting well-known Rabbi Hillel, Rabbi Fink said:

> 'If I'm not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I, and if not now, when?' We have to be for ourselves as Hillel said. If we are not for ourselves, who will be? We have to stand for ourselves as a city, but if we are only for ourselves, it's important to note the change in pronoun. It's not who am I, but what am I? If we are only for ourselves, if we think only about ourselves, if we are not our brothers and sisters keepers, we are less than fully human, and if not now, when is the time? As you indicated Mayor McLean, we are at, if not immediately approaching, a tipping point. This is the time for Boiseans to say this is not who we are, and as you noted Mayor, I believe too that this is not who we are. But the words will be empty, if we don't get out there and show that this is not who we are because who we are is ultimately determined by our actions--by the actions of the majority, who I believe are good and caring and compassionate and want to say no to hate and will say no to intimidation.

Identity of the community is important, and Fink sees the community as the extension of the individual. His use of "we" over and over includes himself in his call to define what constitutes a community of support and care. Fink's call to action, which he also places upon himself, requires

visible action because a community in words only is empty without the actions that support its *existence*. Here I use the word *existence* on purpose because it is a word that expresses a way of being or doing, which ties back to the Bawarshi and Reiff quote that opened this chapter and provides yet another example of the metagenre *support*. A community is an action, and assemblage, a way of being and doing, not a word, so the actions and responses of a community when faced with a swastika hate act constitute or reconstitute the community and what it means to belong to that community.

Boiseans owned up, took responsibility for the narrative around who they were, and enacted community as Rabbi Fink discussed when he quoted Rabbi Hillel. They acted in ways both big and small that demonstrated that they were a community of support, that they were the majority, and that there was still work to be done, if they were to make good on the ideals McLean mentioned in her speech at the meeting mentioned earlier in this chapter. This ties to the idea of humanity that Thompson articulated in my interview with him. He said that "at the end of the day we're all trying to acknowledge the unique humanness in each of us, and the equal humanness in each of us," and that this humanness should dictate our actions of care for everyone with the goal of undermining seeds of divisiveness (Thompson). Humanness unites disparate groups within a community, and it is from this unity that a community like Boise can appreciate difference with respect rather than turn that insider/outsider dynamic into the kind of "othering" that can occur when diverse groups exist within the same geographical spaces and place (Thompson).

The notion of "othering" is also one that Rabbi Fink brought up. To enact community, we must take care of one another, which means everyone has the resources they need to survive: food, shelter, medical care, a living wage (Fink). Without these, the disparities between

individuals and/or groups will cause individuals to not take care of their neighbor; they will compete. When there is competition, there will always be an "other" because you do not see yourself in them; rather you see them as an adversary. This leads to a perceived win/lose situation instead of understanding the community as one, and just as Rabbi Hillel said, if you do not take care of your brothers and sisters, then who will take care of you? Boise's multifaceted response attempted to address the humanity of all Boiseans in such a way that qualities that are indicative of care and kindness for others were fore-fronted as the ideal.

8.5.1 Education with a Focus toward Futurity

But how does care figure into the future where unforeseen moments of trauma can and will occur? Boise's actions, although in response to a specific moment, are not just limited to just that moment. The care demonstrated in the defensive response to trauma in that current moment worked as an offensive move as Boise prepared and laid the groundwork for future responses should the need arise again. In essence Boise altered the trajectory of their own embodied rhetorical genre of *community response to trauma* and provided a design from which they will continue to draw in the future. Boise's response also provides a redesign possibility for other communities to consider and shows scholars the dynamic Schryer calls "stable for now" (108). While the response is "stable," Boise's embodied response as a genre may/will need to change to meet the community's needs in the future. From my interviews and the data collected within them, the town of Boise and its residents recognize that the incident in December of 2020 is not a "one and done" moment in time. Boise will have to continue to modify, adapt, and redesign their responses to mitigate harm to those impacted by the swastikas that may appear in their

community.[61] The history of Idaho and the history of the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights and the Anne Frank Memorial demand that Boise not be complacent and that it revisit time and time again how it defines itself, who it wants to be, and how it wants to conduct itself.

One way Boise intends to continue the conversation around human rights and its identity as a safe place for diversity is by ensuring the safety of the space around the Memorial with a security system and by fortifying educational programs available at the Wassmuth Center. A GoFundMe account raised $19,005 of its $5,000 goal to provide security to the Memorial with donations ranging from $5 to $1000. In addition, financial donations of various businesses, corporations, groups, and individuals across the state funded over 90% of a construction project to build a larger footprint for the Center itself: one that will accommodate a research library, educational material and an indoor classroom as well as an interactive exhibit.[62] The focus on access to educational programming and the security of the space, which allows it to endure temporally, will enable more school and community groups to learn in that space. Already, the Annex Shuler classroom contains an interactive kiosk and a rotating display that spotlights a broad spectrum of Idaho residents under the tagline, "Seeing me is not knowing me." The display at the Shuler classroom introduces both people and their identity statements—providing faces to those who some might view as "the other." Exposing individuals to diverse groups is one way to break down "othering" and the stereotypes that can contribute to hate acts, and the number of student groups that visit the center demonstrates that the community in Boise and the communities of surrounding areas are interested in breaking down that "othering" practice.

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[61] It just so happens that there have been two swastika incidents in Boise since the December 2020 incident. While both have not occurred at the memorial (one on a building downtown), one was in a walking tunnel near the Memorial. This caused a new wave of response that drew upon the previous campaign.

[62] Boise's Wassmuth Center for Human Rights to break ground on new building - Bing video

8.5.2 Implications for Other Communities

There will always be someone who is dissatisfied and wishes discomfort or harm to another person because they believe their resources and/or power are being diminished. White supremacy will continue to be an issue in the future, so change in community response to swastika hate acts and trauma in general is inevitable and necessary. Never will it be enough to be complacent and sit on one's laurels. Having done a "good job" of responding in the past does little, if there is no eye toward the future and no desire by stakeholders within the community to change and adapt as repetition occurs within cities, across counties, within state borders, and across the nation.

Genres change because they have to in order to be effective, and embodied rhetorical genres are no different. The embodied rhetorical genre of *community response to trauma*, and specifically community response to swastika hate acts, has changed, so it must be updated to maintain its same goal; mitigation of harm. Changes in people and situations, as well as the compounding of trauma require community leaders to be the facilitators of communication by circulating information and economically supporting ways to combat hate. Boise provides an example of leaders within the community being the largest disseminators of information about participation and support opportunities. Part of participation in Boise's response involved corporate activities, but that activism also provided opportunities for participation at the individual neighborhood level across the city and even across the state as signs were shipped to various locations at no cost to the average person. Individuals participating in big and small ways reinforced community expectations and gave teeth to the reconstitution of Boise when its identity was challenged. Boise's concentration on kindness allowed individuals across the city and state to unite. Hate acts have the capability to create a Sisyphean cycle where again and again a

response to a hate act leaves a community on a high of activism only to find itself back in the valley of another hate act because hate has not been addressed on a systemic level like Rabbi Fink alluded to earlier in this chapter, and this may be the case with Boise. Their redesign, however, has given them a better base from which they can draw, so that the peaks and valleys may not be so dramatic.

Another route that a community like Boise could undertake as it looks to prevent dramatic peaks and valleys is communicating with the groups and individuals who experience harm whether it be a hate act, a natural disaster, or police violence. Phillip Thompson shared this sentiment in my interview with him. He said that when someone is harmed, people should reach out to them and "do something to let them know, 'Hey I got your back'" (Thompson). Talking with people as a form of rhetorical listening instead of jumping to conclusions as to what you think they need does much to lift targeted community voices and provides opportunities for support that better meets those impacted communities. Rhetorical listening also acknowledges the embodied and emotional harm done to those individuals. Conversations might circle around security and preparation, so that vulnerable populations are protected when/if something were to occur (Thompson). These conversations might also produce structures and systems that benefit various groups within the larger community (Thompson). One task would be to sk individuals targeted by hate what they need, and then follow through on their needs with actions. These conversations invoke a kind of empathetic and active listening that, coupled with discursive and non-discursive action, can support targets/targeted communities and emphasize a way of doing and being that contributes to better health, safety, and support of the entire community as a whole.

Chapter 9 'Stable-for-Now': Redesigns in an Embodied Rhetorical Genre and Implications for Future Iterations

This dissertation and its creation of a taxonomy has given me both the tools and the next steps toward understanding the embodied rhetorical phenomenon of *community response to trauma*. My project has created the opportunity for me to speak to and with genre studies, and visual, material, and embodied rhetorics as it explores how visual hate symbols create patterns of behavior as communities assemble and reassemble in their responsive actions around "issues of concern" (Grabill 199). More importantly, my dissertation provides examples of available designs and redesigns that communities could utilize if they experience trauma. Whether it be a swastika hate act, police brutality, a mass shooting, school shooting, or a natural disaster, communities would benefit from thinking about *redesigns* as a starting point in their discussion about community response. These various forms of violence that occur within communities challenge the idea that communities are monoliths when it comes to identity and ask communities to engage with difference. When it comes to swastika hate acts, perpetrators, bystanders, upstanders and targets/target communities of swastika hate acts live within the larger community. How that larger community responds to a hate act speaks back to and with a target's/target community's harm and can forge and/or break bonds as it establishes what community means for that town, city, location.

My dissertation also provides a concrete example of an embodied rhetorical genre that moves beyond words and attends to practices of social action as described by Carolyn Miller. Weedon and Fountain argue, genre—even of the written variety—requires bodies to perform it,

so every genre is an embodied genre (590). This project teases out the various embodied actions of a variety of actors as they respond (often but not exclusively in writing), and this project likewise attends to those responses that are non-discursive like attendance, participation, and clean up. In this way, I expand practice beyond the linguistic and make visible concrete examples of non-discursive practice within community responses to swastika hate acts. Finally, my dissertation also speaks to material and visual rhetoric as spaces and places are altered with the placement of swastikas within them. I demonstrate how locations and materiality of the swastika itself create impetus for rhetorical action as response. I have outlined and provided commentary from target/target communities that support the notion that swastikas as visual hate icons create inhospitable places and spaces that require community action to reverse and reclaim as inclusive and safe.

9.1 Taxonomy: A Starting Point to Make Sense

In order for my dissertation to do the things I mention above, I needed to gather, organize, and make sense of the data around swastika appearances in the material world. As methods of inquiry, iconographic tracking, genre tracing, and genre analysis inherently lent themselves to the creation of my taxonomy. All three methods allowed me to gather, organize, and make sense of the data and see the "big picture" of *community response to trauma*. They then helped delineate the three metagenres: *silence*, *speech*, and *support*, which gave me a way to better understand the "way of doing" a response that could possibly be helpful and/or harmful depending upon the larger community and the target/target community's relationship.

My belief is that in order to disrupt or challenge something, you need to know what you are up against and its structure. Through identification and examination of a concept or structure, one can see the subtle or significant cracks in its foundation in order to press upon or stress those

places more and/or compromise the structure. The process of identification is a necessary step, and creating a taxonomy allowed me to do that by making visible the material and embodied practices of responses in communities that experience trauma. Some of these practices have become cliché or ineffective over time (i.e., "thoughts and prayers."); some of them hold true; and some of them offer redesigns and inroads for future responsive responses

With the creation of my taxonomy, I tried to create opportunities for points of engagement. Inadvertently, however, I fear I have created a kind of checklist where some individuals or communities would use this dissertation to say that they "did the thing" so they are a "responsive" (read "woke" and therefore above scrutiny) community. In this way, checklists become dangerous because they fix genres (and in this case genres of response) in time; they capture the moments and in doing so create rigidity, which is counter to the argument of this dissertation that argues that genres do change and must change. The responses to trauma that individuals and communities fall back on again and again may not be responsive in the future. It is foolish to believe that kairos plays no part in the formation and evolution of this genre, and the *redesigns* in this dissertation prove that.

Kairos also plays a part in my own trajectory of social justice work. If my career goal is to forward social justice by advocating inclusivity and supporting diversity, my dissertation and the ideas within it too cannot be fixed; they too must be engaged with by myself, by academia, and by communities across the nation in iterative ways that allow for them to evolve and be redesigned over time. My dissertation represents a kairotic response to the current moment and provides a means to identify forms of action and types of discourse within its taxonomy, but that taxonomy cannot remain fixed. While my taxonomy fixes past events in order to make sense of the responses, moments and responses change, so therefore my taxonomy will also need to be

responsive and evolve and reshape itself to reflect those changes over time within the genre itself. This is why my dissertation is in invitation to engage: engage with the ideas presented here in terms of embodiment, materiality, and visuality, engage with the designs that are available to you in your own communities that you belong to, and engage with your own practices in order to be critical of their alignment with your ideals.

9.2 *Available designs*: Creating Engagement for Stakeholders

As a "stable-for-now" snapshot of an embodied rhetorical genre, the taxonomy I have devised creates a jumping off point that stakeholders could use to engage with their own community traumas or to create plans to deal with future traumas. The data from *The Swastika Counter Project* (*TSCP*) demonstrates that stakeholders are not alone in their struggle with swastika hate acts because of the number of incidents and the variety of available designs, but that knowledge of not being alone warrants a seriousness and attention to swastika hate acts and begs the question of what to do differently. It is a double-edged sword in that there is comfort in numbers, but the numbers themselves and the repetition of this kind of harm across the country actually does little to comfort vulnerable populations targeted by swastikas. In fact, it does quite the opposite; it causes even more discomfort and unease for vulnerable populations as each incident becomes yet another micro or macro aggression that is compounded with each new occurrence. How each community responds will be different, but this dissertation provides a platform for discussion around the available designs and redesigns with the goal that honest reflection and change is possible.

9.3 Misalignment and Disconnect: Intention and Practice

"It is not enough to be compassionate. You must act"-Tenzin Gyatso, 14th Dali Lama

In my exploration of community responses to swastika hate acts, my findings chapters provided inroads into possible change and presented some takeaways that community stakeholders could consider or use as lenses as they turn to discussions around their own practices. The first takeaway ties to the metagenre of *silence*. *Silence* showed how a move to clean up quickly and involve the police did prevent some harm in the moment in that it decreases exposure, but in the long term, it could shut down needed conversations within the community that lead to actionable changes in systems that might prevent future harm. This might focus communities upon the actions around cleanup and what they are doing beyond erasing the symbol to attend to target/target community harm. Within the metagenre of *speech* the motivation to support through speech acts demonstrated individuals' good intent and did do something to comfort targets/target communities in the moment, but it often lacked follow-through of action and as a result appeared as an empty performative gesture, especially when it happened again and again. One need look no further toward school shootings to see how "thoughts and prayers" function. Looking at how speech functions for a community as it responds to swastika hate acts to determine if it is being used as a substitute for embodied support or if it works in tandem to create and organize embodied support for target/target communities is critical. Finally, the lack of data tied to the metagenre of *support* demonstrated a shortfall (only 17.45% of the total responses) in embodied support for targets/targeted communities, which may have impacted individuals emotional and physical well-being both in the moment and in the long run. This lack of supportive action and what may better address target/target communities after a swastika hate act will be talked about more in depth later in this chapter when I address next steps.

Underpinning the argument I make in this dissertation is the belief that the majority of the communities within the United States are and want to be good to those who live within their boundaries or under their purview. I would also like to believe that communities and community leaders, as a result, are motivated by a desire to help, to mitigate harm, and to make a community stronger, better, more supportive. Regardless of intent, as discussed in Chapter Four, what is left when a phenomenon occurs are material and embodied responses and, so we as scholars, community members, and stakeholders in our various circles of influence must examine our practices to see if indeed they line up with our intent. We must also be vigilant that we do not excuse a practice solely because we did not intend it. We must own up to what we *do* and alter our future practices—do better (Kendi, DiAngelo). Questions we might ask ourselves within the various communities that we inhabit are: What can we do to support targets/target communities beyond words, and how might we disrupt systems of oppression that are both explicit and implicit? These questions center bodies rather than words, and this dissertation has shown that words can be effective/affective. They can move; they can incite; and they can console, but they can also be performances that do nothing but give lip service to a cause as a way to maintain power or ensure that the individuals issuing them are viewed favorably.

9.3.1 Stakeholder Practices

In terms of key stakeholders and possible points of engagement, four groups might find my dissertation useful as a jumping off point for discussion of their own practices: police, religious leaders, school administration, and elected civic leaders. I label these groups specifically because not only were they key actors in many of the responses within the community, they were also the ones to whom communities look for protection and guidance.

9.3.3.1 Police

Police do have a lot of responsibility in a community, and for that reason, they need to be aware of their practices when it comes to trauma and trauma response. Police could look at *TSCP* to find answers to questions like these: Which targets of hate are police responding to? When are police responding? Which communities seem to attract higher rates of police response? For example, do police in a given locale respond more quickly depending upon the target community/individual's race, religion, or sexuality? Which kinds of cases involving targets/target groups are resolved and/or the perpetrator is caught? What practices attend to targets/target group needs? How do police talk about perpetrators? How could practices be altered to create better relationships with the community but more specifically those targeted by swastikas and/or who are historically marginalized and therefore more vulnerable? In looking at general trends and responses via *TSCP* as a collection of data, police departments may then be able to turn their attention to their own practices as they answer those questions tied to their departments. This could inform better police relations with various marginalized and vulnerable populations because they would be able to recognize trends in actions and in language, especially since police often center perpetrators rather than targets of harm.

9.3.3.2 Religious Leaders

Religious leaders could also benefit from looking at *TSCP* and reading this dissertation. As a group, religious leaders have the power to unify a variety of identities under specific faiths, but I would ask that religious leaders use that same power across religions much like the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) does in their response to swastika hate acts. As evidenced by the statements gathered in *TSCP* CAIR advocates religious freedom and safety to be protected as part of a Constitutional right as American citizens or as individuals who live

within American borders. Their approach, outlined in Chapter Seven shows how there is opportunity for interfaith organizations to work together to educate and support other religious groups or individuals targeted by swastika hate acts more specifically but trauma more generally. To help religious leaders reflect on their own practices, they could look at *TSCP* to answer these questions: When are religious leaders speaking up? When are religious leaders not speaking up? How are religious leaders positioning themselves in relation to those who are harmed? What practices is the religious community undertaking that extend and allow others the freedoms that they enjoy in their own faith? Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dali Lama is credited with saying, "If you wish to experience peace, provide peace for another. If you wish to know that you are safe, cause another to know they are safe." As I talked about in Chapter Seven, religious leaders have the opportunity to bridge differences through a shared understanding of humanity, and when religious leaders do not reflect on their own practices when faced with other faiths who experience trauma, they may miss opportunities to create support for all beyond their religious community.

9.3.3.3 School Administration

School administrators have already demonstrated that they are key players in responses to swastika hate acts in school settings via the data in *TSCP*. As shown in Chapter Five, they are the most vocal and involved in target/target community support after a swastika hate act, but they still fall prey to the metagenre of *speech* as their main response. Schools and school administration still need to reflect upon their own practices in relation to swastika hate acts or hate acts in general by asking themselves these kinds of questions: How are school administrations talking about targets/target communities? Are there some incidents that garner a stronger response than others? What correlation is there between the administration's response

and the target community? What systems do school administrations have in place to prevent future harm? What practices do school administrators offer as responses that create opportunities for engagement in support beyond condemnation? Because education is one of the pillars valued by American society, those responsible for the system of education must be critical of their practices and who they directly and indirectly harm in their responses to hate. Also, a charge of the education system is creating a citizenry that is tolerant, if not supportive, of diversity because by default education is compulsory for all children regardless of their background, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexuality. All eyes are on educators and school administrations, but the most important eyes on those two groups within K-12 where many incidents occur are the eyes of the children because educators and school officials are the role models and leaders for those growing minds.

9.3.3.4 Elected Civic Leaders

The final group that could benefit from looking at data from *TSCP* and this dissertation would be elected civic leaders. As was enumerated in Chapter 6, elected officials have been tasked with representing their constituents and the constituents' best interests—not their own personal interests. If elected officials are to really do the job of acting in the best interest of the people, they need to examine their practices beyond the spoken word that include time, attention, attendance, and financial support. Elected officials need to recognize who they are privileging with those practices. Some possible questions for elected civic leaders to ask themselves might be: When do elected officials respond to hate acts? How do these responses correlate with the election cycles? When are elected officials present and active in the community beyond speaking engagements? Which kinds of incidents do elected officials speak about more? How do elected officials position themselves, their communities, and/or the perpetrator when they do address

issues? This is why websites or videos that record who votes for what or that document what people say in response to laws surrounding civil rights and hate are important. Elected civic leaders need to actually follow through on actions and participate in actionable items, so that the cliche of the thoughts and prayers is no longer a form of hand waving. Instead, letters and statements could have some legs. Citizens need to hold those leaders accountable for what they say and push leaders to create moments, create opportunities, and create places and spaces for community members to act to make the larger community more inclusive.

Finally, the two most important takeaways to think about are that victims should always be centered and privileged in a community's response and that incidents of trauma are not a one and done kind of phenomenon. Therefore, stakeholders in the community need to think proactively about how they will deal with these incidents of harm in the future. In my interview with Phillip Thompson, he relayed how a good defense is a good offense and how his own religious community has created plans to keep individuals safe should something happen on or near the mosque (Thompson). Thompson also shared that he has worked with the police to plan these safety measures and has also talked with Rabbi Fink about possibilities for the Jewish synagogue to create more safety for vulnerable populations and their religious community as well (Thompson). Combating hate, especially, is an ongoing struggle, and if hate is to be dealt with, it has to be dealt with in a systematic way thinking about the future and the long game. In my interview with Rabbi Fink, he talked about the systemic issues like housing insecurity, lack of universal health care, and inequitable food access. Fink maintains that lacking those basic human needs creates opportunity for *othering* to occur within cities and towns and sets the stage for individuals or groups to lash out against others because of a competition over perceived or actual limited resources. Listening to various community members and taking care of everyone's

basic needs could create space for conversations around what it means to be human and in doing so, stakeholders could enact community and the kinds of care Rabbi Fink described in Chapter Eight and that the Boise response also demonstrates in Chapter Eight.

9.4 New *Available designs* and Ways of Doing

As mentioned earlier, I don't want my dissertation to be some kind of checklist that someone reads and says, "Okay, if I do these things, I will have a successful response," but I do understand that there are some things that my dissertation demonstrates as being key and pivotal in understanding and creating a community response that is more responsive and centers victims. For those reasons, I want to focus on three concepts tied to action that a community could take to respond to trauma. I am asking communities to center and listen to targets/target communities' needs, rethink punishment and implement restitution, and name and reclaim spaces as inclusive rather than exclusive. Using these three principles as guidance may help communities who are faced with trauma imagine how responses might take a different form and become a new "way of doing" (Carter).

9.4.1 Centering and Listen to Targets/Target Communities

Chapter Four discusses the decentering of victims and a focus on perpetrators as a form of silencing, which prevents meaningful conversations around diversity and inclusion. By asking those targeted or who experienced trauma what they need, listening to those needs, and actually doing things that respond to those needs, community leaders center those individuals and their wellbeing and safety. This shows individuals who have been harmed that they are included and are a valued part of the larger community and does much to increase the trust and relationships among community members.

9.4.2 Rethinking Punishment and Implementing Restitution

Along the lines of listening to and centering targets/target communities, when those individuals respond to the question of what they need to feel safe or that justice has been served, the larger community needs to listen and follow through. Justice may therefore take a different form from the legal punitive ways that are used across America. I am not advocating anything mob justice or some kind of group that functions above the law. Rather, perhaps communities could use other formats to deal with reparations and harm like restorative justice where perpetrators face and hear how they impacted those they targeted and where those who were harmed are supported by counselors, legal officials, and mediators in those meetings. Restorative justice could provide a platform for discussion around restitution and reparations. Restitution rather than punishment may prevent recidivism and actually enact community. By this I mean that the act of coming together, deliberating, and focusing on repair is a communion or a communal decision and therefore makes community an action. When power and punishment are siloed into specific groups, that does not allow for much participation by anyone beyond those groups and works much like what was discussed in Chapter Four; it silences productive conversation around community identity and what it means to be a member of a community.

9.4.3 Naming and Reclaiming Spaces and Places

Finally renaming and reclaiming spaces as inclusive beyond mere coverup could prevent future hate acts as renaming and reclaiming serve as material and visual markers of space and place. Boise's response in Chapter Eight also demonstrates a reclamation of places and spaces that I think is important if we are going to understand the material and embodied harm of swastikas. Communities need to think about how to make and mark those spaces as inclusive and do so in ways that let all community members know that everyone is welcome and safe there.

Granted, at the atomic level, one can never remove the trace of swastikas as I mentioned in Chapter Four, but as with Boise a new layer can be created that reclaims spaces and places that is more potent and inclusive than the swastika itself. In covering over a swastika, the space has the opportunity to be marked anew by the larger community if the larger community forefronts the target/target community needs within the space and beyond the scene of the swastika hate act. Centering target/target communities in decisions around that space helps reclaimed those spaces and places in restorative and preventative ways for all in the community.

9.5 Next Steps: Disrupting My Taxonomy and Focusing on Ecologies

Writing this dissertation has been the first step of many actions my career will take as I work toward diversity, equity, inclusivity, and justice in my workplace, my neighborhood, my state, and my nation. By naming structures of harm and oppression, I can attend to them, but the real work needs to move beyond mere clarification to a better understanding of the relationships between actors within responses that create the cement or glue that binds the structure together. Understanding the relationship between actors gives me another level or tool to break structures, and taxonomy alone does provide me with this opportunity.

While my taxonomy did allow me to identify and categorize in order to make sense of a phenomenon as well as see pitfalls and opportunities for redesign, it also created some theoretical problems when it came to methodology and documenting the response. My taxonomy became a bit too rigid, regimented, and cut and dry as taxonomies are want to do, and as a result it did not show the dynamic and fluid nature of genre for which I argued in my introduction to this dissertation. In essence my taxonomy fought against the fluid nature of the embodied rhetorical genre I identified as it fixed moments and phenomena. I see this is not so much as a fault in this dissertation because I had to find some way to understand and make visible the

genre, but as seen in my findings chapters, there is a bleeding or blurring between the metagenres that is problematic especially when we look at how moves within *silence* and *speech* performed by actors could function as support, if we better understood the relationship between actors or how those actions were carried out. While I did try to attend to relationships with my chapter focusing on Boise, that chapter was dependent upon recollection and memory, which can be unreliable and may be more rose-colored than reality when it comes to how actors interacted. To address these limitations, I would require another method and metaphor to engage with the data in *TSCP* that attends to relationships.

Using the concept of ecologies would allow me to see both the fluidity and dynamism of responses to swastika hate acts in motion as well as witness the interactions between, among, and in relation to the various individuals and material actors within the assemblages created by the swastika hate act. Being able to observe these interactions could enable me to better see the dynamics of power and relationship between. Such research is not just beneficial to me. The concept of ecologies could give me and other scholars, community stakeholders, and organizations, who want to do work on hate speech and community response, a more complete understanding of the dynamic nature of community definition and redefinition as it undergoes a redesign of practice or "way of doing" around a response to trauma. This kind of research could also provide scholars, including myself, with even more answers about the rhetorical power of visual hate symbols in the material world and do much to help the communities we participate in to be more inclusive and supportive of diversity.

Appendices

Appendix A The Swastika Counter Project (TSCP) Codes with Subcategories with Examples

This appendix contains the 16 categories that were gathered and coded within *The Swastika Counter Project* for each swastika incident. Subcategories, if applicable, are listed, and some examples are given to show what we included in those categories and subcategories.

Category	**Subcategory (if applicable)**	***Examples***
Web		
Date of discovery		
City		
State		
Source	Local news	NBC, ABC affiliates
	National News	Newsweek, CNN, Reuters, The Washington Post
	International News	Times of Israel, World Israel News, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, The Jerusalem Post
	Student Newspaper	Daily Orange, The Tufts Daily, Indiana Daily Student, The Ithacan
	Online Magazine	Philadelphia (Phillymag), L. A. Taco, Reason, Bethesda Magazine
	Religious Journal	Cleveland Jewish News, Jewish Standard, New Jersey Jewish News, Jwsish Weekly
	Aggregate Community News Platform	Patch, Westside Register, Brooklyn Post, lohud.
	Non-Profit Website	Alums for Campus Fairness, VTDigger, AMCHA Initiative
	School	

Category	**Subcategory (if applicable)**	***Examples***
	Administration Website	
	Online Database	University of Nevada Reno Bias and Hate Incident Reporting
	Social Media	Facebook, Capital.Fox.com
	Government Website	New York State Senate, Town of Reading Massachusetts
	Blog	Orlando Weekly, Palo Alto Online, West Seattle Blog, The Hill
	Tabloid Paper	New York Post
Reported Phenomenon other than Swastika		Vandalism, graffiti, racist graffiti, hate symbol, hate crime, symbol of hate, symbol of Nazism and White Supremacy, Nazi symbols, anti-Semitic graffiti, hate message, hateful graffiti, act of anti-Semitism, anti-Semitism graffiti, anti-Semitic symbols
Accompanying Text		(racial slurs), (homophobic slurs), Go Trump, F**k Trump, White Power, Go Home, Build a Wall
Accompanying Visual Signs		Male genitalia, Star of David, Hitler, cross, SS lightning bolts, pentagram
Nazi Reference	Yes/No	Yes meant that it had and accompanying image or some written reference to Hitler, the Nazi Flag, used German phrases like “Heil” or made some connection to what Nazis had done like “burn the J**s”
Media		Spray paint, marker, paper and ink, metal, paint, chalk, cement/pavement, cloth, cloth and ink, feces, grass, snow, tape, vinyl, wood
Place		College campus, private property, urban street, public park, dorm, high school, middle school, elementary school, golf course, home, highway, library, law firm, medical center, memorial park, museum, neighborhood, parking lot
Category of	College	

Category	**Subcategory (if applicable)**	***Examples***
Place		
	Park	
	Public space	Overpass, underpass, street
	Local business	
	K-12	Elementary school, middle school, junior high, high school
	Religious Institution	Synagogue, church, mosque
	Community Center	Jewish Community Center
	Private property	Land, fences
	Public facility	Library
	Public transportation	Bus, train, subway
	Abandoned structure	
	Cemetery	
	Government Property	City Hall, police station
	Fairgrounds	
	Virtual	Facebook
	Unknown	
Structure		Exterior wall, bathroom, automobile, sidewalk, door, armband, political campaign signs, bulletin board/whiteboard/chalkboard, garage, flier, elevator, street, traffic sign, utility pole
Target	Jewish Community	
	Black Community	
	Asian Community	
	Native American/Indigenous	

Category	**Subcategory (if applicable)**	***Examples***
	Community	
	Latinx Community	
	Muslim Community	
	Trump Supporter	
	Biden Supporter	
	Black Lives Matter (BLM) Supporter	
	Non-White	
	Immigrant	
	LGBTQIA+	
	Multiple	
Culprit		
Community Response		(texts of letters and statements), listings of responses
Notes		connections to other swastika incidents, sprees noted, other news stories that contained the same incident, connections to other sources

Appendix B Breakdown of Community Responses with Examples

This chart contains the categories of actors and moves with examples of other actors and moves that were coded as that category.

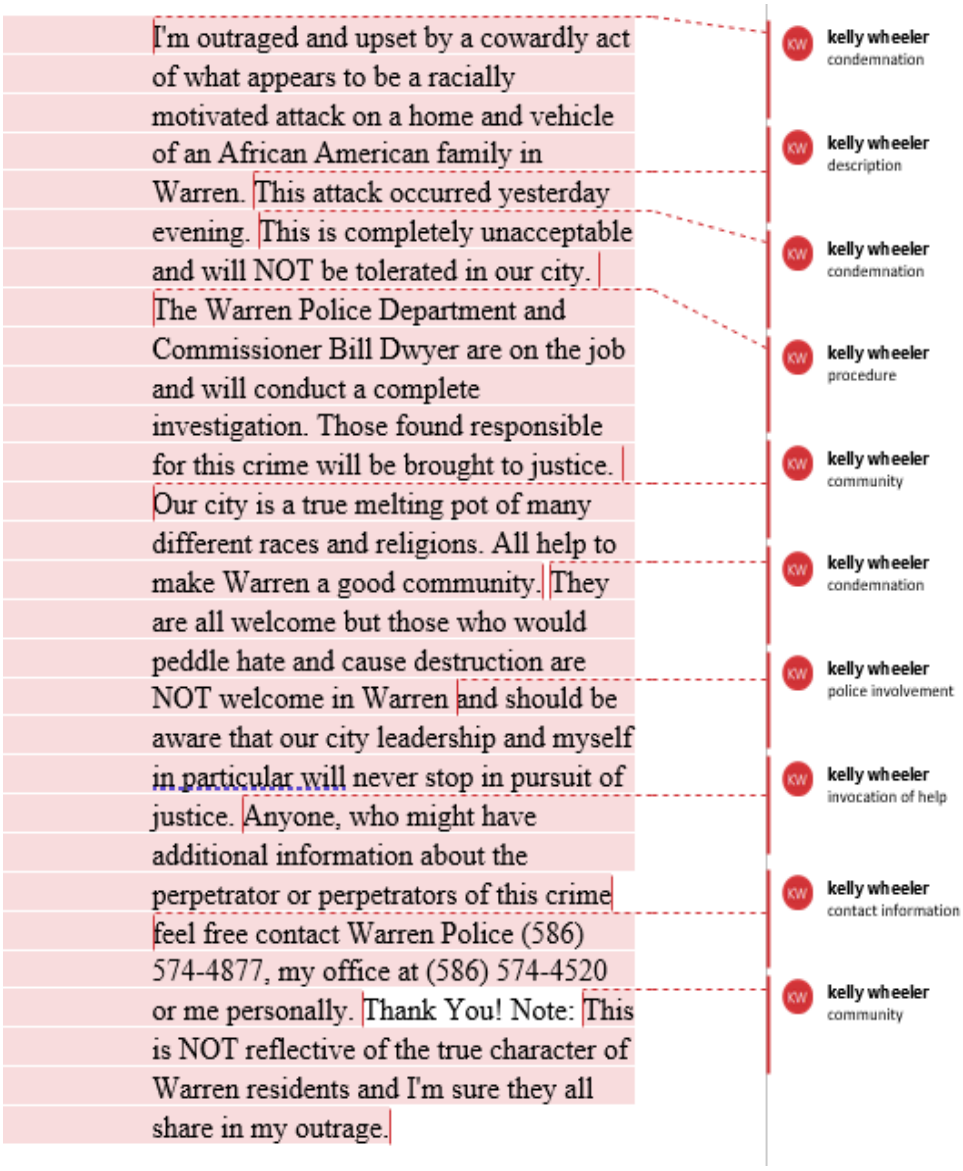
Actors Coded	**Moves Coded (performed by any actor)**
School Administration *principals, vice-principals, deans, directors of student affairs, superintendents, presidents of colleges/universities*	Letters/Statements
Mayor/Council Member *assembly person, selectmen, chief-of-staff, mayor, councilmember, member of chamber of commerce*	Cleanup/Coverup
Police/Sheriff *includes campus safety*	Policy/Committee/System Creation *review groups, procedures for reporting, studies, education, assemblies, curricular changes, sensitivity training, committee meeting, meeting to discuss next steps*
Representative/Senator	Victim Support *mental health services, extra security*
Department of Transportation *roadworks crews, transit authorities*	Gathering/Protest/Vigil/Demonstration *rally, forum*
Parks Department *public works, fire department, city employees, maintenance crews*	Suspension/Denial of Access to Space *arrested, fined, suspended from school, made to clean up, punished, charged with crime*
Neighbors	Other *reached out to ADL, spoke with a Holocaust survivor, when coded with* ***Police*** *it means "Police Investigation"*
Community Members *local newspaper*	
Religious Leaders	

Actors Coded	**Moves Coded (performed by any actor)**
Anti-Defamation League (ADL) *Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)*	
Student Group *student government*	
Homeowner/Car Owner *family member*	
Business Owner *library, church*	

Appendix C Samples of Coded Letters

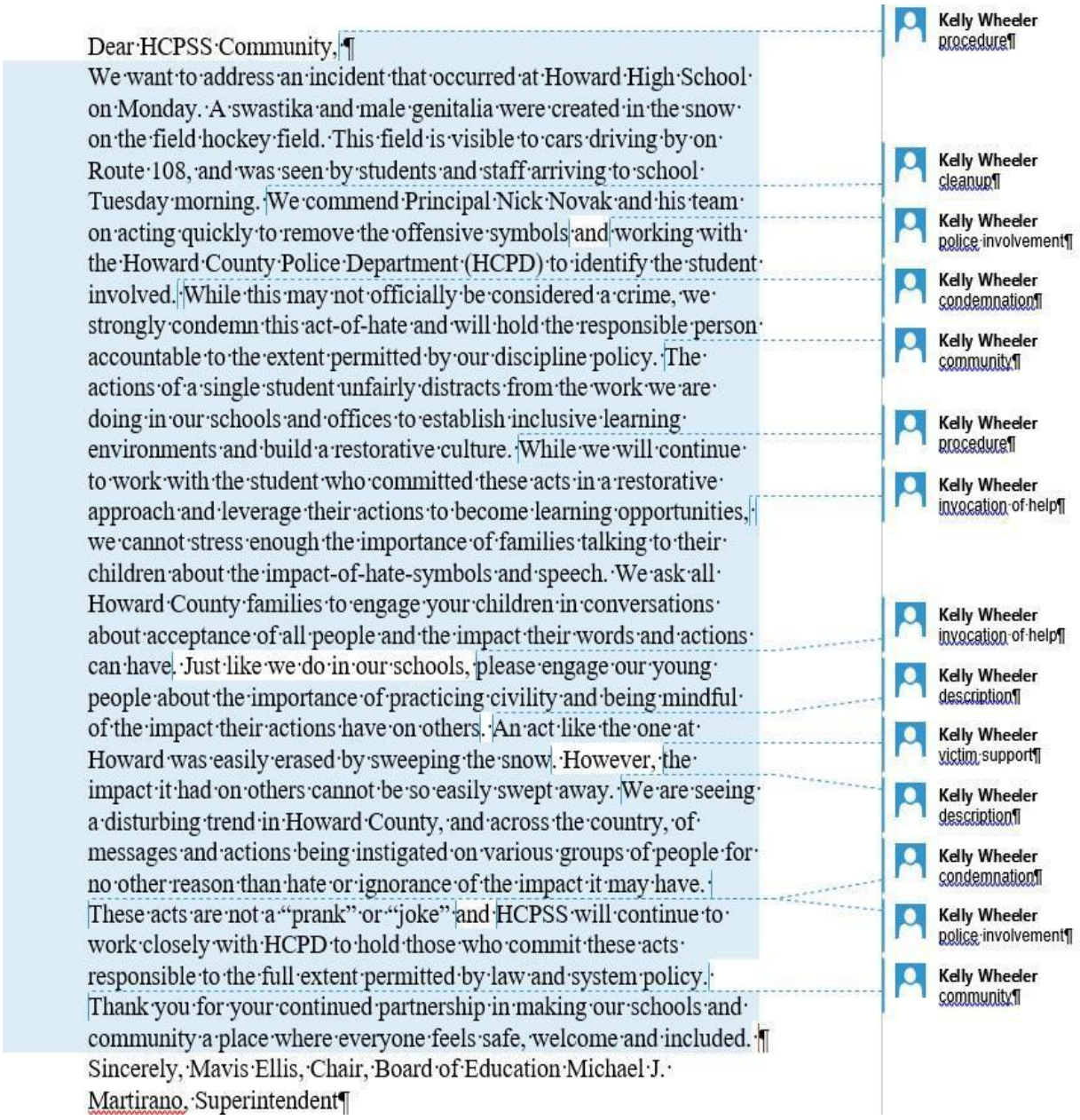
C.1 Elected Official Sample of a Coded Letter

This sample demonstrates how I coded a letter written by Mayor Jim Fouts, of Warren, MI. His statement was released in response to vandalism on a Black family's automobile that occurred September 9, 2020 and included "Get the f**k out," "Black Lives Matter," Terrorist," "Not Welcome," and "Get out" along with a swastika.



C.2 School Administration Sample of a Coded Letter

This sample demonstrates how I coded a letter written by the Chair of the School Board, Mavis Ellis and the Superintendent Michael Martirano of Howard County Public School System (HPSS) in Ellicott, MD. Their statement was released in response to an incident involving a swastika that occurred January 1, 2019.



Appendix D Invitation to be Interviewed Letter Sample with Questions

D.1 Letter

Dear _____,

My name is Kelly Wheeler. I am a graduate student in the Joint Program English and Education at the University of Michigan. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my dissertation and PhD, and I would like to invite you to participate.

I would like to understand how communities respond to swastika hate acts and have found your response to the incident in December of 2020 to be unique and supportive of victims and in doing so, enacted a form of social justice that I did not see in the other 1338 incidents I have collected spanning from 1/1/16-1/20/21.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in one interview about the process and your involvement in the campaign you chose as a response. In particular, we will discuss your emotional response, the decisions behind the campaign decision, and your motivations. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to. The meeting will take place at your discretion or a mutually agreed upon time and place and should last no more than 45 minutes. The interview will be audio taped and transcribed so that I can accurately reflect on what is discussed. The tape will only be reviewed by myself, the researcher, who will transcribe and analyze them. They will then be destroyed.

Study information will be kept in a secure location at the University of Michigan. The results of the study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but your private information beyond your name and civic title in the community will not be shared. You will be able to review my dissertation and any/all information that pertains to you before I defend my dissertation, and I will do all in my power to represent you in a way you feel comfortable being represented.

Taking part in the study is your decision. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. You may also quit being in the study at any time or decide not to answer any question you are not comfortable answering.

I will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at 206.920.4764 or *kellynnw@umich.edu* or my faculty advisor, Dr. M. Remi Yergeau *myergeau@umich.edu* if you have study related questions or problems. As part of their review, the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences has determined that this study is no more than minimal risk and exempt from on-going IRB oversight.

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to participate, please contact me at the number listed below to discuss participating.

With kind regards,

Kelly L. Wheeler
4206 Packard St. Apt 6, Ann Arbor, MI 49108
206.920.4764
kellynnw@umich.edu

D. 2 Questions

Name:
Date/Time:
Community Role:

1. What do you perceive as being the goal/s of a community?
2. What do you perceive as being the goal/s of community leaders?
3. What do you perceive as being your goal/s as a community leader?
4. Describe the swastika hate act that occurred December of 2020 to the Anne Frank Statue.
5. How might this incident be connected to other incidents in Boise, ID past?
    a. What, if any, connections did you see?
    b. How was this different, if at all, from past incidents?
6. What was your reaction to the swastika hate act that occurred December of 2020?
    a. What actions did you take as a result?
    b. What actions did others take?
7. The community designed a campaign to combat the incident. Can you tell me what was the planning process of the community response to the swastika hate act?
    a. How were you involved, and what roles did you take on in the response?
    b. How did the committee come up with possible responses?
    c. How did the committee decide on the response they chose?
    d. Why did the committee choose the campaign they did?
        i. Talk me through your decision to create videos for the Wassmuth Center's website.
        ii. Talk me through your decision to create banners for the lamp posts downtown.
8. How do you feel about your role in the campaign?
9. How do you feel about the campaign and its impact?
10. What else would you like to share about the incident or the campaign that you feel is important?

Thank you for your time.

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